



Research Article

Proportions between religion and the state in Pakistan

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Abstract

The relationship between religion and the state has been one of the most persistent problems of Pakistani political development since the country's founding in 1947 as the first modern state established explicitly on an Islamic basis. This study examines the evolution of religion-state relations in Pakistan, focusing on the intellectual contribution of Abul A'la Maududi, whose doctrine of divine sovereignty (hakimiyyat-i ilahi) reconciled the vocabulary of modern statehood with the claim that legislative authority belongs to God alone. Adopting a historical-documentary approach, the research draws on constitutional texts, judicial decisions, Maududi's writings and secondary scholarship, employing process tracing and thematic analysis to trace how these ideas moved from intellectual debate into legal and political institutions between the 1930s and the present. The findings show that Maududi's influence operated mainly through ideational and institutional diffusion rather than direct political control, from the Objectives Resolution of 1949 through the constitutions of 1956, 1962 and 1973, reaching its fullest expression under General Zia-ul-Haq, when the Federal Shariat Court, the Council of Islamic Ideology, the Hudood Ordinances and the zakat and ushr system embedded Islamic principles within the machinery of the state. The study argues that this process produced a hybrid political order combining democratic procedures and modern legal structures with religious sources of legitimacy, challenging linear secularization theory while intensifying sectarian contestation. Maududi's lasting significance, the study concludes, lies less in the electoral fortunes of Jamaat-e-Islami than in the enduring conceptual framework he provided for reconciling Islam with the modern state.

Keywords: Constitution, Pakistan, Proportions, Religion, State.

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Introduction

The relationship between religion and the state is among the most enduring problems in comparative political development and few cases illustrate this complexity as vividly as Pakistan. Since 1947, Pakistan has been the first and only twentieth-century state founded upon an Islamic identity, rather than having Islam introduced retrospectively into an existing secular polity. Consequently, questions that other postcolonial states could defer or resolve through ordinary legislation became constitutive dilemmas of Pakistani statehood: the relationship between divine law and positive legislation, the authority to interpret Sharia and whether a bureaucratic state can derive legitimacy from revelation. These questions remain unsettled, renegotiated across seven decades of constitutional politics and military intervention. Rather than the linear retreat of religion predicted by secularization theory, Pakistan has witnessed a cumulative deepening of religion's constitutional and legal presence under civilian and military governments. Although the Pakistan Movement's founders held divergent views on religion-state boundaries, Islam gradually consolidated as a primary source of state legitimacy, driving successive waves of Islamization contested among competing currents Barelvi, Deobandi and Jamaat-e-Islami each articulating distinct visions of an Islamic state. Among these, Abul A'la Maududi's doctrine of divine sovereignty (*hakimiyyat-i ilahi*) proved especially influential, reconciling the vocabulary of modern statehood with the claim that legislative authority belongs to God alone. Despite modest electoral success, Maududi's ideas shaped constitutional advocacy and judicial activism. This study examines the evolution of religion-state relations in Pakistan, emphasizing Maududi's contribution and its institutional ramifications and situates divine sovereignty as a coherent normative project within modern political authority.

Materials and Methods

The geographical focus of this study is Pakistan and the research adopts a historical and documentary approach, drawing upon a wide range of primary and secondary sources. Data have been collected through the examination of library resources, official

government documents, the Constitution of Pakistan, judicial decisions related to the implementation and interpretation of Islamic law, the writings of Abul A'la Maududi, state records and relevant scholarly literature. The theoretical framework of the study is grounded in major approaches to religion-state relations and theories of political Islam. Within this framework, Maududi's concept of divine sovereignty serves as the principal intellectual independent variable, while the institutional and legal transformations of the Pakistani state constitute the arena in which these ideas have been manifested and operationalized. To examine this relationship, the study employs process tracing as its primary methodological tool. This approach facilitates the identification of the mechanisms through which theoretical ideas are translated into legal and political institutions across different historical periods. Moreover, it enables the investigation of causal linkages among the production of political thought, the mobilization of social forces and institutional change. In addition, thematic analysis has been utilized to examine the content of relevant texts. Particular attention has been devoted to Maududi's major works, especially *The Islamic Law and Constitution*, *Political Theory of Islam* and *Khilafat and Monarchy*, alongside the Constitution of Pakistan, the Objectives Resolution of 1949, constitutional amendments and official documents relating to Islamization policies. Key themes including divine sovereignty, the vicegerency of humankind (*Khilafat al-Insan*), the Islamic state, Sharia, political legitimacy and the Islamization of the legal order have been identified and systematically analyzed in relation to their reflection within Pakistan's political and constitutional structures. The unit of analysis in this research is the Pakistani state as a politico-legal institution, whereas the units of observation consist of historical documents, legal texts, theoretical writings and political developments associated with the process of Islamization. The temporal scope of the study extends from the emergence of the idea of Pakistan during the 1930s to contemporary political developments, thereby allowing for an examination of both continuity and transformation in religion-state relations over an extended historical period. To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, the study employs a strategy of data triangulation.

Accordingly, evidence derived from primary sources including legal texts, Maududi's writings and official state documents has been systematically compared and cross-validated with findings from secondary sources such as scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles and academic research studies. This procedure contributes to the robustness of the analysis and strengthens the credibility of the study's conclusions.

Results and Discussion

A historical-institutional reading of Pakistan's political development suggests that religion–state relations cannot be reduced either to elite preferences or to pressure from religious actors. Rather, they have been shaped by the interaction of three enduring forces: the Islamic identity of the state, the imperatives of modern statehood and the discourse of political Islam. The coexistence of these competing logics has produced a hybrid political order in which neither secular statehood nor Islamic governance has achieved complete predominance. The findings indicate that Abul A'la Maududi's influence was exercised primarily through ideational and institutional diffusion rather than direct political control. Core concepts of his political thought including divine sovereignty, the subordination of legislation to Sharia and the conception of Islam as a comprehensive socio-political order gradually migrated from intellectual debate into Pakistan's constitutional and legal framework, a process that unfolded incrementally between the 1940s and the 1980s, with the Objectives Resolution of 1949 serving as a critical moment in the constitutionalization of Islamic legitimacy. The study further demonstrates that Islamization was driven less by societal consensus than by strategic alliances between state authorities and religious actors, a dynamic that became particularly pronounced under General Zia-ul-Haq, when Islamic symbolism and institutions were mobilized to reinforce political legitimacy. The military coup of 1977 thus constituted a critical juncture that fundamentally reshaped the trajectory of religion–state relations in Pakistan. Through institutions such as the Federal Shariat Court, the Council of Islamic Ideology, the Zakat and Ushr system and the expansion of religious seminaries, the state sought to embed Islamic principles within the machinery of governance though the outcomes remained uneven, with

