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The Use of Religious Symbolism in Nation-Building Narratives: Faith and State in Pakistan's National Identity Formation

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ABSTRACT

This research explored how religious themes have been applied in the process of nation building and how a national identity has been created in Pakistan. It examines to what degree the flag, the anthem, and elements of discourse in education combine the consolidation of state power and authority with Islam, hence establishing emotional unity and political legitimacy. The study adopts a qualitative and interpretive methodology by reviewing literature in the social sciences, historical sources and policy documents between the years 1963 and 2025. The theoretical framework of the research is a combination of imagined communities by Anderson, invented traditions by Hobsbawm and Ranger, symbolic regimes by Elgenius, and desecularization model by Saeed. The findings of the research suggest that Islam was the main moral and ideological justification of the state since the independence, and the religious themes created the social unity and the sense of collectivity. The state, on the other hand, institutionalized the religion to promote the pluralism of civic education, which was reinforced by the political marginalization of the minorities. The overriding influence of the desecularization process, coupled with low levels of democratic participation, has strengthened the claims of the people to Islam and, at the same time, weakened the claims to democracy. This process of marginalization of the civic element and the emphasis of Sufi traditions of love, tolerance, and peace provide the transformative path of the potential research, as it deals with the exclusionary and oppressive national identity in order to be integrated. The end of the study suggests that the future of the national identity of Pakistan will depend on the reinterpretation in which faith will be still the ethical guide, but it will co-exist with pluralism, democracy, and peace. This balancing should enable Pakistan to enhance its inner spiritual and outer social internalization in an era of an increased globalization.

Keywords: *Religious Symbolism, Nation-Building, National Identity, Pakistan, Islam, Desecularization, Sufism; Education, Pluralism, Symbolic Regimes.*

1. Introduction

Nation-building includes political, emotional, and cultural components. Nations are built on a foundation of shared symbols, rituals, and narratives. Flags, anthems, monuments, and holidays are tangible and visible reminders of unity, integration, and common purpose of a people. Religious symbols are stronger because they intertwine one's national belonging with one's faith, morality, and a divine order. National symbols are tools of unity and expressions of political power, as noted by Geisler (2005) and Elgenius (2011). They make the notion of a nation tangible and real in people's daily lives.

In Muslim societies, faith is interwoven with public life. With the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the first homeland was based on the idea that Muslims needed a place where they could live and practice their values (Sayeed, 1963). Since the beginning, new Pakistan's flag, national anthem, and the motto "Faith, Unity, Discipline" all articulated how Pakistan defined itself through Islam. Durrani and Dunne (2010) also claim that the enculturation tools of education and the Islam-centered school textbooks maintained this identity in children.

The integration of religion and the state institutions has produced both good and bad results. It has given Pakistan an excellent moral push, but it has also created a tendency of disintegration of the various ethnic and religious groups in Pakistan. Desecularization in Pakistan has been met with a decline in pluralism and this has ensured that minorities remain even fainter in the mainstream history of Pakistan (Saeed 2013, 214). Religious appeal has also led to the suppression of a free discussion (Shabbir, Ali, and Jawad 2024). Instead, the Islamic symbols, especially the symbols of Sufi traditions, which are more or less a national symbol, are reported to cause tolerance and positive diplomacy (Yousef and Huaibin 2014; Mahmududdin 2024). The current study aims to appreciate how religious symbolism has affected the transformation of the national identity of Pakistan. It is concerned with the possibly unifying and legitimizing roles of religious symbols and their re-practicing in the modern environment supporting inclusivity and harmony.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Ever since independence, Pakistan has based its national identity upon the pivotal figure of Islam. The ethos of Islam is proclaimed by the national flag, national anthem and other accounts of the country and brings the sense of moral pride. This kind of focus on Islam, however, has its own challenges. The definition of belonging in terms of exclusionary religious terms marginalizes the minorities and is likely to homogenize culture. The contribution by Durrani (2013) and Saeed (2013) demonstrates that the religious discourse of education and policy creates a limited vision of identity and obstructs dialogue. As the works of Ahmed (2017) and Rehman (2025) point out, the focus of the political actors on cohesion and legitimacy in the first place leads to the erasure of pluralism in the name of Islam. There is no challenge in the field of the religion itself but in its exploitation and interpretation. The way religious symbols mobilize and influence the dynamics of forming power structures is a crucial point that needs to be taken into account. This kind of awareness can help recast the Islamic iconography to give off the impression of inclusiveness as opposed to the current views of exclusion and politicization.

