

**No. 79**

**THE STATE AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS  
IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES**

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Singapore**

**JUNE 2005**

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## ABSTRACT

The institutional configurations of Islamic societies can be classified into two types, namely, differentiated social formations – societies in which religion and state occupy different space – and undifferentiated social formations – societies in which religion and state are integrated, i.e. Islamic states. Using survey data from a comparative study of five Muslim societies, this paper examines the level of trust in religious institutions in these two types of Muslim social formations. The evidence reveals that the level of trust in religious institutions tends to be significantly higher in differentiated Muslim social formations. The paper discusses the possible sociological implications of this finding for Muslim societies and proposes an explanatory model to account for the finding. It concludes that an Islamic state may not always be in the best interests of Islamic institutions and the religious elite. The empirical evidence also suggests that the trust in religious institutions in Muslim societies is positively associated with trust in key institutions of the state. Implications of this finding are also discussed.

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# **THE STATE AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES**

## **Introduction**

The relationship between politics and religion in Muslim societies is a focus of intense debate among scholars of Islam. A commonly stated view of many Western and Muslim scholars of Islam is that Islam is not only a religion but also a blueprint for social order and therefore encompasses all domains of life, including law and the state (Maududi 1960, Lewis 1993, Huntington 1996, Rahman 1982, Weber 1978, Gellner 1981). It is further argued that this characterisation sets Islamic societies apart from Western societies, which are based upon the separation of state and religious institutions.

Lapidus (1996) and Keddie (1994) have pointed out that, notwithstanding several examples of state control of religion in Western societies, these differences are commonly used to account for the different developmental trajectories of Western and Islamic societies. Western societies, with their separation of church and state, of civil and religious law, are said to have promoted an autonomous domain for secular culture and civil society, which together form the bases of modernity. In Islamic societies, the lack of differentiation between the secular and the sacred has inhibited such development (Weber 1978, Crone 1980, Lewis 1993, Huntington 1996).

After reviewing the evidence concerning the separation of state and religion in Islamic history, Lapidus (1996) concluded that the history of the Muslim world reveals two main institutional configurations. The undifferentiated state-religious configuration characterised a small number of Middle Eastern societies. This configuration was characteristic of lineage or tribal societies. The historic norm for agro-urban Islamic societies was an institutional configuration that recognised the division between state and religious spheres.

Despite the common statement (and the Muslim ideal) that the institutions of state and religion are unified, and that Islam is a total way of life that defines political as well as social

and family matters, most Muslim societies did not conform to this ideal, but were built around separate institutions of state and religion (Lapidus 1996:24). Keddie (1994:463) has described the supposed near-identity of religion and the state in Islam as “more a pious myth than reality for most of Islamic history”. Similar views of Islamic history have also been advanced by others (Zubaida 1989, Sadowski 1997, Ayubi 1991).

The weight of historical scholarship indicates that the institutional configurations of Islamic societies can be classified into two types: a) differentiated social formations (i.e., societies in which religion and state occupy different space), and b) undifferentiated social formations (i.e., societies in which religion and state are integrated). While a majority of Islamic societies have been and are ‘differentiated social formations’, a small but significant number have been and are societies that can be classified as ‘undifferentiated social formations’. A label commonly used in contemporary discourse for undifferentiated Muslim social formations is ‘Islamic State’.

Irrespective of the historical evidence, relations between the state and religion are an important issue in contemporary Muslim countries. Many Muslim countries are a product of the process of decolonisation in this century, where nationalist movements were spearheaded by relatively secular leaders. These new states have defined their identities in nationalist terms, and in many cases, have preserved the secular legal, educational and political institutions inherited from the colonial era. Islamic revival movements have emerged in many Muslim countries, however, and in general they denounce the trend toward secularisation, calling for the return to a state that represents and embodies Islam and enforces an Islamic way of life (Lapidus 1996, Beinun and Stork 1997, Esposito 1992, Marty and Appleby 1993).

Whereas in the past only Saudi Arabia defined itself as an Islamic state, now countries like Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Sudan have become or aspire to become Islamic states, and while all of them define themselves and function as Islamic states, they differ from one another in many significant ways. Algeria is currently enduring a bloody struggle for the establishment of an Islamic state. Similar trends appear to be occurring in predominantly Muslim regions of Nigeria. In Turkey, the power of the Kemalist secular state has come under muted challenge from the Islamic parties.

