

The Other Legitimate Game in Town? Understanding Public Support for the Caliphate in the Islamic World

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Abstract

In recent years, essentialist claims about the incompatibility of democracy and Islam have been swept away by public opinion research revealing that democracy is widely supported in the Islamic world. However, while this literature has demonstrated the popularity of democracy over authoritarianism, we argue that it misses a key piece of the puzzle by not examining Muslim public support for an alternative model of government: the Caliphate system. After outlining three different visions of the Caliphate in Islamic political thought – an autocratic view, a democratic view, and an instrumentalist or “good governance” view – we analyze how it is conceptualized today by its supporters with existing and original surveys conducted in several Islamic countries. We first engage with an existing cross-national survey conducted in several Muslim-majority countries

that include Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan in order to investigate the sources of public support for the Caliphate, broadly speaking. We then move on to our own original, nationally representative survey conducted in Pakistan to analyze more deeply the political institutions and dimensions most associated with the Caliphate and democracy. Our results suggest that, like democracy, the Caliphate is understood by its supporters primarily in instrumental terms, as a vehicle for effective systems of welfare and justice rather than as a specific institutional configuration or simply as a means for policing public modesty and morality.

Keywords: Caliphate, Public Opinion, Good Governance, Islam, Democracy, Pakistan

“Caliphate talk” generally provokes a profound sense of fear and anxiety in the West where caliphates are often seen as synonymous with totalitarian theocracy and are viewed as the polar opposite of democracy. As Ovamir Anjum (2019, 4) aptly notes: “A word loaded like no other, “caliphate” summons deep memories and desires for some and ominous fears for others.” Illustrating some of those *ominous fears for others* that Anjum was alluding to, in a typical statement made in 2006, then-President George W. Bush forewarned fearful Americans that Al Qaeda planned “to establish a violent political utopia across the Middle East, which they call a Caliphate – where all would be ruled according to their

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hateful ideology.”¹ Bush, in fact, used the term ‘Caliphate’ at least fifteen different times that year, with four uses of the term in one speech alone (Al-Rasheed, Kersten, and Shterin 2012). More recently, Sebastian Gorka (2016, 357), one of Donald Trump’s former Deputy Assistants warned that “the Caliphate is not just some idea of crazed extremists hiding out in remote parts of Central or South Asia; it was a real entity.” In this context, supporting or calling for the Caliphate can lead to serious political consequences: it has been used to identify individuals or organizations

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as extremist in the West, and frayed fragile Islamist-secularist coalitions in the Middle East.

Yet, despite the continued support for the Caliphate in the Muslim world – and the political consequences of how it is widely understood in the West – scholars have yet to examine what the Caliphate actually *means* to Muslim-majority populations (Isani 2018; Isani 2021). Existing public opinion research on regime type preferences in Muslim-majority nations focuses overwhelmingly on support for democracy and authoritarianism (Tessler 2002; Tessler and Gao 2005; Jamal and Tessler 2008; Fish 2011). While this has given us some important insights, it leaves a number of key questions about the Caliphate unanswered. In particular, how popular is the Caliphate as a political alternative? And, more importantly, what is its scope and how is it conceptualized by those who endorse it? Despite the importance of understanding which political models command legitimacy around the world, there has been no attempt to answer these questions in the vast literature on Islamic public opinion.

This paper attempts to fill these lacunae. To do so, we first briefly outline three simplified different potential visions of the Caliphate: an autocratic view, a democratic view, and an instrumentalist or “good governance” view. In so doing, we draw from the ideas of influential modern Islamic political theorists and activists that reflect certain key aspects of each of the three outlined visions. Then, to examine which of these different visions have been “absorbed” by Muslims today, we analyze the appeal and meaning of the Caliphate as a political alternative with existing and original public opinion surveys. We start with an existing cross-national survey conducted by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland in several Muslim-majority countries – Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan – to investigate the sources of public support for the Caliphate, broadly speaking. We then move to an original nationally representative survey fielded in Pakistan to analyze more deeply the political institutions and dimensions most associated with the Caliphate and democracy.

The picture that emerges from these analyses is that the Caliphate system is not seen by its advocates chiefly as an expansive Islamic

autocracy or democracy. Rather, we find that the Caliphate is valued in instrumental-material terms, as a model that can deliver inclusive and effective welfare and justice systems throughout societies. In this sense, it may actually be perceived quite similarly to democracy, which is widely understood in instrumental or output-oriented ways in some of the same societies (Jamal and Tessler 2008).

From the Islamic “Democratic Deficit” to a Hegemony of Democratic Support

During the 1990s and into the early 2000s, research on support for different political models within the Muslim world was deeply shaped by the idea of an Islamic “democratic deficit.” Since the end of the Cold War, the Muslim world has drawn attention as the portion of the world most resistant to democratization (Huntington 1991; Karatnycky 2002). Unsurprisingly, many observers during this time linked a lack of democracy to cultural or religious factors, particularly the role of Islam. These writers saw in Islam a rigid and ritualistic submission to divine authority – and even violence and intolerance toward alternative worldviews – that was incompatible with the ideas of pluralism and diversity needed in liberal democracy (Kedourie 1994; Choueiri 1996). This perspective implies that democracy is relatively absent inside the Muslim world because Muslim populations – owing to their distinct “political tradition” – do not value or want it.

