Why Do Dissatisfied Individuals Not Rebel? Life Satisfaction, Deprivation, Religiosity, and Protest Behavior in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Existing literature frequently highlights low life satisfaction as the driver of collective protest and rebellion. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province in Pakistan (bordering Afghanistan) experiences high income inequality, economic marginalization and political exclusion, yet community-level protests or rebellion are absent. This study postulates that *adverse objective conditions* conceptualized as ***apparent life satisfaction*** may be mitigated by *subjective resources* understood as the drivers of ***presumed life satisfaction.*** By highlighting how subjective well-being transforms structural grievances into resilience rather than rebellion, this study is the first to offer a systematic explanation for the persistence of political stability in highly deprived settings. Using primary-level data of 400 respondents collected through stratified random sampling, and applying multi-linear regression methods, this study examines the independent and interactive effects of the apparent and presumed dimensions of life satisfaction on an individual's willingness to protest. Results indicate that economic marginalization and income inequality individually exert positive effects on protest propensity, however, when the variables are interacted with religiosity and social networks, they reverse in sign. Thus, higher levels of presumed life satisfaction substantially weaken, and in some cases inverts, the mobilizing effects of material deprivation, indicating that subjective well-being operates as a powerful buffer against grievance-driven political action.

Keywords: Life Satisfaction, Relative Deprivation, Economic Marginalization, Religiosity and Social Networks, Political Protest

JEL Classifications: A13, J1, P10, Z12

1. INTRODUCTION

Life satisfaction is a fundamental aspect of human well-being, however, globally, individuals often struggle to achieve contentment in their lifespan[i]. Life satisfaction encompasses dimensions such as physical and mental health, social relationships, financial stability, personal achievements, and a sense of meaning and purpose (Clark, 1997; Diener et al., 2002; Pavot & Diener, 2008; Tantawi, 2023; Veenhoven, 1996). The concept of life satisfaction can be categorized into *apparent* and *presumed* life satisfaction. Presumed life satisfaction is defined as personal and subjective judgment made by an individual based on their own feelings and experiences. On the other hand, apparent life satisfaction is defined as the objective assessment of individual's life satisfaction, focusing on observable and measurable indicators such as external achievements, socioeconomic status, and overall well-being. Various studies suggest that apparent life satisfaction has a greater impact on life satisfaction than presumed life satisfaction [ii]. When individuals experience low apparent life satisfaction, they may compare themselves to others who may appear more satisfied with their lives, leading to a state of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation is defined as being deprived of something others possess, which can lead to feelings of injustice and frustration [iii]. Gurr (2015) studied rebellion and revolution, focusing on relative deprivation as its driver. In addition, Davies (1962) argue that revolutions occur when individuals or groups experience a gap between their expectations and actual experiences, leading to frustration and anger.

Although relative deprivation is argued to be a phenomenon that can potentially lead to social unrest or rebellion [iv], yet several countries that experience rarely undergo social or political unrest. This may be because certain non-material but crucial factors may arguably provide individuals with a sense of meaning, which can reduce the intensity of rebellion and social unrest while facing relative deprivation. Such factors include, for instance, the strength of personal relationships, feelings of purpose and meaning, a sense of accomplishment and progress towards personal goals, religious beliefs, and social network/influence (Diener et al., 2011; Diener et al., 2002). Among these, religious factors play a significant role in promoting purpose and meaning in life. By providing individuals with a framework for understanding their place in the world, religious beliefs and practices can contribute to an overall sense of well-being (Ellison et al., 2001). Likewise, a family unit is also a contributing factor to life satisfaction. It offers individuals a sense of belonging and support, which can be invaluable during times of hardship[v]. Furthermore, the family unit can promote a sense of community and cooperation, reducing social unrest and rebellion [vi]. Similarly, social networks are also a significant factor in influencing life satisfaction. Individuals are inherently emotional creatures and are influenced by those around them. Positive social influence can contribute to happiness and contentment, while negative social influence can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction [vii].