The relationship between religion and the state is influenced by the internal dynamics of Muslim societies. These dynamics are grounded in the relationship between the two traditions of Islam, namely the ‘high Islam’ of the Ulema and the ‘folk’ or ‘popular Islam’ of the masses. These two styles or traditions of Islam provide a built-in mechanism for self-rectification and purification, which periodically manifests in ‘differentiation’ and ‘dedifferentiation’ between religion and politics in Muslim countries. The dynamics of the relationship between these two traditions offer the possibility for Muslim societies to move from one to the other (Gellner 1981, 1992, Rahman 1982, Beyer 1994, Hassan 1987, 2002).

Although relations between the state and religious institutions are a significant concern of the Islamic world, there is no empirical study of the attitudes of Muslims toward different institutional configurations. The issue here is whether religious institutions enjoy more or less trust in the public mind in differentiated Muslim social formations, in which religion and the state are separate, than in undifferentiated Muslim social formations, in which religion and the state are closely integrated. Public trust in institutions of the state and civil society is an important symbol of political legitimacy of the state and its agencies.

Drawing from empirical evidence gathered as part of an international study of Muslim religiosity, this paper will examine this issue by comparing data about trust in the state and civil society. It will explore the levels of trust in institutions in different Muslim countries and also compare the level of trust in undifferentiated and differentiated Muslim social formations.

## **Methodology and Data**

As mentioned above, the data for the study were gathered through an international study of Muslim religiosity. This study was carried out in five countries, namely Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt, Kazakhstan and Iran. For details of this study and how it was carried out see Hassan (2002). The initial intention was to interview a sample of the elite and the general public. The elite were to consist of religious elite and Muslim elite from other spheres of society. However, due to technical, political, logistical, ethical and financial reasons, such a sample composition could not be achieved in any country. The survey fieldwork in each country was

carried out with the collaboration of local social sciences research institutes. Because of the nature of the issues being explored in the study, the investigators had to rely on ‘snowball’ and purposive methods of sample selection. This situation required a redefinition of the elite, and after considerable consultation with local colleagues, it was concluded that the only way to capture an elite dimension was to focus on the educated individuals occupying professional, economic, social, religious, cultural and bureaucratic positions in the mainstream social structures of their respective societies. The samples in Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt and Kazakhstan were therefore stratified by those who were active in major legal religious organisations and highly educated respondents who were actively involved in professional, business, bureaucratic and cultural organisations. In Iran, however, due to logistical reasons, the sample was drawn from general public mainly from Tehran. In each group, between 20 and 45 percent of the respondents were women.

The fieldwork in Indonesia was carried out by the Population Studies Center of Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta. In Pakistan it was carried out by the Social Science Research Center, University of the Punjab, Lahore. In Egypt it was carried out by the Ibn Khaldoun Center for Social Development, Cairo. In Kazakhstan it was carried out by the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, Almaty, and in Iran through the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran. General socio-demographic profiles of the five samples are given in Table 1. In Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt and Kazakhstan the fieldwork was carried out in 1997 and 1998, and in Iran in 2001 and 2002. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire, which took on average about 90 minutes to complete.

Experts in Indonesian, Urdu, Arabic, Russian, Persian and Kazakh translated the survey questionnaire into these languages, and key parts of the questionnaire were then back-translated into English to minimise translation bias. In most cases, the questionnaire was given to the selected respondents for completion but the interviewers were available for clarifications or questions. Whenever and wherever it was or became necessary, the questionnaire was administered through a face-to-face interview. Almost all of the interviewers were graduates in social sciences. A field supervisor checked each questionnaire for completion. The completed questionnaires were coded in the country where the data were entered and initial frequency tables were run.