several Islamic institutions becoming enduring components of Pakistan's legal order while broader ambitions for social and economic transformation were only partially realized. Perhaps the most significant finding concerns the relationship between political Islam and modern statehood. Contrary to assumptions that regard the two as inherently incompatible, Pakistan illustrates a pattern of institutional accommodation, combining democratic procedures, modern legal structures, constitutional norms and religious sources of legitimacy into a form of governance that is neither conventionally secular nor fully theocratic thereby challenging linear assumptions about secularization as the inevitable pathway of state formation in Muslim societies. At the same time, the incorporation of religion into state structures has generated contradictory consequences: Islam has functioned as a powerful source of national cohesion across a socially diverse society, yet state involvement in defining religious identity has also intensified sectarian contestation, as the Ahmadiyya issue and recurring sectarian disputes demonstrate. Finally, the study argues that Maududi's historical significance should not be measured by the electoral performance of Jamaat-e-Islami. His intellectual influence has consistently exceeded the political reach of the movement itself and his enduring legacy lies in the conceptual framework he offered for reimagining the relationship between Islam and the modern state an influence that continued to shape the discourse of state institutions and political elites even as Jamaat-e-Islami occupied only a marginal position within formal politics.

1. Historical Foundations of Religion–State Relations in Pakistan

Religion–state relations in Pakistan can only be understood within the broader historical context of Islam's expansion across the Indian subcontinent. The creation of Pakistan in 1947 was not merely the outcome of anti-colonial mobilization or political competition between Hindus and Muslims; rather, it represented the culmination of a long historical process through which Muslim communities gradually developed a distinct political consciousness and collective identity (Jalal, 2014). Islam first entered the subcontinent through commercial networks linking Arab merchants with the

western coast of India. While these interactions facilitated the gradual diffusion of Islamic beliefs and practices, the political presence of Islam was consolidated following the conquest of Sindh by Muhammad ibn Qasim in 712 CE. This event established the first Muslim polity in the region and initiated a process through which Islamic institutions and cultural influences became increasingly embedded within local society (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2012). Recent scholarship has challenged narratives that attribute the spread of Islam primarily to military conquest. Instead, historians have emphasized the pivotal role of Sufi networks, whose religious, educational and social activities facilitated the incorporation of diverse local populations into the Islamic sphere. As Eaton (1993) argues, the success of Islam in South Asia owed much to the cultural adaptability of Sufi traditions and their ability to engage with indigenous social structures. The consolidation of Muslim political authority continued under successive dynasties, including the Ghaznavids, Ghurids and the Delhi Sultanate. However, the Mughal Empire marked the most significant phase in the political history of South Asian Muslims. Over more than three centuries, the Mughals established one of the largest and most sophisticated Muslim empires of the early modern period, fostering a composite civilization that integrated Persian, Turkic, Indian and Islamic traditions (Talbot, 2012). Beyond its administrative achievements, Mughal rule contributed to the emergence of a broader sense of Muslim political identity that would later acquire renewed significance under colonial rule. The decline of the Mughal Empire and the expansion of British colonial authority fundamentally transformed the position of Muslims within the subcontinent. The transfer of political power to the British not only weakened Muslim elites but also generated a widespread perception that the historical order of Muslim rule had collapsed (Robinson, 2007). These anxieties intensified after the Revolt of 1857, when Muslims were widely viewed by colonial authorities as principal instigators of resistance and subsequently faced political, educational and economic marginalization. It was within this context that a range of Muslim reform movements emerged. Among the most influential was the Aligarh Movement led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Advocating educational

reform and engagement with modern knowledge, Sir Syed sought to restore Muslim socio-political standing while avoiding direct confrontation with British rule. More importantly, he articulated the view that Muslims constituted a distinct historical and political community rather than merely a religious group. This intellectual shift laid important foundations for the later development of the Two-Nation Theory (Lelyveld, 1996). By the early twentieth century, the rise of Hindu nationalism and constitutional reforms under British rule intensified Muslim concerns regarding political representation. These concerns culminated in the establishment of the All-India Muslim League in 1906, which gradually emerged as the principal political voice of Muslim interests (Qureshi, 2002). In contrast to the Indian National Congress, which promoted a territorially defined Indian nationalism, the Muslim League increasingly framed Muslims as a separate political community entitled to distinct constitutional safeguards. The intellectual foundations of this transformation were further strengthened by Muhammad Iqbal, whose political thought reimagined Islam as a comprehensive framework for social and political organization. In his 1930 Allahabad Address, Iqbal proposed the creation of a self-governing Muslim political unit in northwestern India, an idea that would later become central to the Pakistan movement (Jalal, 2014). These developments culminated in the ascendancy of the Two-Nation Theory, which maintained that Muslims and Hindus constituted separate nations with distinct historical experiences, cultural traditions and political aspirations. Under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, this argument became the ideological cornerstone of the Muslim League's campaign for statehood. The Lahore Resolution of 1940 marked a decisive turning point by formally endorsing the creation of autonomous political units in Muslim-majority regions, thereby providing the intellectual and political foundations for the eventual establishment of Pakistan (Qureshi, 2002). Yet the creation of Pakistan did not resolve the fundamental question of the state's identity. Whether Pakistan was to emerge as a modern nation-state with a Muslim majority or as an explicitly Islamic polity remained deeply contested. While Jinnah often emphasized citizenship,

equality and religious freedom, many Islamic scholars and religious intellectuals advocated a political order grounded in Islamic principles. It was within this debate that the ideas of Abul A'la Maududi gained increasing prominence, providing one of the most influential theoretical frameworks for conceptualizing the relationship between Islam and the state in Pakistan. The enduring impact of his thought would later become evident in the country's constitutional development, legal institutions and successive projects of Islamization.

2. The Creation of Pakistan, the Identity Crisis of the New State and the Rise of Maududi's Political Thought

The establishment of Pakistan in August 1947 marked not only the end of British colonial rule in part of South Asia but also the beginning of a fundamental debate over the identity of the new state. At the heart of this debate lay a question that would shape Pakistan's subsequent political development: was Pakistan intended to be a state for Muslims, or an Islamic state? While the distinction may appear semantic, it reflected competing conceptions of political authority, state legitimacy and the role of religion in public life. Much of Pakistan's early constitutional and political history can be understood as an attempt to reconcile these competing visions (Jalal, 2014). At independence, no consensus existed regarding the ideological foundations of the state. Political leaders, religious scholars and Muslim intellectuals advanced divergent interpretations of the Pakistan project. Some envisioned a modern democratic state in which Muslims constituted the majority population, whereas others regarded Pakistan as a vehicle for the establishment of an explicitly Islamic political order (Talbot, 2012). These competing interpretations were further complicated by the ambiguity surrounding Muhammad Ali Jinnah's political legacy. Although Jinnah repeatedly emphasized citizenship, equality and religious freedom most notably in his address to the Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947, scholars remain divided over whether his vision was fundamentally secular, civic-nationalist, or compatible with an Islamic constitutional framework (Jalal, 2014). The debate acquired greater urgency as the new state confronted severe political and administrative challenges, including mass migration, economic instability, ethnic

