

**BETWEEN DEVOTION AND DEMOCRACY:
Religiosity, Religious Fundamentalism, and Support for
Democracy in Contemporary India**

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the relationship between religiosity, religious fundamentalism, and mass attitudes towards support for democracy in contemporary India by using World Values Survey data for wave 6 and 7. It builds on previous scholarship on the relationship between religion and democracy by distinguishing between religiosity and religious fundamentalism, and by conceptualizing democratic support along four distinct dimensions: principled support for democracy, rejection of authoritarian alternatives, attitudes towards gender equality, and tolerance of out-groups. Through multivariate OLS regression models, the findings demonstrate that religious fundamentalism is consistently negatively related to democratic support, whereas religiosity presents mixed associations for the various dimensions. National pride, a proxy for the nationalist nature of Hindu fundamentalist mobilization, also reacts in a mixed manner. This study highlights how Hindu fundamentalism, embedded within a Hindu nationalist ideology, is associated with decreased democratic support in the contemporary period. It also underscores the need to differentiate religious belief and behavior from exclusionary and absolutist religious fundamentalism when investigating democratic support. This research contributes to the broader literature on religion and democracy by situating the Indian case within global debates about actor-driven polarization, socio-economic modernization, and democratic backsliding.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

α	Cronbach's Alpha
ω	McDonald's Omega
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CDCS	Center for the Study of Developing Societies
CR	Christian Right
DV	Dependent Variable(s)
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
IV	Independent Variable(s)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization(s)
OBC	Other Backward Castes
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
RSS	Rastriya Swayamsewak Sangh
SC	Scheduled Castes
ST	Scheduled Tribes
USA	United States of America
WVS	World Values Survey

CONSTRUCTED INDICES

AA	Authoritarian Rejection Index
GL	Gender-Liberal Attitudes Index
NP	National Pride
PD	Principled Support for Democracy Index
RB	Religiosity Index
RF	Religious Fundamentalism Index
RN	Religio-National Identity Index
TRUST	Out-Group Tolerance Index

1. INTRODUCTION

A large literature has investigated the relationship between religion and democracy and found it to be variegated. Across cross-national studies, some scholars have found positive associations between religiosity and democratic commitment, while others have noted that religion's association with traditional values has led to weaker commitment to both intrinsic and liberal components of democracy. These scholars have treated religious belief, behavior, and social engagement as facets of religiosity, but have not treated religious fundamentalism – characterized by absolutism, dogmatism, and exclusivism; and related to prejudice and authoritarian orientations – as an independent factor with a distinct relationship to democratic support. Furthermore, these studies on the relationship between religion and mass democratic support have often honed in on Christian and Muslim majority countries. This study builds on this literature to investigate whether the relationship holds for a Hindu majority country, namely, India. This is one way in which this study contributes to the broader literature on religion and democracy.

India – the world's largest democracy – has recently seen much debate surrounding the character of its democracy. The role of state and state-adjacent actors in eroding India's democratic and secular liberal institutions has been well documented. As the Hindu nationalist ideology known as Hindutva has increasingly gained traction in popular consciousness, political contestation has evolved to center the deep ethno-religious cleavages that underpin Indian society and increase the salience of fundamentalist religious appeals. This begs the question of whether citizens' attitudes towards and support for democracy have weakened alongside institutional erosion. To this end, I ask the questions: *Do more religious citizens, or those*

endorsing religious fundamentalism, differ systematically in their support for democracy in contemporary India? How have these relationships evolved over time under Hindutva-aligned politics? For this analysis, I use World Values Survey wave 7 data for India as the primary sample. I also replicate the analysis on the wave 6 sample in order to probe change in these attitudes under the rule of the Hindutva-aligned Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

In section 2, I develop the theoretical framework on which this study rests. The literature indicates that “support for democracy” is multidimensional, both in its conceptualization and its measurement. Citizens can continue to approve of democracy in the abstract while still tolerating authoritarian alternatives or endorsing illiberal values (Schedler and Sarsfield 2007). Therefore, treating democratic support as unidimensional risks conflating overt democratic endorsement with a more substantive commitment to democracy. I first disaggregate mass attitudes towards democratic support into four different dimensions using WVS-based indicators: overt support – capturing principled endorsement of democracy, substantive support – captured through rejection of authoritarian rule, and two dimensions of liberal-substantive support, captured through the integration of emancipative values, which rest on attitudes towards gender egalitarianism and out-group tolerance, represented by inter-religious trust in this study. I then examine prior cross-national research into the relationship between religiosity and democracy. I also provide a brief overview of the conceptualization of fundamentalism and its relationship with democracy. Finally, I clarify the context of religious fundamentalism and fundamentalist mobilization in India. The current political environment imbues religious fundamentalist mobilization with a pronounced majoritarian nationalist register through the mobilization of a “Hindu vote,” so that the resulting polarization increases the relevance of national pride as a covariate of democratic attitudes. Therefore, I also include national pride as an indicator in the analysis.

In section 3, I run exploratory factor analysis on pre-selected survey instruments which are consistent with prior empirical operationalization. I then construct indices from the survey instruments that load on the same underlying latent dimensions and perform min-max normalization to rescale the constructed indices to a 0-1 scale for easier comparability. In section 4, I first conduct a preliminary descriptive analysis to preview the directional relationships between group identification and the relevant dimensions of democratic support. I then run multivariate OLS regressions to ascertain strength of relationships on the four dimensions of democratic support for the wave 7 and wave 6 data.

The analysis results in four primary findings. Religiosity has a complex relationship with democratic support as it is positively associated with overt endorsements of democracy, but negatively associated with authoritarian rejection and out-group tolerance and has an almost null relationship with gender-egalitarian or gender-liberal attitudes. This aligns with the prior literature as it demonstrates that religiosity is positively related to democratic rhetoric but negatively related with procedural democratic guardrails and liberal pluralism (Meyer, Tope and Price 2008; Bomhoff and Gu 2012; Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan 2013; Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom 2022; Huber and Mohamed 2023)². Religious fundamentalism is consistently negative across all dimensions of democracy, demonstrating a significant negative correlation with overt endorsement, authoritarian rejection, and gender-liberal attitudes as well as a directionally negative relationship but non-significant with out-group tolerance. National pride was found to be more ambivalent, being positively associated with overt support for democracy and gender-liberal attitudes, but non-significant for authoritarian rejection and negatively associated with out-group tolerance. This is theoretically consistent with the conception of a majoritarian

² More information available in Appendix 1.

orientation towards democracy where there is lower tolerance towards religious out-groups in an increasingly polarized political landscape. Finally, this study also indicates that political context matters. In comparing the wave 6 and wave 7 samples, I find that the negative relationship between religious fundamentalism and overt support for democracy is stronger in the latter sample. Additionally, the negative association between religiosity and out-group tolerance is also stronger in the wave 7 sample, suggesting that the more polarized climate under the BJP has led to out-group suspicion diffusing among religious people beyond just self-identified fundamentalists.

Some key contributions arise from this study. Conceptually, it demonstrates the value in separating overt endorsements of democracy from more substantive measures of democratic support. This disaggregation allows for a more nuanced approach in estimating how different factors interact with the distinct dimensions of democratic support. This can help resolve puzzles regarding the mixed nature of correlations when all items indicating democratic support are pooled into one construct. Empirically, it distinguishes religiosity from religious fundamentalism and demonstrates that their associations with democratic support are different across the various dimensions. It extends the conceptualization of religious fundamentalism – a concept based in the Christian tradition – to a Hindu-majority country with different underlying values. It also reframes the discussion from the role of actors in fundamentalist mobilization and shows an empirical connection between religious fundamentalist attitudes and support for democracy. Substantively, it situates the India-specific findings within a context where nationalist sentiments are salient and demonstrates how national pride can be a significant covariate in analyses regarding the relationship between religion and democracy.

2. THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

2.1 Dimensions of Democratic Support

Political science scholars have long identified the multidimensional nature of mass attitudes towards democracy. In his seminal work, Easton (1975) distinguishes democratic support into two dimensions of specific and diffuse support. Specific support is based on evaluations of performance and trust in political actors, and is therefore coherent with attitudes that measure satisfaction with democracy. On the other hand, diffuse support is composed of belief in the intrinsic value of democracy and the legitimacy of democratic norms and values. Therefore, it is more coherent with overt statements in support of democracy. These differing dimensions of democratic support play out very clearly in large scale survey research. Research finds that public dissatisfaction with specific outcomes and negative evaluations of democratic performance does not erode public *diffuse* public support for democracy as a whole (Norris 2011; Bratton and Mattes 2001).

The dimensions of specific and diffuse support for democracy conceptualized by Easton mostly capture either support through satisfaction with the regime, or support for procedural conceptualizations of democracy, characterized by elements such as rule of law, accountability, and competitive elections, respectively (Dahl 1971; Schumpeter 1942). Inglehart and Welzel (2005) further identify self-expression, and emancipative values as key underlying dimensions of support for democracy distinct from regime satisfaction. Emancipative values have been characterized through two aspects: firstly, a liberating orientation, emphasizing freedom of choice; and secondly, egalitarianism in access to opportunities (Welzel 2013). They are a consequence of socioeconomic modernization and the move away from survivalist values; and have been found to be strongly associated with democratic desires. Therefore, stronger

emancipative values prompt people to define democracy in liberal terms; that is, in terms of the equal freedoms through which democracy empowers the people. They further determine gender egalitarianism to be a core aspect of emancipative values, along with what they term as “trust in other people” (Norris and Inglehart 2003; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Welzel 2013). Therefore, it is clear that gender-liberal attitudes and out-group trust are core elements that underpin support for democracy.

Ambiguities exist not only in the definition of democratic support as a political concept, but also in its measurement. Tapping only overt measures of democratic support may lead to overdetermination. It is entirely plausible that social desirability mechanisms lead survey respondents to pay lip service to democracy while still tolerating authoritarian and illiberal elements. Schedler and Sarsfield (2007) distinguish between different kinds of democrats: liberal democrats, who express both overt support for democracy and support for its liberal values; intolerant democrats, who express overt support for democracy but intolerance towards dissenting opinions; paternalistic democrats, who support democracy both overtly and in its liberal elements, but not in their attitudes towards freedom of organization and expression; exclusionary democrats, who support democracy over authoritarianism but have superficial commitment to liberal values; homophobic democrats, who are supportive of democracy but intolerant and hostile to out-groups such as the queer community; and ambivalent democrats who are instrumental (performance-based) in their support of democracy and ambivalent on liberal values. Further, empirical research has also found that survey respondents in western democracies can express high ‘overt’ support for democracy while simultaneously expressing attitudes of tolerance to authoritarian elements such as strong leaders, which corresponds to dissatisfaction with state performance under democracy. This has been linked to the increase in

influence of populist leaders who foster illiberal politics under democratic banners and incite erosion of the liberal elements of democracy (Foa and Mounk 2016).

Therefore, it is clear that individuals can simultaneously hold various conflicting attitudes towards democratic support. On the basis of this theoretical overview, I distinguish four dimensions of democratic support for this study which are described in Table 1.

Table 1: Conceptualization of the Dimensions of Democratic Support

Construct	WVS Item Codes	What the Item Represents	What the Construct Captures
PD; Principled or Overt Support for Democracy	Q250	Endorsement of democracy in the abstract	Captures normative commitment to democratic rule.
	Q238	Evaluation of democracy as a preferred political system	
AA; Rejection of Authoritarian Rule	Q235	Preference towards a strong leader	Reverse-coding of these items captures willingness to reject non-democratic alternatives and thus, procedural guardrails for democracy.
	Q237	Preference of army rule	
	Q239 ³	Preference of religious rule	
GL; Gender-liberal Attitudes	Q29	Support for women as political leaders	Taps values related to gender egalitarianism , a core substantive dimension underpinning support for democracy
	Q30	Women are thought to be equally deserving of higher education as men	
	Q31	Support for women as business executives	
TRUST; Out-group Religious Tolerance	Q62	Trust toward people of other religions	Measures inclusive social tolerance , a core substantive underlying dimension of democracy, with a specific focus on religion which is relevant for the India-

³ Q239 (religious rule) is unavailable in wave 6 due to which AA is constructed from Q235 and Q237 only for the wave 6 regression analysis.

			specific ethno-religious cleavage
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2.2 Religion, Religious Fundamentalism and Democratic Support

Religion and religious beliefs, especially as adopted by right-wing and conservative parties, have increasingly become a major aspect in the formulation of political agendas, as seen by the prominence of debates on abortion rights and sexual freedom in the United States. This adoption of conservative religious ideas by a major party has led to a culture of polarization and divisiveness and further deepened the salience of the religious-secular divide. However, scholars within political science agree that it is not religion in general but specifically religious fundamentalism which is creating this culture of intolerance, and laying the groundwork for rising authoritarianism (Giroux 2005; Lo Mascolo 2023).

With the increased salience of religious issues in the current political debate worldwide, it becomes crucial to note the difference between religiosity on the one hand and religious fundamentalism on the other. Religiosity, which is characterized by religious belief and religious behavior, is not necessarily linked to prejudice, conservatism, and anti-democratic sentiments. In fact, as most religious philosophy emphasizes values such as neighborliness, cooperation, and interpersonal and inter-group tolerance, religiosity should be associated with lack of prejudice. Empirical research in Switzerland proved this to be true as individual spirituality and being strongly religious was associated with less religious prejudice towards Islam when not accompanied by fundamentalist religious orientations (Yendell and Huber 2020). Hunsberger (1995) also asserts that it is the close association between religious fundamentalism and right-wing authoritarianism (rather than its association with religious beliefs) which leads to positive correlations with measures of prejudice.

2.2.1 Religion and Democracy

While scholars universally agree that religious fundamentalism has a negative effect on democratic support, the relationship between religiosity and attitudes toward democracy is much more contested in the literature. Research based on public opinion surveys in Africa has found that religious faith has a positive effect on political trust and involvement, as religious citizens are found to be more trusting of their politicians and take greater interest in public affairs (McCauley and Gyimah-Boadi 2009). Similar analyses in Indian states also finds that regardless of the population density, the type of party system (two-party or multiparty) or level of representation (regional or national), respondents more engaged in religious practice were consistently found to be more likely to perceive politicians and parties as more representative of their interests (Chhibber and Shastri 2014).

A study based on the 2005 World Values Survey also found degree of religious belief to be a strong attitudinal predictor for support for democracy. This result held true for both Catholic and Muslim countries, where strong attachment to Islam did not deter individuals from supporting democracy. The researchers did, however, find systematic differences in the substantive conceptualization of democracy between citizens of Catholic and Islamic countries ⁴ (Bomhoff and Gu 2011).

Empirical research based on 17 democracies in Europe found religious engagement to be associated with lower levels of support for democratic accountability. People with strong religious belief were found to be less likely to be committed to holding governments accountable

⁴ In Catholic countries, democracy was conceptualized as something with intrinsic value and embodied by greater tolerance of diversity, mutual trust, equality and freedom of expression. In Islamic countries, however, democracy was conceptualized almost exclusively for its economic benefits without necessarily endorsing the liberal aspects.

for their performance in office; and intense religious engagement was found to weaken evaluation of policy outcomes and governmental satisfaction (Just 2018).

In a large-scale empirical analysis of waves 5 and 6 of the World Values Survey, Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan (2013) also found that different aspects of religiosity interact differently with attitudes towards democracy. Contrary to Bomhoff and Gu, religious belief was found to be positively associated with traditional and survivalist values, and therefore, have a negative effect on overt and intrinsic support for democracy. However, religious engagement (or religious social behavior) and its associated increase in political interest and institutional trust was found to be linked to increased support for democracy. In further empirical research, they again demonstrate that religious group identities⁵ – operationalized through social religious engagement – are associated with reduced genuine support for democracy **except** in the case of minority religious groups who face differential and discriminatory treatment (Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom 2022). The stronger sense of minority religious identity is associated with stronger pro-democratic orientation due to contextual factors such as unfair treatment by the state.

Psychological research into the impact of religion on support for democratic norms also found that when directly linked, religious commitment is found to have a positive impact on level of support for democratic norms. However, this is only in the case that the religious beliefs do not influence psychological security through dogmatic tendencies, which are linked more to fundamentalism and authoritarian orientation, and leads to rejection of democratic values (Eisenstein and Clark 2017).

2.2.2 Religious Fundamentalism and Democracy

⁵ Which is more linked to religious fundamentalism due to the ethnic connotations of group identities.

Conceptualizing Religious Fundamentalism

The term “fundamentalism” first originated in the United States in the early 20th century to denote a specific conservative evangelical Christian Protestant movement⁶ in response to the perceived encroachment of liberalism within churches and the increasing secularism of American society (Riesebrodt 2000; Morris 2008; Litonjua 2018). The connotation of the term was then extended to describe other instances in the 1970-80s, particularly Islamic extremist movements (Marti 2010). Over time, the term “fundamentalism”, has been extended and abstracted from its origins in Christian Evangelical Protestantism to describe similar movements in all religions. *The Fundamentalism Project* has developed a set of four ideological and four organizational characteristics that can be used to identify fundamentalism: absolutism, selectivity, moral Manichaeism, and messianism as ideological features; and authoritarianism, behavioral requirements, sharp in-group boundaries, and “chosen-ness” as organizational features (Marty and Appleby 1991; Litonjua 2018). These ideological and organizational characteristics can also be organized into five distinct categories that define religious fundamentalists: belief, behavior, emotions, goals, and organizational structure.

i. Belief:

Religious fundamentalists seemingly have literalist interpretations of their sacred texts and an absolute belief in the truth and infallibility of their scripture (the ideological feature of absolutism). They also display a tendency towards dogmatism in their beliefs (Yendell and Huber 2020) and world views of reality which are starkly divided into

⁶ This fundamentalist movement demanded the belief and acceptance of five religious doctrinal beliefs in order to be Christian: The Bible as the absolute truth, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, the substitute atonement of Jesus Christ, wherein he took the punishment for the sins of the people, Christ’s resurrection from the dead and the imminent second coming of Christ. Fundamentalists also required belief in four additional tenets: the deification of Christ, the sinful nature of humanity, that salvation would be had through faith in God and that true believers would be resurrected on the Last Day of Judgment (Litonjua 2018).

