



Parliament, Parties, Polls and Islam: Issues in the Current Debate on Religion and Politics in Pakistan

Babar Zaheer¹, Ali Bukhtiar², Hafiz Abdul Rehman Saleem³ & Haseeb Ahmad⁴

¹Department of Law, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Pakistan, Email: babarzaheerkhan@gmail.com

²Department of Law, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Pakistan, Email: alibukhtiar61@gmail.com

³Department of Law, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Pakistan, Email: h.a.rehman@hotmail.com

⁴Department of Law, University of Sahiwal, Sahiwal, Pakistan, Email: haseebahmad2771@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: January 04, 2025
Revised: February 06, 2025
Accepted: February 07, 2025
Available Online: February 09, 2025

Keywords:

Parliament, Political Parties, Islam and Politics, Elections, Islamic Law (Sharia), Religion

Corresponding Author:

Babar Zaheer

Email:

babarzaheerkhan@gmail.com



ABSTRACT

The relationship between religion and politics has played a critical role in Pakistan's political history, affecting everything from constitutional frameworks to the outcomes of elections. This study asks how religious political parties performed in the last parliamentary elections and how they affect the interaction between Islam and politics. It stresses the historical hurdles for Pakistan to reconcile Islamic precepts with democratic governance and the implications of these dynamics for the functioning of the legislature and the judiciary. Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) managed to win almost 4% of votes in the 2018 parliamentary election, most recently, among other religious parties. However, that influence does not always translate to significant National Assembly representation. This research explains the dynamics of success and decline experienced in the history of religious political entities and highlights the implications of their scope in the field of politics. The study also examines constitutional amendments and court verdicts, including a recent decision granting parliament the authority to appoint the Supreme Court's chief justice, that have heightened debates over the balance of authority between political and religious bodies. These changes speak to the balancing act between democratic governance and Islamic State. The report offers suggestions to promote a more inclusive and balanced approach to religion and politics in Pakistan. Striving for democratic reforms, interfaith dialogue, and civic education, it hopes to enter into a political environment respectful of both Islamic tradition and democratic values. This research thus aspires to achieve a synergistic model of governance by developing a roadmap that would help address these challenges and facilitate a balanced and stable political environment with enough room for differences without compromising the stability of the religious and democratic institutions.

Introduction

Since its birth in 1947, religion and politics in Pakistan have been mutually intertwined, dictating each other's roles and significantly influencing the nation as a whole. The founding fathers' vision of Pakistan as the homeland for Muslims was the first step on the road leading to the longest journey in the history of the relationship between Islam and politics (Jalal, 1985, p. 88). This relationship has changed over the decades as well, swinging between interpretations of Islamic governance and its practical application in a modern nation-state (Mohiuddin, A.). Gharbi collection and political *ulamā* is particularly at stake, as the debate regarding the role of Islam in politics continues to define Pakistan's socio-political discourse, shaping policymaking and electoral dynamics, as well as the wider societal fabric of the country throughout its history (Salim, (2012).

In Pakistan, political parties have been critical in shaping and promoting the integration of Islam in governance. For example, many political parties, such as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Pakistan People's Party (PPP), use some degree of Islamic rhetoric and use Islam in their manifestos to connect with the religious sentiments of the voters (Yilmaz & Shukri 2024). On the other hand, parties with religiously motivated agendas such as Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) and Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) promote a more direct In Pakistan, political parties have been critical in shaping and promoting the integration of Islam in governance. For example, many political parties, such as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Pakistan People's Party (PPP), use some degree of Islamic rhetoric and use Islam in their manifestos to connect with the religious sentiments of the voters Rafiq, A. (2014). On the other hand, parties with religiously motivated agendas such as Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) and Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) promote a more direct application of Islamic tenets, pursuing policies based on Sharia law and religious doctrines (Rafiq, 2014). This leads to a range of moderate to conservative and represents the diversity of Pakistan's political scene (Dorsey, J. M. 2024).

Over the years Pakistan's Parliament has always remained engaged with matters of Islam and have opposed domestic and international events (Latif, 2024). Resolutions passed in Parliament, such as the condemnation of Islamophobic acts abroad, highlight the state's obligation to protect Islamic values and respond to the sensibilities of its Muslim majority population, and so these measures are framed as serving public interest (De Blasio & Selva). Such moves reflect Pakistan's attempts to position itself as a prominent voice in the Muslim world, one that promotes global awareness and appreciation of its religious symbols and customs (Bilal, 2024).The discourse on religion and politics is greatly influenced by public opinion. In the polls, we see a complicated relationship between the desire for Islamic governance and the acknowledgment of challenges associated with religious extremism (Whyte, 2024).

A majority of citizens are in favor of using Islamic principles in state policies, but there is increasing realization of the political abuse of religion and the potential consequences on democracy, human rights, and minority rights (Mukaddam, 2024). In examining the interplay of these forces, this paper aims to investigate the involvement of political parties, parliamentary measures, and public sentiment in the continuities of public discourse on religion and politics in Pakistan (Tavares de Oliveira, 2024). Overall, it seeks to capture a full picture of the role Islam plays in political processes and decision-making alongside the subsequent frictions and opportunities that the interplay generates. The study also explores implications of these debates for

Pakistan's democracy, interfaith harmony, and international relations (Chaturvedi, 2023). Pakistan stands at a crossroad with many such questions lingering in the social and political fabric of the state. This introduction then not only paves the way for expanding upon the importance and prospects of these questions, but it also foregrounds an emphasis towards inclusivity and Islamic reflection amidst the inculcation of a political ideology based upon both Islam and democracy borne out in the country following decades of centrifugal manifestations (Malik, 2018). Drawing on a broader socio-political framework of religion and politics, this paper furthers the understanding of the role of Islam in Pakistan's political trajectory (Yilmaz & Sokolova 2024).

The History of the Creation of Pakistan and the Role of Islam in Its Political Allegiance Pakistan:

The Formation and Cultural Dynamics of a Nation Pakistan: The Formation and Cultural Dynamics of a Nation Pakistan: The Formation and Cultural Dynamics of a Nation This demand for a separate state for Muslims was a reaction to what was seen as the marginalization of the Muslim minority in a Hindu-majority India (Ayaz, & Baqi, 2024). Political insecurity among Muslims was brought on innovations by British colonizers in the administration and the rise of Indian National Congress as a nationalist movement (Shukri, S. 2024). Under such circumstance, in 1906 the All-India Muslim League an Islamic political party that focused on protecting Muslim demand and concerns and for ensuring political power to Muslims came to life (Model, A.P. R. C) Islam was at the heart of rallying support for the concept of a separate homeland. The leaders like Allama Iqbal and Muhammad Ali Jinnah envisaged the idea of Pakistan in the form of demand of Pakistan to be religious freedom, cultural freedom and Political freedom (Lodhi.2024). The renowned philosopher and poet, Allama Iqbal, envisioned a Muslim state that allowed Muslims to live their religion and create their society in accordance with Islamic teachings (Ali, 2022).

Quaid-e-Azam (Great Leader, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, 1876–1948, the first Governor-General of Pakistan) was the one who focused on how Muslim rights, culture, and identity needed to be protected, Islamic was not just a religion but a complete routine (Abid, 2023) The Lahore Resolution of 1940: A Turning Point in the Pakistan Movement It demanded independent states in Muslim-majority areas of India, which eventually led to the foundation of Pakistan in 1947(Das & Sarma, 2022). But Jinnah's vision of Pakistan was complex. He wanted a state that respected Islamic principles of justice, equality and tolerance, and, in fact, should protect the rights of minorities. In his well-known speech on August 11, 1947, he stressed that religion was to be a personal creature in this new state of ours and that we were to live in a pluralistic society (Bonney, 2004). After independence, the role of Islam in the political identity of Pakistan became a hotly debated issue. According to the Objectives Resolution, enacted by the Constituent Assembly in 1949, sovereignty lay with Allah and laws would be formulated in accordance with Islamic principles (the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, (Ali Saleem & Saleem, 2017).

