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Abstract

This study examines the influence of Islam in shaping Pakistan's political identity and governance, analyzing the ways Islamic principles and values have been integrated into the nation's constitutional and institutional frameworks. Since its inception, Pakistan has sought to balance Islamic ideology with modern statecraft, creating a unique model of governance that intertwines religious ideals with political structures. This paper investigates the historical foundations of Islam's role in Pakistan's political development, exploring how Islamic concepts have influenced legal, social, and policy domains. By studying key constitutional amendments, political movements, and policy shifts, this research sheds light on the complex relationship between religion and state governance in Pakistan, highlighting both the achievements and challenges of incorporating Islamic ideals into contemporary political systems.

Keywords: Islam, Pakistan, Political Identity, Governance, Constitutional Framework, Islamic Ideology, Statecraft

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Title

The Role of Islam in Shaping Pakistan's Political Identity and Governance

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of Islam in shaping Pakistan's political identity and governance, analyzing the ways Islamic principles and values have been integrated into the nation's constitutional and institutional frameworks. Since its inception, Pakistan has sought to balance Islamic ideology with modern statecraft, creating a unique model of governance that intertwines religious ideals with political structures. This paper investigates the historical foundations of Islam's role in Pakistan's political development, exploring how Islamic concepts have influenced legal, social, and policy domains. By studying key constitutional amendments, political movements, and policy shifts, this research sheds light on the complex relationship between religion and state governance in Pakistan, highlighting both the achievements and challenges of incorporating Islamic ideals into contemporary political systems.

Keywords: Islam, Pakistan, Political Identity, Governance, Constitutional Framework, Islamic Ideology, Statecraft

Introduction

The bedrock of the foundation of Pakistan in 1947 was the vision of a state, which would give Muslims full religious and cultural freedom. It did not only inspire independence with its religious ideology but was, in fact, the core of Pakistan's political identity

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as well as the backbone of the basis of its government structure. The country meant to ensure the rights of Muslims and also provide equal opportunities to religious minorities was Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision. However, interpreting and practically interpreting and practically implementing fundamental Islamic principles of governance have been controversially controversial, leading to a grievous impact on Pakistan's political trajectory (Islam 1981).

Islam has been central to legislative frameworks, political debates, and public policies since the Objectives Resolution of 1949, and the adoption of the 1973 Constitution onwards. In religion, and politics, the intertwining of the two has both fused national unity and deepened the divisions and diverse interpretations of Islam principles abound.

In this article, we look into how Pakistan's political identity and governance have been impacted by Islam. It draws upon historical and contemporary sources as it considers the role of Islam as a state-building ideology, the constitutional structure, and policy development. Finally, the study delves into the tensions resulting from harmonizing Islamic values with modern governance in their efforts to tackle challenges including extremism, pluralism, and socio-economic development (Shabbir, Ali, et al., 2024).

This analysis provides further insights into the ongoing struggle by Pakistan to keep its Islamic soul together with the requirements of modern nationhood. This article aims to contribute to a more general debate on the role of religion in statecraft in Pakistan and more generally in other Muslim-majority nations by examining the lessons learned and the shortcomings of integrating religion into governance.

Literature Review

Historical Context of Islam in Pakistan's Political Ideology

Fundamentally, Pakistan was based on the Islamic identity of the Indian Muslim community. According to Jalal (2008), Islam was used by the All-India Muslim League to give the idea of Pakistan unity. Grounded in the belief that Islam would make for a separate political and cultural identity, the vision of a separate homeland was an autonomous land whose people would identify as Muslims. Many of Jinnah's speeches enumerated the articulation of Islam, not as some theocratic straightjacket on the people, but as a way to ensure justice, equality, and a harmonious and composite society. This vision appealed to the Muslim masses who felt Islam was an important part of political and social organization at a time when they were growing concerned about being squeezed out of a Hindu-majority India (Rais, 2007).

Objectives Resolution of 1949 marked a major milestone by version of Islamic principles into the legislative and political edifice of the state. Proclaimed this resolution that Allah is sovereign and the state is a trustee to apply divine guidance. Studies have, therefore, stated that this is very important for designing Pakistan's constitutional path because it suggests an early resolve to establish a governance system based on Islamic teachings (Ahmed, 2013). However, this balance had been important for keeping the debate going on the relationship between the principles of religious and secular governance in Pakistan, with regard to the actual application of these principles (Khan, 1999).