**Table 1. Sample Profiles**

		Pakistan	Turkey	Indonesia	Egypt	Kazakhstan	Iran
<b>Gender</b>	Male	79.1	54.5	74.3	75.8	53.8	50.5
	Female	20.9	45.5	25.7	24.2	46.2	49.5
<b>Age</b>	< 25	17.2	34.0	20.3	16.0	20.1	43.5
	26 – 40	47.9	38.9	39.5	54.6	39.6	33.5
	41 – 55	22.5	23.5	28.9	19.1	25.0	16.3
	> 56	12.4	3.6	11.3	10.3	15.3	6.7
<b>Level of Education</b>	Less than High School	5.6	39.1	10.8	14.0	14.0	21.2
	HS / Some College	8.9	37.0	21.6	20.1	39.6	54.2
	College/ further study	82.5	22.8	66.4	65.9	45.1	24.5
	Other	3.0	1.1	1.2	—	1.3	—
<b>Sample type</b>	Religious activists	49.9	31.5	41.9	—	36.4	—
	Muslim professionals	15.9	33.4	26.1	49.3	50.2	—
	Public	34.2	35.1	32.0	49.3	13.4	100
<b>N =</b>		1185	527	1472	788	1000	535

Note: Sample types in Turkey: Religious Segment, Upper Class, Working Class.

As in any study of this type, problems arose. They were resolved in appropriate ways by the country coordinators in consultation with the principal investigator (Riaz Hassan). In each country, some minor changes were made to some questions in the questionnaire in accordance with the advice of the local coordinators. These changes were made to accommodate local sensitivities and they did not compromise the overall objectives of the study.

The respondents in all four countries were asked how much trust they had in key institutions of the state and civil society. This paper is based on the responses to that question, which was posed as follows: ‘I am going to name a number of organisations. For each one, could you tell me how much you trust them to tell the truth and to do what is best for the country? Is it a great deal of trust, quite a lot of trust, not very much trust, none at all, or do not know?’ Readers who are familiar with the World Value Survey will know that this is a modified

version of the question posed there. The institutions about which the respondents' opinions were sought were the following:

Ulema <sup>1</sup>	Parliament	Press	Universities
Imam Masjid <sup>2</sup>	Courts	Television	Schools
Pirs/Kiyai <sup>3</sup>	Civil Service	Major Companies	Intellectuals
Political Parties	Armed Forces		

In Iran, the institutions of Ulema, Pirs and the Armed forces were excluded from the main survey (N=469), but they were included in an exploratory survey (N=66).

## **Findings: Religious Institutions and the State**

As mentioned earlier, relations between the state and religious institutions and communities are a central concern in the Islamic World. It is therefore rather surprising, given the importance of this issue, that there have been no systematic empirical investigations of the subject. The purpose of this paper is to fill this gap in our knowledge. *The general issue examined was the level of trust in religious institutions and the institutions of civil society, in undifferentiated Muslim social formations (i.e., Islamic states), and in differentiated Muslim social formations.*

In computing the trust scores from the data reported here, the two categories of 'a great deal of trust' and 'quite a lot of trust' were combined to arrive at a composite index of trust. The findings of the survey data are reported in Table 2. They show that there are wide variations as well as similarities among respondents in the five countries in terms of their trust in core institutions of religion and the state. Kazakhstan stands out as a country in which Kazak Muslims universally have very low confidence in the key institutions of society. This is most likely a function of the dramatic changes that have occurred in Kazakhstan over the past

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<sup>1</sup> Ulema refers to scholars, jurists and teachers learned in the Islamic sciences. For a general discussion of the nature and functions of the Islamic institutions of Ulema, Imam Masjid and Pirs/Kiyai, see Keddie (1972).

<sup>2</sup> Imam Masjid are the leaders of the daily mandatory prayers in Muslim mosques. See Keddie (1972).

<sup>3</sup> Pirs and Kiyai are leaders of folk or popular Islam. The nomenclature used to describe or refer to this institution varies in different countries. See Keddie (1972), Mayer (1967), Gellner (1969) and Dhofier (1980).

decade. The impression gathered during the fieldwork was that most people were disoriented by the economic and social changes that followed the collapse of the former Soviet Union. These changes had reduced the total worth of Kazakhstan's Gross Domestic Product by half, thus adversely affecting the lives of ordinary citizens (UNDP 1996).