By enshrining Islam in this resolution, the foundation was laid for the incorporation of religion into Pakistan's political framework. But Pakistan's struggle to define its Islamic identity has been complicated and disputed (Zulfiqar, G. M. 2022). Over the decades, successive governments have employed Islam as a vehicle for political legitimacy. The most pivotal change occurred during the period of General Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988), when the country adopted Sharia-backed laws and Islamic institutions (Abbas, 2004). While Islamic doctrine has always played a role in Pakistan's laws and politics, these measures institutionalized that role in the political and legal systems but also bred contention as to the balance between religious ideology and democratic principles (Saal, J. 2021).

Statement of the Problem

Religion was always a defining characteristic of Pakistan's socio-political fabric. However, the contemporary debate has come to a head in the context of increasingly bitter political polarization and differing visions of governance for the country (Zaidi, 2022). Religious Politics which is being used as a tool for political mobilization to divide parties and society (Majed, R.2021). All major political actors including mainstream parties (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)) and religious parties (for instance, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F)) widely use religious rhetoric to build their support base (Zafar, &Sami, 2021). Such dynamics not only breed sectarian tensions but also further challenge the prospect of a unified national (Holland, C. C.2022)

Contentious and politically charged issues like blasphemy laws, freedom of religion and protection of religious minorities also exacerbate the polarization (Dwivedi, 2023). This widening gulf poses a risk to democratic processes, social cohesion, and Pakistan's capacity to tackle issues such as extremist violence and international engagement. (Roberts, D. B. 2023) This issue makes it critical to find a balanced approach to nature of religious influence on politics and taking care of all citizens in the multi-faith and multi-religious society (Farrell, 2023.)

Background: Impact of Islam in Formation of Pakistan (Two-Nation Theory)

The Two-Nation theory laid the foundation for the creation of Pakistan in 1947, arguing that Muslims and Hindus in colonial India belonged to different nations, with their own religions, cultures, and customs (Farid, & Jackson, 2024). This theory emerged in response to the socio-political landscape of British India, in which Muslims, notwithstanding their erstwhile prominence, were perceived to be both politically marginalized and economically disadvantaged under the Hindu-majority Indian National Congress (Ponniah, 2023). Islam was central to their identity and political aspirations. Prominent leaders like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and to some extent, Allama Iqbal urged the Muslims to protect their religious, cultural and political rights (Ashraf, S. 2021) his rhetoric culminated in the Lahore Resolution of 1940, which demanded independent states in the Muslim majority regions of India. Islam in this sense became a common factor behind the demand for Pakistan, representing both religious and political independence (Pandit, 2021).

As a result of the Two-Nation Theory, India was divided in half and Pakistan was established as a Muslim homeland, which retains the religion as a central feature of national identity and political power (Mukherjee & Das, 2024). Background: Allama Iqbal's Ideology of a Separate Home Land for Muslims: Iqbal, in his 1930 address raised the concept of a homeland for Muslims, where Islamic principles would not just be visualized but implemented in the true sense; where governance would be envisioned from the perspective of guiding it by principles of equality, justice, and spiritual self-fulfillment (Iqbal, 1930). Muhammad Ali Jinnah led the All-India Muslim League, which pushed for the Two-Nation Theory and argued that Muslims were a distinct nation entitled to self-determination (Harrell, 2019).

Historical Context: Role of Islam in the Creation of Pakistan (Two-Nation Theory)

The creation of Pakistan in 1947 was deeply rooted in the Two-Nation Theory, which argued that Muslims and Hindus in colonial India were distinct nations with their own religions, cultures, and

social systems (Hoodbhoy, 2023). This theory emerged as a response to the socio-political dynamics of British India, where Muslims, despite their historical prominence, were perceived to be politically marginalized and economically disadvantaged under the Hindu-majority Indian National Congress (Nasir, 2024). Islam played a central role in shaping the Muslim identity and political aspirations. Leaders like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and later Allama Iqbal emphasized the need for Muslims to safeguard their religious, cultural, and political rights (Ali, 2022)

Allama Iqbal's vision for a separate homeland for Muslims, articulated in his 1930 address, highlighted the desire for a state where Islamic principles could guide governance and provide a framework for justice, equality, and spiritual fulfillment (Iqbal, 1930). The All-India Muslim League, under Muhammad Ali Jinnah's leadership, championed the Two-Nation Theory, asserting that Muslims were a separate nation deserving of self-determination (Young, 2024). This argument culminated in the Lahore Resolution of 1940, which called for independent states in Muslim-majority regions of India. Islam, thus, became the unifying force for the demand for Pakistan, symbolizing both religious and political autonomy (Ahmed, & Abbasi, 2023). The Two-Nation Theory ultimately led to the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan as a homeland for Muslims, where Islam continues to play a foundational role in its identity and governance (Das, Bhattacharya, & Sarma 2022)

Analytical Outcomes: Two Phases Representing Milestones in Constitutional History: 1 (1949); 2 (1973)

Taken in 1949, the Objectives Resolution was a first in Pakistan's constitutional history that provided the ideological base of the state. It proclaimed the sovereignty belonging to Allah and that Pakistan was governed as a trust according to Islamic principles. Rhetoric surrounding the resolution focused on the creation of an Islamic democratic order based on social justice, freedom and equality. It also vowed to protect the rights of minorities, granting them the freedom to practice their religions freely (Amjad, 2022). This resolution served as a guiding post for the constitutions to follow and also found its way to the preamble of Pakistan's 1973 Constitution. Islam's role already had been institutionalized in the 1973 Constitution. It announced Islam as the religion of the state and made it mandatory for both the President and the Prime Minister to be Muslims (Ahmed & Brasted 2021) It created the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) to ensure that legislation did not violate Islamic teachings, and to facilitate the Islamization of laws and policies. It emphasized the promotion of Islamic education, teaching of Quran and Sunnah and removal of customs against Islam. These events over the years signify Pakistan's journey towards establishing Islamic values in governance and its endeavor to harmonize them with democratic principles and the rights of religious minorities, a testament to the nation's distinct constitutional identity (Hannum 2023).

Historical Evolution of Political Islam and Institutionalization

The Political Islam in Pakistan has played a pivotal role in defining the political fabric of the country. Pakistan's relationship with Islam then developed from the original vision of Pakistan as a state grounded in Islamic ideals to a more institutionalized relationship with Islam. At the time of its inception, the ideology of Pakistan was rooted in the socio-political ideology termed as the Two-Nation Theory. While great leaders like Allama Iqbal and Muhammad Ali Jinnah focused on Islamic values as the basic premise for the country yet their vision also carried a state based on democratic principles combined with the teachings of Islam (Amin, 2024). After independence in 1947, the 1949 Objectives Resolution institutionalized Islam in Pakistan's political system. It

proclaimed that sovereignty belonged to Allah and that the state would endeavor to base its laws. This resolution laid the philosophical basis of Pakistan's constitutional structure. Political Islam was further institutionalized during General Zia-ul-Haq's rule (1977–1988). Hudood Ordinances, Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), and Islamic education were introduced to strengthen the Islamic orientation of the state (Cheema, & Akram, 2023) These measures exerted a deep influence on Pakistan's legal and social systems, merging religious doctrine with state authority. Even today, Political Islam plays a significant role in Pakistan's policies, influencing discussions about blasphemy laws, women's rights, and minority protections, and establishing a complex relationship between religion and modern governance (Khan, & Firdous, 2022)

Parties and Religion

In Pakistan, political parties have a historically drawn on religious influence and militancy to consolidate their political base, rally voters, and increase support for policies and agendas. Both mainstream and religiously oriented political parties are heavily influenced in their policies and rhetoric by religion, which shapes their understanding of governance and societal issues. Islam is also embedded in the platforms of mainstream political parties in Pakistan, such as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), who emphasize different aspects of nationalism, social justice, and economic progress framed in Islamic values (Sobhy, H. 2024). There is an influential section of the population that views the value of the state in terms of its Islamic identity, which is why religion is used by these parties to mobilize support and justify their exercise of power (Suraj, O. A. 2023). Though other Political Parties inclining on either side of the center tend to approach the Islamic ideologies abstractly, there are extremist political parties like Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), and Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) that directly lobby for the implementation of Sharia and religiously conservative policies. These include parties that emphasize on blasphemy laws, the rights of religious minorities and the imposition of an Islamic state.

