

Political Islam: An Exploration of the Argument of Olivier Roy that Political Islam is a Failure in the Light of Two Muslim Majorities

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<i>Article history:</i> Date of Submission: 26-06-2024 Date of Acceptance: 08-09-2024 Date of Publication: 30-10-2025 <i>Keywords:</i> Political, Islam, Egypt, Pakistan, Failure, Olivier Roy	The emergence of Political Islam has sparked expansive academic debates regarding its failure to acknowledge its intended goals, as argued by Olivier Roy (1994) in his seminal work. This paper aims to evaluate Roy's central argument by scrutinizing the fundamental motivations of Political Islam and its ramifications on two Muslim-majority countries - Egypt and Pakistan, both with a rich historical legacy of Political Islam. Consistent with Roy's analysis, this study finds that Political Islam can be considered a failure in light of these two Muslim majorities, based on the thesis of Roy. Given that Political Islam has been unsuccessful in accomplishing its objectives of capturing state power and transforming society, it underscores that the projects of Political Islam are self-contradictory and lack modern-day realist interpretations. Consequently, Political Islam has metamorphosed into an instrument for political elites who exploit Islamic ideals to conform their political ambitions.

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Introduction

The proliferation of Political Islam in the modern world is largely conceived as a response to Western modernity, resulting in the rise of numerous Islamist movements. These movements, with their unique unity of religious and political aspects, seek to transform society based on idealist Islamic principles. This politico-religious movement aims to capture political power and transform society in a manner that is reminiscent of the 7th century. The fundamental belief of Political Islam is to reinvigorate the virtue of the earliest form of Islam, which was exercised in the 7th century and had conglomerated politico-religious objectives. This rejuvenation is plausible only if the society is collectively transformed. According to Roy (1994, p.27), “The essential premise of the Islamist movement is that the political model it proposes presupposes the virtue of individuals, but that this virtue can be acquired only if the society is truly Islamic.” Consequently, Political Islam can be understood as a project aiming to capture state power by transforming the society based on Islamic Shari’ah, as Roy (1994) underscores. Further to that, Political Islamists do not differentiate between religious and political, instead conceive as unilateral milieu as Roy shows (1994, p. 13).

Political Islam, dating back to the 19th century, has found its popular support in numerous Muslim majorities such as Egypt, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, giving rise to several Islamic political organizations, such as Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jamat-i-Islami in Pakistan (Jenkins, 2021; Kiris, 2021). However, these countries differ strategically and politically in numerous aspects, resulting in the different natures of political Islam in these regions. An example of that would be the difference between Iran and Egypt; the former is a Shi’ah majority country, and the latter is a Sunni majority. The implication of Political Islam in those countries is contested and controversial, which led some scholars to agree on the limitations of Political Islam, such as Roy (1994, 2004), Mandeville (2004), Akbarzadeh (2021), Voll and Son (2019) and many more.

In order to illustrate the limitations of Political Islam, Roy (1994), in his seminal yet controversial book *The Failure of Political Islam*, argued that Political Islam is a failure. His arguments were informed by two case studies- Iran and Afghanistan. His arguments formed the foundation of latter-day debates in academic scholarship on numerous domains of Political Islam. Roy (1994, pp.9-10) argued that political Islam is a complete failure and could not achieve its objectives, subsequently bringing attention to scholars in this field. This is not only because such intended political thoughts facilitated the global rise of radical thoughts but also because of the political contradictions that the so-called ideal objectives propagated by those proponents. To Roy (1994), the Political Islamists have strengthened the very ideas and norms they

primarily opposed. Similarly to Roy (1994), Akbarzadeh (2021), endorsing Roy's (1994) thesis argues that the political project of Political Islam has self-contradiction within its arguments. Roy (1994) considers that Political Islam discharges the prevailing Westphalian state system as a tool of Western domination, and the imposed nation-state boundaries divide Muslims as a unity 'ummah.' Moreover, Roy (1994) accused Political Islam of the rise of radicalization as he termed it as 'neo-fundamentalism'. This view is also supported by scholars (Calvert, 2021; Zollner, 2021).