‘light’ and ‘dark’ (the ideological feature of moral Manichaeism) (Ozzano 2009).

Regarding group-related beliefs, fundamentalists believe in their own superiority and the “divinely called” chosen-ness of their membership (the organizational feature of “chosen-ness” and ideological feature of messianism) (Ozzano 2009; Kindermann et al 2024).

ii. Behavior:

The behavior of religious fundamentalists is characterized by selective attitudes towards modernity and exclusivism (ideological feature of selectivity; organizational feature of chosen-ness – which requires solidarity, cohesion and commitment) (Litonjua 2018).

Religious fundamentalists are characterized by a strong sense of social cohesion, group belonging, and high level of coalitional commitment to one’s religious group (Wright 2016; Yendell and Huber 2020). This strong within-group commitment means that in and out-group relations are characterized by defensiveness, exclusivism, intolerance, hostility, and oppression respectively. Hindu and Buddhist fundamentalism, in particular, have extremely strong exclusivist tendencies and out-group hostility, which manifests in the form of cultural exclusivity and nationalism (Kindermann et al 2024). The groups also tend to have distinctive behavioral requirements, including permissible and non-permissible music, rules for dress, drinking, sexual identity, etc. which are usually enforced through the censorship of reading and audio-visual material for members of the group (Ozzano 2009).

iii. Emotions:

Fundamentalists tend to display psychologically insecure traits brought about by fear and uncertainty caused by socio-economic and ideological modernization (Kindermann et al 2024; Carlucci et al 2021). This is characterized by an enhanced perception of threat

against and subsequent retaliation to protect one's beliefs (Wright 2016). Out-group feelings have been characterized as threatening, victimizing and humiliating, which then leads to more hostility against outgroups (Kindermann et al 2024).

iv. Goals:

Religious fundamentalists tend to have goals that include broad institutional, social and economic change. Primarily, their concern is the prevention of moral decay of society by returning to their core political goals and the remodeling of society on the basis of their sacred texts (Ozzano 2009; Kindermann et al 2024). Another goal of religious fundamentalists is the weakening of the liberal order of democracy and rule of law. They pursue this goal by opposing gender equality and sexual diversity, changing the composition of judicial bodies to elect people who align to their views, and pursuing nationalist agendas to marginalize those who do not fit in their mold (Lo Mascolo 2023).

v. Organizational Structure:

The organizational structure of religious fundamentalism is related to group organization and cognition. Organizationally, religious fundamentalism seems to be characterized by strong in-group cohesion. Fundamentalist groups are often led by a strong, charismatic leader and are therefore also associated with authoritarianism (Ozzano 2009; Yendell and Herbert 2022). Cognitively, religious fundamentalism is embedded in wider political, social and historical organizational structures. Fundamentalist thought can be conceptualized as reactionary backlash to liberalism, globalization, and western colonial influence in the case of Asia (Kindermann et al 2024).

Scholars also conceptualize religious fundamentalism as a set of beliefs that is characterized by an exclusivist understanding of one's religion, associated with social dimensions such as authoritarianism, prejudice, ethnocentrism, and anti-modernism, and is positively related to belief in conspiracy theories (Wright 2016; Carlucci et al 2021; Yendell and Huber 2020; Yendell and Herbert 2022). Psychological research finds fundamentalism to be associated with a closed-minded personality dimension wherein fundamentalists display values related to conformity, tradition and security – seeking to avoid threats, preserve the status quo, and depend on authorities as sources of legitimization for their emotions and behavior (Carlucci et al 2021).

At its core, religious fundamentalism is a reaction to and retaliation against the changing modern context which enshrines democratic principles, liberalism, egalitarianism, plurality, relativity, and secularity (Litonjua 2018; Morris 2008; Kindermann et al 2024; Herry-Priyono 2017). In this way, religious fundamentalism – characterized by anti-intellectualism, resistance to doubt and criticism, and desire for significance, domination and legitimation – is a function of modernism (Kindermann et al 2024; Wright 2016). However, fundamentalists are selectively anti-modern as they embrace certain aspects of modernity such as technology, while rejecting others such as gender and sexual equality. Religious fundamentalists, especially in the Islamic, Hindu or Buddhist traditions are also often characterized as militant. They enforce sharp boundaries between the faithful and the sinful, where the separation is implemented through physical means, vocabulary, or control over access to communication and media (Ozzano 2009; Litonjua 2018).

However, although an abstract conceptualization of religious fundamentalism has been developed, it cannot be denied that its conception is rooted in a specific monolithic religious

tradition and a specific historical and contextual setting. As such, it would be natural to question whether the vocabulary of the concept is able to precisely capture the characteristics of religious fundamentalism in a non-western religious and contextual setting which is far removed from the context of the origin of the concept (Sartori 1970). Riesebrodt (2000) argues against limiting the concept of fundamentalism to refer only to Abrahamic traditions such as Christianity, Judaism or Islam (where the concept still holds much precision). He states that although religious fundamentalist traditions naturally carry traces of their origins, fundamentalist movements in general also share many features, which might be more relevant as it indicates similar social transformations in all contexts of religious fundamentalism. Therefore, although the precision of the concept of fundamentalism might not be as crisp as it would be for Islam, it is still possible to apply this concept to Hindu religious fundamentalism, which does show itself to feature many of the characteristics identified for religious fundamentalism, particularly selectivity, authoritarianism, behavioral limitations, and out-group hostility.

Relationship with Democratic Attitudes

Having thus conceptualized religious fundamentalism, we can clearly see that there is a fundamental disconnect between its values and those of liberal democracy. Absolutist belief is in tension with pluralism. Messianism is in conflict with secularism. Their belief in their own superiority is in contention with the values of egalitarianism. The absolute authority of the leader and the literalist understanding of the sacred texts is opposed to the autonomous and sovereign features of the democratic process (Litonjua 2018; Ozzano 2009; Kindermann et al 2024; Herry-Priyono 2017). Dogmatism is one of the dominant influences in religious fundamentalism, which

is a primary driver of intolerance and an indicator of anti-democratic attitudes (Eisenstein and Clark 2017).

In analyzing four different religious fundamentalist movements (the Christian right (CR) in the United States, the Hindu religious nationalist movement (*sangh parivar*) in India, the Jewish religious nationalist movement in Israel, and the Islamist movement in Turkey), Ozzano (2009) found two main trends in the way religious fundamentalists acted within democracies. In cases where the religious fundamentalist group perceived another significant ethno-religious minority as an enemy (Hindu fundamentalists against Muslims in India, and the Jewish nation against Palestinians in Israel), they tended towards nationalism and often violent conflict, where they participated in territorial litigation and dispute over holy places. In cases without this perceived enemy (Christian Right in USA and the Islamist movement in Turkey), the main conflict was with the secular state about the role of religion in the public sphere and was therefore pursued through peaceful means (Ozzano 2009).

One of the main political strategies used by religious fundamentalist groups in democracies is long-term rather than short-term policy gain. Over the course of years, they slowly occupy key executive agencies such as the Ministry of Education and the judiciary, and implement programs such as revision of textbooks and setting up alternative and religious schools and universities to influence culture to be more favorable to their values and goals (Ozzano 2009). They also use social media to radicalize and mobilize their religious communities and inflate the relevance of their own ideologies. We clearly see the impact of such strategies in the United States, where over the course of decades, we have seen an escalation of polarization and divisiveness and a decline in open debate, civil discourse and social cohesion (Giroux 2005; Lo Mascolo 2023).

2.3 The Indian Context

The primary driver of religious fundamentalism in the Indian context has been the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS). Under a unified Hindu nationalist ideology known as *Hindutva*, a plurality of organizations under the RSS including the BJP and different vigilante groups (collectively known as the *Sangh Parivar*) have promoted, and gone through cycles of mobilization centered around hostility and violent conflict with Muslim and Christian communities in India (Ozzano 2009). This Hindutva ideology functions through the construction of victimhood for Hindus, who have been supposedly subjugated by a series of foreign invasions throughout history, first by Muslims under the Mughal rule, and then by Christians under the British Raj. It further calls for divided Hindus, as the original people occupying the land to band together in order to ‘reclaim their homeland from outsiders’ (Lobo 2009; Sharma 2020; Mehta 2022). However, although masking itself with the façade of religion, scholars argue that Hindutva is, in actuality, a political ideology that aims to create a unified ethnic identity and consolidate political power in the hands of the unified Hindu majority to create an “ethnic democracy” (Chackalackal 2008; Jaffrelot and Schoch 2021; Mehta 2022; Sircar 2022).

Furthermore, evidence suggests that particularly notable instances of Hindu fundamentalist mobilization, especially violent mobilization, have been incited and encouraged by the RSS and the BJP. In *Modi’s India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy*, Jaffrelot and Schoch (2021) point out how the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid, an old mosque purportedly built over the foundations of an older Hindu temple was incited by BJP’s then-president L.K. Advani’s deliberate attempt to mobilize Hindus for the reconstruction of the

temple.⁷ They also point out that the anti-Muslim mobilization in 2002 Gujarat — in what has been termed one of the worst anti-Muslim pogroms in Indian history—occurred in large part due to then-Chief Minister Modi’s deliberate misrepresentation of a tragic episode of communal violence as a pre-planned attack by Muslims against Hindus⁸ and active encouragement for retaliation. Under the first Modi-led government of 2014, the centralization of religiously-motivated issues became even more prominent. Policy outcomes have been seen in the passing of laws related to religious conversion and cow protection in several states (the protection of the sacred animal being a key issue for Hindutva believers). However, beyond policy-level interventions, Hindu fundamentalist mobilization over this issue has also resulted in the lynching of a number of Muslims with allegations of beef consumption and cattle smuggling. The *Sangh Parivar*, particularly the youth wing *Bajrang Dal*, has been a major actor in these violent mobilizations, including in the campaigns to fight against religious conversions and inter-faith marriages, resulting in violent interference in wedding ceremonies or physical assault of Muslim men married to Hindu women on accusations of *love jihad* – the seduction and ‘forced’ Muslim conversion of Hindu women (Jaffrelot and Schoch 2021; Jayal 2022). Jayal (2022) claims that the second Modi regime has also seen the reinvention of citizenship to class undocumented

⁷ In 1990, after a Supreme Court ruling upheld the status quo regarding the mosque’s existence, Advani launched a cross-country Rath Yatra (chariot procession) to build support for the former temple (Ram Mandir)’s reconstruction. This chariot procession ultimately degenerated into communal rioting and Advani was arrested before arriving at his final destination of Ayodhya. However, his followers did manage to storm and ultimately demolish the mosque, which triggered further Hindu-Muslim violence nationwide. During the second Modi government period, the Supreme Court acquitted the main instigators (as top party officials of the BJP) of any wrongdoing in the mosque demolition and handed over the disputed holy lands to a Hindu trust. The Hindu temple was (re-)constructed and consecrated in the presence of PM Modi in 2024 (BBC 2020; Al Jazeera 2024).

⁸ In early 2002, clashes broke out between Hindu and Muslim groups in a town in eastern Gujarat leading to 59 Hindus being burned alive aboard a train bringing them from Ayodhya to Uttar Pradesh. Instead of presenting the issue as an unfortunate and tragic communal incident, Chief Minister Modi termed it a “one-sided collective violent act of terrorism from one community [towards Hindus]”. This incited members of the violent youth wing, *Bajrang Dal* to storm Muslim residential communities across Gujarat, leading to deaths of an estimated 2000 people, primarily Muslims. Prime Minister Modi has never expressed regret or apology for this incident (Jaffrelot and Schoch 2021).

Muslims as second-class citizens. The removal of the special status of Jammu & Kashmir (the only Muslim majority state in India), and the introduction of the Citizenship Amendment Act in conjunction with the National Register for Citizens (which would allow undocumented and illegal non-Muslims a fast-track to citizenship but would not allow the same for Muslims) means that Hindu fundamentalist politics are effectively undermining India's constitutional commitment to secularism (Jaffrelot and Schoch 2021; Jayal 2022).

Sircar (2022) suggests that the positive association between the spike in cycles of violent mobilization with the timing and location of BJP-led governments shows that control over state power and media is crucial in the articulation, politicization, and mobilization of "Hindu" issues in order to consolidate a Hindu vote. In addition to building support for "Hindu issues", state control also allows leaders frame religious issues to both generate support for religion-based polarization and legitimize religio-ethnic violent mobilization through control of police and judiciary apparatus.

Another major win for the BJP's agenda is the way in which it has repositioned caste in the Indian political sphere. In the 1980s, the BJP and the RSS were primarily conceived as upper-caste organizations – established by upper class Brahmins for their own interests. Under the threat of the rising socio-economic pressure of the lower caste (primarily due to reservations in the public sphere), it is easy to see why the upper class and the upper caste would support the BJP's conservative policies. Therefore, for the poor upper-caste, it makes complete sense to align themselves with a party that appears to promote the Hindu high-caste tradition and is seemingly hostile to positive discrimination. However, as a man belonging to neither the upper caste nor the upper-class strata, Prime Minister Modi was a political figure that the poor and the lower caste were better able to identify with (Mehta 2022). Under his leadership, BJP has run an immense

campaign to deepen and center India's religious cleavage and unite both the upper and lower caste Hindu majority against the threat of the Muslim other. The cross-cutting cleavages of class and caste which have always been crucial identity lines in the Indian political context have been subsumed under a single reinforced cleavage of religion in an extreme case of social polarization (Haggard and Kaufman 2021). As the BJP actively works to generate a new iteration of the "Indian" identity, this othering is unlikely to remain limited to religious grounds. In fact, the Hindu fundamentalist regime and its resistance to criticism has also resulted in a sharp decline in the freedom of speech and thought in the academic space, further exacerbated by harassment of secularists and liberal-leftists, and crackdown on NGOs, think tanks and research institutes that are regime-critical (Lobo 2009, Jaffrelot and Schoch 2021, Mehta 2022).

Although much of the Hindu fundamentalist and Hindu nationalist mobilization in India is concentrated in the north (in states including Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, and Assam, where Hindutva-aligned parties hold power), the Hindutva agenda does seem to be making inroads in southern Dravidian states as well. Expressions of Hindu pride and disdain for religious minorities have become seemingly commonplace among the Hindu middle class in Tamil Nadu, which also recorded the second-highest number of Hindutva-related attacks against the Christian religious minority in 2019. Additionally, the conflicting caste interests of major Dravidian parties has also resulted in the BJP winning out, as it de-emphasizes conflicting caste interests in favor of Hindutva-led interests (Lillelund 2025).

It is clear that the Hindu fundamentalist movement in India is associated with increased illiberalism in India, especially regarding the protection of minority rights. However, as an organization that seeks legitimation through electoral means, the BJP seems committed to electoral democracy, especially in terms of the construction of a "Hindu" vote (Mehta 2022;

Sircar 2022). On similar lines, the aggressive social polarization and anti-Muslim rhetoric has not affected the electoral participation of Muslim voters either. In response to their marginalization by the dominant party, they strategically vote for the opposition as part of a survival strategy to remain politically relevant (Ahmed 2022).

Table 2: Conceptualization of Religiosity and Religious Fundamentalism

Construct	WVS Item Codes	What the Item Represents	What the Construct Captures
RB; Religiosity Index	Q6	Importance of religion	Captures religiosity broadly across various indicators of belief, behavior and identity .
	Q164	Importance of God	
	Q172	Frequency of prayer	
	Q173	Self-identification as religious	
RF; Religious Fundamentalism	Q169	Absolutism (religion trusted over science)	Captures doctrinal authoritarianism and exclusion which are key aspects of religious fundamentalism.
	Q170	Exclusivism (only my religion is acceptable)	
NP; National Pride	Q254	Attachment to the nation	Captures majoritarian identification in the Indian context as religious fundamentalism tends to come in concert with nationalism

A detailed overview of how other scholars have operationalized the relevant concepts of support for democracy, religiosity and religious fundamentalism is presented in Appendix 1. ‘Support for democracy’ has been variously operationalized through combinations of overt statements in support for democracy, procedural support, political participation in democracy, performance satisfaction, measurements of support for alternative authoritarian regimes, and support/opposition of liberal principles. ‘Religiosity’ has been operationalized through

measurements of religious belief, self-assessments of religiosity, religious practice, and social religious behavior. ‘Religious fundamentalism’ has been operationalized through overt statements of religious superiority and support of religious rule. The specific survey instruments that I use in the operationalization of these concepts in this study, along with the exact item wording and scales of measurement are presented in Tables A2 and A3 in Appendix 2.

