

Politics of Desecularization

Over time the Pakistani state has moved from accommodating the Ahmadiyya community as full citizens of the state to forcibly declaring them non-Muslim and eventually criminalizing them for their religious beliefs. *Politics of Desecularization* deploys the “Ahmadi question” to theorize a core feature of modern public Islam – its contested and unsettled relationship with the nation-state form. It posits that our current understandings of modern religious change have been shaped by a highly limited number of national cases in which states have been successful at arriving at stable ideologies about religion. Pakistan, however, epitomizes polities that are undergoing protracted political and cultural struggles over religion’s proper place in the state. The book’s gripping account shows that these struggles are carried out in social sites as diverse as courts, legislative assemblies, and newspapers. The result in Pakistan has been the emergence of a trajectory of desecularization characterized by official religious nationalism.

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The most enduring and illuminating bodies of late nineteenth-century social theory – by Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and others – emphasized the integration of religion, polity, and economy through time and place. Once a staple of classic social theory, however, religion gradually lost the interest of many social scientists during the twentieth century. The recent emergence of phenomena such as Solidarity in Poland, the dissolution of the Soviet empire, various South American, Southern African, and South Asian liberation movements, the Christian Right in the United States, and Al Qaeda have reawakened scholarly interest in religiously based political conflict. At the same time, fundamental questions are once again being asked about the role of religion in stable political regimes, public policies, and constitutional orders. The series *Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion, and Politics* will produce volumes that study religion and politics by drawing upon classic social theory and more recent social scientific research traditions. Books in the series offer theoretically grounded, comparative empirical studies that raise “big” questions about a timely subject that has long engaged the best minds in social science.

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Politics of Desecularization

Law and the Minority Question in Pakistan

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107140035

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First published 2016

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Saeed, Sadia, author.

Politics of desecularization : law and the minority question
in Pakistan / Sadia Saeed.

Cambridge studies in social theory, religion, and politics.

New York : Cambridge University Press, 2016. | Series: Cambridge studies
in social theory, religion and politics | Includes bibliographical
references and index.

LCCN 2016030314 | ISBN 9781107140035 (alkaline paper)

LCSH: Religious minorities – Pakistan. | Religious law and legislation –
Pakistan. | Ahmadiyya – Pakistan. | Secularization – Pakistan. | Islam and
politics – Pakistan. | Islam and state – Pakistan. | Islam and
state – Pakistan – History.

LCC BL2035.5.R45 S24 2016 | DDC 954.9104-dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016030314>

ISBN 978-1-107-14003-5 Hardback

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Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-14003-5 — Politics of Desecularization
Sadia Saeed
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To my parents

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Acknowledgments

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my debts to my mentors at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where this book first took shape as a dissertation. My advisor, George Steinmetz, gave his unqualified intellectual support to my project. His critical readings of my work have been pivotal in shaping this book. I also benefited enormously from input from Fatma Müge Göçek, Geneviève Zubrzycki, and Mamadou Diouf. Müge constantly reminded me to delve fully into the lives and motivations of the people in my study. As a fellow traveler working on the same terrain of religion and nationalism as Geneviève, I have found her insights to be especially enriching for my work. Mamadou emphasized the importance of taking a comparative perspective and critically considering the notion of modernity with his characteristic humor. I also thank Howard Kimeldorf for reading and commenting extensively on my work, and Peggy Somers for leading a writing seminar where I was able to share my work with, and benefit from, a wonderful community of scholars. I was also fortunate to work on a project with Barbara Metcalf and learn from the rigor with which she pursues her own research projects.

This work took its present shape at Yale University, where I held a postdoctoral fellowship. I cannot imagine a better environment for revising this book. The participants of the Comparative Research Workshop, where I shared my work on numerous occasions, were a constant source of perceptive comments. Julia Adams, Phil Gorski, Jonathan Wrytzen, Nick Wilson, Matt Mahler, Jeff Alexander, Steve Wilkinson, and Karuna Mantena read book chapters and provided comments. Julia both contributed to this work and provided incredible support on every other imaginable front. Her friendship deeply enriched

my sojourn at Yale and continues to be a source of sustenance. Phil read the prospectus for this book, and his feedback has shaped this book in more ways than he can know. Although they did not read chapters, my conversations with Andrew March, Frank Griffel, and Kalyanakrishnan (Shivi) Sivaramakrishnan provided important insights and directions.