They enjoy a significant following, particularly in rural areas and among more conservative segments of society (Abbas, Q. 2022). This situation is further complicated by the attitude of the mainstream political parties in the country, which face the challenge of striking a balance between their religious identity and the process of democratic governance (Abbas, Q. 2022), not least because the mainstream political parties also face criticism for not being able to implement Islamic ideals in governance. In summary, the dynamics between political parties and religious influence remain a defining feature of Pakistan's political landscape, impacting everything from legislative agendas to the country's foreign relations.

Political Parties and Religious Influence

Political parties in Pakistan have historically leveraged religious influence to strengthen their political base, mobilize voters, and promote their agendas. Religion plays a crucial role in shaping the policies and rhetoric of both mainstream and religiously oriented political parties, impacting their approach to governance and societal issues. Mainstream political parties like the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) incorporate Islamic principles into their platforms, often emphasizing nationalism, social justice, and economic development within the framework of Islamic values (Kismawadi, E. R. 2024). These parties appeal to a significant portion of the population that values the Islamic identity of the state, using religion as a means to garner support and legitimize their political power

religious parties, such as Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), and Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM), take a more direct approach by advocating for the implementation of Sharia law and promoting conservative Islamic policies. These parties often focus on issues such as blasphemy laws, protection of religious minorities, and the establishment of an Islamic state. They have a substantial following, especially in rural areas and among more conservative segments of society (Kenny, & Luca, 2021)

The influence of religion in politics has also led to tensions between secular and religious factions. While religious parties emphasize a greater role for Islam in state affairs, mainstream political parties attempt to balance religious identity with democratic principles, often facing criticism for not fully integrating Islamic ideals into governance. Overall, the relationship between political parties and religious influence continues to shape Pakistan's political discourse, affecting everything from legislative policies to the nation's international diplomacy (Melissen,2005).

Discussion of Religious Parties

Religious political parties in Pakistan have been quite important in shaping the overall dynamics of the Pakistani political and social landscape. Such parties tend to have a strong focus on the application of an Islamic worldview to governance and support the creation of an Islamic state. As conservatives, have a strong base of support in the rural underdeveloped regions, while more moderate religious parties are popular in urban settings where people are looking for a compromise between tradition and modernity. One of the features that make religious parties effective is their capacity to galvanize support in the realm of religion and identity issues, including blasphemy laws, safeguarding Islamic values, and counter-secular policies (Koussens,D.2023)..” For instance, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) have weaker political agendas, as they are more oriented towards social conservatism as JI and TLP both represent what their constituents are demanding by Islamizing the political scene (Ahmad, & Falki 2023).

Effect of Religious Rhetoric on Party Platforms and Voter Mobilization

Every political party in Pakistan uses progressive religious rhetoric to further their agenda and mobilize the masses. Islamic tenets and rhetoric allow political parties, especially strong religious parties, to reach the people inside more than just the outgoings with the electorate. These parties appeal to the values of faith, tradition and identity, which give them emotional resonance among voters, particularly in places where socio-economic conditions are hard (D’Ambrosio, 2022). Religious rhetoric is at the heart of the campaigns of religious parties, including Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). This has been reflected in agenda items covering blasphemy law, implementation of Islamic law, safeguarding of religious minorities, and moral governorship, all molded to Mack an appeal to conservative voters who favor Islamic values. This kind of rhetoric works to galvanize voters because it offers a sense of security and ideological clarity in a politically polarized context (Löfflmann .2024)

Religious parties have played a significant role in shaping policy in it, particularly during times of military rule or when mainstream parties are viewed as inadequate in articulating Islamic values. General Zia-ul-Haq introduced Sharia-based laws and Islamic education in schools, which the institutionalization of Islamic practices continues to be contentious, with some factions pressing for additional Islamic reforms, while others (including some Islamic factions) advocate for a more moderate approach that includes pluralism and democracy. Religious parties, on the other hand,

are criticized for their inflexible position on religiously charged issues, including intolerance, sectarianism, and even human rights violations (Sajjad, 2023).

It has also faced challenges from progressive political forces advocating a more inclusive and moderate Islam. Nonetheless, religious parties are still actively involved in defining the conversation around religion and politics in Pakistan. Even mainstream political parties employ religious rhetoric, but to a lesser extent than their religious counterparts. To tap into the religious sentiments of the people, they deliberately imbue their platforms with Islamic values, often by focusing on matters such as Islamic welfare programs, social justice, and the preservation of Islamic heritage. This method allows mainstream parties to capture wider electoral support from right-wing constituencies by balancing progressive and moderate policies (Gingrich & Giudici (2024)

Electoral Politics and Islam

Islam has been influential in various aspects of the electoral politics in Pakistan including party platforms, voter behavior, and policy decisions. Often they stir supporters' Islamic sentiments to their side, when they offer a campaign for election in the respective constitutions; heads and others (who are the representatives of the body as donor) terms of representation of government in their favourite constitutions. Parties with religious orientations, like Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), have agendas which centre on measures like Sharia law implementation, protection of religious minorities, and advocacy for welfare systems based on Islamic principles. In the areas where religious identity is a major component of voters' political preferences, these parties tend to prevail. Mainstream parties weave Islamic language into their electoral strategies as well. In particular, PML-N & PTI align with a considerable conservative voter segment through their policies with Islamic social values and emphasis on defending Islamic values. This constant balancing between Islamic fundamentals and modern governance is a vital challenge for any mainstream political party. But the over-attention to spiritual matters when deciding who to vote for can cause other pressing policy matters – such as socio-economic development and reforms in healthcare and education – to be eclipsed. Moreover, in the context of electoral politics influenced significantly by Islam, it can lead to further aggravation of the sectarian crisis in Pakistan and can impede social harmony and political stability as well (Ali & Arshad, 2024)

Electoral Politics and Islam

Islam has profoundly influenced electoral politics in Pakistan, shaping party platforms, voter behavior, and policy decisions. Political parties often incorporate Islamic values into their election campaigns to mobilize support, especially in constituencies with religiously conservative populations. Religious parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) focus on issues like the implementation of Sharia law, protection of religious minorities, and advocacy for Islamic welfare systems. These parties often dominate in regions where religious identity is a central aspect of voters' political choices. (Babalola 2024).

Mainstream parties also integrate Islamic rhetoric into their election strategies. For instance, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) appeal to conservative voters by promoting policies aligned with Islamic social values and by highlighting their commitment to safeguarding Islamic traditions. This balancing act between Islamic principles

and modern governance remains a key challenge for mainstream political parties. However, the emphasis on religious issues during elections can lead to the marginalization of other critical policy concerns such as economic development, education reform, and healthcare. Additionally, electoral politics heavily influenced by Islam can exacerbate sectarianism and deepen divisions between religious communities, impacting social harmony and political stability. (NISAR, R. D. 2022).

Role of Religious Narrative in Elections

Pakistan is one of several countries where the role of the religious narrative in elections remains significant due to the historical influence of religion on political discourse and voter behavior. Islamic rhetoric is another tool for political parties that seek to reach out to conservative and devout voters while presenting themselves as protectors of Islamic principles and customs. This story is particularly strong in places where religious identity is a defining factor when making political choices. Religious parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) are aggressively pursuing, to the exclusion of virtually any other issues, the implementation of Sharia law, protection of religious minorities, and enactment of Islamic social policies instead. These parties attract voters by offering to establish an Islamic state and they can do this because their platforms are based on what conservative voters primarily want: religious content, not other political demands. Mainstream parties also imbibe religious narratives in their electoral campaigns, albeit to a lesser degree. Islamist parties have also adopted a similar strategy of using Islamic symbols and rhetoric. This balancing act speaks to the difficulty of staying true to the fragmented, democratic ethos of their movement while also honoring the traditional religious nature of their constituency. But, an excessive reliance on religious narratives can create divisions, shift focus from core social essentials for example, economic development and incite sectarianism. It can lead to the marginalization of minority groups and the promotion of a narrow interpretation of Islam, affecting social cohesion and inclusivity in politics. So if they use religious narratives in electoral politics and they do religious narratives challenge democratic governance and pluralism (Fossati, D. 2022).