Against this backdrop, this study aims to explore whether Political Islam can be considered a success. This question has been one of the critical aspects of present-day studies on Political Islam since Olivier Roy's (1994) framing of Political Islam as a failure. Even though Roy (1994) restricted his arguments within Iran and Afghanistan, this study examines Roy's (1994) argument based on two other essential case studies- Egypt and Pakistan. The significance of choosing these two case studies over many other Muslim majorities is worth mentioning. On the one hand, Egypt has been considered the hub of Political Islam, giving rise to parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Hasan-al-Bannah, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, was conceived as one of the pioneers of Political Islam, and the impact of the party and himself had been enormous, encouraging people from other countries to form similar groups. On the other hand, Pakistan is one of the most significant Muslim majorities and is considered a haven for Political Islam, where political elites instrumentalize religion to form the power structure. Abul ala Al Maududi, the founder of Jamat-i-Islami in Pakistan, set the foundation for modern political Islam in Pakistan, and the party is said to have a political franchise in different countries. In addition to it, Political Islam has a strong presence in Pakistan's political discourse, despite of its failure to hold state power. Therefore, those two case studies have been explicated in line with Olivier Roy's (1994) arguments, providing a comprehensive and in-depth analysis for our research.

Consequently, this paper aligns with Roy's (1994, pp. 9-10) central arguments, contending that the emergence of Political Islam in Egypt and Pakistan has been a failure. The failure is attributed to the deviation of Political Islam from its initial promises and its inability to establish a perfect shari'ah-based Islamic society. Additionally, the very promises of Political Islam have been self-contradictory in these two countries. The ensuing discussion is structured to underscore the analysis of the central arguments of a brief history of Political Islam, the central arguments of Olivier Roy, and the implications of Political Islam in Egypt and Pakistan, culminating in a comparative analysis of those two case studies.

Political Islam: Emergence and Theoretical Genesis

Comprehending the scholarly perspectives on Political Islam is pivotal, as it is a convoluted and multifaceted vision. Roy (1994, 2004) defines Political Islam as the brand of modern political fundamentalism, which is premised on establishing an actual Islamic society by not only imposing Shari'ah alone but also establishing an Islamic state through political actions. He used Islamism and Political Islam interchangeably to illustrate similar aspects (Roy, 1994). Similar to Roy (1994), Akbarzadeh (2021) argued that Islamism is a normative framework that aims to make modern society fit into it. The activists or the Political Islamists argue that Political Islam emanated because of the failure of the modern-day 'ism.' Akbarzadeh (2021, 1) explained that the failure of secularism, nationalism, and socialism as ideological projects ignited anti-imperialist discourse, which subsequently obliged the rise of Political Islam.

Modern Political Islam originated from Salafist ideology to return to the Quran, Hadith, and Shari'ah by rejecting historical commentary, four Sunni schools of law, and Islamic civilization after the four caliphs (Roy, 1994). In addition, Islamism considers that society can be Islamized only through social and political action. This is why Islamism considers politics an integral part of religion, which ensures the totality of religion. Roy (1994, p. 37) writes that Islamism acclimates the classical version of Islam (Quran, Hadith, and Shari'ah) as a complete and universal system as an 'ahistorical' phenomenon. Thus, Islamism rejects the necessity of modernizing Islamic interpretations but objectifies Islam to implement Islamic injunctions in modern society.

Now, an apparent question arises: who can be called Political Islamists? In Roy's (1994) understanding, Political Islamists are those who conceive Islam as a political ideology, thereby emphasizing religion as not apolitical (p. ix). Since they conflate religion and politics, the operational and ideological pursuits of Political Islam thus stand to transform the social system by political instruments. Hirschkind (2016) paraded that Political Islam can manifest different forms- directly involved in power dynamics or emphasizing altering society through individual transformation by dawah or preaching Islamic ideals. Additionally, he argued that many other Islamist movements are immersed in charity, giving alms, medical care, mosque building, and other welfare activities. The reason Hirschkind (2016) considers all these movements as political is primarily because of the broad spectrum of the political domain of the state, as these organizations need to obtain permission from the state by various means. These movements and organizations can never be 'apolitical.'