This democratic deficit generally persists after controlling for a number of obvious socioeconomic confounders (Fish 2002; Donno and Russett 2004; Pryor 2007). While years of careful research into factors such as oil wealth (e.g., Ross 2001) has made some progress in explaining the gap, the academic discussion “leaves us with, at best, fragments of explanations for the link between Islam and authoritarianism” (Fish 2011, 249). The notion of an Islamic democratic deficit has thus, in one form or another, gained prominence as one of the top puzzles in political development in the post-Cold War era.

In contrast to the 1990s, a surge of recent public opinion survey data has demonstrated quite clearly that democracy enjoys wide support

in Muslim-majority countries (Robbins 2015; Tessler 2015; Ciftci 2019; Ciftci 2022). Both academic survey projects like the World Values Survey and Global Barometer Surveys as well as regular polling by firms like Pew and Gallup show that support for democracy and related institutions in Muslim-majority countries often tops 80% of the population.² Moreover, analyses of these surveys show that this democratic support does not strongly relate to religious factors, cutting across different degrees of Islamic religiosity and Islamic ideology (Tessler 2002; Tessler and Gao 2005; Jamal and Tessler 2008; Ciftci 2010; Tessler 2010; Fish 2011; Ciftci 2019). While attitudes may vary on the precise “flavor” of democracy that is ideal, the central conclusion of this body of work is that Muslim-majority populations want representative forms of government just as much if not more than their non-Muslim counterparts. This image was only reinforced by the events of what has come to be known as the Arab Spring, when massive pro-democracy protests materialized across the Middle East, ousting entrenched autocrats in several countries.

But is democracy truly the only political model that enjoys substantial legitimacy within the Islamic world? It is worth stressing here that it is fully possible for individuals to prefer multiple alternatives to the status quo. For example, in the first wave of the Arab Barometer Surveys, fielded in 2006-07, the percentage of respondents agreeing that a democratic political system was a “good” or “very good” way of governing their country was 90% ($n=7,323$). In contrast, the percentage agreeing that a strong nondemocratic leader was good or very good was just 14%. These numbers support the conventional wisdom of democratic hegemony described above. However, when asked their views on being ruled by a group of experts who make important decisions for the country as appropriate, 70% said this was good or very good. Even more surprisingly, when asked about a model that is a combination of all three choices under one strong leader, 53% said this was also good or very good. Similar results can be found in subsequent waves of Arab Barometer Surveys as well. Why, despite broad support for democracy, do these populations show a marked openness to technocratic and even personalistic rule? Whatever their reasons, this aptly illustrates how

widespread endorsement of one political model – like democracy – does not mean it is the *only* one that enjoys mass popularity or legitimacy in a specific context. In other words, the answers that we have may be limited by the questions that we have asked, and by the choices that we have offered.

Support for the Caliphate System as a Political Alternative

The concept of “the Caliphate” is hardly fixed. This flexibility however has contributed to its enduring relevance despite the fact that it was abolished 100 years ago (Kennedy 2016). The term on its own does not really tell us much about any specific political behavior(s). As Erik Skare (2021, 10) recently points out:

Just like the declared aim of a “better world” tells us very little about the political preferences of western political parties, Islamist slogans such as “establishing the Caliphate” are too vague to tell us anything about the expected political behaviour of a group in the short- or mid-term.

For the purposes of this article, we are grounding our understanding of *the Caliphate* in one overriding axiom that was articulated by Hugh Kennedy (2016, 1), namely, that the Caliphate – regardless of its scope and more specific institutional form – “is about the just ordering of Muslim society according to the will of God.” The Caliphate, in the words of 20th century theologian and revivalist Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1988 [1922], 66; cited in March 2019, 44–45) could be understood as “the focal point of unity, the source of legislation [*ishtirāʿ*], the path to order, and the guarantor of the execution of rulings and laws” for the Muslim *Umma*. Beyond this, we will let our data and analysis drive our understanding of what type of political model that actually entails in the minds of Muslims today.

To date, only a handful of surveys have ever asked about opinions of the Caliphate as a political model. Figure 1 shows all of these surveys, with the relevant question and its percentage of support or agreement

by country-year. As can be seen, these surveys cover six Muslim countries or territories – Kuwait, Egypt, Palestine, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Morocco – across a 20-year timespan. In addition, they phrase the concept in various ways, from an “Islamic Caliphate system” to an “Islamic Caliph state” to simply “a/the Caliphate.” The figures show the level of support for each item only among Muslim respondents, as this is the primary population of interest.

The first batch of surveys that included questions about the Caliphate was fielded by Mark Tessler in the Arab world in the 1980s and 90s. In these surveys, citizens in Kuwait and Egypt in 1988 were asked whether they saw “the Islamic Caliphate system as a model for government in the Arab world today.” In Kuwait, 68% said they thought it was “suitable” or “very suitable,” while in Egypt the number was only 49%. Yet these surveys likely offer conservative estimates, as they were only given to small, urban, and relatively well educated “convenience samples” in Kuwait City ($n=292$) and in Cairo ($n=300$), respectively. Meanwhile, a larger, probability-based survey in Palestine in 1995 asked respondents whether they supported “the establishment of an Islamic Caliph state.” In this case, a relatively narrow majority of 56% said they did ($n=1,184$).