Constitutional Framework and Islamic Provisions

Pakistan's constitutional journey is marked by the centrality of Islam to the workings of the state. Each of these successive constitutions, excluding 1913 and including those of 1956, 1962, and 1973, displays differing Islamic tones to the extent that the priorities of successive regimes warranted. Pakistan's first Constitution, of 1956, made the country an 'Islamic Republic of Pakistan,' and provided for nothing to be done in contravention of the Quran and Sunnah. Political instability and disagreement about the degree of Islamization prevented implementation, however.

Under Ayub Kahn's military rule, the 1962 Constitution tried to be more modernist. It kept the Islamic Republic title while downplaying Islamic provisions in favor of economic and administrative arrangements. Attackers claim (Zaman, 2018) that this strategy alienated conservative groups and undermined the state's Islamic legitimacy among many of the people in Pakistan (Shaheed, 2010).

Yet the 1973 Constitution that was promulgated by the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is at the

end of the process of constitutionalization, set on tying governance to the principles of Islam. In addition to that, articles 227–231 made it mandatory that all laws of Pakistan be in conformity with Islamic injunctions and formed the Federal Shariat Court amongst other bodies such as the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII). According to Piscatori, the provisions were devised to ensure that governance was Islamic in principle while permitting the practice of democracy. However, such (Nasr, 2001) provisions have been often politicized, as governments have used Islamic entities, acted outside the limits of Shari'ah clear rules, and used religion to oppress dissent, disenfranchise minorities, and assume power. Additionally, Islamic principles are not applied through consistent interpretation of the same (Jawed 2010).

Islamization Policies and Political Dynamics

Islamization policies launched by General Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988) form the main turning point as far as the governance of Pakistan is concerned. Regime Zia-ul-Haq attempted to instrumentalize Islam by way of constitutional amendments; Hudood Ordinances; Quranic courts; and Islamic education dispensed education as obligatory. They allege that these measures of establishing the Islamic Identity of Pakistan gave it the panacea for a moral basis in governance (Esposito, 1998). But those policies deepened sectarian divisions, bred extremism, and alienated a religious minority (Mishali-Ram, 2015).

Despite his selective outbreaks of anti-communist fervor and Zia's Islamization policies, the latter generally bore little relation to the actual attempt to carry out real religious reform and were, to a large extent, pursued for politico expedience. For example, it introduced harsh punishments for theft and adultery (collectively known as Hudood Ordinances of which the first phase criticized their inconsistent enforcement and how they discriminate against women and powerless communities. Just like Zakat and Ushr founded compulsory tax for redistribution in its formulation, there became allegations of mismanagement and corruption of the tax (Shaikh, 2009).

Since Post Zia, different governments had to face the Islamization legacy. Though the democratic regimes of the 1990s tried to weaken Zia-era policies, they still went on using Islamic symbolism to get populist support. This has weakened public trust, fractured the political landscape, and accorded religious parties excessive influence, researchers argue (Subhan et al., 2024).

Islam and Public Policy

Public policy in these arenas has already been shaped by Islam. For instance, efforts to incorporate Islamic teachings into the curricula for the educational sector have occurred repeatedly, which was a replica of the state's determination to propagate Islamic values. According to critics, however, these efforts have frequently chosen to stress religious indoctrination instead of critical thinking and scientific education at the expense of a less competitive workforce (Haque, 2015).

Moreover, Islamic principles are used in economic policies (e.g. banking and wealth redistribution). Islamic banking initiatives first appeared in the 1980s purifying financial transactions by removing interest (riba) and substituting it with profit sharing. However, Pakistan is executing various initiatives that will enhance the share of Pakistan's economy, but they fail to get any practical implementation due to a gap in systematic as well as transparency, both of which make it hard to exercise these initiatives in accordance with Islamic values. The same as that usually echoes while the zakat system of wealth distribution fights back against poverty because of corruption, and lack of targeting the right beneficiaries (Toor, 2011).