fragmentation and territorial disputes. For many religious leaders, the legitimacy of Pakistan depended on its ability to distinguish itself from a conventional nation-state and embody Islamic principles in its institutional structure. It was within this context that the political thought of Abul A'la Maududi emerged as one of the most influential intellectual responses to the identity crisis of the postcolonial state (Binder, 1961). Unlike many contemporary Islamic thinkers, Maududi developed a comprehensive theory linking political authority, sovereignty and Islamic law. Significantly, he had initially opposed the Pakistan movement, arguing that nationalism even when articulated in Muslim terms was incompatible with Islam's universal conception of the ummah. In his view, the territorial nation-state represented a departure from the transnational foundations of Islamic political community (Nasr, 1996). Following partition, however, Maududi recalibrated his position and increasingly viewed Pakistan as a potential laboratory for the realization of an Islamic political order. The centerpiece of Maududi's political theory was the doctrine of divine sovereignty (*hakimiyyat-i ilahi*). Rejecting the modern assumption that legislative authority ultimately resides in the people, he argued that sovereignty belongs exclusively to God and that political institutions derive legitimacy only insofar as they operate within the framework of divine law. While Maududi did not reject political participation or representative institutions, he maintained that popular authority must remain subordinate to the normative boundaries established by Sharia. To describe this arrangement, he coined the concept of "theo-democracy," a system in which rulers are elected by the people but remain constrained by immutable Islamic principles (Maududi, 1960). Maududi's ideas quickly became influential within debates over Pakistan's constitutional future. For many Islamist actors, his theory provided a coherent framework through which the ideological foundations of the state could be defined. Critics, however, warned that grounding political legitimacy in a particular interpretation of Islam risked narrowing political pluralism and undermining minority rights (Binder, 1961). These competing perspectives ultimately converged in the adoption of the Objectives Resolution of 1949, the first major

attempt to articulate the constitutional identity of the Pakistani state. The Resolution declared that sovereignty over the universe belongs to Almighty God and that the authority exercised by the state is a sacred trust delegated through the representatives of the people. This formulation reflected, at least in part, the growing influence of Maududi's conception of divine sovereignty and established the normative foundations for the subsequent

Islamization of Pakistan's constitutional order (Esposito, 1998). More importantly, it transformed the relationship between religion and the state from an intellectual debate into a constitutional principle. By the end of the first post-independence decade, the basic contours of Pakistan's religion-state framework had been established and Maududi's ideas had begun their gradual transition from ideological discourse to institutional reality.



Fig. 1: Topographic Map of Pakistan (World Atlas, 2023)

3. Divine Sovereignty and the Reconfiguration of the Islamic State in Maududi's Political Thought

Among twentieth-century theorists of political Islam, Abul A'la Maududi occupies a distinctive position for his attempt to construct a comprehensive theory of the state, political authority, law and legitimacy grounded in Islamic principles. Whereas many Muslim reformers concentrated on moral renewal or social reform, Maududi sought to formulate an alternative political order capable of responding to the challenges posed by colonialism, secular nationalism and the rise of the modern nation-state. In his view, the crisis confronting Muslim societies was not merely political or economic; it was fundamentally intellectual, stemming from the gradual adoption of Western conceptions of sovereignty and the marginalization of divine authority in public life (Nasr, 1996). At the center of Maududi's political theory lies the doctrine of divine sovereignty (*hakimiyyat-i ilahi*). He argued that modern political systems, regardless of their ideological orientation, share a common assumption: the ultimate source of legislative authority resides in human beings. This assumption, according to Maududi, stands in direct contradiction to the Islamic worldview, which recognizes God alone as the sovereign lawgiver. Consequently, no individual,

parliament, or state institution possesses unrestricted legislative authority independent of the norms established by the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Maududi, 1960). Maududi's critique of popular sovereignty did not, however, lead him to reject political participation altogether. Aware of the realities of modern governance, he sought to reconcile divine sovereignty with representative institutions. This effort culminated in his reformulation of the classical concept of the caliphate. Rather than locating political authority in a single ruler, Maududi argued that vicegerency belongs collectively to the Muslim community. All Muslims, as God's vicegerents on earth, share responsibility for implementing and safeguarding the divine order (Nasr, 1996). This reinterpretation provided a religious basis for electoral participation, public accountability and collective political engagement while preserving the supremacy of Islamic law. The practical expression of this synthesis was Maududi's well-known concept of "theo-democracy." Designed as an alternative to both liberal democracy and clerical rule, theo-democracy combines popular participation with normative constraints derived from Sharia. Citizens retain the right to elect their representatives and oversee public affairs, yet neither elected officials nor legislative bodies

possess the authority to alter the fundamental principles of Islam. In this model, democratic procedures are accepted, but they operate within boundaries defined by divine revelation rather than unrestricted popular will (Adams, 1983). This distinction is particularly evident in Maududi's understanding of legislation. He differentiated between immutable religious injunctions and administrative or regulatory matters not explicitly addressed in Islamic sources. While the former remain beyond the reach of legislative revision, the latter may be regulated through representative institutions and public deliberation. Legislative authority therefore exists, but it is neither absolute nor sovereign in the modern liberal sense. This formulation would later exert a significant influence on constitutional debates in Pakistan and contribute to the establishment of institutions such as the Council of Islamic Ideology and the Federal Shariat Court (Haqqani, 2005). Despite its influence, Maududi's theory has been the subject of sustained criticism. Some Muslim scholars contend that his conception of divine sovereignty transforms a theological principle into a political doctrine in ways that depart from classical Islamic thought (Rahman, 1982). Secular critics, meanwhile, argue that grounding state legitimacy in religious authority may constrain political pluralism and generate ambiguity regarding who possesses the authority to interpret Islamic law. Others have pointed to an unresolved tension within Maududi's own framework: while emphasizing popular participation, it simultaneously places substantive limits on the scope of democratic decision-making (Esposito, 1998). Nevertheless, Maududi's significance extends far beyond these debates. His contribution lies not only in developing a systematic theory of the Islamic state but also in providing a conceptual vocabulary through which political Islam engaged the institutions of the modern state. In Pakistan, many of the principles articulated in his writings gradually moved from intellectual discourse into constitutional and legal practice. The significance of Maududi's legacy therefore cannot be assessed solely at the level of political theory; it must also be examined through its influence on constitutional development and the institutionalization of Islam within the Pakistani state. Understanding this transition

from doctrine to constitutional practice is essential for explaining how Islamic principles became embedded in Pakistan's legal and political order (Nasr, 1996).