However, there are also other societal drivers that influence democratic support. Socioeconomic shifts in human development transform traditional agrarian societies into industrial and knowledge economies, giving rise to emancipative values, and causing societal transformation which tracks the shift away from survivalism towards self-expression and therefore towards democratic support. Furthermore, generational cohort changes have also been associated with a rise in emancipative values and thus, more support for democracy (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). On the basis of this theory, I also include education, income, class, and age as controls in this study.

2.4 Hypotheses

The literature review makes it clear that the association between religiosity and democratic attitudes is contested. Religious belief and practice increase support for democracy through both overt support for democratic norms (Bomhoff and Gu 2011; Meyer, Tope and Price 2008), and greater political engagement and trust in representatives (McCauley and Gyimah-Boadi 2009; Chhibber and Shastri 2014); but religious belief can also reduce overt and liberal-substantive support for democracy due to its linkages to traditional values, traditional gender roles, and conservative policy preferences (Norris and Inglehart 2003; Ben-Num Bloom and Arikan 2013;

Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom 2022). Religious engagement can suppress support for procedural mechanisms such as democratic accountability (Just 2018). Theoretical expectations based on this overview suggest that religiosity can be linked to increased overt or principled support for democracy, reduced rejection of authoritarian rule (which serve as procedural guardrails), and decreased gender-liberal attitudes and out-group tolerance as conceptualized through religious trust for this study. I use ‘rejection of authoritarian rule’, ‘authoritarian rejection’ and ‘anti-authoritarianism’ interchangeably going forward.

Religious fundamentalism, on the other hand, is associated with authoritarianism and reduced support for democratic norms (Eisenstein and Clark 2017; Giroux 2005; Lo Mascolo 2023). Furthermore, in the Indian context, religious fundamentalism also tends to manifest with and as majoritarian nationalism (Ozzano 2009). Therefore, theoretical expectations suggest that fundamentalism is negatively associated with all dimensions of democratic support.

In this study, I conceptualize ‘overt or principled support’ as expressions of support for democracy, ‘procedural guardrails’ as rejection of authoritarianism and ‘liberal-substantive support’ as attitudes related to gender equality and outgroup tolerance. These elements broadly capture the underlying dimensions that bolster democracy and are therefore, key elements that help define attitudes towards democratic support.

Based on this theoretical framework, I propose the following hypotheses:

Overt/Principled Support for Democracy:

H1a: Higher religiosity is associated with higher principled support for democracy.

H1b: Higher religious fundamentalism is associated with lower principled support for democracy.

Procedural Guardrails/Authoritarian Rejection:

H2a: Higher religiosity is associated with lower levels of authoritarian rejection.

H2b: Higher religious fundamentalism is associated with lower levels of authoritarian rejection.

Liberal-Substantive Support for Democracy:

H3a: Higher religiosity is associated with lower gender-liberal attitudes.

H3b: Higher religious fundamentalism is associated with lower gender-liberal attitudes.

H4a: Higher religiosity is associated with lower outgroup tolerance.

H4b: Higher religious fundamentalism is associated with lower outgroup tolerance.

Nationalism:

H5a: Higher national pride is associated with higher principled support for democracy.

H5b: Higher national pride is associated with lower levels of authoritarian rejection.

H5c: Higher national pride is associated with lower gender-liberal attitudes.

H5d: Higher national pride is associated with lower out-group tolerance.

We also see that religious fundamentalist mobilization has amped up in recent years after the BJP was elected into government. Therefore, I hypothesize that the effect of religious fundamentalism is stronger in the most recent wave compared to earlier waves of the World Values Survey.

The effect of time:

H6: The negative association of religious fundamentalism with all dimensions of democracy is stronger in wave 7 (the Modi era) than it was in wave 6 (pre-Modi regime).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Data

This analysis uses data from the World Values Survey for India. The World Values Survey (WVS) is a global research project that scientifically measures people's social, political, cultural, economic and religious values, beliefs and attitudes. It conducts these surveys every five years in order to measure the change in values over time and its impact on socioeconomic and cultural development.⁹ This project primarily uses data from wave 7 (sample collected in 2023) but I also replicate the analysis on the wave 6 data sample (2012) to compare the change in effect over time.

3.1.1 Wave 7 Data

The survey in India was conducted by Lokniti – Programme for Comparative Democracies at Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) and collected data from 1692 respondents from a sample of eight states: four Hindi-speaking states (Bihar, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi NCR) as well as West Bengal (Bengali-speaking), Maharashtra (Marathi-speaking), Punjab (Punjabi-speaking) and Telangana (Telegu-speaking) in order to capture a range of linguistic representation and also represent the central, eastern, western, northern, and southern regions of the country respectively. The representativeness of the sample in comparison with the actual population of the country as per the latest census is displayed in Table 3. The distribution of sample demographics can be seen in Table 4 as well as in Figure 1.

⁹ From the World Values Survey Database website: <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp>.

Table 3: Sample Representativeness in WVS Wave 7 data for India

Categories	Actual Population as per Census 2011 (%)	In Survey (%)
Male	52.0	56.6
Female	48.0	43.4
Rural	69.8	62.5
Urban	30.2	37.5
Hindu	77.7	82.0
Muslim	16.8	10.4
Sikh	3.1	5.1

Source: World Values Survey: Wave 7 – India: A Technical Report (Lokniti 2023)

We see that the distribution of the sample and the distribution of the population in the latest available census data is comparable, indicating representativeness.

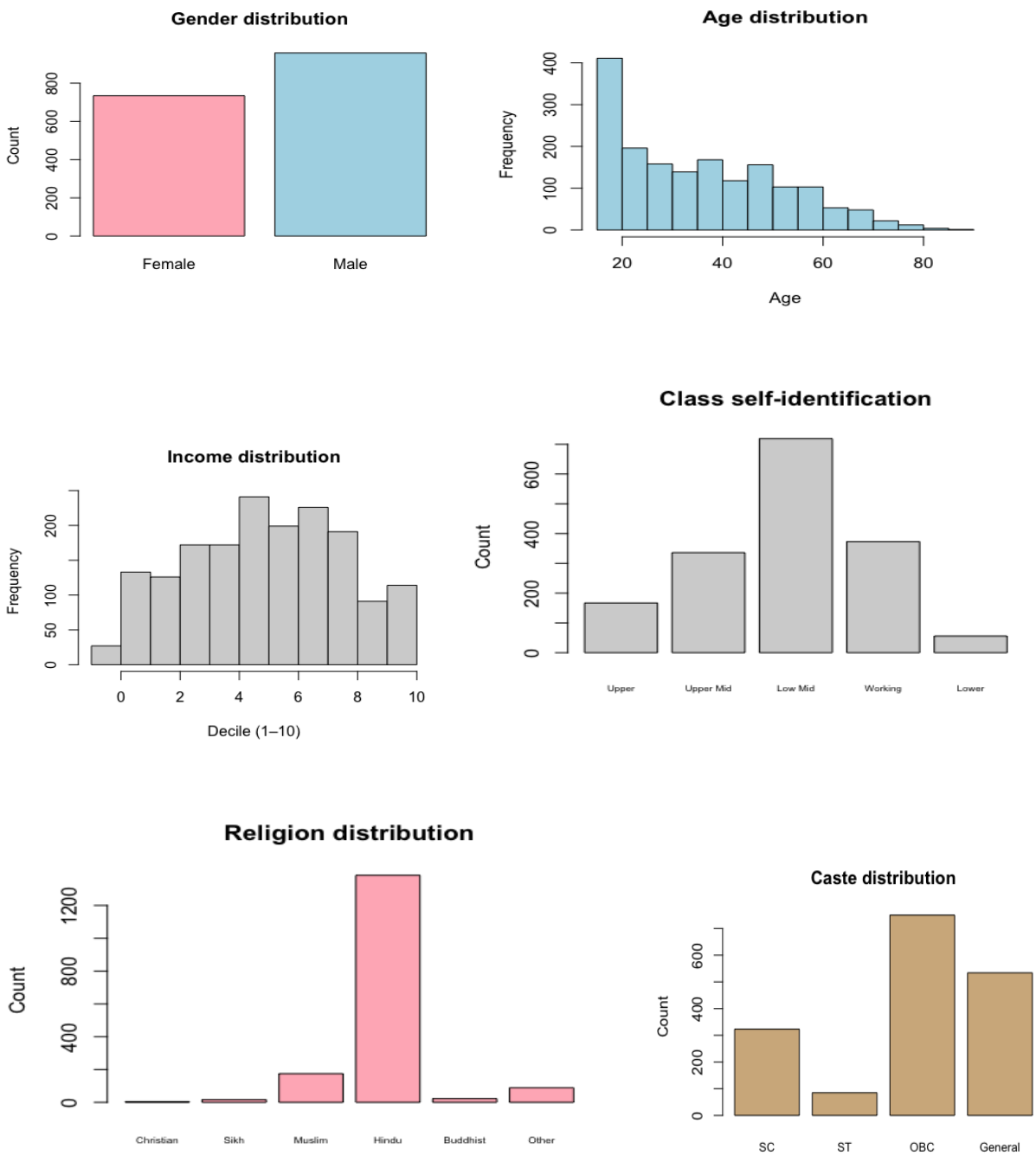
Table 4: Summary of Sample Demographics (Wave 7 – India)

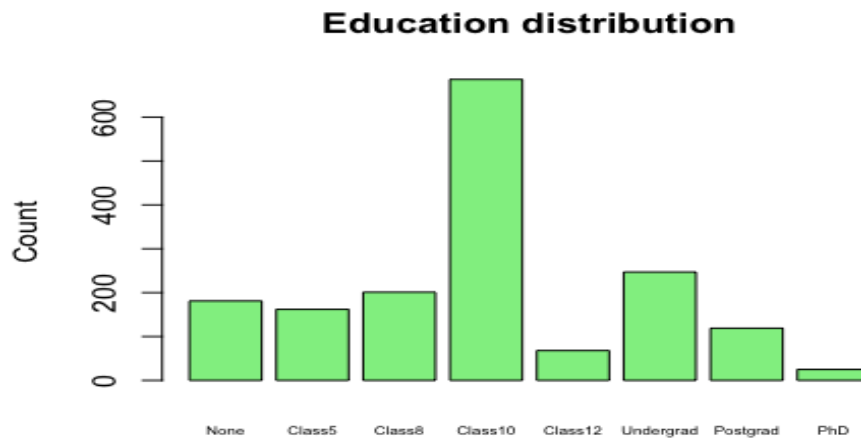
Variable	Percentage of Sample	Mean	SD
Gender: % male	56.6		
Age		35.8	16.3
Education		3.2	2.1
Income		5.3	2.7
Class		2.9	1

Table 4 and Figure 1 demonstrate that the respondents in the dataset lean young, with a mean of approximately 36 years old. A significant percentage of the respondents also seem to identify as lower middle class. The largest number of respondents in the survey identify as Hindu (also validated by Table 3, which reports 82% Hindus in the sample), with Muslims being a distant second. The caste distribution sees that the highest number of respondents belong to the Other Backward Castes (OBC) category, followed by the General (non-protected and therefore higher-caste) category. Approximately 300 respondents identify as members of Scheduled Castes (SC),

and the number of respondents identifying as part of the Scheduled Tribes (ST) is very low. We also see that most respondents in the dataset seem to have only secondary-level education.

Figure 1: Sample Demographics (Wave 7 – India)





3.1.2 Wave 6 Data

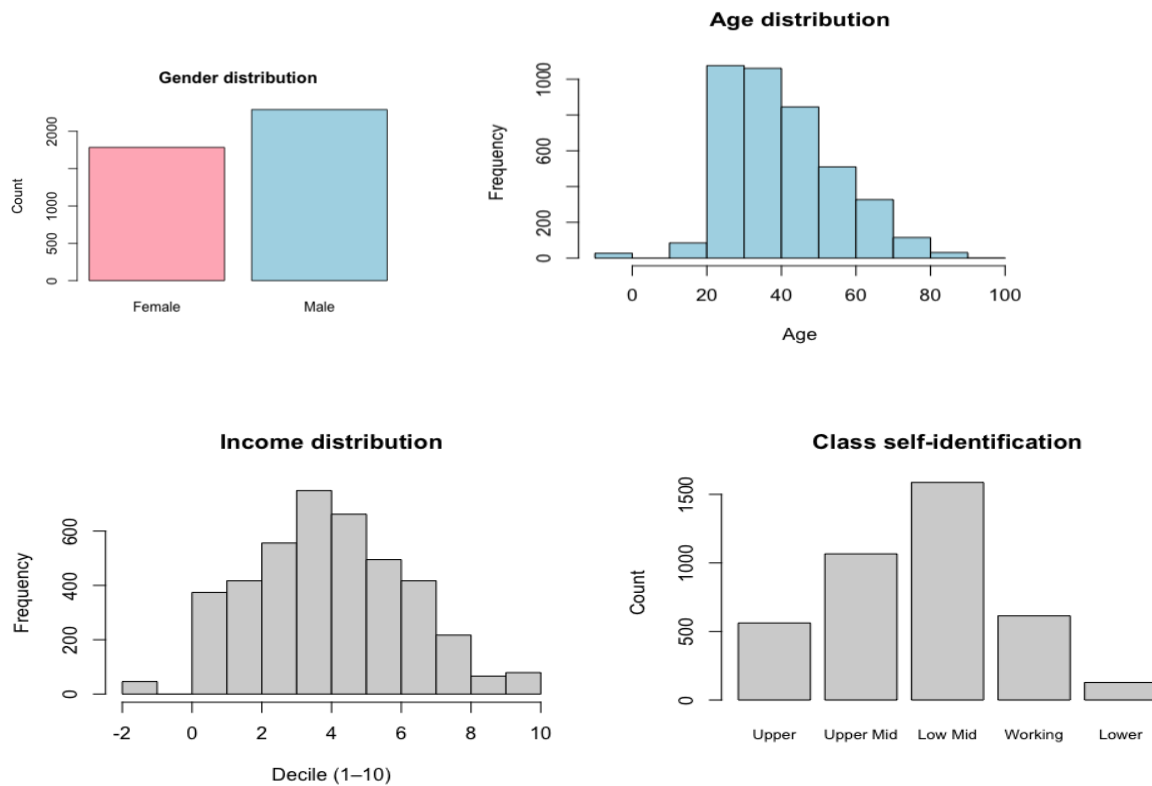
Comparatively, the wave 6 data has been sampled from 17 states (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Uttarakhand) and collected data from 4078 respondents.

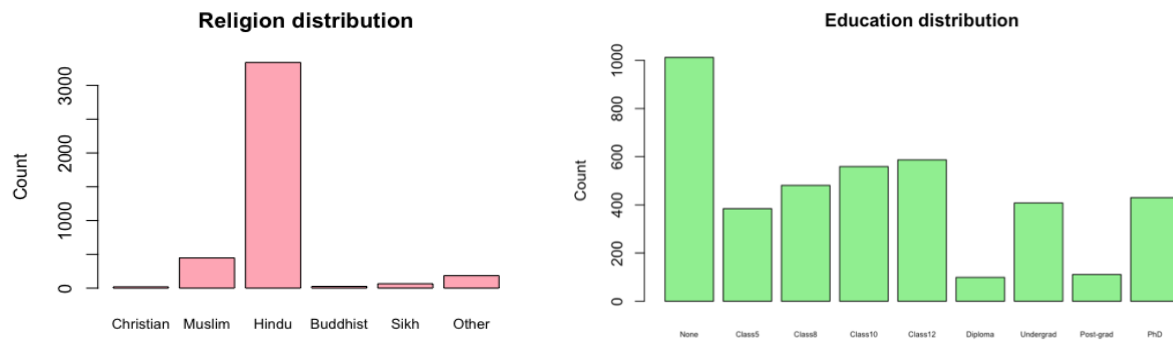
Table 5: Sample demographics summary (Wave 6 – India)

Variable	Percentage of Sample	Mean	SD
Gender: % male	56.2		
Age		41.0	14.9
Education		4.1	2.6
Income		4.4	2.3
Class		2.7	1
Caste	OBC - 39.9% General (High Caste) - 32.1% SC - 19.7% ST - 6.6%.		

We see that, similar to the wave 7 data sample, there is a higher percentage of males in the sample, but with a mean age of 41 years old, the age distribution in the wave 6 sample leans older. Similar to the wave 7 sample, most people seem to identify as lower middle class and the majority of the sample seems to be Hindu. Compared to the wave 7 data, the wave 6 sample seems to have a significant number of respondents with no formal education. Table 5 and Figure 2 detail the demographics for the wave 6 sample.

Figure 2: Sample Demographics (Wave 6 – India)





3.2. Operationalization

The WVS uses a battery of questions in order to gauge individual attitudes. On the basis of operationalization of concepts in prior empirical research (Appendix 1), I considered a variety of survey instruments that could be used to construct the dependent and independent variables. The particular items I considered for operationalization have been summarized in Tables 1 and 2. I conducted exploratory factor analysis to determine whether these instruments load on the same latent dimensions and could therefore be used to construct indices which coherently measure ‘support for democracy’, ‘religiosity’ and ‘religious fundamentalism’. As these survey instruments measure on different scales (for example, “importance of God” measures on a 1 – 10 scale whereas “support for a strong leader” measures on a 1 – 4 Likert scale), I also rescaled the indices to a 0 – 1 scale using min-max normalization. This ensured that the constructed indices were comparable across the different variables.

3.2.1 Dependent Variable – Support for Democracy

To operationalize the dependent variable, I first selected a number of potential survey instruments that could indicate ‘support for democracy’. These instruments have been selected on the basis of the literature review in Table A1 in Appendix 1.