The Effects of Religious Voter Blocs

Religious voter blocs have been a formidable force in determining election outcomes in Pakistan, especially in areas where religious identity and values hold considerable influence. The numerous blocs that make up these groups are constituents and communities deeply committed to Islamic values with a penchant for parties whose narratives and policy agendas are aligned with what Islam prescribes. The increasing presence of their political clout is visible in several elections, both local and national, shaping the competition. It is these voter blocs that provide these religious parties like Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) considerable assistance. Qutbism is equally anti-communist, often drawing blasphemy laws and implementing Sharia as a bottom one-party theocratic state of protecting religious minorities and Allah's take on social justice. These parties galvanize voters by means of religious rhetoric, helping them accrue support in the constituencies, where religious sentiment is integral to political decision making. The religious political movements have significant power in determining who comes into office, so it gives mainstream political parties no choice but to acknowledge their presence and try to seek these blocs — if not their direct support, at least the suggestion of a potential alliance for political favors when needed — by promising candidates who are prepared to enact policies aligned with Islamic values. For example, both Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) sometimes infuse Islamic imagery, language, and

policies throughout their campaigns to resonate with conservative voters, especially in rural and semi-urban regions where religious identity plays a prominent role in regions where these religious voter blocs dominate, other political issues become less of a priority, and therefore have a smaller impact on the electoral outcome. As a result, this has the potential to distract attention from more widely relevant national questions and help create a politically polarized setting. Moreover, religious voter blocs could constrain the prospects for secular and progressive candidates, molding the political landscape toward a focus on conservative and religious issues rather than pluralistic principles (Boas, T. C. 2023)

Instrumentalization of Religion in electoral practices

In Pakistan, the politicization of religion is not new, and political parties have often exploited religious symbols and rhetoric for electoral gain, using them as a tool to influence voters and secure political power. Religions are also used by political candidates and parties to win supporters from the constituencies because, in most constituencies, religion is central in shaping voter behavior (Nimako, M. A.2024.). This can have serious implications for democracy, as it may marginalize more secular or progressive candidates and polarize voters on religious lines. Using religious language casts political platforms in a light that makes sense for conservative and devout voters who have strong and deeply held convictions. For example, parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) etc., oicker up Islamic Lingo to talk about issues pertaining to blasphemy laws, protection of the Islamic values and implementation of the Sharia law .This not only mobilizes voters, but it also creates a schism between religious and secular politics, relegating minority groups and more moderate views to the margins. Furthermore, the use of religious imagery in political campaigns can pervert the democratic process, using fear, passion, and misinformation to sway voters. The link between religion and politics has been substantial, especially at times of political crisis, using religious sentiment to maintain control and mediate public opinion If excessive, the political lexicon of religious symbols and rhetoric can quickly lead to division and homogeneity. It pushes vitally important topics like economic development, education reform, and social welfare to the margins, inviting a circumscribed religion-based politics. Moreover, this practice does not comply with the principles of pluralism, leading to a polarized political environment in which religious minorities and secular voices are marginalized. (Boland, C. 2021)

Islam and Legislative Practice: The Role of Islam and Religious Discourse in Contemporary Legislation and Parliamentary Proceedings

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is based on the principles of the Islamic way of life, where the legislative process is guided by Islamic ideals and where religious discourse strongly informs legislative debates. Islamic values have been enshrined in the legislative process since the founding of the country, covering governance, law, and public policy. Islamic rhetoric finds great enthusiasm among political parties and religious groups and often serves as the hook for mainstream political establishments to align policies on issues, which results in embedding the Islamic standards into constitutional and statutory domains. It determined that sovereignty rests with Allah, and the state is obligated to ensure that all laws comply with Islamic teachings. This resulted in the 1973 Constitution, which entrenched the role of Islam in governance even further. Laws cannot contradict Islamic principles, as mandated by the Constitution, and the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) was put in place to advise on the compatibility of existing and proposed legislation. While discussing sensitive topics like blasphemy legislation, Hudood Ordinances, protection of women, minority rights, and Islamic social policy, religious discourse is often the

dominant mode of governing in parliamentary debates. Reference [2] In Pakistan, the politicization of religion can be seen from the outside world a majoritarian and religious dominated society where minorities such as Christians, Ahmedis and Shia Muslims have been implicated in terrorism. The debate often falls along religious and secular lines, with religious political parties calling for a strict application of Sharia law and secular or more progressive voices calling for a more moderate approach that allows for pluralism and modern democratic ideals (Medzihorsky & Lindberg, 2024).

Religious discourse has resulted in the passing of many value-laden laws consistent with conservative Islam. However, it has sparked criticism for sidelining minority rights and for continuing discriminatory practices against non-Muslim communities and women. Moreover, the prevalence of religious rhetoric often disrupts the implementation of progressive solutions to present social and economic predicaments. While this rich scholarship on the institutionalization of Islamic discourse within parliamentary processes reinforces legislative discourse with religious concepts, it poses a problem for pluralism and human rights, as well as democratic governance. (Tampubolon, M.2024)

Parliamentary Proceedings and Islam: Role of Religious Discourse in Legislation and Policymaking

In Pakistan, parliamentary proceedings are deeply influenced by religious discourse, with Islamic principles playing a central role in shaping legislation and policymaking. Since the country's inception, Islamic values have been incorporated into the legislative process, impacting various aspects of governance, law, and public policy. Political parties, religious groups, and even mainstream political entities frequently invoke Islamic rhetoric to justify their positions on key issues, leading to the integration of Islamic norms into both constitutional and statutory laws. The Objectives Resolution of 1949 serves as a cornerstone for incorporating Islamic principles into Pakistan's legal framework. It established that sovereignty belongs to Allah, and the state is responsible for ensuring that all laws conform to Islamic teachings. (P Junejo, S. 2024)

This resolution laid the foundation for the 1973 Constitution, which further entrenched Islam's role in governance. The Constitution requires that laws must not contradict Islamic principles, and the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) was established to advise on the Islamic compatibility of existing and proposed legislation (pakistani.org). In parliamentary debates, religious discourse often dominates discussions on sensitive issues such as blasphemy laws, Hudood Ordinances, women's rights, minority protections, and the role of Islamic social policies. These debates often polarize lawmakers along religious and secular lines, with religious political parties advocating for stricter implementation of Sharia law, while more progressive or secular voices call for a more inclusive approach that balances religious values with modern democratic ideals (Syarif, N.2021)

Religious discourse has led to the passage of numerous laws that reflect conservative Islamic values. However, this has sparked criticism for marginalizing minority rights and perpetuating discriminatory practices against non-Muslim communities and women. Additionally, the dominance of religious rhetoric sometimes hinders the adoption of progressive policies addressing contemporary social and economic issues. Thus, while religious discourse enriches the parliamentary process by grounding legislation in Islamic principles, it also creates challenges for pluralism, human rights, and democratic governance (Toniatti, R. 2024).

A Case Study of Blasphemy Laws, Hudood Ordinances and Family Laws

Blasphemy Laws

They are codified under sections 295 to 298 of the Pakistan Penal Code, which makes acts deemed disrespectful toward Islam illegal, including insults against the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and other religious figures. While these laws were originally enacted for safeguarding the tenets of Islam, they have been misused, with countless people—usually from minority faiths—being wrongly accused, facing severe punishment and even extra-judicial killings. One prominent example involved a doctor accused of blasphemy who was killed during a fake encounter shootout, highlighting how these laws are dangerously abused (Reuters). Should the subject matter of blasphemy be crime-related or political, this also is a point of contention especially in Pakistani politics as religious parties are for the strict enforcement, whereas secular forces demand reforms to abolish misuse and ensure protection of human rights. In the face of ever-increasing criticism from human rights NGOs and progressive sections, attempts to amend these laws met with fierce resistance, led by conservative lawmakers and religious groups who believe blasphemy laws lie at the heart of the maintenance of the Islamic identity⁸¹ (Amnesty International). This contention about protecting religious values and individual rights has led to a highly polarized political atmosphere.

