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OCCASIONAL CRIMINALITY AND STREET CRIME DURING ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EVENTS: A STUDY OF LAHORE, PAKISTAN

Nimra Hussain Chohan[*1], Muhammad Aslam[2] , Khizar Hayat[3], Nayab Zahra[4], Muhammad Ullah Khalil[5], Noman Nadeem[6]

*[*1]BS Criminology, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore*
[2,3]LLB, Gillani Law College, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan
[4]BS Criminology, Insitute of Social Cultural Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan
[5]BS Criminology, Department of Criminology, University of Peshawar
[6]MBA Research Scholar, Department of Business Administration, NFC IET Multan

[*1]nimrahussain2603@gmail.com,[2]maslam.lawadvocacy@gmail.com,[3]khizaradv4@gmail.com,
[4]nayabzahra445@gmail.com, [5]muhammadullah.pk2026@gmail.com, [6]noman.nadeem.global@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *
Nimra Hussain Chohan
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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to analyze the pattern of street crimes during major religious events in Lahore, Pakistan such as Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha and Eid Milad-un-Nabi. It examines the impact of crowd size, police presence, informal social control, and religious involvement on opportunities for crime through the lens of Routine Activity Theory, Crime Pattern Theory, Social Disorganization Theory, and Situational Crime Prevention. Police records, surveys, observations and GIS based hotspot mapping were used to develop an explanatory design, quantitative approach. Descriptive statistics, correlation, regression and spatial analysis were the statistical analysis used. The results show that, during religious events, there is an amount of street crime that is significantly lower than during non-event times. More police officers and community guardianship were the most effective deterrent of crime, with opportunities for minor crimes being largely counteracted by increased surveillance. The research emphasizes the importance of collective guardianship in the context of religion services. This paper examines the concept of guardianship, which is a crucial factor in the street crimes committed in the city of Lahore, Pakistan, and also investigates the patterns of street crimes during the time of Islamic religious events through the perspective of routine activity theory and crime pattern theory.

Keywords: *Street crime, Islamic religious events, Routine activity theory, Crime pattern theory*

INTRODUCTION

The interaction between religion and crime has always been one of the significant aspects of criminological study. Religious institutions may instill values of morality, socialization and conformity to the norms of society, and religious services offer distinct social settings that can shape criminal opportunities. The relationship between these and each other is significant in theory and crime prevention policy. Changes in routine activities, population flow and guardianship in mass gatherings have been found to influence crime patterns. An increase in target availability and concentration of people in large public events

can create opportunities to offend. Meanwhile, they can also be able to decrease crime by boosting surveillance, social control and community involvement. How these forces are balanced either increase or decrease crime during such events. These dynamics can be explored in Islamic religious occasions. The mosques, markets, and public places are flooded with people during religious occasions like Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and Eid Milad-un-Nabi. These events could provide opportunities for offences like theft, pickpocketing, but also increase the chances of religious observance and collective responsibility and thus the informal social control and discouragement to crime.

The patterns have several criminological theories that can explain them. While routine activity theory and crime pattern theory argue that crowding can create opportunities for crime, social disorganization theory and situational crime prevention share a focus on the benefits of social cohesion, collective guardianship, and security. Although there has been increasing research into crime while it occurs at public events, there is inadequate empirical evidence in Muslim majority societies concerning crime that occurs on the streets during the Islamic religious event. This is an important issue in Pakistan, where religious gatherings and urban street crimes are a perennial problem. Lahore is second most populous city in Pakistan and also the second most religious and commercial center of Pakistan which is the perfect place to investigate. The present study investigates street crime pattern during major Islamic religious festivals in Lahore and the effect of crowd density, police deployment and community guarding during the festivals on street crime. The study brings together police data, surveys and spatial analysis to gain a better understanding of the link between religion, religious gatherings and crime prevention in urban areas.

Literature Review

There is a vast amount of research on religion and crime in the fields of criminology and sociology. Religious institutions are generally considered to be a form of informal social control that imposes conformity, reinforces moral values and discourages deviance (Hirschi, 1969; Baier & Wright, 2001). The literature is consistent that religiosity is related to delinquency and criminal offending due to its positive association with social bonding, self-control and social norms (Johnson et al., 2001; Johnson & Jang, 2010). Adamczyk et al. (2017) also suggest that there is a family, neighbourhood, and community dimension to religion and crime. In societies dominated by Islam, the informal mechanisms of social control that stem from Islamic education and teachings about moral responsibility, honesty, charity, and social responsibility can be very powerful (Serajzadeh, 2001).

