

## NEW ETHNIC IDENTITY: ROLE OF RELIGION AND STATE OF IDENTITY IN PAKISTAN

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**Abstract:** *Religion and ethnicity are the two key dynamics of the politics of identity in Pakistan. The emergent significance of religion as an architect of identity and an instrument of political mobilization is reshaping the political landscape of ethno-religious conflicts in Pakistan. This research paper expounds that in case of Pakistan, religion is more influential to shape a violent ethnic and sectarian divide as compared to other bases of ethnicity like language, race, and region. Over emphasis on religious paradigm by authoritarian state discourses as the primary source of integration and its relevance to regime legitimacy made Islam a significant identity of various groups to contest power and influence. The evident ability of religion to form a group identity in Pakistan is leading to form a new ethnicity, which is exclusively based on the contrary, Islamic interpretations where the concept of 'others' seems to be less compromising, more antagonistic as compared to linguistic and regional forms of ethnicity. It identifies another aspect where religion and ethnicity are largely intermingled in Pakistan as different ethnic categories largely built on language and region are also associated with various forms of Islam. The underlying study expounds that over the time due to growing potential of Islam as source of protest and mobility in the politics of identity, it has become one of the key expressions of ethnicity which led to design an ethicized form of religion in Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** religion, Islam, ethnicity, politics, identity, Pakistan

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## Role of Religion in Politics: An Identity Maker

No major religion of the world has been exempted from complexity and violent conflict. Religious affiliation and convictions often motivates religious communities to advocate and promote particular philosophies. The religion becomes intertwined with the range of casual dynamics like socio-economic conditions, the level of political stability in a political system and societal patterns of cohesion, which define propel and intensity of a conflict. It has been observed that religion has considerable influence on political attitudes and it causes the great functional value. Mostly in traditional societies, religion is a mass phenomenon, politics is not. Religion often serves as a mean by which masses become politicized.<sup>1</sup> Religion is an identity which creates a sense of belonging among many people around the world. It appears to be more controversial than other identities as it often becomes complex due to the support and push of “orthodoxy” which means “correct the belief” and “orthopraxy” which means “correct the practice” among the adherents of any faith.<sup>2</sup> Oxford Learner’s Dictionary explains religion as “a belief in a superhuman controlling power that is entitled to obedience and worship”. Mardin in light of recent development in Social Sciences, points out that “religion can be conceptualized as an anxiety reducing and identity symbolic process”. Religion can be also defined as any system of thoughts and action started by a group which gives the individuals a frame of orientations and an object of devotion. It also manifests that life has a particular and most often single meaning, which provides by his or her faith.<sup>3</sup> According to the Smith’s classification, there are two models expounding the relationship of politics and religion;

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<sup>1</sup>Arish Salem Hisami, *Pakistan: Politics, Religion and Extremism*, (New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2009), [http://ipcs.org/pdf\\_file/issue/RP20-Arshi-Pakistan.pdf](http://ipcs.org/pdf_file/issue/RP20-Arshi-Pakistan.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>Ulrich Schneckener and Stefan Wolff, *Managing and Settling Ethnic Conflicts: Perspectives on Successes and Failures in Europe, Africa, and Asia* (Charlesbourg, Quebec: Braille Jymico Inc, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> M. Lutfullah Karaman, ". Religion, Politics, and Mobilization: A Theoretical Perspective with A Special Note on The Indian Khilafat Movement," *Turkish journal of International Relations*, 3(1), 37-55, (2004).

- Organic Model, which is a fusion of religion and political functions performed by unitary structure and equation of religion in society, is maximized. Hinduism and Islam can be fit into this model.
- Church Model, in which there is structure and role differentiation between religion and political sphere but with the close alliance of two distinct institutions, government and religious body. Buddhism and catholic are the best example of church model.<sup>4</sup>

There are mainly three schools of thought expounding the relationship of religion and conflict. One school of thought consisted of Hent De Vries and Mark Juergenmeyers who claimed that there is no religion in the world without violence of some sort and no violence without the religion of some type. This school of thought argues that religious violence is an outcome of people's propensity to see their life as a constant struggle between good & evil. The second school of thought largely consisted of Samuel P. Huntington, Bernard Lewis, Daniel Pipes and Jessica Stern views Islam as inevitably violent. It stresses that the ideology of radical Islam is incompatible with secular western norms of the society.<sup>5</sup> Third school of thought is based on Ted Gurr's model of 'Relative Deprivation'.<sup>6</sup> In most cases of ethnic and religious conflicts in the world, minorities are largely rebelling against the political system, but South Asian political and ethnic settings are unique in the sense that mostly revivalist movements and ideologies were initiated and propagated by the religious majority. Fear of being deprived of something can also initiate aggressive, antagonistic behavior as religious radical are largely united by fear. Irrespective of the kind of religion, fear of being deprived of their influence and roles which they expect to achieve are the one of the prime causes of generating conflicts in many societies. In the case of Pakistan, the role of religion in ethno-religious conflicts can be understood in the context of Ted Gurr's relative deprivation where element of fear among religious categories of losing their identity and influence is one of the significant reasons.<sup>7</sup> In underdeveloped political systems, conflicts are primarily politicized and in case of involvement

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid

<sup>5</sup>Arshi Saleem Hashmi, *Pakistan: Politics, Religion and Extremism*, (New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2009), [http://ipcs.org/pdf\\_file/issue/RP20-Arshi-Pakistan.pdf](http://ipcs.org/pdf_file/issue/RP20-Arshi-Pakistan.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>7</sup>Arshi Saleem Hashmi, *Pakistan: Politics, Religion and Extremism*, (New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, 2009), [http://ipcs.org/pdf\\_file/issue/RP20-Arshi-Pakistan.pdf](http://ipcs.org/pdf_file/issue/RP20-Arshi-Pakistan.pdf).

of religious communities, interest perceptions of society and individuals are significantly related to the respective religious associations. In this context, conflict related to religious communities appears in two dimensions;

- Conflict to overthrow the foreign imperialistic power of different religion.
- Conflict between two or more indigenous religion communities.<sup>8</sup>

Under the typology developed by Smith, Islam can be certainly considered as an organic religion because Islamic teachings make no differentiation between state and society. Politics and religion are largely fused in Islam while establishing an ideology formula of two-fold functions.