The design of family laws in Pakistan is influenced by Islamic principles themselves which may be seen in the case of the Muslim Family Law of 1961 which sought to regulate matters of polygamy, divorce, and inheritance. At the time the laws were progressive but groups on the conservative side fought them and so enforcement has been spotty (Chak, 2014).

Contemporary Challenges and Debates

At present, Pakistan must handle its Islamic identity with modern governance in the 21st century. Increased extremism, socioeconomic crises, and the current wave of global human rights pressures have intensified the debate over whether or not Islam should be a referent in politics. For example, the state's efforts to fight extremism are

often in opposition to religious groups, which are so deeply entrenched. These challenges (Fair, 2014) call for a pragmatic approach combining Islamic principles and the modern facets of governance (Aziz et al. 2024).

In addition, the politicization of Islam has contributed to the tensions in respect of minority rights and gender equality. Islamic teachings of justice and inclusivity are however rarely applied when convenient. To cite an example, blasphemy laws, originally intended to keep sentiments about religion at bay, have been criticized extensively for having been abused by a majority and its opponents to a minority. In just the same way, religiously rooted gender disparities that deny women education, work, and governance, also serve as an impediment (Nazir et al., 2023).

However; some other scholars have advised an interpretation of Islam as universal based on its universal values of compassion, justice, and equality. But they say that an approach of this sort would solve Pakistan's governance trouble without sacrificing its Islamic identity.

Comparative Perspectives

The diversity of approaches to incorporating Islam into governance is revealed through a comparison with other countries with a majority Muslim population. And Turkey and Malaysia are nations that have tried to reach a compromise between Islam and modern democratic structures and one just might serve as a lesson for Pakistan. Yet, they state that Pakistan could do the same thing, with a greater margin in terms of inclusion and flexibility on Islamic principles (Hassan, 2015).

Methodology

With the aim of unraveling the role of Islam in shaping Pakistan's political identity and governance, this thesis takes the qualitative route. This approach is especially unique because it allows for a deep reading of the historical events, constitutional developments, and socio-political dynamics. The methodology is structured around five key components: Data collection and analysis is interspersed with historical analysis, content analysis of constitutions and legal documents, case studies of political and governance practice, and ethical considerations. The purpose of designing the scenarios was to get exhaustive insights regarding the implications of Islamic teachings in the context of the political as well as governance structures of Pakistan (Zaman, 2020).

Historical Analysis

This research is based on the historical analysis of the ideological and political historical development of Pakistan, and the chronological understanding of ideology and politics. This analysis looks at some of the important milestones of Pakistan's history that go beyond its origin and the Pakistan Movement, Objectives Resolution, and bringing of constitutions in 1956, 1962, and 1973. Critical analysis was carried out of archival sources like Jinnah's speeches, the parliamentary debates, and official records to trace the ideological significance of Islam in state formation.

It talked about how Islam helps Muslims to have something to hold on to that deals with the thought of a different country. Discussed were speeches delivered by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah who elaborated Islamic values as a few principles to be followed for administering the state. The concept was elaborated to see the effects of implementing the Objectives Resolution of 1949 in the long run, in internalizing Islam in the legal and political framework of the state.

Through historical analysis and history as text interpretation, the paper clarifies how Islam remained a political identity and political culture in the premodern Muslim world, yet it turned politically legitimate in the Muslim modern world. Using this historical perspective, this paper proposes a framework to evaluate today's concerns and quarrels regarding the implementation of aspects of Sharia law into the governing system of Muslim nations.

Content Analysis of Constitutional and Legal Documents

A systematic content analysis was used to examine the manner in which Islamic principles have been codified in the constitutional and legal architecture of Pakistan. This analysis focused on three critical documents:

- The Objectives Resolution (1949): The Objectives Resolution, as a founding document, stated that sovereignty is Allah's and that all future laws will be Islamic. This

was analysed and the impact of it on ensuing constitutional events and its share in providing Pakistan its identity as an Islamic republic was assessed.

- The 1973 Constitution of Pakistan: The Islamic provisions testified within this document include the demand that all laws be according to the Quran and Sunnah, the inclusion of the Council for Islamic Ideology, and the Federal Shariat Court. Articles 227 – 231 were examined in detail to see how Islam was institutionalized within the legislative process.
- Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization Ordinances: In my research, I study the impact of these ordinances on Pakistan's governmental, socio-political Pakistani landscape during the General Zia ul Haq regime. The ordinances all include the Hudood laws, the introduction of the Sharia courts, and mandatory Islamic education.