By highlighting how subjective well-being transforms structural grievances into resilience rather than rebellion, this study offers a systematic explanation for the persistence of political stability in highly deprived settings. Using primary-level data of 400 respondents collected through stratified random sampling, and applying multi-linear regression methods, this study examines the independent and interactive effects of the apparent and presumed dimensions of

life satisfaction on an individual's willingness to protest. Results indicate that economic marginalization and income inequality individually exert positive effects on protest propensity, however, when the variables are interacted with religiosity and social networks, they reverse in sign. Thus, higher levels of presumed life satisfaction substantially weakens, and in some cases inverts, the mobilizing effects of material deprivation, indicating that subjective well-being operates as a powerful buffer against grievance-driven political action.

1.1 Socioeconomic Hardships, Marginalization, and Resurgent Violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Brief Overview

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), a province in northwestern Pakistan neighbouring Afghanistan has long been a focal point of socioeconomic challenges and political instability. KP has one of the highest levels of multidimensional poverty in Pakistan (Ministry of Planning, 2025), with a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) incidence of 53.5% and an intensity of 49.2%. These figures highlight the widespread deprivation across various dimensions such as education, health, and living standards, with the economic vulnerabilities being further exacerbated by income inequality, inadequate infrastructure, and limited industrial development, leaving large segments of the population marginalized and economically disenfranchised.

In recent years, the socio-political landscape of KP has become even more precarious due to the resurgence of militant violence, particularly following the Taliban's return to power in neighboring Afghanistan in August 2021. The increase in violence has fostered an environment where dissatisfaction, fear, and perceived injustice are now rampant in KP. This makes KP an ideal setting to explore how factors related to life satisfaction influence the willingness to engage in rebellion - or, conversely, why individuals may choose not to rebel despite severe dissatisfaction.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Setting

2.1 Willingness to Protest (Dependent Variable)

This study uses willingness to protest as a proxy for rebellion [viii]. Individuals are expected to have a high willingness to protest to voice dissatisfaction, grievances, and advocate for social change when lacking life satisfaction [ix]. Several scholars have studied civic engagement and political behavior by examining willingness to participate in protests[x]. There are many factors that can influence an individual's willingness to protest, including socio-demographic characteristics, political attitudes, efficacy beliefs, costs and benefits of protesting, social networks and organizational resources.[xi].

2.2 Apparent aspects of life satisfaction

From an economic point of view, life satisfaction can be seen as a function of an individual's consumption choices, as well as their social and institutional context [xii].

2.2.1 Income is a recognized factor that significantly influences life satisfaction by providing access to essential goods and services [xiii]. Research shows that higher income is often associated with higher life satisfaction (Clark et al., 2008; Easterlin, 1995, 2001; Kahneman & Deaton, 2010). To meeting basic needs, additional income may contribute to temporary

happiness through material possessions and experiences, but may not lead to long-term life satisfaction (Easterlin, 1995, 2001).

Hypothesis 1: Individuals with higher incomes exhibit greater life satisfaction and are therefore less likely to protest.

2.2.2 Perceived Income inequality, referring to the subjective assessment of uneven income distribution within a society, has been identified as a crucial factor influencing life satisfaction. Research conducted by Oshio & Urakawa, (2014) emphasizes the substantial impact of perceived income inequality on overall life satisfaction levels. The study suggests that higher levels of perceived income inequality are linked to lower levels of life satisfaction, shedding light on the relationship between societal wealth distribution and individual well-being.

Hypothesis 2: Individual with higher perception of income inequality exhibit lower levels of life satisfaction and are more likely to engage in protests.

2.2.3 Social capital consisting of networks, norms, and trust within a community, influences life satisfaction, and facilitates cooperation, mutual support, and belonging. Helliwell & Putnam (2004) suggest social capital contributes to improved well-being by enhancing individuals' access to resources, opportunities, and personal support systems. The presence of strong interpersonal connections and a supportive community can positively impact an individual's overall life satisfaction by fostering a sense of belonging, connectedness, and community cohesion [xiv].

Hypothesis 3: Individuals with higher social capital exhibit higher life satisfaction and are less likely to engage in protests.

2.2.4 Institutions encompassing legal frameworks, political systems, and social norms, have a significant impact on individuals' life satisfaction by shaping the opportunities and limitations they encounter [xv]. Certain institutions play a crucial role in providing access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and housing. By ensuring the availability and accessibility of essential services, institutions create a more favourable environment for individuals to thrive, leading to higher life satisfaction [xvi].