1.2 Significance of the Study

There are several justifications for the worth of this research. First, it contributes to the international scholarship regarding the relations of religion and social constructs with the formation of nations (Geisler, 2005; Elgenius, 2011; Mock, 2011). While it situates these frameworks in the context of Pakistan, which is profoundly shaped by Islamic iconography in politics and culture. Second, it elaborates the hitherto neglected dimension of Pakistan's nation-building which is the fact the flag, national anthem, school curriculum, and state monuments

are designed to foster emotional sentiments of the citizens towards the state. Third, it provides guidance to policy makers and educators. Knowledge of how community cohesion is cultivated through symbols can aid the reconciliation school curriculum and citizenship education designed to foster social fabric. In this context, Yousaf and Huaibin (2014) point out that such religious symbols can also be used to enhance Pakistan's diplomatic relations. Finally, this research augments the objectives of social cohesion and peace. It demonstrates that national symbols can unify disparate individuals when used in an open and respectful manner.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How have religious symbols such as the national flag, anthem, and educational narratives contributed to the construction of Pakistan's national identity since independence?
2. In what ways has the state's use of religious symbolism influenced pluralism, minority representation, and cultural inclusion within Pakistan's national discourse?
3. How can Sufi traditions and inclusive interpretations of Islam be used to reinterpret religious symbols for promoting peace, tolerance, and national unity in modern Pakistan?

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This research adopts an interpretive approach incorporating key theories on nationalism, symbolism, and religion, and how these theories help identify how religious symbols influence the construction of national identity in Pakistan. The approach integrates global scholarship on nation-building and Pakistan's historical and cultural context.

The study utilizes Benedict Anderson's imagined communities to elaborate on how citizens of Pakistan perceive nationhood. According to Anderson (1991), nations are built not only by physical frontiers but by citizens 'imagining' collective belonging through shared symbols, stories, and narratives. In the case of Pakistan, the Islamic symbols of the flag, the anthem, and the national motto help citizens 'imagine' loyalty and attachment to the morally and spiritually unbounded community of Muslims. The narratives of unity and the symbols help the citizens 'visualize' the 'imagined' community of loyal citizens.

Hobsbawm and Ranger (1992) extends the explanation on continuity and legitimacy by the construction of invented traditions. In the case of Pakistan, national days, official ceremonies, and religious references in school curricula and the media are examples of such invented traditions. The state connects itself to the faith and, in that process, accrues sacred authority and cultural depth.

To understand how nations regulate meaning and identity through the use of symbols and institutions, one can refer to the work of Elgenius (2011, 2014) on 'symbolic regimes'. This explains how the state apparatus of Pakistan reinforces an Islamic interpretation of the narratives contained in school books, public monuments, and national dialogue. While the state wields these instruments of power, to the public, these constructs serve as symbols of faith and emotionally anchor the citizens to the bedrock of nationalism. This power relation shapes how citizens understand the nexus of faith and nationalism.

The works of Durkheim on 'social solidarity' and 'symbolic interactionism' were also of great importance to this study. While Durkheim acknowledged the power of religion to socially integrate people, it was the shared rituals and the sacred symbols that formed the glue. The study takes an interpretive methodology, which includes major theories on nationalism, symbolism, and religion, and the way these theories assist in determining the role of religious symbols in the formation of national identity in Pakistan. The strategy is based on combining international knowledge about nation-building and historical and cultural background of Pakistan.

In the Pakistan situation, it is the Islamic symbols that fulfill this role. This is further explained by Steffen (1998) who states that in the period of social change, symbols and narratives offer

reconstructed social relations and ethical order. The desecularization concept as presented by Saeed (2013) can also provide the modern sociological approach to the topic of the study. Desecularization is a concept that refers to the reawakening of religion in the field, which shapes the political, social and cultural life. This is implemented in Pakistan through the insertion of Islamic references in the policies, mass media, and learning content. Such extent of desecularization will help emphasize the religious and spiritual nature of India during the 19th century and the contemporary modernizations of society.

Combined, these theories account for the nation-building of Pakistan, in which religion is integrated not only as a belief system but as a socio-political authority. While Anderson's imagined community and Hobsbawm's invented traditions may account for the construction of national sentiments, Eugeniusz's symbolic regime and Saeed's desecularization provide an explanation of the power relations that enable their perpetuation. These theories inform the study on the paradox of the religious symbols of unity which enable the national narrative but simultaneously constrict the diversity of the Indian socio-culture. This is only relieved by a reinterpretation of inclusive Islamic spirituality, and particularly Sufism, which has the potential to promote a healthy and plural outlook on the nation of Pakistan.