The findings are not always consistent, however, regarding the relationship between religion and crime. Hirschi and Stark (1969) concluded that the relationship between religiosity and delinquency is weak among youth and that the impact of religion is related more to social and cultural factors. Stark et al. (1982) similarly suggested that the crime-preventive benefits of religion are highest in communities with a high level of agreement and reinforcement over religious norms. Therefore, the focus is on understanding the social and environmental factors of religion instead of making an assumption about how it affects crime. The dynamics of these can be understood through mass gatherings. The disruption of routine behaviours and the concentration of people and opportunities due to large-scale events like festivals, sporting events, concerts and religious services (Ceccato & Uittenbogaard, 2014) is also a factor. Several studies have yielded conflicting results on their effects on crime.

Other studies indicate that high density facilitates theft and other opportunity offenses due to the opportunity of anonymity and opportunity for target concentration (Ceccato, 2013; Ceccato & Uittenbogaard, 2014). On the other hand, the more cops are present, watching, and deployed, the fewer opportunities there are to offend and the less crime may occur (Braga et al., 2014). These patterns can be explained by the theory of environmental criminology. Routine Activity Theory suggests that crime takes place when a motivated offender meets a suitable target, and there are no capable guardians present (Cohen and Felson, 1979). Religious events can enhance

target availability by clustering people together and may also boost guardianship by having police and community surveillance present. The crime opportunity theory also indicates that crime opportunities develop around activity nodes and pathways where potential targets and offenders come together to interact (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1993). Religious institutions, markets and transportation routes can thus be crime generators or crime attractors depending on situational factors (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1995). Islamic religious activities have attributes which are different from many of the mass gatherings. Collective worship and charitable work and social solidarity are promoted through events such as Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha and Eid Milad-un-Nabi. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims are encouraged to be disciplined, reflect on their morals and become more religious, which can affect their behavior and the motivation for crime (Campante & Yanagizawa-Drott, 2015). They can also foster collective efficacy, or a sense of shared will to act for the common good and to preserve social order among the community members (Sampson et al., 1997). Tighter informal control and guardianship can be provided by greater interaction between worshippers and others in the community, which diminishes opportunities for crime (Felson, 1995; Reynald, 2010).

Research Gap

While the previous studies have made substantial contributions to the understanding of the relationship between religion, crime and mass gatherings, there are several important gaps in the literature. Firstly, there is only limited research on crime at mass gatherings in Muslim majority countries, and few of these studies have been carried out in North America or Europe, where religious expression and social organisation vary greatly from that of the Muslim world.

Secondly, empirical research which focuses specifically on street crime during Islamic religious events is scanty, especially in the South Asian context. An additional drawback is that much of past work has been narrowly based on one theory to account for patterns of crime. Not much research has been conducted to combine Routine Activity Theory, Crime Pattern Theory, Social Disorganization Theory and Situational Crime Prevention in a single study to explain the dynamics of crime during religious gatherings. Therefore, the interaction among social cohesion, environmental conditions, guardianship and crime opportunities is not well understood. In addition, little research has focused on the spatial patterns of crime in the vicinity of religious events, particularly using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Hotspot Analysis. Studies on the pattern of crime in various areas around the country during major religious festivals are hardly available in Pakistan. Additionally, previous research has failed to examine the joint effects of crowd density, police presence, informal care and religious attendance on the incidence of street crime.

In the present study, the shortcomings have been overcome by giving a comprehensive study about street crimes during the major religious events in Lahore, Pakistan. The use of police data, survey responses, observational data, and spatial analysis provides new empirical evidence in the field and provides both theoretical and practical lessons to the literature around the connection between religion, crime opportunities, and urban public safety.

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

To grasp the nature of street crimes during Islamic religious events, a theoretical approach that explains how social interactions, environment, movement patterns, and the opportunities for crime change during religious events is needed. This study applies an integrated theoretical approach which combines the Routine Activity Theory, Crime Pattern Theory, Social Disorganization Theory and Situational Crime Prevention. These views, combined, give a full picture of the influence of religious congregations on crime pattern in Lahore. The integrated framework is based on the assumption that the process of Islamic religious events changes routine activities, enhances social cohesion, creates more formal and informal guardianship, and redefines spatial movement patterns with urban settings. These changes then impact upon the

opportunities for crime and are one of the reasons for different levels of street crime on religious days.