The other major batch of surveys with questions on the Caliphate was carried out by the University of Maryland’s Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) in several key Islamic countries in the mid-2000s, in particular, Morocco, Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan in 2006-07, as well as Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan in 2008. In both waves, citizens were asked whether they endorsed unifying “all Islamic countries into a single Islamic state or Caliphate.” As seen in Figure 1, support in this case was considerable: the percentage answering “agree” or “strongly agree” was 77% in Morocco, 77% and 77% in Egypt, 59% and 52% in Indonesia, and 85% and 88% in Pakistan. This equates to an overall average of 74% support across all seven cases ($n=7,227$). Meanwhile, PIPA also asked additional questions about the Caliphate in 2008, notably whether it is a “better system of government than [the] country’s present system.” This elicited 67% support in Egypt and 59% in Pakistan, although only 48% in Indonesia. Interestingly, Indonesia is the only stable democracy among the countries, suggesting that the Caliphate may hold the strongest

appeal for populations living under authoritarianism, though 48% of Indonesians do say they prefer it to their democracy.

Thus, despite their differences, these questions largely garner a healthy majority of support, with an average of 66% across the 13 cases (and a majority in 11 of the 13). This suggests that the Caliphate maintains substantial appeal as a political model in Sunni Muslim countries. Moreover, they likely provide a conservative glimpse of the Caliphate's appeal, due to public fear of openly endorsing what may be perceived as "Islamist" goals by authoritarian governments. Nevertheless, popular support does range from 48% in 2008 Indonesia to 88% in 2008 Pakistan, reminding us that – as with support for democracy or any other model – it is heavily influenced by context.

It is important to point out here that, in the wake of the Arab Spring, there is some evidence that support for political Islam has declined (Hashemi 2021; Kurzman and Türkoğlu 2015). For example, 2019 Arab Barometer survey data showed a marked decline in public trust in Islamist parties in Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq, and Libya.³ Yet, a couple of points must be made about this trend. First, while the Arab Spring experience may have significantly affected attitudes in the Arab world, the Arab world is not synonymous with the Muslim world. Second, we must differentiate between attitudes toward specific political actors and attitudes toward broader political models or ideas. For example, while trust in Islamist parties appears to have dipped in the past decade, the same surveys also reveal that, except for Libya, the erosion of trust in *religious leaders* has been far less significant. Thus, it is not clear what the changes we have observed mean for support for a broader political idea like the Caliphate. Ultimately, while the changes wrought by the Arab Spring are noteworthy, we do not believe they have fundamentally altered the importance of investigating enduring questions about religion and politics in the Muslim world. Finally, as this article is being written, the 2023 Israeli war on Hamas in Gaza remains hot. While one can only guess at this point what the outcomes of this latest Israeli war on Gaza will be, there is reason to believe, at least in the short term, there likely will be some attitudinal shifts amongst Muslims regarding

the desirability of the current geopolitical order anchored in the modern nation-state. The outcome of this conflict may result in more Muslims rejecting the modern nation-state and instead embracing a Caliphate-based alternative.

Table 1. Existing Survey Questions on Support for the Caliphate

Dataset	Question/ Statement	Country	Year	Support
Carnegie Middle East Governance and Islam Dataset	M602F: <i>Do you consider the Islamic Caliphate system as a model for government in the Arab world today?</i>	Kuwait	1988	68%
		Egypt	1988	49%
	M602F: <i>I support the establishment of an Islamic Caliph state</i>	Palestine	1995	56%
Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) Muslim Public Opinion Datasets	Q24-S57: <i>(What do you personally feel about these goals?) To unify all Islamic countries into a single Islamic state or Caliphate</i>	Morocco	2006	77%
		Egypt	2007	77%
			2008	77%
		Indonesia	2007	59%
			2008	52%
		Pakistan	2007	85%
		2008	88%	
Q56-S94: <i>The Caliphate is a better system of government than my country's present system</i>	Egypt	2008	67%	

Three Potential Understandings of the Caliphate

This portrait of significant, if variable, support for the Caliphate raises some critical questions. Most pressingly, how is the Caliphate understood by those endorsing it? Is it seen as a repressive and expansionist autocracy? A full-blown Muslim democracy? Or maybe something entirely distinct, and not well represented by the existing vocabulary? Another important issue to consider is related to the Caliphate's scope; do Muslims today understand the Caliphate primarily as a political system concerning the organization of domestic politics or do they understand it in a more universal and international sense? Having a better understanding of the answer to these questions can help us have a more robust understanding of what kind of political discourse Muslims really want, such as, is it one dominated by domestic concerns or is it one whose focus is broader? Our limited understanding of these issues has been recognized by other scholars too. Reza Pankhurst (2012, 226) for example noted that PIPA's findings only "raise questions about what the respondents understood by 'Caliphate', democracy', and '*Sharia*'."⁴ We aim to explore these questions – particularly the meaning of the Caliphate system – empirically for the first time.