- First it defines individual's spiritual and temporal existence.
- Secondly it unites community of believers to build a socio-political order.<sup>9</sup>

Identities are largely neither stable nor permanent as they are subject to the historical transformations. Identity making is a multilayered process in Pakistan, which involves certain external and internal dynamics of politics, culture and epitomizes the interplay of ethnicity and religion. It is imperative to note that religion and ethnicity are the contested domains in Pakistan. Religion and ethnicity are the two significant dynamics which largely provides the bases for political identity, recruitment and inspiration to mobilize and protest. It has been observed that ethnic identities in Pakistan are primarily mix of primordial origins as language or kinship and idea of social construction of a nation as a political community under 'Imagined Communities'<sup>10</sup> which formulate a sense of shared destiny on the basis of "invented and reinvented traditions".

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<sup>8</sup> M. LutfullahKaraman, ". Religion, Politics, and Mobilization: A Theoretical Perspective with A Special Note on The Indian Khilafat Movement," *Turkish journal of International Relations*, 3(1), 37-55 , (2004).

<sup>9</sup>ibid

<sup>10</sup>An "Imagined Community" is a concept coined by Benedict Anderson in his book "Imagined Communities" in 1983 to analyze Nationalism. In opposition to Primordial's school of thought, Anderson explained nation as a socially constructed community, imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group. Anderson falls into the Historical or Modernists school of nationalism. He also asserts that nations and nationalism are products of modernity and have been created as means to political and economic ends. See for the further detail: "Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism" 2006, Verso, London.

The development of ethnic categories in Pakistan can be understood within the context of Fredrick Barth's explanation of ethnic groups as a form of social organizations where groups rise and maintain their identity while interacting with others by recurrent expression and validation and leading to the standards of inclusion and exclusion<sup>11</sup>. Linguistic and religious categories in Pakistan are primarily linked to the conception of a nation which is originated from Islamic togetherness and as a result of religion as a driving force of a nation, ethnic groups have often confused with Islam.<sup>12</sup> Since its Inception, Pakistan is facing the problem of adjustment and accommodation of different cultural identities and ethnic groups. Pakistan's birth as an ideological state was based on religion which paved grounds to view Islam as an integrative force to fulfill the task of nation building. This led to the political instrumentalization of Islam by Pakistani state to suppress and counter ethnic, regional, linguistic and parochial identities. The crisis of identity intensified gradually in Pakistan due to the emergent influences of religious forces by state patronage and backing which further divided the society on less compromising ideological paradigms and gave birth to various religious categories.

### **Islam as an Identity-Maker in Sub-Continent: A Response to the Colonization**

The arrival of Islam in 712 AD in Subcontinent manifested the foundations of differentiation of identities based on religion with gradual developments regarding reforming the Indian society. The Sufi and Saints preached religion as a source of stimulation to correct practices to obtain spiritual purity. Islam was also viewed as a remedy to correct the socio-economic imbalances of Indian society. The problems of racism, caste system and economic deprivation among certain social classes of United India provided enough space to the religious ideologies to play its role as a cure. The concept of equality irrespective of race, color, language and caste was the prime attraction for the less privileged and marginalized classes for embracing Islam. The establishment of Muslim rule in Subcontinent further strengthened the process of reforms based on Islam however relative political and social consciousness among Muslims based on their religious identity was not arouse to a substantial level during the respective period. On the other hand, the experiences under Muslim rule and later British colonization of

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<sup>11</sup> Fredrick Barth,(ed) "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference",(Boston: Little Brown Company, 1969)

<sup>12</sup> O. Verkaaik, "Islam: Sindhi Sufis, Muhajirs Modernist and Tribal Islam," in *New Perspectives on Pakistan: Vision for the future*, ed. Saeed Shafqat (Karachi: Oxford, 2009).

Subcontinent also made Hindu communities more conscious about reforming and revival of their religious beliefs. In the context of Islam, secular policies of Muslim Emperor Akbar and gradual decline of the Mughal Empire caused the self-awakening of the Muslim communalities as many of the Islamic scholars of that time disapproved the idea of amalgamation of Hinduism and Islam. Mujaddid Alaf Sani (Shaykh Ahmad Sarhindhi) was one of those Islamic intellectuals who severely criticized Akbar's policies while calling it un-Islamic and rejected his notion of 'Divine Faith'. In quest of maintaining Islamic identity detached to other religions, Mujaddid raised the question of "who is a Muslim". Later Emperor Aurangzeb enforced state version of Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) entitled as 'Fatwa Alamgiri' to avoid the potential political disintegration of Mughal Empire. The religious revivalists like Shah WaliUllah and many other Ulama (religious Scholars) tried to promote social and religious purity among Muslim communities through promulgating the strict devotion to Islam and by fostering the Muslim identity through classification of believers and non-believers. These endeavors of Ulama led to the emergence of Jihad movement especially in North Western India against Sikhs and later against British rule continued their efforts with varying intensity to establish their distinctive religious identity while making political and territorial claims.<sup>13</sup> The development of Muslim distinctive identity based on Islam in eighteenth century as result of revivalist and reformist movements was later employed by Muslim Modernist and liberal political leadership as a force against British colonialism to secure political and economic rights of Muslims of Subcontinent. Conflicts among the different sects of Islam largely became observable during the Mughal dynasty though remained limited under British rule. British as expressions of disagreement of these sectarian categories being minorities were neither sharp nor visibly aggressive towards each other due to lack of their significant share in power structures and absence of effective channels of communications for the political claims. Hindi-Urdu controversy of 1867 at the outset started as a controversy of adopting scripts of Persian or Nagari however it was much augmented when Ghandi through his various speeches and writings stressed for a common language labeled as 'Hindi or Hindustani' largely striving for the unity of Hindus and Muslims. While paving the grounds for a common national language, he largely associated Persian-Arabic and Nagari respectively with Muslims and Hindus by extensively using the phrases like

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<sup>13</sup> Manzoorudin Ahmed, *The Political Role of 'Ulama' in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent*, Islamic Studies, Vol.6(4) PP.327-354 (Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, 1967)

“Language of Muslim brothers” and “Language spoken by Hindus”.<sup>14</sup> Gandhi’s frequent altered stances over the issue of national language of United India, most often focusing on Nagari while also legitimizing Urdu language primarily indicated his compulsion to simultaneously recognize the ‘Othering’ of Muslim and also to incorporate them into his visualization of a monolithic India. His Support to the Khalifat Movement and Urdu based on Persian-Arabic script on the basis of religious importance to the Muslims in reality played a crucial role to develop the individuality of Muslim communalities on the religious identity.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the establishment of all India Muslim League (IML) as a representative political party of Muslims provided a strong base for religious identity in the politics. The Khilafat movement was the first major political expression which paved grounds for Muslims to integrate on the basis of common religious cause. Not only the Islamic groups and organizations but the ordinary Muslims were also mobilized in the name of Islam while raising their political demands on the basis of religious identity and goals. The consequences of amalgamation of religious agenda with political expressions were far-reaching in the politics of Sub-Continent and for especially constructing the identity of Muslims. Dr. Mohammad Waseem identified four key trends that were developed as upshot of the Khalifat movement which led to an assertion of religion as a significant source of Identity of Muslims.