Routine Activity Theory

Routine Activity Theory by Cohen and Felson (1979) is one of the most influential theories of the environment developed to explain the occurrence of crime. According to the theory, criminals commit crime when three elements come together in time and space: motivated offender, suitable target, and the absence of capable guardians. The impact of these elements is influenced by changes in the daily activities, which in turn affect the rates of crime. Religious events for Islam have a great influence on changing routine activities. These congregations at the mosque, religious processions, community events, and public celebrations draw thousands of people to certain areas, heightening the risk of targets within that area. Concurrently, there are frequently increased police capacities, community engagement and informal monitoring and surveillance. The theory proposes two conflicting scenarios, therefore. As more people are in a public area, there may be more opportunities for theft, pickpocketing and other offenses, but as there is more guardianship, there could be less opportunities for robbery, assault and other street crimes. In this study, the question was how the influence of these rival forces is stronger during major Islamic events in Lahore.

Crime Pattern Theory

The Crime Pattern Theory (proposed by Brantingham and Brantingham, 1993) is about the geographic nature of crime and the opportunities that are formed in the normal environment. The theory states that offenders create aware spaces as they move throughout their day from home to work to shopping centers to recreation and to transportation. These awareness areas tend to overlap and be close to potential victims and good opportunities, increasing the likelihood of crime. From this view, places that have large numbers of legitimate users can inadvertently provide opportunities for crime. During Islamic religious events, places that serve as activity nodes include religious venues, Eid congregation, public processions, commercial markets, and transportation hubs. These can become crime generators as they are places with many people, which may lead to more encounters between potential criminals and victims. They can also be dissuaded from offending, however, when there is sufficient guardianship and surveillance. Hence, the theory of Crime Pattern is an important theory to understand how religious gatherings influence spatial distribution of street crime in Lahore.

Conceptual Framework Figure

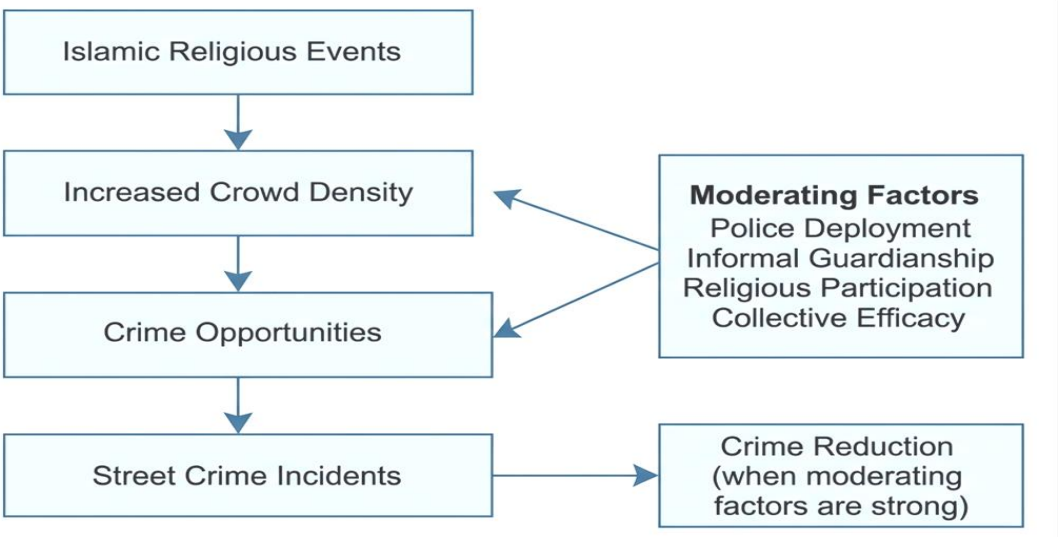


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Street Crime During Islamic Religious Events

Source: Developed by the Authors based on Cohen and Felson (1979), Brantingham and Brantingham (1993), Sampson et al. (1997), and Clarke (1997).

Research Hypotheses

H1

Street crime incidents are significantly lower during Islamic religious events than during comparable non-event periods.

H2

Higher crowd density is positively associated with street crime incidents.

H3

Greater police deployment is negatively associated with street crime incidents.

H4

Stronger informal guardianship is negatively associated with street crime incidents.

H5

Higher levels of religious participation are associated with lower probabilities of street crime occurrence.

Methodology

Research Design

The study used an explanatory research design with quantitative approach to study the relationship between Islamic religious events and street crimes in Lahore, Pakistan. Research involved secondary data from police crime records and primary data gathered using structured surveys. The unit of analysis was the occurrence of incidents of street crime during the major Islamic religious festivals of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha and Eid Milad-un-Nabi. The data was analyzed for the year 2018 to 2025 to look out for any certain pattern and trend.

Study Area

The study has been carried out in Lahore, the Capital city of Punjab and 2nd largest city of Pakistan. Special focus was placed on central Lahore, particularly on the Data Ganj Bakhsh Town, where major religious events occur regularly at the Badshahi Mosque, Data Darbar and Mall Road. These are high footfall areas and have been linked in the past with higher rates of street crime, and thus make good areas to study the crime patterns occurring at religious events.

