Cover Letter

NBER Summer Institute 2025 — REStat Fellowship Application

Name: Sultan Mehmood
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Affiliation: Assistant Professor of Economics, New Economic School.
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Summary:

I am a development economist and political economist working at the intersection of law, development, and political economy. My research leverages natural experiments and large-scale administrative data—often newly digitized archival data on courts or historical datasets—to examine how institutional reforms in judicial selection, transparency, and accountability shape judicial, political and economic outcomes My work contributes to the literature on law and development, bureaucratic reform, and democratization, with an empirical focus on Pakistan. My research has been published in *AEJ: Applied*, *AEJ: Policy*, *The Economic Journal*, *Journal of Development Economics*, *PNAS*, and *Nature Human Behavior*. Recent papers examine the consequences of presidential vs. committee-based judicial appointments (AEJ: Applied, 2022), elite entrenchment in reform cascades (R&R, AEJ: Applied), and the behavioral impacts of fasting on judges (Nature Human Behavior, 2023).

Contribution to the Summer Institute Community:

I bring a perspective grounded in field-based institutional analysis, on law and political economy, using modern empirical methods and novel administrative datasets to uncover the causal effects of reform in opaque environments. My work contributes to the underrepresented domain of judicial institutions in developing countries, which have profound implications for the rule of law, state capacity and economic development. I believe my participation would help bridge the law and development of literature with cutting-edge work in development and political economy and expand geographic and thematic representation at the Summer Institute.

What I Hope to Gain:

I hope to receive feedback on ongoing and future work on the role of judicial selection, civil society mobilization, and legal empowerment in weak institutional environments. I also aim to develop collaborations and close gain comments and discussion by researchers at the frontier of economic research who are interested in bureaucracy, regulation, and political economy.

Sessions of Interest:

- Development Economics
- Political Economy
- Law and Economics

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Assistant Professor

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Languages: Punjabi (native), English (fluent), Urdu (fluent), Hindi (fluent), French (basic), Russian (basic).

Current Position:

Assistant Professor at the New Economic School, January 2021-

Education:

PhD in Economics, University of Paris-Dauphine, France
Thesis Title: "Essays on Judicial Independence and Development"
Completion Date: 15th October 2019
Advisor: Ekaterina Zhuravskaya

M.S. Public Policy and Development, Paris School of Economics, France
Thesis Title: "Using Geopolitics to identify the causal effect of Aid on Growth"
Advisor: Thierry Verdier

Research Fields:

Development Economics, Political Economy, Law and Development.

Publications:

1. Mehmood, Sultan. 2022. "The impact of Presidential appointment of judges: Montesquieu or the Federalists?" **American Economic Journal: Applied Economics**, 14(4): 411–445.
2. Mehmood, Sultan and Seror, Avner. 2023. "Religious Leaders and Rule of Law" **Journal of Development Economics**, 160(1): 1–18.
3. Mehmood, Sultan, Seror, A. and Chen, Daniel, 2023. "Ramadan Fasting Increases Judicial Leniency in Judges from Pakistan and India" **Nature Human Behavior**, pp.1-7. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-023-01547-3 **(Cover Article).**
4. Mehmood, S. and Ali, B., 2024. Judicial Capture. **The Economic Journal**, 134(659), pp.1287-1301.
5. Mehmood, S, Naseer, S., and Chen, D., 2024. "Altruism in Governance: Insights from Randomized Training for Pakistan's Junior Ministers". **Journal of Development Economics**.
6. Transmitting Rights (with S. Naseer and D. Chen) – Forthcoming **at the American Economic Journal: Economic Policy**. https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.20230620&from=f
7. Role Models and Theory of Mind (with S. Naseer and D. Chen) - Forthcoming at **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences** (PNAS).

Revise and Resubmit:

8. Reform Multiplier and Elite Entrenchment (with B. Ali) – R&R at **American Economic Journal: Applied Economics**.
9. AI Education as State Capacity: Experimental Evidence from Pakistan (with S. Naseer and D. Chen) – Revise and Resubmit at **Journal of Development Economics**.

Teaching Experience:

Spring 2022: Empirical Public Economics at the New Economic School (Masters Level)
Spring 2022: Introduction to Law and Economics (Bachelors Level)
Spring 2022: Law and Economics (Masters Level)
Spring 2023: Empirical Public Economics at the New Economic School (Masters Level)
Spring 2023: Introduction to Law and Economics (Bachelors Level)
Spring 2023: Law and Economics (Masters Level)
Spring 2024: Introduction to Law and Economics (Bachelors Level)
Spring 2024: Law and Economics (Masters Level)
Spring 2024: Econometrics II (Masters Level)

Referee Service (selected):

American Economic Review, Review of Economic Studies, The Economic Journal, Journal of the European Economic Association, American Economic Review: Insights, Review of Economics and Statistics, Journal of Development Economics, American Economic Journal: Applied Economics.

Submitted Papers (selected):

1. Ink and Ire: The Revolutionary Impact of Russian Literature (with V. Avetian) – **Submitted.**

Can the written word spark resistance against an autocratic state? We examine Russian literature from its Golden Age, illustrating how the Sovremennik magazine, initiated by the legendary poet Alexander Pushkin and featuring works of Russian literary giants, served as a gateway to more radical ideologies, ultimately igniting violent dissent against the Czarist regime. Using Pushkin's 'circle' and his chance encounters as an instrument for the magazine's spread, we find evidence of a causal relationship. The magazine cultivated a market for revolutionary ideas, inspiring underground publications and new generations of readers and writers. Our findings highlight that Russian literature, one of the most influential literary movements, catalyzed violent political dissent against the Czar.

2. Contract Enforcement in a Stateless Economy (with D. Chen) – **Submitted.**

How do markets flourish in the absence of a formal State authority enforcing contracts. To study contract enforcement without the State, we focus on a large informal market: illegal gambling. We present evidence that even in the absence of legal enforcement authority, personal relationships, and violence, more than 70% of gamblers fulfill their contractual obligations in this informal economy. We provide experimental evidence that even in impersonal and informal markets, reputation plays a key role in the honoring of contractual obligations. Extensions of the payment deadline also increases contract enforcement. Overall, we provide data and causal evidence that contract enforcement is possible in impersonal markets and without formal legal enforcement. Illegal gambling thrives on the same principles of reputation and credit constraints that sustain modern legal markets.

3. Addiction and Illegal Markets (with S. Ishiguro, D. Chen and A. Seror) – **Submitted.**

This paper studies dynamic contracts in illegal addictive markets where individuals' tastes for addictive goods develop through prolonged consumption and contract enforcement is limited. Our theoretical analysis uncovers the optimality of a 'free- first-dose' strategy where sellers intensify buyers' addiction by offering consumption credit to newcomers. We show that buyers default a certain portion of the debts for early period consumption but are never imposed any penalty on the equilibrium path. This implies that illegal markets might favor non-violent interactions over violent ones, defying the stereotypical association of illegality with violence. Mean- while, in illegal gambling markets, a distinct equilibrium phenomenon known as the long-shot bias emerges due to the influence of addiction, illustrating another com- plex dynamic within these markets. We discuss the implications of the model in the context of illegal sports wagering, narcotics, and religious sects.

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4. **The 1970 Bhola Cyclone and the Birth of Bangladesh** (with M. Mobarak)

The November 1970 Bhola cyclone in East Pakistan, with a death toll of 300,000–500,000, remains the deadliest cyclone ever recorded. We combine satellite data from a NASA mission operational briefly in 1970 with newly digitized archival records of subdistrict-level voting behavior in the December 1970 Pakistan general election, cyclone relief provision, and conflict activities during the 1971 Bangladesh War of Independence. By linking spatial variation in storm intensity to these political and conflict outcomes, we document how the cyclone's devastation—and the stark inadequacy of the Pakistani government's response—shifted electoral support toward the independence movement, ultimately leading to the creation of Bangladesh. Our analysis highlights the intersection of environmental shocks and state capacity in shaping pivotal moments of political change. We find heightened political activism and support for the separatist Awami League in cyclone-affected areas in elections held one month after the cyclone, especially in the subset of those districts where the government failed to provide relief. We show that those same cyclone-affected districts are disproportionately represented in an archived list of birthplaces of Bangladeshi "Insurgents" who fought in the ensuing Liberation War. Our statistical evidence using large-sample geospatial data supports historical accounts of the role the cyclone (and the Pakistani state's indifferent response to it) played in the formation of Bangladesh. Events like large-scale natural disasters can reveal the characteristics of leadership by giving citizens an opportunity to observe their response. In this case, it appears to have accentuated a movement that had sought greater economic and political autonomy for East Pakistan. The heightened sense of loss and betrayal crystallized into greater participation in political protests and conflict in cyclone-affected regions. Disasters thus also create focal points that allow people to coordinate political activities.

Selected Work-in-Progress:

1. Are judges a jury of one? Evidence from Abolition of juries in India (with R. Ahmed and N. Kala)
2. Beneath the Ban of Abortion: Evidence from the USSR (with Y. Prokhorskoy and H. Zoabi)
3. Mental Health, Teacher Stress and Student Achievement (with S. Naseer & D. Chen) – AEA RCT Registry
4. The Strike of the Righteous: The Impact of Hate Literature in Pakistan (with S. Asad) – AEA RCT Registry
5. Courts of Tomorrow (with E. Ash) – AEA RCT Registry

Policy Writing:

"A Judicial manifesto". The International Herald Tribune, 2023.
"Training Effective Altruism: Experimental Evidence from Pakistan". Vox Policy Column, 2021.
"A cultural phenomenon". The International Herald Tribune, 2016.
"A discussion on death penalty". Dawn Pakistan, 2015.
"Fallibility of Intuition and the Utility of Models". The International Herald Tribune, 2014.

Awards and Honors:

2024 Armenian Economic Association Best Paper Award "Revolutionary Impact of Russian Literature".
2022 International Growth Centre Research Grant "Machine Learning for Tax Courts" ($ 60, 000)
2021 IPA Peace and Recovery Research Funding "Radicalization in Pakistan" ($ 50, 000)
2020 International Growth Centre Research Grant "Judicial Access and Development" ($ 70, 000)
2019 EDI Grant "Judicial Independence in Pakistan" ($ 32,000)
2018 Best Paper Award Institutional and Organizational Economics Academy

Computer Skills:

Stata, Python, Latex, MS Office, ArcGIS.

Civil Society and Democratization: Evidence from Lawyers' Movement in Pakistan

Sultan Mehmood[*] Daniel L. Chen[†]

February 28, 2025

Abstract

This paper provides causal evidence that civil society can advance democratization. Using the Lawyers' Movement in Pakistan as a quasi-experiment, we implement an array of difference-in-differences methodologies to show that this lawyer-led civil society movement had far-reaching effects, shaping political attitudes, voting behavior, and participation in democratic institutions, ultimately paving the way for a democratic transition. The movement led to a decline in approval for the autocrat, increased electoral support for the pro-movement party, strengthened trust in the judiciary, and reduced confidence in the security establishment. Over time, districts more exposed to the movement have shown some evidence of greater reliance on formal courts and a potential decline in dependence on informal justice systems. Our findings underscore that civil society can disrupt autocratic power, facilitate democratic change, and enhance trust in formal institutions.

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"I was among the many people who welcomed Musharraf when he took over, but he wants no checks. He wants a free hand for everything."

Abdullah, a 70-year-old farmer, in an interview with *L'Express (2007)*

"The restoration of judges is not an administrative or a political issue rather, it is a matter of the country's survival."

Opposition Leader and PML-N Chief Nawaz Sharif in *Business Recorder (2008)*

1. INTRODUCTION

Civil society uprisings have highlighted both the promise and the constraints of fostering democratic change. In Nepal (2006) and Tunisia (2011), civil society movements appear to have compelled governments to implement significant democratic reforms, including transitions to democratic governance. In contrast, similar efforts in Belarus (2020) and Yemen (2011) failed to achieve democratic breakthroughs.

The role of civil society in advancing democratic change remains both theoretically and empirically ambiguous. On the one hand, civil society mobilization may just reflect pre-existing conditions, with movements emerging in regions already conducive to political transitions. Acemoglu, Naidu, Restrepo, and Robinson (2019) provide evidence suggesting that such democratic movements are often preceded by prior economic downturns that create fertile ground for democratic reform. On the other hand, civil society itself may act as a catalyst for change. Historical examples include civil society's role in improving labor conditions in 19th-century Britain (Naidu & Yuchtman, 2013), mobilizing against slavery during the US Civil War (Dippel & Heblich, 2021), and facilitating pro-women reforms during the Temperance Crusade in the United States (García-Jimeno, Iglesias, & Yildirim, 2022). Yet, the mixed outcomes of civil society movements, particularly in democratization efforts, raise fundamental questions: Can civil society truly act as a driver of democratic change? Specifically, can civil society advocacy for democratic reforms shift political

attitudes away from authoritarian rule, realign electoral behavior in favor of democratic objectives, and strengthen trust in democratic institutions?

Some fundamental challenges remain in addressing these questions. First, episodes of successful democratization are rare, and data in these contexts remain extremely limited. Second, democratic reform movements tend to concentrate in political hotspots. Egypt's 2011 uprising was concentrated in Cairo's Tahrir Square (Hodler, 2018), Hong Kong's pro-democracy demonstrations were centered in Admiralty (Bursztyn, Cantoni, Yang, Yuchtman, & Zhang, 2021), and Tunisia's 2010–2011 protests unfolded largely on Habib Bourguiba Avenue in Tunis (Anderson, 2011). Third, and crucially, civil society mobilizations for democratic reform are often dramatic, nationwide outbursts, leaving little room for within-country variation in exposure to the movement.

However, the history of Pakistan provides a unique setting to study how a civil society movement—spearheaded by lawyers and joined by farmers, political parties, and traders—shaped political attitudes, electoral behavior, and trust in democratic institutions. The inflection point came on March 9, 2007, appearing to set in motion forces that would upend the dictatorial rule of General Musharraf. When Chief Justice Chaudhry defied General Musharraf's demand to resign, his dismissal and dramatic arrest ignited a historic civil society movement for democratic reform. What started as a legal standoff quickly escalated into *the Lawyers' Movement*, a democratic uprising that culminated in Musharraf's resignation, key constitutional reforms—including the establishment of an independent judicial selection mechanism (Mehmood, 2022)—and a transition to civilian rule. The movement's ability to sustain pressure on the regime—often met with violent crackdowns—underscores its role in reshaping Pakistan's political trajectory. As the Centre Tricontinental (2023), a Belgium-based NGO, recounts, "The lawyers' movement became the principal conduit for democratic change".

Beyond its immediate political impact, the Lawyers' Movement appeared to have influenced national discourse. As Muhammad (2019) noted, "The success of Pakistan's lawyers' movement lay in its ability to initiate discourse upon autocratic rule, democracy, the supremacy of law, and separation of powers." This perspective was reinforced by a leading figure in the movement: "The lawyers carry with them no weapon except the precepts of our Constitution." (Ahsan, 2009). Despite General Musharraf's censorship, which blocked live broadcasts of lawyers' speeches and restricted newspaper coverage, Figure I, Panel A shows a sharp increase in newspaper discussions on the rule of law, constitutionalism, and civil society coinciding with the Lawyers' Movement. The resonance of these ideas is captured in an interview published in the Harvard Law Review: "I support the lawyers," said a Pakistani farmer, "because if Musharraf can do whatever he wants to this man, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, then none of us is safe." Public frustration with military

rule deepened as the Lawyers' Movement gained momentum. As Zahoor, from a small village in Kohu, observed, "Before, our children would salute our soldiers when they passed. Now they spit on them" (Gall & Sengupta, 2007). The movement's reach extended beyond legal professionals, activating civil society more broadly—lawyers boycotted court proceedings, traders refused transactions with the government, and farmers debated new constraints on executive power. The broad-based nature of the lawyers' movement is also suggested in Figure I, Panel B, which documents a sharp rise in strikes, led primarily by lawyers but also joined by farmers and trader associations, following the dismissal of Chief Justice Chaudhary.

Nevertheless, the movement's defining feature was its fragmented yet expansive mobilization. Across Pakistan, convoys of lawyers—at times stretching to a hundred cars—traveled through urban centers and rural districts, rallying support from farmers, journalists, and political and rights activists who lined the streets in solidarity.[1] A *New York Times* report from the time describes "a cavalcade of about 100 cars jammed with lawyers and political supporters on a 75-mile trip from Islamabad. Along the route, hundreds of people stood waiting at every junction and small town". The uneven distribution of these lawyers' visits provides a natural setting to assess their effects empirically.

Nonetheless, visits by lawyers were unlikely to be random, as they were more likely to occur in politically significant districts where support for democratic reforms may have already been higher. This raises the possibility that observed effects reflect pre-existing political attitudes rather than the visits' causal influence. To address this identification concern, we adopt a suite of Difference-in-Differences (DiD) methods that leverage pre- and post-treatment data from three complementary sources: polling to measure shifts in political attitudes, electoral data to track changes in voting behavior, and administrative court records to assess engagement with democratic institutions. This approach allows us to capture partial equilibrium differences between visited and unvisited districts while controlling for the broader movement at the national level. Under the assumption of parallel trends, the difference-in-differences design provides an internally valid strategy for estimating the causal effects of lawyers' visits on political and institutional outcomes.

Several pieces of evidence support the validity of this identifying assumption. First, consistent with the abrupt onset of the movement, we find no evidence of differential pre-trends between visited and unvisited districts. Second, we deploy the Synthetic Difference-in-Differences method (Arkhangelsky, Athey, Hirshberg, Imbens, & Wager, 2021), which is more robust to potential violations of parallel trends by re-weighting and matching treated and control districts based on pre-exposure trends. Third, we apply the recently suggested approach of Rambachan and Roth (2023),

[1] Lawyer visits often featured local lawyer leaders delivering speeches on military overreach, judicial independence, and rule of law, ensuring the movement's narrative reached local audiences despite state-imposed media restrictions. By engaging directly with local audiences, lawyers likely bypassed institutional barriers to political messaging and mobilization.

which relaxes the parallel trends assumption by allowing bounded deviations after treatment. This method provides partial identification of causal effects and enables inference that remains valid even under limited violations of parallel trends, improving robustness in difference-in-differences designs. Across all three methods, our findings remain robust, reinforcing the credibility of our research design.

The Lawyers' Movement visits triggered significant political and institutional shifts, reshaping public sentiment and trust in key institutions. We document four main findings. First, approval for General Musharraf declined, suggesting an erosion of support for the autocrat. Second, electoral support for the pro-lawyers' movement party increased, suggesting that political mobilization translated into measurable electoral gains. Third, trust in the judiciary strengthened, consistent with the movement's framing of the courts as defenders of constitutionalism. Finally, confidence in the military or security establishment declined, pointing to a possible reallocation of institutional trust away from the security apparatus and toward legal institutions. While long-term effects are more difficult to isolate, the evidence suggests that these visits correlated with a declining reliance on informal dispute resolution mechanisms, such as *Jirgas* and *Panchayats*. Moreover, the visits appear to have contributed to a broader shift toward greater engagement with the formal judiciary.

Specifically, the estimates indicate that lawyers' visits correspond to about a 25% reduction in General Musharraf's approval ratings and a 20% increase in pro-Lawyers' Movement votes relative to the sample mean, suggesting that these shifts in public sentiment regarding Musharraf are not merely superficial; rather, they translate into a tangible shift in electoral support. To put these estimates into perspective, in the 2008 elections, the pro-lawyers' movement party secured 23% of the parliamentary seats. Absent the lawyers' visits, opposition to General Musharraf might have forfeited 23 seats, reducing its legislative presence by 14%.[2] This implies that the opposition to General Musharraf would not have had the requisite majority in Parliament to impeach him, potentially putting the entire democratic transition in peril. Beyond political attitudes and electoral outcomes, the movement also influenced institutional trust: lawyers' visits led to a 7% increase in trust in the judiciary and a 10% decline in support for the military, underscoring a broader shift in confidence toward democratic institutions such as formal courts.

Our findings remain robust across multiple validation exercises. The results hold after adjusting for potential electoral fraud and employing alternative standard error adjustments, such as Wild Bootstrapping (Roodman, Nielsen, MacKinnon, & Webb, 2019), spatial correlation corrections

[2]Ahead of the elections, the pro-movement opposition PML-N required electoral candidates to publicly endorse the Lawyers' Movement. After the elections, the party pulled out of the coalition government and resigned from cabinet roles to protest the government's inaction on the Lawyers' Movement demands. We later show that opposition parties that were not aligned with the Lawyers' Movement saw no significant change in their vote shares following lawyers' visits, reinforcing that the observed electoral effects were concentrated among movement-aligned parties rather than reflecting broader anti-incumbent sentiment.

(Conley, 2010), or randomization inference tests. The results also hold when we explicitly control for road network centrality, as suggested in Becker, Pfaff, Hsiao, and Rubin (2023). Furthermore, we implement placebo tests using visits by political leaders unaffiliated with the Lawyers' Movement. To further address selection concerns, we employ a control function approach and estimate a dynamic matched difference-in-differences design, following recent studies (e.g., Fenizia and Saggio (2024); Jäger and Heining (2022)). The results remain robust across all these sensitivity analyses.

While data limitations prevent an exhaustive assessment of mechanisms, we systematically test several possible channels that could mediate the movement's impact. Collectively, the evidence suggests that local networks of lawyers' bar associations likely played an important role in shaping the lawyers' visits impact. We cautiously infer this mechanism to be the most consistent explanation from three complementary pieces of evidence. First, historical narratives, including Malik (2008)'s memoir, highlight district bar associations as key hubs for local organization, providing the movement with essential coordination structures. Second, we apply Heckman and Pinto (2024)'s causal mediation analysis to formally assess the role of lawyers' bar associations in transmitting the effects of the lawyers' visits relative to other competing mechanisms. Last, unlike historical lawyers' bar associations, other historical networks—such as journalists' press clubs—did not mediate the movement's impact. While both originated as colonial-era professional organizations, bar associations played a far more active role in the Lawyers' Movement, functioning as key platforms for local coordination and discussion. Our mediation analysis suggests that lawyers' visits were significantly mediated through these historical bar associations ($p < 0.01$), while press clubs exhibited no statistically discernible mediation, suggesting that mobilization within legal networks facilitated the movement's influence.

We also examine alternative mechanisms, including the expansion of private media in the early 2000s, electoral fraud, and leader-specific effects, but none statistically explain the Movement's observed effects. Historical religious school networks (madrassas), which have been mobilized in past political protests by religious parties, also do not mediate the Lawyers' Movement's impact. Furthermore, the Movement's impact does not appear to hinge on individual leadership. Our findings show no statistical differences—visits led by Chief Justice Chaudhry had effects comparable to those led by Aitzaz Ahsan or Ali Ahmad Kurd—suggesting that the Movement's impact was driven by collective mobilization rather than the influence of one single leader.