- Mass agitation: Street power and protest during Khilafat movement.
- Strengthening of Institute of Islamic learning in Deobandi/ Bareilvi and Lucknow, which provided a framework for Muslim self-esteem and classical values of Islam.
- Islamic Revivalist Movement, which started during the War of Independence and later it was led by Wahhabi on one side and Ahmedi on the other side through establishing their own organizations.

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<sup>14</sup> Ganpat, Teli, Gandhi and His Hindustani, Language in India: Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow, Vol. 12, PP.137-144 (2012), retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/8054416/Gandhi\\_and\\_His\\_Hindustani](https://www.academia.edu/8054416/Gandhi_and_His_Hindustani)

<sup>15</sup> David, Lelyveld. Words and Deeds: Gandhi and Language, The Annual Urdu Studies, 64-75(2001), retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/2252277/Words\\_as\\_deeds\\_Gandhi\\_and\\_language](https://www.academia.edu/2252277/Words_as_deeds_Gandhi_and_language).

- Mullah activism in Pukhtoon tribal areas adjoining Afghanistan largely characterized by local rebellion.<sup>16</sup>

It is imperative to note that these trends are still perceptible in Pakistan. Ian Talbot also pointed out four responses as a result of the crisis generated by loss of Muslim political power and emergence of non-Muslim rule in Subcontinent. These responses were a mix of religious ideologies with political agendas largely known as "Modernist by Aligarh" reformist through Deobandis, traditionalist by Barelvīs and Islamism by Jamaat-i-Islami(JI).<sup>17</sup> The experiences of communal violence and aggressive Hindu assertions under the Congress ministries (1937-1939) led to strengthen the counter narrative of Muslim identity in a more formularized way with enhanced consensus among Muslim communities to employ Islam as a key source of political and constitutional demands to deal with British rulers and potential Hindu domination. The political developments during 1940-1947 furnished the legitimatization of the demand of the Muslim nation for a separate state in the name of religion.

However, many of Islamist parties and organizations opposed the idea of a separate state at that time and there were few to support the Liberal Muslim leadership's political claims on the bases of religious identity for separate statehood.<sup>18</sup> It is vital to understand the basic idea of religious color that despite adopting the Islam as a symbol of identity, mobilization, political participation and protest, freedom movement primarily and secondary directed by the Modernist and liberal political leadership of IML rather than clergy and religious organizations of that

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<sup>16</sup> Mohammad Waseem et al., "sectarian conflict and conflict transformation in Pakistan," in *Dilemmas of Pride and Pain: Sectarian Conflict and Conflict Transformation in Pakistan* (UK: University of Birmingham, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Savita Pande, *Politics of Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Pakistan* (Delhi: Shipra, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Many Muslim thinkers oppose nationalism as it only treats religion as one of the common national bonds equal to other factors like language, race, territory, culture, economic or geographic unit etc. Under nationalism paradigm, religion does not appear as most important or the only firm basis of establishment of state. See for the further detail; Marietta Stepaniants, "Ethnicity and Religion". CRN Working Paper Archive, (Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences 2001) retrieved on October 2017 [http://www.dartmouth.edu/crn/crn\\_papers/Stepaniants2.pdf](http://www.dartmouth.edu/crn/crn_papers/Stepaniants2.pdf)

time.<sup>19</sup> Use of religion in the political context in Subcontinent was the result of the worldwide developments of making it an effective strategy in response to colonization process as this severed to integrate several communities to resist against their imperial masters.

### **Politics of Religion in Post Partition Scenario: Ethno-linguistic v/s Ethno-Religious**

In Subcontinent, Islam has played a significant role in transforming the Muslim communities to a Muslim nation and in the post-partition scenario; it also remained a major dynamic to direct the politics. After passing more than half century, the relationship between state, society and religion in Pakistan is blurred. It has been argued that Pakistan emerged as a nation-state although it barely characterized by any history of national unity as it lacked common language, homogenous culture or any other valid geographical or economic associations and not even a well-articulated ideology.<sup>20</sup> It is a matter of fact that the religious identity of state in Pakistan had been never in question as compared to the existing ethnic-linguistic identities. However religion has remained one of the key reasons of various conflicts in Pakistan's politics and an issue which is still not settled.<sup>21</sup> The pronouncement of Islam as an official

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<sup>19</sup> The Traditionalist Ulama largely from Jamiat al-ulama-e-Hind (JUH) shared the similar views with All India National Congress regarding the political future of United India. Both political parties primarily viewed IML as a reactionary and communal based organization. Furthermore, JHU & IML had divergent conception of 'Nationhood' where liberal Muslim leadership advocated 'Islamic Nationalism' while traditional Ulama expounded the 'Nationalist Thesis' characterized by formulation of a nation primarily based on state not religion. A relevant reference can be observed in Manzoorudin Ahmed, *The Political Role of 'Ulama' in the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent* (1967, p.332)

<sup>20</sup> Keith Callard, *Pakistan: A Political Study*, (London, Allen & Unwin, 1957). Religion during the freedom movement was largely used to mobilize Muslim masses by the western oriented bourgeois leaders through their slogans of Islam to form a group identity which was less relevant with Islam as belief system. See for the instance; Nasir Islam, *Islam & National Identity: Case of Pakistan & Bangladesh*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 1981, PP.55-72.

<sup>21</sup> Shuja Sharif, "Pakistan: Islam, Radicalism and the Army," *International Journal on World Peace* 24 (2007).

ideology of Pakistani state and the center of national discourse was an attempt to calm down the representational, political and constitutional demands of various communities and ethnic groups. The migrant political leadership especially Urdu speaking coming from India lacked the constituencies in newly born state of Pakistan which largely led them to consider Islam as a key identity of their political assertions under their fear of losing influence and ‘Relative Deprivation’. It is imperative to note that during the initial years of Pakistan, there were no extensive demands of structuring the state on Islamic lines from masses, although in 1949, adoption of the ‘Objective resolution’ directed the constitutional path of Pakistan which developed a contested identity of the state. This resolution provided a framework of an Islamic state with a federal design which led to develop the divergence of theory and practice. It became extremely difficult to ensure federal practices in Pakistan whereas politics was largely driven by integrationist paradigm while preferring the absorption of all identities into a greater identity of Islam. The state identity of Pakistan itself became contested as both religion and federalism did not seem compatible with each other at operational level especially when religion became a political instrument of legitimization of governance.