In order to have a consistent measurement for ‘support for democracy’, I re--coded item Q238 and Q62 so that the lower value indicates worse opinion and the higher value indicates a good opinion. I also re-coded survey item Q23 to make it a binary variable where 0 indicates ‘not wanting [a person of another religion] as a neighbor’ and 1 indicates ‘wanting as neighbor’. I re-coded and reversed survey items Q235, Q236, W237, and Q239 so that they indicate support for ‘anti-authoritarianism’ rather than support for alternative authoritarian political regimes on the same lower value = lower support and higher value = higher support scale. I did not reverse survey items Q28, Q29, Q30, and Q31 as that would capture rejection rather than support of gender-liberal attitudes.

Preliminary factor analysis indicated that the chosen items load on 4 factors. We see in Table 6 that items related to gender-attitudes loaded on MR1, items related to support for democracy loaded on MR2, items related to rejection of authoritarian rule loaded on MR3 and out-group trust loaded on MR4. Q28 and Q23 did not load on any of the factors. Furthermore, Q236 (rejection of expert rule) loaded negatively on the pro-democracy factor and did not load on the anti-authoritarianism factor. Therefore, these items were dropped from consideration.

Table 6: EFA Loadings (DV items, loadings $\geq .30$, Wave 7)

Item	MR1	MR2	MR3	MR4
Stated importance of democracy (Q250)		0.444		
Democracy is a good political system (Q238)		0.749		
Rejection of strong leader (-Q235)			0.513	

Rejection of expert rule (-Q236)		-0.509		
Rejection of army rule (-Q237)			0.587	
Rejection of religious rule (-Q239)			0.616	
Children suffer when mothers work (Q28)				
Women would be as good political leaders as men (Q29)	0.765			
University education is not more important for boys (Q30)	0.588			
Women would be as good business executives as men (Q31)	0.863			
Trust in people of other religions (Q62)				0.804
Want neighbors of other religions (Q23)				

On the basis of this exploratory factor analysis, I constructed indices along these four dimensions leading to four different dependent variables which measure support for democracy.

- i. PD: principled support for democracy (Q250 + Q238),
- ii. AA: rejection of authoritarian forms of rule (Q235 + Q237 + Q239)
- iii. GL: gender-liberal attitudes (Q29 + Q30 + Q31)
- iv. TRUST: outgroup tolerance (Q62)

Table 7 shows the internal consistency of the different indices. Both α (Cronbach's Alpha) and ω (McDonald's Omega) are greater than 0.7 for gender-liberal attitudes, indicating acceptable reliability as a combined index. The internal reliability for principled support for democracy, however, is divergent ($\alpha = 0.51$, i.e., below standard but $\omega = 0.91$, indicating excellent reliability). In this case, the low α -value is potentially due to the differing scales and low number of the items. As the items are congeneric, I consider ω as the more appropriate consistency metric and therefore retain PD as an index with high internal consistency. The internal consistency for anti-authoritarianism, on the other hand, is low (α and ω are both

approximately equal to 0.5), indicating that the items in this construct measure different aspects of anti-authoritarianism. However, as all three survey items loaded on the same factor, I proceeded with the constructed index as a measure for anti-authoritarian attitudes in the main regression models. For robustness, I tested the individual item-level interactions of this index by running multivariate regression models for the individual items against the independent variables in Appendix 3.

Table 7: Reliability for DV subscales (Wave 7)

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	McDonald's Omega
Principled support for democracy (PD)	0.510 ¹⁰	0.91
Anti-authoritarianism (AA)	0.496	0.516
Gender-liberal attitudes (GL)	0.713	0.747

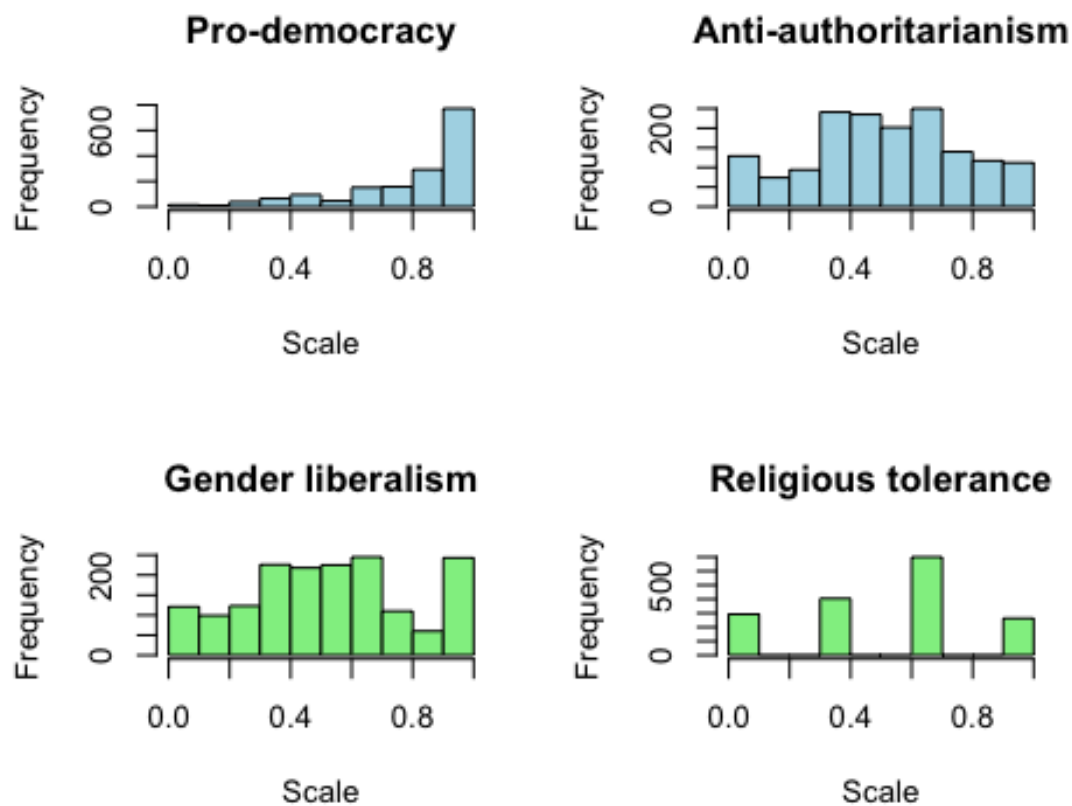
Table 8 displays the correlation between the different dependent variable subscales after min-max normalization. We see that the correlations between the different subscales are all less than 0.25, indicating low intercorrelation. This further confirms the findings from the exploratory factor analysis that these indices are related but distinct constructs which represent different dimensions of 'support for democracy'. The min-max normalized distribution of the dependent variables for wave 7 is captured in Figure 3 below.

Table 8: Correlation matrix among DVs (Wave 7)

	PD	AA	GL	TRUST
PD	1.00	0.11	0.24	-0.16
AA	0.11	1.00	0.20	0.07
GL	0.24	0.20	1.00	0.00
TRUST	-0.16	0.07	0.00	1.00

¹⁰ I use the standardized alpha for reliability measurement of PD as the two indicators are on different scales.

Figure 3: Distribution of the Normalized Dependent Variables on a 0 – 1 Scale (Wave 7)



Having already performed factor analysis to determine the items loading onto the various dimensions of the dependent variable, I constructed indices with the same items for the wave 6 sample. However, it is important to note that the survey instrument for religious rule (Q239) is not available for this sample, and so the anti-authoritarianism index has been constructed with only two items (Q235 + Q237)¹¹.

Table 9: Correlation matrix among DVs (Wave 6)

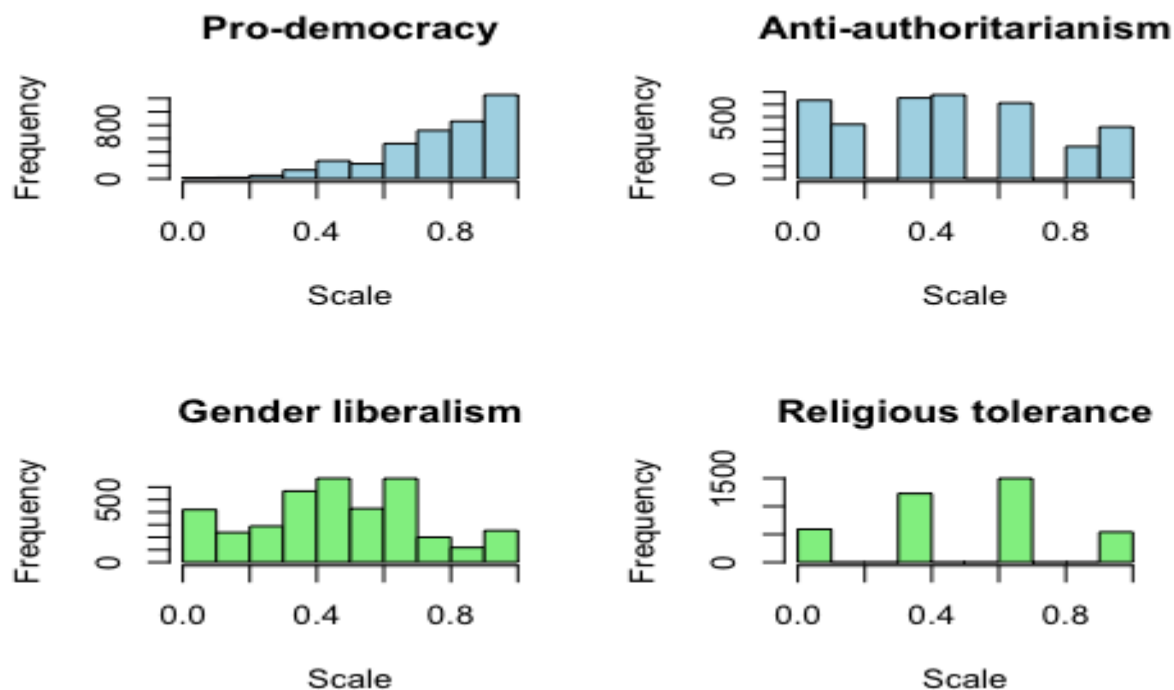
	PD	AA	GL	TRUST
PD	1.00	0.05	0.11	0.09
AA	0.05	1.00	0.15	0.02
GL	0.11	0.15	1.00	-0.03

¹¹ Reverse coded as rejection of strong leader and rejection of army rule respectively.

TRUST	0.09	0.02	-0.03	1.00
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We see that the intercorrelation of the indices is extremely low for this sample ($r \leq 0.15$), indicating that the items load on different dimensions in the wave 6 data as well. This confirms that support for democracy loads on four distinct dimensions similar to the wave 7 data and therefore the results of the main models are comparable. The indices, once constructed, were normalized to a 0 – 1 scale through a min-max normalization strategy. The normalized distribution of the dependent variables for wave 6 is captured in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Distribution of the Normalized Dependent Variables on a 0 – 1 Scale (Wave 6)



3.2.2 Independent Variables

I performed the same selection of survey instruments and exploratory factor analysis for the independent variables as for the dependent variables. The list of survey instruments with exact

item wording can be found in Table A3 in Appendix 2. While the literature reviewed in Table A1 only strictly considers elements related to religious belief, religious practice and religious fundamentalism, it is clear from the overview of the Indian context that Hindu religious fundamentalism in India includes an element of nationalism. To account for this, I added a survey instrument related to national pride (Q254) in this analysis. I also reverse-coded Q23 (wanting people of a different religion as neighbors) to see if it can measure out-group intolerance as an aspect of religious fundamentalism in the preliminary factor analysis.

Table 10: Preliminary EFA Loadings (IV items, 2 Factors, loadings $\geq .30$, Wave 7)

Item	MR1	MR2
How often an individual prays (Q172)	0.334	
Self-identification as religious (Q173)	0.871	
Importance of religion (Q6)	0.359	
Importance of God (Q164)	0.655	
Religion wins in conflict with science (Q169)		0.827
Own religion as the only acceptable religion (Q170)		0.768
Reject people of other religions as neighbors (-Q23)		
National pride (Q254)	0.418	

In the preliminary factor analysis, items corresponding to religiosity loaded on MR1 and those representing religious fundamentalism loaded on MR2. Outgroup tolerance in the form of rejection of neighbors of another religion did not load. Therefore, I dropped this item from consideration. National pride loaded with religiosity, which intuitively do not seem to represent the same underlying dimensions. Furthermore, exploratory factor analysis also indicated that there are three underlying latent dimensions for these items. Therefore, I re-ran the EFA with three factors, with findings reported in Table 11.

Table 11: EFA Loadings (IV items, 3 factors, loadings $\geq .30$, Wave 7)

Item	MR1	MR2	MR3
How often an individual prays (Q172)	0.322		
Self-identification as religious (Q173)	1.009		
Importance of religion (Q6)			
Importance of God (Q164)	0.440		
Religion wins in conflict with science (Q169)		0.855	
Own religion as the only acceptable religion (Q170)		0.743	
National pride (Q254)			0.700

We see that although Q6 (importance of religion) loaded with other indicators of religiosity in the preliminary EFA, it did not load on the second EFA with three factors. However, the internal consistency of the ‘religiosity’ scale is lower when Q6 is discarded.¹² Furthermore, the low internal consistency of the ‘religiosity’ scale denotes that the items measure different aspects of religiosity (religious practice: Q172; importance of the religious belief: Q6 + Q164; and self-identification: Q173). As Q6 did load with other religiosity items in the preliminary EFA, and scale reliability is lower in its absence, I constructed religiosity as a composite index (composed of practice, identity and belief) with modest reliability. The internal consistency for religious fundamentalism is in the acceptable range, indicating that these items capture the same underlying latent dimension. Additionally, as national pride loaded with religiosity items in the first factor analysis, I also constructed a ‘religio-national index’ which averages religiosity and national pride to capture a combined identity dimension that can be theorized as religious nationalism. I re-ran the multivariate regression analysis with this indicator against the DVs for

¹² $\omega = 0.53$ when Q6 is included but $\omega = 0.467$ when excluded. Similarly, $\alpha = 0.575$ when Q6 is included but $\alpha = 0.56$ when excluded. Switching out the other indicators also reduces reliability for both α and ω .

support for democracy in Appendix 4 in order to robustly test the association between religious nationalism and support for democracy.

Table 12: Reliability for IV subscales (Wave 7)

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	McDonald's Omega
Religiosity (RB)	0.575	0.53
Fundamentalism (RF)	0.700	0.79

Therefore, there are three different independent variables for the main models:

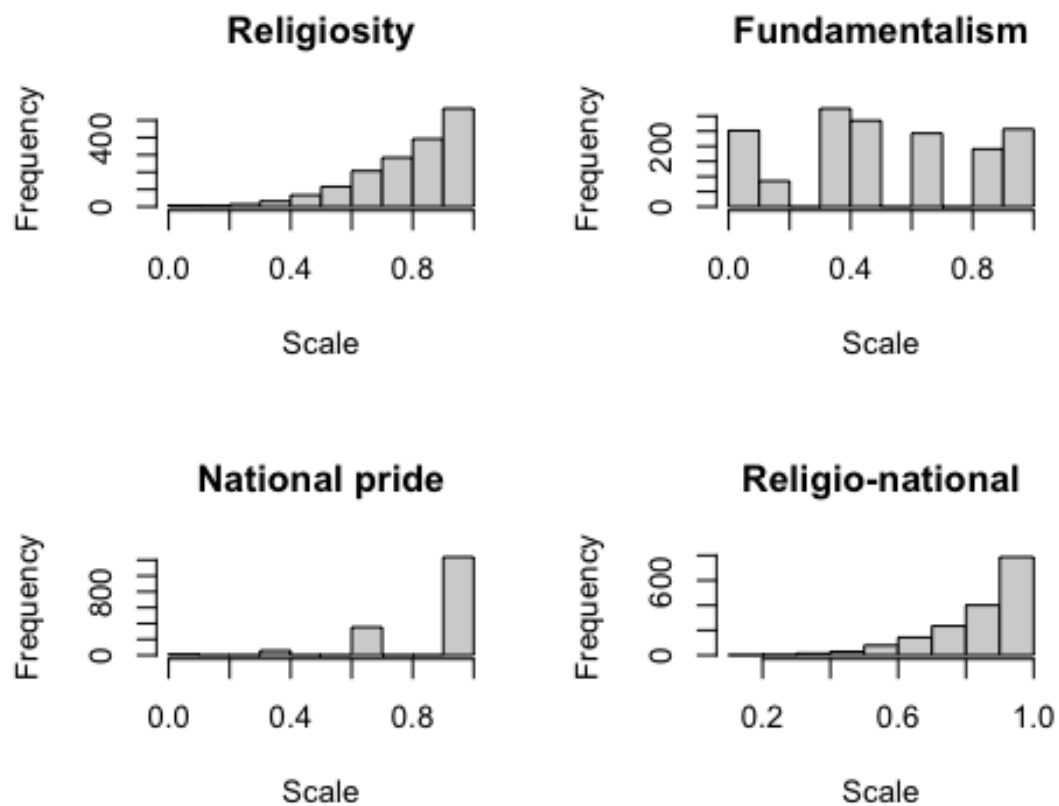
- i. RB: religiosity (Q6 + Q164 + Q172 + Q173),
- ii. RF: religious fundamentalism (Q169 + Q170)
- iii. NP: national pride (Q254)

And one combined index for robustness checks:

- iv. RN: religio-national identity index (RB + NP)

The indices, once constructed, were normalized to a 0 – 1 scale through a min-max normalization strategy. The normalized distribution of the independent variables is captured in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Distribution of the Normalized Independent Variables on a 0 – 1 Scale (Wave 7)



The intercorrelation of the constructed indices for wave 7 are presented in Table 13 below. The correlations between religiosity, religious fundamentalism, and national pride are low, further confirming that these indices capture unique latent dimensions.