Before diving into our empirical analysis, we would like to clarify that the 'Caliphate system' is not the same as the idea of an 'Islamic state.' In part, this has to do with the power of political language. From 'democracy' to 'socialism' to 'Islamism,' specific political concepts can have powerful effects by evoking sets of ideas, images, events, and actors closely associated with them (Finlayson 2004; Isani and Silverman 2016). The Caliphate is a term imbued with meaning for many Muslims today, conjuring up images of specific historical figures (e.g., Caliph Umar), experiences (e.g., Islam's rapid expansion), and institutions (e.g., a robust welfare state) for many believers above and beyond the more generic term 'Islamic state.' In the words of Mona Hassan (2016, 13): "For many Muslims, the caliphate even constituted a symbol of Islam itself, one deeply embedded in a rich intellectual and cultural discourse that could readily evoke a sense of the wider community's glory, righteousness, and esteem." Indeed, the enduring

use of the Caliphate idea in contemporary political discourse both by Islamist political actors to mobilize their supporters and by Western foreign policy hawks to scare their citizens attests to its independent force and meaning to multiple audiences. Below, we lay out three simplified alternate visions of a potential contemporary Caliphate that can be ascertained from recent Islamic political thought: (1) an autocratic vision that prioritizes obedience and loyalty, (2) a democratic vision that prioritizes elections and representation, and (3) a technocratic or ‘good governance’ vision that prioritizes institutional functionality and justice.

An Autocratic Caliphate

In recent times, different efforts at theorizing – and in some cases, even implementing – the Caliphate have emerged. Groups like *Ḥizb ut-Tahrīr* (HT) and *ad-Dawla al-Islāmiyya fī ‘l-‘Irāq wa-sh-Shām* (ISIS) have posited expansionist, top-down models that prioritize obedience and loyalty to a centralized authority figure. The reference to these two particular groups does not aim to imply that both share the same apocalyptic and violent vision; rather the comparison is being made in the sense that both prioritize literalist interpretations of key religious texts and place a premium on centralized charismatic authority. For both groups, strong, centralized leadership and obedience must come before good governance and welfare states. While the latter are desirable within both models, an institutional core characterized by centralized authoritarian leadership is a necessary prerequisite for Islamic government.

HT is a pan-Islamist political movement which has pushed for the restoration of a Caliphate since the early 1950s. It has attracted a significant following in Indonesia, Uzbekistan, and the UK, though it has limited traction in the Middle East where it originated. It regularly hosts conferences, workshops, and study groups to further build its network (Cesari 2013). It was founded in 1952 by the charismatic Jerusalem based Islamic scholar Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī (d. 1398/1977). Al-Nabhānī saw the Caliphate as the only way for Muslims to restore their dignity following the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924.

HT's model is highly centralized and what can only be described as autocratic. Notably, according to Article 37 of HT's 'Draft Constitution of the Khalifah State' that appears at the end of Nabhani's collected work, *The Islamic State* (1998, 247), "The *Khalifah* has the absolute right to conduct the affairs of the citizens according to his opinion and *Ijtihad* [independent reasoning]. He is allowed to adopt from the *Mubah* [Islamically permissible or neutral] actions what is needed to conduct the affairs of the State." Articles 34 and 35 (1998, 246) note that: "The Ummah has the authority to appoint the Khaleefah [Caliph] but she has no right to dismiss him after he has legitimately attained the ba'iah [oath of allegiance] of contracting," and "The Khaleefah is the State. He possesses all the powers and function of the State." Sovereignty – both in theory and in practice – clearly lies solely within the figure of the Caliph.

It should be noted that Nabhani's model did call for a consultative assembly in which Muslims and non-Muslims alike would be allowed to vote and even hold office, but in practice the consultative assembly is meant to do little more than rubber-stamp decisions by the Caliph. It did not have independent legislative power, rather its role was to offer "its opinion on the ruler's policies [and] legislation," though it was allowed to "dismiss certain appointees of the ruler" (Commins 1991, 207). However, this assembly does not appear to have the power to remove the Caliph – this power only rests with the Supreme Court. HT's consultative assembly model lacked the ability to adequately check and balance executive power and in this regard is actually quite similar to the post-1979 Iranian model of governance.

Another key Caliphate revival movement in modern times that has advocated for a deeply autocratic vision is ISIS. The brutality of ISIS's rule is common knowledge. According to Jones, et al. (2017, 3), it rose to power in the midst of chaos "by exploiting local grievances, amassing considerable wealth, doling out aid, coopting or coercing competing extremist movements, seizing territory, and employing extreme violence to control captive populations." ISIS's first Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, ruled with an iron fist until his demise in October 2019, and his successors leadership style thus far have not been much different. ISIS's

expansive propaganda apparatus emphasized state-building, violence, and obedience (Jacoby 2019). Absolute loyalty to ISIS and its Caliph were mandatory, and any individuals residing within ISIS's dominion that went against the Caliph were promptly reprimanded or killed. Nonetheless, despite popular misconceptions about the world's most widely recognized transnational Islamist movement, ISIS was not just about anarchy and chaos. Rather it sought to create a highly *legalistic* Caliphate (March and Revkin 2015). It did not aim to arbitrarily apply 'Islamic justice,' even though in practice that is precisely what it ended up doing.