The abrupt removal of Chief Justice Chaudhry by General Musharraf in March 2007 sparked a nationwide resistance movement that reshaped Pakistan's political landscape. The movement appeared to force Musharraf to hold elections, leading to his decisive defeat in the February 2008 elections and his resignation in August 2008. By March 2009, it had ousted a military ruler, facili-

tated a democratic transition, and reinstated the deposed Chief Justice. Beyond these substantive political consequences, the movement's emphasis on the rule of law may have had enduring effects on the trust and, hence, the use of formal courts.

While establishing causal identification of long-run effects remains challenging, we cautiously examine whether the lawyers' visits were linked to greater reliance on the formal judiciary. To investigate this, we digitized an administrative dataset from statistical reports submitted by local courts to the Justice Department of Pakistan (LJCP), constructing an annual panel of court-level case filings across Pakistan. The findings indicate that districts exposed to lawyers' visits exhibited an increase in local court usage, raising the possibility that the movement's influence extended beyond electoral dynamics and institutional trust to foster deeper engagement with formal legal institutions.

1.1. Related Literature

Our findings contribute to four broad literatures. First, we engage with the literature on democratization. Economists and political scientists have long sought to understand the democratization process. One school of thought posits that democratization is a "compromise" between the elite and the masses (Rustow, 1970), brought about to preempt mass protests (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2000), to avert a revolution (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006), and control escalating violence (Aidt & Franck, 2015). Another viewpoint suggests that democratization occurs due to economic considerations, for instance, to reduce patronage (Lizzeri & Persico, 2004), to increase the size of the future economic pie (Acemoglu, Egorov, & Sonin, 2015), and to diversify against dwindling resource rents (Hodler, 2018). It has even been suggested that democratization is solely a function of the autocrat's actions: the autocrat democratizes to counter internal coups (de Mesquita & Smith, 2010) or makes a strategic mistake that inadvertently leads to democratization (Treisman, 2020). Deep cultural factors, such as collectivist cultures, have also been identified as barriers to democratization (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2021). Yet, despite substantial theoretical progress and cross-country analyses, empirical evidence on democratization remains limited by identification challenges and data constraints (see Egorov and Sonin (2024), for a recent review). While existing studies provide important macro-level insights (Acemoglu et al., 2019), well-identified analyses leveraging within-country variation are required to advance this literature (Cantoni & Yuchtman, 2021; Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2018). Our study distinguishes itself from prior scholarship by providing empirical evidence from a large Muslim-majority country of 250 million people, where conditions for democratization are typically constrained. Our contribution lies in identifying the causal effect of a civil society movement in challenging an entrenched dictatorship and laying the groundwork for a

democratic resurgence. Our findings align with the arguments put forth by Acemoglu and Robinson (2019) in *The Narrow Corridor* and expanded upon by Dixit (2021) and Bisin and Verdier (2024), who emphasize the critical role of civil society in the democratization process. We also complement recent cross-country analyses of democratic reforms, which associate greater exposure to democratic reforms with stronger public support for democratic institutions, as seen in surveys (Aksoy, Eichengreen, Litina, Özgüzel, & Yu, 2025) and dictator-game experiments (Acemoglu, Cheema, Khwaja, & Robinson, 2020). By leveraging polling data on support for the autocrat and military, election records, and administrative data on court usage, we provide evidence that the influence of civil society can persist beyond the fall of a dictatorship. It can foster support for democratic institutions by increasing trust in democratic institutions.

Second, our work builds on foundational studies in judicial independence and court legitimacy, elements that are considered critical in sustaining democratic institutions and economic development (Montesquieu (1748); Hayek (1961); Buchanan (1974); North (1986)). While a substantial body of theoretical and cross-country literature has emphasized the importance of judicial independence for economic prosperity (Glaeser and Shleifer (2002); La Porta, López-de-Silanes, Pop-Eleches, and Shleifer (2004); La Porta, Lopez-de Silanes, and Shleifer (2008); Besley and Persson (2011); Robinson and Acemoglu (2012); Voigt, Gutmann, and Feld (2015); Chemin (2020)), there remains a surprising lack of causal evidence on factors that alleviate court capture by the executive.[3] Exceptions include recent work by (Liu, Lu, Peng, & Wang, 2022), who leverage exogenous variation in judges' incentives to show that judicial reform in China could mitigate court capture, as well as (Mehmood & Ali, 2023), who show how a change in judicial selection mechanism in Pakistan increased judicial legitimacy. Our contribution to this literature is twofold. First, we move beyond assessing judicial independence as an outcome and instead attempt to examine its origins, identifying how civil society can generate demand for reforms that enhance court legitimacy and trust. Second, by leveraging a setting where legal institutions were actively contested, we provide novel evidence on how bottom-up pressures from civil society can strengthen judicial legitimacy, bridging the gap between the literature on judicial independence and the broader political economy of institutional reforms.

Third, we speak to the literature on social movements. Cascio and Washington (2014) study the Civil Rights movement in the United States, showing that enacting the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was associated with heightened public expenditure in counties with larger African American communities. Aneja and Avenancio-Leon (2019) extend this line of inquiry by demonstrating that the Voting Rights Act not only augmented the representation of African Americans in the

[3] In contrast, a burgeoning and vibrant empirical literature examines the economic effects of judicial efficiency, particularly the speed of case processing (Chemin (2009); Visaria (2009); Ponticelli and Alencar (2016); Boehm and Oberfield (2020); Li and Ponticelli (2022)).

public sector but also significantly narrowed the black-white wage gaps. The post-war era also witnessed women at the forefront of social movements, with seminal work by Goldin and Katz (2002) and Bailey (2010) highlighting the popularization of "the pill," and its impact on the feminist movement, which led to delayed entry into motherhood, enhanced educational attainment, and increased participation in skilled professions by women. More recently, García-Jimeno et al. (2022) studied a 19th-century social movement, focusing on the women-led anti-liquor protests in the United States, and Assouad (2020) demonstrated how a leader in Turkey (Atatürk) contributed to increasing the incidence of babies born with more Turkish-sounding names. Relatedly, Dippel and Heblich (2021) highlights the role of immigrant leadership in social movements.[4] We complement the existing literature on social movements by providing evidence from a successful mobilization of lawyers for democratic reforms. While prior research emphasizes mass protests and leadership as key drivers of political change, we highlight the complementary importance of legal professionals—who, by virtue of their institutional legitimacy and constitutional expertise, have the potential to build pressure on autocratic regimes and advance democratic reforms in ways that spontaneous uprisings may struggle to achieve. Our findings add to this broader discussion by illustrating how mobilization by lawyers can complement other forms of civil resistance, particularly for democratic change.

Last, our study speaks to the seminal theoretical literature on focal or tipping points in shaping political dynamics. Schelling (1978) theory of tipping points and Granovetter (1978) threshold models suggest how small, seemingly isolated events can lead to widespread collective action. Kuran (1991) analysis of preference falsification further builds on this by demonstrating how autocratic regimes can quickly unravel when a focal point unifies dissenters, triggering a cascade of coordinated actions. McAdam (1985) political process theory also emphasizes the importance of key events in providing opportunities for organization and activism.[5] The dismissal and arrest of Pakistan's Chief Justice by General Musharraf may have served as such a focal point, igniting the Lawyers' Movement by uniting the lawyers and the broader civil society, enabling widespread mobilization. Our empirical evidence is consistent with these theoretical insights, suggesting that civil society can capitalize on a focal event to facilitate democratic change.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides the political and in-

[4]Similarly, González (2020) provides an analysis of a social movement by students in Chile, focusing on the influential role of high school classmate networks in driving collective action for educational reform, while (Reny & Newman, 2021) shows that the Black Lives Matter protests likely impacted public opinion. Unlike our study, the focus of these movements was on educational reform and civil rights for African Americans in the US, not on support for the autocrat and democratization. Additional evidence of the role of social movements includes the Tea Party protests in the United States (Madestam, Shoag, Veuger, & Yanagizawa-Drott, 2013), the 19th-century British labor movement (Naidu & Yuchtman, 2013), and German exiles advancing antislavery efforts during the U.S. Civil War (Dippel & Heblich, 2021). For a recent literature review on social movements, see (Gethin & Pons, 2024).

[5]Likewise, (Satyanath, Voigtländer, & Voth, 2017), (Becker, Hsiao, Pfaff, & Rubin, 2020), and (Becker, Lindenthal, Mukand, & Waldinger, 2024) suggest how social networks can serve as conduits for political mobilization, lowering coordination costs and amplifying collective action, particularly in moments of institutional instability.

stitutional context underlying the Lawyers' Movement. Section 3 describes the data; Section 4 delineates the empirical strategy. Section 5 presents the main results, while Section 6 explores the underlying mechanisms. Section 7 documents additional robustness checks. A final section concludes. Variable definitions, data sources, and additional details can be found in Online Appendix A, with supporting figures and tables available in Online Appendix B.

2. CONTEXT AND INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND

Focal Point. On March 9, 2007, a seemingly routine meeting between the Chief Justice of Pakistan and the military chief sparked a resistance movement against the autocratic government that would dramatically alter the course of Pakistan's history. In an unprecedented act of defiance, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, refused to succumb to General Musharraf and his generals' demand that he resign. Despite Chief Justice Chaudhry's swift dismissal and arrest by the incumbent military ruler, far from quelling dissent, this event is believed to have unleashed a civil society movement led by lawyers in Pakistan. This movement set the stage for General Musharraf's decisive electoral defeat, subsequent exile, and even a death sentence for his egregious assault on the democratic order. In just two years after the pivotal events of March 9, 2007, General Musharraf faced a decisive electoral defeat, resigned from office, and went into exile, while the ousted Chief Justice was reinstated. The period also saw significant constitutional reforms, with the 18th Amendment reinforcing democratic representation and the 19th Amendment increasing the judiciary's independence in the appointment process.

Political Background. The Lawyers' Movement, which emerged in response to Chief Justice Chaudhry's dismissal, evolved into a broader effort to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law in Pakistan. Since gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1947, when British India was partitioned into two separate nations, Pakistan's political trajectory has been punctuated by military takeovers. General Pervez Musharraf's military regime (1999–2008) was established following a coup against Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who was subsequently arrested and exiled. In the political restructuring that followed, a splinter faction of Sharif's party rebranded as the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) and aligned with Musharraf, forming a governing coalition with the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), an alliance of Islamist right-wing parties, and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). In contrast, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) remained in opposition and played a central role in the Lawyers' Movement. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP), despite being in opposition, pursued a power-sharing agreement with Musharraf, limiting its engagement with the movement. In the wake of the February 2008 elections, a democratic transition unfolded as opposition formed a united front against General Musharraf. Just as the new

government initiated impeachment proceedings against him, he resigned.[6]

Major Political Players. The military has long played a dominant role in Pakistan's political landscape, often holding power for extended periods. During one such period of direct military rule, the Lawyers' Movement emerged as a challenge to autocratic governance. Beyond its immediate demands, the movement confronted the broader entrenchment of the security establishment in Pakistan's political order. This movement occurred during a relatively stable period in Pakistan's history, marked by General Pervez Musharraf's entrenched rule following his 1999 coup, substantial U.S. aid, and record economic growth (World Bank, 2006). The International Republican Institute (IRI) survey from June 2006 showed General Musharraf with an approval rating of over 60%, leading many commentators to view him as favorably positioned for electoral victory in the upcoming elections scheduled for next year. His primary rival, the center-right Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), led by Nawaz Sharif, whom he had ousted, was in exile in Saudi Arabia. Benazir Bhutto, leading the center-left Pakistan People's Party (PPP), was in exile in London. As one analyst succinctly put it, the opposition to General Musharraf was in "political cold storage" (Almeida, 2008).

Lawyers' Movement. While led by lawyers, the movement saw broad civic participation from human rights activists, journalists, farmers, and political activists (Khan, 2023). A notable aspect of the movement was the lawyers' visits across Pakistan, often, though not always, accompanied by the dismissed Chief Justice. A Times magazine report recounts the scene, noting "a growing cavalcade of cars, trucks, vans, busses, rickshaws and even donkey carts, was welcomed with boisterous cheers" (Time Magazine, 2007). These "road visits" by lawyers played three main roles. First, they appear to have facilitated the spread of information about the movement, potentially shaping a narrative around the rule of law, civil resistance, and constitutionalism—an interpretation supported by analysis of newspaper corpus (Figure I, Panel A).[7] Second, lawyers leveraged their visits to escalate pressure on the government, coordinating court boycotts and staging strikes as forms of collective resistance (Figure I, Panel B). Third, with approximately 100,000 members in 2007, the lawyers in Pakistan may have provided a critical mass for collective action, offering safety in numbers for broader civil society participation (Phelps, 2009). The lawyers' visits as tools of dissemination were particularly important given the limited channels for information flow—literacy stood at just 54% in 2007, and internet penetration was less than 7% (Stats, 2007). In this environment, where the government censoring traditional media—banning, for instance, live broadcasts of lawyer convoys—face-to-face interactions became a key channel for disseminating the Movement's

[6]However, the military retained some influence, particularly in foreign policy and national security matters. While democratic institutions like the judiciary are functioning in this new democracy, they face persistent challenges typical of developing states, including resource constraints and external pressures.

[7]Despite restrictions on live broadcasts of the lawyers' visits and speeches, their message appears to permeate the print media as observed from text analysis of newspapers.

message.

Democratic Transition. The February 2008 general elections marked a decisive shift in Pakistan's political landscape, signaling a move towards greater civilian space for governance. The 2008 electoral transition was pivotal in this shift, ushering in political forces more sympathetic to its cause. This shift, coupled with escalating political pressure from the newly elected opposition and the imminent threat of impeachment by the new government, precipitated General Pervez Musharraf's dual resignations—first as Chief of Army Staff and subsequently as President in August 2008. The New York Times captured succinctly the significance of these events, reporting, "In March 2007, Chaudhry refused the urging of five generals to resign and was removed by Musharraf. Two years later, with Musharraf in exile and a civilian government in power, nationwide protests returned Chaudhry to his position atop the nation's highest court" (Gall, 2009). This sequence aligns with qualitative research, which attributes the Lawyers' Movement to "the downfall of the Musharraf regime and a transition to electoral democracy" (Khan (2019), p. 2). In such qualitative discussions, the Lawyers' Movement was associated with causing a "normative shift in public perceptions," wherein the military lost its legitimacy to rule Pakistan (Malik and Tudor (2024), p. 80).

The Restoration of the Judiciary. Beyond the resignation and subsequent exile of General Musharraf, the Lawyers' Movement's crowning success was the March 2009 restoration of the judiciary, marking a watershed moment in Pakistan's history. The Bhurban Accord 2008, brokered between the opposition to General Musharaf parties, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in March 2008, laid the groundwork for this development by promising the judges' return, including Justice Chaudhary within 30 days of government formation. However, reneging on the Accord, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)-led transition government initially refused to reinstate the judges dismissed by General Musharraf. In response, a march to Islamabad, initially planned and organized by lawyers and later joined by Nawaz Sharif's pro-lawyers PML-N, was undertaken to compel the government to fulfill the accord. As the march advanced towards the capital, the government issued an executive order reinstating Chief Justice Chaudhry. A remarkable reversal of fortunes occurred; in less than two years since March 2007, General Musharraf was forced into exile, a democratic transition followed, and the deposed Chief Justice was reinstated, resuming his position as the Chief Justice of Pakistan.[8]

Lawyers' Bar Associations. District bar associations played a central role in the Lawyers' Move-

[8]Even after his reinstatement as Chief Justice Chaudhry remained engaged in legal proceedings that scrutinized the military's involvement in the politics of Pakistan. His rulings addressed issues such as election interference and enforced disappearances, raising questions about the military's long-standing role in Pakistan's political order. In response to judicial inquiries into retired generals, Army Chief succeeding Musharraf, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, warned of "negative consequences" (T. N. Y. Times, 2012) if institutions failed to work in harmony, highlighting the sensitive nature of the judiciary's interventions. While Chaudhry's statements, including his assertion that "gone are the days when stability and security of the country were defined in terms of a number of missiles and tanks," and multiple landmark judgments suggest a shift in the institutional balance, the extent to which the judiciary could meaningfully constrain military influence remains an open question.

ment by structuring collective action and mobilizing legal professionals across the country. Acting as hubs for discussion and policy coordination, these associations also leveraged press releases to articulate movement objectives, ensuring message diffusion within legal circles and broader civil society. In this subsection, we provide additional institutional background and a historical overview of these associations. The institutional framework of the Pakistani bar, a vestige of the colonial era (Schmitthener, 1968), comprises a hierarchical structure that extends from the national level down to the district level. Its five provincial counterparts accompany the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), the regulatory body governing the legal profession. Parallel to this regulatory body, lawyers voluntarily associate within a tiered network of bar associations, ranging from district bar associations to the national Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA). With approximately 200 bar associations nationwide, these entities serve as a professional and political support network, with members elected in annual elections. More than a professional gathering place, the bar association also brings lawyers together with journalists and human rights activists, fostering ties to broader civil society (Malik, 2008). At the national level, the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) anchors this collective action, while the decentralized, district bar associations enhance lawyers' capacity for mobilization at the local level. With 100,000 members, this network became a force during the Lawyers' Movement, driving large-scale mobilization efforts (Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, 2024). This was evident on the eve of the Chief Justice's dismissal, when the SCBA President quickly condemned the act, describing it as "a callous conspiracy of the highest order against the superior judiciary" (Dawn, 2007). This quickly trickled to district bar associations, with the Lahore High Court Bar Association declaring: "Relieving the chief justice of his responsibilities or rendering him non-functional is totally illegal and unconstitutional and condemnable in the strongest possible words."

3. DATA AND MAIN VARIABLES

We construct a granular, multi-source dataset by integrating institutionally fragmented and historically inaccessible data streams, including opinion surveys on support for General Musharraf, the military, police, and courts; electoral records; bar association registries; media oversight reports; judicial administrative records; and international election audits. Below, we detail our main data sources and key variables. More detailed descriptions and sources for the variables can be found in Appendix A1. Next, we first describe the three groups of outcome variables: political attitudes (polling data), voting behavior (electoral records), and court outcomes (judicial records). We then discuss the Lawyers' Visits treatment variable, detailing its construction and measurement.

3.1. Outcome Variables

Polling Data. Amid the United States' geopolitical interests and Pakistan's role in the War on Terror, international organizations, particularly U.S.-based think tanks, conducted independent surveys on Musharraf's domestic approval and public trust in state institutions to assess shifts in his political legitimacy and the broader public perception of state authority. Given the restrictions on independent polling in authoritarian settings, these surveys conducted by U.S. think tanks provide a rare opportunity to assess political sentiment under military rule. To the best of our knowledge, the only district-level panel data from this period comes from quarterly surveys conducted by the International Republican Institute (IRI), a globally active nonprofit headquartered in the United States, which tracked pre- and post-Lawyers' Movement variation in approval for Musharraf and institutional trust. Beyond courts, the IRI surveys record attitudes toward 'non-democratic' institutions, including confidence in the military (which Musharraf headed) and the police, enabling a broader assessment of institutional trust in the wake of the Lawyers' Movement. Figure B1 in Appendix A presents trends surrounding the Lawyers' Movement, documenting a sharp decline in Musharraf's approval alongside a corresponding increase in confidence in the judiciary. These patterns are consistent with the broader narrative of institutional realignment following the movement.

Voting Records. To assess whether political attitudes translate into voting behavior, we leverage electoral data from the official records of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Our analysis focuses on the pro-Lawyers' Movement party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), led by Nawaz Sharif; it was the only major political party that openly and publicly supported the Lawyers' Movement. The PML-N's pre-election pledges and post-election actions provided a singular political platform explicitly aligned with the movement. The party's campaign promise made this explicit: "If elected, we will reinstate the Chief Justice and fully support the demands of the Lawyers' Movement" (Business Recorder, 2008). The founding chairman of PML-N, Nawaz Sharif, framed the restoration of the Chief Justice as essential to national survival, stating: "The restoration of judges is not an administrative or a political issue; rather, it is a matter of the country's survival". The PML-N institutionalized its support for the Lawyers' Movement by requiring candidates to publicly pledge their commitment to judicial restoration before receiving party endorsement. In contrast, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) refrained from explicitly endorsing the movement. As Musharraf's grip on power weakened, the Pakistan Peoples Party pursued a power-sharing agreement rather than advocating for judicial reinstatement. Following the PPP's reluctance to restore Chief Justice Chaudhry post-transition, the PML-N withdrew from the coalition government. Similarly, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) maintained

their alliance with Musharraf's regime throughout the Lawyers' Movement, providing both political backing and, in the case of MQM, direct involvement in state repression. MQM actively participated in the violent suppression of protests, employing live fire and orchestrating targeted attacks against lawyers and demonstrators—most notably on May 12, 2007. Since the PML-N was a dominant political player even before the Lawyers' Movement, its pre-movement vote share provides a natural baseline. In addition to PML-N, we later analyze how the lawyers' visits influenced the vote shares of other parties, including Musharraf's coalition allies and smaller parties.

Vote Validations. To address concerns about electoral manipulation under Musharraf's regime, we additionally verify our findings using a fraud-adjusted vote count from the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN Election Analysis, 2009). This dataset, based on observations from 20,000 independent election monitors and a random audit of 1,000 voters per district, provides a more reliable measure of voter preferences in a constrained political environment. Moreover, we control for measures of electoral fraud, including the share of rejected ballots.

Court Records. The attitudinal and voting data allow us to examine the lawyers' visits influence on political preferences, electoral behavior, and institutional trust in the judiciary, military, and police. To assess long-run effects beyond short-term political shifts, we augment attitudinal and voting data with administrative records from local courts in Pakistan. We digitize all available Statistical Reports submitted by local courts to the Justice Department from 2006 to 2022. We construct this annual panel dataset tracking case filings and case closure rates in district courts, enabling an analysis of how lawyers' visits shaped engagement with courts of first instance, considered pivotal to the justice system (Siddique, 2013). To further study shifts in engagement and trust in the judiciary, we integrate cross-sectional data from a nationwide survey on informal dispute resolution mechanisms, such as *jirgas* and *panchayats*, collected by Free and Fair Election Network (2016). This allows us to assess the correlation between exposure to the Lawyers' Movement and reliance on informal dispute resolution mechanisms.