Hudood Ordinances

These are primarily based on Hudood Ordinances which came into existence in 1979 during the regime of General Zia-ul-Haq, when strict Islamic punishments were prescribed for crimes like adultery, rape and drinking alcohol. The ordinances have faced substantial criticism for perpetuating gender discrimination, as the burdens of punitive evidence-based requirements and moral judgment disproportionately affect women. Victims of rape, for example, often are forced to endure a torturous legal process in which they must testify in ways that violate respect for Islamic codes of honor, making it unlikely that justice will be achieved. In the meantime, parliamentarians -largely passive consents- have made great efforts for early enforcement of Hudood laws under the influence of conservative Islamic forces. Secular and women's rights activists, however, argue that change is essential, calling for laws that are human rights- and gender-equal rights-based (Human Rights Asia). Calls for amendments, however, face stout resistance, as religious values continue to stand in blatant contradiction to modern democratic principles (Amnesty International).

Family Laws

In Pakistan, family laws are largely based on Islamic concepts, governing marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody. These laws express religious values, which have come under criticism for restricting the freedom of women and minorities. For instance, while the law governing Talaq (divorce) and Dower (bride price) accords some rights to women, the specific rules on marriage and divorce reflect the patriarchal context within which they were made, to the point that women find themselves at a significant disadvantage. The political debate surrounding family laws is indicative of a larger struggle between conservative forces that oppose change and progressive movements that fight for gender equality and minority rights. This creates a complex debate in parliamentary proceedings as some efforts have been introduced to reform laws that

would ensure more equitable treatment and preservation of traditional Islamic family values between religious groups (Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law).

Islamic Laws and Human Rights

Pakistan has its own set of Islamic laws the Hudood Ordinances and blasphemy laws based on Islamic jurisprudence but which differ from international human rights standards. Some examples include the Hudood Ordinances, which were heavily criticized for their gender biased nature; their provisions regarding rape and adultery particularly come to mind as highly problematic with stringent evidentiary burdens leading to deep inequity. Blasphemy laws have similarly been utilized to stifle dissent and target minority communities, leading to fears of freedom of expression and religious bigotry. Last week, a mob in Pakistan lynched a tourist for allegedly insulting the Quran, a tragic reminder of the social tensions and curtailment of freedom of expression that these laws foster (The Scottish Sun). Although Islamic law seeks to maintain a moral and social justice, it often contradicts the human rights system as established by the United Nations and other international organizations (United Nations).

Would balancing Islamic laws and rights of minorities on ground and water help?

Pakistan's Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis, and Sikhs as minority communities struggle to secure appropriate legal protections with Islamic laws prevailing. Specifically, blasphemy laws have been applied against religious minorities, resulting in violence and persecution. Pakistan is a party to international charters including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) but the country is at a loss to interpret these while upholding its own version of sharia. Conservative elements of the political and judicial systems consistently favor Islamic jurisprudence over global human rights standards, and such efforts to protect religious minorities are often opposed (Amnesty International).

Islamic Laws violence and "gender equality"

Another area of significance is gender equality where Islamic laws and international standards conflict. Although family laws and marital practices in Pakistan generally coincide with Islamic precepts, they restrict women's rights, especially in divorce, inheritance, and custody issues. Legal instruments like Hudood Ordinances and certain provisions of the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance are not delivering comparable protections to women, in contradiction to global tenets of gender justice as embodied in treaties like CEDAW. Progressive voices demand reform, but conservative religious groups oppose change that could erode Islamic traditions, leading to a delicate balance that policymakers need to tread (Duke Law Journal).

Difficulties in Reforms of Legislation

To strike a balance between Islamic laws and international obligations, you need a nuanced approach: One that not only promotes the diverse beliefs of Pakistanis but also guarantees the protection of basic human rights. It does face a challenge in terms of opposition from religious conservative groups who will read any changes as erosion of Islamic values, against international actors who are calling for conformity to human rights principles. Given this context, it is important for Pakistan to look for ways to accommodate religious sensibilities with the progress of global human rights standards in order to promote justice, equality, and inclusivity to define the law that

also captures the diverse socio-political landscape that political ideologies in Pakistan have created in the warring milieu within the law (Ahmar, M. 2023)

Debates on religion and politics today

Secular versus Religious View on Governance (Polarization)

Back in Pakistan, there are two domains of political thoughts: the secular domain and the religious domain. This fracture plays a role in major arenas such as policymaking, lawmaking, and state-society relations, influencing the nation's political environment and public conversation. Secularists assert this comprehensive, separated style of approach is more inclusive and better well-organized, though religious conservatives want to implement political systems that they argue legislate Islamic laws and policies in accordance with Sharia. This polarization has deep historical roots and persisting effects on Pakistan domestic and foreign policies (Bilal, M. (2024)

Secular Perspective in Governance

September 30, 2023May 2, 2024 Secularism refers to a principle where religion and government are separated from one another. Thus, secular political parties, human rights activists, and progressive civil society groups demand an inclusive governance that upholds the right of all citizens, irrespective of their religion, and ensures equality. These often include calls for reforms in the areas of education, the legal system and human rights, aligning their vision with international human rights standards and global democratic expectations. Nonetheless, secular voices come under threat from religiously driven political movements and conservative groups that try to input faith-based discussions into the political discourse. The polarization around majority-minority relationships is reflected in controversies related to blasphemy laws, the role of the judiciary, and the enforcement of Sharia in some areas of the country (Eddyono, S.2025.)"

Religion-Based Governance

The religious conservatives see these as a modernization of Islam that should be infused into the state's legal and social fabric. Parties advocating for the full implementation of Sharia (Jamaat-e-Islami, Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam) consider Islamic values the underlying doctrine for governance by the state. These movements call for legislation that is informed by Islamic morality, particularly when it comes to family law, education, and social justice in general (Hasan, 2018). Religious speech is one of the main pillars of political platforms, while religious language is used to energize conservative constituencies. This stance does engender significant contention with secular organizations and minority communities who fear disenfranchisement in a government system governed by theological laws. This strict interpretation of Islam leads to a tension between inclusivity and preservation of religious heritage, deepening the polarization of state-society relations (Sebastian & Alkaff,2024)

Impact of Polarization

This division has led to political instability and constrained progressive governance within a polarized framework where secular and religious perspectives challenge each other at every turn. On many occasions, Islamists have leveraged their political power to prevent reforms that endanger orthodox Islamic values, particularly regarding gender roles, minority rights and

freedom of belief. At the same time, secular movements are trying to make rights-based governance the new normal against the backdrop of the over-determining influence of religious narratives over policy of the state. This divide has extended into foreign relations, as the country has grappled with the tension between Pakistan's aspiration to be a parliamentary, pluralistic state and Pakistan's reluctance to be held to international human rights standards. The challenge of reconciling these differing conceptions of governance is ongoing for policymakers, who have increasingly regarded the rise in religious conservatism as a impediment and set of underlying issues that affect broader legislative processes and societal integration (Gale, R.2025).