Before taking up my fellowship at Yale, I spent a year as a postdoctoral fellow at the Maurer School of Law at Indian University, Bloomington. The Center for Law, Society, and Culture was an incredibly welcoming and conducive environment for beginning my revisions. I thank Art Alderson, Mike Grossberg, Ho-fung Hung, Patricia McManus, Ajay Mehrotra, Rob Robinson, and Camille Walsh for reading and engaging with my work. My thanks also go to Julian Go, Bob Hefner, Frank Korom, and Teena Purohit at Boston University, where I taught briefly, for their encouragement and advice as this book neared conclusion.

Outside the institutions with which I have been affiliated, a number of scholars have generously read portions of this work. Thanks are due especially to Sadaf Ahmad, Nathan Brown, Humeira Iqtidar, Robert Jansen, Matthias Koenig, Charles Kurzman, Paula Newberg, Ayelet Shachar, Tayyab Mahmud, Salman Raja, Iddo Tavory, and Syed Akbar Zaidi. My work has also been enriched by illuminating discussions of this work with Kamran Ali, Zahid Hussain, Christophe Jaffrelot, Ayesha Jalal, and Azfar Moin.

Over the course of writing this book, I had the opportunity to present my work at forums at the University of Michigan, Indiana University, Bloomington, Harvard University, Yale University, the University of Texas at Austin, Sarah Lawrence College, Princeton University, Columbia University, and the University of Southern California Gould School of Law. I thank these audiences for their interest in my work and for their many insightful suggestions.

My research would not have been possible without the help of a great number of people in Pakistan who spoke to me about my research, answered my questions, and provided me with invaluable resources for carrying out this project. I thank all the Ahmadis who trusted me enough to speak candidly with me. Equally, I thank all the other individuals who allowed me to question them on sensitive political and religious issues. I admire the generosity and candidness of all the people I spoke to. I hope that by bringing their narratives together, I have been able to do some justice to them all.

I received immense assistance from personnel at various archives and research sites that I visited. My heartfelt thanks go to the staffs at the

Acknowledgments

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National Archives of Pakistan, the National Library of Pakistan, and the National Documentation Center. I also thank the personnel at the *Aalimi Majlis-e-Tahaffuz-e-Khatam-e-Nabuwat* head offices in Multan, the Khilafat Library at Rabwah, and the Ahmadiyya Community Center in Islamabad for facilitating my research. Finally, thanks are due to the research staff at the India Office Records at the British Library, London.

The research for this project was funded by a number of sources. A fellowship from the American Institute of Pakistan Studies allowed me to spend considerable time in Pakistan and England. I also received grants and fellowships from various venues at the University of Michigan, including the Department of Sociology, the Rackham Graduate School, and the International Institute. Research funds made available through my postdoctoral fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies allowed me to bring this project to fruition.

My editor at Cambridge University Press, Lew Bateman, has impressed me deeply with his patience and excellent guidance. I also thank Bronte Rawlings and Karthik Orukaimani for shepherding the publication process in the final stages. I am also indebted to the series editors of *Cambridge Studies in Social Theory, Religion, and Politics*, David Legee, Kenneth Wald, and Richard Wood, for their support of this book and for their feedback. Two external reviewers provided extensive and insightful feedback from which this book has benefited enormously.

Portions of this book have been published in *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, *Political Power and Social Theory*, and *Economic and Political Weekly*. Portions of Chapters 2 and 3 were published in “Pakistani Nationalism and the State Marginalization of Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan,” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 7(3): 132–52. Portions of the Introduction, Chapters 2 and 3 were published in “Political Fields and Religious Movements: The Exclusion of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan,” *Political Power and Social Theory* 23: 189–223. Portions of the Introduction and Chapters 2 and 3 were published in “Desecularisation as an Instituted Process: National Identity and Religious Difference in Pakistan,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(50): 62–70, special issue: “Secularisation and Secularism: Political Reality and Conceptual Clarity.”

A number of friends have greatly aided my work through their presence, humor, and encouragement. I would like to thank especially Asiya Alam, Subul Ali, Jennifer Ailshire, Xóchitl Bada, Anita Chaudhry, Camilo Leslie, Rajashree Mazumder, Shireen Meer, Besnik Pula, Erzsébet Ravasz Regan, Peter Regan, and Sarah Shafiq.

Finally, my family provided unquestioning support, patience, and good cheer during the course of the writing of this book. My thanks go to my brother, Adnan; my sister, Aliya; my mother-in-law, Maria-Magdolna; Bakhtiar; and Haniya. My husband, Zoltán, has been with me every step of the way in the writing of this book, enabling me in every possible way. Our daughter, Alina, has been a constant source of joy and inspiration, propelling this book forward. My deepest gratitude, however, is to my parents, whose unlimited confidence in my abilities never ceases to amaze me. I dedicate this book to them.