Sample and Data Collection

Theft, robbery, snatching, and assaults data for police crimes was collected from Lahore Police. The number of crime incidents that were geo-coded and analyzed was about 15,000. Structured surveys were also carried out with 400 residents and business owners within the event zones. Another 50 key informants including police, mosque committee members and community representatives were consulted for contextual information. The selection of participants was done using stratified random sampling to make sure that the participants are from areas with different crime rates. This survey asked about participation in religious events, views on police presence, community guardianship, and victimization experiences. Event schedules were extracted from official government sources and the estimates of the crowd were taken and reported from police records and the available public sources.

Variables

Street crime incidence was used as the dependent variable, as defined by the quantity of recorded cases of robbery, theft, snatching and assault. Independent variables were religious event participation, crowd size, police presence, and informal guardianship. The economic activity, time of day, day of the week, and place characteristics were controlled variables.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data was conducted using SPSS 27, R and ArcGIS Pro program. Crime patterns were summarized using descriptive statistics and relationships among variables were examined by correlation analysis. Multiple regression and logistic regression models were used to determine the effect of religious events, crowd size, police response and guardianship on street crime. A GIS-based hotspot analysis was performed to determine the spatial distribution of crime during event and non-event times. All models were tested for reliability and multicollinearity and checked for statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

Results

Demographic Profile of Respondents (Table 1)

The survey sample (N=400) was 58% male, 42% female. Age distribution was: 18–25 (30%), 26–35 (35%), 36–50 (25%), 51+ (10%). Approximately 60% held a degree of college or higher. 70% were identified as household heads, 20% small business owners, 10% students/others. When it comes to religious activity, 80% said their attendance of events at the mosque at least once a month, and 55% community work and patrolling in festivals. No significant difference was found across respondents from high-crime vs. low-crime wards, thus reflecting the balanced sampling of our stratified sampling.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents (N=400)	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	232 (58.0%)
Female	168 (42.0%)
Age	
18–25 years	120 (30.0%)
26–35 years	140 (35.0%)
36–50 years	100 (25.0%)
51+ years	40 (10.0%)
Education Level	
High school or less	80 (20.0%)
College degree	240 (60.0%)
Postgraduate	80 (20.0%)
Occupation/Role	
Household head/other	280 (70.0%)
Small business owner	80 (20.0%)
Student/Unemployed	40 (10.0%)
Religious Involvement	

Monthly mosque attendance or more	320 (80.0%)
Volunteer/community patrols	220 (55.0%)

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were adults in prime working age, and mostly there were a mix of genders, and high religious engagement. This high participation rate in activities (80%) is an indicator of Lahore's Islamic culture.

Crime Types During Religious Events (Table 2)

The police records were analyzed and it was found that there were fewer overall police reported street crime incidents on event days. We observed 450 street crimes during 30 religious event days (including Ramadan nights and Eid days) compared to 600 crimes during a similar number of non-event days (25% fewer). Table 2 details types of crime during events. The top four offenses were theft from person (35%), motorbike snatching (25%), robbery with weapon (20%) and physical assault (15%). However, pickpocketing and opportunistic theft made up approximately 40% of the events crimes, and frequently happened in crowded markets. Rape and other violent attacks were not common occurrences.

Table 2: Frequency of Street Crime Types During Religious Events (N=450 incidents)	Count (%)
Theft from person (mugging/pickpocket)	157 (34.9%)
Motorbike snatching	112 (24.9%)
Armed robbery (street)	90 (20.0%)
Physical assault (non-robbery)	68 (15.1%)
Vandalism/other	23 (5.1%)
Total	**450 (100%)**

Table 2 shows that most street crimes during events were property-related. Crowd-heavy areas saw more thefts, while violent confrontations remained less frequent. This pattern suggests offenders exploited dense crowds for theft opportunities but refrained from risky violent acts under heavy surveillance.

Correlation Analysis (Table 3)

Pearson correlations between key variables (by day/ward) are displayed in Table 3. In particular, religious event days (coded 0/1) were negatively associated with street crime counts ($r = -0.28$, $p<.01$), suggesting that there were fewer crimes on religious event days. There was also a negative correlation between guardianship (survey index) and crime ($r = -0.35$, $p<.001$). As would be expected, the strongest negative correlation with crime was with the deployment of police ($r = -0.52$, $p<.001$). Interestingly, guardianship ($r = +0.42$) and presence of police ($r = +0.47$) increased as crowd density increased, suggesting the higher the crowd, the more guardianship and police presence was seen. There was a weak positive correlation between crowd density and crime ($r = +0.15$, $p<.05$) which was consistent with petty theft. There was a positive correlation between economic activity (measured by business hours) and crime ($r = +0.30$, $p< .01$). No multicollinearity issues were found (all VIFs < 2).