However, Hirschkind's (2016) perspective is challenged by Voll and Sonn (2019), who argue that categorizing every Islamist movement as 'political' is problematic. They propose a more nuanced approach that differentiates between non-political

and political Islamist movements. Using the Tablighi Jama'at as an example, they argue that this group (and similar groups) should not be considered a political entity. Labelling them as Political Islam can lead to confusion. In this debate, Roy (1994) conceptualizes Political Islam as a political phenomenon, where Political Islamists strive to attain state power. This perspective helps to differentiate between the myriad Islamist movements, categorizing them as either political or non-political, thereby providing a balanced view of the debate.

Political Islam can be traced back to the late 18th century when Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahab (founder of Wahhabism) formulated his religio-political theory, marking the base of modern political Islam or Islamism in general. His ideas, generally called Wahhabism, have had a historical influence on other Islamist movements throughout Muslim states despite significant differences from country to country. However, present-day Political Islam is directly tied with Salafist movements, popularly called Salafism, which means pious successors (Roy, 1994; Mandaville, 2014, p. 47). Although Mandaville (2014, p. 48) interchangeably used Wahhabism and Salafism, he argued that Salafism is broader in scope than Wahhabism, where the latter mainly focuses on the exclusion of *bida'ah* or innovation from Islamic culture and going back to the earliest Islam. In addition, Salafism urges the establishment of Islamic ummah or society throughout the world. This Salafi ideological scheme was developed by different 19th and 20th-century activists of political Islam, such as Mohammad ibn Abdu Hu, Jamal al-Din Afghani, Rashid Rida, Hasan Al Bannah, Sayeed Qutub, and most recently, Ayman Al Zawahiri. While Abdu Hu focused on the sanctification of Islam based on individuals and society, Rashid Rida formulated a framework for the Islamic state based on the political power that influenced Sayeed Qutub and Maududi. According to Rida, this Islamic state should be solely based on Shari'ah but must be compatible with modern-day political norms. On this point, equating Islam and Shari'ah with modern political norms, Maududi and Qutub differed in their opinions, rejecting any compatibility with Western political norms (Mandaville, 2004, p.49). This rejection of Western political norms by some proponents of Political Islam underscores the movement's response to external influences, highlighting its independence and resilience.

Since the beginning of Salafism, it can be clustered into four broad groups. Firstly, Salafist quietist focuses on individual spirituality and attainment of purification but rejects the establishment of an Islamic political order or Islamic state. Secondly, Salafist jihadists want to establish an Islamic state by any violent means, which Roy (2004) described as neo-fundamentalists. Thirdly, the Salafi Islamists want to establish an Islamic state through the mainstream process of the present political structure. Fourthly, Salafist reformists are positioned to transform society by collectively challenging the existing socio-political structure and implanting normative change.

As Roy (1994, p.310) explained, the Salafist reformism was grounded in the question of why Muslims failed to compete with the West. This question triggered Jamal-Ud-Din Afghani, Rashid Rida, and Hasan-Al-Bannah to search for ideological bases. In addition, because of its association with anti-Western strategies, Salafism became popular in the Arab region. A pivotal cause of the proliferation of Salafi ideology was the perceived existential threat from the colonial power, which the propagators of the ideology implanted as us (Arabs/Muslims) vs them (West). Moreover, Mandaville (2014, p.51) explained that Salafism has grown exponentially because of the fear of fragmentation of religious authority in the Muslim regions.

In response to the Westernization and transformations occurring in the Muslim world, two kinds of Islamist movements emerged - Islamic revivalism and Islamic reformation. One of the most notable revivalist movements was started by Abdul Wahab (1703-92), who emphasized the need to return to the primary prototype of Islam. This movement eventually gained eminence and was known as Salafism. Abdul Wahab vehemently rejected Sufism, a mystic order, considering it *bida'ah* or innovation, a term in Islamic jurisprudence that refers to any religious innovation or deviation from the established practices of Islam. His influential book, *The Book of the Divine Unity*, laid the foundation of the modern-day Saudi Arabian kingdom in the name of Muhammad Ibn Saud (Mandaville, 2014, p. 58). According to the Wahhabis, the only way to counter the Western influence is to return to the original teachings of the Quran, hadiths, and four caliphs. Armajani (2012) considers that Ibn Tymiah, a 13th-century Muslim intellectual, largely influenced Abdul Wohab. He argued that Abdul Wohab's tendency to preach the significance of revival of the earliest form of Islam laid down a cornerstone for Political Islam.