2. Literature Review

This part examines previous international and Pakistani literature regarding how national identity is influenced by symbols, religion, and political discourse. There is a comparative analysis of global considerations vis-a-vis the symbolic nation-building practices instituted in Pakistan, given the significance of Islamic symbols and Islam within the configuration of the state and the integration of the state on a social level.

2.1 Global Perspectives on Symbolism and Nation-Building

Different regions' studies reveal how symbols fulfill a country's need for unity and continuity. Geisler (2005) emphasizes national symbols' (flags, monuments, and other nationally recognized items and/or practices) memorial and conflictual social aspects. They remember, celebrate, and civilly organize social cooperation around common and dominant values, while, at the same time, concealing and hiding social conflicts regarding dominant and subaltern values. Equally, Elgenius (2011, 2014) describes how state symbols seek allegiance, while, and along with the other attributes, emotional attachment. These emotional attachments, masquerading as 'symbolic regimes', are politically charged and conjoined with emotional experiences, thus rendering political belonging and, hence, participation, a moral duty. Stripped and naked, the civic duty also borders along the realm of legal obligation.

Mock (2011) and Kolstø (2016) point out that symbols are most relevant during periods of political change and crisis. Mock observes that symbols of defeat and trauma, when re-framed as a source of national pride, could even capture, fully, national identity. Kolstø (2016) argues that countries in the post-conflict stage, or countries that have newly emerged from conflict, employ symbols to regain and reassert legitimacy and continuity of a narrative of history. Regarding the association of national symbols with urban space and monuments, as well as their findings that urban space and monuments with national symbols also bear and showcase civil authority and civil memory, the work of Forest and Moser (2020) is equally relevant. These illustrate how the emotional and cultural dimensions of investment are equally core, along with the political propaganda, in the creation of nations. Sustained nations are those in which continuity, and a sense of collective purpose and belonging, is embodied in and through the symbols (Pochkhua, 2023; Mahmud).

2.2 The Role of Religion in National Identity

Religion strengthens nation-building, as it ties political identity to the sacred. Social solidarity by Durkheim illustrates how the collective sentiments of people can be emotionally united by rituals and faith symbols. Bornman, (2006) shows the value of religious symbols given to people after social engineering as order and the moral meaning of the social order. In Muslim

societies, the ties of faith and nationality grow ever closer. Akturk, (2015) illustrates this in comparative work on Turkey, Algeria, and Pakistan where religion simultaneously challenges and legitimizes modern nationalism.

Studies in South and Central Asia deepen this understanding of religion symbolism and influence on legitimacy. Insebayeva (2022) explained how the Kazakhstan government utilizes the religious ambiguity of the country as a tool for reinforcing national unity. Southeastern Europe and the post-Soviet states, as explained by Pavlaković (2016) and (Bakhytbekkyzy) 2020, employ religious and historical instrumental in the sacred revisionism of nations to denote new nation states.

In Pakistan, the politics of faith and emotion politics shaped by the Two Nation Theory considerably overlap and persist to influence political power (Sayeed, 1963, Haider & Zaheer, 2023).

2.3 Pakistan: Religion, Symbolism, and State-Building

To create a home for the South-Asian Muslims, Pakistan was created in 1947. Therefore, a religion was the new nation's moral and ideological foundation (Sayeed, 1963). Since, the state has Islamic ally focused most of its bloody imagery. According to Haider and Zaheer (2023), the early Islamization and subsequent guidance of Pakistan, within all its political transition periods, employed Islam fostering symbols. As Gurchani, Imran, and Malik (2024) entail, the governance by Islam shaped Constitutional order within the country and the socio-psyche of the people.

This identity in its symbolism, is and was, mostly focused to communication centers. Durrani and Dunne (2010) finds that the school systems and their programs foster and unshaken program that Islam in connection in education is to linked with Nationalism, disabusing children the idea that Islam is a vital part of the Citizenry. In Durrani, (2013) he pointed out that the strong emotional connections created were at the cost of a larger all-embracing National identity which, in relation to the secondary and weaker connections made with the and Nationalism. Qazi (2023) pointed out that the state schools and National systems foster a state sanctioned new Nationalism of religion.