3.2. Explanatory Variables

Lawyers' Visits. The treatment variable is a binary indicator for districts visited by the lawyers. These road visits—a coordinated and highly visible event, sometimes forming convoys of 100+ cars—played three main roles. First, lawyers used these visits to deliver speeches pushing back against dictatorship and advocating for the rule of law and democratic rights. By relying on in-person dissemination, these visits likely sidestepped live broadcast and print media bans, embedding the movement's narrative within local political discourse. Despite General Musharraf's censorship, the movement's message appeared to have diffused through alternative channels. Figure I

(Panel A) shows a rise in newspaper references to the rule of law, constitutionalism, civil society, and lawyers' bar associations following the onset of the movement, suggesting an information spillover into public discourse. In contrast, function words (e.g., "of," "or," or "the") and culturally salient terms like "Islam" exhibit minimal change (Figure B2 in Appendix B). In an era where low literacy (54%) constrained newspaper reach and internet penetration remained below 7% in 2007—before the rise of social media—lawyers' visits likely compensated for the lack of independent information channels by directly engaging the public. Second, the lawyers' visits intensified pressure on the military government by coinciding with nationwide court boycotts and strikes, which often saw participation from farmers and small business associations (Figure I, Panel B). Third, Pakistan's legal profession—comprising approximately 100,000 lawyers in 2007–2008—provided a substantial base for mobilization, potentially providing safety in numbers (Bursztyn et al., 2021). Figure II, Panel A highlights one such lawyers' convoy, while Panel B maps the full set of lawyers visits. International media, including *The New York Times*, documented the lawyers' visit, calling them "a cavalcade of about 100 cars jammed with lawyers and political supporters" tracing their route "as [they] left Islamabad on Saturday morning for Abbottabad" (Gall & Sengupta, 2007). The movement's visibility extended beyond legal circles, drawing crowds along its path. As Time Magazine reported, "Tens of thousands of Pakistanis lined the route, cheering, chanting, and waving", with "dancing ponies performed in front of the car. Camels were decorated for the occasion" (Time Magazine, 2007). In Haripur, a small village at the convoy's halfway mark, 33-year-old farmer Rauf Naizi waited for hours. Speaking to Time, he remarked, "The government rents crowds for their rallies, but we are not getting money or food to be here. We come just to pay tribute to the Chief Justice, because he stood up against the army generals" (Baker, 2007). Despite state-imposed censorship restricting the publication and broadcast of lawyers' speeches during their nationwide visits, media outlets were still able to document the movement. The sheer scale of the lawyers' convoys—sometimes consisting of 100 cars—made them impossible to overlook. As one leader put it, the movement was simply too big to ignore (Malik, 2008). Therefore, given the movement's visibility and sheer scale, our main explanatory variable is constructed by analyzing a corpus of more than 20,000 news archives, minimizing concerns over missing data. For the more complete description of the collection procedure, see variable description section in Appendix A.[9]

[9]The Chief Justice, though central to the movement in his defiance of General Musharraf, remained a symbolic leader. He seldom made public statements and relied on the movement's lawyers to organize and drive mobilization. A news report by the Times stated "Mr. Chaudhry never left his car and did not speak to the crowds along the way." A highly esteemed constitutional lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan, a central figure in the movement, often assumed the role of the Chief Justice's "chauffeur" during his nationwide tours, underscoring the collaborative and coordinated nature of the movement's leadership. We subsequently demonstrate that the impact of the movement extends beyond visits by the Chief Justice, showing similar effects when any of the key leaders are involved. For instance, visits by prominent lawyers like Aitzaz Ahsan and Ali Ahmad Kurd yield comparable results. This is unsurprising as the Chief Justice was not known to be the most charismatic. According to the Times magazine, "Finally, Chaudhry stepped to the podium at 2 a.m. and launched into his prepared talk on article 25 of the Pakistani constitution, about non-discrimination before the law ... his talk was remarkably tame. Boring even." (Baker, 2007).

Control Variables. The choice of control variables varies based on the specific outcome variable under consideration. Our baseline controls for polling data include trust in the police and judiciary when assessing approval for General Musharraf or the military. For voting data, we incorporate total registered votes, total votes cast, and the proportion of rejected ballots, with the latter serving as a potential indicator of electoral fraud. Our local court data includes the number of pending cases as a control, serving as a proxy for case backlog. As will be shown in the results section, the inclusion of these controls does not substantively affect our main conclusions. Appendix A1 details variable definitions and data sources, while Appendix A2 presents additional qualitative details on the lawyers' visits. Appendix B, Table B1, provides descriptive statistics for the main variables used in the study.

4. EMPIRICAL METHODOLOGY

Estimating Equation. To evaluate the impact of lawyers' visits, we estimate the following specification using standard and synthetic difference-in-differences estimators as baseline:

$$Y_{it} = \beta \text{Lawyers' Visits}_i \times \text{Post-Movement}_t + \gamma_i + \theta_t + \mathbf{X}_{it}\mu + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{1}$$

i and t index districts and time. Time periods are defined as quarters, years, or election years, depending on the specific outcome being considered. Lawyers' Visits is a binary indicator that takes the value of 1 if the lawyers visited the district and 0 otherwise. Post-Movement is an indicator variable that switches to 1 for the period following the Lawyers' Movement, specifically from March 2007 onward. $\mathbf{X}$ is a matrix of time-varying controls.[10] Standard errors are clustered at the district level.[11]

The interaction term between Lawyers' Visits $\times$ Post-Movement is our primary variable of interest. The coefficient on this interaction term (β) serves as the difference-in-differences coefficient, quantifying the effect of the lawyers' visits on the outcome under consideration. Under the parallel trends assumption, β provides the causal estimate of the impact of lawyers' visits.

Identification. To probe the parallel trends assumption, we begin with a conventional pre-trend test. Recognizing the potential limitations of this approach, we further employ alternative

[10] The selection of controls is guided by data availability, which, in turn, depends on the specific outcome being analyzed. For polling data related to Musharraf's and the army's approval, the time-varying controls include support for the police and courts. In the case of voting data, we control for the share of rejected votes, total polled votes, and total registered voters.

[11] In addition to clustering standard errors at the district level, we account for potential concerns about inference with a limited number of clusters. While our cluster count is more than double the recommended rule-of-thumb of 42 clusters for reliable inference under asymptotic theory (Angrist & Pischke, 2008), we further validate our estimates using a bootstrap procedure (Cameron, Gelbach, & Miller, 2008) that remains robust even in settings with fewer clusters. Since visits are geographically concentrated—neighboring regions are more similar than distant ones—we additionally apply the Conley (2010) correction for spatially correlated errors to also find our results to be robust.

estimators that relax the strict parallel trends requirement. First, we assess pre-trends by estimating a dynamic version of Equation 1 in a standard 2×2 difference-in-differences setup. Specifically, we estimate the following equation:

$$Y_{it} = \sum_{k=1}^{T} \beta_k \text{Lawyers' Visits}_i \times \text{D}_k + \gamma_i + \theta_{ts} + \mathbf{X}_{it}\mu + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{2}$$

where Y represents the respective outcome, for example, General Musharraf's approval rating and D is a set of time fixed effects that take the value of one for each period before and after the Lawyers' Movement. The period immediately preceding the Lawyers' Movement serves as the reference period. All other notation follows the same structure as in Equation 1.[12]

Our analysis will indicate that lawyer-visited districts do not exhibit diverging trends prior to the movement, supporting the validity of our identification strategy. However, since post-treatment violations of parallel trends would still remain a concern, we also employ the synthetic difference-in-differences (SDID) method developed by Arkhangelsky et al. (2021). This approach weakens reliance on strict parallel trends assumptions by optimally reweighting and matching pre-lawyers' visit trends between treated and control districts. Specifically, SDID combines elements of difference-in-differences (DID) and synthetic control (SC), allowing for greater flexibility in trend alignment. Unlike standard DID, SDID does not require strict parallel trends, and unlike SC, it does not impose the convex hull restriction on control units (which limits the potential to construct counterfactuals from untreated units), making it particularly suited for empirical settings, where traditional synthetic control may struggle due to a lack of comparable untreated units, and standard DID may fail due to non-parallel pre-trends.

Finally, while SDID weakens the reliance on strict parallel trends (Arkhangelsky et al., 2021), it does not estimate or adjust for potential violations in trend slopes post-treatment. To address this limitation, we adopt the recent approach developed by Rambachan and Roth (2023), which explicitly estimates the slope of pre-trends and adjusts event study estimates by rotating them based on the magnitude of potential deviations. This method further assesses robustness by allowing for controlled departures from parallel trends and evaluating whether the results remain stable.[13]

[12] With many of the lawyers' visits taking place in the initial months following Chief Justice Chaudhry's dismissal in 2007, we use a 2x2 difference-in-differences versus TWFE approach for estimation. Given that the dependent variable data is available in five-year intervals for election data, and annually for court data, quarterly for survey data, a staggered design is unfeasible as it would require higher-frequency outcome data at least at a monthly level. It is worth noting that while the staggered design could have provided the advantage of incorporating more variation in our treatment variable, it has been shown to produce negative weighting bias—an issue not fundamental in the current 2x2 difference-in-differences design. For this reason, we can not present results using standard heterogeneous treatment effect estimators designed to mitigate negative weighting (Borusyak, Jaravel, & Spiess, 2024; Goodman-Bacon, 2021).

[13] Specifically, this method bounds the possible deviation from the parallel trends using:

$$\Delta^{SD} = \{\theta : (\theta_{k+1} - \theta_k) - (\theta_k - \theta_{k-1}) \leq M\} \tag{3}$$

The constant M bounds the maximal linear extrapolation error, where $M = 0$ enforces exact linearity. We compare baseline estimates across varying M levels and report the threshold beyond which results lose significance. In all specifications, this

Our results are essentially similar when we employ any of these state-of-the-art refinements in difference-in-differences estimations.[14]

5. MAIN RESULTS

5.1. Impact on Political Preferences

Musharraf Approval and Voting. Results from standard and synthetic difference-in-differences estimation of Equation 1 on General Musharraf's approval and vote shares for the party aligned with the Lawyers' Movement are reported in Table I. Columns 1 and 2 of Panel A and B indicate that a lawyers' visit is associated with a 10-percentage-point decline in Musharraf's approval rating, an effect amounting to a 20 percent drop relative to the pre-movement mean.

In addition to shifts in public approval for General Musharraf, the lawyers' visits had electoral consequences. Figure B3 in Appendix B documents raw vote shares for the pro-lawyers' votes before and after the movement. Unsurprisingly, we find that lawyers' visits were concentrated in districts where the pro-lawyers' party, PML-N, already enjoyed stronger electoral support prior to the movement. This pattern suggests a strategic mobilization effort, as visited districts had a 2.66 percentage-point higher PML-N vote share than unvisited districts in the 2002 elections. This gap widened significantly post-movement, reaching 5.33 percentage points in the February 2008 election, translating to a raw difference-in-differences estimate of 2.67 percentage points. The difference-in-differences point estimate is even larger when estimating Equation 1 that also includes district and election year fixed effects and controls for time-varying factors such as total votes polled, registered voters, and share of rejected votes. Both standard and synthetic difference-in-differences estimates in Table I (Columns 3 and 4) indicate that lawyers' visits increased pro-lawyers' votes by approximately 3.5 percentage points. This corresponds to at least a 15% increase relative to the mean pre-2008 vote shares.[15]

Identification Checks. For causal interpretation of these results, parallel trends must hold. First, we estimate a standard event-study specification, allowing us to examine pre-trends and the dynamic evolution of treatment effects. Figure III reports the estimation of Equation 2, where Panel

threshold is qualitatively large, far exceeding the trend slope.

[14] As an additional robustness check, we further implement a matched dynamic difference-in-differences design that is used in recent work, e.g., (Fenizia & Saggio, 2024; Jäger & Heining, 2022). Using our baseline control variables, we construct a non-treated counterfactual for treated districts, ensuring that treatment and control groups are well-matched on key covariates. We then estimate the difference-in-differences model on this matched sample. The results still remain similar, further reinforcing the robustness of our findings.

[15] According to a simple back-of-the-envelope calculation, had the lawyers not made these visits, the opposition PML-N could have seen a loss of 23 electoral districts, equating to about 14% decrease in their legislative representation. To perform this back-of-the-envelope calculation, we used the difference-in-differences coefficient with all controls for the PML-N (Pro-Lawyers Movement Party) from Table I, Panel A, Column (4). To account for redistribution, we subtracted the coefficient for the PML-N from their actual vote shares. Using the resulting numbers, we then calculated the number of constituencies where PML-N-affiliated candidates lost their winning positions, arriving at a figure of 23 electoral districts, or 14% of seats lost absent the lawyers' visits (184 - 161 = 23).

A presents the dynamic effects on General Musharraf's approval, and Panel B illustrates the time path of pro-lawyers votes. Both panels suggest flat pre-trends. Prior to the onset of the Lawyers' Movement, districts visited by the lawyers were not on different trajectories in either Musharraf's approval or pro-lawyers votes compared to those that were not visited. Second, we estimate Equation 2 using the synthetic difference-in-differences (SDID), which relaxes strict parallel trends by optimally reweighting and matching pre-trends across visited and unvisited districts Arkhangelsky et al. (2021). These results are reported in Figure IV. In addition to the event study, we also report the Difference-in-Differences estimates in levels in Figure B4. Solid lines represent visited districts, while dotted lines denote the synthetic control districts—those most similar to visited districts pre-treatment. Panel A of Figure B4 presents results for Musharraf's approval and pro-lawyers votes. The sharp trend breaks post-movement reflect our estimated treatment effects. Finally, while SDID weakens reliance on strict parallel trends, it does not directly estimate or attempt to correct post-treatment deviations in parallel trends. To speak to this, we apply the recent Rambachan and Roth (2023) method, which estimates trend slopes and adjusts event study estimates by rotating them based on potential violations, pre and post-treatment. Figure V presents these results: Panel A estimates the assumed parallel trend on the baseline event study, Panel B adjusts for linear deviations (monotonic deviations), and Panel C incorporates bounded non-linear deviations to assess robustness. When we rotate trends to account for linear or bounded non-linear deviations, the estimated effects of lawyers' visits continue to show a sharp decline in General Musharraf's approval and a significant increase in pro-lawyers votes. Only assuming the most extreme non-linearity perturbs the results. Next, we extend our analysis beyond Musharraf's approval and voting behavior to examine citizen attitudes toward the two institutions central to the Lawyers' Movement: the judiciary and the military.

5.2. Impact on Institutional Trust

Judiciary and Army. We assess how lawyers' visits shaped confidence in democratic and non-democratic institutions by estimating Equation 1 on public support for the judiciary and military, respectively. Table II, Panels A and B, present results using both standard and synthetic difference-in-differences. Panel A (Columns 1 and 2) reports standard difference-in-differences estimates, showing that lawyers' visits increased public confidence in the judiciary. Panel B (Columns 1 and 2) reports corresponding results using synthetic difference-in-differences. Both approaches indicate an approximate 3 percentage point increase in judicial trust—a roughly 7% rise relative to the sample mean. This finding suggests that the Lawyers' Movement, by emphasizing the function of the judiciary in safeguarding citizen rights, likely contributed to enhancing public confidence in

the judiciary.

We next examine the impact of lawyers' visits on public confidence in the military—an institution that has governed Pakistan for nearly half of its history. During our sample period, military approval averaged just over 70%. Did the lawyers' visits erode this strong support? Table II (Columns 3 and 4) reports these findings: across both standard and synthetic difference-in-differences estimates, lawyers' visits are associated with a statistically significant 6-percentage-point decline in military confidence, roughly a 10% drop relative to the sample mean. This decline aligns with the movement's explicit critique of military. Conversely, the estimates in Table B2 indicate that lawyers' visits had no measurable impact on public trust in the police. This result is consistent with the view of military abuse of power, which concentrates on military toppling democratically elected governments via coups, rather than on the actions of the police. Overall, the findings suggest a clear pattern: lawyers' visits eroded support for General Musharraf and the military while strengthening trust in the judiciary.

Identification Checks. The parallel trends assumption is a key consideration for interpreting the effect of lawyers' visits. While synthetic difference-in-differences partially relaxes this assumption, we also examine a standard event study and apply the Rambachan and Roth (2023) method, which accounts for deviations in trend slopes, including potential non-linear violations. Figure B5 in Appendix B presents these results. Panel A shows flat pre-trends under the standard event-study design, thereby supporting our identification assumption. Moreover, the sharp decline in military support alongside the rise in judicial trust following the onset of the Lawyers' Movement is consistent with the phenomenon of preference falsification. In environments where expressing dissent is costly, individuals may misrepresent their true preferences in public while holding different private beliefs, suggesting that the observed shifts may partly reflect strategic behavior (Kuran, 1991).[16] Panel B shows that adjusting for linear deviations does not alter the estimated effects—lawyers' visits continue to drive a significant rise in support for the judiciary and a sharp decline in military confidence. Likewise, Panel C incorporates bounded non-linear deviations to assess robustness; the core findings remain substantively unchanged.

Placebo Visits. Finally, we conducted a placebo test by replacing lawyers' visits with those by Imran Khan, a prominent political figure who later ascended to the office of Pakistan's Prime Minister. During the period from 2011 to 2013, Khan traveled to various districts to mobilize political support for his party. Notably, by this time the Lawyers' Movement had effectively ended—Chief Justice Chaudhry had been reinstated in 2009, General Musharraf had resigned and gone into exile, and the movement had receded from political discourse. Under the assumption that our identifi-

[16] The outpouring of dissent right after the Lawyers' Movement, by creating a focal point for dissent and visibly challenging the military's role in politics, may have lowered the perceived costs of expressing opposition in the short-run.

cation strategy is valid, Khan's later visits should exhibit no correlation with "pre-treatment" (pre-Imran Visits) levels of General Musharraf's approval or with pro-lawyers votes in the 2008 elections (Card, 2022). Figure B6 in Appendix B presents these findings. Reassuringly, Khan's post-2011 visits exhibit no statistically significant association with pre-treatment measures of Musharraf's approval, pro-lawyers votes in 2008, or with support for the army or judiciary, thereby reinforcing the credibility of our identification strategy.

6. MECHANISMS AND LONG-RUN IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Causal Mediation

Bar Associations. To explore potential channels, we systematically examine mechanisms through which lawyers' visits may have influenced political preferences. To structure our analysis, we employ causal mediation framework suggested by Heckman and Pinto (2024). Unlike simple interaction terms, which test whether the treatment effect statistically differs across subgroups, causal mediation formally distinguishes whether the treatment's impact operates through a given mediator. This method allows us to examine if there is a non-zero effect attributable to the mediator (Natural Indirect Effect) from the portion that directly results from the treatment (Natural Direct Effect). If the Natural Indirect Effect (NIE) is statistically significant, it provides evidence that the mediator is a causal pathway rather than a correlated proxy.[17]

While data limitations prevent a complete assessment of potential mechanisms, we draw upon qualitative accounts suggesting potential explanations for the success of the Movement. In his memoir, Advocate Munir A. Malik, a leading figure in the Movement, argues that a network of local bar associations was crucial in mobilizing support for the Movement (Malik, 2008). The qualitative scholarship further contends that local bar associations served as "social capital for lawyers,' providing a forum for discussion and facilitating local organizational efforts (Khan, 2019). Beyond bar associations, other civil society networks—such as journalists' press clubs—may have also played a role. Both networks trace their origins to British colonial rule, which established constitutional courts that facilitated the development of professional legal and journalistic networks in the early 20th century (Schmitthener, 1968). Panel A and Panel B of Figure B7 in Appendix B visualize the geographic distribution of these historical networks. We statistically examine if these two historical networks that emerged around the same time—one actively participating in the Lawyers' Movement (bar associations) and the other relatively inactive (press clubs)—statistically mediate

[17] A key advantage of the NIE estimate under this framework is that it is less prone to bias. This is because Heckman and Pinto (2024)'s mediation framework, identification relies on estimating the counterfactual distribution of the mediator under treatment and control. This makes it more likely that the NIE captures the causal role of the mediator rather than spurious correlations induced by unobserved heterogeneity. If omitted variables were likely driving the relationship, we would expect NIE estimates to fluctuate unpredictably and, hence, not be statistically significant.

the effect of lawyers' visits. The effect attributable to the mediator (NIE) for bar associations is statistically significant, with a p-value < 0.01, indicating that bar associations strongly mediate the impact of lawyers' visits on pro-lawyers' votes (Column 1 of Table III). This is consistent with bar associations serving as coordination hubs that link local and regional lawyer leadership, issue press releases to communicate policy, and enhance the movement's local organizational capacity (Malik, 2008). In contrast, press clubs show no statistically significant effect (Columns 2 of Table III), suggesting that the network that was most active during the lawyers' movement is what mattered in mediating its influence.

Alternative Mechanisms. To further explore the mechanisms underlying the effect of lawyers' visits, we assess the mediating role of three additional channels: private media, historical electoral fraud, and Pakistan's religious school network, which may also contribute to explaining the observed impact. One possible channel is the liberalization of private media in the early 2000s, which reduced state control over information dissemination. This shift—from a single state-owned radio station to nearly 100 private outlets by 2006—suggests a potential role for new private media in amplifying the effects of lawyers' visits.(Blumenstock Joshua, 2022) Radio, in particular, emerged as a critical source of news, especially in rural areas where television access remained limited, with over half of rural households in Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa relying on it for information (Gallup, 2014). Another possible mechanism is historical electoral fraud, which could have influenced voting outcomes if fraud was systematically higher or lower in visited districts. Finally, we consider the role of Pakistan's madrassa (religious school) network, which has historically contributed to political mobilization (Fair, 2008). If these networks wielded political influence in the districts visited by the lawyers, they could have also mediated electoral outcomes or shifts in political attitudes, either independently or in conjunction with the bar associations. Columns 3–5 of Table III report the results for all three alternative mechanisms. The NIE estimates for all three mechanisms are qualitatively small and statistically insignificant, indicating that media expansion in the early 2000s, historical electoral fraud, and historical religious school networks do not appear to mediate the observed effects.[18] Instead, only lawyers' bar associations—actively engaged during the movement—appear to have played a role.

Lawyers' Leaders vs Chief Justice. Our treatment variable is the lawyers' visits, which were carried out in large, highly visible convoys of lawyers and other civil society members. We avoid calling them 'Chief Justice Visits' because these convoys sometimes proceeded without Chief Justice Chaudhry, the movement's figurehead. To test our findings are not driven solely by the Chief Justice's presence, we distinguish between visits including him and those organized by other promi-

[18]Several factors may explain why these mechanisms were not central. For instance, the PML-N, the primary political ally of the Lawyers' Movement, lacked the support of madrassas, which were primarily controlled by the Islamist MMA, a coalition partner of General Musharraf.

nent lawyer-leaders. We investigate whether the presence of Chief Justice Chaudhry was necessary for lawyers' visits to have an impact by examining visits led by other Movement leaders, Ali Ahmad Kurd and Aitzaz Ahsan, in his absence. The findings, reported in Appendix Table B3, indicate comparable shifts in Musharraf's approval, pro-lawyers voting, trust in the army, and judiciary. These results suggest that the effects of lawyers' visits were not confined to the Chief Justice's leadership alone but may have stemmed from broader organizational and mobilization efforts.[19]

6.2. Alternative Outcomes.

Impact on Other Parties. We next assess whether lawyers' visits influenced electoral outcomes beyond the pro-Lawyers' Movement party. While General Musharraf did not directly contest the parliamentary elections, his administration depended on the electoral support of aligned parties, for example, the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) and the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). Columns 1 and 2 of Table B4 report the effects of lawyers' visits on vote shares for these two parties. The findings suggest that while lawyers' visits had no statistically distinguishable effect on the center-right PML-Q, they led to a 5 percent decline in vote share for Islamist MMA, indicating that at least some of Musharraf's allies faced electoral setbacks due to the lawyers' visits. Other parties, including the opposition Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)—which, unlike PML-N, did not align with the movement and instead attempted to pursue a backdoor power-sharing agreement with Musharraf—and other smaller parties (Table B4, Panel B) appear to be unaffected by the lawyers' visits.[20]

Impact on Turnout. Did lawyers' visits mobilize new voters, or did they primarily reallocate votes away from pro-Musharraf supporters? The observed increase in pro-lawyers vote share, coupled with the decline in support for the MMA—a key Musharraf ally—in visited districts, suggests that vote redistribution played a role in shaping the electoral impact. We next examine whether lawyers' visits influenced overall voter turnout, assessing whether the movement mobilized new voters. Figure B8 illustrates the effect of lawyers' visits on turnout over time. Across both standard and synthetic difference-in-differences event studies, we find little evidence that voter turnout increased following lawyers' visits. This suggests that the visits may have operated through persuasion or preference realignment rather than large-scale voter mobilization, shaping vote choices rather than substantially expanding electoral participation.