Many Kazakhs are disillusioned and very apprehensive about the future, and the data reflects this. In relative terms, roughly three out of ten respondents trusted the Armed Forces, Press, Television, Universities and Intellectuals. However, the religious institutions of the Ulema, Imam Masjid and Pirs enjoyed much more trust than the key institutions of the state. This is rather surprising, given that most Kazakhs were not actively involved in religion during the Soviet era. We think that Kazakhstan would need to be considered a special case. The other four countries can be compared with greater confidence, which is the strategy adopted in this paper.

Indonesia, Egypt, Iran and Pakistan, unlike Kazakhstan, are large, predominantly Muslim countries that have been ruled by the indigenous ruling classes for at least half a century. The key state institutions in these countries, namely the Parliament, Courts, Civil Service and Political Parties, enjoy moderate to low levels of trust in the public mind. Among the four countries the trust in the state institutions was lowest in Iran. The Armed Forces are trusted by a considerable majority of people, and in Pakistan in particular, they are the most trusted institution of society.

**Table 2. Trust in Key Institutions (%)**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>Turkey</b>	<b>Indonesia</b>	<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Kazakhstan</b>	<b>Iran</b>
Ulema	48	28	96	90	24	7*
Imam Masjid	44	26	94	83	22	36
Pirs / Kiyai	21	18	91	52	21	8*
Parliament	22	11	53	34	19	32
Courts	55	37	55	76	16	28
Civil Service	26	22	58	44	11	23
Political Parties	12	3	35	28	12	11
Armed Forces	82	68	68	78	33	7*

Press	38	4	84	54	33	24
Television	31	9	80	49	37	30
Major Companies	29	27	42	45	14	16
Universities	60	58	88	70	33	44
Schools	71	57	92	68	48	47
Intellectuals	66	67	92	81	37	59

\* Indicates figure from sub-set of Iran sample, N=66

The most striking differences between the countries, however, relate to trust in the Islamic institutions. In Indonesia and Egypt, the Ulema and the Imam Masjid are the most trusted institutions of civil society. The institution of Pirs/Kiyai is very highly trusted in Indonesia, and moderately in Egypt. In Pakistan and Iran, the two countries that can be described as undifferentiated (i.e. Muslim states), trust in the religious institutions was low. The main survey in Iran only ascertained the level of trust in Imam Masjid and it was found to be the lowest among the four countries. In Iran, a smaller preliminary survey (N=66) did include the questions about trust in Ulema and Pirs and the findings revealed a very low level of trust in these institutions. The preliminary survey surveyed mainly the middle and upper middle class respondents from Tehran. However, for proper comparison only the data pertaining to Imam Masjid should be considered as comparable. The institution of Pirs/Kiyai is very highly trusted in Indonesia, but less so in Egypt. In Pakistan, however, the situation is entirely different: all three Islamic institutions are trusted by less than half of the respondents. As mentioned above, the pattern in Iran was similar to Pakistan, at least in relations to the Imam Masjid.

Three other institutions that are trusted by a significant majority of the respondents in Indonesia, Egypt and Pakistan are the Intellectuals, the Universities and the Schools. The level of trust in these three institutions is particularly high in Indonesia. The Mass Media are respected highly in Indonesia, moderately in Egypt, and not very highly in Pakistan and Kazakhstan. In Iran, the only institution trusted by a majority of respondents was the Intellectuals. The empirical evidence presented in Table 2 suggests that the trust in religious institutions tends to be significantly higher in differentiated Muslim societies.

These findings are interesting because this is the first time such an empirical study has been carried out in five major Muslim communities in different regions of the world, and in different social formations. Intuitively, one would expect that since Iran and Pakistan are the only undifferentiated (Islamic) states among the five countries under study, the level of trust in the religious institutions should be relatively high. The results are the *exact opposite*. It is also worth mentioning that one does not hear that religious institutions are held in such high esteem in Indonesia and Egypt. In relative terms, even the trust shown in religious institutions in Kazakhstan as compared with state institutions was surprising, although as mentioned earlier, one must treat Kazakhstan as a special case, given its recent history. In view of the evidence reported in Table 2, we can say that the faithlines in contemporary Indonesian and Egyptian societies are very clearly delineated. The state institutions are held in low to moderate esteem, and the religious institutions are held in the highest esteem. In Iran and Pakistan, both state and religious institutions are held in low esteem, and a similar pattern prevails in Kazakhstan.