Despite the fact that the preachers of Wahabism were instrumental against the then societal framework and eager to replicate the earliest form through state formation, there emerged another form of Political Islam. In response to Wahhabism, Jamal-al-Din Afghani (1839-97) started the Islamic reformist movement, theorizing the Muslim trajectory condition as a product of Western colonialization and deviation from the actual teaching of Islam. Roy (1994) and Mandaville (2014) understood this movement a response to imperialism. Afghani, criticizing the then-Muslim scholars as stagnant, wanted to establish a pristine Islamic society by not rejecting historicity or historical civilization like Abbasids or Umayyads. He urged the improvement of science emanating from Quranic philosophy, which has historical supremacy over the West. Later, his follower Abdu Hu accelerated this reformist movement. According to this lineage, it is not possible to establish an Islamic society or state by rejecting the long history of Islam or by deserting the modern-day phenomenon, either political or scientific. Now it is consequential to underscore again what Roy (1994) argues in his book regarding Political Islam and how his arguments can be illustrated with the two selected case studies in this paper.

Olivier Roy and The Failure of Political Islam

The publication of Roy's *The Failure of Political Islam* (1994) has sparked significant debate in the scholarly world, resonating with scholars, researchers, and students in Political Science, Religious studies, International relations and Sociology. It has drawn attention from those who view Political Islam as a misguided path and those who see it as a Eurocentric project. For instance, Salman Sayyid's (2015) *Fundamental Fear* has argued that the Eurocentric perspective on Political Islam lacks context-driven analysis. Instead, it wrongly interprets Political Islam through a Eurocentric lens. He understood Political Islam must accentuate the local context in order to be conceived in a linear progression model. To illustrate Political Islam, he challenged the interpretation of Political Islam and reinvigorated a much more 'critical' lens to delineate Political Islam. However, this section will focus on the key arguments of Roy (1994) that will be used to analyze the case studies in this paper, underscoring the global relevance and impact of Roy's work in the field.

Roy's (1994) central aim is to unravel the intricate and multifaceted complexities of Political Islam, which has not been able to achieve a complete social transformation of the Islamic world or establish a persistent state power. His thesis navigates the sharp contradiction within the philosophical underpinning of Political Islamists and the rapid transformation of their adherents, which Roy sees as a failure. He argues that while Islamists have been successful in mobilizing support and winning elections, they are likely to abandon their Islamist objectives in favour of democratic values. This failure has led to the rise of neo-fundamentalism, as seen in Wahhabi-Salafism (Roy, 2020, p. 167).

Roy (1994) accepts the proposition that there has been a proliferation of PI across the Muslim majorities in countries such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Tunisia, where they lack political freedom, democratic institutions, and military rulers. Islamist movements or organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt and Jamat-i-Islami in Pakistan, took advantage of this situation to fill the political and cultural space. Modern political junctures have equipped themselves in the modern political process. Although their primary project is to unite Islamic ummah as much as possible, their organizational work focuses on local contexts, deviance to Roy (1994). As Roy (1994) notes, Political Islamists use the same template to illustrate why the existing government system should be changed, which is very similar to traditional oppositions, which capitalize on the discourses of social-cultural or economic factors of a state. The lack of socioeconomic freedom is ultimately shifting public attention towards Political Islam as an alternative. Roy (1994, p.194): "Islamism is above all a socio-cultural movement embodying the protests and frustration of a generation of youth that has not been integrated socially or politically." Therefore, Roy believes

people pay attention to PI mainly because of the world's crisis. Roy (1994) also argued that the absolute 'pure' Islamic society of the 7th-century kind is not even possible because the moment Political Islamists assume power, they must carry the previously established networks and socioeconomic systems that already have been persistent in the state. As a result, according to Roy (1994, p.144), the envision of operating an Islamic economy is also a 'rhetoric' in the real world. Even once they assume the Political Islamists will enforce a 'top-down' approach imposing Shari'ah in the public sphere while deviating themselves from the very promises of Political Islam. An obvious question arises- why did Roy (1994) repeatedly argue that PI is a failure and is a deviant per se?