[19]This aligns with anecdotal accounts suggesting that Chief Justice Chaudhary was not particularly charismatic, often described as having a "reserved" persona, even as "tame" and "boring" (Baker, 2007). He spoke infrequently and primarily on technical constitutional matters.

[20]Benazir Bhutto, the heir to the Bhutto dynasty and chairperson of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), publicly acknowledged the prospect of supporting General Musharraf, stating: "If the elections are fair, and we have a level playing field, and he seeks re-election from the next assembly, then certainly the Parliament can consider that." (N. Y. Times, 2007).

6.3. Lawyers Movement in the Long-Run

Post-Movement Votes. We showed that lawyers' visits increased support for the party that visibly and vocally aligned with the movement while reducing votes for a key ally of Musharraf. While these findings indicate that lawyers' visits influenced the 2008 elections, an important question remains: Did their impact extend beyond the immediate electoral cycle? By 2013, the Lawyers' Movement had achieved its core objectives—Musharraf had resigned, the Chief Justice was reinstated, and institutional reforms like the 18th and 19th constitutional amendments strengthened judicial independence. If the movement's influence extended beyond the 2008 elections, PML-N may have maintained some electoral advantage in later contests, particularly given its association with the movement and the reinstatement of the Chief Justice. If this alignment bolstered the party's perceived commitment to judicial independence and opposition to executive overreach, it could have contributed to sustained electoral gains. Figure B9 in Appendix B suggests that lawyers' visits were indeed associated with stronger support for PML-N in the 2013 elections, suggesting that the political consequences of the movement extended beyond a single electoral cycle. These findings are consistent with the idea that the movement may have contributed to longer-term shifts in voter alignment and institutional trust.

Formal Courts. The Lawyers' Movement was not merely a challenge to General Musharraf's rule; it also became a broader platform for advocating judicial independence. Reforms such as changes in judicial selection procedures and constitutional amendments—notably the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan, which curtailed executive influence over judicial appointments—are often linked to the movement's legacy Malik and Tudor (2024). However, at the core of the movement was the reinstatement of Chief Justice Chaudhry. The lawyers' visits and public speeches also framed the movement as a defense of democratic institutions, particularly the judiciary. As shown in Columns 1 and 2 of Table II, trust in the judiciary increased in the short term following the lawyers' visits. Nevertheless, evaluating longer-term effects is more challenging due to data constraints. In the absence of panel data, we rely on cross-sectional correlations, which, while informative, can only provide suggestive evidence. Figure B10 presents these results, showing that trust in courts is higher in districts visited by lawyers compared to unvisited districts as of 2016.

While short-run panel survey data and long-run cross-sectional evidence offer some information, we now assess whether lawyers' visits are associated with actual court usage. To do so, we digitized statistical reports from the Justice Department of Pakistan (LJCP), constructing annual case filings and resolution rates in local courts from 2006 onward. Although pre-2006 data is unavailable, preventing a formal pre-trend analysis, this administrative dataset allows us to assess the

movement's long-term impact on court usage through 2022. The results are reported in Table IV. Our estimates indicate that districts visited by lawyers experienced an increase of approximately 10,000 new case filings annually, accompanied by a proportional rise in case resolutions. This magnitude appears to be substantial, representing a nearly 50% increase in new filings relative to the sample mean. This magnitude is similar to the findings by Acemoglu et al. (2020), who reported a similar rise in the use of formal courts in Pakistan following their experimental intervention.

Informal Courts. Beyond the formal judiciary, it is worth exploring whether the lawyers' visits had a substitution effect on informal dispute resolution forums, such as *Panchayats* and *Jirgas*. These traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, consisting of village elders and community leaders, likely substitute for formal courts. Although data on informal institutions is sparse, we leverage a nationwide survey with district-level information on informal court usage to explore differences in reported reliance on informal dispute resolution mechanisms between districts visited by the lawyers and those unvisited. Figure B11 in Appendix B reports the cross-district correlation, indicating that reliance on informal dispute resolution forums was lower in districts visited by lawyers compared to unvisited districts. This finding suggests that lawyers' visits may have contributed to a shift toward formal legal institutions, possibly by increasing public confidence in the judiciary. While this pattern is consistent with the possibility that lawyers' visits encouraged a shift toward formal legal institutions, potentially by increasing public confidence in the judiciary, alternative explanations cannot be completely ruled out.

7. ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

This section reports some additional sensitivity checks, which collectively reinforce the robustness of our results.

Adjusting for Election Fraud. In one of our main results, we leverage official election records from both pre- and post-Movement periods. This approach helps address concerns about the accuracy of vote counts, particularly given that both the 2002 and 2008 elections occurred under General Musharraf's autocratic rule. However, while using official records reduces the risk of systematic misreporting, it does not eliminate concerns about disproportionate electoral manipulation during this period. However, to empirically validate our findings concerning election outcomes, we draw upon fraud-adjusted vote tallies curated by the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), an extensive rights-based organization dedicated to the enhancement of democratic transparency and the detection of electoral fraud in Pakistan. (FAFEN, 2008)'s comprehensive electoral monitoring initiative ranks among the largest observation missions globally, encompassing the deployment of 20,000 independent observers. These observers systematically gathered data from a diverse sample

of 1,000 voters per district across Pakistan. The results based on the fraud-adjusted data, shown in Table B5 of Appendix B, closely align with the official election outcomes in both standard and synthetic difference-in-differences estimations, supporting the robustness of our findings.

Network Centrality. It is plausible that lawyers' visits (road trips) were systematically concentrated in areas with better road networks, as pre-existing infrastructure may have facilitated access to certain districts. While district fixed effects absorb some of this variation, we further address this concern by incorporating pre-treatment network centrality measures, following the approach outlined in recent work by Becker et al. (2023). To this end, we construct a novel dataset on Pakistan's road infrastructure to compute the centrality measure. Table B6 introduces road connectivity and its interaction with the post-movement dummy into our baseline specification. The estimated impact of lawyers' visits remains robust to the inclusion of road density or centrality measure control interactions with the post-movement dummy, suggesting that our results are not driven by differential access to districts with superior road infrastructure. If anything, the estimates suggest that expanding the road network would likely amplify our estimated effects. Improved infrastructure would enable lawyers to campaign more extensively, reaching deeper into Pakistan, including provinces such as Balochistan, where few roads currently exist.

Standard Errors. In addition to clustering standard errors at the district level, we address concerns regarding inference with a limited number of clusters. While the number of clusters in our analysis exceeds (and is more than double) the recommended rule-of-thumb threshold of 42 for inference under asymptotic theory (Angrist & Pischke, 2008), we further validate our estimates using a bootstrap procedure (Cameron et al., 2008), which does not hinge on asymptotic theory for statistical inference. The results from Wild Bootstrapping, implemented using the package developed by Roodman et al. (2019), are reported in Figure B12 of Appendix B. Additionally, recognizing the geographic concentration of lawyers' visits—where neighboring regions may exhibit greater similarity than distant ones—we apply the spatial error correction outlined in Conley (2010) to account for spatially correlated errors. Since Conley standard error adjustments have been criticized for potentially over-rejecting null hypotheses, we follow the suggested approach of testing results under different distance cutoffs (Bertrand, Duflo, & Mullainathan, 2004). The results, presented in Table B7 of Appendix B, remain consistent across multiple cutoff points, reinforcing the robustness of our findings.

Other Sensitivity Checks. Our findings hold under a range of additional robustness tests, maintaining both qualitative and statistical significance. First, we employ a control function approach following Aneja and Xu (2023), which addresses potential confounding by sequentially introducing interactions between pre-treatment outcomes, time-invariant baseline district charac-

teristics, and time dummies into the baseline specification in Equation 1. These variables provide additional flexibility in capturing differential trends across districts. Table B8 in Appendix B presents the results, where we progressively introduce these time-interacted controls. Notably, the coefficient on Lawyers' Visits × Post-Movement remains stable and statistically significant across specifications, underscoring the robustness of the estimated treatment effects. Second, we implement multiple hypothesis testing corrections to mitigate the risk of detecting false positives, recognizing that inference across multiple outcomes increases the likelihood of detecting statistically significant effects by chance. The results in Table B9 suggest that the likelihood of detecting a significant coefficient by chance due to multiple hypothesis testing remains low. Third, we conduct randomization inference tests that scramble the lawyers' visited districts and reassign treatment at random. The distribution of placebo estimates, shown in Figure B13 in Appendix B, falls around zero, with the actual treatment effect lying in the far tail, reinforcing that our findings are unlikely to be driven by chance alone. This approach strengthens inference by ensuring that the estimated effects are not artifacts of spurious correlations that coincidentally align with the treatment assignment. Fourth, we assess the sensitivity of our main results by re-estimating the coefficient of interest while sequentially excluding one region at a time from the sample. Figure B14 illustrates that the estimated effects remain largely unchanged, confirming that our findings are not driven by any specific region and reinforcing the robustness of the results. Fifth, we implement a matched dynamic difference-in-differences approach to further assess the robustness of our results, complementing the standard, synthetic, and Rambachan-Roth difference-in-differences approaches we applied earlier. This method, applied in recent work (e.g. Fenizia and Saggio (2024); Jäger and Heining (2022)), constructs a matched non-treated counterfactual for treated districts using baseline control variables from our prior analysis. Table B10 in Appendix B reports these results, which closely align with our baseline findings. Finally, we evaluate whether our results are driven by the overall political mobilization of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, who was also campaigning nationwide for her party. Since Benazir Bhutto's visits coincided with a period of political uncertainty for General Musharraf, it is possible that her rallies, rather than the lawyers' visits, drove the observed attitudinal and electoral shifts. However, as shown in Table B11, controlling for Bhutto's Visits × Post-Movement does not alter our main results. Additionally, accounting for the geographic distribution of her visits leaves our findings unchanged. Collectively, these sensitivity analyses underscore the robustness of our findings.

8. CONCLUSION

Civil society movements have been central to political transitions and institutional change. Examples include the Solidarity Movement in Poland during the 1980s, the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia (1989), the fall of Suharto in Indonesia (1998), and Tunisia's 2011 Jasmine Revolution, which sparked the Arab Spring. More recently, pro-democracy movements in Venezuela and Hong Kong have renewed interest in the role of civic organizations, professional associations, and student groups in influencing political change (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2019). Yet, while some movements appear to catalyze democratic transitions, others fail to disrupt entrenched autocracies. Egypt's 2011 uprising was followed by a reassertion of military rule, and Venezuela's 2017 movement failed to weaken Nicolás Maduro's grip on power. This discrepancy raises two central questions. First, do civil society movements actively destabilize autocratic regimes, or does their emergence simply reflect deeper political and economic shifts already underway? Second, beyond its direct political effects, can civil society mobilization influence trust in state institutions?

This paper provides empirical evidence from Pakistan's Lawyers' Movement, a distinctive case that enables the analysis of a civil society movement using district-level panel data. Unlike many civil society movements that center solely on regime change or a narrowly defined objective, the Lawyers' Movement pursued a broader agenda of democratic reforms, making it a valuable setting for studying the political and institutional impact of civic activism. While we do not dismiss the complementary importance of preexisting political and economic fault lines, we emphasize the independent impact of civil society in reshaping the political and institutional landscape. Led by lawyers, the movement was not solely about removing an autocrat but the reversal of actions perceived as undermining judicial independence and democratic norms. The movement sought to reinstate the detained chief justice, push for elections, secure President Musharraf's resignation as military chief, and strengthen judicial independence through judicial reforms.[21] This institutional focus provides a setting to examine how civil society activism influences not only political transitions but also broader institutional trust, particularly in the judiciary and the security establishment.

Using quasi-experimental variation in exposure to the movement, we identify its impact on political preferences and institutional trust. First, the approval of General Musharraf declined, reflecting a sharp fall in perceived support for the military ruler. Second, pro-lawyers' movement votes increased, suggesting that shifts in political attitudes were transmitted into electoral outcomes. Third, trust in the judiciary strengthened, whereas fourth, confidence in the military

[21] For instance, the movement is linked to paving the way for deeper institutional reforms, such as reducing the executive influence over judicial appointments as studied in (Mehmood, 2022).

weakened, suggesting changing perceptions of institutional legitimacy. Although longer-run effects remain challenging to isolate, we find suggestive evidence that reliance on informal dispute resolution mechanisms, such as *Jirgas* and *Panchayats*, declined, while engagement with the formal judiciary increased. These results underscore the broader effects of civil society activism, suggesting that movements advocating for democratic reforms may not only shift political attitudes but also influence trust and interaction with state institutions.

Situating the Lawyers' Movement within the broader context of civil society mobilization, this paper can inform the debate on whether such movements can exert an independent causal effect on political transitions and enhance trust in democratic institutions. These results highlight the broader role of civic activism in institutional development and raise future questions about the long-term sustainability of such movements in consolidating democratic gains.

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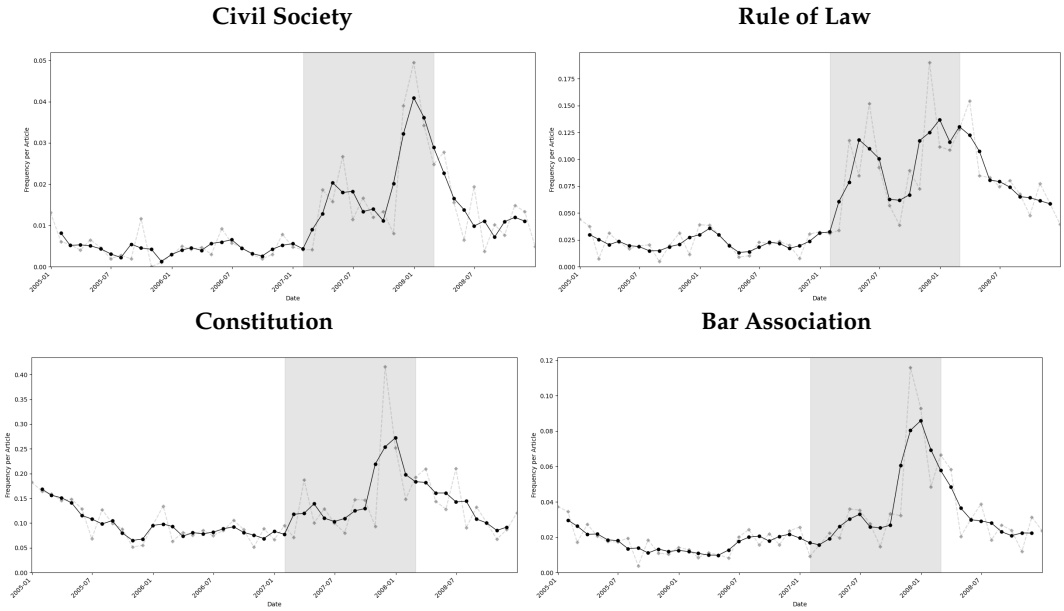
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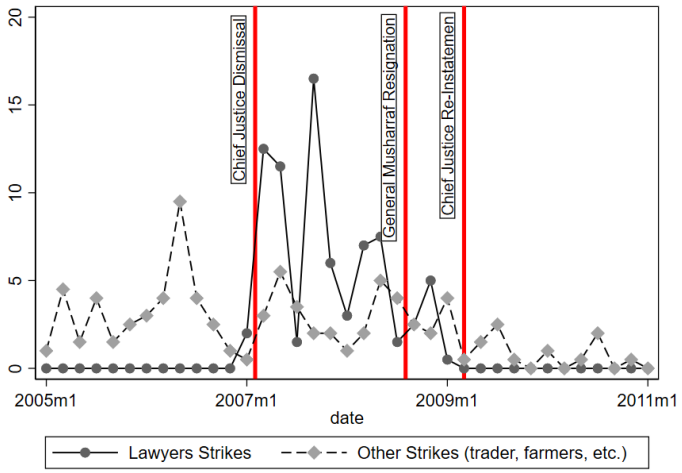
FIGURES AND TABLES

FIGURE I: **Trends in Discourse and Civil Society Strikes around the Lawyers' Movement**

Panel A: Newspaper Corpus Text Analysis



Panel B: Lawyers Strikes and Other strikes



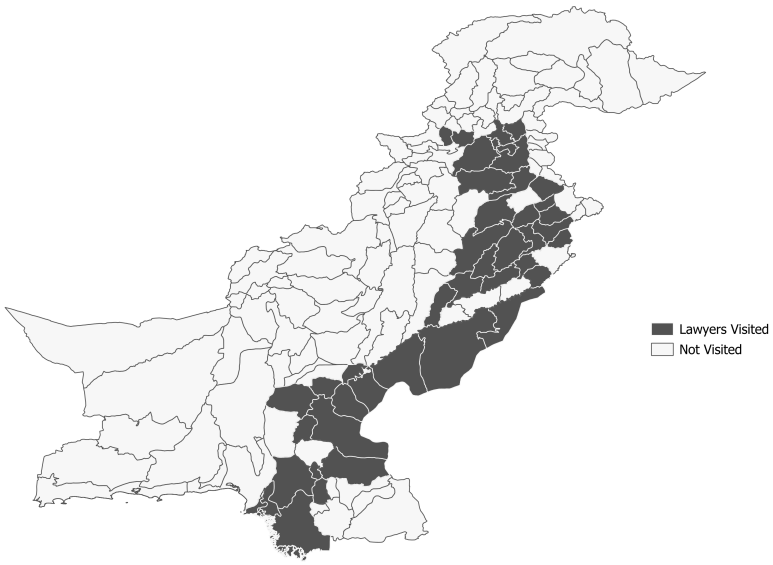
Note: The figure illustrates changes in the discourse surrounding the Lawyers' Movement (Panel A) alongside trends in strike activity over time in Pakistan (Panel B). Within Panel A, each subfigure charts the frequency of references to "Civil Society," "Rule of Law," "Constitution," and "Bar Association" in Dawn, Pakistan's most prominent newspaper. The solid black line represents the three-month moving average of mentions per article, while the dashed gray line corresponds to the raw number of mentions per article. The gray background highlights the period of the Lawyers' Movement, from the dismissal of the Chief Justice to General Musharraf's resignation. Panel B displays the frequency of Lawyers' Court Boycotts across major cities, segmented into periods before, during, and after the Lawyers' Movement, alongside strikes by different civil society groups such as lawyers, traders' and farmers' unions. The solid line represents strikes organized by various district bar associations of lawyers, while the dotted line denotes strikes by farmers' and traders' unions. The first vertical line marks the start of the Lawyers' Movement, initiated by General Musharraf's dismissal of the Chief Justice in March 2007. The second vertical line indicates General Musharraf's resignation in August 2008, while the third vertical line marks the reinstatement of Chief Justice Chaudhry to the Supreme Court in March 2009.

FIGURE II: **Lawyers' Visits Across Pakistan**

Panel A: Lawyers' Caravan



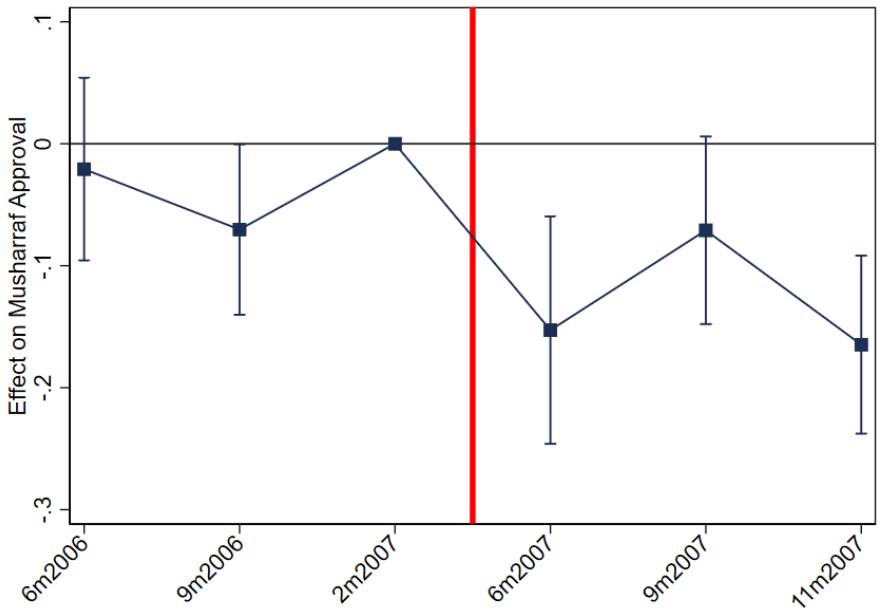
Panel B: Map of Lawyers' Visits



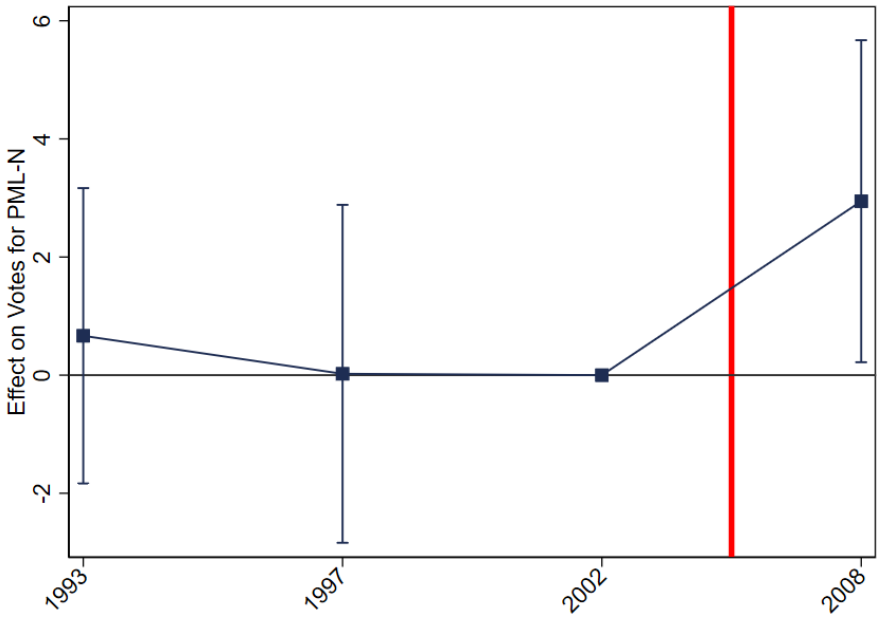
Note: The figure provides a visual representation of a lawyers' caravan and the locations visited, shown in Panels A and B, respectively. Panel B presents a map depicting lawyers' visits across Pakistan between March 2007 and January 2008, covering all locations visited before the February 2008 elections. Shaded districts indicate visited areas, while unshaded districts represent unvisited ones.