The radicalization and rise in extremism in South Asia has also become a prominent reason for increased political instability

Extremism in Pakistan – Consequences – Political Stability, Social Cohesion, Governance. Islam has an unwavering verse in it referred to as the verse of calling upon the daees on to Islam, resuming dawah would open our eyes and ease our minds and hearts on the hurdles of people and themselves, extremism among some sects would dull their hearts and powers. These groups challenged the authority of state institutions, which led to instability and insecurity. Extremism has given rise to violence and terrorism extremism, undermining democracy and effective government. We can respond that political leaders are subjected to intense pressure from extremist groups, based on which they are forced to compromise on the rule of law and democracy. This played a role in the erosion of the institutions as the state loses its grip on security, law enforcement, and policy-making (Cirrone,2023). Violent all types of extremist groups with acts of violence against political opposition, against minorities, against civil society organizations. This has aggravated sectarian tensions and polarized society further into fear and mistrust. Extremist groups, too, have tried to assert their own interpretations of Islamic laws, undermining the country's constitutional foundations and exacerbating tensions between religious conservatism and progressive elements calling for social and political reforms. Thus, the surge of extremism has threatened political stability as the proactive democratically elected government is weakened and dissenting voices are marginalized and the atmosphere is insecure. Finding the balance between state security and inclusive governance and respect for human rights continues to be one of the greatest challenges for Pakistan as it tackles extremism and seeks to restore political stability (Kazma 2024)

The Role of Social Media in Amplifying Religious Political Narratives

This role of social media in promoting and spreading religious political narratives has become an increasingly important means of influencing public opinion and affecting political discussion in Pakistan. Given the increasing prevalence of digital platforms, social media emerged as a potent instrument for religious and political entities to engage with wider audiences, spread their messages, and rally support. On Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and WhatsApp, extremist groups, religious parties, and political organizations can have ideas spread in an effective fashion that are sympathetic to their conservatist or religious values. Religious political narratives emphasize on, upholding Islamic values, legislating Islamic laws, and addressing issues such as blasphemy, rights of minority and gender equality from an Islamic perspective (Janabi,2024).

Social media influencers, clerics, and activists amplify these narratives, urging audiences on digital platforms to believe in unity, moral righteousness, and a fight against secularism, or Western influences. Extremist groups, through the use of algorithms and targeted content, can

meticulously tailor their messaging by specific demographics, fostering echo chambers in which extreme views predominate conversation. It has also been used to mobilize religious voters during elections, rally support for protests, and inform policy decisions. This has made for a fertile ground for rumours, conspiracy theories and extremist rhetoric to spread rapidly, roiling the traditional mediation of information from media and state institutions to information and commentary generation and dissemination. Also, the role of social media platforms in facilitating the transnational flow of religious and political material has aggravated the existing regional and ideological tension within the country. The Pakistani government, civil society, and social media companies have struggled to regulate and counter online extremist content in the face of such campaigns. In part, efforts to limit the spread of religious political messages on social media have tended to be reactive, often in response to acts of violence or calls from religious groups to censor content that is inconsistent with their religious beliefs. On the other hand, the emergence of social media as a key platform for shaping public conversations highlights the importance of a proactive, integrated approach to controlling online extremism, whilst supporting freedom of expression and religious pluralism (Wolbers. 2024)

Test of inclusion of pluralism

Pakistan is a nation fragmented by its diverse ethnic, religious and cultural identities living under one roof and the challenge of inclusivity and pluralism continues to be relevant in the country. Despite this, the often religious and political polarization in the country has regularly pushed minority communities, women and secular voices to the margins (Yavuz & Öztürk,2023). Prominent conservative narratives that favor Islamic values over individual rights and minority protections often undermine inclusivity and pluralism. Whereas religious minorities like Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis, and Sikhs have always been the victim of discrimination, violence, and lack of representation in mainstream political and social life. This exclusion is compounded by laws like blasphemy laws and Hudood Ordinances which cultivate an atmosphere of intolerance and fear (USCIRF, 2023). Secular and progressive forces that call for more inclusivity often fail to win a political hearing in a society that is dominated by religious conservatism (Siddiqui, 2020). Religions intolerance happens, but also there are ethnic and regional differences that are inclusive challenges. As different provinces and communities with unique cultural identities and calls for autonomy, their voices are marginalized in national politics (Ahmed, 2023). Language, regionalism, economic inequality: These are the walls that prevent us from becoming a truly pluralistic society, where the country is equally experienced by all citizens.

The emergence of extremist groups has further complicated the question of inclusivity. Such groups project a rigid, exclusionary vision of Pakistan, ultimately perpetuating divisions instead of promoting unity. For a nation that seeks to reconcile its Islamic background with contemporary democratic ideals, guaranteeing equal rights, responding to minority needs and advancing diversity, remain work in progress. Overcoming these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that encourages acceptance, protection of the rights of minority groups, education, and open dialogue. Only then can Pakistan aspire for a more inclusive and pluralistic society that embraces justice and equality of all citizens. (Gilani. Khaliq & Waheed 2024)

Impact of Religious Influence on Minority Rights and Social Cohesion

In Pakistan, a powerful influence of religion has posed an impact on the minority rights by following the same pattern of excluding out-groups. The socio-political agenda of religious

conservatism has marginalized and discriminated against religious minorities, comprising Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis, Sikhs, and other non-Muslims (MUSTAFA,2021). From blasphemy laws to Hudood Ordinances, these legal frameworks create state-level discrimination against minority communities and a culture of fear and exclusion. For example, blasphemy laws are frequently misused against religious minorities, which can lead to making false accusations and to violence (USCIRF, 2023). Such laws have made it a hostile environment for minority communities who feel unsafe, and have no legal way of seeking justice. In the same vein, Hudood Ordinances have curtailed minority rights — especially regarding marriage and inheritance — and thus bolstered social and legal discrimination. The marginalization of minorities in education and political discourse is exacerbated by the domination of religious narratives. Due to traditional historical and religious narratives, there is an ignorance/denial of these communities and their contributions which results in intolerance towards them (Ertorer, S. E).

This has repercussions for social cohesion, pitting Muslim against non-Muslim communities and leading to a fractured society that lacks tolerance and mutual respect. In addition, the religious influence in policymaking has restricted the structure of inclusive institutions that deal with the rights of minorities. Religious entities frequently act as opposition to reforms that seek to defend the rights of minorities, thereby establishing a political paradigm that places religious orthodoxy above fundamental human rights and equality (ICG,2022). This has led to consistent difficulty for minorities to obtain full social, political, and economic integration. While utilizing core teachings on mutual coexistence, minority rights and intercultural sensitization, the aim is to provide a culture-friendly lexicon surrounding diversified concepts addressing the spirit of harmony and peace through minimum interference in the community; or in other words — a series of possible ways by which one might promote the importance of minorities and the basics of human rights and equality in an environment respecting diversity and intercultural dialogue without infringing upon other human rights standards.(Knox,& Morgera,2022)

International Impact and Image of Pakistan

Issues within the state of Pakistan, including the entanglement of religion and politics, human rights, and the treatment of minorities affect its image and how it conducts its diplomatic relations (Osler, & Skarra,2025). Pakistan's foreign policy and diplomats are also influenced by these factors as they determine its image in the global arena. Hence, the plight of the country to balance its Islamic identity with democratic and secular values has led issues in the concentration of a good relation with other nation and international organizations. Aspects such as religious zealotry, human rights violations, and political upheaval in Pakistan have drawn criticism from global actors, including the United Nations, European Union, and the Western nations (HRW, 2023). This has raised alarm at the alleged misuse of blasphemy laws and treatment of religious minorities, and ratification of women, and calls for accountability and safeguards. This has led to strains in Pakistan's diplomatic relations with countries that champion human rights and democratic governance, and may further isolate Pakistan from multilateral partnerships and foreign investments (USCIRF, 2023). Moreover, Pakistan's sein relationship with its neighboring countries, namely India and Afghanistan, gets affected by its internal religious and political struggles. Complications between ideological lines of religion and secularism cross-fertilize into foreign policy, often forming stumbling blocks of effective diplomacy (Zarycki, 2022). Pakistan's historical use of extremist groups, particularly during conflicts with India and Afghanistan, has bred mistrust from global powers and complicated its diplomatic engagements.

Conclusion

Religion and politics have been so interwoven in the politics of Pakistan that this has affected party politics, legislation and public opinion. It flushes down to the massacre of the minorities and challenges the democratic process” Despite the fact that the Islam has provided a decorum and a moral model as well a society of united identity Its politicization has repeatedly unsealed disunity, oppressive repression, marginalization of minorities and the bests of challenges to the democratic. In this regard, the Stainability of the Fooding between the Religion and Politics, need to be regulated from instructions and legislation in the Political Parties of Pakistan, steht the regitxture growth of democracy.

Recommendations

Legislative Reforms:

Review and amend laws that have been misused to marginalize minorities or stifle dissent, including blasphemy laws. Doing so would deliver justice and protect them from political exploitation."