Are these differences an artefact of statistics or survey methodology? Indirect confirmation of the level of trust in religious institutions was provided by the findings of a 1996 Gallup Pakistan survey on 'Important Social Issues'. A randomly selected sample of 821 urban respondents was asked how much they trusted the following institutions: Military, Religious Scholars, Industries, Courts, Newspapers, Parliament, Politicians, Government Officials and Police. The results were: Military 78%, Religious Scholars 44%, Industries 38%, Courts 34%, Newspapers 29%, Parliament 21%, Politicians 19%, Government Officials 17%, and Police 10% (Gallup Pakistan 1996). The results of the Gallup Survey are remarkably similar to the results of the present study, and provide an external validation of the findings reported here as they relate to Pakistan.

### **Relationship Between Trust in Religious Institutions and Trust in Key State Institutions**

In this study, we were also able to examine the relationship between the level of trust in religious institutions and the level of trust in key institutions of the state. We hypothesised that: The relationship between the level of trust in religious institutions and the level of trust

in key institutions of the state will be stronger in an undifferentiated Muslim social formation than in a differentiated Muslim social formation.

In order to test this hypothesis, the average percentage of respondents expressing trust in each of the four institutions of the state, namely Parliament, Political Parties, Civil Service and Courts, was calculated separately for respondents expressing a lot of trust, not very much trust, or no trust in the three religious institutions, namely the Ulema, Imam Masjid and Pirs/Kiyai. The category ‘a lot of trust’ includes the responses ‘a great deal of trust’ and ‘quite a lot of trust’, while the ‘not very much trust’ and ‘no trust’ categories represent those responses alone. The percentages refer to the proportion of respondents indicating that they had ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of trust in the institutions of the state. In Iran, the main survey did not include questions about trust in Ulema and Pirs, so the level of trust in religious institutions is solely based on the data pertaining to trust in Imam Masjid. The findings of these calculations are reported in Table 3 below.

These findings show that an increase in trust in religious institutions is associated with increased trust in the institutions of the state in Egypt, Indonesia, Iran and Pakistan. This association did not apply in Kazakhstan, and most likely this was due to the special historical conditions mentioned earlier. Another notable trend discernible from the evidence is that compared with respondents in Egypt and Indonesia, the average percentage of those in Kazakhstan who trusted the religious institutions and the key state institutions was significantly lower. This is consistent with the findings reported earlier pertaining to the main hypothesis.

**Table 3. Level of Trust in Key Institutions of the State by Level of Trust in Religious Institutions**

	A Lot of Trust	Some Trust	No Trust
Egypt	54	46	27
Indonesia	61	25	56
Pakistan	40	29	20
Kazakhstan	33	19	7
Iran	47	14	9
Turkey	24	18	15

\*For Iranian sample, ‘religious institutions’ refers only to Imam Masjid

Based on the preceding examination of the data, we can now conclude that:

- a) the differences in the levels of trust in Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia and Egypt are most likely produced by political and social dynamics, and not by cultural dynamics or methodological biases;
- b) the same reasoning can be extended to explain the very low level of trust in political and religious institutions in Kazakhstan;
- c) low levels of trust in religious institutions in society negatively impact the level of trust in state institutions.

## **Discussion**

What could be a possible explanation of these findings and what are their sociological implications? An explanatory hypothesis could be constructed in the following way. Given that in all of the societies under study there is a relatively low level of trust in key state institutions, we can hypothesise that a dialectical process is created by the social and political conditions within which key state institutions enjoy only low levels of esteem, and consequently political legitimacy among their citizens.

The main business of the state is to govern and manage the affairs of society in a fair and unbiased manner. When the state or its key institutions lack social/political legitimacy in the public mind, the state must use varying degrees of coercion to ensure compliance. This the citizens inevitably resist, which in turn produces a more authoritarian state response. This generates further resistance, and so a cycle of authoritarian response and resistance develops. The state ultimately comes to be seen as authoritarian, oppressive and unfair and this leads to political mobilisation against the state. The institutions of civil society that act as the mobilisers of this resistance gain in public trust and consequently come to enjoy high levels of esteem and legitimacy among the public.