Pakistani state largely emerged as an ‘Ethnic Hegemon’ State where assimilation of weaker groups was preferred rather than accommodation of its various identities through increasing their stakes in Pakistani federation by the means of consensus which led to decline the state ability to manage ethnic nationalism.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore the processes of nation building and state building commenced simultaneously in newly born state while paving grounds for viewing integration as the only solution for emergent challenges by incorporating Islam as a state discourse, mainly meant to discourage all other identities in Pakistan. The ethno-linguistic

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<sup>22</sup> There can be three forms of a multi-ethnic society. In such cases, a state can be neutral where participatory and non-participatory institutions are not on ethno-linguistic bases. Secondly, a state can be ethnic representational if it recruits into its basic institutions in proportion to the numerical strength of its ethnic groups or it can be ‘Ethnic hegemon’ where a single ethnic group takes control over the state. See for the further detail; Myron Weiner, *Political Change; Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, in Myron Weiner & Samuel P. Huntington, eds.,” *Understanding political development*, (Little Brown & Co, Boston, 1987. Also see; Inayatullah, *Ethno nationalism & Democracy*, in S.M. Naseem & Khalid Nadvi, *The post colonial state & Social transformation in India & Pakistan*, Oxford University, Karachi, 2002.

identities in Pakistan are not recognized constitutionally however provinces are symbolically identified with major nationalities while manifesting a default structure of an ethnic federalism. Apart from state discourses primarily pronouncing Islam as key source of assimilation, there were some other internal and external factors which enhanced the role of religion in politics of Pakistan. These included fear of looming India constantly causing insecurity about Pakistan's survival, narratives of 'National Security State', need of legitimization of authoritarian governments and regimes. In the backdrop of these dynamics and political, economic uncertainties, ethnic and linguistic identities in Pakistan largely viewed as anti-state and disloyal which in due course paved grounds for the separation of the Eastern Wing of Pakistan in 1971. However, after the fall of Dhaka, Pakistani political and military elite did not learn the lesson and kept using religion as the key mechanism to address the political and constitutional challenges. The results of formal Islamization process were devastating as in later years; Islam emerged as a potent force which transformed different forms of identities into the various standing of religion by triggering a societal change. Moreover, religion in Pakistan has always been a source of twofold tasks; legitimize the claim of political power and authority to reform society. The Constitutionalization of the religious identity developed the hierarchies of the citizens, mainly based on their religious beliefs and gender while affecting the notion of citizenship and breeding inequalities in Pakistan.

### **Legitimization of power and politics of Identity: State Discourses in Pakistan**

In 1959, the government had promulgated the 'West Pakistan Waqaf Ordinance' to curb the Ulama's position and to establish its control over these autonomous institutions. As a response to government policy, four organizations and groups largely Deobandis, Bralvis, Ahl-i-Hadith and Shia Denni Maddarassas enhanced their association with political parties and provided them recruitment base and mobilization strength.<sup>23</sup> This commenced an interaction of political parties with these Islamist groups and organizations which gradually developed the reliance of political forces on religious sects for protest and agitation. Moreover, inclusion of Islamic provisions in the Constitution of 1962 strengthened the position of these Islamist groups to assert their political claims on religious justifications. Ayub Khan due to his liberal mindset

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<sup>23</sup>S. Jamal Malik, "Islamization in Pakistan 1977-1985; The Ulama and their Places of Learning," *Islamic Studies* 28, no. 1 (1989):5-28.

was not much cordial towards clergy class; however, no reason other than religion was appropriate to claim legitimacy for a military regime in Pakistan.

It is important to mention that these were not only military regimes in Pakistan largely using Islamization of state to prolong their rule, but political leadership was also not immune from this practice. Z.A. Bhutto, a civilian and an elected prime minister also propagated the vague Islamic socialism in order to sustain his popular support. Several important steps were taken by civilian government of Mr. Bhutto, including limiting the highest executive post to Muslims only, setting up the question "who is the Muslim?" by defining and constitutionalizing the attributes of a Muslim while providing it a constitutional cover. Additionally, Madrassas (religious learning centers) were also encouraged by the government to full fill the gap on shortage of schools. Mr. Bhutto though had a liberal outlook, but with a feudal mindset and due to his authoritarian bent he also dealt with ethnic and regional demands of political power sharing by incorporating religion into the constitution. Later, his policy of Islamization of the state was more extensively adopted by military regime of General Zia while expanding its domain from state to the societal level.

During the Zia regime, politicization of religion was much intensified as antagonism towards Shia sect and non-Muslims was generally increased as a result of state patronage to some Sunni groups<sup>24</sup>. The Mullah-military alliance was also developed as an upshot of some of the foreign policy compulsions which led religious elites and their respective School of thoughts to have access to financial support and weaponry. State patronage to some of the religious groups also commenced a tug of war between and among various sects. The backing of Saudi Arab and Iran respectively to Sunni and Shia groups in Pakistan also exaggerated the sectarian strife which over the time expanded the sectarian discard from inter-sect conflicts to intra-sect enmity. These religious fractions asserting contesting ideologies and versions of Islam while claiming material and power claims represented the on-going process of religion as an identity maker among the various groups of Pakistani society. Religious organizations like Sipa-e-Sahaba and Sipa-e-Jaffaria expressed their sectarian standings by adopting militant postures which added facade of violence in the process of formulation, exhibiting and contesting their identities.

End of the Zia regime did not diminish the sectarian conflict. In aftermath of Pakistan led-proxy war in Afghanistan, many of the Islamist groups which were previously dependent

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<sup>24</sup>SavitaPande, *Politics of Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Pakistan* (Delhi: Shipra, 2005).

upon state patronage largely turned into independent militant organizations. These militant organizations penetrated into society by earning sympathies and material resources to sufficiently fund them. Failure of the elected governments to address socioeconomic challenges intensified the poverty ratio in Pakistan, which ultimately strengthened the footings of these militant organizations to serve as social and welfare mechanisms. The ‘top down’ Islamization was endured under civilian federal governments of 1990s as they embraced orthodox Islam to discredit their political and ethnic opponents while diverting public focus from socio-economic issues.<sup>25</sup> Due to constant political shocks and breakdowns and removal of four elected governments on the allegations of corruption left these Islamist groups as an unchecked phenomenon. This also provided them an opportunity to transform themselves into transnational groups by developing their links across the borders. The War on Terror in wake of 9/11 and Pakistan’s involvement as a front line state provoked anti-American sentiments which were well utilized by the religious political parties and first time in electoral history of Pakistan, a religious alliance MMA (MutahidaMajlis-e-Amal) secured significant share of the votes and formulated provincial governments in Baluchistan and KPK.