Hypothesis 4: Stronger and more effective government institutions are associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and less willingness to protest.

2.2.5 Political marginalization significantly influences life satisfaction by shaping an individual's access to societal resources and participation in decision-making processes [xvii]. Previous research suggests that higher levels of political marginalization may be associated with lower life satisfaction [xviii]. Individuals experiencing political marginalization may face challenges in accessing opportunities and resources, leading to a decreased sense of well-being.

Hypothesis 5: Politically marginalized individual exhibit lower life satisfaction and are more willing to protest.

2.2.6 Economic marginalization influences individuals' willingness to engage in political protest by shaping their access to financial resources and opportunities [xix]. The relationship between economic marginalization and the willingness to protest is complex, as economic hardships may amplify dissatisfaction and frustration, driving individuals to seek alternative avenues to voice their socio-economic concerns [xx]. Individuals facing economic marginalization may perceive protest as a means of challenging the status quo and advocating for socio-economic reforms.

Hypothesis 6: Economically marginalized individual exhibit lower life satisfaction and are more willing to protest.

2.2.7 Relative deprivation is the perception of being worse off than other people in comparison to an assumed benchmark[xxi]. Material, economic, or psychological disparities can cause relative deprivation (Crosby, 1984; Webber, 2007). Experiencing relative deprivation can trigger negative emotions such as frustration, anger, and anxiety, and can lead to various forms of social and political outbursts, including protest, violence, and extremism [xxii]. Research has shown that low life satisfaction is negatively associated with perceptions of social status and well-being [xxiii]. Individuals who are dissatisfied with their lives tend to compare themselves with others who are better off and perceive themselves as relatively deprived [xxiv]. This perception of relative deprivation can be exacerbated by societal and cultural norms that emphasize competition and material success [xxv].

Hypothesis 7: Relative deprivation invokes a sense of low life satisfaction and can catalyze willingness to protest.

2.2.8 Collective relative deprivation is considered a pivotal factor influencing individuals' propensity to participate in political protest by shaping their perceptions of shared injustice and unequal distribution of resources within a group or community [xxvi]. Researchers have found that collective relative deprivation may lead to a higher likelihood of political activism, since individuals perceive a gap between their collective aspirations and current socioeconomic conditions. When individuals experience collective relative deprivation, they may view political protest as a means to advocate for social change and address perceived injustices.

Hypothesis 8: Collective Relative deprivation invokes a sense of low life satisfaction and can catalyse willingness to protest.

2.3 Presumed aspect of life satisfaction

Presumed life satisfaction, a multifaceted construct influenced by various factors, extends beyond material and objective conditions to encompass subjective and psychological elements [xxvii]. Notably, research suggests a positive association between life satisfaction and certain presumed aspects such as religious beliefs, family ties, and social networks [xxviii].

2.3.1 Religiosity and life satisfaction tend to be positively associated. It has been suggested that religious beliefs may motivate individuals to engage in peaceful forms of social change and resistance [xxix]. In contrast, other studies have revealed religious beliefs can also trigger

radicalization and extremism, especially when associated with fundamentalist and exclusivist beliefs [xxx].

Hypothesis 9: Individuals with higher levels of religiosity exhibits higher levels of life satisfaction and are less likely to protest.

2.3.2 Family ties promote resilience and coping abilities by providing a sense of belonging, emotional support, and a social network [xxxi]. Positive family links, such as communication, common interest and support during difficult times, lead to higher levels of life satisfaction and fulfilment. In some cases, families may instil certain beliefs, values, or ideologies that promote or support aggressive or confrontational actions [xxxii]. As a result, individuals may resort to protests or violent means of expressing their dissatisfaction or seeking social change.

Hypothesis 10: Individuals with strong family ties experience higher life satisfaction and are less likely to engage in protests.

2.3.3 Social networks offer belonging, purpose, and meaning to individuals who feel cut off from mainstream society [xxxiii]. However, in some instances, social networks can breed extremist ideologies, particularly if individuals create a closed and insulating environment that excludes diverse ideas.