4. Constitutional Developments in Pakistan

4.1. The Objectives Resolution of 1949 and the Constitution of 1956

The first major step toward defining the Islamic character of the Pakistani state was the adoption of the Objectives Resolution in 1949. Introduced by Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, the Resolution represented the earliest official attempt to Maududiate the constitutional relationship between Islam and the state (Binder, 1961). Its significance lay not merely in its political symbolism but in its establishment of a normative framework that would shape Pakistan's subsequent constitutional development. The Resolution declared that sovereignty over the universe belongs to Almighty God and that the authority exercised by the state is a sacred trust delegated through the representatives of the people. This formulation closely reflected the logic of Maududi's doctrine of divine sovereignty, despite his lack of direct involvement in drafting the document (Esposito, 1998). At the same time, the Resolution sought to reconcile Islamic principles with representative government by affirming both divine sovereignty and democratic participation. In this respect, it embodied a constitutional compromise remarkably similar to Maududi's conception of "theo-democracy" (Haqqani, 2005). Although critics from religious minorities and secular circles warned that the Resolution could pave the way for the politicization of religion and the marginalization of non-Muslim citizens, its long-term significance proved undeniable. More than a symbolic declaration, it established the ideological foundations upon which later constitutional arrangements would be constructed (Binder, 1961). These principles were formally incorporated into Pakistan's first constitution in 1956. The Constitution designated the country as the "Islamic Republic of Pakistan," required that legislation conform to the Qur'an and Sunnah and established an Islamic advisory body to review legal compatibility with Islamic norms (Talbot, 2012). While it fell short of the demands advanced by many Islamist groups, the Constitution marked a critical transition: Islam

was no longer treated solely as the faith of the majority population but as a source of constitutional legitimacy and state identity (Qureshi, 2002).

4.2. Constitutions 1962 and 1973

The military coup of General Ayub Khan in 1958 temporarily altered the trajectory of constitutional Islamization. Committed to state-led modernization and wary of religious influence in politics, Ayub sought to limit the political role of Islamist actors. These preferences were reflected in the Constitution of 1962, whose original version omitted the designation “Islamic Republic” and attempted to reduce the influence of religious parties (Talbot, 2012). Yet the strong opposition generated by these reforms revealed the extent to which Islamic identity had already become embedded in Pakistan’s political culture. Faced with sustained pressure from religious groups and public opinion, the regime ultimately restored the title “Islamic Republic of Pakistan,” demonstrating that even authoritarian modernization projects could not entirely detach themselves from Islamic sources of legitimacy (Haqqani, 2005). The most consequential constitutional milestone, however, was the Constitution of 1973, which remains the foundation of Pakistan’s political system. Drafted under the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, it incorporated Islamic provisions more explicitly than any previous constitutional document (Jalal, 2014). Islam was declared the state religion, existing laws were required to conform to the Qur’an and Sunnah and the offices of President and Prime Minister were restricted to Muslims. The Constitution also institutionalized the Council of Islamic Ideology as a permanent advisory body responsible for guiding the Islamization of legislation. A particularly significant development occurred with the Second Constitutional Amendment of 1974, which officially declared members of the Ahmadiyya community to be non-Muslims (Talbot, 2012). Beyond its immediate legal consequences, this amendment marked a profound shift in the role of the state. For the first time, the government assumed the authority to define the boundaries of religious identity through constitutional means. As a result, questions of religious belonging were transformed into matters of law and public policy, carrying far-reaching implications for minority rights and sectarian politics (Rahman, 1982). By the mid-1970s,

many of the core objectives long advocated by Islamist thinkers had been incorporated into Pakistan’s constitutional framework. Divine sovereignty had been recognized in foundational state documents, Islam had acquired formal constitutional status and institutions dedicated to the Islamization of law had become permanent features of the political system. Nevertheless, many religious actors regarded these developments as incomplete. Their demands for a more comprehensive implementation of Sharia, judicial reform and deeper Islamization would gain renewed momentum under General Zia-ul-Haq. If the period between the 1950s and 1970s represented the constitutional entrenchment of Islam, the 1980s would witness its most extensive institutional implementation, bringing Pakistan closer than ever to the political vision articulated by Maududi.

5. Islamisation of the State under General Zia-ul-Haq: *The Apex of Religion–State Integration in Pakistan*

In the political history of Pakistan, the period of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq’s rule represents a decisive phase in the intertwining of religion and state. If the early decades following independence are understood as the formative stage of Pakistan’s constitutional and theoretical foundations as an Islamic state and the preceding periods as a gradual institutionalisation of Islam within the constitutional framework, then the Zia era can be characterised as the phase in which Islamisation was systematically and extensively implemented across state structures, the legal system and broader society. Many scholars argue that it was during this period that ideas previously articulated by thinkers such as Abul A’la Maududi were most comprehensively translated into official state policy (Haqqani, 2005). Zia-ul-Haq came to power in July 1977 through a military coup against the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. From the outset, his regime faced a serious legitimacy deficit. Lacking an electoral mandate, the government increasingly turned to Islam as a primary source of political legitimacy. Consequently, Islamisation functioned not only as a religious project but also as a mechanism for consolidating political authority. Zia repeatedly emphasised that the central objective of his regime was the establishment of an Islamic order and the realisation of the ideals upon which Pakistan

had been founded (Talbot, 2012). One of the earliest measures of the new regime was the expansion of religious symbolism in the public sphere. State-controlled media, the education system, the judiciary and administrative institutions were progressively shaped by Islamic discourse. The government sought to construct the perception that the implementation of Sharia was not a political choice but an essential component of Pakistan's national identity. As a result, Islamisation during this period acquired extensive cultural, social and legal dimensions (Nasr, 1996). A notable feature of the Zia era was the close cooperation between the state and Jamaat-e-Islami. Although the party had never succeeded in achieving electoral dominance, it possessed considerable ideological influence among political and military elites. Many of Zia-ul-Haq's conceptualisations of the Islamic state, divine sovereignty and Sharia implementation bore a strong resemblance to Maududi's intellectual framework (Esposito, 1998). Jamaat-e-Islami welcomed the military takeover, while the regime, in turn, provided its members with opportunities to enter state institutions. This symbiotic relationship facilitated the translation of Islamist ideas into state policy, leading some scholars to describe the Zia period as the most successful phase in the political institutionalisation of Maududi's thought in Pakistan (Nasr, 1996).