Table 13: Correlation matrix among IVs (Wave 7)

	Religiosity index	Fundamentalism index	National pride	Religio-national index
Religiosity index	1.00	0.31	0.22	0.77
Fundamentalism index	0.31	1.00	0.02	0.21
National pride	0.22	0.02	1.00	0.79
Religio-national index	0.77	0.21	0.79	1.00

On the basis of this EFA, I then constructed indices with the same items for the wave 6 data sample. The correlations of the wave 6 indices are presented in Table 14 and the low value of intercorrelation confirms that these scales capture unique latent dimensions in the wave 6 data sample as well.

Table 14: Correlation matrix among IVs (Wave 6)

	Religiosity index	Fundamentalism index	National pride	Religio-national index
Religiosity index	1.00	0.21	0.10	0.68
Fundamentalism index	0.21	1.00	0.01	0.14
National pride	0.10	0.01	1.00	0.80

3.2.3 Control Variables

I include demographic factors such as gender, age, level of education, class identity, level of income, religious denomination, caste identity and rural/urban settlement as control variables in the regression analysis. This has clear theoretical justification as prior research has demonstrated that rural/urban settlements, education and income have an impact on attitudes towards democracy. Additionally, as the BJP is a party historically composed of upper-caste Brahmins and primarily appealing to Hindu people, caste identity and religious denomination are also crucial controls in the Indian context. However, clear caste group identification and settlement type information is not available for wave 6 data and were excluded from the controls for the regression models for wave 6.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Prior research indicates that socio-economic modernization (specifically higher levels of education and income) is associated with increased support for democracy through increased levels of tolerance, self-expression and critical engagement with the state (Lipset 1959; Inglehart & Welzel 2005). The cross tabulations in this section further reinforce the decision to model the regressions using distinct dependent variable indices and also allow for a preliminary analysis on whether groups interact with the dependent variables in a theory-consistent manner.

Figure 6: Attitude Overlap: Democracy Support vs. Anti-Authoritarianism (Waves 6 & 7)

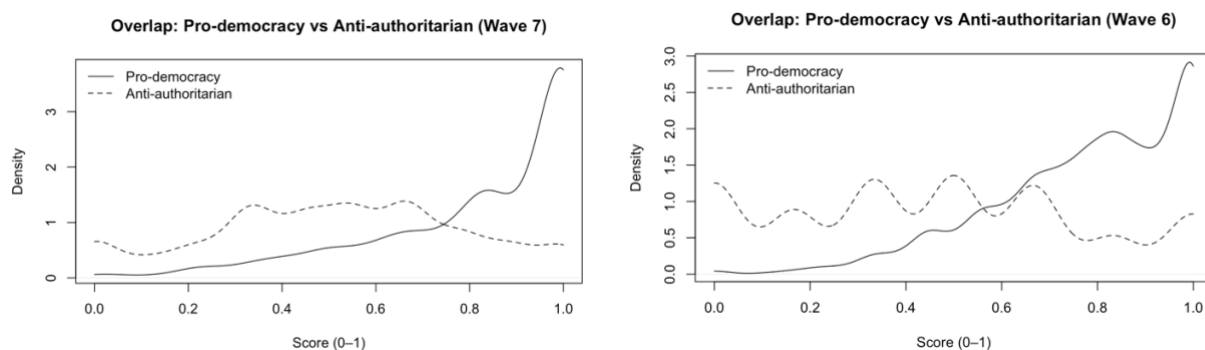


Figure 6 demonstrates the different attitudes respondents had towards principled support for democracy (PD) and authoritarian rejection (AA) across the two survey waves. We see that there is strong principled democratic support (the density clusters around 1) but anti-authoritarian attitudes are more scattered. Although there is some overlap between PD and AA attitudes across both waves, it is clear that this overlap is limited, further justifying the decision to model these as separate constructs which indicate distinct dimensions of democratic attitudes. This is consistent with literature which argues that citizens can simultaneously endorse democratic principles and tolerate authoritarian alternatives (Schedler and Sarsfield 2007). The distribution of consistent vs ambivalent democrats in the survey data is presented in Table 15.

Table 15: Democratic Ambivalence Typology (median splits, Waves 6 & 7)

Type	Percentage (Wave 7)	Percentage (Wave 6)
Ambivalent democrats (High PD, Low AA)	21.4	22.7
Authoritarian-leaning (Low PD, Low AA)	26.6	24.0
Consistent democrats (High PD, High AA)	31.2	31.0
Reluctant democrats (Low PD, High AA)	20.7	22.4

Figure 7: Gender-liberal attitudes x Gender (Waves 6 & 7)

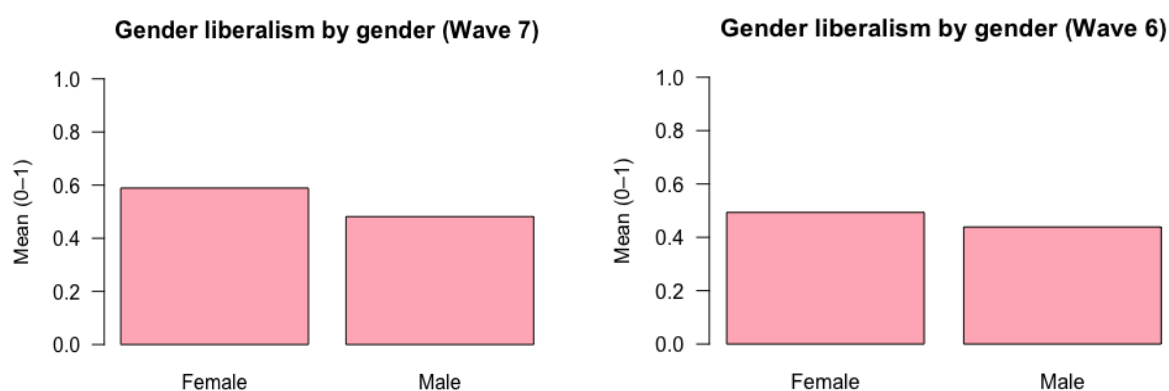


Figure 7 demonstrates gender-liberal attitudes (GL) across gender identification. Women consistently tend to hold more gender-liberal attitudes than men. This difference is more pronounced in the wave 7 sample compared to wave 6. This is consistent with Norris and Inglehart (2003), who found that women are more supportive of gender equality than men across various types of societies, and indicates that the ‘male’ demographic covariate might relate to lower support for this substantive dimension of democracy in the regression analysis.

Figure 8: Anti-authoritarianism x Education (Waves 6 & 7)

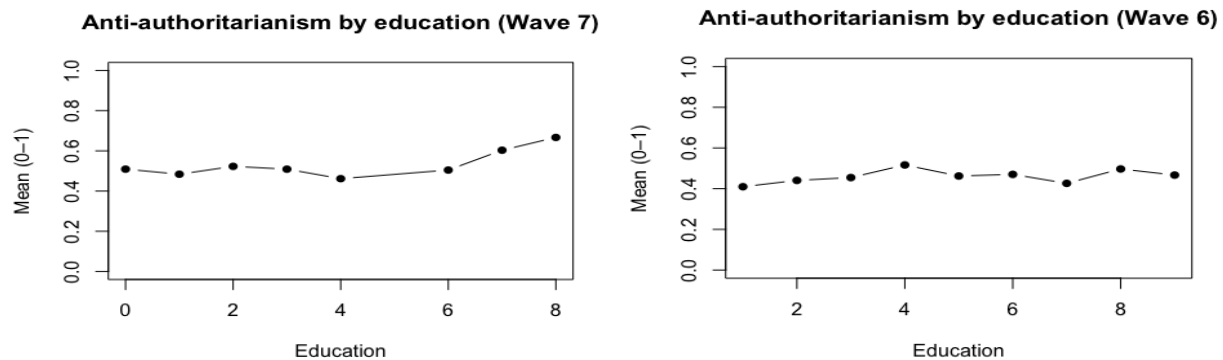


Figure 8 shows anti-authoritarian attitudes (AA) by the level of education. The wave 7 sample shows a clear upward shift in anti-authoritarian attitudes as education levels increase, which is consistent with the theory that education increases democratic support and reduces authoritarian tolerance (Lipset 1959). This trajectory is also somewhat evident in the wave 6 sample, albeit to a smaller degree. This indicates that education might be positively associated with the dependent variables in the regression analysis.

Figure 9: Anti-authoritarianism x Income (Waves 6 & 7)

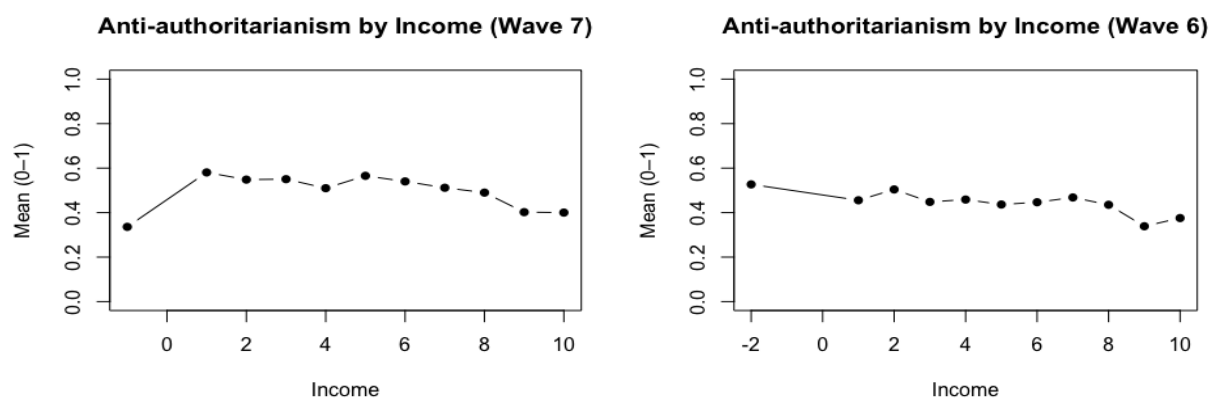


Figure 9 demonstrates that middle levels of income are associated with more anti-authoritarian attitudes whereas higher levels of income are related to less anti-authoritarian attitudes. This is in

line with Jaffrelot and Schoch (2021), who posit that elite comfort with the socioeconomic status quo indicates (and determines) elite support for authoritarianism.

Figure 10: Bivariate Correlations between the DVs and IVs for Wave 7

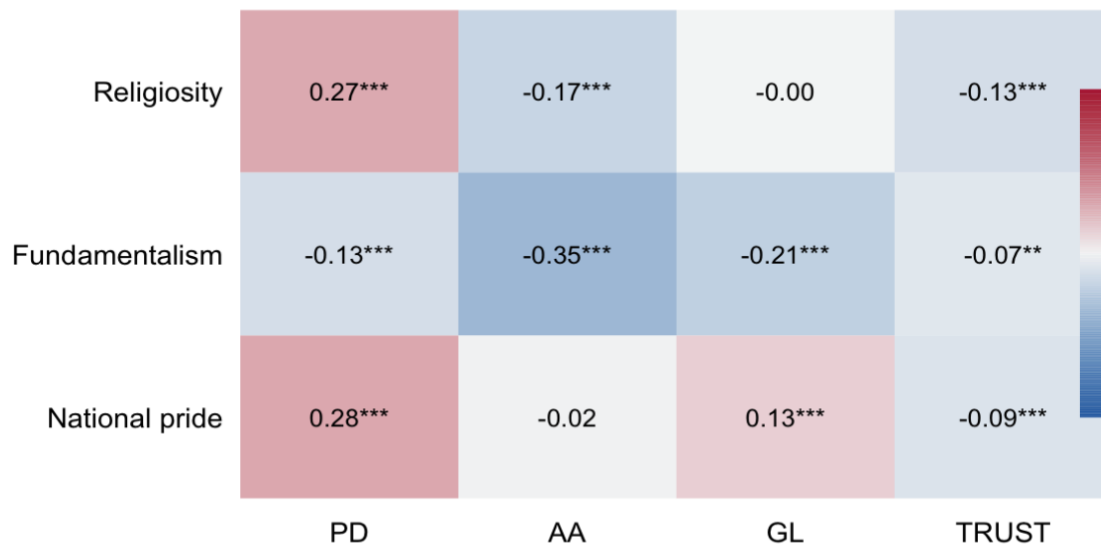


Figure 10 presents the correlations between the four dependent variables and the three main independent variables. The color indicates the direction of the relationship (red indicates positive correlation and blue indicates negative) whereas the intensity of the shade indicates the strength of the relationship. Religiosity has a strong positive association for principled support for democracy but negatively correlates with authoritarian rejection. It is also negatively associated with out-group tolerance. Conversely, religious fundamentalism has consistently negative relationships across all indicators of democratic attitudes. It has strong negative associations with anti-authoritarianism and gender-liberal attitudes. National pride has a strong positive association with principled support for democracy and a positive and significant association with gender-

liberal attitudes. However, it is negatively associated with outgroup tolerance, which seems to indicate a majoritarian nature. It must be noted that this heatmap does not control for demographic factors which affect support for democracy such as education or income, and therefore the magnitude and significance of the relationship in the multivariate regression analysis might be different than seen in Figure 10.

4.2 Regression Results

In the previous section, I mapped the relationship between the dependent and independent variables and examined group-level differences for various key covariates. This descriptive analysis provided important preliminary insights, but does not account for the simultaneous impact of other key factors. In this section, I present the results of multivariate OLS regression models for the various dimensions of democratic support.

Table 16: Multivariate OLS Estimates across Four Democratic Attitudes, Wave 7

	PD	AA	GL	TRUST
(Intercept)	0.087 (0.122)	0.722*** (0.152)	0.508** (0.167)	0.799*** (0.189)
Religiosity	0.350*** (0.032)	-0.118** (0.040)	0.009 (0.043)	-0.171*** (0.049)
Religious Fundamentalism	-0.140*** (0.017)	-0.253*** (0.022)	-0.160*** (0.023)	-0.036 (0.026)
National Pride	0.280*** (0.029)	0.035 (0.036)	0.205*** (0.039)	-0.084+ (0.044)
Male	-0.008	-0.023+	-0.108***	0.014

	PD	AA	GL	TRUST
	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.017)
Age	-0.000	0.001***	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Education	0.011***	0.011**	0.020***	-0.004
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Class	-0.003	-0.004	-0.013	0.036***
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.010)
Income	0.002	-0.018***	-0.002	-0.011**
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Scheduled Tribes	-0.105***	-0.033	0.040	0.084*
	(0.026)	(0.033)	(0.036)	(0.040)
Other Backward Castes	-0.039**	-0.053**	-0.007	0.028
	(0.015)	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.023)
General Castes	-0.019	-0.008	0.065**	0.005
	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.025)
Muslim	0.334**	0.039	0.077	-0.180
	(0.129)	(0.161)	(0.176)	(0.200)
Hindu	0.260*	0.042	-0.082	-0.024
	(0.118)	(0.147)	(0.161)	(0.183)
Buddhist	0.269*	0.042	-0.059	-0.115
	(0.117)	(0.145)	(0.160)	(0.181)
Sikh	0.276*	0.042	-0.116	-0.024
	(0.126)	(0.158)	(0.172)	(0.196)

	PD	AA	GL	TRUST
Other Religion	0.293*	0.139	-0.025	-0.054
	(0.119)	(0.148)	(0.162)	(0.184)
Urban	0.004	0.011	0.004	0.040*
	(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.017)
Num.Obs.	1549	1507	1562	1547
R2	0.198	0.167	0.125	0.051
R2 Adj.	0.189	0.158	0.116	0.041

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 16 displays the regression results for wave 7 across the four dependent variables: PD (principled support for democracy), AA (rejection of authoritarian rule); GL (attitudes relating to gender equality and gender-liberal attitudes) and TRUST (outgroup tolerance). The relationship between the DVs and various IVs are detailed here:

i. Religiosity

We see that religiosity is strongly positively associated with principled support for democracy (PD). On a 0 – 1 scale, a point increase in religiosity is associated with a +0.35 increase in PD. In fact, the effect of religiosity is higher with the addition of other variables, as seen when compared with the bivariate correlation which only indicated a +0.27 increase. This indicates that the bivariate association was negatively confounded by fundamentalism, and the association between religiosity and PD strengthens after adjustment for covariates. This supports hypothesis H1a which states that higher religiosity is positively associated with high principled support for democracy.

On the other hand, we see that religiosity is negatively associated with AA, such that point increase in religiosity corresponds to -0.118-point decrease in rejection of authoritarianism on a 0 – 1 scale. This indicates that adding other covariates (such as religious fundamentalism and income controls) offsets the negative effect of religiosity on authoritarian rejection (from -0.17 to -0.118). This finding, however, still supports H2a which states that higher religiosity is negatively associated with rejection of authoritarian rule.