Roy's (1994) analysis presents two compelling arguments. Firstly, Political Islam's failure is attributed to its inability to seize state power and establish an absolute Shari'ah-based system. Secondly, Political Islamists have contradicted their early promises of returning to the core texts of Islam, i.e. Quran and Sunnah, by compromising with the democratic ethos in Muslim majority regions. This contradiction raises intriguing questions about the intentions of Political Islam and how respective case studies can be explained by Roy's (1994) thesis.

Roy (1994, pp. 3-27) argued that political Islam has essentially failed to accomplish its ideological purpose of establishing an Islamic state governed by Shari'ah law. Despite accumulating power in various contexts such as Iran and Afghanistan, Political Islamists often needed to be more competent to enforce their religio-political visions due to practical impediments and internal dichotomies. The ideological contradictions emanated from the specific groups first and, indeed, from the intergroup later. Given the situation that Political Islam have had to operate in relatively inconvenient environment as in the case of Egypt for instance, Roy argued that Political Islamists often compromised the ideological spirit with practical gains to get political establishments (Roy, 1994, pp. 28-43). Roy writes (1994, p. 37):

“Islamism adopts the classical vision of Islam as a complete and universal system, one, therefore, that does not have to “modernise” or adapt.” However, Roy found that Political Islamists frequently adapt in the modern society- be it social system or economic dimension. These illustrations has led Roy (1994) argue that Islamism's premise is incompatible to the modern nation state under which the political Islamists operate.

Political Islam in two Muslim Majorities

The following analysis underscores how Political Islam, a term referring to the intersection of Islam and politics, has unfolded in Egypt and Pakistan, two prominent countries known as home to Political Islam. Despite the fact that there are many other

Muslim-majority countries with larger populations or even with persistent Political Islamists in power, the reason for choosing these cases is that these two countries gave rise to the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt and Jamat-i-Islami in Pakistan. An example of this would be the argument of Saba Mahmood, who argued that Egypt has always been an epicentre of Islamist movements and an interesting case that congruently focuses on Arab culture and Islamic culture (Mahmood, 2011). Political analysts conceive these cases as pioneering agents in the Political Islamist milieu and the key instruments of propagation of their philosophy. Therefore, the following analysis presents a discussion on how the seminal argument of Olivier Roy (1994) can be compatible with Egypt and Pakistan's cases, with specific case studies of the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamat-i-Islami Pakistan.

Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt

Premised on Salafist ideological projects, Hasan Al Bannah (1906-1948) founded Ikhwanul Muslemeen or Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in 1928. Over time, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) has become the most influential modern Islamic political organization (Pew Research Forum, 2010). This group promoted both personal and social reforms based on Islamic teachings. Starting from a resistance organization, it quickly became politicized to establish a Sharia'ah-based Islamic state with the principle of 'Islam is the solution' (Pew Research Forum, 2010). Rejecting Western ideas, Bannah argued that the solution for Muslims in modern days lies in returning to the original teachings of Islam. He was deeply influenced by the teachings of Rida, Abdu Hu, and Afghani, but his interpretation of Islam found the modern ground of political Islam (Armajani, 2012, p. 48).

MB became popular very quickly, reaching half a million active members. Like Jamat-i-Islam in Pakistan, Bannah founded many charitable hospitals, schools, and mosques to spread his teachings to reach the people easily. In response to the Western colonial economic model, he urged the zakat economy to solve the economic problems of Muslim nations, specifically in Egypt (Armajai, 2012, p. 51). MB remained financially solvent in the 1940s amidst high inflation, a weak economy, and a lower employment rate, which gave them a sound footing to spread their work from an anti-government standpoint.