This model can explain the high level of trust in religious as well as other institutions of civil society — like the Schools, Universities and Public Intellectuals — in Indonesia and Egypt. Since both these societies are examples of what we have called differentiated Muslim social formations, the religious institutions play a vital public role in the mobilisation of resistance to the state, thereby increasing their esteem in the public mind. Universities, Schools and

Public Intellectuals are also held in high esteem for the same reason. In Pakistan and Iran, however, the situation is different. Pakistan and Iran, as we have argued, are undifferentiated social formations in which religious institutions are integrated in the state structures. The erosion of trust in state institutions, therefore, also corrodes trust in the religious institutions that are perceived as part of the state. The Schools, Intellectuals and Universities are probably trusted because of their role as mobilisers of resistance against a state perceived as weak, ineffectual and authoritarian. The low level of trust in religious institutions in Pakistan and Iran further reduces the trust in the state institutions. In the case of Kazakhstan, the disintegration of the former Soviet Union has resulted in unparalleled political, social and economic insecurity, and the low level of trust in all institutions is probably indicative of that insecurity, but again, the logic of the model applied in the case of Indonesia, Egypt, Iran and Pakistan can also be applicable to Kazakhstan.

The high level of trust in the Armed Forces could be a function of the underlying dynamics of the proposed model. The state's lack of legitimacy may create or aggravate an underlying sense of insecurity among the people. It may be that this sense of insecurity produces a positive perception of the Armed Forces as a compensatory force for the perceived sense of insecurity. In Pakistan, the very high level of trust could also be due to the perception in the public mind of a military and political threat from India, which the Pakistan Government promotes as a matter of public policy to justify its huge allocations of public revenues to the Armed Forces.

An alternative explanation of the findings can also be constructed by applying Luhmann's typology of the role of religion in modern society. According to Luhmann (1977, 1982), a distinctive feature of modern society is institutional differentiation and functional specialisation. This gives rise to autonomous 'functional instrumentalities' such as polity, law, economy, science, education, health, art, family and religion. One consequence of the relative institutional autonomy is that the major institutions become independent of religious norms and values, which Luhmann calls 'secularisation'. In such conditions, the degree of public influence that religion enjoys depends on how it relates to other social systems in society. Luhmann uses the terms 'function' and 'performance' to analyse this relationship.

'Function' in this context refers to 'pure' religious communication, variously called devotion and worship, the care of souls, the search for salvation and enlightenment. 'Function' is the



pure, social communication involving the transcendent and the aspect that religious institutions claim for themselves on the basis of their autonomy in modern society. Religious ‘performance’, by contrast, occurs when religion is ‘applied’ to problems generated in other institutional systems but not solved there or simply not addressed anywhere else, such as economic poverty, corruption, political oppression, etc. Religious institutions gain public influence through the ‘performance’ role by addressing these non-religious or ‘profane’ problems. The functional problem of religion in modern society is a performance problem.

Religious institutions gain public influence when they efficiently carry out their performance role. This requires religious institutions to be autonomous vis-à-vis the state and other institutional sub-systems. A logical deduction of this is that religious institutions will gain greater public influence in institutional configurations in which they are autonomous from the state. If they are not, then they cannot carry out their performance function effectively. This model is articulated in Figure A below. In the context of the present study, this means that religious institutions will enjoy, at least theoretically, greater public influence in a differentiated social formation than in an undifferentiated state social formation. The findings of this study would appear to support Luhmann’s analysis.

**Figure 1: Differentiated vs. Undifferentiated Social Formations by Functional vs. Performance Roles**

<b>Role of Religion</b>	<b>Undifferentiated Social Formation</b>	<b>Differentiated Social Formation</b>
<b>Functional Role</b>	High	Low
<b>Performance Role</b>	Low	High

Viewed from these perspectives, the findings may have important implications for the institutional configuration of the state in Muslim countries. An Islamic state that lacks trust, and consequently political legitimacy, in the public mind, may in fact cause an erosion of trust in Islamic institutions, thereby further weakening the fabric of civil society. For the religious elite in Muslim countries, the message of these findings is that an Islamic State may not always be in the best interest of Islamic institutions and religious elite. To promote a

constructive socio-cultural, moral and religious role for religious institutions within a Muslim society, it may be prudent to keep Faithlines separate from the state, and thereby prevent them from becoming the faultlines of the political terrain.