Contrary to the expectation of H3a (higher religiosity is negatively associated with gender-liberal attitudes), we see that religiosity has a non-significant and near zero relationship with GL. However, religiosity does have a negative association with out-group tolerance (TRUST) as point increase in religiosity corresponds to a -0.17 decrease in TRUST. This finding is also consistent with the bivariate correlations which found a 0.13 decrease in TRUST with increase in religiosity when not adjusted for controls. The results support H4a (higher religiosity is negatively associated with outgroup tolerance).

ii. Religious Fundamentalism

A point increase in religious fundamentalism is associated with a -0.14 decrease in PD. The effect with the inclusion of covariates is stronger than in the bivariate analysis, which had indicated a -0.13 decrease. This aligns with H1b which states that religious fundamentalism is negatively associated with principled support for democracy. We see a similar negative association between religious fundamentalism and AA. Point increase in religious fundamentalism correlates to a -0.25 decrease in authoritarian rejection. While this is still a strong negative association, the magnitude of the effect is smaller than in the bivariate correlation which amounted to a -0.35 decrease in authoritarian rejection with

an increase in fundamentalism. This further indicates that multivariate analysis allows for a more granular interpretation of the effects of religiosity vs fundamentalism that was missing in the bivariate analysis. The regression results support H2b.

Regarding the effect of religious fundamentalism on the substantive aspects of democracy, we see that H3b is supported. Point increase religious fundamentalism is associated with a -0.16 decrease in gender-liberal attitudes (GL). Furthermore, although religious fundamentalism is negatively associated with out-group tolerance (TRUST), this result is not significant. Therefore, H4b. is not supported. The coefficient sizes for both substantive indicators of democracy are smaller in the multivariate analysis than in the bivariate analysis, indicating that other covariates offset the magnitude of the negative association between religious fundamentalism and liberal-substantive indicators of democracy.

iii. National Pride

National pride is positively associated with principled support for democracy. We see that a point increase in national pride is associated with a +0.28 increase in PD. The coefficient size is similar in magnitude to the bivariate correlational estimates. This finding supports H5a. H5b is not supported as national pride has a non-significant positive association with rejection of authoritarian rule (AA).

Furthermore, contrary to expectations, national pride has a positive association with gender-liberal attitudes (GL). A point increase in national pride is associated with a +0.205 increase in GL, indicating that pride aligns with gender-liberal attitudes in wave 7. Therefore, H5c is not supported. The association between national pride and gender-liberal attitudes is larger in the multivariate analysis (+0.205 compared to +0.13). We see

that increase in national pride relates to a small and marginally significant -0.084 decrease in out-group tolerance, somewhat indicating the presence of a majoritarian nationalist sentiment. National pride is therefore, directionally illiberal in its relationship with out-group tolerance (TRUST). This relationship is further clarified in Appendix 4.

iv. Relevant Control Variables

As previously stated, the regression models control for gender, age, education, class, income, caste, religion and urban settlements.

Male gender identity has a marginally significant negative association with authoritarian rejection (AA) and a highly significant negative association with gender-liberal attitudes (GL) where male gender identification is associated with a -0.108 decrease in gender-liberal attitudes. This aligns with what we see in Figure 7. Education is positively associated with principled support for democracy (PD), rejection of authoritarian rule (AA), and gender-liberal attitudes (GL). This aligns with theoretical expectations from the literature on modernization, wherein higher level of education is a positive predictor for greater support of democratic norms (Lipset 1959; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Furthermore, class is positively associated with out-group tolerance (TRUST) but higher income is negatively associated with rejection of authoritarian rule (AA) and out-group tolerance (TRUST). This reinforces what we see in Figure 9.

Some caste identities are actually negatively associated with overt support for democracy. Identification as a member of the Scheduled Tribes is associated with a -0.105 decrease in principled support for democracy (PD) whereas identifying as a member of the Other Backward Castes is associated with significant negative associations with PD and AA. Therefore, members of the OBC are less likely to support

democracy in principle and more likely to be tolerant of authoritarianism. This might be due to their identification with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the current leader of BJP who is himself a part of the OBC. The General castes category (which indicates high caste groups) is positively associated with gender-liberal attitudes (GL).

Religious denomination on the other hand seems to be positively associated with principled support for democracy (PD) across all religious groups. Identifying as a Muslim is associated with a +0.334 increase in PD, whereas identifying as Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh are associated with marginally significant +0.26-0.27 increases in PD. Lastly, being a part of an urban settlement is marginally positively associated with out-group tolerance (TRUST).

The multivariate regression analysis for wave 7 shows that religious fundamentalism is a consistent democracy-eroding component in the determination of mass attitudes. However, its link to out-group tolerance is weak after adjustment for covariates. The contested relationship between religiosity and democratic attitudes is also affirmed, as we see that religiosity is associated positively with PD but negatively with AA and TRUST. Finally, education, income and caste and religious identification seem to be important indicators for democratic attitudes in India. The r-squared values indicate that 19.8% of the variance in PD and 16.8% of the variance in AA are explained by the models. This is a moderate model fit considering that this study works with unweighted survey data. The models only explain 12.5% of the variance in GL and 5.1% of the variance in TRUST. This might be because out-group tolerance is driven by communal experiences that are not captured by the survey data.

Having conducted multivariate regression analysis on the wave 7 data, I then replicated the analysis on wave 6 data to see whether the change in contextual factors due to time and political change has affected the associations between the dependent and independent variables.

Table 17: Multivariate OLS Estimates across Four Democratic Attitudes, Wave 6

	PD	AA	GL	TRUST
(Intercept)	0.533*** (0.066)	0.699*** (0.111)	0.582*** (0.092)	0.360** (0.120)
Religiosity	0.284*** (0.022)	-0.143*** (0.036)	0.092** (0.031)	0.049 (0.037)
Religious Fundamentalism	-0.079*** (0.012)	-0.283*** (0.019)	-0.220*** (0.016)	-0.069*** (0.019)
National Pride	0.203*** (0.018)	0.090** (0.030)	0.059* (0.025)	0.141*** (0.030)
Male	0.016* (0.006)	-0.012 (0.010)	-0.075*** (0.009)	0.004 (0.011)
Age	-0.000 (0.000)	0.002*** (0.000)	-0.000 (0.000)	0.001** (0.000)
Education	0.003* (0.001)	0.009*** (0.002)	0.007*** (0.002)	0.010*** (0.002)
Class	0.001 (0.004)	-0.057*** (0.006)	0.012* (0.005)	0.002 (0.006)
Income	-0.002 (0.002)	0.001 (0.003)	-0.006** (0.002)	0.004 (0.003)
Muslim	-0.134* (0.066)	0.074 (0.111)	-0.141 (0.092)	-0.025 (0.120)

	PD	AA	GL	TRUST
	(0.063)	(0.106)	(0.087)	(0.115)
Hindu	-0.130*	0.004	-0.104	-0.104
	(0.062)	(0.105)	(0.086)	(0.114)
Buddhist	-0.052	0.086	0.080	-0.083
	(0.073)	(0.123)	(0.102)	(0.130)
Sikh	-0.088	0.066	-0.115	-0.023
	(0.066)	(0.111)	(0.092)	(0.120)
Other Religion	-0.111+	-0.005	0.094	-0.064
	(0.064)	(0.107)	(0.089)	(0.116)
Num.Obs.	3551	3401	3496	3408
R2	0.096	0.121	0.105	0.033
R2 Adj.	0.093	0.117	0.101	0.029

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

I conduct this comparison systematically across the four different models below:

i. Principled Support for Democracy (PD)

We see that religiosity has a strong positive association with PD such that a point increase in religiosity corresponds to a +0.284 increase in principled support for democracy. Therefore, H1a holds across both waves although the size of the association is larger in wave 7 (+0.35).

Religious fundamentalism has a negative association with PD in the wave 6 data as well. Therefore, H1b is also supported across both waves. However, it is clear that the size of the negative association is much larger in wave 7 – where a point increase in religious fundamentalism is associated with a -0.079 decrease in PD in wave 6, it is associated with a -

0.14 decrease in PD in wave 7. This strongly supports H6, which posits that the negative association of religious fundamentalism with the dimensions of democracy is stronger in wave 7 than in wave 6.

While national pride has a consistently strong positive association with PD across both waves (H5a is supported across waves), the size of the association is also larger in wave 7 than in wave 6 – a point increase in national pride corresponds to a +0.203 increase in wave 6 but a +0.28 increase in wave 7. This indicates that national pride was more associated with principled or overt democratic support in wave 7.

The positive association between education and PD strengthens in wave 7 – where a point increase corresponds to a marginally significant +0.003 increase in wave 6, it corresponds to a statistically significant +0.011 increase in wave 7. This is consistent with theoretical expectations from modernization theory. Interestingly, whereas Muslim and Hindu religious identification is negatively associated with PD in wave 6, they are positively associated in wave 7. While this might be because of changes in sociopolitical context, it may also point to differences in survey data collection methodology across the waves.

ii. Rejection of Authoritarian Rule (AA)

Higher religiosity corresponds to lower authoritarian rejection, indicating that H2a holds directionally across waves. However, the magnitude of authoritarian tolerance is lower in wave 7 – whereas a point increase in religiosity in wave 6 corresponds to a -0.143 decrease in wave 6, it corresponds to a -0.118 decrease in wave 7. This may potentially be due the inclusion of the extra AA item (rejection of religious rule) in wave 7.

Religious fundamentalism remains consistently negatively associated with anti-authoritarianism across waves. However, the magnitude of authoritarian tolerance in relation

with religious fundamentalism decreases marginally – a point increase corresponds to a -0.283 decrease in AA in wave 6, but a -0.253 decrease in wave 7. Although the size of the association remains quite large in wave 7, this does not support H6.

Contrary to H5b, we see that national pride has a small positive association (+0.09) with anti-authoritarianism in wave 6. However, this association fades in wave 7, indicating that for wave 7, national pride is strongly associated with principled democratic support without necessarily rejecting authoritarianism.

Education remains positively associated with AA across the two waves, with a greater positive magnitude in wave 7 (+0.009 vs +0.011); and the significant negative association between class and anti-authoritarianism fades from wave 6 to wave 7 – aligning with the theoretical expectations of modernization. Income, which is not significant and effectively null in wave 6, is negatively associated with AA in wave 7 (a point increase in income corresponds to -0.018 decrease). This is consistent with Jaffrelot and Schoch (2021), who identify higher-income cohorts in India as being more comfortable with authoritarian leaders in the recent period.

iii. Gender-liberal attitudes (GL)

H3a does not hold for either wave 6 or wave 7. There is a small positive association between religiosity and GL in wave 6, which vanishes in wave 7. This indicates that although religiosity does not relate to gender illiberalism (as hypothesized), it also does not positively correlate to gender-liberal attitudes over time.

The magnitude of the negative association between religious fundamentalism and GL shrinks in wave 7. Whereas a point increase in religious fundamentalism is associated with a

-0.22 decrease in GL in wave 6, in wave 7, a point decrease is associated with a -0.16 decrease in gender-liberal attitudes. Therefore, this also does not support H6.

H5c does not hold across both waves. Although national pride is marginally positively associated with GL in wave six (+0.059 increase per point increase in national pride), the size of the association is much bigger in wave 7 – with a point increase in national pride correlating to a +0.205 increase in gender-liberal attitudes. This indicates that national pride is associated with pro-gender egalitarian values, potentially reflecting a national pride narrative that casts gender-liberal attitudes as a sign of developmental progress.

As expected from figure 7, men are less gender-liberal across both waves, but the magnitude of the negative association increases in the wave 7 data (from -0.075 to -0.108). Education is positively associated with GL in both waves, but more so in wave 7 compared to wave 6 (+0.007 in wave 6; +0.02 in wave 7).

iv. Out-group Tolerance (TRUST)

H4a holds for wave 7 but not for wave 6. Whereas increase in religiosity is associated with a small, non-significant positive increment in TRUST in wave 6, it is strongly negatively associated in wave 7 (with a -0.171 decrease in TRUST with every point increase in religiosity). This is the biggest substantive shift across both waves, indicating that there has been a large-scale attitudinal reorientation in religious people regarding out-group tolerance, represented in this study by inter-religious trust. Although this indicator does not capture religious fundamentalism, this relationship might partially support H6, as it indicates lower levels of out-group tolerance among people with high religiosity when moving across time periods.

The association between religious fundamentalism and TRUST fades across the waves. Whereas there is a small but significant negative association between fundamentalism and TRUST in wave 6, this relationship is non-significant in wave 7. This, along with the increased negative association between religiosity and TRUST in wave 7, hints that out-group suspicions have broadened from being characteristic to just fundamentalists in the more recent time period.

The association between national pride and TRUST flips from positive in wave 6 to negative in wave 7. This hints at an emerging majoritarian nationhood, which is theoretically consistent with India's democratic trajectory towards what Jaffrelot terms as "ethnic democracy" (Jaffrelot and Schoch 2021).

There is a positive association between class and TRUST (+0.036) and a negative association between income and TRUST (-0.011) in the wave 7 sample which is not present in the wave 6 sample.

We see that models for the wave 7 data explain variance better than the wave 6 models. For the wave 6 sample, the models explain only 9.6% of variance for PD compared to 19.8% for wave 7; 12.1% for AA in wave 6 compared to 16.8% in wave 7; 10.5% for GL in wave 6 compared to 12.5% in wave 7; and 3.3% for TRUST in wave 6 compared to 5.1% in wave 7. This might be because the indices for the dependent variables were constructed based on relationships in the wave 7 data. Furthermore, the covariates for caste groups and urban settlement are missing in the wave 6 models. This might account for the worse model fits. However, the purpose of the wave 6 regressions was to assess the difference in associations over time rather than to maximize

predictive ability. As such, even with the moderate to low model fits, the directionality and magnitude of the coefficients are relevant for H6.

4.3 Discussion

The previous section tested the proposed hypotheses through multivariate OLS regression analysis. The findings indicate that:

- H1a holds true such that higher degrees of religiosity are associated with higher principled or overt support for democracy for both waves.
- H1b also holds true, as higher degrees of religious fundamentalism are associated with lower principled support for democracy in both wave samples.
- H5a, which states that higher degrees of national pride are associated with higher principled support for democracy, is found to be supported by the PD regression model for both waves.

Therefore, religiosity and national pride are positively associated, and religious fundamentalism is negatively associated with the dimension of democratic support that deals with overt endorsements of democracy.

- H2a, which states that higher degrees of religiosity are associated with lower authoritarian rejection, is supported by the analysis for both waves.
- H2b, stating that higher degrees of religious fundamentalism are associated with lower authoritarian rejection, is also supported in both wave samples.
- H5b, which states that higher degrees of national pride are associated with lower authoritarian rejection, is not supported by the model for both waves.

The expectations regarding the dimension of democratic support that deals with procedural guardrails are only partially supported. While religiosity and religious fundamentalism are negatively associated to anti-authoritarianism, national pride has an almost null relationship with AA in wave 7, and is positively associated with authoritarian rejection in wave 6.

- H3a, which states that higher degrees of religiosity are associated with lower degrees of gender-liberal attitudes, does not hold for wave 7 or wave 6.
- H3b, which states that higher religious fundamentalism is associated with lower gender-liberal attitudes holds true across both waves.
- H5c, which states that higher degrees of national pride are associated with lower degrees of gender-liberal attitudes, does not hold for wave 7 or wave 6.

The hypotheses which deal with the gender-egalitarian liberal-substantive dimension of democratic support are also only partially supported. Contrary to theoretical expectations from the link between religiosity and traditional values and gender norms, the findings indicate that religiosity has a null relationship with GL in wave 7 and is positively associated with GL in wave 6. Similarly, national pride is marginally positively associated with GL in wave 6 and strongly positively associated in wave 7. Therefore, national pride in this instance, does not act in conjunction with religious fundamentalism, which is negatively associated with the liberal-substantive dimension of attitudes towards gender-liberal norms.

- H4a, which states that higher religiosity is associated with lower outgroup tolerance is supported for wave 7, but not for wave 6.

- H4b, which states that higher degrees of religious fundamentalism are associated with lower degrees of outgroup tolerance is supported for wave 6, but not for wave 7.
- H5d, which states that higher national pride is associated with lower out-group tolerance is marginally supported in the wave 7 analysis, but not supported for wave 6.

The expectations for the liberal-substantive dimension of out-group tolerance do hold for religiosity in wave 7. Similarly, national pride is marginally negatively associated with TRUST in wave 7. Interestingly, religious fundamentalism loses the significance of its negative association with out-group tolerance in wave 7 when modelled with other covariates.

- H6, which states that the negative association of religious fundamentalism with all dimensions of democracy is stronger in wave 7 (the Modi era) than it was in wave 6 (pre-Modi regime) is partially supported.

The change in political context (relating to greater Hindu fundamentalist mobilization under Modi) has shown a greater magnitude of negative association in wave 7 compared to wave 6 for the dimension of principled support for democracy, but not for rejection of authoritarian rule or the liberal-substantive dimensions of democratic support.

In temporal comparisons of the associations, the mixed-support nature of religiosity is more pronounced in wave 7, where it is positively associated with principled support for democracy, but also significantly negatively associated with anti-authoritarian attitudes and out-group tolerance. Fundamentalism remains a clear anti-democratic force across the two waves with significant negative associations with principled support and anti-authoritarianism. Its negative associations with the liberal-substantive dimensions of democracy are significantly weakened in the recent time period. That is, religious fundamentalism in wave 7 is still strongly negatively

associated with overt support and gender illiberalism in wave 7, but its associations with out-group tolerance weaken when the covariates of religiosity and national pride are introduced, which is not seen in the wave 6 regression analysis. Interestingly, the negative association between religiosity and TRUST increases significantly across the waves, which might indicate that out-group suspicion has permeated the consciousness of the larger religious public rather than just being limited to fundamentalists.