Primarily, Bannah rejected any radical or violent path to establishing Islam in all spheres. However, in his later days, he used to preach a more jihadist philosophy that was radical (Taj Hashmi, 2015). Armajani (2012, p. 52) noted that during the 1940s, MB members started to be influenced by the Nazi philosophy, which later on, within the lifetime of Bannah, gave rise to another section of MB that urged the use of violent means to debacle the government, the western socio-economic models, and

to kill high officials. Consequently, it can be said that Mb started to be more radical in the late 1940s. Although Armajani (2012) argued that Bannah was not highly radical in his teachings, the radical path that MB members have followed over the period is grounded in the 'jihadist philosophy' of Bannah, who called jihad the art of death. Mitchell (1993) argued that besides proposing a radical philosophy of jihadist movement in order to establish Islamic society, he used Nazi model violence in many places in Egypt to debacle the Egyptian government.

These violent activities can be observed through some incidents, such as in 1948, an MB member assassinated Egypt's Prime Minister Nukrashi Pasha, and MB members burnt around 750 nightclubs, theatres, and hotels in Cairo in 1952. They supported the military establishment in Egypt and promoted the establishment of a global caliphate. It must be noted that a significant change in MB's political behaviour occurred during the Sayyed Qutub (the most influential leader of MB after Bannah), who preferred radical means to establish Islam to its fullest (Hashmi, 2015).

Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) called for "jihad" against the West, the society he believed as compared to ignorance (jahiliyyah) of 6th century Arabia (Taj Hashmi, 2015). Indeed, Qutub was always against Western imperialism; he never used Islam as a counter philosophy instead of secular values propounded by America until his journey to America in 1948. During his visit to America, he found that American values were premised on 'consumption,' which lacked morality in every societal sphere (Armajani, 2012, p. 55). Though MB supported General Nagib's military regime, they tried to assassinate military president Naser in 1954 for his anti-Muslim Brotherhood strategy. This killing mission accelerated the ban on MB in the public sphere. Naser viewed political Islam as a threat to Egyptian society's security (Taj Hashmi, 2015).

Moreover, Bayat (2011) argued that there are now two sections of MB members. The old school is still reluctant to adopt a modern democratic strategy, while the younger MB group follows Turkey's Justice and Development Party. After a long period of underground work in the following years, the Muslim Brotherhood rose to power in the face of the Arab Spring in 2012, which resembles the dominance of comparative modern MB members. Nevertheless, the ideological standpoint of MB was summarized by the then president Moorsi: "The Koran is our constitution, the Prophet Muhammad is our leader, jihad is our path, and death for the sake of Allah is our most lofty aspiration...sharia, sharia, and then finally sharia. This nation will enjoy blessing and revival only through the Islamic sharia" (Mark Durie, 2013). This statement clearly shows that the Muslim Brotherhood is still premised on the earliest philosophy of political Islam, at least at the theoretical level. Later, following a military coup, the MB government led by Dr. Mohamed Moorsi survived for only one year and again faced a formal ban on politics.

Jamat-i- Islami in Pakistan

In the face of the anti-British movement in the 20th century, Maududi founded Jamat-i-Islami in 1941, aiming to establish a 'pure' Islamic society based on Quran, Hadith, and Sharia (Nasr 1996, pp. 88-92). A pure Islamic society was meant to be based on the complete injunctions of Shari'ah and the principles of the prophet (pbuh) and four caliphs. Influenced by Mohammad ibn Abduhu, Maududi understood other societies like the Abbasiads, the Umayyads, and other dynasties as un-Islamic due to their submissive character towards 'kings' (Armajani, 2012, p.167-168).

Jamat believes that adequately understanding the Quran and its implementation in every aspect of human life can solve all political and social problems. As an eternal way, the Quran contains four aspects: divinity, lord, worship, and religion. This religion is the totality of a society, from religious to social or political. Thus, Jamat conceives of religion and politics as inseparable and identical leaving no aspect of life untouched by its principles (Armajani, 2012, p. 165). Maududi conceived of two enemies against whom Muslims, especially Indian Muslims, should fight. According to Maududi, these are the Indian National Congress, which was a more pro-Hindu organization, and the Muslim League, grounded in non-Islamic ideals. These parties were non-Islamic and influenced by Western values and democracy (Armajani, 2012). Maududi's idea of pure Islam is grounded in the establishment of an Islamic state. He de-emphasized the role of free elections in the democratic process. To him, all power is vested in Allah, and he is the only power source. As a representative, an emir will rule the state in which power is vested in him (Nasr, 1996, p. 89). The state is correctly guided by shari'ah. People cannot give their opinions, as these ideas might contradict Sharia law. Hashmi (2015) termed this model as 'Theo-democracy.'