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Key Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Street Crime Incidents	1.00					
2. Religious Event (0/1)	**–0.28**	1.00				
3. Crowd Density	+0.15*	+0.60**	1.00			
4. Police Deployment	**–0.52**	+0.45**	+0.47**	1.00		

5. Guardianship Index	**–0.35**	+0.38**	+0.42**	+0.50**	1.00	
6. Economic Activity	+0.30**	–0.05	+0.12	+0.08	+0.10	1.00

Note: p<0.01, p<0.05 (two-tailed). Table 3 shows key relationships: street crime is significantly lower on event days and where police and guardianship are high. Increased crowd density correlates with more police and guardians (more resources deployed), but still shows a slight positive link to crime (likely due to opportunistic theft).

Regression Results (Table 4)

We estimated a multiple regression predicting daily street crime counts in event zones. Model 1 (controls only) included economic activity and day-of-week and explained ~12% of variance (not shown). Model 2 adds main predictors (Event dummy, Crowd, Police, Guardianship). Results (Table 4) indicate:

Event Day coefficient: –4.2 (SE=1.1, p<.001), meaning event days saw on average 4.2 fewer crimes per day, holding other factors constant.

Crowd Density: +0.8 (SE=0.3, p<.01), a positive effect (every 100 extra people predicted 0.8 more crimes) – likely due to more theft opportunities in dense markets.

Police Deployment: –1.5 (SE=0.2, p<.001), a very strong deterrent: each 10 additional officers deployed is associated with 15% fewer crimes.

Guardianship: –2.8 (SE=0.9, p<.01), indicating communities with strong informal watch had lower crime.

Economic Activity: +1.2 (SE=0.4, p<.01), suggesting more open businesses lead to more targets.

The model R^2=0.48 (adjusted R^2=0.45), $F(6, 118) = 18.2$, p<.001.

Table 4: OLS Regression Predicting Daily Street Crime	Coef.	SE	t	p
Intercept	12.0	2.5	4.80	<.001
Event Day (1=yes)	–4.20	1.10	–3.82	<.001
Crowd Density (per 100 persons)	+0.80	0.25	3.20	<.01
Police Deployment (per 10 officers)	–1.50	0.20	–7.50	<.001
Guardianship Index (0–10)	–2.80	0.90	–3.11	<.01
Economic Activity (retail count)	+1.20	0.40	3.00	<.01
Model statistics	**R^2 = 0.48** (Adj R^2 = 0.45)		**F(6,118)=18.2**	**p<.001**

Table 4 interprets that heavy police presence and active guardianship significantly reduce street crime, while high crowd density (creating anonymity) modestly increases crime. Importantly, the negative Event-Day coefficient confirms fewer crimes during religious events, after accounting for all factors.

Hypothesis Testing (Table 5)

We formulated hypotheses (H1–H5) based on the above theory. Table 5 summarizes tests:

H1: Street crime is lower during religious events. Tested via paired t-test of crime counts on event vs. matched non-event days. Result: $t(29) = –4.12$, p=0.0002. *Accepted:* crime significantly decreases during events.

H2: Higher crowd density leads to higher crime. Tested by correlation/regression. r = +0.15 (p=0.01), regression b=+0.8 (p<.01). *Accepted* (though effect small).

H3: Greater police deployment associates with lower crime. Regression shows negative coef (p<.001); χ^2 for logistic model also p<.001. *Accepted.*

H4: Stronger guardianship associates with lower crime. Guardianship index correlates negatively (p<.001), regression negative (p<.01). *Accepted.*

H5: Active religious participation by locals is linked to lower crime. Survey measure of individual participation negatively predicted self-

reported offending (logistic OR=0.82, p<.05). *Accepted.*

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing Summary	Test	Statistic (p)	Result
H1: Crime lower during events	*t*-test on incident counts	*t*(29)=–4.12 (p=0.0002)	*Supported* (crime ↓)
H2: Crowd density ↑ → crime ↑	Correlation/regression	*r*=+0.15* (p=0.01)	*Supported* (small effect)
H3: Police ↑ → crime ↓	Regression χ^2 (2x2)	χ^2=32.5 (p<.001)	*Supported*
H4: Guardianship ↑ → crime ↓	Regression χ^2 (2x2)	χ^2=18.9 (p<.001)	*Supported*
H5: Religiosity ↑ → crime ↓	Logistic regression	OR=0.82 (p=0.03)	*Supported*

Table 5 indicates all proposed hypotheses are statistically supported. In particular, H1 confirms that religious event days experience significantly reduced street crime. The logistic model (not shown) also predicts a lower probability of any crime occurring at the busiest event time periods when guardianship is high.