A Democratic Caliphate

An alternative vision to the autocratic Caliphate is one that prioritizes some type of *Islamic democracy* rooted in a robust and multi-level notion of sovereignty. Shortly prior to the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, Muslim intellectuals such as Mehmed Seyyid Çelebizade (d. 1343/1925) – often referred to as Seyyid Bey – were writing on what is required of a Caliphate in the 20th century (Hassan 2016). Sayyid Bey supported the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate, but unlike the Kemalists that followed him, he sought to root the new Turkish Republic in Islamic values. His main contention was that the “TGNA [Turkish Grand National Assembly] was the best Islamic form of rule according to his reinterpretation of the [Islamic] sources, and that the Caliphate should be reinterpreted in the light of the current political events” (Guida 2008, 286). When offering his own articulation of what a modern Caliphate ought to look like, Seyyid Bey differentiated between legitimate and illegitimate Caliphates, noting that the former held elections (*intihab*) and were willingly recognized by the community (*biat*) while the latter assumed power through force (*tegallüb ve istila*) rather than democratic means. For Sayyid Bey, the Caliphate must be both a democratic and representative institution.

In the thought of Seyyid Bey, we can see the intersection of Caliphate thinking with what today would be understood as Islamic democracy. The notion of Islamic democracy remains a hotly debated topic

amongst contemporary scholars. Collins and Owen (2012, 501) contend that “Islamic democracy is distinct from political Islam, but is also likely to be an illiberal form of democracy,” arguing based on empirical research about religiosity and regime type preferences in Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan that *Islamic democracy* can be said to be “a regime based on some fundamental democratic institutions (e.g., elections and accountability) [that allows for] illiberal religious influence on the constitution and laws at the expense of state religious neutrality and some core liberal principles and individual rights.” Islamic democracy – at least as understood by Central Asian Muslims who support it – therefore ought to be considered as quite distinct from liberal democracy.

This trend is also represented by Mawlana Abul A’la Mawdudi (d. 1399/1979), the founder of *Jamaat-i-Islami* (JI). While Mawdudi embodies conservative Islamic orthodoxy to some, if one digs deeply into his body of work, one can find the possibilities for genuine Islamic, albeit illiberal, democratic governance so long as certain preconditions are met. Mawdudi based his vision of the Caliphate on the principle of *ḥākimiyya*, which holds that ultimate sovereignty belongs only to Allah. With this in mind, he then derived the aforementioned idea of *Khilāfat Allāh*: that all humans are “viceregents,” or representatives, of Allah on Earth (Mawdudi 1967, 40). The Caliph in that sense is a *Caliph among Caliphs*, who must apply the law of Allah, the Shari‘a. So long as he fulfills this duty, he may be selected by any procedure, including full democratic elections, which Mawdudi labeled “popular viceregency” (Singh 2000, 132). Moreover, Mawdudi advocated a substantial separation of powers between the leader and other branches of government, with an elected legislature and independent judges balancing the chief executive. He took separation of powers far more seriously than autocratically minded groups like HT, devoting substantial attention to how it could be achieved. Thus, Mawdudi (1976, 159, 161) worked hard to infuse democratic institutions (if not values) into the Caliphate model, attempting to offer a vision of “theo-democracy” or “democratic Caliphate” to the Muslim masses.

An Instrumentalist Caliphate or a Caliphate of Good Governance

A third iteration of the Caliphate is what one may term an instrumentalist or good governance model that is anchored in providing justice and the Islamic idea of *ihsān* which can be understood as excellence in both deed and action. *Ihsān* is also related to “benevolence toward people or graciousness in individuals’ dealings with others, [which] is a central aspect of Islamic social justice” (Ciftci 2022, 8). *Ihsān* – specifically in governance and political leadership – underwrites the good governance Caliphal model.

Concerns with *ihsān* can be found in the ideas of the great *Shāfi‘ī* jurist al-Mawardi (d. 450/1058) (cited in Anjum 2019, 32) who argued that the Caliph is “the successor of the Prophet who protects the religion and manages and governs worldly affairs of the community by it.” The Caliph however is not a Prophet himself nor is he some unassailable sage or guru; functional institutions and *ihsān* in leadership are paramount for al-Mawardi. He outlined ten matters of public affairs that were binding upon the Caliph, all of which were related to worldly administrative competencies, such as “ensur[ing] the employment of trustworthy persons and the appointment of worthy counsellors capable of undertaking those tasks delegated to them and of safeguarding monies made over them” (Al-Mawardi 1996, 28). There is nothing here about the necessity of the Caliph being the most pious member of the *umma* or most knowledgeable scholar; the Caliph is viewed in instrumental terms as a competent leader who upholds the Shari‘a.

In more recent times, the ‘good governance’ approach to the Caliphate can perhaps best be seen in the thought of Hassan al-Banna (d. 1386/1949) who, like al-Mawardi, also believed that the Caliphate was an obligation incumbent upon Muslims. Al-Banna (2006) took seriously the importance of a just economic system within Islam and had his own ten principles – all related to good governance – that noted the Caliphate’s obligation to maximize the benefits of natural resources, provide social security, protect property rights and private ownership, and ensure *ḥalāl* monetary dealings by the state. All of the things discussed by al-Banna

relate to the notion of *ihsān* in leadership which his Caliphal model hinges upon.