### **Ethnicizing Islam<sup>26</sup>: State Sponsored and Anti-State Islam**

Islam and ethnicity are two major principles of political identity in Pakistan which are largely intermingled. Ethnic categories in Pakistan over the time have been associated with different mode of Islam, which manifested their identification in the context of religion as largely these ethnic movements were responding to the state sponsored nation building where religion was the key ingredient of state policies of integration. Over the time, Islam often proved to be the significant boundary maker between the various ethnic groups in Pakistan. The infusion of religion with local cultures of some of the ethnic categories led to define Sindhi identity in the terms of Sufi Islam; whereas Mohajirs were identified by a modernist version of Islam while

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<sup>25</sup>ZulqarnainSewag, "The Intra-Sunni Conflicts in Pakistan," *Faith-Based Violence and Deobandi Militancy in Pakistan*, 2016, doi:10.1057/978-1-349-94966-3\_11

<sup>26</sup> This part of research paper is largely built on Dutch author and an expert on Sind, Oscar Verkaaik,s ideas depicted in *Ethnicizing Islam: Sindhi Sufis, Muhajirs Modernists and Tribal Islam in Pakistan*, 2007 “ Sufi Saints of ASindhi Nationalism” 2010.

Pakhtun largely became associated with blend of tribal code and jihad.<sup>27</sup> It has been argued by Verkaaik that Islam in Pakistan is the key language with which ethnic categories are produced as both ethnicity and Islam are not mutually exclusive. He further asserts that over the time due to ability of Islam as a major dynamic of mobilization and protest, it has become the most important identity maker between the various ethnic categories in Pakistan. Islam as a key factor of politics of identity in Pakistan is not only significant due to its legitimization of power, but it also has the ability to reforms society and manifest political culture.<sup>28</sup> The interaction of ethnicity and Islam led to develop an 'Ethnicized form of Islam' in Pakistan, largely the product of various political movements to mobilize the masses. This also depicts a struggle between the notion of state sponsored Islam largely aimed to ensure legitimacy of the governments or regimes and a counter version of Islam by various ethnic categories in response to the authoritarian modes of governance of military or military led- establishment.

### **Sufi Traditions of Islam in Sindh**

The Political assertion of Sindhi Sufi<sup>29</sup> Islam emerged in the 1960s as a response to state sponsored nationalism mainly based on religion as a core concept of integration which also required the submission of all other identities to Islamic view. Sufi traditions in Sindh did not reject the notion of nationalism linked with Islam; however, it asserts the distinctiveness of Sindh by highlighting its unique religious civilization. The Pluralistic disposition of Sufi Islam in Sindh mainly shaped by the activities of various of Sufi saints (especially Shah Abdul Latif, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, Sachel Sarmast, Shah Inayatullah) where tolerance and coexistence emerged as a central theme of spirituality while rejecting the rigid and constrained Islamic world view. . State sponsored Islam was largely based on civilization of the Middle East whereas social, political and religious narratives of Sindhi nationalism were originated from the Indus Valley

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<sup>27</sup>O. Verkaaik, "Islam: Sindhi Sufis, Muhajirs Modernist and Tribal Islam," in *New Perspectives on Pakistan: Vision for the future*, ed. SaeedShafqat (Karachi: Oxford, 2009).

<sup>28</sup>O. Verkaaik, "Islam: Sindhi Sufis, Muhajirs Modernist and Tribal Islam," in *New Perspectives on Pakistan: Vision for the future*, ed. SaeedShafqat (Karachi: Oxford, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Sufism is defined as the 'Unity of Being' (Wahdat-ul-wajud), which has had various prophets, including Buddha, Christ, and prophet Muhammad (PBHU), JalalddinRumi etc and many various mystics and poets.

civilization and absorption of different cultures and religions arrived in Sindh.<sup>30</sup> Under the military regime of Ayub Khan, ethnic and regional identities were largely denied while discouraging the notion of 'folk Islam' as these local traditions largely viewed as an influence of Hindu culture. The state sponsored Islam considered local traditions of Islam primarily conflicting to Muslim nationalism. Sufi Islam seemed to be more pluralistic whereas, state sponsored Islam was viewed by Sindhis as a source of emerging political and economic interests of the Punjabi dominating state elite.<sup>31</sup>

Renowned Sindhi nationalist, G. M. Syed significantly contributed to furnish the Sindhi identity by focusing its evolution through historical and religious perspective. He also worked to guard the Sindhi society from the devastating effects of religious polarization and sectarianism which were chiefly results of various religious experimentations of Pakistani state by providing patronage to various religious categories. This Sindi Sufi Islam tradition was also recognized by first Sindhi Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto however his policy was largely aimed to achieve two ends. First was to neutralize and counter the political influence of G.M. Syed and his potential separatist tendencies in Sindh. Secondly, it was used to fatten up Bhutto's populist trends infused with socialism which inevitably led to develop another version of state sponsored Islam provoking civilian mode of Islamization.<sup>32</sup>

It is imperative to note that infusion of Islam with Sindhi nationalism was intended to secure their century's old Sindhi ethnic identity against the state discourses of nationalism largely built on religious ideology which viewed linguistic and regional identities disloyal to the state. The Pakistani state under its 'National Security Paradigm' and colonial legacies of centralization of political power paved grounds to discourage ethnic assertions of identity by imposing a monolithic idea of Pakistani nationhood. Furthermore, ethnic hegemonic posturing of Pakistani state due to its inherent Punjabi dominance over the state structures and institutions compelled non-Punjabi identities to dismiss and rebuff the state's idea of nationhood.

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<sup>30</sup> P.L Bhola, "Pakistan's culture: Crisis of its Identity," in *Contemporary Pakistan: trends and issues*, ed. SurendraNathKaushik and S. ShashiUpadhyay (Delhi: Kalinga Publishers, 2001).

<sup>31</sup>NadeemParacha, "Old Sufis, new challenges," DAWN, March 20, 2014, retrived from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1094446>.