Saeed (2013) discusses these frameworks as desecularization where religions once again enter public institutions, determining the policies of the state as well as the social customs and practices of the people. Rehman (2025) argues that religious nationalism and its dominance may create an imbalance between moral authority and cultural pluralism. Similarly, Ahmed (2017) points out religious symbols may unify people, but also have the potential to control them and be wielded by political leaders to rally support while stifling the plurality of the people.

2.4 Contemporary Shifts: Sufism, Peace, and Cultural Diplomacy

Despite the continued significance of religion, the incorporation of more inclusive Islamic traditions, particularly Sufism, into the national discourse is a focus of recent scholarship. Yousaf and Huaibin (2014) also confirm that the Pakistani state has a Sufi image of a tolerant state, a spiritual state, and a non-violent state as a part of its global diplomatic justification of its role in the world.

Mahmuluddin (2024) also points out that peace-building rituals and religious symbols can be “bridges of peace” and assist the reconciliatory processes of societies in the overcoming of deep divisions. This further indicates that the use of religious symbols is flexible and adaptable. While the politically and culturally prevailing configurations of a society may determine the use of certain religious symbols, it can also provide soft power on the geopolitical stage and assist with internal cohesion. Pakistan can use Sufi traditions to promote the ethics of love, equality, and service in its religious symbols to assist with the internal cohesion of disparate social groups.

Symbolic representations of the nation have been the focus of both global and Pakistani studies. Such representations may create uniting bonds but can also entail exclusion. Since independence, the Pakistani state has used religious symbols to construct the ethical boundaries of the nation. The lack of pluralism may be politically driven, but the prevailing scholarship suggests that such politically and socially divisive symbols can be transformed into peace-creating symbols through inclusive Islamic values. This has formed the basis of the literature on religious symbolism which integrates faith, multiculturalism, and civic virtue.

3. Methodology

A qualitative and interpretive approach is employed in this study. This is not a theory-testing exercise conducted by statistical analysis, but it is a study of the importance, portrayal and the historical scaffolding behind the analysis of a small collection of writings. The methodology considers the research design to be the documentary and thematic analysis. It examines how religious symbols in the flag, anthem, education texts, and political messages are used in forming moral and emotional parameters of the Pakistan nation. The paper uses Elgenius (2011) and Geisler (2005) as a reference and examines national symbols as cultural texts, which represent unity and political hegemony. The study will entail close reading of academic literature, historical documents, and policy literature published in the period between 1963 and 2025 that contain documents. The papers by Sayeed (1963), Durrani and Dunne (2010), Saeed (2013), and Haider and Zaheer (2023) explain how Islam is currently a dualistic ideology and a symbolic system of identity construction in Pakistan.

This research work is purely on secondary work, which also deals with nation-building, religion, and symbolism. These are academic articles, books and reports. Among foreign works, there are Geisler (2005), Mock (2011), Kolstö (2016), and Elgenius (2014) as well as publications in Pakistan, among others, Durrani and Dunne (2010), Saeed (2013), Ahmed (2017), Rehman (2025), and Shabbir et al. (2024). This kind of choice allows contrasting global and local conditions of symbolic politics. Although the international sources provided theoretical insights, the publications in Pakistan demonstrated the background of faith-based nationalism where the notions are applied. The data was collected by means of the extensive literature review of peer-reviewed journals, books, and publications by different institutions. In order to protect the reliability and integrity of the study, scholarly works were taken into account and all non-scholarly works that were opinion based were excluded. Both works were examined concerning the elements of religious imagery, ideological contextualization, and symbolic depiction. These have been grouped together alongside nation-building, desecularization, education and pluralism.

The analysis followed thematic content analysis, which is the same procedure used in the case of qualitative social research. Coding of texts was done on the key themes which consisted of: Islamic symbolism and moral authority, education and ideological identity, the role of religion in political legitimacy, pluralism and desecularization, and Sufi heritage and peacebuilding. These patterns were then explained through a theoretical framework that encompassed imagined communities as proposed by Anderson (1991), imagined traditions as postulated by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1992) and symbolic regimes as suggested by Elgenius (2011) and desecularization as proposed by Saeed (2013). The analysis demonstrated how much religious symbols enable state to put across a message of unity and legitimacy and how a reinterpretation of these symbols enables inclusive and harmonious nationalism.

Thematic content analysis was adopted for the analysis, similar to the approach taken in qualitative social research. Texts were coded for the major themes which included: Islamic symbolism and moral authority, education and ideological identity, the role of religion in political legitimacy, pluralism and desecularization, and Sufi heritage and peacebuilding. The patterns were then interpreted using a theoretical framework that integrated Anderson's (1991) imagined communities, Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1992) invented traditions, Elgenius's (2011)

symbolic regimes, and Saeed's (2013) desecularization. The analysis revealed the extent to which religious symbols allow states to convey a message of unity and legitimacy, while a reinterpretation of these symbols facilitates inclusive and harmonious nationalism.