The associations of national pride, especially in wave 7, also diverge. While it is positively associated with principled support for democracy across both waves, and becomes moderately positively associated with gender-liberal attitudes in wave 7, it loses its positive association with anti-authoritarianism, indicating that those with higher degrees of national pride might not mind authoritarian tactics. Furthermore, it is marginally negatively associated with out-group tolerance when it used to be significantly *positive* associated with TRUST in wave 6, indicating that national pride is associated with strong pro-democratic identity without pluralistic commitments in wave 7. This, in conjunction with the significant negative association between religiosity and TRUST in wave 7 could indicate strong religio-national identification with low tolerance for people of other religious groups – which is a defining characteristic of Hindu fundamentalist mobilization in India. This association is further investigated in Appendix 4.

5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to measure how religiosity, religious fundamentalism, and national pride relate to the varied dimensions of democratic support in India using World Values Survey data, with wave 7 as the primary sample and wave 6 for comparative purposes.

This study provides clear empirical evidence of the multidimensionality of ‘support for democracy’. There is a clear divide between overt democratic endorsement and authoritarian tolerance; not just through performance dissatisfaction but also principled support for norms and the liberal dimension of democracy. Principled endorsements can remain high alongside tolerance for illiberal shortcuts and erosion of liberal-substantive norms. Therefore, combined measures for ‘support for democracy’ capture a lot of noise which make it difficult to precisely measure mass attitudes towards democracy.

Religiosity exhibits ambivalent associations with democratic support, whereas religious fundamentalism is consistently negative. This pattern is consistent with prior mixed findings: personal religiosity can coexist with democratic ideals and still correlate to preferences that weaken democratic guardrails and inclusive social norms. This study also reinforces the theoretical link between religious fundamentalism and anti-democratic values, specifically for the case of India, which is consistent with prior investigations. The divergent relationships of religiosity and religious fundamentalism with the different dimensions of democratic support indicate that it is essential to distinguish the two in future investigations into the relationship between religion and support for democracy. National pride acts as a majoritarian nationalist conception which couples ‘support for democracy’ in some dimensions with an exclusionist orientation towards other religious groups.

Beyond the main covariates, this study also finds that the controls behave in a coherent manner. Education is positively associated with both overt democratic endorsement and the liberal-substantive dimensions of democracy, which is theoretically consistent with accounts of socioeconomic modernization. Income is negatively associated with authoritarian rejection and out-group tolerance, which is also theoretically expected in the Indian context. Beyond this, caste and religious identity capture heterogeneity in their relationships to the dimensions of democratic support, indicating that structural cleavages still shape democratic attitudes.

In the temporal comparison, some illiberal associations appear to be more pronounced in the more recent wave 7 sample compared to wave 6. This is most clear for the relationship between religious fundamentalism and principled support for democracy, but is also evident in the negative association between religiosity and out-group tolerance in the more recent sample. This pattern is consistent with accounts of the polarizing effect of more intense Hindu fundamentalist and Hindu nationalist rhetoric as well as the institutional erosion of protections for religious minorities while the BJP has been in power.

In conclusion, the findings of this study emphasize the fragility of democratic support in contexts where majoritarian religious identities dominate political life. They highlight the need for renewed civic, educational, and institutional efforts to safeguard pluralist values and contest authoritarian tolerance, particularly in contexts where religion and nationalism intersect. This study also resonates with other studies in the broad debate about India's democratic trajectory. Scholars have argued that India is shifting from a legacy of pluralist, secular democracy towards a more ethnic orientation, shaped in large part by religious majoritarian nationalism (Jaffrelot and Schoch 2021; Jayal 2022; Mehta 2022). The negative associations between religiosity, religious fundamentalism and national pride as well as the varied dimensions of democratic

support observed in this study provide quantitative support to these concerns. Ultimately, this study indicates that democratic backsliding in India is occurring not only at the institutional level, but also through shifting mass attitudes, where exclusivist religio-national and fundamentalist ideologies are undermining liberal and pluralist commitments.

6. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The academic conceptualization of fundamentalism originating in a specific Evangelical-Protestant context in the United States has implications for conceptual transport and coverage when applied to a Hindu context. The battery of questions available in the WVS which relate to religious fundamentalism capture doctrinal absolutism and general exclusivism,¹³ but do not account for movement organization or the ethno-national orientation which is relevant to India. Including the covariate for national pride might mitigate this somewhat, but the index for religious fundamentalism likely undermeasures the breadth of fundamentalism in India.

Some indices (especially AA and Religiosity) combine measures of heterogeneous items by design, leading to low internal consistency. This likely has an impact on the estimation accuracy for the magnitude of effect. However, the items used to construct the Religiosity index loaded on the same factor and thus indicated that religiosity has a multi-faceted disposition, so the index allows this study to remain theoretically consistent in testing the relationship between religiosity and democratic support. Furthermore, to mitigate concerns regarding the low scale reliability of the AA index, I run item-level regressions for each item in the scale in Appendix 3, which affirms that directional conclusions hold.

The analysis is run on unweighted survey data, which implies that this analysis cannot be broadened to a population-level inference. However, as the demographic composition is broadly comparable to census benchmarks and indicates a nationally representative sample, this is not a big limitation in the study.

¹³ Q169 captures trust of religion over science indicating doctrinal absolutism, and Q170 captures belief in only one's own religion as acceptable, indicating exclusivism.

The analysis for wave 7 and wave 6 differs in a variety of ways, including: the availability of instruments – the survey item for “religious rule” only appears in wave 7, and this item is missing in the construction of AA for the wave 6 regression analysis; availability of covariates – the models for wave 6 do not include caste identity groups and urban settlement as covariates; and sampling differences – wave 7 sampled 8 states whereas wave 6 sampled 17 states. This indicates that cross-wave comparability is limited and the effect over time should not be taken as definitive.

The wave 7 sample skews younger than the wave 6 data, which may limit the broadening of the inference to India’s adult population. However, Tables 16 and 17 demonstrate that there is no significant difference in the moderating effect of age across the models for the two time periods, indicating that this is not a significant limitation.

Taken together, these limitations indicate that the findings should be interpreted as associational patterns within the Indian context rather than definitive causal claims.

Future Research

Conceptually, the basis of the development of the dependent variables in this study emerges out of dimensions of ‘diffuse support of democracy’ (Easton 1975). Incorporation of indicators of ‘specific support’ i.e., satisfaction with democracy and trust in institutions would allow for more robust capture of the dimension of ‘authoritarian tolerance’ by disaggregating what is genuine tolerance and what is dissatisfactory evaluation of performance. Furthermore, the existing ‘liberal-substantive’ dimension of democratic support can be further extended to incorporate attitudes towards and evaluations of protection of civil rights, minority rights and press freedom, which broaden measurement of the liberal content beyond just attitudes towards gender equality and out-group tolerance.

Analytically, the application of survey weights would allow for a more conclusive identification of the relationship between religiosity, religious fundamentalism and democratic support for the entire national population. Furthermore, the extension of the comparative apparatus to include state-level comparisons which account for varying levels of religious polarization and fundamentalist mobilization would allow for a more nuanced analysis about the importance of the political context for investigations into the relationship between religious fundamentalism and attitudes towards democratic support. This study does not test for potential interaction effects such as [Hindu] religious denomination \times fundamentalism or media exposure \times fundamentalism. Hindu \times fundamentalism interactions could not be meaningfully modeled here as both the population and the sample are majority Hindu – presenting insufficient variation across religious groups. However, this is an important avenue for future research, as the political salience of religious identity in the current context may condition how fundamentalist orientations translate into democratic attitudes. Similarly, exposure to partisan media may amplify the exclusionary tendencies of fundamentalism. Future research in broader samples would benefit from the inclusion of these interaction effects as it could shed light on the conditions under which religious fundamentalism most strongly erodes democratic support.

These next steps would move the analysis from associative inferences towards more robust conclusions about how religious and religious fundamentalist orientations truly affect attitudes towards democratic support.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Operationalization of Democratic Attitudes and Religion / Fundamentalism in Prior Empirical Research

Appendix 1 situates the measurement and operationalization choices in this study within the existing literature. Table A1 summarizes how prior empirical research has conceptualized and measured support for democracy, religious belief and practice, and religious fundamentalism, along with their key findings. This comparative overview highlights the diversity in approaches to operationalization and therefore provides the rationale for the strategy adopted in this study.

Table A 1: Detailed Operationalization Matrix for Support for Democracy, Religious Belief and Religious Fundamentalism

SN	Article	Dataset	Operationalization (Dependent Variable)	Operationalization (Relevant Independent Variable)	Findings
1.	Ben-Nun Bloom and Arikan (2013) Religion and Support for Democracy: A Cross- National Test of the Mediating Mechanisms <small>CEU eLibrary Collection</small>	World Values Survey	DV1 > Overt Support for Democracy > summative index [‘Having a democratic political system’ + ‘Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections’] and [‘Democracies aren’t good at maintaining order’ + ‘In democracy, the economic system runs badly’ + ‘Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling’ (reversed order)]	IV1 > religious belief > additive index [considers oneself religious + importance of God in respondent’s life] IV2 > social religious behavior > summative index [frequency of attendance of religious gathering + belonging to a religious	Private religious belief is associated with decreased overt and intrinsic support for democracy; communal religious behavior is associated with

			<p>DV2 > Substantive Support for Democracy > two additive scales: procedural support [‘people choose their leaders in free elections’ + ‘civil rights protect people against oppression’ + ‘people can change the laws in referendums’ + ‘women have the same rights as men’]; and non-instrumental support [‘governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor’ + ‘people receive state aid for unemployment’ + ‘the economy is prospering’ + ‘criminals are severely punished’].</p>	<p>organization/being an active or inactive member of a religious organization</p>	<p>more support for democracy</p>
2.	<p>Just (2018)</p> <p>Religious engagement and citizen support for democratic accountability in contemporary democracies</p> <p>CEU eTD Collection</p>	<p>European Social Survey</p>	<p>DV1 > attitude towards democratic accountability > ‘How important do you think it is for democracy in general that governing parties are punished in elections when they have done a bad job?’</p> <p>DV2 > satisfaction with democracy > ‘How satisfied are you with the way [your country’s government] is doing its job?’</p>	<p>IV1 > religious attitude > ‘How religious would you say you are?’</p> <p>IV2 > religious social behavior > ‘Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services nowadays?’</p> <p>IV3 > economic performance > ‘How satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [country]?’</p>	<p>High individual religious engagement (religious belief + religious social behavior) is associated with lower motivation for democratic accountability</p>

3.	Bomhoff and Gu (2012) Religion and Support for Democracy: A Comparative Study for Catholic and Muslim Countries	World Values Survey	DV > importance of democracy > ‘How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?’ + measurement of alternative regimes [‘Having a democratic political system’ + ‘Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections’]	IV > religious belief > ‘How important is God in your life?’	High levels of belief in Islam does not correlate to low support for democracy but the conceptualization of democracy is different in citizens of Catholic and Muslim countries
4.	Huber and Mohamed (2023) The Decline of Religion and Its Rise in Electoral Politics CEU eTD Collection	World Values Survey	DV1 > liberal opposition > can abortion and homosexuality always be justified, never be justified, or something in between? DV2 > economic policy attitudes > tolerance of income gaps + attitude towards government’s responsibility to provide DV3 > participation in national elections > ‘When elections take place at the national level, do you vote [1] always, [2] usually or [3] never?’ DV4 > participation in local elections > ‘When elections take	IV1 > religious belief > ‘How important is God in your life?’ IV2 > religious practice > measure frequency of church attendance	Religious belief is associated with conservative policy preferences Church attendance is associated with higher political engagement

			place at the local level, do you vote [1] always, [2] usually or [3] never?’		
5.	Wright (2016) Why is Contemporary Religious Terrorism Predominantly Linked to Islam? Four Possible Psychosocial Factors	World Values Survey	DV > measure of fundamentalism > mean of four items (scale reversed) [‘Whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right’ + ‘The only acceptable religion is my religion’ + ‘All religions should be taught in our public schools’ + ‘People who belong to different religions are probably just as moral as those who belong to mine’]	IV > religious denomination > “Do you belong to a religion or religious denomination? If yes, which one?”	Followers of Islam hold more religious fundamentalist sentiments than those of other religious denomination
6.	Arikan and Ben-Nun Bloom (2022) Religious Identity Politics and Genuine Support for Democracy CEU eTD Collection	World Values Survey	DV1 > genuine support for democracy > support for (not reversed) authoritarianism [Religious authorities interpret the laws’+ ‘The army takes over when government is incompetent’] + instrumental support for democracy [‘Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor’ + ‘People receive state aid for unemployment’] – support for liberal democratic principles [‘People choose their leaders in free elections’ + ‘Civil rights protect people’s liberty against oppression’ + ‘Women have the same rights as men’]	IV1 > religious identity (engagement in religious social activities) > additive index [‘How often do you attend religious services’ + ‘Are you an active/inactive member of a religious organization?’] IV2 > government favoritism of the religion > degree of friendliness of state to religion [recognition of national religion, funding for religious education, clergy, etc.] (Pew Research Center)	Religious belief is associated with reduced genuine support for democracy; impact of religious identity on democracy is conditional upon the context of religion in the country. Discriminated, minority

				<p>IV3 > discrimination against minority religions > restriction on religious institutions and leadership (RAS Project)</p> <p>Control Variable > religious belief > additive index [‘How important is God in your life?’ + ‘Do you consider yourself to be a religious person?’]</p>	religions have more genuine support for democracy.
7.	<p>McCauley and Gyimah-Boadi (2009)</p> <p>Religious Faith and Democracy: Evidence from the Afrobarometer Surveys</p>	Afrobarometer Survey	<p>DV1 > trust in institutions > ‘How much trust do you have in the President/ political parties/ police/other entities?’</p> <p>DV2 > support for democracy > ‘Democracy is always preferable to other forms of government’</p> <p>DV3 > interest in politics > scale of 1 – 4 for interest in public affairs</p>	IV > religious belief > ‘How important is religion in your life?’	Religious belief has a strong positive association with trust in institutions and interest in politics, but a statistically insignificant weak positive association with support for democracy
8.	<p>Yendell and Hubert (2022)</p> <p>Religion, Conspiracy</p>	2021 ReRa UK Survey sample (representative by education,	DV > conspiracy mentality > a sum score of three statements [‘most people do not realize how far our lives are determined by conspiracies that are concocted in secret’ + ‘there are secret organizations that have a	<p>IVs ></p> <p>Attitude towards democracy > ‘Compared to other political ideas, what would</p>	Conspiracy mentality is negatively related to support for

	<p>Thinking, and the Rejection of Democracy: Evidence From the UK</p> <p>CEU eTD Collection</p>	gender, age, and region)	great influence on political decisions' + 'politicians and other leading figures are only puppets of the powers behind'	<p>you think about the idea of democracy?'</p> <p>Satisfaction with democracy > 'How satisfied are you with how democracy is working in the UK as a whole?'</p> <p>Religious affiliation > 'Which religious community or denomination do you belong or identify with?'</p> <p>Importance of religiosity > 'How important is religion in your life?'</p> <p>Religious fundamentalism > sum score of four statements ['There is only one true religion' + 'Obeying the commandments of my religion is more important to me than the laws of the state in which I live' + 'Only my religion is able to solve the problems of our time' + 'Members of my religion should return to their religious roots']</p> <p>Authoritarianism: sum score ['Troublemakers should be</p>	<p>democracy and positively related to religious fundamentalism .</p>
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				made very aware that they are unwanted in society’ + ‘Important decisions in society should be left to its leaders’ + ‘Tried and tested practices should not be called into question’]	
9.	Norris and Inglehart (2011) Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide, 2 nd Edition CEU eTD Collection	World Values Survey and European Values Survey	DV1 > religious participation > [‘How often do you attend religious services?’ + ‘How often do you pray to God outside of religious services?’] DV2 > religious values > [‘How important is God in your life?’ + ‘How important is religion in your life?’] DV3 > religious beliefs > [‘Do you believe in heaven?’ + ‘Do you believe in hell?’ + ‘Do you believe in life after death?’ + ‘Do you believe people have a soul?’] DV4 > support for democratic ideals ¹⁴ > [‘Democracy may have its problems but it’s better than any other form of government’ +	IVs > Demographics > age, gender, income, education religious denomination > type of religious culture (Catholic, Muslim, Protestant)	No significant difference in support for democratic ideals between those living in Western and Muslim countries

¹⁴ Norris and Inglehart use principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalization to account for measurement variance between indicators of the two different surveys.