Hypothesis 11: Individuals with strong social network exhibit higher life satisfaction and are less likely to protest.

3. Data and empirical strategy

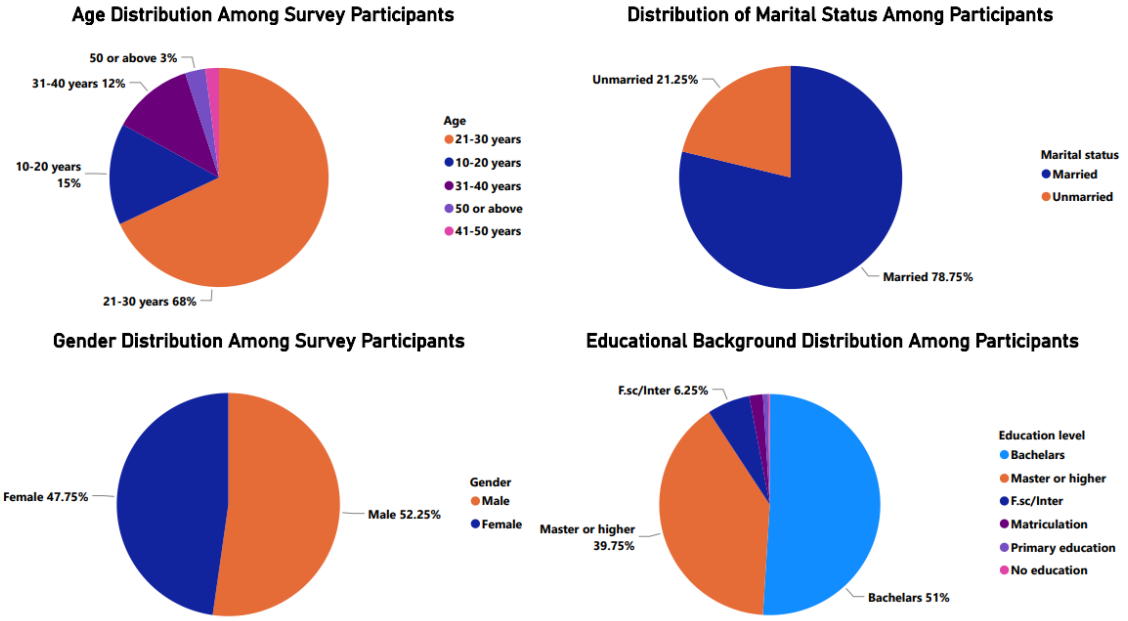
3.1 Sampling

This study uses collection of primary data from KP to estimate the impact of life satisfaction on willingness to protest. By using the Taro Yamane's formula for sampling, 400 individuals are chosen to represent the population of KP as per Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2020. The use of stratified sampling guarantees that a diverse range of demographics and socio-economic factors are well-represented from each region of KP. Moreover, random sampling methods within each stratum are utilized to ensure credibility and applicability of the chosen respondents. In total, 228 individuals are chosen from central KP area, 87 individuals from the southern KP area, and 85 individuals from the northern KP region.

3.2 Demographics

In the sample, most participants belonged to the 21-30 age group (68.50%). Gender distribution was equitable (47.75% female). Educational attainment levels varied (51.00% holding bachelor's degrees), while family size distribution ranged from 1 to 10 members, with the most common category being 6 to 10 members (46.75%). Additionally, majority of participants were unmarried (78.25%). Figure 1 illustrate the demographics in visualization below.

Figure 1: Demographics Visualization



3.3 Willingness to protest

The main outcome variable of the empirical analysis is the degree to which respondents are willing to protest in the face of dissatisfaction. The study operationalizes willingness to protest through an index of seven survey items, with some adapted from Jost et al., (2011). Respondents are asked about their (i) participation in peaceful protests to express dissatisfaction with injustices in Pakistani society and advocate for social change, (ii) willingness to occupy a government building as a form of protest, (iii) willingness to sign a petition or send a letter of protest, (iv) willingness to boycott taxes as a protest, (v) views on the acceptability of engaging in a strike, (vi) attitudes towards a political leaders advocating violence and (vii) willingness to express dissatisfaction with the government through social media. Each of the variables are measured on a scale from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. The seven items are then standardized and combined to create an index of willingness to protest (willingness to protest index, Cronbach's α 0.75).