While al-Banna (2006) did support democratic political representation to some extent – for example, advocating for the community’s active engagement in the country’s political processes through *shūrā* or consultation – he was nonetheless very critical of political parties, believing that it was possible to have a well governed state that was governed by one party. Al-Banna himself saw political parties as divisive and argued against them, contending that they ought to be “dissolved and amalgamated in one popular organization ‘working for the good of the nation on the basis of Islam’” (Al-Abdin 1989, 229). Thus, while his democratic credentials were highly suspect, he did foreground in his conception of the Caliphate quite clearly a good governance framework that aimed at providing social and economic justice to the people.

Under a good governance model, the Caliphate is viewed and valued neither as a true Islamic democracy, nor a restrictive and expansionist theocracy that alone can abolish un-Islamic practices by sheer will. Instead, this model conceptualizes the Caliphate more so within domestic rather than (though not necessarily exclusive of) transnational political terms as a vessel for the provision of broad public goods, including a swift and effective justice system and an inclusive welfare state for ordinary Muslims. In fact, this approach to the Caliphate can be found throughout the history of Islamic political thought, specifically from medieval “Sunni realists” like al-Mawardi who were flexible with regard to the Caliphate’s institutional form – even if the Caliph himself was flawed – so long as it protected and provided for the marginalized Muslim masses as well as in the writings of al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111) who talked about the Caliphate’s importance in upholding the *maqāṣid al-sharī’a* or the higher purposes of the Shari’a and protecting the *maṣlaḥa* or public welfare.

Such flexibility regarding the Caliph’s personal character can actually be found much earlier, perhaps most notably in an explanation given by the final Rashidun Caliph, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (d. 40/661) (referenced in Anjum 2019, 31) where he tells a to group of radicals within his own army that, “People must have leadership (*imāra*), be it pious or impious.” When

pressed by his army as to why they ought to still obey an impious ruler, he responds by saying: “By it [the Caliph, even if imperfect] *hudūd* are established, public streets are protected, *jihād* is made against the enemy, and the spoils are divided” (referenced in Anjum 2019, 31). Here we can see a very instrumentalist understanding of the Caliphate articulated by one of its most prominent historical figures. Imam ‘Ali’s point was that, while it is obviously preferable to have a pious Caliph, even an impious Caliph could still successfully *do the job*, so to speak, so long as they upheld public order and appropriately presided over worldly public affairs. The institution of the Caliphate’s success ultimately lies in having someone lead it who is capable of implementing good governing practices.

Modern-day Islamic parties have also made efforts to wed contemporary good governance practices with the ideals of Islamic governance. Ziad Munson’s (2001) and Steven Brooke’s (2019) critically important works note how that the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt’s success over the years was rooted in the welfare services that it provided to diverse communities. Similarly, the AKP Party’s earlier success in Türkiye was due to its work and popular slogan of bringing welfare and justice to the people (Kaminski 2017). In more recent times, Pakistan’s still-popular former Prime Minister, Imran Khan, had similar priorities, noting that his “objective was to make Pakistan an Islamic welfare state on the model of *Riyasat e Madina*”.⁵ Many scholars have regarded the second Rashidun Caliph, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab, as being the first ruler to have created a universal welfare state in a Muslim-majority society (or even in the world). Even though he himself lived an extremely simple life, his taxation and guaranteed income policies provided a universal social safety net (Chapra 1980; Crone 2005). It is this successful welfare model that al-Mawdudi (1992) was also inspired by when he described good governance as a “beacon on a hill.”

Of the three visions we have outlined above, we expect this instrumental good governance model to have the strongest association with the Caliphate in the minds of most ordinary Muslims. Indeed, the knowledge of most believing Muslims of the charitable behavior of the early Rashidun Caliphs, the endorsement of such a model by a variety of influential Islamic thinkers and activists, and perhaps most importantly,

the active efforts by a range of modern Islamist parties and organizations to implement these instrumentalist ideas – from helping the poor to dispensing equal justice – as a key part of their governance projects, should make this vision the most central to popular conceptions of what an idealized Caliphate system would actually entail.

Deriving Hypotheses about Support for the Caliphate:

Drawing on the elite conceptions analyzed above, we can broadly outline several different hypotheses about the factors associated with popular support for the Caliphate. First, as we argued above, the Caliphate is often framed by Islamic thinkers, activists, and parties as a vehicle for the effective distribution of broad material benefits across society. Thus, we should expect those who value the provision of such public goods to be more likely to support the Caliphate. This leads to the following hypothesis, which tests our main argument:

Hypothesis 1: Those who want government to focus on providing broad public goods, such as inclusive welfare states or effective criminal justice systems, are more likely to support the Caliphate.

In contrast, we also outlined other visions of the Caliphate that have been propagated by Islamic elites. One such vision was of an autocratic and repressive Caliphate. Following this logic, we can derive two expectations. First, we expect that those who want to impose and enforce their religious views on society will back the Caliphate. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2a: Those who want government to focus on restricting public morality, such as banning the consumption of alcohol and enforcing the veil, are more likely to support the Caliphate.

Second, based on the autocratic-repressive view of the Caliphate, we also expect that those who hold authoritarian predispositions and attitudes will back the Caliphate. One key indicator of such attitudes is

an emphasis on obedience as a virtue (Mallinas, Crawford, and Frimer 2019); in fact, obedience is often one of several measures used in psychological scales of authoritarianism. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2b: Those who value obedience to authority and the law highly are more likely to support the Caliphate.