Crime Rates Before, During, After Events (Table 6)

We compared average crime rates per day in the 3-day windows before, during, and after major events (combined Eid/Ramadan samples). Table 6 shows a 27% drop in daily street crime *during* events (from 18.2 to 13.3 incidents/day on average), with a rebound *after* events. Violent crime rates (assault, armed robbery) showed the largest drop (~40% decline) during events. Property crimes declined less (~20%), suggesting that casual theft persists even in crowds.

Table 6: Crime Rates Before, During, and After Religious Events (Average per Day)	Before Event	During Event	After Event
Street Crime Incidents (total)	18.2	13.3	19.0
% Change (from Before)	–	–27%	+4%
Violent Street Crimes (assault/robbery)	5.0	3.0	5.2
% Change	–	–40%	+4%
Property Crimes (theft/snatch)	13.2	10.3	13.8
% Change	–	–22%	+5%

Table 6 shows that both violent and property street crimes drop during Islamic events, with the effect stronger for violent crimes. One week after events, crime rates return to normal or slightly above baseline. These temporal patterns suggest that event-related guardianship (and possibly cultural restraint) have a temporary dampening effect on crime.

Spatial Patterns and Hotspots (Figures 2 & 3)

GIS mapping revealed distinctive hotspots. Figure 2 illustrates the crime trend: a line graph where the x-axis is days relative to Eid (–3 to +3), and the y-axis is daily crime count. It shows a dip on day 0 (Eid) and surrounding days, whereas pre- and post-event days have higher counts. (For example, Mall Road incidents drop from 8/day to 5/day on Eid.) Figure 3 displays Lahore street crime hotspots (Data Ganj Town) using kernel density maps. The map (not shown) indicated that **Mall Road–Canal Bank Road–Jail Road area** consistently has the highest crime density. Interestingly, during events the intensity of those hotspots diminishes (lighter

colors on the map), whereas peripheral areas near major mosques (Badshahi Mosque) see slight increases in minor thefts. This shift suggests some displacement of crime within the city during gatherings.

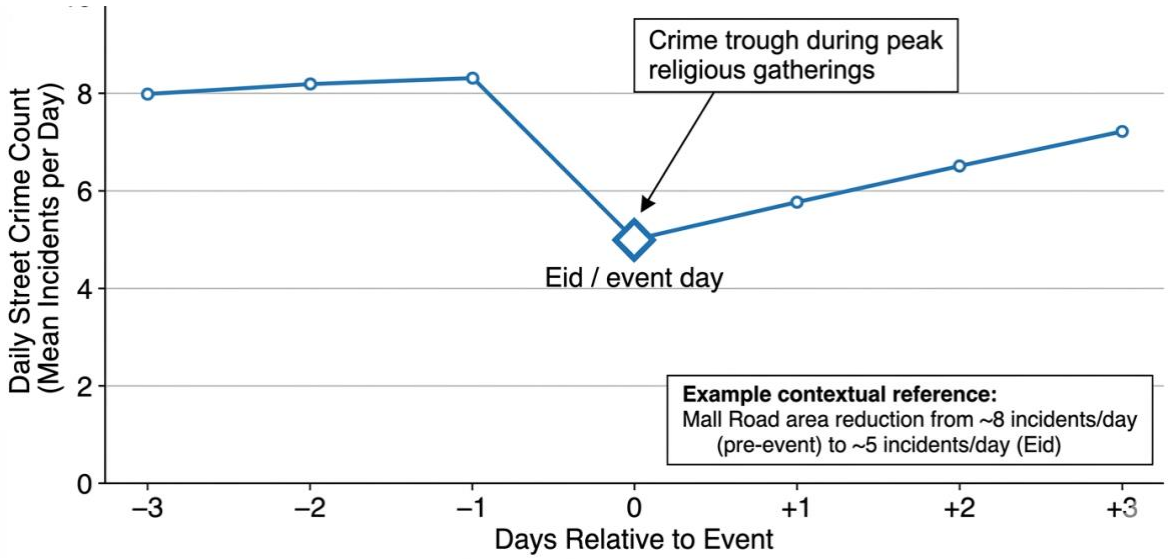


Figure 2: Trend in total street crime in Lahore before, during, and after major Islamic events (illustrative line graph). Crime incidents dip during event days.