<sup>32</sup>NadeemParacha, "Old Sufis, new challenges," DAWN, March 20, 2014, retrived from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1094446>.

## Mohajirs and Modernist Islam

Another expression of ‘Ethnicized form of Islam’ was made by migrant population mainly from North India, largely settled in different cities of Sindh province largely concentrated in Hyderabad and Karachi. The demographic changes in Sindh paved grounds not only for the contesting the claims of economic and political power based on ethnic-linguistic identities but also provided significant divergence of Modernist Islam advocated by Muhajirs and Sufi traditions of mysticism, largely carried by native Sindhis. The gradual increase in the influence of Urdu-speaking Mohajirs due to their education, skills and expertise in different professions in Sindh was viewed by native Sindhis as an outcome of state patronage to them.

Mohajirs were largely from those areas of Subcontinent which could never become part of the Pakistani state and the respective leadership of this set of population also lacked their constituencies in newly born Pakistan, which led them to assert religion as their prime ideology to authenticate claims over political power. The emergent phenomenon of ethnic ‘Othering’ led Sindhis and Mohajirs to establish their identification of with their respective mode of Islam. However, in case of Mohajirs prior to Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) in 1980s, political preferences were divided. The arrival of MQM in the political scene however altered the association of Muhajirs with Modernist Islam and their image as Islamic reformists was also challenged as MQM demanded the recognition on the bases of linguistic and ethnic identity.<sup>33</sup>

## Pashtuns and the Tribal Islam: New Face of Islamism

Rise of Islamism in Pakistan is mainly the offshoot of global trends of Islamic revivalism however it strengthened mainly due to its infusion with Pushtun traditions in Pakistan. The rise of ethnic categorization and its links with Islam and reformist movements in Pakistan provided the emergence of ‘Tribal Islam’. The respective type of ethno-religious category primarily developed as a result of Islamization policies of General Zia-ul-Haq which sponsored different radical Sunni groups to offset the Shia opposition against the military regime.<sup>34</sup> General Zia’s policies of promoting religious education through funding Madrassahs gradually turned many of

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<sup>33</sup>O. Verkaaik, "Islam: Sindhi Sufis, Muhajirs Modernist and Tribal Islam," in *New Perspectives on Pakistan: Vision for the future*, ed. SaeedShafqat (Karachi: Oxford, 2009).

<sup>34</sup>MariamAbouZohab, "Regional Dimensions of Regional Conflicts in Pakistan," in *Pakistan: Nationalism without a nation*, ed. C. Jefforlot (New Delhi: Manohar, 2004).

these religious institutions as militant centers provoking radicalism and mobilization for militancy. General Zia's pan-Islamist mode of religion was largely supported and promoted by Jamait-i-Islami (JI) which surfaced public opinion in the favor of Afghan jihad while considering Mujahideen as saviors. JI remained an ally of the military regime in local politics due to its close contacts with Pakistan army. However, from 1984 and onwards, as a result of ethnic riots on a large scale in Karachi, JI changed its strategy and drifted away from the regime. The violent conflict between the two segments Mohajirs and Pashtuns required JI to sacrifice its traditional vote bank from Mohajir community and re-align its political associations with emergent stronghold among the Pashtun population.<sup>35</sup> Later, due to the Taliban coming into power in Afghanistan and Pakistan's support to them made Jam'it-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) more relevant as they were also a coalition partner in Pakistan's Peoples Party (PPP) government (1993-1996). These altered trends of national politics made JI to transform its reformist stance to a populist party. Along with JI and JUI, some other religious political parties and groups, especially Jam'at-e-Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP) significantly established their links with state funded Madrassahs and movements. Marketing of Islamism also provided space for Wahhabi groups to wield their pressure on state policies as they were penetrated into Pakistan-Afghanistan border area.

The traditions of 'Pakhtunwala' justified the notion of the use of violence to defend one's property. It is imperative to note that the idea of Jihad was not strange to the tribal society of Pashtuns due to persistence of tribal warfare and patron-client relations. Increasing influence of religious political parties and Islamist groups in KPK province and their identification with different interpretation of Islam infused religion with tribal code of honor and jihad. State patronage with Pakistani military's backing and tribal commitments gave birth to the state sponsored jihad leading to a proxy war in Afghanistan. This also altered the Pashtun ethnic identity from purely Paktunwali to refashioned traditions of tribal code and jihad largely stemming out of global Islamism.

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<sup>35</sup>O. Verkaaik, "Islam: Sindhi Sufis, Muhajirs Modernist and Tribal Islam, 2009.

## Religious ‘Othering’

Islamic fundamentalism<sup>36</sup> is one of the significant areas of emergent academic debate on international and national level. It is considered as a major cause of conflict and disagreement leading to violence and challenging the state authority by non-state actors. Religious differences provided the basis of strong associations of religious groups with specific ideologies which not only widen the gap between Sunni-Shia groups but also developed an antagonism among various Sunni sects. As an outcome of religious and ideological bifurcation of Pakistani society, lines of differentiation are significantly drawn and Sunni Islam with contesting versions has been identified as Barelvis, Deobandis and Ahl-i-Hadith.<sup>37</sup>

The decade of 1980 has witnessed the birth of various militant groups and Islamist organizations in Pakistan though their goals were specific and limited. Some of them focused on Kashmir issue and few like Lashka-i-Jhangvi and Sipay-e- Sahaba-i-Pakistan targeted their opponent’s sects as a result of their anti-Shia stances.<sup>38</sup> At the end of Afghan war, it was quite difficult to define and limit the role of militant Islamic organizations as they were deeply penetrated into local societies due to ethnic bonding and their transnational connections with

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<sup>36</sup> Lane & Redissi explicates the development of Islamic fundamentalism through its four stages. In first stage it was neither radical nor propagated Jihad. In Second stage there was nationalist fundamentalism but still concept of Jihad wasn’t infused in it. At third stage, radical Islam was linked with fundamentalism while propagating Jihad however its objectives remained confine to national territories. At the fourth stage, Fundamentalism separated from its national background and transformed it into a global movement by recruiting militants anywhere for international terrorist acts. See for the further details; Religion and politics: Islam and Muslim Civilization, 2009, Ashgate.

<sup>37</sup> According to the International Crisis Group Report (2003:5), Shia is 15%, Deobandis and Barelvis are almost 77%, and Ahl-i-Hadith is about 6%. For the detail on these religious ‘others’ see ; Pluralism and Intolerance in Pakistani society: Attitudes of Pakistani Students towards the Religious ‘Others’ by Tariq Rehman , pp.122-151, Also see for the Doctrinal differences between Deobandis and Barelvis, Robinson 1993 and See on the Deobandi, Metcalf 1982.