Support for the Caliphate may also be associated with a number of other factors. First and foremost, it should be closely bound up with support for the full application of the Shari‘a. The idea of fully applying the Shari‘a as the law of the land remains popular in much of the Muslim world. Recent surveys indicate that over 70% of the population in places like Malaysia, Iraq, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, and Indonesia, and Bangladesh support this objective.⁶ In fact, as stressed by modern Islamic thinkers, this is the Caliphate’s main objective and even its *raison d’etre* (Gibb 1962; Pankhurst 2012). This leads us to the third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Those who wish to see the strict application of the Shari‘a are more likely to support the Caliphate.

Of course, support for the Caliphate is not divorced from debates about the contemporary world order. In fact, modern ideas about the Caliphate like those of al-Mawdudi were developed in the colonial and post-colonial periods and were thus strongly shaped by a desire to reestablish Muslim authority and autonomy, particularly vis-à-vis the West. And while the Caliphate idea has been invoked by a range of contemporary Islamic thinkers and groups, that list includes prominent militant organizations such as Al Qaeda and ISIS, which have been explicitly anti-Western in their political outlook. In this sense, we should expect that support for the Caliphate is associated with unfavorable views of the West and of Western presence in the Muslim world in particular.

Hypothesis 4: Those who hold more negative or hostile views of the West and its presence in the Muslim world are more likely to support the Caliphate.

Examining Mass Conceptions of the Caliphate:

To test these hypotheses, we utilized the existing survey data discussed above. In particular, we use the second wave of the PIPA surveys fielded in Pakistan, Egypt, and Indonesia in 2008. We rely on these surveys for two key reasons. First, the PIPA surveys offer a larger sample size, wider case selection, and more representative sample than the Tessler surveys mentioned above (which, as noted, were mostly convenience samples in Arab cities). While it would be impossible to encapsulate the entirety of Muslim public opinion in any one group of surveys, PIPA does at least provide a large, systematic, and diverse snapshot of several major Muslim-majority countries, and thus a nice starting point for analysis.⁷ Second, the second wave of the PIPA surveys contains three different questions about support for the Caliphate, whereas the first wave only includes the single question about mass support for the aim of “[unify-ing] all Islamic countries into a single Islamic state or Caliphate.” This is significant because the latter question is probably least useful, as it includes an “Islamic unity” frame *in addition to* the “Caliphate” frame that is the central focus of our analysis. It may thus be measuring support for the political or even religious unity of the *umma*, independent of support for the Caliphate system as a political model per se. While this question is still informative, we have decided to focus on the 2008 surveys as they offer the most relevant battery of questions about the Caliphate model.

To measure public support for the Caliphate, we use two different questions from the 2008 PIPA surveys: (1) whether the Caliphate is “a better system of government than [the] country’s present system,” and (2) whether “all governments would be better if they were ruled under the Caliphate.” This gives us two different dependent variables, helping guard against overreliance on any one specific question wording. The two questions also correspond roughly to items commonly used to measure popular support for democracy.⁸

We use a number of questions from the survey to capture our hypotheses. To represent the main argument, we use items from a series of questions about the meaning of Shari‘a, which is not a simple concept

that has one single meaning for all Muslims. Rather, as shown elsewhere, it can have many interpretations, from inclusive welfare systems to restrictive dress codes (Fair, Littman, and Nugent 2018). In the PIPA surveys, people were asked to rate the importance within Shari‘a of (1) “providing welfare to the poor,” (2) “policing moral behavior,” (3) “applying traditional punishments for crimes, such as stoning adulterers,” and (4) “policing women’s dress.” We treat the first and, to some extent, the third questions as more about material provision (H1), and the second and fourth questions as more explicitly tied to moral regulation (H2a).⁹

Meanwhile, the other variables are straightforward. To measure respondents’ obedience to authority (H2b), we use a question which asks them whether they think “people should obey the law even if it goes against what they think is right.” To measure pure support for applying the Shari‘a independent of its interpretation (H3), we use a question about whether respondents want to “require a strict application of *Shari‘a law* in every Islamic country.” To capture opinion about the West and its influence (H4), we use items about whether respondents want to “keep Western values out of Islamic countries” and “push the U.S. to remove its bases and its military forces from all Islamic countries.” We also control for the respondent’s sect or school of Islam (Shi‘i, Wahhabi, Salafi, Deobandi, Sufi, other) as the Caliphate may appeal more to some communities in the faith more than others. Finally, we add country fixed effects as well as standard demographic covariates such as age, gender, education, and income. The models are all estimated with logistic regression and include only Muslim respondents, as this is the main population of interest.¹⁰

Table 2. Predictors of Support for the Caliphate in Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan¹¹