The data on willingness to protest reveals willingness to engage in various forms of protest, from peaceful demonstrations to financial resistance and digital activism. Notably, there is a strong rejection of violent tactics, illustrated by the disapproval of advocating for attacks on government property. The data indicates trust in established channels for expressing grievances, such as signing petitions or participating in peaceful protests.

4. Results

The study uses an ordinary least squares regression model. All models control for the covariates listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Determinants of willingness to protest

VARIABLES	Model WTP
FACTORS OF APPARENT LIFE SATISFACTION	
Income	0.04 (0.044)
Income inequality	0.162** (0.71)
Social Capital	-.021 (.052)
Institutions	-.084* .05
Relative Deprivation	.07 (.052)
Collective Relative Deprivation	-.006 (.039)
Economic Marginalization	.15*** (0.52)
Political Marginalization	-.01 (.047)
FACTORS OF PRESUMED LIFE SATISFACTION	
Religiosity	.021 (0.061)
Family ties	.022 (.047)
Social networks	021 (.041)
MODERATION	
Economic marginalization * Religiosity	-.194*** (.066)
Economic marginalization * Social networks	-.118** (.046)
Income Inequality * Social networks	-.116** (.057)
SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CONTROLS	
Gender (0 = Female, 1 = Male)	.003 (.071)
Age	-.182*** (.065)
Marital Status	-.032 (.096)
Education	-.036 (.043)
Employment Level	-.049 (.068)

Family Size	-.001 (.032)
Observations	400
Note: Ordinary least squares regressions. Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1	

4.1 Apparent life satisfaction

4.1.1 Income

Income is operationalized through an index based on two survey items, adapted from Di Tella et al., (2001) and Lester, (1987). The items asked about (i) monthly household income (55% earning above USD 170 monthly) and (ii) satisfaction with family income (56% satisfied).

The two variables are standardized to create an income index (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.43$). The coefficient of 0.04 on the variable income in Table 1 is statistically insignificant, suggesting no evidence of a relationship between willingness to protest and the income index.

4.1.2 Income Inequality

To measure income inequality, the study uses a 5-item survey adapted from Du et al., (2022) and Ward & King, (2019). The items assessed (i) satisfaction with the family's economic situation (45% expressing satisfaction), (ii) if respondents believed there was a need for resource redistribution (46% agreeing), (iii) concerns about inequality affecting respondents and their families (59% agreeing), (iv) perceptions of wealth distribution (76% disagreed) and (v) whether income should be equally distributed (38% agreeing).

The study standardized these five variables to create an income inequality index (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.35$). The regression analysis (Table 1) showed a significant correlation between income inequality and the willingness to protest, with a coefficient of 0.162, which is statistically significant. The results reinforce the idea that economic disparity plays a key role in driving protest behavior.

4.1.2 Social capital

Social capital is measured using three survey items adapted from Inagaki & Eisenberger, 2016 and Warren & Johnson, (1995) Inagaki & Eisenberger (2016) and Warren & Johnson (1995). The items assessed (i) support from the community committee or *jirga* (45% agreeing), (ii) concerns expressed by neighbours during difficult times (19% responding often) and (iii) understanding shown by employers, colleagues, or peers during emergencies (50% agreeing).

These items are standardized to form a social capital index (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.53$). However, regression analysis in Table 1 does not reveal a statistically significant relationship between social capital and the willingness to protest.

4.1.3 Institutions

To measure institutional performance, the study uses five items adapted from Axelsson et al., (2007). The item assessed (i) satisfaction with the political system (89% disagreeing), (ii) public healthcare services provided (62% dissatisfied), (iii) satisfaction with the public education system (69% dissatisfied), (iv) satisfaction with the judicial system (77% dissatisfied) and (v) overall satisfaction with the government (84% dissatisfied).

The five items are standardized and combined into a government institutions index (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.80$). The regression analysis in Table 1 show a significant negative correlation between government institutional performance and the willingness to protest, with a coefficient of -0.084, which is statistically significant.