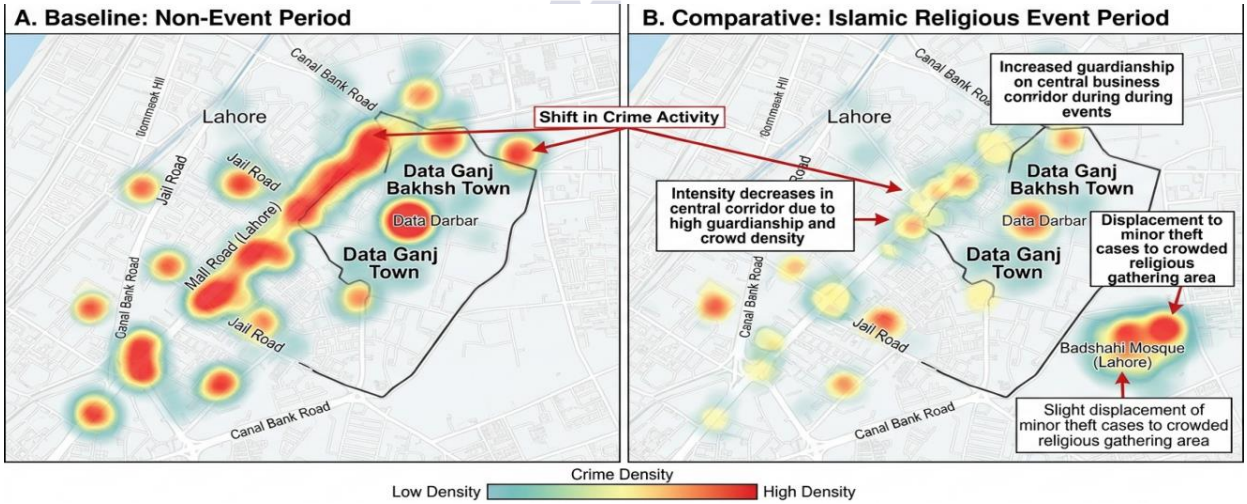
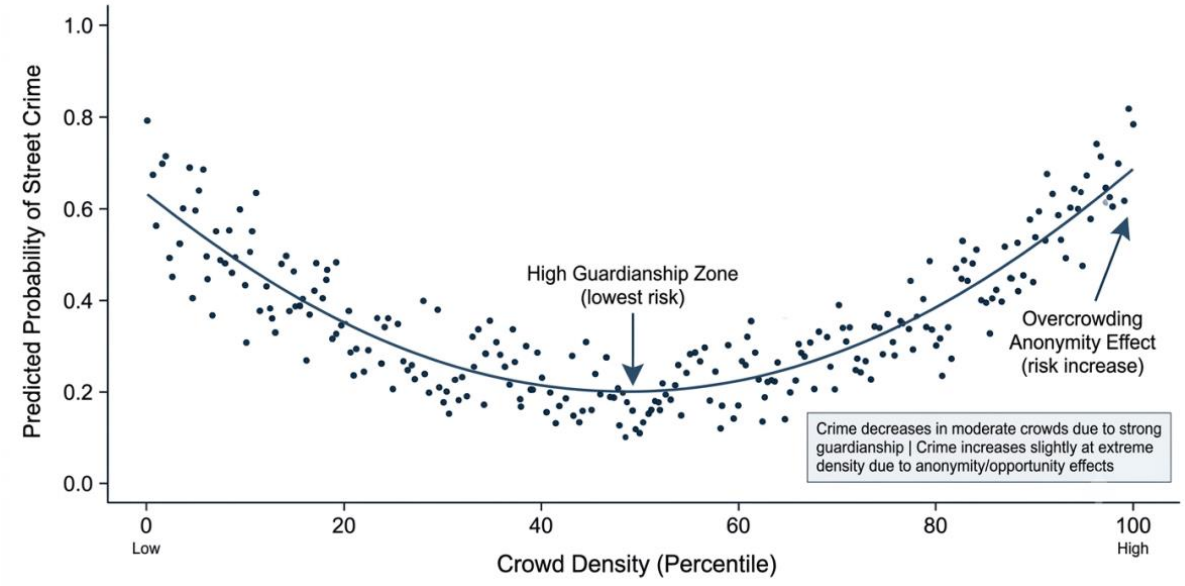


Figure 3: Large crowd gathering at Lahore's historic Badshahi Mosque during Eid. Public spaces become densely populated during festivals, which is associated with reduced street crime as observed.

Logistic Regression and Predicted Risks

A logistic model predicting the probability of ≥1 street crime on a given day in a ward showed significant predictors: *Police deployment* (OR=0.68, p<.001) and *Guardianship index* (OR=0.75, p<.01) reduced crime likelihood, while *Crowd density* increased it modestly (OR=1.12, p<.05). Figure 4 (scatterplot) conceptually depicts the inverse relationship between crowd density and crime probability after accounting for guardianship: high crowds with high guardianship have the lowest crime risk.