Depoliticizing Religion:

Stimulate political parties to be more development and governance-oriented, rather than religiously motivated; instead of throwing out being a party for a particular group of people, such as Muslims or Hindus.

Promoting Pluralism:

Launch educational and awareness campaigns to promote tolerance and interfaith harmony thereby reducing sectarian tensions and fostering national unity.

Civil Society and Media Engagement

Strengthen civil society actors and regulate the media to counter extremist narratives, promote constructive, inclusive political discourse.

By adopting these measures, Pakistan can redesign its political structure for the Islamic ideology within the postmodern world that promotes the principles of democracy, justice and equality of rights for all citizens.

References

1. Mohiuddin, A. Navigating Religious Authority in Muslim Societies.
2. Salim, D. P. (2012). The Transnational and the Local in the Politics of Islam.
3. Yilmaz, I., & Shukri, S. (2024). A Faithful Force: Jamaat-E-Islami and Islamist Politics in Pakistan. In *Islamist Parties and Power in Democratic Nation-States: A Comparative Analysis of Six Muslim-Majority Countries* (pp. 133-170). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

4. Rafiq, A. (2014). *Sunni Deobandi-Shia Sectarian Violence in Pakistan*. Middle East Institute.
5. Dorsey, J. M. (2024). Islam's New Kid on the Block. In *The Battle for the Soul of Islam: Defining the Muslim Faith in the 21st Century* (pp. 33-62). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
6. Latif, M. A. (2024). Political struggle of Malaysia and Islam: moderating and radicalizing the state, society, and religion alternately (1957–2023). *Discover global society*, 2(1), 40.
7. De Blasio, E., & Selva, D. *Gender and Culture Wars in Italy*.
8. Bilal, M. (2024). Finding Religion in Everyday Life: How Lifeworlds Work in Pakistan. In *Beyond the Law: Living Blasphemy in Pakistan: Ethnography of Mundane Violence, Faith, and Lifeworlds* (pp. 31-68). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
9. Whyte, S. A. (2024). Localising Religious Authority: Recruitment, Training and Funding of Imams and Scholars. In *Islamic Religious Authority in a Modern Age: Australian and Global Perspectives* (pp. 207-254). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
10. Mukaddam, F. (2024). Contextualising Legal Pluralism. In *Muslim Women between Community and Individual Rights: Legal Pluralism and Marriage in South Africa* (pp. 23-43). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
11. Tavares de Oliveira, V. (2024). The Formation of the Indian State and Its Post-colonial Condition: Field, Capital, and Doxa. In *Necropolitics, Habitus, And The Kashmiri Resistance: We Are Here Still* (pp. 55-92). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
12. Chaturvedi, R. (2023). *Violence of Democracy: Interparty Conflict in South India*. Duke University Press.
13. Malik, I. (2018). *Muslim women, agency and resistance politics: The case of Kashmir*. Springer.
14. Yilmaz, I., & Sokolova-Shipoli, D. P. (2024). Shari'a as a Source of Legal Pluralism in the Lives of Western Muslims. In *Muslim Legal Pluralism in the West: Transnationalism, Political Participation, Citizenship and Shari'a* (pp. 1-18). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
15. Ayaz, M., & Baqi, K. (2024). Transforming Political Culture in Pakistan: The Interplay of Ethnic Federalism and Political Stability. *Tanazur*, 5(2), 337-355.
16. Shukri, S. (2024). *Elite Populism and Malay Political Leaders in Malaysia*.
17. Model, A. P. R. C. *Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh*.
18. Lodhi, M. (Ed.). (2024). *Pakistan: The Search for Stability*. Hurst Publishers.
19. Ali, I. (2022). Muhammad Iqbal. In *Reappraising Modern Indian Thought: Themes and Thinkers* (pp. 317-346). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
20. Abid, M. (2023). *Jamaat-e-Islami's Influence on the Muslim Identity of Pakistanis Through Legislative Amendments and Their Social Consequences* (Master's thesis, University of Kansas).
21. Das, T. K., Bhattacharyya, R., & Sarma, P. K. (2022). Revisiting geographies of nationalism and national identity in Bangladesh. *GeoJournal*, 87(2), 1099-1120.
22. Bonney, R. (2004). Conclusion: 'Enlightened Moderation': Towards a Muslim Consensus on the Future Development of Islām and its Relations with the West. In *Jihād: From Qur'ān to bin Laden* (pp. 395-423). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
23. Ali Saleem, R. M., & Saleem, R. M. A. (2017). Islam, Secularism and Constitutions. *State, Nationalism, and Islamization: Historical Analysis of Turkey and Pakistan*, 31-70.
24. Zulfiqar, G. M. (2022). Inequality regimes, patriarchal connectivity, and the elusive right to own land for women in Pakistan. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 177(4), 799-811.
25. Saal, J. (2021). *The Dark Social Capital of Religious Radicals*. Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.

26. Zaidi, A. (2022). Pakistani worldmaking in international politics: empire, decolonization and Cold War struggles 1950-1989 (Doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science).
27. Majed, R. (2021). In defense of intra-sectarian divide: street mobilization, coalition formation, and rapid realignments of sectarian boundaries in Lebanon. *Social Forces*, 99(4), 1772-1798.
28. Zafar, F., & Sami, A. (2021). Women's Participation in Politics in Pakistan.
29. Holland, C. C. (2022). Inequality, identity, and the politics of Northern Ireland: Challenges of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Rowman & Littlefield.
30. Dwivedi, S. K. (2023). Contradiction between the blasphemy laws in Islamic nations and the international human rights law.
31. Roberts, D. B. (2023). Security politics in the Gulf monarchies: continuity amid change. Columbia University Press.
32. Farrell, F. (2023). Multiculturalism, Religious Education, and Fundamental British Values. In *Fundamental British Values, Michel Foucault, and Religious Education Teacher Subjectivity: A Critical Investigation* (pp. 75-103). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
33. Farid, M. S., & Jackson, L. (2024). Education and the Congregation of Holy Cross in Bangladesh. In *Can the Church Be Decolonized? Holy Cross Education in Bangladesh* (pp. 11-29). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
34. Ponniah, J. (2023). Relationship Between State and Religion in India: A Sphere of Indifference, Contradictions, or Engagement?. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Religion and State Volume II: Global Perspectives* (pp. 347-378). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
35. Ashraf, S. (2021). Finding the Enemy Within: Blasphemy Accusations and Subsequent Violence in Pakistan (p. 270). ANU Press.
36. Pandit, A. (2021). Claiming Citizenship and Nation: Muslim Politics and State Building in North India, 1947–1986. Taylor & Francis.
37. Mukherjee, D., & Das, T. (2024). Understanding India's Relation with Pakistan and Afghanistan: A Study of Contested Spaces and Strategies. In *75 Years of India's Foreign Policy: Bilateral, Conventional and Emerging Trends* (pp. 283-311). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
38. Harrell, D. (2019). A Man Alone: Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the All-India Muslim League's Support for the British During World War II.
39. Hoodbhoy, P. (2023). Pakistan: Origins, Identity and Future. Routledge India.
40. Nasir, J. (2024). The Militancy Challenge. In *Development Challenges of Pakistan: Constraints and Choices* (pp. 407-441). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
41. Ali, I. (2022). Muhammad Iqbal. In *Reappraising Modern Indian Thought: Themes and Thinkers* (pp. 317-346). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
42. Young, B. (2024). Alternative formats.
43. Ahmed, D., & Abbasi, M. Z. (2023). Democracy Under God. Cambridge University Press.
44. Das, T. K., Bhattacharyya, R., & Sarma, P. K. (2022). Revisiting geographies of nationalism and national identity in Bangladesh. *GeoJournal*, 87(2), 1099-1120.
45. Amjad, J. (2022). The question of Pakistan's national identity: a study of Islamist and Secularist narratives.
46. Ahmed, I., & Brasted, H. (2021). Recognition and dissent: Constitutional design and religious conflict in Pakistan. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 51(2), 351-367.
47. Hannum, H. (Ed.). (2023). Documents on autonomy and minority rights. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