			<p>‘Approve of having a democratic political system’]</p> <p>DV5 > support for alternative form of governance > [‘Approve having experts, not government, make decisions’ + ‘Approve having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections’]</p>		
10.	<p>Meyer, Tope and Price (2008)</p> <p>Religion and Support for Democracy: A Cross-national Examination</p> <p>CEU eTD Collection</p>	World Values Survey	<p>DV > support for democracy > five item additive scale [opinion of democratic political system + ‘In democracy, the economic system runs badly’ + ‘Democracies are indecisive and have too much quibbling’ + ‘Democracies aren’t good at maintaining order’ + ‘Democracy may have problems, but it’s better than any other form of government’]</p>	<p>IV1 > predominant religion > binary measure of 1 for dominant religion; 0 for others [Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox]</p> <p>IV2 > religious attachment > four item scale [importance of religion + importance of God + finding comfort/strength in religion + frequency of prayer outside of religious service]</p> <p>IV3 > religious attendance > ‘Apart from weddings, funerals, and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days?’</p>	<p>Islam is not negatively associated with support for democracy.</p> <p>Religious attachment is positively associated with support for democracy whereas religious politics is negatively associated with support for democracy.</p>

				IV4 > religious politics > four item scale [‘Politicians who do not believe in God are unfit for public office’ + ‘Religious leaders should not influence how people vote in elections’ + ‘It would be better for [this country] if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office’ + ‘Religious leaders should not influence government decisions’]	
11.	Marsh (2005) Orthodox Christianity, Civil Society, and Russian Democracy CEU eTD Collection	World Values Survey	DV > civic engagement (important pro-democratic attitude) DV1> ‘often discusses politics’ DV2 > ‘interest in politics’	IV > religiosity IV1 > religious belief > ‘How important is God in your life?’ IV2 > religious behavior > ‘pray outside of religious services’ IV3 > religious social behavior > Church attendance IV3 > religious denomination > identification as Orthodox	Orthodox Christians are more positive towards democracy than other Russians. Religious belief and practice have no impact on pro-democratic attitudes.

				IV4 > political religion > 'belief that political leaders should believe in God'	
12.	Tessler (2002) Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries	Survey Data (Palestine, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt)	DV > attitudes towards democracy > factor analysis and additive index of a range of measurement instruments that clump together across the four surveys	IV1 > personal religious belief > factor analysis and additive index of a range of measurement instruments that clump together across the four surveys IV2 > political Islam > factor analysis and additive index of a range of measurement instruments that clump together across the four surveys	In Palestine and Egypt, personal religious belief is inversely related to support for democracy. In Morocco and Algeria, support for political Islam is inversely related to support for democracy.

Appendix 2: Survey Instruments for Dependent and Independent Variables

Appendix 2 details the exact WVS item wording and item codes across the two waves, reproduced verbatim from the WVS questionnaires, and the respective scales for the survey instruments utilized for the construction of variables in this study. Table A2 consists of the survey instruments utilized in the operationalization of the dependent variable.

Table A 2: Survey Instruments for Dependent Variable Construction (Wave 6 & 7)

SN	Item	Question Number (Wave 7)	Question Number (Wave 6)	Scale
1	How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?	Q250	V140	1 – 10 scale 1 = Not Important 10 = Very Important
Are these various political systems a good or bad way of governing India?				
2	Having a democratic political system	Q238	V130	1 – 4 scale 1 = Very good 2 = Fairly good 3 = Fairly bad 4 = Very bad
3	Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections	Q235	V127	1 – 4 scale 1 = Very good 2 = Fairly good 3 = Fairly bad 4 = Very bad
4	Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country	Q236	V128	1 – 4 scale 1 = Very good 2 = Fairly good 3 = Fairly bad 4 = Very bad
5	Having the army rule	Q237	V129	1 – 4 scale 1 = Very good 2 = Fairly good 3 = Fairly bad 4 = Very bad
6	Having a system governed by religious law in which there are no political parties or elections	Q239	NA	1 – 4 scale 1 = Very good 2 = Fairly good

				3 = Fairly bad 4 = Very bad
7	When a mother works for pay, the children suffer	Q28	V50	1 – 4 scale 1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Disagree 4 = Strongly Disagree
8	On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do	Q29	V51	1 – 4 scale 1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Disagree 4 = Strongly Disagree
9	A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl	Q30	V52	1 – 4 scale 1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Disagree 4 = Strongly Disagree
10	On the whole, men make better business executives than women do	Q31	V53	1 – 4 scale 1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Disagree 4 = Strongly Disagree
11	Do you trust people from another religion?	Q62	V106	1 – 4 scale 1 = Trust completely 2 = Trust somewhat 3 = Do not trust very much 4 = Do not trust at all
12	Would you like to have people of a different religion as neighbors?	Q23	V41	1 – 2 scale 1 = Not like to see as neighbors 2 = Like to see as neighbors

Table A3 similarly presents the survey instruments operationalized in the construction of the independent variables.

Table A 3: Survey Instruments for Independent Variable Construction (Wave 6 & 7)

SN	Item	Question Number (Wave 7)	Question Number (Wave 6)	Scale
1	Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you pray?	Q172	V146	1 – 8 scale 1 = several times per day 2 = once per day 3 = several times per week 4 = only during religious services 5 = only on special holy days 6 = once a year 7 = less often 8 = never
2	Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are a religious person, not a religious person or an atheist?	Q173	V147	1 – 3 scale 1 = A religious person 2 = Not a religious person 3 = An atheist
3	How important is religion in your life?	Q6	V9	1 – 4 scale 1 = Very important 2 = Important 3 = Not very important 4 = Not at all important
4	How important is God in your life?	Q164	V152	1 – 10 scale 1 = Not Important 10 = Very Important
5	Whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right	Q169	V153	1 – 4 scale 1 = Strongly Agree

				2 = Agree 3 = Disagree 4 = Strongly Disagree
6	The only acceptable religion is my religion	Q170	V154	1 – 4 scale 1 = Strongly Agree 2 = Agree 3 = Disagree 4 = Strongly Disagree
7	Reversal of [Would you like to have people of a different religion as neighbors?]	Q23	V41	1 – 2 scale 1 = Not like to see as neighbors 2 = Like to see as neighbors
8	How proud are you to be an Indian?	Q254	V211	1 – 4 scale 1 = Very proud 2 = Quite proud 3 = Not very proud 4 = Not at all proud

Appendix 3: Robustness Tests – Dependent Variables

The anti-authoritarian index (AA) demonstrated low internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.496$ and $\omega = 0.516$) as it captures different dimensions of authoritarian rule and therefore blurs distinct attitudes towards the different sub-dimensions. Because of this, it is important to test whether the results for the main model of AA hold across the different components of the index. This robustness check helps determine whether the patterns identified in the main regression models hold across the different measures of anti-authoritarianism or if some sub-dimensions are masked in the main model.

I also run the regression analysis on a combined Net Democracy index, an additive index which combines all four normalized dependent variable indicators in the main models (PD, AA, GL, and TRUST) as a descriptive indicator for broad democratic orientation.

Table A 4: Regression Results (Robustness Check - DVs)

	AA - leader	AA - army	AA - religious rule	Net Democracy
(Intercept)	0.699***	0.426*	0.939***	0.529***
	(0.212)	(0.210)	(0.206)	(0.089)
	(<0.001)	(0.042)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
Religiosity	-0.277***	0.055	-0.045	0.018
	(0.056)	(0.058)	(0.055)	(0.023)
	(<0.001)	(0.342)	(0.413)	(0.425)

	AA - leader	AA - army	AA - religious rule	Net Democracy
Religious Fundamentalism	-0.205***	-0.177***	-0.328***	-0.149***
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.012)
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
National Pride	-0.336***	0.278***	0.219***	0.108***
	(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.051)	(0.021)
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
Male	-0.054**	-0.005	-0.014	-0.031***
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.008)
	(0.004)	(0.801)	(0.451)	(<0.001)
Age	0.001*	0.002***	0.001*	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)
	(0.024)	(<0.001)	(0.046)	(0.385)
Education	-0.006	0.019***	0.010*	0.010***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.002)
	(0.270)	(<0.001)	(0.050)	(<0.001)
Class	0.029*	-0.019+	0.011	0.002
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.005)
	(0.011)	(0.099)	(0.345)	(0.648)
Income	-0.016***	-0.021***	-0.032***	-0.006***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.002)

	AA - leader	AA - army	AA - religious rule	Net Democracy
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
Scheduled Tribes	-0.098*	0.050	-0.035	-0.006
	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.045)	(0.019)
	(0.032)	(0.279)	(0.441)	(0.758)
Other Backward Castes	-0.066*	-0.036	-0.022	-0.021+
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.011)
	(0.014)	(0.181)	(0.415)	(0.054)
General Castes	-0.034	0.001	0.013	0.008
	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.029)	(0.012)
	(0.245)	(0.977)	(0.661)	(0.501)
Muslim	0.320	0.035	-0.141	0.068
	(0.224)	(0.223)	(0.221)	(0.094)
	(0.153)	(0.876)	(0.525)	(0.470)
Hindu	0.359+	-0.015	-0.245	0.050
	(0.203)	(0.201)	(0.198)	(0.086)
	(0.077)	(0.942)	(0.216)	(0.558)
Buddhist	0.321	0.008	-0.227	0.034
	(0.201)	(0.199)	(0.196)	(0.085)
	(0.111)	(0.969)	(0.247)	(0.691)
Sikh	0.286	0.015	-0.247	0.044
	(0.218)	(0.218)	(0.214)	(0.092)
	(0.190)	(0.946)	(0.248)	(0.631)

	AA - leader	AA - army	AA - religious rule	Net Democracy
Other Religion	0.401+	0.129	-0.129	0.091
	(0.205)	(0.203)	(0.200)	(0.086)
	(0.051)	(0.525)	(0.518)	(0.295)
Urban	-0.034+	0.021	0.034+	0.014+
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.008)
	(0.083)	(0.294)	(0.083)	(0.085)
Num.Obs.	1456	1382	1397	1573
R2	0.131	0.098	0.158	0.162
R2 Adj.	0.120	0.087	0.148	0.153

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Religiosity has a strong negative association with rejection of a strong leader (-0.277 for every point increase in religiosity), but is insignificant for the other dimensions of anti-authoritarianism. This indicates that the negative association with rejection of a strong leader is the dominant association in the main AA model in Table 16, which indicated a -0.118 decrease for every point increase in religiosity. Religious fundamentalism, on the other hand, is consistently strongly negatively associated with authoritarian rejection across all dimensions of AA, which is in line with the relationship between RF and AA in the main models.

National pride is strongly negatively associated with rejection of a strong leader (-0.336 for every point increase in national pride) but also significantly positively associated with the rejection of both army and religious rule (+0.278 and + 0.219 respectively). This indicates that national pride has some conflicting associations with the subdimensions of AA in the combined

index (national pride has an approximately null relationship with the combined AA index).

Income is also consistently negatively associated across all individual measures of anti-authoritarianism. This is consistent with the significant negative association between income and AA in the main models and further props up the theoretical expectations about the relationship between higher income and authoritarian tolerance in India.

Religious fundamentalism is also negatively associated with the construct for broad democratic orientations. This is in line with the directionally negative relationship between fundamentalism and all indicators of democratic support in the main models. We also see that national pride is significantly positively associated with net democratic support. This indicates that its positive associations with overt democratic support (PD) and gender-liberal attitudes (GL) dominate the relationship with this broad indicator of democratic support. Education is positively associated with broad democratic orientation whereas income presents a negative relationship. This is in line with the relationships from the main models and our theoretical expectations for India.

Across all models, religious fundamentalism, once again, appears to have the most consistent negative association for anti-authoritarianism. Religious fundamentalism, associated with tolerance of religious authority in politics, draws a clear line to the support for ethno-religious policies that have become prevalent in India today (Jaffrelot and Schoch 2021). In contrast, religiosity only undercuts the rejection of strong leaders and has no relationship with the other sub-dimensions of authoritarian rejection while national pride displays a more complex and conflicting relationship with the different sub-dimensions of AA. Overall, this robustness check demonstrates that the findings for the AA main model are not necessarily an artifact of its low reliability: religious fundamentalism has a negative relationship across the board, religiosity

is primarily only concerned with tolerance of strong leaders, which is reflected in the main model, and national pride acts in varied ways.

This robustness check provides additional support to the hypotheses. In accordance with H2b, religious fundamentalism is consistently negatively associated with rejection of authoritarian rule. The models also weakly support H2a, as religiosity is negatively associated with rejection of a strong leader but not with the other sub-dimensions. Furthermore, the negative relationship between national pride and rejection of a strong leader partially supports H5b, which predicts that higher degrees of national pride are correlated to lower authoritarian rejection.

Appendix 4: Robustness Tests – Independent Variables

In the factor analysis for the independent variables as seen in Table 10, national pride initially loaded onto the same latent dimension as religiosity. To account for this overlap, I averaged the construct for religiosity and national pride to construct a combined index for religio-national identity, which is empirically distinct from religious fundamentalism (as clarified by the correlation table in Table 13); and test its associations for the four main dependent variables. Where religious fundamentalism reflects authoritarian and exclusivist orientations which are rooted in absolutism, dogmatism, and out-group hostility, religio-national identity captures the combination of personal religious belief and behavior and attachment to the nation. This construct tests whether the associations between religiosity and national pride and the attitudes towards democratic support remain stable when treated as a single entity.

Table A 5: Regression Results (Robustness Check - IV)

	PD	AA	GL	TRUST
(Intercept)	0.056	0.754***	0.555***	0.819***
	(0.123)	(0.152)	(0.167)	(0.189)
	(0.647)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
Religio-National Identity	0.629***	-0.066	0.228***	-0.232***
	(0.037)	(0.046)	(0.050)	(0.057)
	(<0.001)	(0.157)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)
Religious Fundamentalism	-0.132***	-0.270***	-0.173***	-0.050+
	(0.017)	(0.021)	(0.022)	(0.025)
	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(<0.001)	(0.050)

	PD	AA	GL	TRUST
Male	-0.009 (0.011) (0.384)	-0.018 (0.013) (0.167)	-0.106*** (0.014) (<0.001)	0.017 (0.016) (0.285)
Age	-0.000 (0.000) (0.636)	0.001** (0.000) (0.001)	-0.000 (0.000) (0.769)	-0.001 (0.001) (0.309)
Education	0.011*** (0.003) (<0.001)	0.011** (0.004) (0.002)	0.020*** (0.004) (<0.001)	-0.004 (0.004) (0.303)
Class	-0.001 (0.006) (0.928)	-0.005 (0.008) (0.507)	-0.016+ (0.009) (0.072)	0.036*** (0.010) (<0.001)
Income	0.002 (0.002) (0.360)	-0.017*** (0.003) (<0.001)	-0.002 (0.003) (0.618)	-0.011** (0.003) (0.001)
Scheduled Tribes	-0.093*** (0.026) (<0.001)	-0.020 (0.032) (0.534)	0.049 (0.036) (0.166)	0.082* (0.040) (0.040)
Other Backward Castes	-0.033* (0.015) (0.026)	-0.054** (0.019) (0.004)	-0.008 (0.020) (0.680)	0.021 (0.023) (0.367)
General Castes	-0.012 (0.016) (0.445)	-0.012 (0.020) (0.549)	0.063** (0.022) (0.004)	-0.001 (0.025) (0.957)
Muslim	0.351**	0.004	0.036	-0.204

	PD	AA	GL	TRUST
	(0.129)	(0.161)	(0.176)	(0.199)
	(0.007)	(0.978)	(0.838)	(0.307)
Hindu	0.275*	0.011	-0.116	-0.038
	(0.118)	(0.146)	(0.161)	(0.182)
	(0.020)	(0.941)	(0.473)	(0.833)
Buddhist	0.280*	0.013	-0.096	-0.136
	(0.117)	(0.145)	(0.160)	(0.181)
	(0.017)	(0.930)	(0.549)	(0.452)
Sikh	0.295*	0.011	-0.156	-0.046
	(0.127)	(0.157)	(0.172)	(0.196)
	(0.020)	(0.943)	(0.365)	(0.814)
Other Religion	0.304*	0.096	-0.073	-0.071
	(0.119)	(0.147)	(0.162)	(0.183)
	(0.011)	(0.513)	(0.650)	(0.698)
Urban	0.004	0.010	0.003	0.043*
	(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.017)
	(0.687)	(0.475)	(0.853)	(0.012)
Num.Obs.	1567	1526	1585	1570
R2	0.198	0.164	0.120	0.052
R2 Adj.	0.190	0.155	0.111	0.042
+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001				

The results in Table A5 show that religio-national identity is strongly positive associated with both principled support for democracy (PD) and gender-liberal attitudes (GL), which align with earlier findings for religiosity and national pride in Table 16. Furthermore, religio-national

identity is strongly negatively associated with out-group religious trust, which indicates that this construct represents a majoritarian nationalist orientation, which is consistent with theoretical expectations about India's ethnic democracy orientations (Jaffrelot and Schoch 2021). The insignificant association with AA indicates that the religio-national identity dimension is not relevant for attitudes towards authoritarian rejection. In these models, religious fundamentalism continues to display negative effects across most dimensions democratic support, with marginal negative association with out-group trust. This aligns with the results from the main models. This reinforces the fact that religious fundamentalism and religio-national identities interact with democratic support in distinct ways: the first through an exclusivist authoritarian orientation, and the latter through ethno-majoritarian orientation.

The robustness models indicate that combining religiosity and national pride do not conclusions about religious fundamentalism in any substantive manner. Furthermore, the greater magnitude of negative association of religio-national identity with TRUST reinforces the conclusions from the main models that religio-national sentiments in India hold strong majoritarian nationalist orientations and manifest in an exclusionary fashion, which are distinct from how religious fundamentalism interacts with exclusion (which are mostly evident in the negative association with gender-liberal attitudes).

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