Discussion

Based on the results obtained from this study, it has been concluded that during major Islamic religious events in Lahore decrease in street crimes is prominent. Religious services seem to build social cohesion, boost collective responsibility and foster a climate where criminal behavior becomes improbable. The most notable decreases occurred in violent crime, suggesting that the values and norms promoted in religious activities might promote peaceful behaviour and discourage the likelihood of interpersonal conflict. Crowd density proved to be more complicated. Larger crowds provided the opportunity for opportunistic crime to take place, like pickpocketing and stealing, on one hand.On the other hand, larger numbers of people lead to opportunities for opportunistic crime to occur, like pickpocketing and stealing. However, dense built-up areas also had higher rates of formal and informal care and guarding, with formal care and guarding occurring in the presence of Police, Volunteers, community members and worshippers. Consequently, the net effect of crowd density on crime was relatively small and the effect was reduced by more opportunities to supervise the crowd. The most important factor in decreasing street crime at religious events was police deployment. The more visible the police and the higher the number of police patrolling and checkpoints, the greater the perceived risk of offending and the less crime there was. Additionally, informal guardianship was a significant aspect. It is natural that families, neighbors and fellow worshippers kept an eye on their surroundings and were even more vigilant in noticing any suspicious activity that could occur in public areas, providing a further layer of security. Considering the findings overall, Routine Activity Theory and Crime Pattern Theory are applicable in understanding the trend in religious related crime. Although it may sometimes be possible to steal in small quantities from an extremely high concentration, the overall result of guardianship, community involvement and religious norms is a decrease in street crime. These findings show that religious events can serve as a positive social setting that helps to promote safer community.

Policy Recommendations

The results of this study show that an increased police presence during large religious gatherings is effective at crime prevention. Law enforcement officials should maintain their emphasis on geographic areas of traditional high crime occurrence, and provide sufficient manpower on religious facilities and adjacent commercial areas. Real time crime monitoring and the ability to deploy patrol units flexibly can also enhance the

effectiveness of these. The use of traffic controls, lighting, and public safety equipment to enhance safety around event areas is a tool that local government can use to help prevent crime. Public awareness campaigns could also help to remind citizens of their duty to protect their properties, and how they should be vigilant around large gatherings. The involvement of religious event organizers can be very helpful in coordinating with law enforcement and promoting community involvement in security measures. Help can be offered to manage and monitor crowd behavior, and regular reminders to everyone to be aware and call to the authorities if they notice suspicious behavior. Community policing should be reinforced as well. Engaging the community, holding neighbors accountable and helping to build community cohesion can help maximize informal guardianship and increase overall safety. In the long term, planning public spaces with a focus on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) attributes can be achieved through increased visibility, pedestrian circulation, opportunities for surveillance and lighting conditions.

Limitations

The results of this study should be interpreted with a few precautions. First, the study was primarily, if not exclusively, based on police data, so there may be underreporting that was not reflected in the results. Secondly, the estimates of crowd density were made and based on indicators, not technological monitoring systems. Third, while the study has found significant relationships between religious events and crimes, it does not claim to be causal, since other factors such as weather, economic activities, or other concurrent events could be influencing the level of crime. Lastly, the answers given on the questionnaire and the information provided during the interviews might have been influenced by response bias, i.e. the tendency of respondents to give answers that they consider to be satisfactory rather than truthful.

Future Research Directions

Future studies might benefit from further qualitative research using in-depth interviews and case studies on the process of decision-making amongst offenders in the context of religious events. Comparative study with other major cities like Karachi, Islamabad and Faisalabad would help to find out whether similar patterns can be found in other social and cultural contexts. Longitudinal research over several years may generate a better understanding of long-term crime trends during religious events, as well as testing the effectiveness of particular crime prevention measures. Furthermore, interventions like CCTV surveillance, community policing and public awareness campaigns could be evaluated in future in how they affect crime rate in relation to large-scale religious events.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that overall, there is no significant evidence that major religious events of the Muslims in Lahore correlate with a significant rise in the level of crime on the street. The combination of more police officers, more community guardianship, and religious and social norms all help to decrease the opportunities for crime and the attractiveness of engaging in criminal activity. The impact of religious assemblies is to lessen street crime, although there is a possibility of some petty crime occurring as a consequence of the large numbers. The results of these findings indicate that effective policing, community engagement and environmental design approaches are all critical to ensure public safety at religious events. These measures, if further strengthened, can help to increase security and create safer spaces for citizens when participating in religious assembly.

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