48. Amin, H. (2024). Value-based frameworks and peace education in faith-neutral, faith-based and faith-inspired schools in Islamabad: a comparative analysis. *Journal of Peace Education*, 21(1), 54-81.
49. Cheema, A. M., & Akram, H. (2023). The Evolution of Islamic Banking in Pakistan: An Analysis. *AL-Qalam*, 28(1), 23-39.
50. Khan, A. R., & Firdous, T. (2022). An Analysis of Blasphemy Laws of Pakistan in the Context of International Human Rights Laws. *The Islamic Culture "As-Saqafat-ul Islamia" الإسلامية والثقافة الإ-Research Journal-Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre, University of Karachi*, 47(1).
51. Sobhy, H. (2024). Campaigning for the revolution: Freedom, social justice and citizenship imaginaries in the Egyptian Uprising. *Mediterranean Politics*, 1-27.
52. Suraj, O. A. (2023). Normative Theoretical Analyses of Religion, Media, and Politics in Nigeria. *Religion and Politics in a Mediatized Society: Critical Analyses and Spheres of Interinfluence in Nigeria and Beyond*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 49.
53. Abbas, Q. (2022). *Anti-Blasphemy Activism In Pakistan: A Study Of The Popularity Of Tehreek Labbaik Pakistan* (Doctoral dissertation, Open Access Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington).
54. Kismawadi, E. R. (2024). Contribution of Islamic banks and macroeconomic variables to economic growth in developing countries: vector error correction model approach (VECM). *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, 15(2), 306-326.
55. Kenny, M., & Luca, D. (2021). The urban-rural polarisation of political disenchantment: An investigation of social and political attitudes in 30 European countries. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 14(3), 565-582.
56. Melissen, J. (2005). The new public diplomacy: Between theory and practice. In *The new public diplomacy: Soft power in international relations* (pp. 3-27). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
57. Koussens, D. (2023). Unveiling Marianne: Religious Symbols at School and the New Secular Grammar. In *Secularism (s) in Contemporary France: Law, Policy, and Religious Diversity* (pp. 95-111). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
58. Ahmad, S., & Falki, S. M. (2023). Role of Religio-Political Activism of TLP in Shaping Security Challenges for Pakistan. *IUB Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(2), 233-247.
59. D'Ambrosio, M. (2022). Emotions in political discourse and social narratives: sociological reflections on traditional and new media. *Society Register*, 6(4), 101-116.
60. Löfflmann, G. (2024). *The Politics of Antagonism: Populist Security Narratives and the Remaking of Political Identity*. Taylor & Francis.
61. Sajjad, M. W. (2023). Prioritizing Religious Freedoms: Islam, Pakistan, and the Human Rights Discourse. *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, 20(1), 47-68.
62. Gingrich, J., & Giudici, A. (2024). Who polarises? Who targets? Parties' educational speech over the long run. *European Journal of Political Research*.
63. Ali, N., & Arshad, F. (2024). Multidimensional Challenges and its Impacts on the Security of Pakistan. *Journal of Human Dynamics*, 2(1), 01-08.
64. Babalola, D. (2024). Party politics, dearth of political ideology, and the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria. *The Round Table*, 113(5), 434-450.
65. NISAR, R. D. (2022). THINKING CONTEMPORARY FACTORIAL POLITICAL FLUX & POLARIZATION ISSUES TO PAKISTAN'S GOVERNMENT:(A PANORAMIC APPRAISAL). *The journal of contemporary issues in business and government*, 28(1), 269-282.
66. Fossati, D. (2022). *Unity through division: Political Islam, representation and democracy in Indonesia*. Cambridge University Press.

67. Boas, T. C. (2023). *Evangelicals and electoral politics in Latin America: a kingdom of this world*. Cambridge University Press.
68. Nimako, M. A. (2024). *From the Pews to the Ballot Box: How Religion Shapes Voting Behavior in Ghana*.
69. Boland, C. (2021). European Muslim Youth and Gender (in) Equality Discourse: Towards a More Critical Academic Inquiry. *Social Sciences*, 10(4), 133.
70. Medzihorsky, J., & Lindberg, S. I. (2024). Walking the talk: How to identify anti-pluralist parties. *Party Politics*, 30(3), 420-434.
71. Tampubolon, M. (2024). *Human Rights in Indonesia*.
72. P Junejo, S. (2024). *Who Governs Pakistan? A Case Study of Military Ethics To identify the driving factors of the Pakistani military's political interventionism in Pakistan's socio-political structure (Doctoral dissertation, University of Leicester)*.
73. Syarif, N. (2021). *Islam, Islamism and Sharia: Muslim perspective on the meaning of democracy, its foundation and contemporary challenge faced by Indonesia*.
74. Toniatti, R. (2024). Legal Monism and the Challenge of Legal Pluralism (s). In *Law and Revolution* (pp. 262-296). Routledge.
75. (Amnesty International).
76. (United Nations).
77. (Duke Law Journal).
78. Ahmar, M. (2023). *The Challenge of Enlightenment, Conflict Transformation and Peace in Pakistan*. Taylor & Francis.
79. Bilal, M. (2024). Epilogue: Is There a Solution to Blasphemy Problem: Answers Beyond the Law. In *Beyond the Law: Living Blasphemy in Pakistan: Ethnography of Mundane Violence, Faith, and Lifeworlds* (pp. 175-192). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
80. Eddyono, S. (2025). Gendered and Religion-based Exclusion in Indonesian Public School. *Asian Perspectives on Education: Inclusivity and Diversity*, 69.
81. Sebastian, L. C., & Alkaff, S. H. B. O. (2024). *Indonesia and Islam in Transition*. Springer Nature Singapore, Imprint: Palgrave Macmillan.
82. Gale, R. (2025). Governing Religious Space: Exploring the Religion and Urban Planning Nexus. *Handbook of the Geographies of Religion*, 391.
83. Cirrone, B. (2023). The role of PMSCs in boosting the erosion of state sovereignty.
84. Kazma Baqi, M. A. (2024). *Pakistan's Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building: Challenges and Strategies towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. *Jahan-e-Tahqeeq*, 7(3), 98-105.
85. Janabi, A. S. (2024). *Political rights of religious minorities in Iraq and Syria: 2008-2018*.
86. Wolbers, R. (2024). The Future of the Christchurch Call to Action: How to Build Multistakeholder Initiatives to Address Content Moderation Challenges. *Journal of Law, Technology, & the Internet*, 15(1), 106.
87. Yavuz, M. H., & Öztürk, A. E. (2023). Kılıçdaroğlu's Political Worldview. In *Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and the New Republican People's Party in Turkey* (pp. 75-121). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
88. (USCIRF, 2023)
89. Ahmed, S. (2023). Problematizing Exclusionary Politics (or Fascism) in the Middle East and North Africa. *New Political Science*, 45(3), 500-525
90. Gilani, S. I. A., Khaliq, A., & Waheed, A. (2024). INTER-CIVILIZATIONAL ISSUES AND THE FACTORS AFFECTING INTERFAITH RELATIONSHIPS: A STUDY OF MUHAMMAD HAMIDULLAH'S CONTRIBUTIONS. *Al-Shajarah: Journal of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation (ISTAC)*, 263-293..

91. MUSTAFA, F. (2021). THE CONSTITUTION AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 48(3/4), 271-280.
92. (USCIRF, 2023)
93. Ertorer, S. E. Racism and Identity in a Xenophobic World.
94. (ICG,2022)
95. Knox, J. H., & Morgera, E. (2022). Human Rights and the environment: the interdependence of human rights and a healthy environment in the context of national legislation on natural resources (Vol. 109). Food & Agriculture Org..
96. Osler, A., & Skarra, J. A. (2025). The rhetoric and reality of human rights education: policy frameworks and teacher perspectives. In *Nordic Perspectives on Human Rights Education*. Taylor & Francis.
97. (HRW, 2023)
98. (USCIRF, 2023)
99. Zarycki, T. (2022). Structural Reading of the Poland's Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century History. In *The Polish Elite and Language Sciences: A Perspective of Global Historical Sociology* (pp. 125-283). Cham: Springer International Publishing.