<sup>38</sup>For an analysis of emergence of concept of Jihad in relevance with Pakistani politics see; MicheBoivin, Jihad, National Process and Identity Assertion in Pakistan: The Dialect of Metaphor and Reality, pp.104-121 in Saeed Shafqat (Ed), New Perspective on Pakistan: Vision for the Future, 2007, Oxford University press, Karachi.

their likeminded. The mode of Islamic militancy was altered as it shifted the focus from sectarianism to engendering the political stipulate while giving birth to a new politico-religious class. The emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan which later penetrated into Pashtun belt and the tribal areas of Pakistan was first of these groups which challenged the Islamic nature of Constitution of 1973. This exhibited the their religious ‘Othering’ by focusing on ‘us’ (Taliban) or ‘them’ (other than Taliban) and most significant was their political agenda of reforming not only the society but the structures of state by revival of early fundamental Islam.<sup>39</sup> The religious ideology developed a sense of ‘Othering’ in Taliban case along with their ethnic self-awareness. The Taliban’s quest for recognition of separate identity further enhanced their demand for religious-political primacy. Moreover, due to "subject” political culture in combination with feeling of relative deprivation and fear of losing as explained by Ted Gurr led to the competition for privileges, state patronage and authority of the primacy of Islamist groups. The power and influence which they enjoyed during the Afghan war were major factors for strengthening tendency among them to form their ethnic identity based on religion.<sup>40</sup>

Emergence of Taliban as ethno-religious group and its extended influence in Pakistani society stimulated the conflict between the two identities; State and the Taliban. Taliban manifested territorial claims over certain parts of Pakistani state on the basis of its identity of religion.<sup>41</sup> This led to develop a new face of militancy with claims of power and authority to use force on certain territory based on Sharia (Islamic Law) as a key source of their political legitimization.

Religious categories have significantly developed in Pakistan on the lines of the Taliban model in Afghanistan. They acquired substantial power to mobilize, protest, jeopardize and

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<sup>39</sup> In Pakistan, Taliban mainly locates in FATA, KPK, and Pak-Afghan border. Taliban ideology is mixed of the traditional code of honor known as per PakhtoonWal I& Deobandi interpretation. Taliban are generally viewed as anti-modernist with a projection of innovative forms of Sharia with strong influence of Pashtun culture.

<sup>40</sup> Aisha Shahzad, "The Issue of Ethnicity in Pakistan: Historical Background, *“Pakistan Vision* 12, no. 2 (2008):124-164

<sup>41</sup> In April 2009, a political crisis was erupted as Pakistani Taliban expanded their military control beyond the FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas into Swat valley.

challenge the writ of the governments.<sup>42</sup> Madrassahs or seminaries of these religious sects became a key source of religious ‘Othering’ by pronouncing hated propaganda against each other’s. Education systems of respective sects are being used to legitimize this otherness. The instrumentalization of Jihad in Pakistani politics became more crucial and took a paradoxical shift when some Sunni sects start accusing each other for being ‘Kafir’ (Non-believer).<sup>43</sup>

It is imperative to point out that this emergent religious ‘Othering’ is different from sectarianism of 1980s as now religious categories have extended their activities from sporadic clashes of attacking each other to making their ideological assertions to validate their political claims of influence and authority. This is leading them to target Pakistani state by challenging its authority through agitation, mobilization, violence, attacking state symbols and often enforcing local sharia in certain parts of their support base areas.<sup>44</sup>

Another significant factor which provided enough room to these religious categories to challenge the state writ is the existence of many ungoverned spaces in Pakistan.<sup>45</sup> It is imperative to note that in Pakistan after separation of its eastern wing (creation of Bangladesh) from the

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<sup>42</sup> Taliban came into power in Afghanistan as a result of changing the position of Ulama in the society.

Religious leaders in opposition to modernization played an active role since nineteenth century in rebellions against governments. (1924, 1929). More over in 1971, Mullah and Ulama managed to organize a demonstration with thousands of people, a congregation which was much larger than any political party could mobilized at that time. During the war period, some religious leaders with the help of their students (Taliban) which commenced the new and long term participation in political power in Afghan society.

<sup>43</sup> A fatwa was sufficient in the opinion of these religious categories to give them legal sanction to kill each other. In May 2001, Mulana Salem Sadri, chief of Sunni Tehrik was assassinated in Karachi due to alleged Deobandi-Braelvi conflict. See, Ansari , Massoud (2001) “The War Within”, NEWSLINE, June, PP.33-41

<sup>44</sup> Lashkree-e-Taaayba (LET), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JEM), Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Lashker-I-Jhangvi (LJ), Sipah-i-Mohammad Pakistan (SMP), Tehreek-e-Jafriya Pakistan (TJP), Tehreek-e-Nifza-e-Shariat-e-Mohammad (TNSM), Tehreek-fiqajafriya, Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) are such religious categories which were banned by Pakistan under Musharraf regime . see for the detail; <http://www.org/publication/17882/profile.html>

<sup>45</sup> Michael Humphrey, "Counter-Militancy, Jihadists and Hypergovernance: Managing Disorder In the "Uncompleted" Postcolonial State Of Pakistan," Arab Studies 34, no. 3 (2012): 144-164.

federation in 1971, ethnic-linguistic identities and their political and resource based claims remained within the constitutional and political limits. Although Baluchistan suffered severely from a political turmoil under Musharaf Regime (1999-2008) due to authoritarian measures and involvement of the military in politics, but gradually it was settled to some extent through 18<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment in 2010 under civilian government of President Asif Ali Zardari of PPP.