FIGURE III: **Lawyers' Visits and Political Preferences**

Panel A: Impact on Musharraf Approval



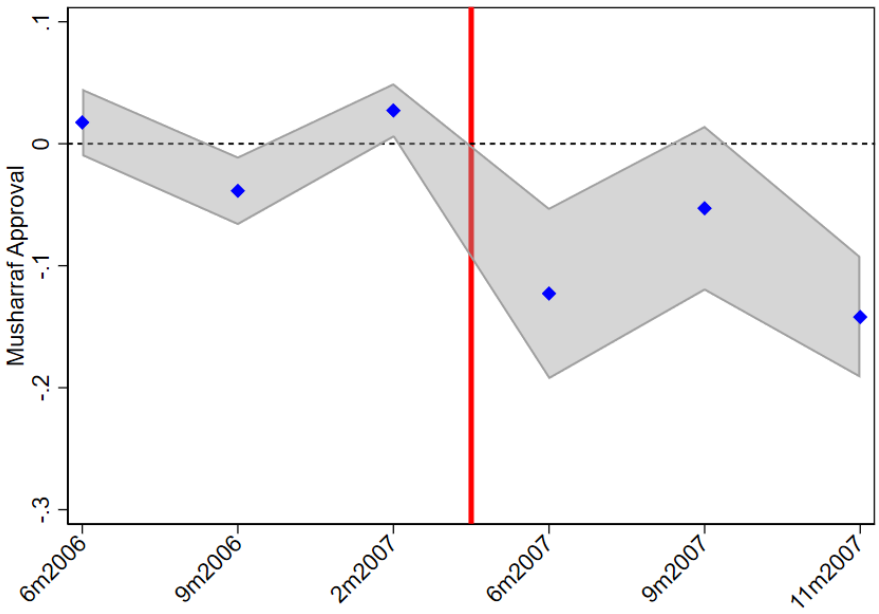
Panel B: Impact on Pro-Movement Votes



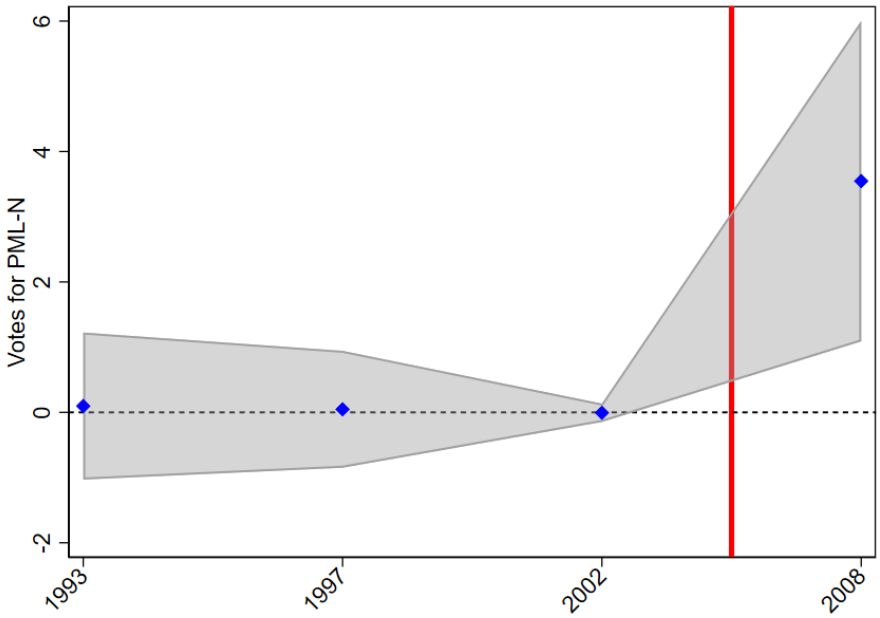
Note: This figure presents a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) event study assessing the impact of lawyers' visits on political preferences. Panel A tracks shifts in public approval for General Musharraf, using district-by-quarter as the unit of observation. Panel B examines the electoral effects of lawyers' visits on pro-Lawyers' Movement votes (PML-N), measured at the district-election-year level. The red vertical line marks the movement's onset. Estimates control for district and province-by-period fixed effects, with standard errors clustered at the district level. The voting data spans three pre-movement elections (1993, 1997, 2002), using the last pre-movement election as the baseline.

FIGURE IV: **Lawyers' Visits and Political Preferences**

Panel A: Impact on Musharraf Approval



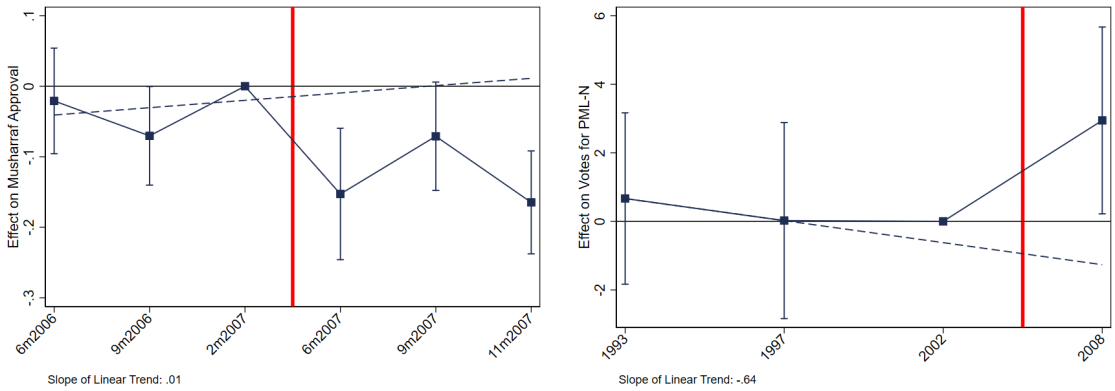
Panel B: Impact on Pro-Movement Votes



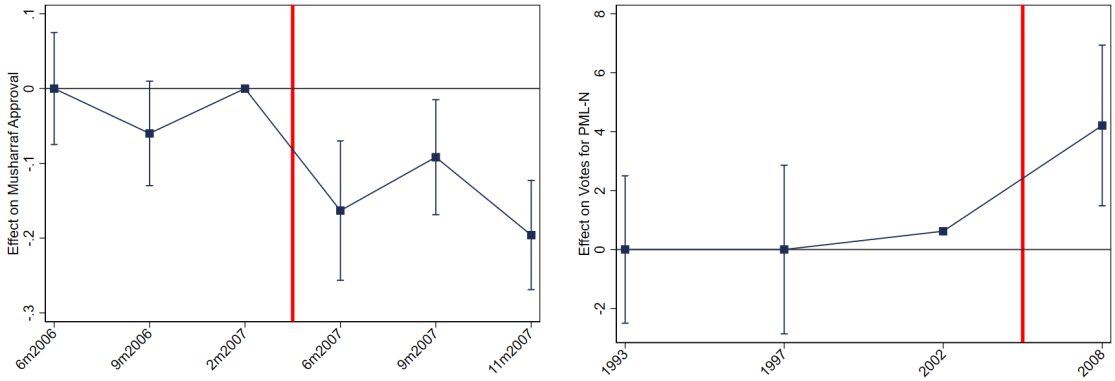
Note: The figure displays an event study examining how visits by lawyers affected two outcomes: public support for General Musharraf (Panel A) and votes for the Lawyers' Movement cause (Panel B). The red vertical line marks the start of the Lawyers' Movement, and the estimates are shown with 95% confidence intervals. The analysis reports synthetic difference-in-differences (SDID) event study estimates, which are calculated using the cluster bootstrap method described in Section 4.4 of Clarke et al. (2023) and following Algorithm 4 from Arkhangelsky et al. (2021). The study uses all available IRI data on Musharraf's approval up to November 2007, and the final election data point is from the February 2008 elections. Data from three elections prior to the movement (1993, 1997, and 2002)—with the last pre-movement election serving as the baseline—and one post-movement election are included. Panel A's analysis is conducted at the district-quarter level, while Panel B's is at the district-election-year level.

FIGURE V: **Lawyers Visits and Political Preferences. Rambachan and Roth (2023)'s Credible Approach to Parallel Trends**

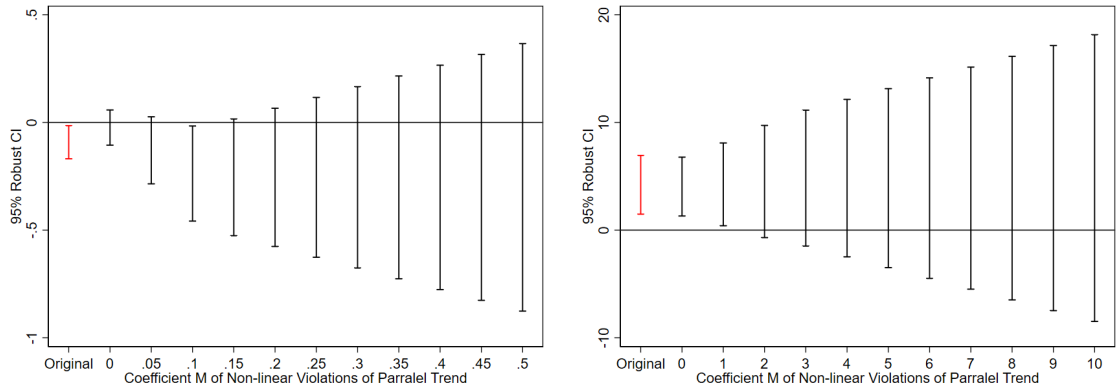
Panel A: Estimated Linear Trend



Panel B: Rotated Event Study



Panel C: Sensitivity to Potential Violations of Parallel Trends



Note: The figure examines potential deviations from the parallel trends assumption following the approach of Rambachan and Roth (2023). In Panel A, we superimpose a linear trend—estimated from pre-treatment data—onto the event-study coefficients and extrapolate it into the post-treatment period. Panel B then presents the event-study estimates adjusted for this extrapolated trend. Finally, Panel C explores the sensitivity of our findings to this linear extrapolation by implementing the 'honest approach to parallel trends" as outlined in Rambachan and Roth (2023). In this panel, we report the confidence sets for the average of all post-treatment coefficients under the constraint that the slope of the pre-treatment coefficients varies by no more than M across successive periods. 95% confidence intervals are reported.

TABLE I
IMPACT OF LAWYERS' VISITS ON GENERAL MUSHARRAF'S APPROVAL AND PRO-LAWYERS VOTES

	Musharraf Approval %		Pro-Lawyers' Movement Votes Share %	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A. All Visits. Difference-in-Differences				
Lawyers' Visits X Post-Movement	-10.941***	-10.901***	3.399*	3.636**
	(2.365)	(2.383)	(1.770)	(1.757)
Panel B. Synthetic Difference-in-Differences				
Lawyers' Incidental Visits X Post-Movement	-10.580***	-9.909***	3.399***	3.402***
	(2.635)	(2.903)	(0.695)	(0.790)
Time Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	43.573	43.573	21.468	21.468
Observations	666	666	1638	1638

Note: This table presents the effect of lawyers' visits on General Musharraf's approval rating and the pro-Lawyers' Movement vote share, respectively. The observation unit is district-by-quarter for polling data while voting data is structured as district-by-election-year. Columns (1)–(2) report results on the approval of General Pervez Musharraf, where the dependent variable is the response to the question: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Pervez Musharraf is handling his job?" Columns (3)–(4) examine the vote share of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), a key political ally of the Lawyers' Movement. Data sources include the International Republican Institute and the Election Commission of Pakistan, respectively. Robust standard errors are clustered at the district level in Panel A, while Panel B reports standard errors using the cluster bootstrap procedure outlined in Algorithm 2 of **?**. Standard errors are presented in parentheses. Column (2) controls for trust in the police and judiciary, while Column (4) further controls for the share of rejected votes, total polled votes, and total registered voters. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

TABLE II
IMPACT OF LAWYERS' VISITS ON TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

	Trust in Judiciary %		Trust in Army %	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A. Difference-in-Differences				
Lawyers' Visits X Post-Movement	2.954**	2.957**	-5.783***	-6.058***
	(1.320)	(1.323)	(1.136)	(1.252)
Panel B. Synthetic Difference-in-Differences				
Lawyers' Incidental Visits X Post-Movement	3.882***	3.872***	-5.760***	-5.907***
	(0.986)	(1.006)	(1.030)	(1.146)
Time Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	43.573	43.573	71.426	71.426
Observations	666	666	666	666

Note: This table presents the effect of lawyer's visits on trust in the judiciary and trust in the army. The unit of observation is district-by-quarter. Columns (1)–(2) report results on judicial trust, with the dependent variable defined as the response to "Are you satisfied with the transparency and accountability of the judicial process?" In Columns (3)–(4), the dependent variable measures confidence in the Army's ability to maintain national security without compromising human rights. Data are sourced from the International Republican Institute. In Panel A, robust standard errors are clustered at the district level; Panel B reports standard errors computed using the cluster bootstrap procedure described in Algorithm 2 of Arkhangelsky et al. (2021). District and quarter-by-year fixed effects are always included. Moreover, Column (2) controls for trust in the police and the army, and Column (4) adds controls for trust in the police and the judiciary. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

TABLE III
MECHANISMS: A CAUSAL MEDIATION APPROACH

	Bar Associations	Press Clubs	Madrassas	Private Media Exposure 2006	Electoral Fraud 2002
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Pro-Movement Votes Share				
NIE					
Lawyers' Visited	6.399***	-2.076	-0.693	0.035	-0.798
	(1.626)	(1.915)	(0.554)	(1.038)	(2.076)
NDE					
Lawyers' Visited	-2.763*	5.711**	4.328**	3.600*	4.433
	(1.554)	(2.359)	(1.867)	(1.976)	(3.271)
TE					
Lawyers' Visited	3.636**	3.636**	3.636**	3.636**	3.636**
	(1.746)	(1.746)	(1.746)	(1.746)	(1.746)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
% of Effect Mediated (p-val.)	0.011 **	0.368	0.269	0.973	0.679
Observations	1638	1638	1638	1638	1638

Note: This table reports estimates of both direct and indirect effects of lawyer's visits on pro-lawyers votes, measured as the total vote share for the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N). The Total Effect (TE) captures the overall impact on vote shares through all channels. The Natural Direct Effect (NDE) reflects the effect of lawyer's visits that is not mediated, while the Natural Indirect Effect (NIE)—the parameter of primary interest—quantifies the effect transmitted via the mediator. In columns (1)–(5), we control for total polled votes, the share of rejected votes, and total registered voters, mirroring our baseline specifications. Each column examines a separate pre-treatment mediator: bar associations, press clubs, madrassas, private media, and election fraud. Standard errors are clustered at the district level and are presented in parentheses. $^{*}\ p < 0.10$, $^{**}\ p < 0.05$, $^{***}\ p < 0.01$.

TABLE IV
LAWYERS' VISITS AND NEW CASE FILINGS AND NEW CASES CLOSED

	Cases in 100,000s			
	Case Filings		Cases Closed	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A. Difference-in-Differences				
Lawyers' Visits X Post-Movement	0.126***	0.129***	0.131***	0.134***
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.045)
Panel B. Synthetic Difference-in-Differences				
Lawyers' Visits X Post-Movement	0.126***	0.135***	0.131**	0.137***
	(0.047)	(0.044)	(0.051)	(0.047)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	.202	.202	.196	.196
Observations	2363	2363	2363	2363

Note: This table presents the estimated impact of lawyers' visits on new case filings and case closures in local district courts. The unit of observation is district-by-year, with the dependent variables measuring the number of new case filings (Columns 1–2) and case closures (Columns 3–4) in each district for each year. The analysis draws on judicial administrative records spanning 2006 to 2022. All specifications include district and year fixed effects. Columns (2) and (4) additionally control for the number of pending cases in the respective district courts. In Panel A, standard difference-in-differences estimates are reported with robust standard errors clustered at the district level. Panel B presents results from the synthetic difference-in-differences approach, implementing the cluster bootstrap method described in Algorithm 2 of Arkhangelsky et al. (2021). * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A1. Variable Definitions

Part A. IRI Survey Dataset

Musharraf Approval = The percentage of respondents who answered "yes" to the question, "Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Pervez Musharraf is handling his job?" This data is sourced from the International Republican Institute, based on a sample of 4,000 people across Pakistan, covering the period from June 2006 to January 2008. These surveys were conducted quarterly, and we aggregated the responses at the district level.

Trust in Army = The percentage of respondents who answered "yes" to the question "Do you trust the Army's ability to maintain national security without compromising human rights?". This data is sourced from the International Republican Institute, based on a sample of 4,000 people across Pakistan, covering the period from June 2006 to January 2008. These surveys were conducted quarterly, and we aggregated the responses at the district level. The March 2007 poll for IRI data was conducted before March 7, 2007, and is therefore considered pre-treatment.

Trust in Police = The percentage of respondents who answered "yes" to the question "Are you confident in the Police's ability to maintain national security without compromising human rights?". This data is sourced from the International Republican Institute, based on a sample of 4,000 people across Pakistan, covering the period from June 2006 to January 2008. These surveys were conducted quarterly, and we aggregated the responses at the district level. The March 2007 poll for IRI data was conducted before March 7, 2007, and is therefore considered pre-treatment.

Trust in Courts = The percentage of respondents who answered "yes" to the question "Are you satisfied with the transparency and accountability of the judicial process?". This data is sourced from the International Republican Institute, based on a sample of 4,000 people across Pakistan, covering the period from June 2006 to January 2008. These surveys were conducted quarterly, and we aggregated the responses at the district level. The March 2007 poll for IRI data was conducted before March 7, 2007, and is therefore considered pre-treatment.

Part B. Election Dataset

Pro-Lawyers Movement Votes = The pro-Lawyers' Movement vote share is measured as the proportion of total votes received by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in each election, based on official data from the Election Commission of Pakistan. The election data is sourced from publicly available records on the Election Commission of Pakistan's website (https://ecp.gov.pk/general-elections).

Share of Rejected Votes = The share of rejected votes is calculated as the percentage of total votes deemed invalid or rejected during the electoral process. The election data is sourced from publicly available records on the Election Commission of Pakistan's website (https://ecp.gov.pk/general-elections).

Total Polled Votes = The total number of votes cast in elections. The election data is sourced from publicly available records on the Election Commission of Pakistan's website (https://ecp.gov.pk/general-elections).

Registered Voters = The total number of individuals registered to vote. The election data is sourced from publicly available records on the Election Commission of Pakistan's website (https://ecp.gov.pk/general-elections).

Turnout = The percentage of registered voters who actually voted in the elections. This is a measure of participation in the electoral process. The election data is sourced from publicly available records on the Election Commission of Pakistan's website (https://ecp.gov.pk/general-elections).

Part C. Courts Panel Dataset

Pendency = Pendency refers to the number of unresolved legal cases in the courts, measured at the district level. The data is sourced from the Justice Department of Pakistan through the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP).

New Cases Filed = New Cases Filed refers to the number of judicial cases initiated within a given period, recorded at the district level. The data is sourced from the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP) under the Justice Department of Pakistan.

Cases Closed = "Cases Closed" refers to the number of judicial cases resolved within a given period, recorded at the district level. The data is sourced from the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP) under the Justice Department of Pakistan.

Part D. FAFEN Socioeconomic Survey 2016

Lower Court = The district-level courts, also called "lower courts" in Pakistan handle both criminal and civil cases, functioning as courts of first instance. The FAFEN socioeconomic survey includes a question measuring public trust in these lower courts on a scale from 1 to 5. Specifically, the FAFEN survey asks "How much do you trust the district Court?" Responses are coded as: 1 - "Not at all" and 5 - "Very much".

High Court = The High Courts in Pakistan are constitutional courts that handle appeals from lower courts and petitions against the government, focusing on cases directly within their jurisdiction. Public trust in these courts is gauged through the FAFEN socioeconomic survey, which specifically asks: "How much do you trust the High Court?". Responses are coded from 1 to 5, with 1 being the response "Not at all" and 5 being "Very much".

Supreme Court = The Supreme Court of Pakistan is the highest constitutional court, with jurisdiction over

appeals from High Courts, original cases of constitutional significance. Public trust in these courts is gauged through the FAFEN socioeconomic survey, which specifically asks: "How much do you trust the Supreme Court". Responses are coded from 1 to 5, with 1 being the response "Not at all" and 5 being "Very much".

Jirga = An informal tribal court system among the Pashtun communities, primarily in regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, where tribal elders make decisions by consensus based on Pashtunwali. Specifically, "Are community disputes taken to a Jirga for resolution?". Responses are coded as 1 for "Yes" and 0 for "No."

Panchayat = A village council system primarily in regions like Punjab and Sindh, dealing with civil matters and crimes through a consensus of five village elders. Specifically, "Are community disputes taken to a collective Panchayat/community Panchayat for resolution?". Responses are coded as 1 for "Yes" and 0 for "No."

Part E. Additional Data Used including Explanatory Variables.

Lawyers' Visits = Lawyers' visits is a binary treatment variable equal to 1 if lawyers visited the district before the February 2008 elections and 0 otherwise. The data was constructed by systematically analyzing the full archive of news articles from Dawn, Pakistan's leading newspaper, for the relevant period. The dataset originally contained over 20,000 articles from 2007–2008, which we filtered using keywords such as "lawyer" and the names of key actors. Given the visibility and political significance of the Lawyers' Movement, *Dawn* comprehensively covered all visits by lawyers, making it a natural source for constructing our main variable.

Lawyers' Bar Associations = A dummy variable indicating 1 if a Bar Association existed in the district. The data is sourced from Bar Association records provided by the Supreme Court Bar Association and Lahore High Court Bar Association.

Private Media = A dummy variable indicating 1 if a private media radio or TV station existed in the district in 2006. The data is sourced from the 2006 PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) reports, published online.

Press clubs = We construct a dummy variable indicating whether a press club establishment with historical roots in the colonial era existed in the district. The data is sourced from a comprehensive study involving extensive research by a large team of scholars (Ahmad et al., 2015).

Madrassa = Number of madrassas (Islamic religious schools) in the district. This is from the 1998 Census of Pakistan.