4.1.4 Individual relative deprivation

This concept is measured using seven survey items. The items asked respondents about their (i) feelings about their achievements (52% satisfied), (ii) assessed perceptions of opportunities (47% satisfied with opportunities), (iii) emotional reactions to treatment in society (49% satisfied), (iv) economic perceptions (38% satisfied), (v) perceived discrimination (40% felt discriminated), (vi) fair treatment (45% satisfied) and (vii) economic accessibility (49% satisfied).

Thee seven items are standardized to create an index of individual relative deprivation (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$). However, regression analysis in Table 1 does not show statistically significant evidence linking individual relative deprivation to the willingness to protest.

4.1.5 Collective Relative deprivation

The items assessed in this concept include (i) perceptions of economic disparities based upon ethnicity (48% agreed), (ii) emotional reactions regarding treatment of their ethnicity (60% felt discriminated), (iii) beliefs about ethnic discrimination (54% felt discriminated), (iv) unfair treatment based upon ethnicity (58% agreeing) and (v) perceived opportunities for their ethnicity (57% felt discriminated).

The six items are combined and standardized to create an index of collective relative deprivation (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$). However, the regression analysis in Table 1 does not provide statistically significant evidence linking collective relative deprivation to the willingness to protest.

4.1.6 Economic marginalization

This concept is operationalized using an index derived from three survey items. The items examined (i) perceptions of wealth (49% dissatisfied with opportunities available), (ii) barriers faced towards job opportunities (40% responded often) and (iii) perceptions of economic favouritism (42% agreed).

All items are standardized to create an economic marginalization index (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.44$). Regression analysis in Table 1 reveals a significant correlation between economic marginalization and willingness to protest, with a coefficient of 0.15, that is statistically significant.

4.1.7 Political marginalization

The items assessed in this concept include respondents' (i) intention to vote in the next election (49% responded likely), (ii) perceptions of government's representation (60% dissatisfied) and (iii) feeling towards government's decisions based upon public opinion (52% disagreed).

These three items are standardized to create a political marginalization index (Cronbach's α = 0.54). However, the regression analysis in Table 1 does not provide statistically significant evidence linking political marginalization to the willingness to protest.

4.2 Presumed aspects of life satisfaction

4.2.1 Religiosity

The concept of religiosity linked with greater satisfaction is operationalized through an index of five survey items, some adapted from Saurabh et al., (2009) [xxxiv]. The items assessed (i) the frequency of visits to a place of worship (75% visiting daily), (ii) religious beliefs (80% identified as Muslim), (iii) the sense of meaning derived from religious beliefs (85% agreed), (iv) interest in religious topics (83% agreed) and (v) use of social media to remain informed regarding religious issues (54% responded often).

These five items are standardized to create a religiosity index (Cronbach's α = 0.57). However, the regression analysis presented in Table 1 does not yield statistically significant results linking religiosity to the willingness to protest.

4.2.2 Family ties

This concept was operationalized using an index of three survey items, adapted from Hill et al., (2001).

The items examined (i) the relationship with the mother (88% reported positive relationship), (ii) the relationship with the father (86% reported positive relationship) and (iii) the overall willingness of family members to support each (89% agreed).

The three items are standardized to create a family ties index (Cronbach's α = 0.84). However, the regression analysis presented in Table 1 do not yield statistically significant evidence linking family ties to the willingness to protest.

4.2.3 Social Networks

This concept is operationalized using an index of four survey items, adapted from Cohen, (2015). The items assessed (i) the frequency of communication with friends (42% stated often), (ii) number of relatives (18% reported no close relatives), (iii) overall satisfaction with social networking (51% satisfied) and (iv) having stable friendships (38% agreed).

The four items are standardized to create a social network index (Cronbach's α = 0.59). The coefficient, which is statistically significant, indicates a positive relationship between the use of social networks and the likelihood of protest.