5.1. Hudood Laws and the Reconstruction of the Criminal Justice System

One of the most significant legal reforms of the Islamisation agenda was the promulgation of the Hudood Ordinances in 1979. These laws aimed to align Pakistan's criminal justice system with Islamic jurisprudence, redefining offences such as zina (illicit sexual relations), qadhf (false accusation of adultery), theft and alcohol consumption within the framework of Sharia. The government justified these reforms by arguing that the colonial-era penal system was incompatible with Pakistan's Islamic identity and required fundamental restructuring (Kennedy, 1990). Accordingly, punishments such as flogging, amputation and stoning were incorporated into the legal framework, although their actual implementation remained limited in practice (Talbot, 2012). Despite their ideological justification, the Hudood laws faced widespread criticism from legal scholars and human rights advocates. Critics argued that their formulation, particularly in cases

involving women, created conditions for judicial misuse and institutional injustice. It was further contended that the state's interpretation of Sharia was overly restrictive and significantly influenced by political considerations (Rahman, 1982). Another major policy initiative was the introduction of compulsory zakat and ushr in 1980. Under this system, the state deducted a portion of savings from Muslim bank accounts as zakat and redistributed it through welfare programmes. Ushr tax was also imposed on selected agricultural produce (Haqqani, 2005). While the policy was presented as an attempt to establish social justice based on Islamic principles, it encountered strong resistance, particularly from Shia communities, who argued that the state had no authority to regulate religious taxation in accordance with a uniform Sunni framework. Following widespread protests, exemptions were eventually granted to Shia citizens, highlighting the enduring challenge of sectarian diversity within Pakistan's Islamisation project (Binder, 1961).

5.2. The Federal Shariat Court and the Expansion of Judicial Religious Authority

One of the most enduring institutional legacies of Zia-ul-Haq's rule was the establishment of the Federal Shariat Court in 1980. The court was mandated to examine whether existing laws conformed to Islamic injunctions and was empowered to strike down legislation deemed inconsistent with the Qur'an and Sunnah (Kennedy, 1990). This development marked a critical shift in Pakistan's constitutional and legal order. For the first time, a formal judicial body was granted authority to evaluate parliamentary legislation on religious grounds, thereby introducing a parallel framework of constitutional review rooted in Islamic jurisprudence. From a theoretical perspective, the Federal Shariat Court represents one of the clearest institutional manifestations of Maududi's conception of divine sovereignty, according to which all legislation must remain subordinate to Islamic law and subject to religious oversight (Maududi, 1960).

5.3. The Afghan War and the Consolidation of Political Islam

Regional dynamics further reinforced the Islamisation process. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 created a strategic environment in which the Pakistani state could mobilise the discourse of jihad to strengthen its

legitimacy. With substantial financial and political support from the United States, Saudi Arabia and other allies, the Zia regime became a central actor in supporting the Afghan resistance (Haqqani, 2005). During this period, religious seminaries expanded significantly and concepts such as jihad, Islamic identity and religious resistance gained prominence in public discourse. Religious institutions received substantial funding, enhancing their social and political influence. These developments had profound implications not only for domestic politics but also for Pakistan's security architecture and regional relations. Zia-ul-Haq's policies remain highly contested in Pakistani political scholarship. Supporters argue that his regime brought the state closer to the Islamic ideals envisioned by its founders and institutionalised important mechanisms for implementing Sharia, such as the Federal Shariat Court and the Council of Islamic Ideology (Esposito, 1998). Critics, however, maintain that Islamisation served primarily as a tool for legitimising military rule. From this perspective, religion was instrumentalised to consolidate authoritarian power and many reforms lacked broad-based social consensus. Moreover, some scholars argue that these policies intensified sectarian divisions, encouraged religious fragmentation and further politicised Islam within Pakistani society (Haqqani, 2005). Nevertheless, the Zia era is widely regarded as the apex of Islamisation in Pakistan.

Many of the institutions, legal frameworks and administrative practices introduced during this period continued to shape the relationship between religion and state long after the end of his regime. In this sense, Zia-ul-Haq's legacy remains inseparable from the trajectory of contemporary political Islam in Pakistan.

6. Political Parties and Islamic Movements in Pakistan and Their Role in Shaping Religion–State Relations

The study of religion–state relations in Pakistan cannot be adequately undertaken solely through an examination of constitutional provisions, governmental institutions, or official state policies. Alongside formal structures of power, a diverse set of political parties, religious organisations and clerical networks has played a central role in shaping the relationship between Islam and the state. Since independence, Islamist currents have

consistently remained among the most influential actors in Pakistan's political landscape and have, in numerous instances, succeeded in shaping state policy directions. The significance of these groups lies in their function as intermediaries between religious society and the political establishment, through which they influence macro-level policy via party politics, educational networks, preaching activities and broader social mobilisation (Nasr, 1996). Although Pakistan has experienced alternating phases of military and democratic governance since its inception, religious parties and movements have persistently constituted a significant component of the country's political sphere. These parties have generally operated with the aim of implementing Sharia, Islamising legislation and expanding the role of religion in governance, albeit with substantial differences in methodology, jurisprudential foundations and political orientation.

6.1. Jamaat-e-Islami: The Foremost Representative of Modern Political Islam

Among all Islamic movements in Pakistan, Jamaat-e-Islami stands out as the most prominent and ideologically influential religious organisation. Founded in 1941 by Abul A'la Maududi, the party from its inception declared its objective to establish a society grounded in Islamic teachings. In contrast to many traditional religious parties focused primarily on jurisprudential or educational functions, Jamaat-e-Islami developed from the outset as a political, social and ideological organisation, seeking to present Islam as a comprehensive system of governance and societal organisation (Nasr, 1996). Jamaat-e-Islami is widely regarded as the first modern Islamist organisation in South Asia. Its structured organisational hierarchy, defined membership system, ideological training of cadres and extensive media engagement distinguished it from other religious groups. Maududi argued that the establishment of an Islamic state required the formation of an ideologically committed elite capable of gradually transforming both societal and governmental structures (Maududi, 1960). Although the party never succeeded in securing a majority in national elections, its intellectual influence far exceeded its electoral performance. Key concepts such as divine sovereignty, Islamisation of law, implementation of Sharia and the necessity of an Islamic state were introduced into Pakistan's

political discourse largely through the writings and activism of Jamaat-e-Islami. Its extensive presence in universities, media institutions, the military and the civil bureaucracy enabled its ideas to exert a profound influence on state policy (Esposito, 1998). Particularly during the Zia-ul-Haq regime, Jamaat-e-Islami emerged as one of the government's principal ideological allies, gaining significant opportunities to translate its ideas into state policy. Although this cooperation later became a subject of internal criticism within the party, it is widely acknowledged that the Zia era marked the peak of Jamaat-e-Islami's political influence in Pakistan (Haqqani, 2005).

6.2. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam: Deobandi Tradition and Pragmatic Political Engagement

Another major religious actor in Pakistan is Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), which is rooted in the Deobandi tradition. This intellectual current emerged in nineteenth-century British India and placed strong emphasis on the preservation of Islamic jurisprudential and educational traditions. In contrast to Jamaat-e-Islami's modern ideological orientation, JUI has historically relied on an extensive network of religious seminaries and clerical authority (Metcalf, 2002).