In the content analysis the recurring themes which mainly included the sovereignty of Allah, the conformity of laws to Islamic teachings, and the institutional mechanisms instituted to assure adherence to Islamic principles were identified. Following this macro contextualization, the implications of these themes were considered in wider political and governance terms.

Case Studies

To illustrate the implications of Islam's role, case studies were conducted on major political and governance events. These case studies included:

- The Islamization Policies of Zia-ul-Haq: The objectives, implementation strategies, and long-term effects of comprehensive Islamization under the rule of Zia's regime were explored by means of this case study. The study looked into how these policies annoyed the functionality of public institutions, formed judicial systems, and built societal norms.
- The Rise of Political Islam in the 21st Century: In this case study, the increasing role of religious parties and movements in Pakistan's political increase was analyzed. It focused on key events, for instance, the role of religious parties in electoral politics and their impacts on decision-making at the policy level.
- Contemporary Governance Challenges: Issues such as extremism, minority rights or the politicization of Islam were the focus of this case study. The paper explored how the incorporation of Islamic principles into governance has contributed to this capacity and is hindering it in addressing these challenges.

These case study data were primarily gathered from academic articles, government reports, and through media coverage. The study examines these specific events, uncovering practical issues and opportunities for integrating Islam into governance.

Data Collection and Analysis

It collected data through a systematic review of the academic literature, government documents, and historical records. Additionally, peer-reviewed journals, books, and reports were considered secondary sources, and speeches, legal documents, and archival records were secondary sources. The data was reliable and valid because this was a multiple-source approach (Aziz, 2022).

Thematic coding is a qualitative process of identifying patterns and contradictions within data and has to be incorporated into the data analysis process. The information gleaned was organized thematically to address the ideological basis of Pakistan, Islamic principles of the constitution, and contemporary governance challenges. The concept of this process helped with analyzing Islam governance through its changing role through the time period.

Included, in many cases, specific coding categories:

- Ideological Themes: Islam as a unifying political ideology in the Pakistan movement, and its subsequent role in state building into the post-independence period.
- Constitutional Themes: The Islamic principles in constitutional provisions and their effect on legislative and judicial process.
- Governance Challenges: Examining the implications for practical use of integration of Islam into governance, especially those about extremism, minority rights, and public policy development.

The analysis also consisted of comparing and cross-referencing findings with data from other sources to ascertain the degree of reliability of findings. Like, historical records were compared with contemporary accounts to see to what extent the role of Islam in governance was continuity or how it changed.

Ethical Considerations

For this study, the sensitive nature of the topic meant that ethical considerations were central. The following measures were taken to ensure the integrity and credibility of the research:

- Accuracy of Data: I have cross-referenced multiple sources to ensure that the data is accurate and (as much as possible) that the sources are authentic and that primary documents have been confirmed as such as they have been sourced.
- Avoidance of Bias: The purpose of the study was to present a balanced presentation of the issue by bringing in a variety of opinions by both those in favor and those against the integration of Islam into governance.
- Respect for Diversity: The research recognized the diversity of understandings of Islam and how they relate to governance. In this, it included seeing the sides of minority groups and marginalized communities.
- Confidentiality: As such, this study was unaffected by primary data collection from human subjects, and it considered ethical standards regarding the treatment of sensitive information, such as unpublished archival materials's confidentiality.
- Transparency: The methodology of the research process was documented in a transparent way, such as the criteria used to select the case studies as well as the way of data analysis.

Justification for the Qualitative Approach

The use of the qualitative research method was informed by the fact that the research question is complex and reveals dimensions. The qualitative studies that were then considered necessary would include the measurement of some issues falling under religion, political systems, and governance having set that quantitative methods were only effective in measuring specific variables out of the various facets of religion and policy. The suggested qualitative research design enabled acquiring a better understanding of historical, constitutional, and socio-political drivers (Shaikh, 2018).