4. Findings and Discussion

This section contains the most significant findings of qualitative analysis and updates it according to the theoretical framework and the previous studies. The themes illustrate that religious symbolism has been the central concern in the nation-building of Pakistan as well as influences politics, education and social identity. There is also the emphasis on the tensions between unity and exclusion, and the new direction of inclusion religious discourses.

The international studies analysis demonstrates that religious symbols are influential tools of bringing people together due to common values. Geisler (2005) and Elgenius (2011) discovered that symbols have not only emotional and cultural purposes but they are also used to express authority and legitimacy. It was found by Mock (2011) and Kolstoe (2016) that in most cases and in former colonized or war-torn countries, the symbols like flags, monuments, and rituals offer continuity and hope. On the same note, Forest and Moser (2020) clarified that the appearance of the public symbols is a reminder of the identity of a state intended to enhance the feeling of belonging and political unfaithfulness.

Such world instances apply to Pakistan, as they demonstrate the way the states relate moral values with political power through symbolic systems. Similar to the postcolonial states in the rest of the world, Pakistan followed the same approach in incorporating symbols of history, religion, and the nationhood to create legitimacy and emotional connection.

The results confirm that religion is the heart of the identity of Pakistan since it was established. Islam was the central part of the nationalism of Pakistan because of the conception of a special country of Muslims (Sayeed, 1963). According to Haider and Zaheer (2023), the political development in Pakistan is defined as a religious nationalism journey, in which the Islamic visuals and ethical principles were recurrently exerted to unify the state power. The crescent and Star in the national flag, the spiritual character of the anthem and the national motto are all symbols of divine guidance and order.

Such a religious identity has however produced divisions. Durrani and Dunne (2010) discovered that in the school curricula, national loyalty is constituted based on Islamic faith and faith presents itself as a moral and political responsibility. Although this enhances unity, there is minimal room to the non-Muslim or regional identities. According to Saeed (2013) and Durrani (2013), this process is desecularization, which has turned religion into an institutional power and has influenced the development of laws and educational systems as well as the representation of minority in the national narrative.

Education became one of the prominent places of symbolic nation-building. Durrani (2013) demonstrated that the textbooks and curricula created an ideal citizen with religious obedience, patriotism and moral discipline. This is supported by Qazi (2023) who says that students are socialized to confuse national belonging with Islamic faith. This close association of religion to identity not only is a source of unity but also limits the definition of citizenship. On the basis of the paradigm of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1992) the invented traditions, these results indicate that educational rituals, including school assemblies, anthem singing, and national day ceremonies, are a form of reproduction of ideology in a repetitive manner. They instill in them discipline as a collectivity and a sense of sacredness which has strengthened the right of the state.

This research discovered that political leaders always turn to the use of religious imagery to gain legitimacy and emotional attachment. According to Ahmed (2017), unity in political crisis is supported by the religious symbolism, and according to Rehman (2025), the ideological control of the state is also enhanced by the religious symbolism. Gurchani, Imran, and Malik (2024) demonstrate that the use of the Islamic language in mass media strengthens authority

because it associates governance with the will of God. This is in line with the idea that Elgenius (2014) conveys in his notion of symbolic regimes; power is sustained by the regulation of collective meaning.

The findings are also related to the concept of imagined communities by Anderson (1991) because the nation is conceived as part of shared religious language and images. The flag, e.g., is not just a political symbol, but a sacred symbol, a symbol of unity, unity before God. However, this divine framing restricts the potential of political opposition or cultural diversity since to go against the given symbol may seem as going against the religion itself.

The numbers reveal an obvious contradiction: religious artifacts help to unify the country and, at the same time, alienate other members who do not perfectly comply with the dominant Islamic identity. According to Saeed (2013) and Shabbir et al. (2024), the process limits pluralism and limits the discussion by citizens. Minorities might not perceive themselves as part of the symbolic and moral marker of the Pakistani nation. This is also explained by Durkheim theory of social solidarity: symbols stick people emotionally, but as they are too exclusive, they also make social boundaries.

This observation implies that religious symbolism should be handled with a lot of care. As much as it is emotionally interesting, it may polarize the society when it is applied to politics. The dilemma is how to maintain the moral unity without establishing the ideological conformity.