Since Pakistan's independence, JUI has adopted a more pragmatic approach to politics. The party has frequently participated in governing coalitions and has sought to influence legislation through engagement with

parliamentary and state institutions. In recent decades, it has become one of the most significant representatives of traditionalist Islam within Pakistan's political system. The importance of JUI extends beyond its formal political activity. A large number of Deobandi seminaries operating in Pakistan are directly or indirectly affiliated with this movement. Consequently, its social and cultural influence is significantly broader than its electoral footprint (Talbot, 2012). In this sense, the party's informal networks of authority often outweigh its formal political power. Alongside the Deobandi tradition, the Barelvi movement represents another major Sunni Islamic current in Pakistan. The Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP) serves as its principal political representative. The Barelvi school emphasises devotion to the Prophet Muhammad, reverence for saints and Sufi practices, thereby distinguishing itself from the Deobandi tradition (Rizvi, 1981). JUP played an important role in the early decades of Pakistan's independence, particularly in debates surrounding the Islamisation of laws and the definition of Islamic identity. The party also adopted active positions on issues such as the status of the Ahmadiyya community. Although its political influence has declined in recent years, the Barelvi tradition continues to constitute one of the most significant socio-religious forces in Pakistan.

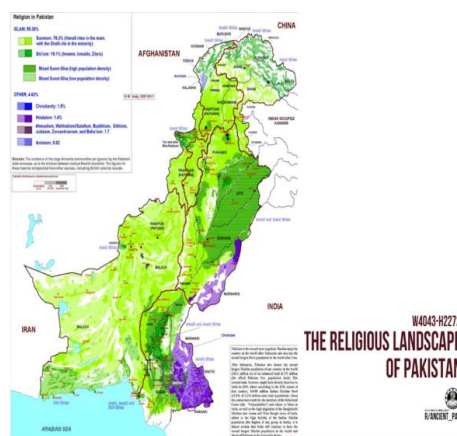


Fig. 2: Map of Distribution of Religions in Pakistan (Minorityrights.org, 2025)

6.3. Religious Seminaries and the Production of Religious Elites

One of the most important elements in religion-state relations in Pakistan is the extensive network of religious seminaries (madrasas). These institutions function not only as centres of Islamic education but also play a

crucial role in the reproduction of religious elites and the transmission of religious values to younger generations. Many leaders of religious parties, mosque imams and religious activists are graduates of these institutions (Rahman, 2004). Religious seminaries in Pakistan belong to several major intellectual traditions, the most

important of which are Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahl-e-Hadith and Shi'a schools. Each of these traditions maintains its own educational network and in many cases, promotes distinct political orientations. The rapid expansion of madrasas, particularly after the Afghan war in the 1980s, significantly enhanced their influence in society. The Zia-ul-Haq government, along with certain foreign actors, supported the growth of these institutions, which led to a substantial increase in the number of students and religious schools. Consequently, madrasas emerged as one of the most important informal actors in religion-state relations in Pakistan (Haqqani, 2005). A key feature of Pakistani politics is the role of religious scholars (ulama) in conferring political legitimacy on governments. Both civilian and military regimes have repeatedly sought the endorsement of religious authorities. This is largely because a significant portion of Pakistani society considers religious legitimacy as an essential source of political authority (Binder, 1961).

In numerous cases, governments have required the support of religious groups in order to pass legislation or implement specific policies. As a result, the relationship between the state and religious scholars has historically been complex and reciprocal. On the one hand, the state relies on religion for legitimacy; on the other, religious groups depend on political power structures to advance their own objectives.

7. Challenges in Religion-State Relations in Pakistan: From the Crisis of Islamic Identity to Sectarianism

Despite Pakistan's consistent efforts since independence to uphold Islamic identity as the principal source of political legitimacy and national cohesion, historical experience demonstrates that the relationship between religion and state has been marked by persistent and complex challenges. Indeed, the same factors that have at times strengthened political legitimacy have also become sources of political and social conflict. Therefore, an adequate analysis of religion-state relations in Pakistan must go beyond the successes of Islamisation and also address its unintended consequences and structural crises. One of the earliest and most enduring challenges has been the question of defining the Islamic identity of the state. Although the vast majority of Pakistan's population is Muslim, there has

never been a consensus on what an "Islamic state" actually entails. Some political elites have interpreted Islam primarily as a marker of national identity and have advocated a state based on democratic principles and citizenship rights. In contrast, Islamist groups have demanded the full implementation of Sharia as the foundation of legislation. This divergence has been evident since the early constitutional debates and continues to shape discussions on parliamentary authority and the role of religious scholars in governance (Jalal, 2014). Another increasingly significant issue is the internal religious diversity within Pakistani Islam. Contrary to the perception of Pakistan as a religiously homogeneous society, it is in fact characterised by considerable sectarian diversity. Sunni Islam itself is divided into Deobandi, Barelvi and Ahl-e-Hadith traditions, alongside a substantial Shi'a population. In addition, communities such as the Ahmadis have played a controversial role in Pakistan's religious history. This diversity has made the formulation of a single official interpretation of Islam highly problematic, raising the fundamental question of which version of Islam should inform state policy (Talbot, 2012). In practice, the Pakistani state has repeatedly intervened in such religious disputes. A prominent example is the Second Amendment to the Constitution in 1974, through which the parliament officially declared the Ahmadi community to be non-Muslim. While this decision was supported by a significant segment of religious groups, it also illustrated the gradual involvement of the state in defining religious boundaries in an area previously dominated by religious scholars. From this point onwards, the definition of Islamic identity became not only a theological issue but also a legal and political one (Haqqani, 2005). Another consequence of Islamisation has been the intensification of competition among religious groups to influence the state. Each movement has sought to present its own interpretation of Islam as the dominant one and to shape laws and public policy accordingly through institutional influence. In certain periods, this competition has contributed to sectarian tensions and even episodes of religious violence. From the 1980s onwards, alongside the expansion of madrasas and the growing public role of religious organisations, sectarian divisions between Sunni and Shi'a

groups intensified, becoming a major internal security concern in Pakistan (Nasr, 2000). Regional factors have also played an important role in exacerbating these dynamics. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the subsequent expansion of Iran's influence among Shi'a communities on the one hand and the support of certain Arab states for Salafi and Deobandi movements on the other, contributed to the transnationalisation of sectarian rivalries. Given its geopolitical position and religious composition, Pakistan became one of the primary arenas for these competing influences (Abbas, 2010). At the same time, the close linkage between religion and politics also transformed certain religious groups into key actors in the security domain. During the Afghan war against the Soviet Union, the Pakistani state mobilised religious resources to recruit fighters and support the mujahideen. While this strategy provided short-term geopolitical and political advantages, it generated long-term structural consequences. Many of the groups that emerged or were strengthened during this period later evolved into semi-autonomous actors beyond full state control (Rashid, 2000). This situation raises a fundamental question regarding the nature of religion-state relations in Pakistan: has the state instrumentalised religion to enhance its legitimacy, or has religion shaped the state in accordance with Islamic objectives? The answer is not straightforward. In many cases, the relationship has been reciprocal. The state has relied on religion for legitimacy, while