This thesis argues in line with Arjamani (2012, p. 168), who also said that there are two reasons: Maududi is authoritarian and anti-democratic. First, Maududi maintained that the prophet (pbuh) was based only on absolute Sharia, which was incompatible with Western democracy. Second, Maududi was suspicious of democracy, as Western colonials used democracy as a weapon of discrimination against the majority of Hindus in India. Maududi rejected any democracy, even in Pakistan, because it would give religious minorities and wrongheaded Muslims too much power to direct the affairs of the Islamic state. Even before the establishment of Pakistan, he said that it would be 'Napakistan' meaning a place of unholy things (Islam and Huda, 2016). Maududi believed that an Islamic state could be attainable through the Islamic revolution. It is a series of processes rather than an overnight phenomenon. Pious people should understand potential enemies and threats such as Marxism, democracy, and secularism. Muslims should, he argued, resist these enemies like the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in 7th century. A successful Islamic revolution requires dedicated

pious minds to spread the teachings of ‘ideal Islam’ (Armajani, 2012, p. 169). Starting with a resistance party, Jamat became mainstream in the early 50s. They began to preach their teachings through printed documents, sermons, and mosque teachings. This had an enormous impact on Pakistani society as soon as Jamat and Maududi received significant attention from the government. This is why, in the formation of the Pakistan constitution in 1956, Jamat was influenced to form an “Islamic Constitution’ naming the country as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. According to Armajani (2012, p. 175), this influence was the first political victory for Jamat. They used this achievement to gain popular support in western Pakistan. In the face of the anti-Jamat attitude of Ayub Khan, who accused Jamat of being an obstacle to progress, Jamat made an ally with secular and non-Islamic political parties in 1960. One example is significant for understanding Jamat’s dualistic nature. In his writings, Maududi spoke against women’s leadership of the state. However, Jamat supported Fatima Zinnah, a secular woman, in the 1965 presidential election who was a secular woman (Armajani, 2012, p. 176). Thus, Jamat diverted from its principles, such as non-obedience to women’s leadership and democracy.

The dualistic character of Jamat did not provide a huge political opportunity, as they could win only four seats in the general election of Pakistan. The Bangladesh Awami League, a secular-democratic political party, got the majority with 167 seats in the national assembly. However, Jamat’s engagement in formal election procedures was their first political establishment in a democratic process. Jamat’s dualistic character was again featured when they supported Ziaul Haq in a military coup after debilitating Bhutto. With the promise of Islamization of law and the judiciary in Pakistan, Jamat gave Ziaul Haq direct support. In response, Ziaul Haq tried to legitimize his regime with ‘Islamic popularity.’ Jamat used to call this relation with general Ziaul Haq as ‘daughter-mother’ relation (Armajani, 2012, p. 178). Due to state sponsorship, Jamat spread its ideology enthusiastically and gained widespread support for its fundamentalist and radical principles. This support base was vital to engaging with the Afghan Taliban in the later days.

A Comparison Between Jamat-i-Islami (JI) and Muslim Brotherhood (MB)

After analyzing how these two groups wanted to propagate their ideology and strategy to capture political power, it is worth comparing them. From at least two perspectives, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and Jamat-i-Islami (JI) share a few common characteristics. From an organizational perspective, both parties were established after anti-colonial movements with leader-centered mobilization, Hasan Al Bannah and Abul ala Maudidi, respectively (Armajani, 2012, p. 181). From a methodological perspective, both MB and JI use printed teaching materials to spread their ideology and mosque-based education, establish educational institutions, train people to collect new adherents, and spread teachings at the grassroots level.

However, most similarities between the MB and JI lie in the shifting position regarding democracy and its discourse construction. Siddiqui (2012) argued that to date, both Jamat and MB have been continuing their ‘brotherly’ relations as they have a common philosophy in terms of anti-western attitude and establishing a global Islam. In their early years, the MB and JI were more resistant than political parties. Nevertheless, since the 1970 election, Jamat has maintained its presence in the ongoing electoral process. This is true for the Muslim Brotherhood, as MB ascended to power in Egypt through a general election in 2012. In addition, both the JI and MB ended up with nationalist politics instead of their earlier premises to establish a global ummah (Hashmi, 2015). This is an essential analytical case of how these groups have contradicted their promises.