The new religious symbolism interpretations, which promote peace and coexistence are identified as the aspects of the recent scholarship. Youseaf and Huaibin (2014) believe that Pakistan can reinforce its image in the world through the promotion of a Sufi brand, the focus on the values of love, tolerance, and spirituality. Mahmududdin (2024) concurs with this by demonstrating the ways rituals and religious activities can be used as peace-building mechanisms. The results are an indication of a national identity which is inclusive, i.e. bridging faith with cultural diversity; this is the Sufi traditions.

This reinterpretation is in line with the notion by Elgenius (2014), who argues that symbolic regimes may change over time. Religious symbols may not separate but can also unify when reformulated in terms of an inclusive spiritual value. This method is also appropriate in the opinion of Durkheim that symbols rejuvenate the solidarity when they respond to social change.

The nation-building and emotional identity of Pakistan is based on religious symbolism. The Islamic symbols are applied in education, politics and media in the state to create legitimacy and unity. The process has also reduced diversity and suppressed plural speech in narratives of nations. The latest tendencies emphasize the opportunities of inclusive Islamic traditions, in particular, Sufism to revitalize the symbolical basis of the country. By reinterpreting the symbols of religion, both the spiritual and civic aspects of Pakistani community can be reinforced.

The results prove the thesis of Anderson (1991) and Hobsbawm and Ranger (1992) that collective symbols and traditions help to construct the nations. These symbols in Pakistan have attracted moral force of Islam, and have created emotional attachment of the state and the citizens. Nevertheless, the described process by Saeed (2013) and Durrani (2013) indicates how such symbols can become stiff identity indicators that limit diversity through desecularization.

The most important thing that this study has taught me is that the main issue is not the symbols themselves, but their interpretation. Religious symbols when interpreted as a demonstration of common faith and morality create solidarity. They form exclusion when they are applied to political dominance. The Sufi traditions show how Islamic symbolism could be used to advance the spirit of compassion, equality, and peace, which are similar to the values of nationhood initially envisioned during the creation of Pakistan.

5. Conclusion

This paper has discussed the role of religious symbolism in Pakistan in nation-building discourses and nationality since independence. The results corroborate the fact that Islam is not a mere religious belief in Pakistan but it is also the emotional and ideological core of the state. The Islamic symbols have provided the citizens with a sense of belonging, unity and morality through the flag and anthem as well as the education system and political discourse (Sayeed, 1963; Durrani and Dunne, 2010; Haider and Zaheer, 2023).

Nonetheless, it is also analyzed that the same symbols that are uniting could also divide. With the course of time, narrow ways of defining national belonging by religious symbolism have deprived space to ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity. According to Saeed (2013) and Durrani (2013), desecularization has transformed religion into a more institutionalized kind of power, which forms identity by schooling, media and politics. This has usually marginalized the minorities and narrowed plural understanding of being Pakistani.

Nonetheless, the current research and trends in the society give hopes of a more inclusive approach despite these challenges. The articles by Yousaf and Huaibin (2014) and Mahmududdin (2024) emphasize that the rich Sufi traditions of Pakistan may be used to provide a gentler and universal face of Islam love, peace, service. These principles have a potential to revive the symbolic roots of the country, which means that religion is not an obstacle, but a connection.

To sum up, the Pakistani national identity has always been bound to faith. However, the future of such relationship lies in the interpretation of the religious symbols. When exploited as moral and cultural, but not as political, weapons, they can be used to enhance harmony, civil unity, and peace. The reinterpretation of these symbols based on the Sufi ethics and inclusive education is capable of assisting Pakistan in achieving the initial vision of the country as a nation of faith, justice and compassion.

This research used documentary and thematic analysis. The interviews, surveys or classroom ethnography could be used in the future to be able to know the views of ordinary citizens, teachers, and students on the national symbols in their everyday life. This can also be achieved through comparative analysis conducted between the country and other Muslim nations and how the symbolism attained in the religious contexts varies in other contexts.

The other area is the digital nationalism in which social media and online platforms are replicating religious symbols and defining the identity of youths. This would enhance the knowledge on how religion, technology and nationhood interact in contemporary Pakistan. Balance is the strength of Pakistan as the nation is founded on faith. Religion is a source of strength when religion brings about moral unity and compassion. It makes society weak when it is used as an instrument of exclusion. Re-defining its symbols, not as fixed identifiers of ideology, but as breathing reminders of peace, equality, and common cause, is a challenge the national identity of Pakistan will have to face in order to secure its future.

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