Appendix A2. Lawyers' Visits

In this appendix, we provide additional qualitative details on the lawyers' visits and the lawyers' convoy. The lawyers' caravan stop featured local lawyer leaders delivering speeches on the movement's message. By

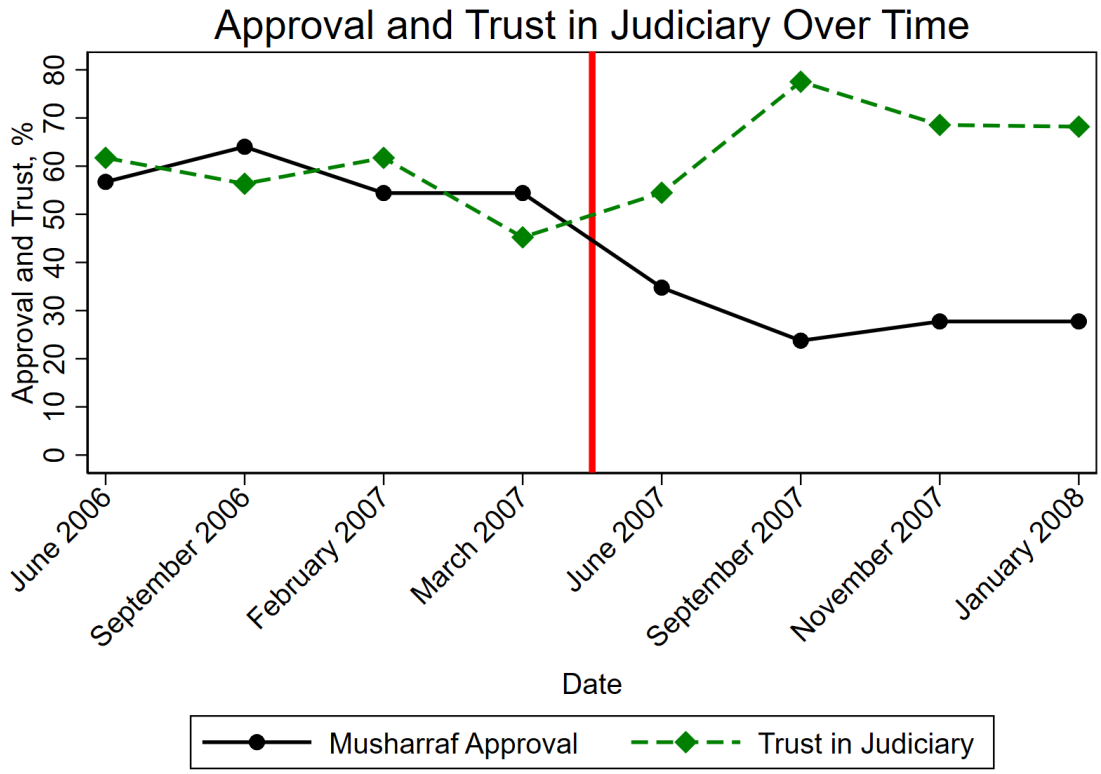
relying on in-person dissemination, these visits likely sidestepped live broadcast and print media bans, embedding the movement's narrative within local political discourse. As the lawyers' processions advanced, local lawyers observed court boycotts, often joined by farmers' and traders' unions, political parties, and rights activists. This trend is illustrated in Figure I (Panel B), which shows a marked increase in the frequency of lawyers' strikes following the Chief Justice's dismissal in March 2007. A prominent newspaper headline at the time read: "The court work came to almost standstill in all major cities as no lawyer appeared in the courts" (Dawn, 2007). As the regulatory authority overseeing a burgeoning private media sector, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) imposed substantial censorship on the Movement's media coverage. PEMRA, for example, barred live reporting on the lawyers' processions and restricted the broadcast of speeches by leading figures in the Movement. PEMRA also took off air several television stations reporting on the movement. Nevertheless, despite an estimated literacy rate of about 50% in 2007 that limited newspaper accessibility, the Movement attracted some attention newspapers with its message seeping into public discourse. A local newspaper report from a city in Punjab highlighted the movement's reach: "A complete strike was also observed by lawyers in Chakwal to show solidarity with the Chief Justice." The Movement rapidly spread across Pakistan, resonating even in military strongholds like Taxila and Wah. Local newspapers from these areas reported, "The lawyers in Taxila and Wah Cantonment also boycotted the courts. A black flag was hoisted at the district bar office." The message of the Lawyers' Movement also began to resonate beyond the legal community, inspiring broader societal engagement. Amir Shehzad, a young chemical engineering student, echoed this spirit, stating, "There is a revolution happening. We are facing for many years a military dictatorship, and people want democracy" Gall and Sengupta (2007). The narrative of discontent and the desire to constrain the power of the military dictator was further echoed by Abdullah, a 70-year-old farmer who, had initially supported General Musharraf's rise to power. "I was among the many people who welcomed General Musharraf when he took over, but he wants no checks. He wants a free hand for everything but that's not fair," Abdullah stated, reflecting a shift in public opinion as he waited in the village of Kharian to greet the lawyers' caravan of cars. This growing demand was also reflected in the words of Chief Justice Chaudhry himself. Although the Chief Justice himself spoke sparingly, when he did, he emphasized the broader struggle against autocratic rule, asserting that "Nations and states which are based on dictatorship instead of the supremacy of the constitution, the rule of law, and protection of basic rights get destroyed" (Gall & Sengupta, 2007). However, despite his pivotal role as a symbol of judicial defiance, his direct engagement in mobilization was limited.

Rather than taking an active role in public engagement, the Chief Justice remained a largely symbolic figure, rarely making statements or addressing crowds directly. Instead, the movement's organization and momentum were largely driven by lawyers who organized themselves in district bar associations to coordinate protests and outreach efforts. As noted in *The Times*, "Mr. Chaudhry never left his car and did not speak to

the crowds along the way." (Gall & Sengupta, 2007). Aitzaz Ahsan, a prominent constitutional lawyer, played an instrumental role, often serving as the Chief Justice's "chauffeur" during nationwide tours, underscoring the decentralized and collective nature of the movement's leadership. Consistent with this decentralized structure, we show that the movement's effects were not solely driven by the Chief Justice's visits. Similar outcomes emerged when other leading figures, such as Aitzaz Ahsan and Ali Ahmad Kurd, played central roles. This is unsurprising given that the Chief Justice, despite his legal stature, was not particularly charismatic. As Time magazine described, "Finally, Chaudhry stepped to the podium at 2 a.m. and launched into his prepared talk on Article 25 of the Pakistani Constitution, about non-discrimination before the law… his talk was remarkably tame. Boring even." (Baker, 2007). Together, these dynamics underscore the decentralized nature of the Lawyers' Movement, where mobilization efforts were sustained not by a single leader but through coordinated actions at the grassroots level. The movement's broad participation and resilience, even in the face of state-imposed media restrictions, highlight its role in shaping political discourse and challenging authoritarianism.

APPENDIX B. ADDITIONAL TABLES AND FIGURES

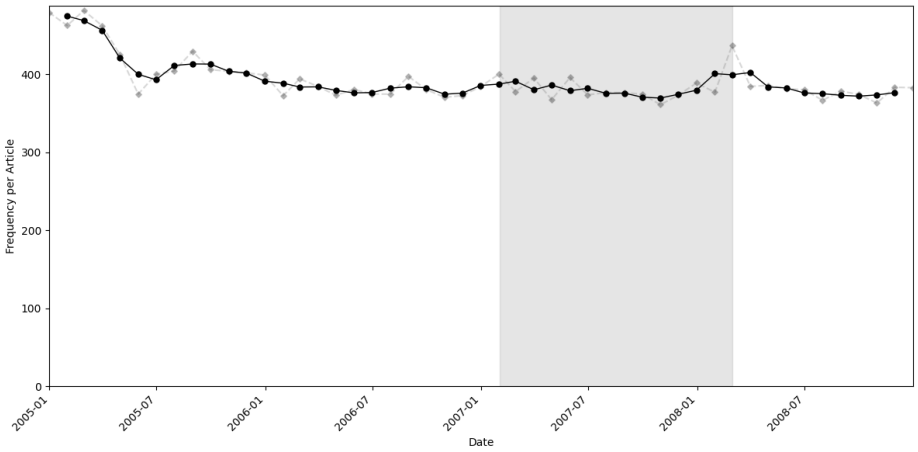
FIGURE B1: **General Musharraf Approval and Trust in Judiciary Over Time**



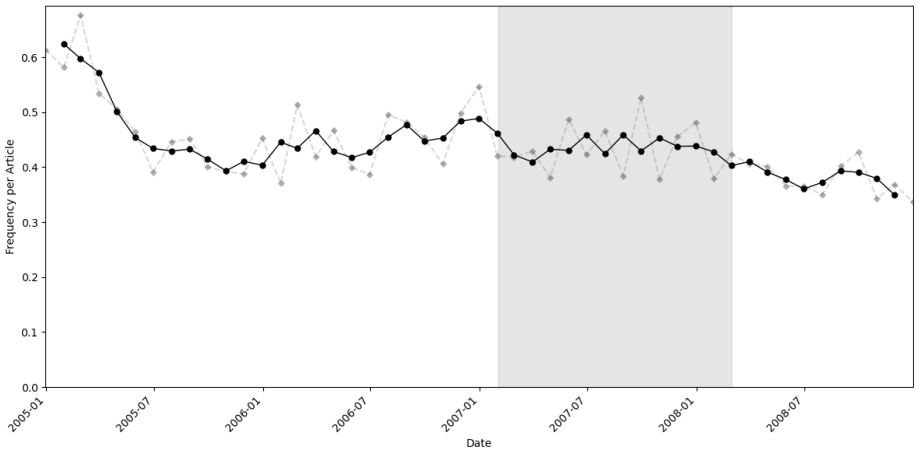
Note: The figure illustrates trends in public approval of President Musharraf's leadership alongside confidence in the formal judiciary. The estimates are derived from responses to the following survey questions: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Pervez Musharraf is handling his job?" For trust or confidence in the judiciary, the specific survey question asks: "Are you satisfied with the transparency and accountability of the judicial process?" Both surveys are sourced from the International Republican Institute's Survey of Pakistan Public Opinion. The red vertical line marks the onset of the Lawyers' Movement in March 2007.

FIGURE B2: **Placebo Test for News Text Analysis**

Panel A: 20 Most Popular Functional Words

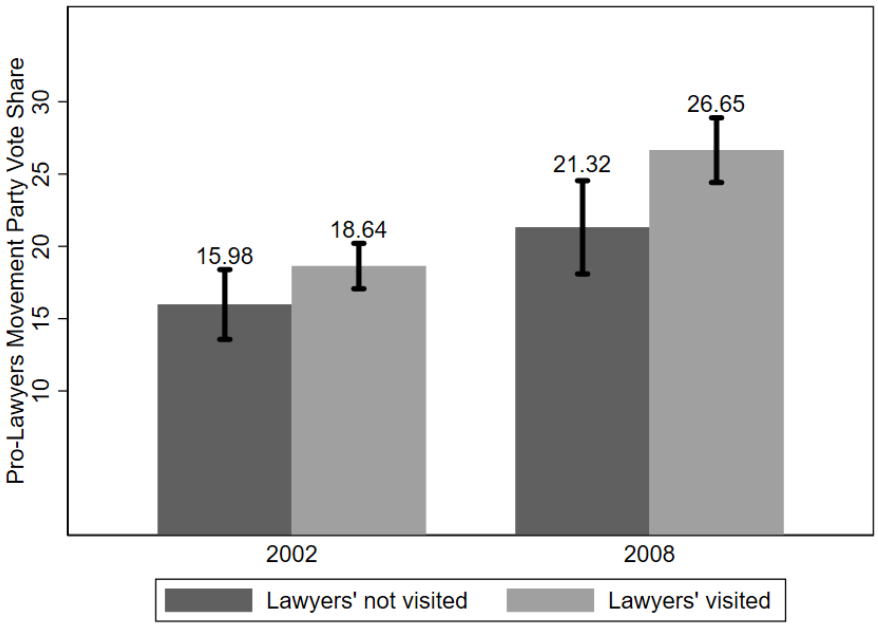


Panel B: Islam



Note: The figure presents a placebo test using functional words and a term frequently appearing in the Pakistani newspaper corpus. The panels display results from a text analysis of Dawn, Pakistan's most prominent newspaper. Each panel tracks the evolution of term frequency per article for the corresponding word or collocation. The solid black line represents a three-month moving average of mentions per article, while the dashed gray line indicates the number of entries per article. Panel A examines the 20 most common functional words (e.g., articles, pronouns, prepositions). In contrast, Panel B shows the evolution of the term "Islam." The gray background denotes the period of the Lawyers' Movement, spanning from the dismissal of the Chief Justice.

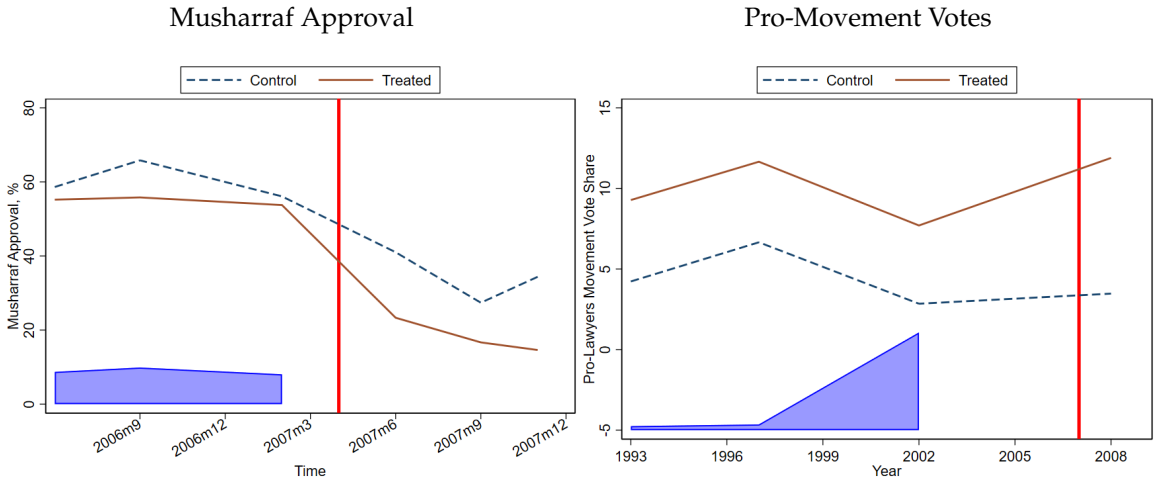
FIGURE B3: **Pro-Lawyers' Votes for Visited versus Unvisited Districts**



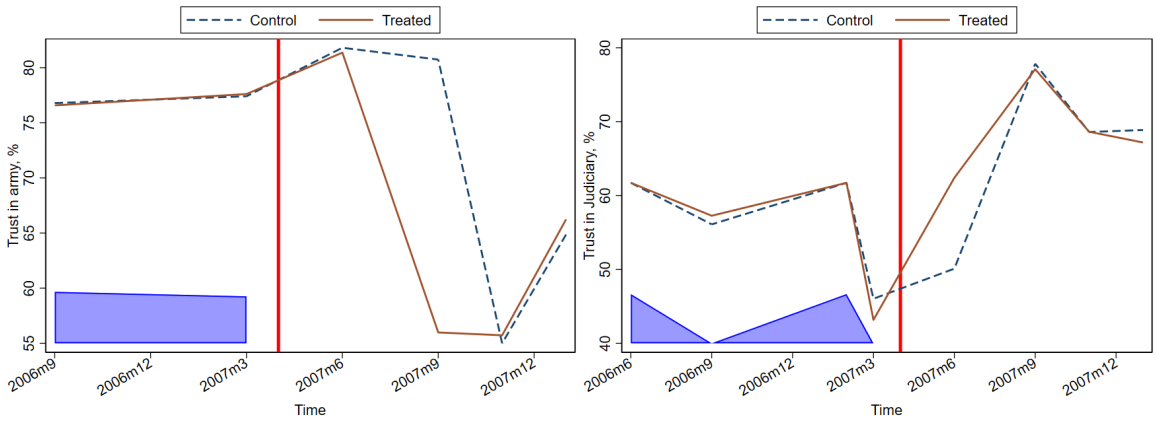
Note: This figure presents the average vote share of the pro-Lawyers' Movement party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), in the first pre-treatment election (2002) and the first post-treatment election (2008). Dark gray bars represent unvisited districts, while light gray bars denote visited districts. The figure also reports 95% confidence intervals.

FIGURE B4: **Lawyers' Visits and Musharraf's Approval & Trust in Army - Synthetic Difference-in-Differences**

Panel A: Impact of Lawyers' Visits on Musharraf Approval Rating And Votes



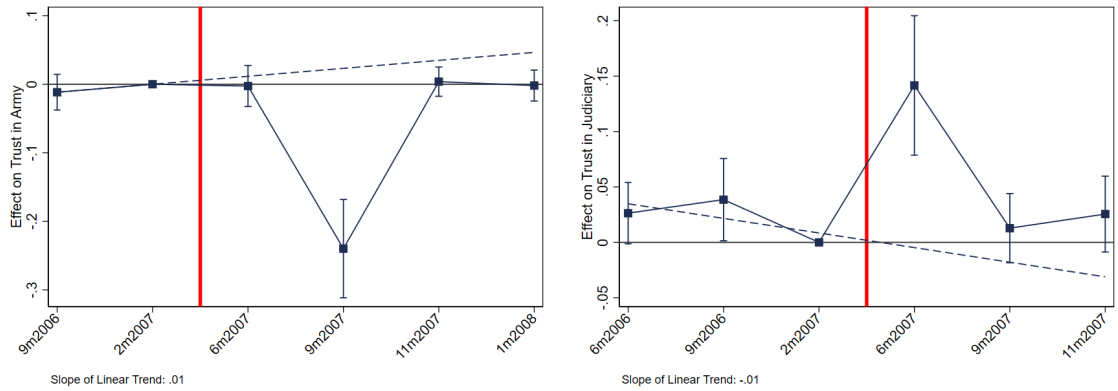
Panel B: Impact of Lawyers' Visits on Trust in Army and Judiciary



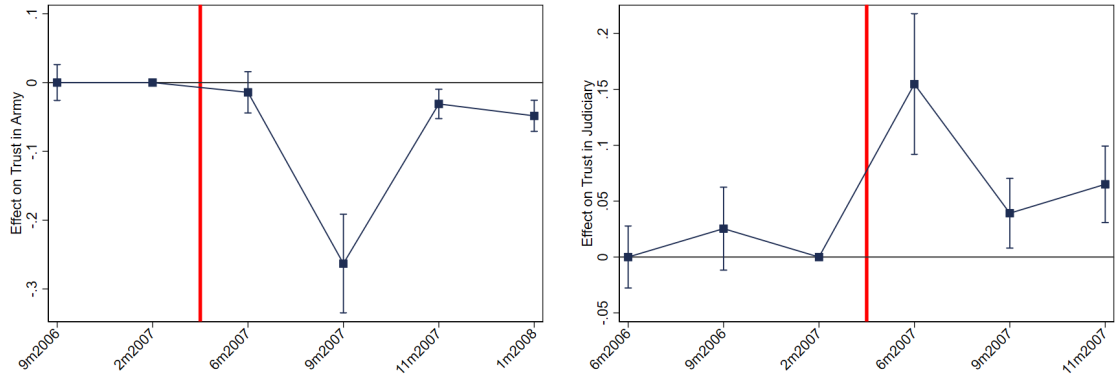
Note: This figure presents synthetic difference-in-differences (SDID) estimates of the effect of the lawyers' visits on Musharraf approval, pro-movement votes (for PML-N party), trust in the army and trust in the judiciary. The panels report SDID estimates using the cluster bootstrap method as outlined in Algorithm 2 of Arkhangelsky et al. (2021) The Synthetic DID estimator is applied to the residuals from Equation (1). The dependent variables in Panel A are response to the question "Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Pervez Musharraf is handling his job?" and the share of total votes for Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N). The dependent variables in Panel B are the response to the questions: "Do you trust the Army's ability to maintain national security without compromising human rights?" and "Are you satisfied with the transparency and accountability of the judicial process?" Data are sourced from the International Republican Institute. The light blue shaded region shows time-weights, and the red vertical line marks the onset of the Lawyers' Movement.

FIGURE B5: **Impact on Support for the Army and the Judiciary. Rambachan and Roth (2023)'s Credible Approach to Parallel Trends**

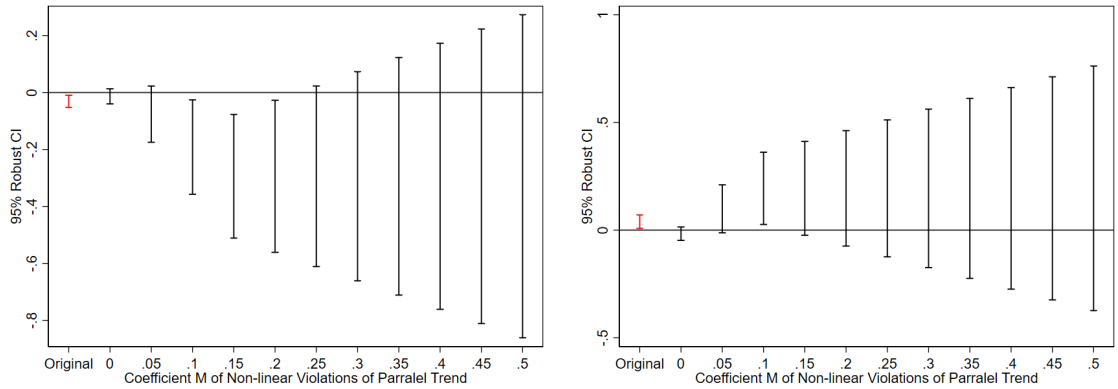
Panel A: Estimated Linear Trend



Panel B: Rotated Event Study



Panel C: Sensitivity to Potential Violations of Parallel Trends

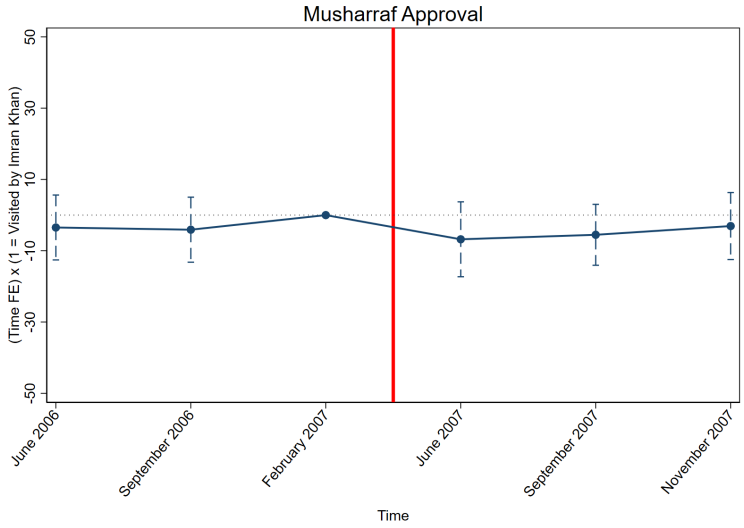


Note: This figure analyzes potential violations of the parallel trends assumption. In Panel A, we overlay a linear trend—estimated using pre-treatment data—onto the event-study coefficients and extrapolate it into the post-treatment period. Panel B presents the event-study estimates adjusted for this estimated trend. Panel C then reports the sensitivity of these results to the linear extrapolation of the pre-event coefficients, using the "honest approach to parallel trends" of Rambachan and Roth (2023). In the right panel, we report the confidence sets for the average of all post-treatment coefficients, computed under the constraint that the slope of the pre-trend coefficients changes by no more than M across consecutive periods.