The integration of the use of history, content, and case analysis offered a full coverage of the topic. Due to capturing the socio-cultural demographics of Pakistan and the factors affecting its governance, this study provides an understanding that is applicable to context and beyond in terms of the debate on the roles of religion in statecraft.

Results and Discussion:

Islam as a Political Unifier and Divider

The research carried out in this paper found that, while the Islamic religion has been a factor in the uniting of Pakistan, it has also been a catalyst of division in the country. In the Pakistan Movement Islam was a unifying ideological force for driving the cause of a separate Muslim nation in South Asia. This unifying role was most conspicuous when the Muslim League was in the process of aggregating mass support for independence since it found a convenient rallying point within Islamic identity to bring together various Muslim groups all over British India. That is why the idea to create Pakistan was built on the unity of the desire to establish a state where Muslims could practice Islam without any limitations – thus making Islam an essential part of Pakistan's political project (Khatoon, 2023).

After independence, diverse interpretations of Islamic principles have come up and have caused political and sectarian divides. For example, such as Sunni-Shia tensions have periodically boiled into violence that has splintered national unity. In the same manner, ideological skirmishes have played out among political parties, religious scholars, and civil society groups, over the function of Islam in political governance. This has led to these divisions being exacerbated by the state's inconsistent enforcement of Islamic principles which too often serve specific sects or political interests. The researchers also show that though Islam has served as a source of identity and legitimacy, its politicization more often than not has eroded its capacity to unite the nation (Ayaz & Baqi, 2024).

Impact on Constitutional and Legal Framework

Islamic principles have been quite profoundly responsible for shaping the constitutional framework of Pakistan, the Objectives Resolution of 1949, which is the foundation of it, being its fundamental basis. In this respect, these principles were institutionalized in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan under which the second point is declared that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan shall be based on the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance, and social justice as enunciated by Islam and justice, fairness and social wedlock shall pervade all the institutions of the permanent government. Articles 227 to 231 laid down the mechanism of the Council of Islamic Ideology being the semi-legislative body and federal Sharia court for the purpose of compliance with injunctions of Islamic services. The idea is that these provisions were meant to go together with governance with Islamic values of justice, equality, and morality (Alavi, 1988).

The study also finds that the politicization of these provisions often reverses what they sought to remedy. For instance, the 1973 Constitution sought to give a foundation for an Islamic government but in an inconsistent and more often politically expedient basis than an overriding principle. Successive governments have, over and over again, relied on Islamic provisions to legitimize rule, quell dissent, and marginalize minorities. The difficulty of birds between religious principles on the one hand and fairness and inclusion on the other is, for example, illustrated by widespread criticism of blasphemy laws being misused against religious minorities and political opponents (Choudhury, 2007).

There is no agreement as to why the Islamic principles are to be interpreted and consequently, the legal framework is ambiguous. In turn, it has generated conflicting judicial rulings and deadlocked legislatures and impedes effective governance. These reinforce the conclusion that with Islamic principles integrated into the constitutional framework, a more coherent and inclusive approach is needed.

Islamization Policies and Their Legacy

There is no agreement as to why the Islamic principles are to be interpreted and consequently, the legal framework is ambiguous. In turn, it has generated conflicting judicial rulings and deadlocked legislatures and impedes effective governance. These reinforce the conclusion that with Islamic principles integrated into the constitutional framework, a more coherent and inclusive approach is needed (Holz, 2022).

The study says the left policy Zia of Islamization had good and bad effects. On the positive side at least they strengthened Pakistan's Islamic identity and raised public awareness of the message of Islam. For example, there are such courts as we have mentioned, which provide the possibility of resolving disputes through Islamic principles and principles in their courts — Sharia courts. But they also pushed for Islamic education so that the young people would have moral values.

Those policies have had profound results, however. Hudood Ordinances are a case in point that shows women facing complaints of discrimination against them including other marginalized communities. All the attention was on Islamic education, to the extent that we had lost that quality of education and that other thing that is known as scientific inquiry. At the same time as these polarized shifts in Zia's policies were occurring, the study also found that Zia's own policies prolonged and deepened extremism and deepened sectarian fissures. They sided with some religious sects and estranged some other sects or religious groups, which, in turn, led to the formation of a society poorly knit, and polarized (Ahmed, 2023).