In Pakistan, it is comparatively more convenient to tranquilize the ethnic-linguistic tendencies by addressing their claims of political representation and adequate distribution of resources. On the other hand, religious ‘Othering’ seems to be less compromising as these religious categories, parties and Islamist groups are largely exploitative on certain issues and their claim over political power is less on electoral competition and more on their religious assertions.<sup>46</sup> The first organized expression of religious ‘Othering’ and claims on political power and territorial assertions was made by seminary students and respective religious leadership of Lal Mosque in federal capital Islamabad which was responded by a military operation (operation Silence) in July, 2007 causing the killing of almost 100 alleged militants and 11 armed personal.<sup>47</sup> The sectarian violence in Pakistan was an offshoot of Islamization policies aiming for the purification of society under Zia regime which later characterized by the attacks and counter

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<sup>46</sup>More than 88 bombings killed 1,188 people and wounded 3,209 in the first year following the Lal Masjid siege alone. TTP, On 6 July 2008; it celebrated the anniversary of the operation by killing 19 in Islamabad through a suicide-bomber, 15 of them policemen. See for the detail on Lal Masjid and related militancy; Zahid Husain “The Scorpion’s Tail: The Relentless Rise of Islamic Militants in Pakistan and how it Threatens America”, 2010. Also see Amir Mir, “Talibanisation of Pakistan from 9/11 to 26/11,”

<sup>47</sup> In 2004, the clerics of the Lal mosque issued a fatwa calling the people to join the militant resistance against the Pakistan army operation in Waziristan. They declared that those fighting the Pakistani forces were martyrs and urged the people not to give Islamic burial to the soldiers killed in the fighting. Lal Mosque became a base for Taliban-style vigilante squads. Led by fearsome, stick-wielding, burqa-clad young women, radicals poured out of the mosque and the two madrassahs affiliated to it, raiding houses allegedly used as brothels, kidnapping suspected prostitutes, and making bonfires of videocassettes and DVDs that they regarded as un-Islamic...<https://www.dawn.com/news/1344098>,

<http://www.thefridaytimes.com/beta3/tft/article.php?issue=20121221&page=3>

attacks of militant and radical Sunni and Shia outfits on each others. These sectarian sporadic clashes gradually turned into a process of religious categories, while provoking process of religious ‘Othering’. This transformation was no doubt the result of various internal and external dynamics especially emergence of Taliban, Pakistan’s close links with militant groups in Afghanistan and commencement of War on Terror.<sup>48</sup>

Now many of these religious categories have their political ideologies leading to claim their share in political power on their mobilization and protest ability. Some of them even have claims of territorial control on certain parts of Pakistani state. They are largely asserting for legitimization and incorporation of their political and religious claims through legislative and constitutional means. Furthermore, their ideologies and religious claims are not only incompatible with each other, but also continuously challenging the state authority.

The argument of this research is largely supported by the occurrence of Model Town, Lahore incident on June 17, 2014, Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT)’s forty five days sit-in under the leadership of Dr Tahir ul Qadri in front of Parliament in August-September, 2014 and the most recent Faizabad blockad and sin-in protest across the country by ‘Tehreek-e-Labaik Ya Rasollah under the leadership of Khadim Hussain Rizvi. This indicated that without participating in the electoral process or lacking a widespread electoral support from Pakistani society, with their appeal to religiosity, these religious categories can jeopardize the Pakistani government and force it to kneel down. Secondly it strengthens the assumptions that some of these Islamists groups are getting indirect support from military led-establishment to destabilize the civilian government whenever civilian government asserts the civilian supremacy. Thirdly, religious categories in Pakistan have strong transnational character and global links as compared to ethno-linguistic identities. Fourthly, in comparison of the major political forces (PPP, PTI, PML-N, and

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<sup>48</sup>Islamization process till Z.A.Bhutto era was a state directed phenomenon where Islamic identity of state remained nationalist. During Gen.Zia regime, Islamization was also state driven however it was largely connected to international discourse where extremism was justified in the defense of Liberty largely advocated by American containment of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan territorial limits of state. Later Islamization process in Pakistan was deeply rooted in society and its associations were shifted to global Islamic discourses where new religious categories attempted to enforce Islamic Law (Sharia) largely derived from global version of Islam with no regard of state boundaries.

PML-Q) in Pakistan, these religious categories are significantly more prone to violence and cause political chaos and it would be extremely difficult to manage them in the future as their demands would not be confined to protest but can lead to claim and of control over the state apparatus. It has been observed these Sunni religious categories with few exceptions, view domestic jihad as a crucial mean for realization of their religious and political goals; First is to grab political power and secondly the Islamization and purification of society, leading to the imposition of their Sunni version of Sharia which provides the idea of strong and non-compromising ‘Othering’ and making ‘us’ and ‘them’ the only criteria of their exclusive politics.

## **Conclusion**

The Islam has emerged as a key force of identity politics in Pakistan. There are largely two emergent dimensions of politics of identity in Pakistan as a result of interplay of Islam and ethnicity. The policies of civilian governments and military regimes to use religion as a national discourse for the legitimization of power and to secure popular support led to develop Islam as the most significant source of identity making for various Islamist groups and ethnic categories. Islam as an ideology in Pakistan has severed to direct two divergent paths as at certain stages of time it significantly enhanced the process of nation building as a potent force but on the other hand it also paved grounds for formulation of different ethnic categories largely based on religious doctrines which are less compatible with each other and exhibit a religious ‘Othering’ process.

It is significant to note that ethnic and linguistic identities often remained violent and aggressive to assert their ethnic and political claims, however this was mainly due to lack of implementation of constitutional guarantees and absence of federal practices in Pakistan. The ethnic and linguistic groups in Pakistan largely preferred to obtain their political demands through electoral and parliamentary measures. It is evident from the history of Pakistani politics that ethnic and linguistic identities can be accommodated by incorporation of democratic practices and constitutionalism as it was somehow accomplished by addressing their reservation through 18<sup>th</sup> amendment into the Constitution of 1973. Moreover development of an ethicized form of Islam was mainly a response to state sponsored Islam which was meant to discourage the ‘Central State Thesis’ of Pakistani state. The ethicized form of Islam with an exception of Tribal Islam had not remained antagonistic towards other forms of ethicized Islam. The tribal Islam

acted as violent and hostile towards other ethnic and religious categories as it largely interacted with and influenced by the transnational Islamist groups advocating religious otherness.

The emergent process of religious ‘Othering’ in Pakistan would not be easy to tackle. Unlike ethnic and linguistic groups, these religious categories neither intended to define their political roles through electoral politics nor many of them able to secure reasonable success on the electoral front. Additionally, their religious-political claims would not be settled down by providing certain constitutional changes as respective religious doctrines are contrary to power sharing through parliamentary means and procedures. It is imperative to note that during the course of history of Pakistani politics, crisis of state has gradually penetrated towards society and now it is potentially turning back to the state by challenging its authority by protest, mobilization and agitation which undermined the supremacy of the federal Parliament. This is apt to say that in Pakistan, Islam is now transforming from a key source of ‘ideology of protest’ to ‘politics of identity’. During the course of this conversion, Islam functioned as the supreme source of legitimacy while defining the parameters of politics, and reforming the society and serving as the major theme of resisting the state policies in Pakistan.