Amidst numerous controversies against these two Islamist parties, they have a solid support base in Egypt and Pakistan. They have shifted their strategy and ideological projects in order to go to power. In Egypt, the MB is more successful in terms of power dynamics. After a long period of the formal ban, they won the general election after the Arab Spring. They proved that the Muslim Brotherhood philosophy still dominates Egyptian society. After one year, General Fattah Al Sisi, a secular military personnel, became president with military backup. However, the situation in Pakistan is different from that in Egypt. Many Muslim political organizations have a solid support base at the Pakistani political juncture. Many of these were anti-Maududi. Pakistani society strongly depends on Islamic political organizations, but this does not mean they have to depend solely on Jamat.

Have the Main Projects of the Islamists been Failed?

It is a well-established fact that political Islam has significantly influenced the global discourse of Islam on the political front. However, it cannot be hailed as a univocal success. The reasons for this are not solely due to its success in gaining political power, a shift in its ideological stance, or its failure to establish a perfect Islamic society. Roy (1994) introduced the theory of ‘failed political Islam,’ which argues that the primary projects of political Islam have failed for two main reasons. First, political Islam has deviated from its original ideological premises and agendas. Second, it has not been able to establish a society that can be deemed ‘pure Islamic’ compared to the early age of Islam (Roy, 1994, pp. 8-10).

The historical context accentuates that Islamism has been unsuccessful, as nowhere in the world is a new society based on its assumptions yet to be established, not even in Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Afghanistan. Political Islam generally rejects the 1400 years of historical incidents and civilizations as *bidah* or inventions, which has created a vacuum from the 7th century to the modern days (Armajani, 2012). This rejection

of historicity is a major obstacle to the re-establishment of the society of the 7th century or the establishment of a new society. The lack of political modernity and its incompatibility with modernity are the main reasons for the impasse of political Islam (Roy, 1994, p. 9-10). However, Political Islam is not in power. It has succeeded in achieving state power, but not in establishing a new Islamic society, which is the ultimate goal of political Islam. The impracticality of reinstating a 7th-century society has led Islamists to shift their ideological and strategic agendas (Roy, 2004).

From the following two examples, it can be proven that Roy's (1994) argument is valid. First, it is known that both the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamat-i-Islami initially rejected the Western democratic model. However, their subsequent entry into this democratic system showcases their adaptability. This strategic shift is also evident in their change of focus from a global caliphate to national politics. For instance, Maududi himself rejected the democratic system under secular governments, but he joined the Pakistan general election in 1970. His party later continued the election process. Second, Islamists failed to establish a total Islamic state as they had promised earlier, like the 7th-century Islamic state led by the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his companions. This intent has remained elusive since political Islam emerged in the 19th century.

Conclusion

From the above discussion explicates that Islamist movements in different nation-states, despite their diverse natures, share a common ideological foundation. This unified ideology recognises political Islam at the intersection of social and political spheres, rejecting the concept of a virtuously 'apolitical' religion. Their entire establishment theory is rooted in the creation of an Islamic state governed by the Quran, Hadith, and Shari'ah laws. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jamat-i-Islami in Pakistan have been instrumental in promoting political Islam in their respective countries. However, these Islamist parties have been accused of radical principles and ideological alterations to gain political power what Roy (1994) argued as neo fundamentalism, leading to a misinterpretation of the true meaning of Islam, which promotes love and compassion. This ideological shift has been a fundamental reason for the failure of political Islam, as Roy argued. The rejection of modernity, historical discourse, and democratic principles has rendered political Islam incompatible with contemporary society, resulting in a lack of widespread support. Even after gaining political power, Islamist political parties in different Muslim countries have failed to establish societies based on the Quran, Hadith, and Shari'ah. Instead, they have failed to create the so-called better society they promised. Therefore, it can be argued that while political Islam has accelerated the velocity of global political discourse, it is a failure based on Olivier Roy's arguments.

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