religious groups have depended on political power to advance their agendas. This mutual dependence has contributed to the persistent ambiguity between the religious and political spheres in Pakistan (Binder, 1961). At the same time, it would be misleading to assume that the religion-state nexus has only produced conflict and instability. For a large segment of Pakistani society, Islamic identity remains a key source of national cohesion. In a country characterised by extensive ethnic, linguistic and regional diversity, Islam has played a significant role in maintaining political unity. Many political leaders have similarly argued that without this shared identity, sustaining national cohesion would be considerably more difficult. Consequently, even governments with relatively secular orientations have generally refrained from directly challenging the institutional role of Islam in the political system (Talbot, 2012). Nevertheless, Pakistan's historical experience demonstrates that embedding religion as a central pillar of political legitimacy has simultaneously created opportunities for strengthening national identity and challenges related to citizenship rights, sectarian division, religious diversity and conflict management. For this reason, Pakistan is often regarded in scholarly literature as a distinctive case of attempting to integrate a modern state structure with Islamic legitimacy an ongoing project that remains incomplete and continues to shape the country's contemporary political trajectory.

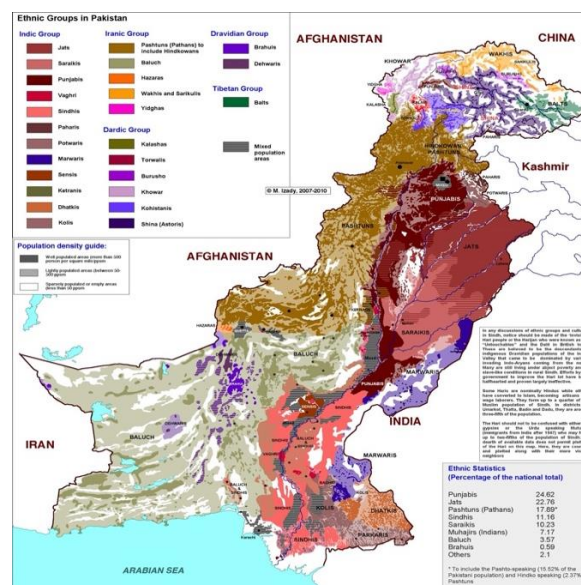


Fig. 3: Map of the Ethnic Distribution in Pakistan (Reserchgate.net, 2023)

8. From Pervez Musharraf to Imran Khan

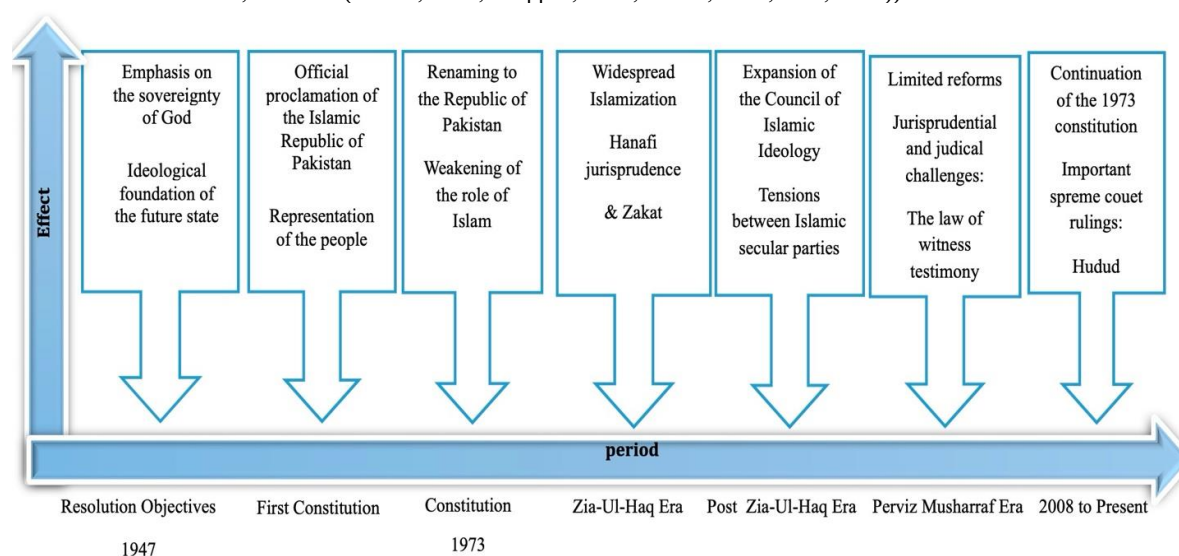
With the end of General Zia-ul-Haq's rule in 1988, many observers initially assumed that the Islamisation process of the Pakistani state would come to a halt and that the country might gradually move toward political secularism, or at least toward a reduction in the role of religion in the public sphere. However, developments over the past three decades have demonstrated that the relationship between religion and state in Pakistan is far more complex than what can be altered by a change of regime or leadership. By the end of the twentieth century, Islam had become so deeply embedded in Pakistan's legal, political and social structures that no government or political actor could ignore it. Therefore, the post-Zia period should not be understood as the end of political Islam, but rather as a phase of redefinition of the religion–state relationship under new domestic and international conditions (Talbot, 2012). The 1990s witnessed political competition between civilian governments led by Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto. Both leaders attempted to balance the demands of modern governance, economic pressures, international expectations and the demands of religious constituencies. Despite their political differences, neither was willing to challenge the constitutional position of Islam. Nawaz Sharif even proposed a “Sharia Amendment” in the late 1990s, aiming to enhance the role of Islamic injunctions within the legal system. This demonstrates that Islam continued to function as one of the primary sources of political legitimacy, compelling even non-religious politicians to invoke it (Haqqani, 2005). The events of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent US-led “War on Terror” marked a major turning point in Pakistan's religion–state relations. The government of Pervez Musharraf, who had come to power through a military coup in 1999, faced intense international pressure to confront religious extremism. In response, Musharraf adopted a strategy he termed “Enlightened Moderation.” The aim of this policy was to project a more moderate image of Islam and reduce the influence of radical groups within Pakistan's political and social structures (Rashid, 2008). Musharraf argued that Pakistan needed to strike a balance between its Islamic identity and the requirements of a modern state in order to achieve economic development and overcome international isolation. In this context, certain restrictions were imposed on extremist