4.3 Interactions between apparent and presumed life satisfaction indicators

4.3.1 Economic marginalization * Religiosity

The regression analysis reveals a statistically significant moderation effect between economic marginalization and religiosity on willingness to protest. Specifically, individuals experiencing economic marginalization exhibit a decreased willingness to protest when they have higher levels of religiosity. This finding implies that religiosity plays a crucial role in reducing the likelihood of an individual protesting in response to economic challenges. Scholarly research supports this notion that religiosity can influence individuals' coping mechanisms and resilience in the face of adversity [xxxv]. Pargament, (2002) highlights the protective function of religious beliefs and practices in buffering individuals against psychological distress associated with life stressors. Similarly, Koenig et al. (2012) discuss the role of religiosity in promoting positive coping strategies and enhancing well-being, particularly among marginalized populations.

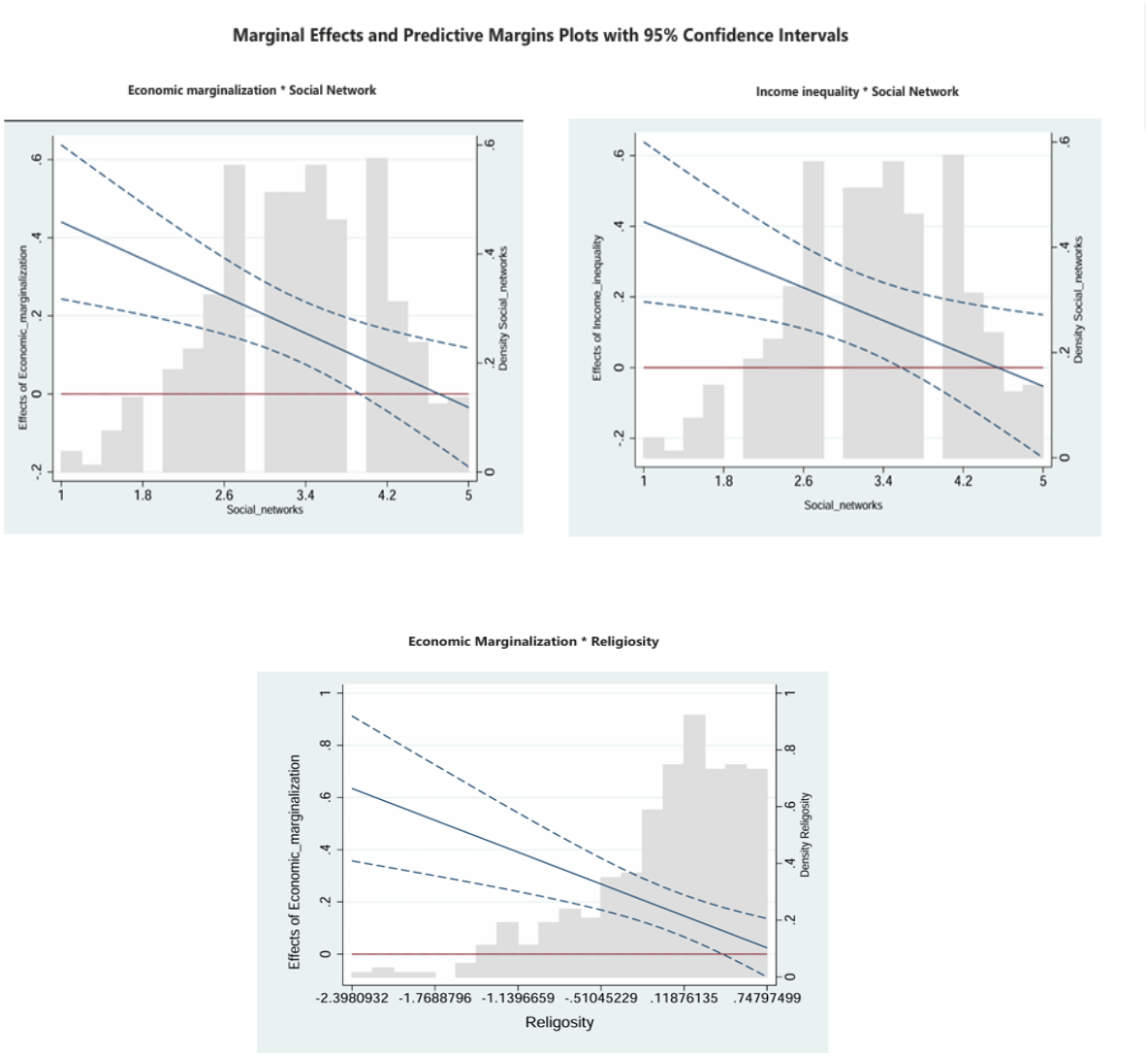
4.3.2 Economic marginalization * social network