These findings also have implications for the ruling elite, particularly in differentiated Muslim societies. As we have noted, the findings show a feedback effect. The level of trust in religious institutions is directly related to the level of trust in the institutions of the state (see Table 3). This means that attempts to disestablish Islam may have adverse consequences for the level of trust in and legitimacy of the state itself. The implication for the international community is that if an Islamic state (i.e., an undifferentiated Muslim social formation) were to come into existence through democratic and constitutional means, support for such a state could in the long run pave the way for the development of a kind of differentiated Muslim social formation.

As in the case of Pakistan and Iran, the Islamic elite may need to make some compromises with the state over time to ensure a stronger socio-cultural, moral and political role for religion in the society at large. We may call this a type of ‘secularisation’ of religion that manifests itself in calls to limit the political role of religion.

In summary, the findings reported in this paper show that the integration of religion and the state in Muslim countries may not always be in the best interests of Islamic institutions and the religious elite, because when a state carries a deficit of trust in the public mind, public trust in religious institutions is also eroded. This could have serious social, cultural, political and religious implications. For example, if the public lacks trust in the institutions of the Ulema and Imam Masjid, this could significantly undermine their economic and social well-being and could lead them to create circumstances or support demands that might not be conducive to the profession and promotion of the universality of Islam. (Here one can speculate about the influence of the madrassas [religious schools] in Pakistan on the rise of the Taliban political and religious movement in neighbouring Afghanistan.)<sup>4</sup> This would also suggest that religious institutions within a Muslim society continue to play a constructive social, cultural and religious role when religion is kept separate from the state and when these

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<sup>4</sup> For an elaboration and discussion of this, see Rashid (1998).

institutions enjoy an appropriate place in the institutional configurations of the society. It may be prudent, therefore, to keep faith separate from the state.

Because of the feedback effect of the level of trust in religious institutions that has been noted earlier, the findings of this paper may also have implications for the relationship between the state and religion in Muslim countries. As the level of trust in religious institutions is directly related to the level of trust in the institutions of the state, it follows that attempts to destabilise Islam may have adverse consequences for the level of trust in and the legitimacy of the state itself. It has also been argued that the undifferentiated Muslim social formation tends to evolve over time toward a kind of differentiated Muslim social formation. An Islamic state, therefore, may also be a route to the social and political development of Muslim societies in which religion and state coexist in an autonomous but mutually cooperative relationship.

There is, of course, the logical possibility of a Muslim society that is characterised by high levels of trust in and esteem for the state, and in which there is also a high level of trust in religious institutions. However, as far as we know, there are no contemporary examples of such a situation that can be readily identified. This raises the interesting question of why this is so? Does it mean that such a situation is not possible, or could such a situation possibly come about under circumstances in which different political arrangements prevail between Islam and the state? We hope that this question as well as the findings reported in this paper will stimulate further debate and discussion on the relationship between the state and religious institutions in Muslim countries.

<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on the data collected as part of the research project on Religiosity of the Elite in Muslim countries. This project is funded by a grant from the Australian Research Council. In Indonesia, the survey fieldwork was coordinated by Dr Agus Dwiyanto, Director and Dr Sukamdi, Deputy Director, Population Studies Centre, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta. In Pakistan, the fieldwork was coordinated by Professor Muhammad Anwar, Director, Social Science Research Centre, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Dr Muneer Ahmad, Mr Safdar Sohail, Mr Shaukat Abbas, and Mrs Razia Rafiq. In Egypt, the fieldwork

was coordinated by Professor Saad Eddin Ibrahim, director, Ibn Khaldoun Centre for Social Development, Cairo, and Dr Hassan Essa. In Kazakhstan, the fieldwork was coordinated by Dr Oumirseric T. Kasenov, Director and Dr Sabit E Jousupov, Deputy Director, Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, Almaty. In Iran, the research was conducted in collaborations with Professor Taghi Azadarmaki, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran.

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