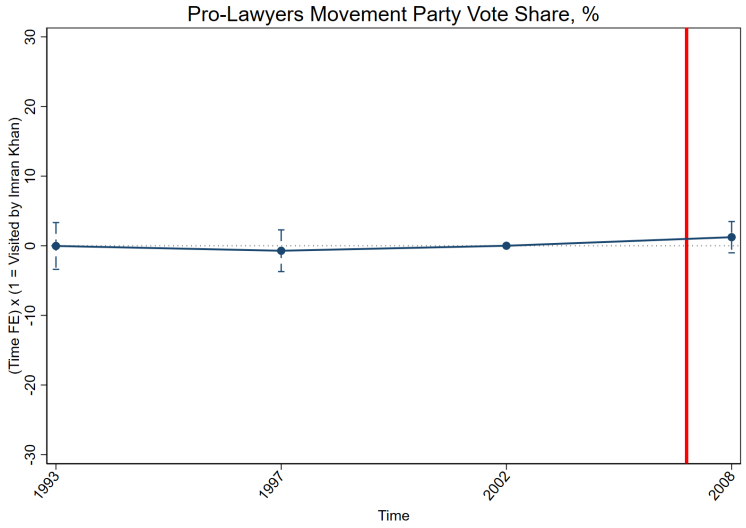
FIGURE B6: **Impact of Placebo Visits by Imran Khan**

Panel A: Impact of Imran Khan's Visits on Musharraf Approval Rating And Votes

Musharraf Approval

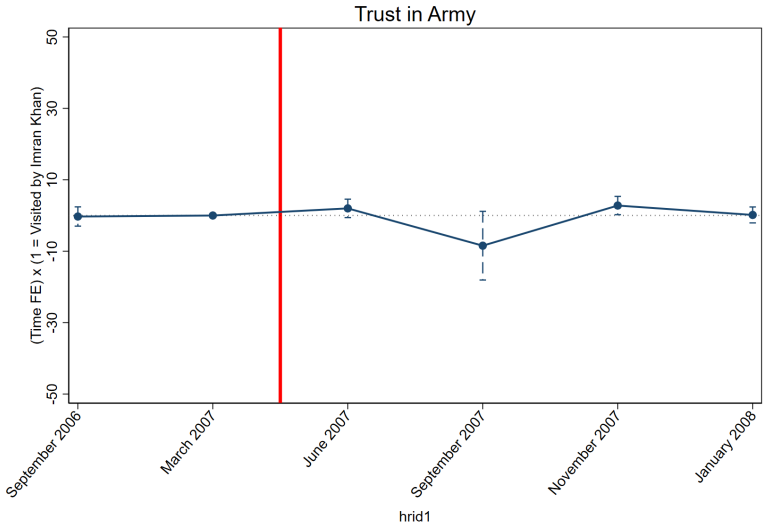


Pro-Movement Votes

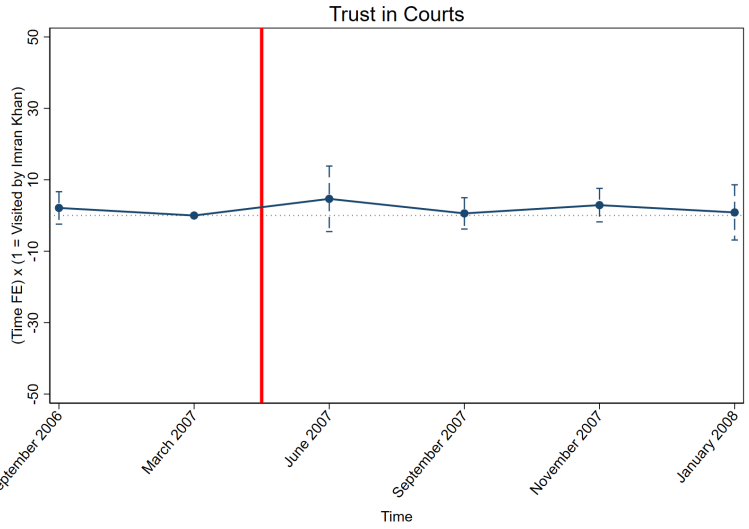


Panel B: Impact of Imran Khan's Visits on Trust in Army and Judiciary

Trust in Army



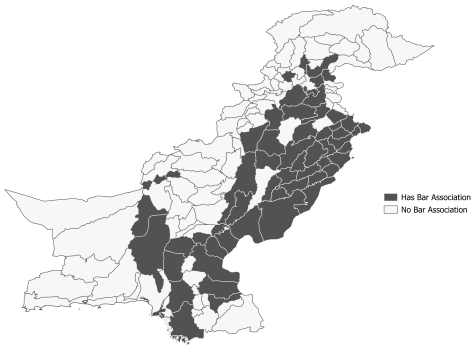
Trust in Judiciary



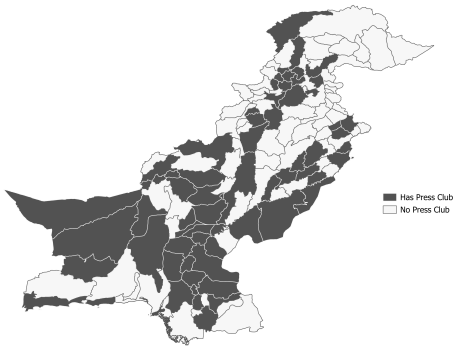
Note: This figure presents difference-in-differences (DID) estimates of the effect of the Post-Movement visits of Imran Khan on "pre-treatment" Musharraf approval, pro-movement votes, Trust in the Army, and Trust in the Judiciary. The dependent variables are the responses to the question:: "Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Pervez Musharraf is handling his job?", "Do you trust the Army's ability to maintain national security without compromising human rights?" and "Are you satisfied with the transparency and accountability of the judicial process?". Data are sourced from the International Republican Institute (IRI). For election data the dependent variable is the proportion of total votes received by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in each election, based on official data from the Election Commission of Pakistan. The red line indicates the onset of the lawyers' movement.

FIGURE B7: **Geographic Distributions of Historical Networks in Pakistan**

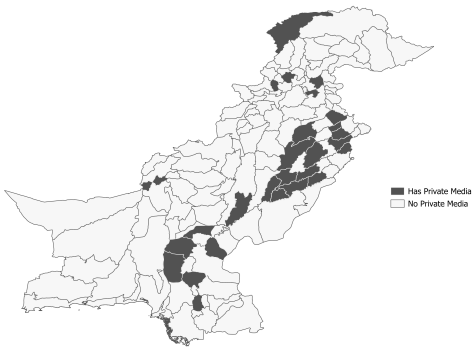
Panel A: Lawyers' Bar Associations



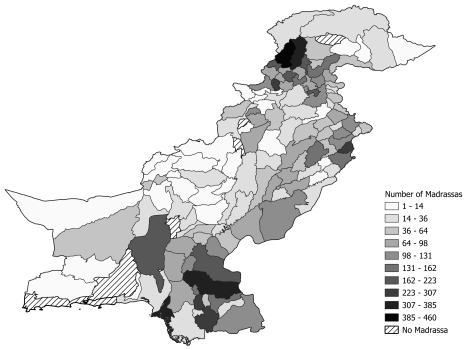
Panel B: Press Clubs



Panel C: Private Media



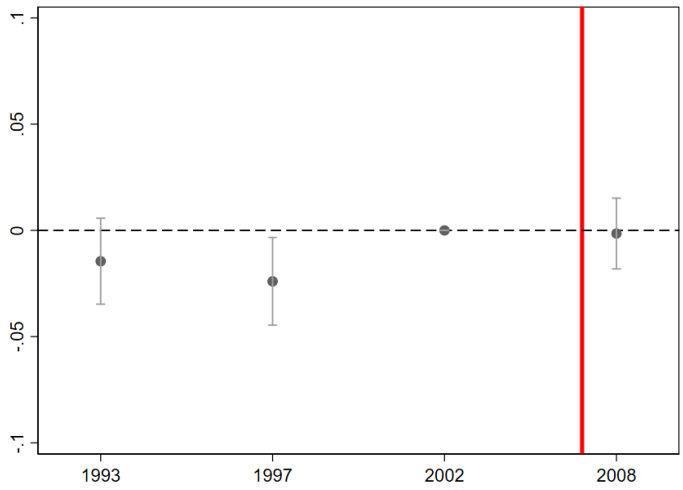
Panel D: Madrassas



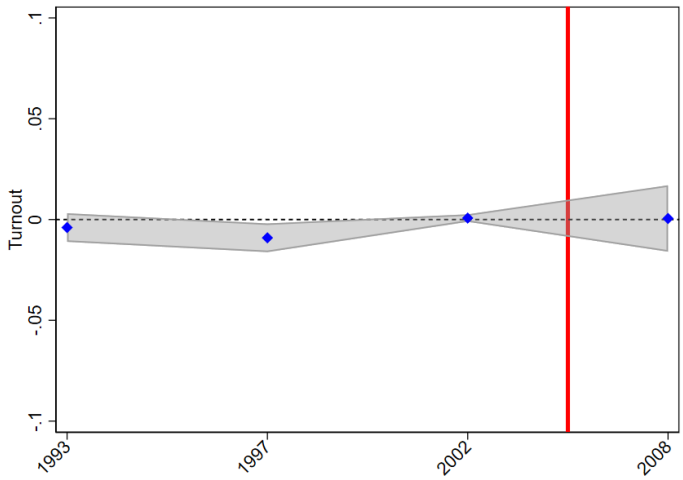
Note: The figure presents the geographical distribution of networks—lawyers (Panel A), journalists (Panel B), private radio (Panel C), and madrassas (Panel D). These distributions are employed in our analysis of the mechanisms mediating the effect of lawyers' visits.

FIGURE B8: **Impact on Turnout**

Panel A: Standard Difference-in-Differences



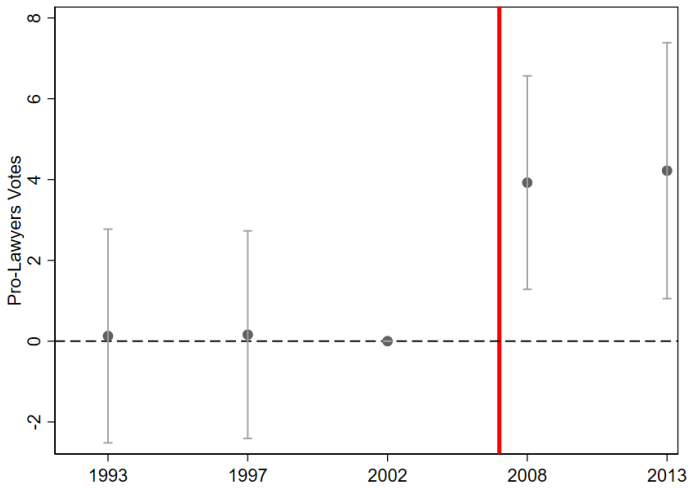
Panel B: Synthetic Difference-in-Differences



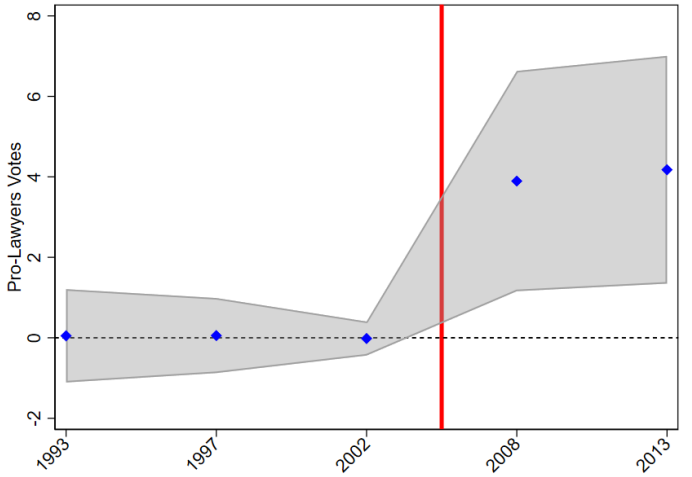
Note: This figure presents event-study estimates of the effect of lawyers' visits on voter turnout. Panel A reports estimates from a standard event-study approach, while Panel B presents results from a synthetic difference-in-differences (SDID) event study. The onset of the Lawyers' Movement is denoted by the red vertical line, and 95% confidence intervals are displayed. The SDID estimates are computed using the cluster bootstrap method outlined in Section 4.4 of Clarke et al. (2023), following the procedure described in Algorithm 4 of Arkhangelsky et al. (2021) The event study includes data from three pre-movement elections (1993, 1997, and 2002), with the last election before the movement serving as the baseline, as well as one post-movement election. The unit of observation is district-by-election year.

FIGURE B9: **Long-run Impact on Pro-Lawyers' Votes**

Panel A: Standard Difference-in-Differences

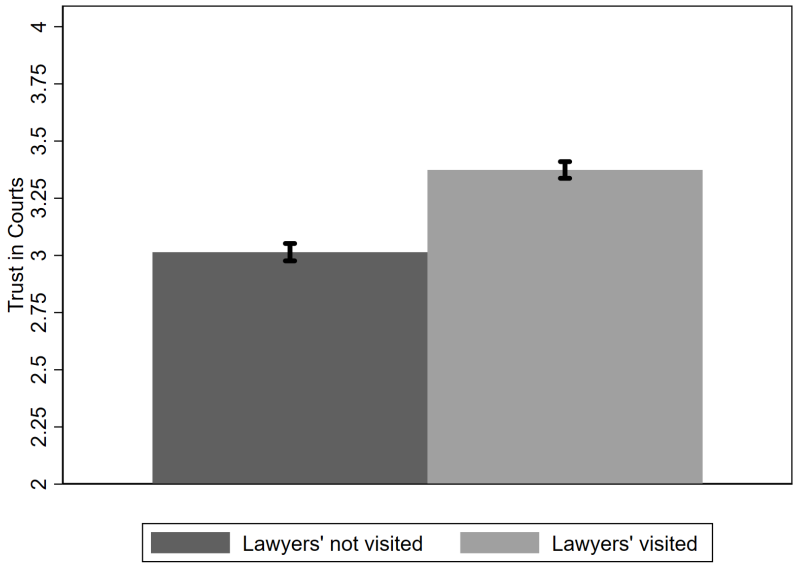


Panel B: Synthetic Difference-in-Differences



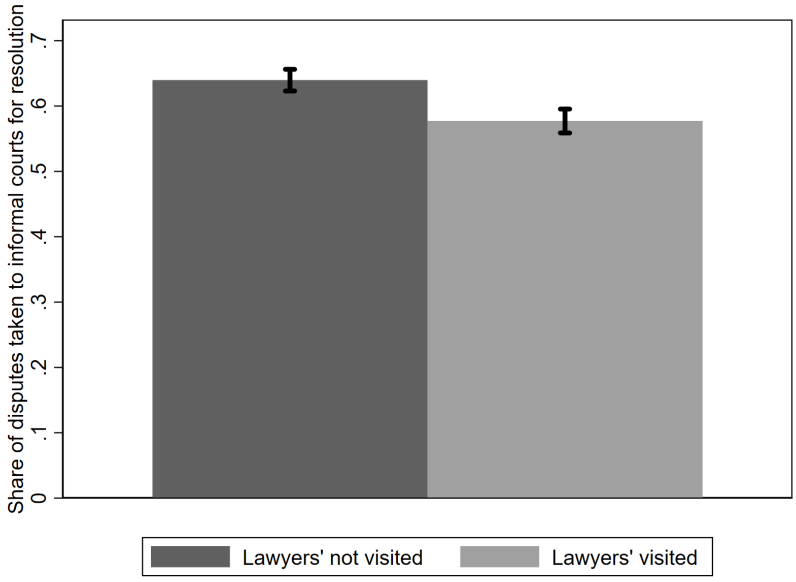
Note: This figure examines the short- and long-run effects of lawyers' visits on support for the pro-lawyers party, PML-N, using an event-study design. Panel A presents estimates from a standard event-study model, while Panel B reports results from a synthetic difference-in-differences (SDID) approach. The red vertical line marks the onset of the Lawyers' Movement, with 95% confidence intervals shown. The SDID estimates are derived using the cluster bootstrap procedure described in Section 4.4 of Clarke et al. (2023), following Algorithm 4 of Arkhangelsky et al. (2021). The analysis includes data from three pre-movement elections (1993, 1997, and 2002), setting the last pre-movement election as the reference point, along with two post-lawyers' visits elections (2008 and 2013). The unit of observation is district-by-election year.

FIGURE B10: **Lawyers' Visits and Trust in Courts**



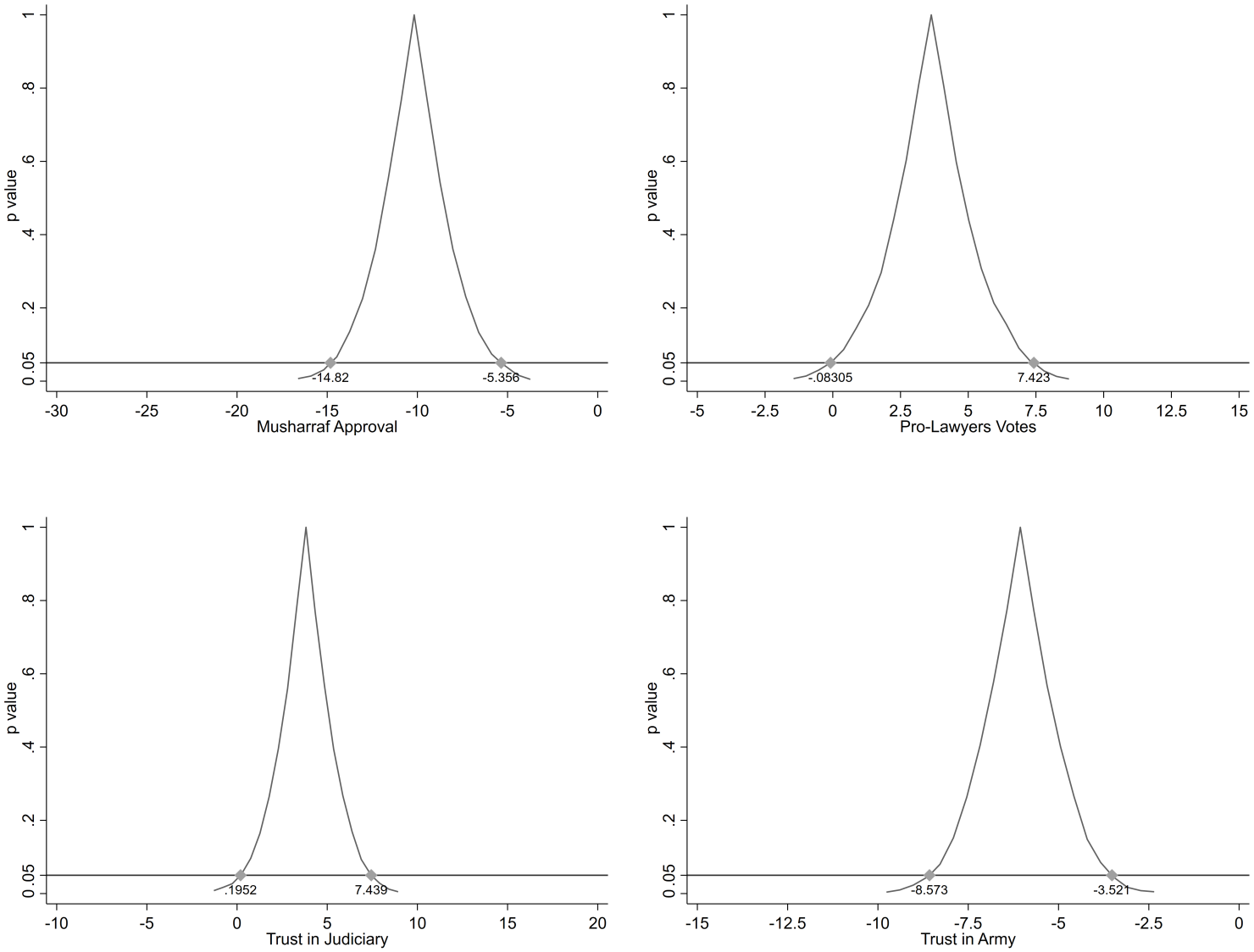
Note: This figure presents a bar chart comparing mean trust in the judiciary between visited and unvisited districts, based on the FAFEN census report on institutional trust released in 2016. The data, aggregated at the district level, capture responses on a 1-to-5 scale, where 1 indicates "Not at all" and 5 represents "Very much," in response to the question, "How much do you trust the District/High/Supreme Court?" The figure also reports 95% confidence intervals.