organisations and attempts were made to reform the education system and religious seminaries. However, these reforms did not amount to a separation of religion from politics. The state continued to define itself in Islamic terms and frequently relied on religious symbols and narratives to legitimise its authority. Consequently, the Musharraf era is best understood as a period of reconfiguration of political Islam rather than its abandonment (Talbot, 2012). In contemporary Pakistan, religion is not merely a matter of belief or culture; it is an integral component of national identity. This has ensured that even governments with relatively secular orientations have preserved Islam's central position in public life. Unlike some other Muslim-majority states where a sharp divide exists between secular and religious forces, most political actors in Pakistan accept the Islamic identity of the state, with disagreements primarily centred on its interpretation and implementation (Jalal, 2014). In recent decades, one of the most significant political developments has been the emergence of a new generation of politicians seeking to integrate Islam, democracy and national development. Imran Khan represents the most prominent example of this trend. After coming to power in 2018, he repeatedly referred to the concept of the “Riyasat-e-Madina” (State of Medina) as an ideal model of governance. Khan argued that Pakistan should draw inspiration from the ethical and social principles of Islam while simultaneously addressing modern challenges such as poverty, corruption and inequality (Khan, 2021). The promotion of the “Riyasat-e-Madina” model illustrates that Islamic discourse remains central to Pakistani politics even in the twenty-first century. However, there is a significant distinction between this approach and the classical Islamist vision of thinkers such as Maududi. While Maududi primarily focused on divine sovereignty and the juridical structure of an Islamic state, Imran Khan emphasised social justice, public welfare and anti-corruption as core Islamic values. This shift indicates that the concept of an Islamic state in Pakistan has gradually undergone reinterpretation over time. Alongside these political developments, Pakistani society itself has experienced profound transformations. Urbanisation, media expansion, rising educational levels and the growth of a middle

class have generated new demands related to citizenship rights, individual freedoms and governmental efficiency. These changes have posed a dual challenge for the state: on the one hand, maintaining Islamic identity remains crucial for a large segment of society; on the other hand, governing a modern state requires responsiveness to diverse social and economic demands. As a result, Pakistani policymakers have continuously attempted to maintain a balance between these two domains. Despite these changes, the intellectual legacy of Abul A'la Maududi remains visible within Pakistan's political structure. Principles such as divine sovereignty, the requirement that legislation conform to Islamic injunctions, the role of the Council of Islamic Ideology and the place of religion in political legitimacy continue to form part of the country's constitutional framework. Although contemporary politicians may employ different terminology, the overall

structure of religion–state relations remains significantly shaped by the intellectual discourse developed by Maududi and other mid-twentieth-century Islamic thinkers (Nasr, 1996). In sum, Pakistan's contemporary experience demonstrates that the relationship between religion and state has neither evolved toward full secularism nor toward the complete realisation of an idealised Islamic state. Instead, what has emerged is a hybrid political system in which modern governing institutions coexist with Islamic elements. While this arrangement has helped preserve the country's Islamic identity, it has also generated ongoing debates regarding the limits of state authority, minority rights, the role of Sharia and the meaning of democracy in Pakistan. For this reason, many scholars regard Pakistan as a political laboratory for examining the interaction between Islam and the modern state in the contemporary world.

Table 1: Diagram of the proportions religion and politics based on the Constitution of Pakistan (Source: compiled from constitutional documents, Authors: (Binder, 1961; Haqqani, 2005; Talbot, 2012; Jalal, 2014))



Conclusion

This article has examined the evolution of religion–state relations in Pakistan through the intellectual framework of Abul A'la Maududi and the historical development of the Pakistani state. By tracing the interaction between Islamic political thought, constitutional transformation and state-building processes, the study has sought to move beyond normative debates concerning whether Pakistan has succeeded or failed in establishing an Islamic state. Instead, it has focused on explaining how

religious ideas become institutionalized within modern political orders and how their implementation is shaped by historical, political and societal constraints. The Pakistani case demonstrates that the relationship between religion and the state cannot be adequately captured through the conventional opposition between secularism and theocracy. Existing scholarship has often treated these categories as mutually exclusive ideal types, implicitly assuming that political development proceeds toward one pole or the other. The evidence

presented here suggests a different conclusion. Pakistan has evolved neither into a secular nation-state in the classical sense nor into a fully realized Islamic polity as envisioned by Islamist theorists. Rather, it has developed a hybrid form of political order in which modern state institutions derive legitimacy from both constitutional authority and religious symbolism, while religious actors operate within the institutional framework of the modern state. From a theoretical perspective, the findings contribute to broader debates on political legitimacy and state formation in religiously informed societies. The Pakistani experience suggests that religion should not be viewed merely as a source of normative values or political mobilization. Instead, religious ideas can function as institutional resources that shape constitutional design, define the boundaries of political legitimacy and influence the distribution of authority within the state. The significance of Maududi's intellectual project therefore lies not only in its ideological content but also in its capacity to redefine the language through which political authority is justified and contested. The analysis further demonstrates that the institutionalization of religion is best understood as a path-dependent process rather than the outcome of a single political decision or regime change. Constitutional provisions, judicial mechanisms, religious advisory bodies and Islamization policies collectively produced a cumulative transformation of the state that extended across different political eras and ideological administrations. Consequently, the enduring role of Islam in Pakistan's political system cannot be explained solely by the actions of particular leaders, military governments, or religious parties. It is embedded within the institutional and discursive foundations of the state itself. At the same time, the study highlights the limits of projects aimed at translating religious doctrine directly into state practice. The diversity of religious interpretations, competing claims to religious authority and the practical requirements of governance have repeatedly constrained efforts to establish a singular and uncontested model of Islamic rule. This finding suggests that the institutional incorporation of religion may generate new forms of political negotiation and contestation rather than ideological consensus. In this respect, religion functions

simultaneously as a source of legitimacy and as a field of political competition. The broader implication of the Pakistani case is that modernization and religious politics should not be conceptualized as inherently contradictory processes. Contrary to the expectations of classical secularization theory, the expansion of modern political institutions has not displaced religion from public life. Instead, religious and modern institutional logics have become intertwined, producing new forms of political order that cannot be adequately explained by existing secularization paradigms. Pakistan therefore offers an important empirical case for rethinking prevailing assumptions regarding the relationship between religion, legitimacy and modern statehood. Ultimately, this study argues that the enduring significance of Islam in Pakistan stems not from the complete realization of an Islamist vision of the state, but from the successful incorporation of religious legitimacy into the architecture of modern governance. The Pakistani experience demonstrates that religion and the state are not fixed or autonomous spheres; rather, they are mutually constitutive institutions whose relationship is continuously renegotiated through political struggle, constitutional development and social change. Understanding this dynamic is essential not only for explaining Pakistan's political trajectory but also for advancing comparative scholarship on religion, state formation and political legitimacy in the contemporary world.

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