Most governance in Pakistan, however, is still influenced by Zia's Islamization legacy. Though subsequent governments have tried to reduce the significance of such policies, these are embedded deep in legal and institutional frameworks. Finally, the study shows that these policies still need to be critically reexamined in order to deal with their unintended consequences.

Challenges in Modern Governance

Islam is the identity of Pakistan in the 21st century and its Islamic identity needs to be aligned with modern governance requirements. The politicization of religion and inarticulate handling by the state of radical ideologies make the latter its most pressing challenge, which is fanning the flames of extremism. But the study indicates that

Islamic principles suggest peace and justice but many choose these principles to support violence and intolerance.

There is another important challenge that will guarantee minority rights. Its constitution provides all citizens with equal rights but the provisions have been stained with discriminatory practices and social prejudice. For example, blasphemy laws have been abused to institute a climate of fear and insecurity for Pakistan's religious minorities and to aggravate an already restrictive environment which has sustained the isolation of the religious minorities from the rest and has harmed Pakistan's international reputation on matters of human rights.

However, it is likewise confronted with the task of harmonizing Islamic principles for developing governance and economic growth, education, and public policy. Initiatives such as Islamic banking and zakat systems are sometimes opaque and inefficient, the study finds. All the same, Islamic education follows the same impetus to develop science and technology skills with the international economic requirement in view.

The study recommends a balanced approach having due regard to Pakistan's Islamic identity demand and the demand for pluralism and socioeconomic development. This means nurturing a reading of Islamic principles that is able to expand their meanings in order to bring about justice that is compassionate and just.

Pathways for Reform and Progress

This study reveals several paths reform could take to create more accepting spaces for the integration of Islam in governance. These include:

- Promoting Inclusive Interpretation of Islamic Principles: It may contribute to the acceptance of Islam having a broader definition which will reduce sectarianism and conflict.
- Strengthening Democratic Institutions: This is important in order to maintain the independence and sustainability of democratic institutions so as to balance religious values and contemporary geopolitics.
- Enhancing Legal and Judicial Reforms: The more you address the ambiguities in the legal framework and the more you ensure higher levels of application of Islamic principles, the better public trust in the governance.
- Investing in Education and Public Awareness: An informed and capable citizenry could develop through that which can accompany Islamic education, critical thinking, and scientific inquiry.
- Fostering Interfaith Dialogue: Dialogue among different religious and sectarian groups could lead to a decrease in the level of religious and sectarian tensions and the construction of a more inclusive society.

Conclusion

This paper argues that Islam crafted Pakistan's political identity by prescribing Pakistan's founding ideals as well as generating its ongoing process of evolution. The Pakistan Movement was steeped in Islam and the Objectives Resolution and constitutional frameworks institutionalized this process and thereafter it became a regular part of statecraft. Despite its politicization, it has become the unifying ideological foundation of Middle Eastern societies, yet has led to grave governance problems in the region, namely sectarian division and marginalization of minorities.

From our findings, a nuanced perspective of embedding Islamic principles into governance is suggested. Islamic values espouse justice, equality, and accountability, yet the promotion of these values has so frequently been self-serving, selective, and politicized that they have, in effect, been violated. To complicate things further, Zia-ul-Haq's reign is ridden with the legacy of Islamization. These policies while strengthening Pakistan's Islamic character deepened social divisions and circumscribed their practice of democracy.

Out-of-the-box thinking is called for to integrate Islamic identity and modern-day governance given the modern-day problems such as extremism, socio-economic inequalities, and protection of minority rights. These can be treated as good candidates for treatment in a broader interpretation of Islam that supports empathy, tolerance, and pluralism. Extending democracy, promoting interfaith dialogue, and raising public consciousness are fundamental measures that bridge the gulf between those two principles and

their larger Islamic objectives of nation-building and sustainable development.

This study implies that the lessons from other Muslim-majority countries can inform broader debates on religion and statecraft and help shape Pakistan's efforts. The requirement of the Islamic background of Pakistan is to take the inclusivity and transparency of a just and cohesive society with prevailing demands of progress and pluralism. Further research at these intersections could provide avenues through which Pakistan might choose to consider two identities simultaneously: An Islamic state and a modern nation.

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