FIGURE B11: **Usage of Informal Courts**



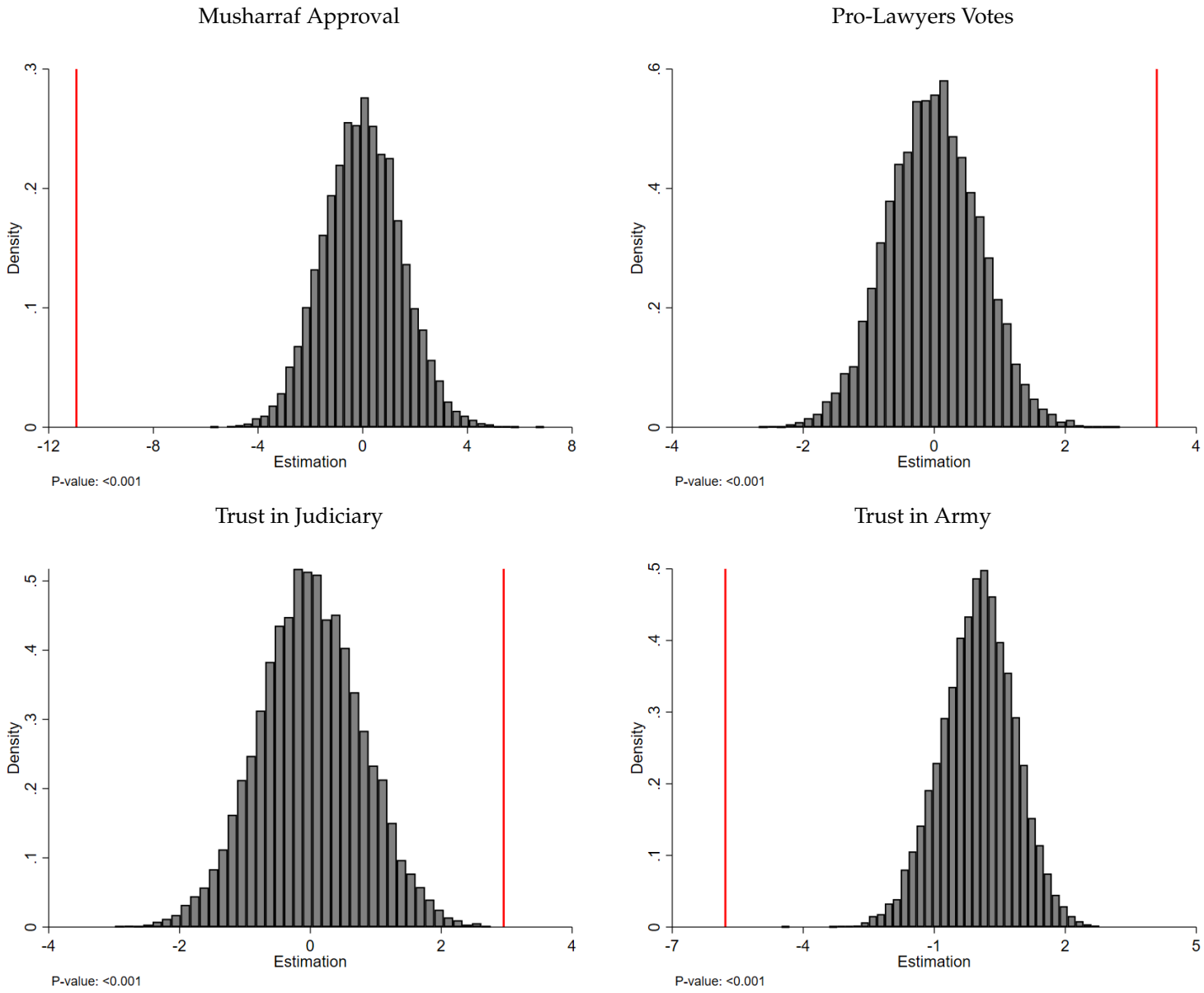
Note: This figure presents a bar chart comparing mean trust in the informal judiciary between visited and unvisited districts, using data from the FAFEN census report on institutional trust released in 2016. Specifically, the analysis focuses on trust in *Jirgas* and *Panchayats* as legal platforms for dispute resolution. The survey question asked respondents, "Are community disputes taken to a Jirga/collective Panchayat/community Panchayat for resolution?" Responses were coded as 1 for "Yes" and 0 for "No." The figure reports the share of individuals who indicated reliance on at least one informal dispute resolution institution. Data are sourced from the 2016 FAFEN Socioeconomic Report, the only year this information was collected. The figure also includes 95% confidence intervals.

FIGURE B12: **Confidence Interval by Wild Bootstrap**



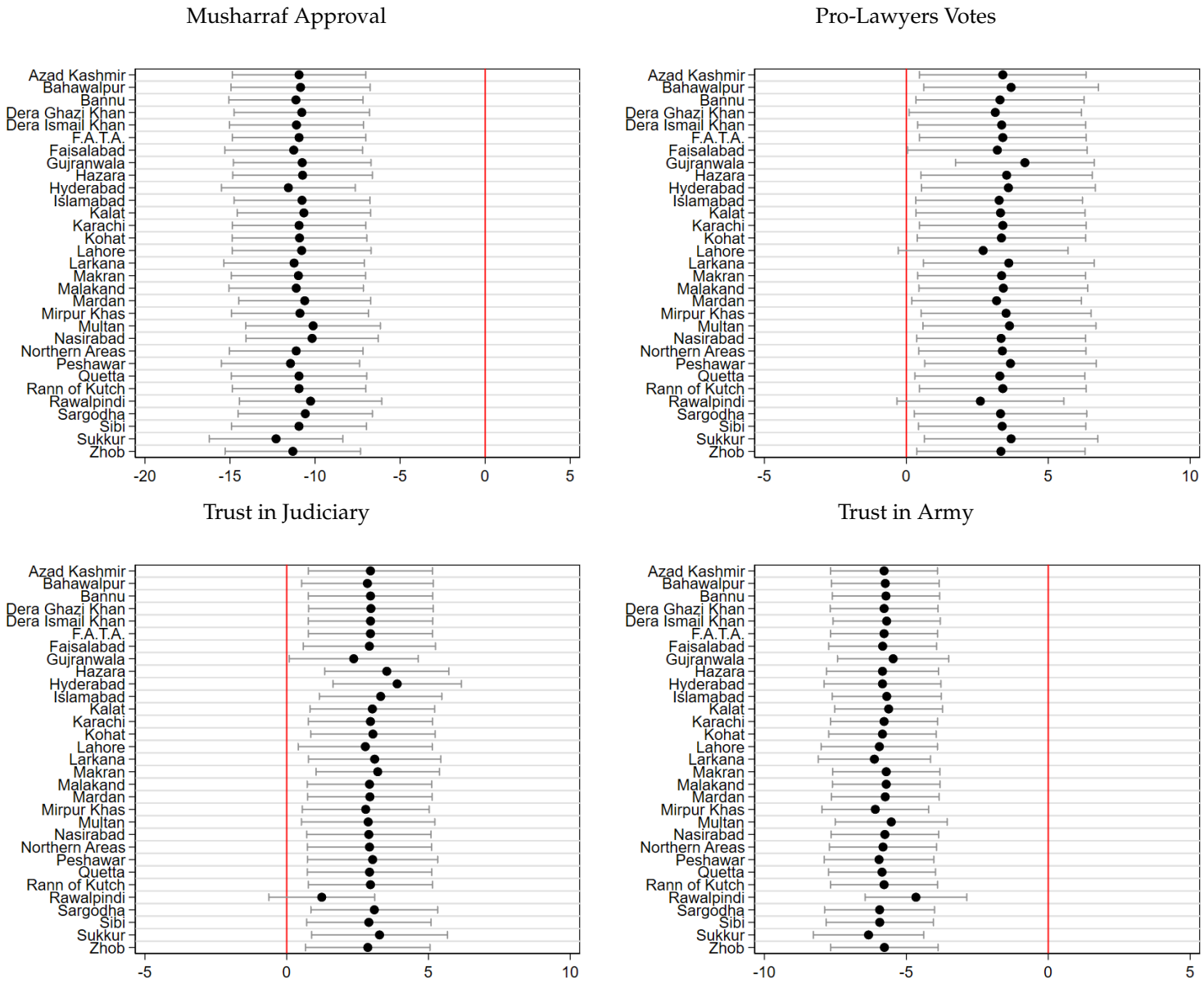
Note: The figure displays the estimated distributions of our coefficients of interest using Wild bootstrap clustering for our main outcome variables. We use the bootest command in Stata 17, developed by Roodman et al. (2019), to construct this confidence interval with 999 repetitions. Specifically, we apply Cameron et al. (2008) wild bootstrapping procedure, utilizing the Rademacher distribution under the null hypothesis. This involves converting the t-statistic from the Wald test and inverting the test to compute the bounds of the confidence set, given the number of clusters (approximately 110 districts in our case). The resulting "confidence curve" is plotted, presenting the bootstrapped p-values that define the limits of the confidence set. This method is advantageous as it generates the estimated distributions without strict reliance on asymptotic theory.

FIGURE B13: **Permutation Inference Test**



Note: This figure presents the distribution of estimated coefficients from a permutation inference test based on 10,000 random assignments. The vertical line marks the actual estimated coefficient. The observed p-values for each test are reported and are all < 0.01, indicating that the estimated effect is highly unlikely to be driven by random chance.

FIGURE B14: **Dropping One Region at a Time**



Note: This figure presents estimated coefficients from our baseline regression, sequentially excluding one division (a group of districts) at a time. The reported coefficients correspond to the difference-in-differences estimation. The red line marks zero, and 90% confidence intervals are displayed. The x-axis represents the estimated coefficient, while the y-axis lists the excluded division.

TABLE B1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variables	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
IRI Polling Dataset:					
Musharraf Approval	666	43.57289	21.68536	0	96.66666
Trust in Army	666	71.42643	12.10718	16.66667	90
Trust in Judiciary	666	59.48449	11.62996	43.33333	100
Trust in Police	666	24.84095	6.508405	3.333333	40
Election Dataset:					
PML-N	1,638	21.46839	17.85628	0.0331504	71.34138
PML-Q	1,638	29.45634	15.40181	0.0707202	85.7028
PPP	1,638	30.18093	18.638	0.0438084	95.40724
MMA	1,638	16.18286	16.15241	0.0086131	62.23189
Total Polled Votes	1,638	77991.55	41586.96	6964	247146
Number Registered Voters	1,638	180527.8	85042.01	32526	651356
Share of Rejected Votes	1,638	0.0282209	0.0125943	0	0.1738589
Court Dataset:					
New Cases Filed	2,363	20236.23	35416.06	37	604970
Cases closed	2,363	19634.92	34671.36	36	611992
Pendency	2,363	8539.319	21134.39	0	436276

Note: This table presents summary statistics for the main variables used in the study. IRI Survey Dataset contains polling data sourced from the International Republican Institute, aggregated by district and quarter for the period between January 2006 and January 2008 (just before the February 2008 elections). The Election Dataset includes election data by electoral district and election years for 1993, 1997, 2002, 2008, and 2013 elections. Summary statistics are provided for 2002 and 2008 years used in the main tables. Court Dataset presents court statistics from the Pakistan Judicial Statistics sourced from the Justice Department of Pakistan, covering the years 2006 to 2022, with information on the annual number of cases filed, resolved, and pending cases at the beginning of the year. Standard deviations are calculated based on the sample distribution for each panel.

TABLE B2
IMPACT OF LAWYERS' VISITS ON TRUST IN THE POLICE AND IN ARMY

	Trust in Police %		Trust in Army %	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A. Difference-in-Differences				
Lawyers' Visits X Post-Movement	0.048	0.110	-5.783***	-6.058***
	(0.433)	(0.603)	(1.136)	(1.252)
Panel B: Synthetic Difference-in-Differences				
Lawyers' Visits X Post-Movement	-0.041	-0.211	-5.760***	-5.907***
	(0.520)	(0.681)	(1.144)	(1.143)
Time Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	24.645	24.645	71.426	71.426
Observations	666	666	666	666

Note: This table reports the effect of lawyers' visits on public trust in the Police and in the Army. Columns (1)–(2) reflect responses to the question "Are you confident in the Police's ability to maintain national security without compromising human rights?" while Columns (3)–(4) correspond to responses to "Do you trust the Army's ability to maintain national security without compromising human rights?" Data are sourced from the International Republican Institute. Column (2) includes controls for trust in the Army and the judiciary, and Column (4) adds controls for trust in the Police and the judiciary. Robust standard errors are clustered at the district level in Panel A, whereas Panel B reports standard errors computed using the cluster bootstrap described in Algorithm 2 of Arkhangelsky et al. (2021) (all standard errors are shown in parentheses). District and quarter-by-year fixed effects are always included. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

TABLE B3
IMPACT OF ALI AHMAD KURD AND AITAZAZ AHSAN VISITS ON GENERAL MUSHARRAF'S APPROVAL, PRO-LAWYERS VOTES, TRUST IN ARMY, AND TRUST IN JUDICIARY

	Approval (%)	Vote Share (%)	Trust (%)	
	Musharraf Approval	Pro-Lawyers Movement	Trust in Army	Trust in Judiciary
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A: Ali Ahmad Kurd Visits. Difference-in-Differences				
Leader 1 Visits X Post-Movement	-15.037***	6.445***	-8.240***	4.274**
	(2.511)	(1.903)	(1.394)	(2.148)
Panel B. Ali Ahmad Kurd Visits. Synthetic Difference-in-Differences				
Leader 1 Visits X Post-Movement	-13.601***	6.556***	-7.532***	1.406
	(2.829)	(1.017)	(1.286)	(3.001)
Time Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	43.573	21.468	71.426	61.722
Observations	666	1638	666	666
Panel C. Aitazaz Ahsan Visits. Difference-in-Differences				
Leader 2 Visits X Post-Movement	-11.746***	7.887***	-7.898***	4.076
	(2.751)	(1.989)	(1.775)	(3.022)
Panel D. Aitazaz Ahsan Visits. Synthetic Difference-in-Differences				
Leader 2 Visits X Post-Movement	-10.131***	8.158***	-6.775***	1.582
	(3.706)	(0.902)	(1.495)	(2.845)
Time Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	43.573	21.468	71.426	61.722
Observations	666	1638	666	666

Note: This table presents the estimated impact of visits by two key leaders of the Lawyers' Movement on approval ratings for General Musharraf, pro-lawyers vote shares, and trust in the Army and Judiciary. Column (1) reports the effect on approval of General Pervez Musharraf's job performance, while Column (2) examines the pro-lawyers Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) vote share. Column (3) considers confidence in the Army, and Column (4) evaluates satisfaction with the transparency and accountability of the judicial process. Panels A and B report the effects of visits by Ali Ahmad Kurd, while Panels C and D present estimates for visits by Aitzaz Ahsan. Robust standard errors are clustered at the district level in Panels A and C. Panels B, and D report standard errors computed using the cluster bootstrap method described in Algorithm 2 of Arkhangelsky et al. (2021). Standard errors are shown in parentheses. Column (2) includes controls for the share of rejected votes, total polled votes, and total registered voters. Columns (1) and (3) control for trust in the judiciary and trust in the police, while Column (4) includes trust in the army and trust in the police as additional controls. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

TABLE B4
IMPACT OF LAWYERS' VISITS ON ELECTION OUTCOMES

	Vote Share %			
	MMA	PML-Q	PPP	MQM
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A. Major Parties				
Lawyers' Visits X Post-Movement	-0.833**	1.157	1.465	4.145
	(0.395)	(1.133)	(1.680)	(3.418)
Mean Dep. Var.	15.576	29.11	30.611	21.938
Panel B. Other Parties				
	ANP	BNP	NPP	PML-F
Lawyers' Visits X Post-Movement	-0.361	0.193	0.098	0.681
	(0.380)	(0.126)	(0.099)	(0.524)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	1.43	.058	.083	.394
Observations	4976	4976	4976	4976

Note: This table presents the effect of lawyers' visits on the vote shares of parties other than the pro-lawyers Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). These parties represent the major political forces for which pre- and post-Lawyers' Movement data are available. Vote shares are measured as a proportion of total votes, consistent with our approach for the pro-lawyers PML-N. The four major parties included in Panel A are Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q), Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the Islamist Muttahida Majlis–e–Amal (MMA), and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). In Panel B, we extend the analysis to more minor parties, including the Awami National Party (ANP), Balochistan National Party (BNP), National People's Party (NPP), and the Jamhoori Wattan Party (JWP). The key explanatory variable, Lawyers' Visits, is a binary treatment indicator equal to 1 if lawyers' visited the district during the pre-election period in 2008. Robust standard errors, clustered at the district level, are presented in parentheses. All regressions control for the share of rejected votes, total polled votes, and total registered voters, as well as district and election-year fixed effects. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

TABLE B5
IMPACT OF LAWYERS' VISITS ON VOTE SHARES - ADJUSTED FOR ELECTORAL FRAUD

	Pro-Lawyers Movement Vote Share %			
	Difference-in-Differences		Synthetic Difference-in-Differences	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyers' Visits X Post-Movement	3.333*	3.553**	3.333***	3.308***
	(1.774)	(1.766)	(0.829)	(0.872)
Year Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	21.983	21.983	21.983	21.983
Observations	1638	1638	1638	1638

Note: This table presents estimates of the impact of lawyer visits on pro-lawyer vote share. The unit of observation is electoral districts and election years. Vote shares are adjusted for election fraud using data from the Free and Fair Election Network's (FAFEN) 2008 election report. FAFEN deployed 20,000 independent observers to 25 polling stations in each district, collecting a random sample of 1,000 registered voters to gauge their voting intentions and construct the adjusted vote tally. The resulting fraud-adjusted vote count is used in our analysis. Out of 273 electoral district observations, 206 (75.46%) were adjusted for fraud in the 2008 election. The pro-lawyer movement vote share is represented by the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) vote share. Electoral district and election year fixed effects are always included. Robust standard errors are clustered at the district level in columns (1)-(2). Columns (3)-(4) report standard errors using the cluster bootstrap method outlined in Arkhangelsky et al. (2021). All standard errors are reported in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

TABLE B6
IMPACT ON GENERAL MUSHARRAF'S APPROVAL, PRO-LAWYERS' VOTES, TRUST IN ARMY AND TRUST IN JUDICIARY - ADJUSTING FOR NETWORK CENTRALITY

	Musharraf Approval	Pro-Lawyer Votes	Trust in Army	Trust in Judiciary
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyers' Visited X Post-Movement	-8.612***	2.816	-5.734***	3.201**
	(2.335)	(1.827)	(1.278)	(1.581)
Centrality Score X Post-Movement	25.700*	-21.890**	5.258	-3.191
	(15.445)	(9.341)	(4.512)	(3.522)
Time Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	45.343	21.468	71.426	61.722
Observations	666	1638	666	666

Note: This table demonstrates the robustness of our results by incorporating a betweenness centrality score, calculated based on the road network, as a control variable for approval ratings of General Musharraf, pro-movement votes, and trust in the military and judiciary. The betweenness centrality score is derived as the normalized number of shortest paths between two districts that pass through a given district, following the method outlined in Becker et al. (2023). Robust standard errors, clustered at the district level, are reported in parentheses. Column (2) includes the share of rejected votes, total polled votes, and total registered voters as control variables, while trust in the police is included in other columns. Trust in the judiciary and trust in the police are included as control variables in columns (1) and (3), while columns (4) include trust in the army and trust in the police as control variables. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

TABLE B7
ROBUSTNESS TO CONLEY SPATIAL CORRELATION

Distance Cutoff	Dependent Variable			
	Musharraf Approval	Pro-Lawyers Votes	Trust in Army	Trust in Judiciary
Baseline p-val.	<0.001	0.057	<0.001	0.036
50 km, p-val.	<0.001	0.040	<0.001	0.036
100 km, p-val.	<0.001	0.037	<0.001	0.025
150 km, p-val.	<0.001	0.012	<0.001	0.035
200 km, p-val.	<0.001	0.003	<0.001	0.044
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean. Dep. Var.	45.343	21.468	71.426	61.722
Observations	666	1638	666	666

Note: The table presents robustness checks using Conley standard errors in our baseline regression. P-values are reported for four distance cutoffs: 50 km, 100 km, 150 km, and 200 km, with baseline p-values included for comparison in the top row. Column 1 reports the results of the approval of General Musharraf. Column 2 shows the pro-lawyer's votes, i.e., the share of total votes for Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Columns (3) and (4) assess confidence in the Army and judiciary, respectively.

TABLE B8
IMPACT ON VOTING WITH BASELINE INTERACTIVE EFFECTS - CONTROL FUNCTION

	Pro-Lawyers Movement Vote Share %					
	Difference-in-Differences			Synthetic Difference-in-Differences		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Lawyers' Visits X Post-Movement	3.086**	3.320**	2.877*	3.173***	2.489***	2.448***
	(1.525)	(1.510)	(1.533)	(0.838)	(0.959)	(0.893)
Year, District FEs and Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Socio-Economic Factors X Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public Goods X Year FE	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Political Violence X Year FE	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	21.468	21.468	21.468	21.468	21.468	21.468
Observations	1638	1638	1638	1638	1638	1638

Note: This table reports the effect of lawyers' visits on votes for the pro-lawyer party, incorporating baseline interactive effects. Observations correspond to electoral districts across multiple election years. Public Goods refers to the number of police stations and cinemas in each district during 2005–2006, while Political Violence captures the number of politically motivated protests in 2008, using data from the BFRS political violence dataset. All specifications include district and year-fixed effects, along with controls for the share of rejected votes, total polled votes, and total registered voters. Columns (4)–(6) implement a synthetic difference-in-differences estimator, following the cluster bootstrap procedure outlined in Algorithm 2 of Arkhangelsky et al. (2021) Robust standard errors, clustered at the district level, are reported in parentheses for Columns (1)–(3). * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

TABLE B9
ADJUSTING FOR MULTIPLE HYPOTHESIS TESTING

	Musharraf Approval	Trust in Army	Trust in Judiciary
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Lawyers' Visited X Post-Movement	-10.178***	-6.058***	3.824**
	(2.417)	(1.252)	(1.725)
Sharpenned q-value	[.001]***	[.001]***	[.01]***
Romano-Wolf Corrected p-value	{.0099}***	{.0099}***	{.0099}***
Time Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	43.573	71.426	61.722
Observations	666	666	666

Note: This table presents re-adjustment to p-values after accounting for multiple hypotheses. The unit of observation is district-quarter. All specifications include district and time-fixed effects. To speak to multiple hypothesis testing, sharpened q-values and Romano-Wolf p-values are reported. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

TABLE B10
MATCHED DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCES

	Musharraf Approval		Pro-Lawyer Votes	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyers' Visited X Post-Movement	-10.941***	-15.478***	3.399***	2.390**
	(2.365)	(4.347)	(0.763)	(0.990)
Matched Sample	No	Yes	No	Yes
Time Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	43.573	39.029	21.468	22.264
Observations	666	282	1638	1306

Note: This table presents results using a Matched Difference-in-Differences approach. Matching is performed on key control variables, including trust in police and trust in the judiciary (Column 2) and electoral characteristics such as the share of rejected votes, total polled votes, and total registered voters (Column 4). The unit of observation is district-quarter for Columns (1) and (2) and district-year for Columns (3) and (4). Columns (1) and (2) examine the approval of General Pervez Musharraf. Columns (3) and (4) report electoral outcomes for the pro-movement party (PML-N). All specifications include district and time-fixed effects (quarterly for Columns 1 and 2, election year for Columns 3 and 4). Robust standard errors are clustered at the district level. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

TABLE B11
IMPACT ON MAIN VARIABLES WITH BENAZIR VISITS X POST-MOVEMENT IN CONTROLS

	Approval (%)	Vote Share (%)	Trust (%)	
	Musharraf Approval	Pro-Lawyers Movement	Trust in Army	Trust in Judiciary
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Lawyers' Visits X Post-Movement	-9.350***	3.543**	-5.990***	4.302**
	(2.517)	(1.694)	(1.373)	(1.731)
Benazir Visits X Post-Movement	-5.508**	0.403	-0.438	-3.229
	(2.523)	(2.541)	(1.331)	(2.581)
Time Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean Dep. Var.	43.573	21.468	71.426	61.722
Observations	666	1638	666	666

Note: This table presents the effect of lawyers' visits on the main outcome variables, controlling for Benazir Bhutto's Visits × Post-Movement. Support for the Pro-Lawyers Movement is measured by the total vote share of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Robust standard errors, clustered at the district level, are reported in parentheses. Column (2) includes controls for the share of rejected votes, total polled votes, total registered voters, and Benazir Visits × Post-Movement. Columns (1) and (3) control for trust in the judiciary, trust in the police, and Benazir Visits × Post-Movement, while Column (4) controls for trust in the army, trust in the police, and Benazir Visits × Post-Movement. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.