The regression analysis also unveils a significant moderation effect between economic marginalization and social networks on willingness to protest. The negative coefficient indicates that individuals facing economic marginalization experience a moderated level of dissatisfaction when they possess stronger social networks. Previous scholarly research supports the role of social networks in mitigating the negative impact of socioeconomic stressors on individuals' well-being [xxxvi]. Thoits (2011) highlights the protective function of social support networks in buffering individuals against the psychological consequences of economic hardship. Similarly, Umberson & Karas Montez (2010) discuss the role of social ties in promoting resilience and adaptive coping strategies among disadvantaged populations.

4.3.3 Economic inequality * social networks

The regression analysis further reveals a significant moderation effect between income inequality and social networks on willingness to protest. The negative coefficient suggests that individuals living in societies characterized by higher levels of income inequality experience a moderated level of dissatisfaction when they possess stronger social networks. Prior research supports the notion that social networks play a crucial role in buffering the negative impact of socioeconomic disparities on individuals' well-being [xxxvii]. For instance, Kawachi & Berkman (2001) discuss the protective function of social capital in reducing the health consequences of income inequality. Similarly, Wilkinson & Pickett (2009) emphasize the role of social connections in promoting social cohesion and mitigating the detrimental effects of income inequality on societal well-being. To better understand the interaction between social network and income inequality, marginal plots are generated and presented in figure 2. It can be observed that as the level of social networks increases, the negative impact of income inequality on willingness to protest becomes less severe.

Figure 2: Marginal Effects



5. Discussion and conclusion

This study examines the determinants of life satisfaction in relation to rebellion and social unrest in Pakistan. A comprehensive literature review establishes the theoretical framework, highlighting key theories that connect life satisfaction to rebellion. The research differentiates between *apparent* life satisfaction and *presumed* life satisfaction, revealing that rebellion is predicted by factors like income inequality, economic marginalization, and weak government institutions, while being moderated by religiosity and social networks.

Results of this research have important takeaways for governments, policymakers and political stakeholders. First, they emphasize the predictive power of income inequality in relation to rebellion, with individuals perceiving higher levels of income inequality likely to experience lower life satisfaction, leading to increased tendencies for rebellious behavior. This aligns with previous studies demonstrating a relationship between income inequality and life satisfaction (e.g., Bjørnskov et al., 2007; Graham & Felton, 2006; Oishi et al., 2011). Second, the findings reveals that weak government institutions significantly predict rebellion. Inadequacies within these institutions cultivate an environment of insecurity and frustration, leading to a perception of a lack of responsiveness and fairness, fostering conditions conducive to rebellion. This aligns with literature emphasizing the impact of governance on societal well-being [xxxviii]. Third, the results highlight economic marginalization as a predictive factor for rebellion, with individuals experiencing limited access to resources and opportunities statistically more likely to engage in rebellious behaviour. This aligns with broader social science literature [xxxix], emphasizing the connection between economic conditions and social stability, whereby addressing economic marginalization is crucial for fostering social justice and reducing unrest.

This research contributes to the existing literature by being the first to disentangle factors related to apparent and presumed life satisfaction. It is unique in providing quantitative insight into the moderating role of religiosity in shaping protest behaviour, when combined with economic marginalization. Furthermore, the analysis quantitatively also show that social networks significantly moderate the effect of economic marginalization on protest behaviour. Finally, it builds upon the evidence in the ongoing debates that income inequality, economic marginalization, and weak government institutions directly drive protest and rebellion.

5.1 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to strict ethical research practices to ensure the rights and privacy of all participants. Before participation, respondents were provided with a detailed written statement, outlining the purpose of the research and emphasizing that their responses were solely for research purposes. The questionnaire explicitly stated that no personal identifying information was requested or recorded. Additionally, participants were informed that their responses would be held in strict confidence and would not be shared with any third parties. Participants were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw at any stage without any consequences.

5.2 Funding Declaration

No funding source to declare.

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