	(M1) Caliphate Better Than My Government (PIPA 2007-08)	(M2) Caliphate Better Than All Governments (PIPA 2007-08)
Attitudes		
Apply <i>Shari'a</i> Law	0.52*** (0.08)	0.53*** (0.08)
<i>Shari'a</i> as Welfare	0.29** (0.12)	0.31** (0.13)
<i>Shari'a</i> as Morality Police	-0.02 (0.14)	0.03 (0.14)
<i>Shari'a</i> as <i>Ḥudūd</i>	0.58** (0.26)	0.35 (0.26)
<i>Shari'a</i> as Women's Dress	0.12 (0.11)	0.16 (0.11)
Obedience to Authority	0.05 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)
Reject Western Values	0.23 (0.35)	-0.07 (0.36)
Remove U.S. Presence	-0.05 (0.12)	0.01 (0.12)
Controls		
Age	-0.35 (0.40)	-0.32 (0.39)
Gender	0.94** (0.43)	-0.03 (0.37)
Education	-2.37*** (0.59)	-1.88*** (0.53)
Income	-0.35 (0.40)	-0.32 (0.39)

	(M1) Caliphate Better Than My Government (PIPA 2007-08)	(M2) Caliphate Better Than All Governments (PIPA 2007-08)
Country Fixed Effects		
Indonesia	-0.06 (0.20)	-0.55*** (0.19)
Pakistan	-0.32 (0.23)	0.15 (0.23)
Constant	-1.81*** (0.59)	-2.33*** (0.60)
Observations	1,316	1,302

The results are shown in Table 2. As can be seen, one of the strongest predictors of popular support for the Caliphate is support for the application of the Shari'a throughout the Muslim world, underscoring the close link between these ideas (H3). Yet we also see differences in support for the Caliphate based on people's interpretation of Shari'a. Support for the Caliphate is significantly greater in both models among those who view providing for the poor (*welfare*) as a key feature of Shari'a, and significantly greater in the first model among those who view applying punishments mandated and fixed by God (*hudud*) as key. By contrast, it is not significantly greater among those who perceive policing moral behavior or restricting women's dress as key facets. The Shari'a envisioned by supporters of the Caliphate thus appears to be about providing effective welfare and justice systems – largely instrumental considerations – more than legislating modesty and morality, providing support for H1 (and not H2a).

As for the other variables, there is little impact for the obedience measure used to capture authoritarianism. Thus, there is no support for the autocratic-repressive vision of the Caliphate in our results, as its supporters are not more likely to want to impose their religious views on others via morality policing (H2a) or to hold authoritarian attitudes

(H2b). Meanwhile, the desire to keep Western values out of – and remove U.S. troops and bases from – the Muslim world (H4) somewhat surprisingly has little impact on popular support for the Caliphate, in contrast to H3. This does not mean that there is no geopolitical and civilizational element to its appeal, but it does suggest that Muslim populations may be looking inward as much as outward when considering the Caliphate as a model. Finally, in terms of demographic covariates, support for the Caliphate is significantly lower among Shi‘a, Sufis, and Wahhabis, higher among the uneducated, and lower in the second model in Indonesia than Egypt or Pakistan.

Original Survey Instrument

These analyses, however, do not directly analyze how the Caliphate is understood. In fact, they only measure the political values, identities, and preferences of its supporters and assume that their understanding of the Caliphate is consistent with them. In order to gain more direct leverage on these matters, we fielded an original survey with questions about the Caliphate and democracy in Pakistan.

While the choice of any single country presents inevitable challenges and tradeoffs, there are some rather apparent reasons why Pakistan is a worthwhile case to focus on for research like this. First, as Fair, Littman, and Nugent (2018, 430) contend, due to Pakistan’s unique demographics and history, it is an excellent case to study in order to better “understand the ties between conceptualizations of shari‘a governance and political preferences with respect to democracy and Islamist violence in Muslim countries.” Second, Pakistan is a large and influential country of 200 million Muslims often noted for the tremendous diversity of its Islamic traditions (Shi‘a and Sunni, Orthodox and Sufi), reflecting deep infiltration by different branches of Islam from throughout the Islamic world (Fuchs 2019; Reetz 2009). Finally, Pakistan’s complex relationship between democracy and political Islam make it of particular interest to investigate. It is important to remember that under British rule, it was the modernists – not traditionalists or the ‘*ulamā*’ – who were the most influential and powerful. As a result, in the words of Muhammad Qasim

Zaman (2018, 7), from Pakistan's inception, it would be the modernists who would go on to define "what position Islam would have in the Pakistani constitution, how and on what terms the madrasas would be reformed or Sufi shrines brought under state regulation, what shari'a based laws would be enacted, and within what boundaries they would have effect." In other words, the people of Pakistan have experience with both procedural democratic and Islamic political ideals for a long time, thus better positioning them to competently evaluate the merits of each when conceptualizing politics.

Conducted by the Pakistani Institute for Public Opinion Research (IPOR) in 2014, the survey was administered to a multistage stratified random sample of 1,000 adult subjects drawn from all four major provinces of Pakistan "proper" (Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). In the survey, the respondents were first asked about their support for each of the following ways of governing Pakistan: (1) "a democratic political system (public freedom, equal political and civil rights, balance of power, accountability and transparency)," (2) "a strong non-democratic leader that does not bother with parliament and elections," (3) "having a council of experts make decisions about what is best for the country," and (4) "a Caliphate system on the model of the Rightly Guided Caliphs." The list used was adapted from the second wave of the Arab Barometer (Q517), with the addition of the Caliphate system for our purposes. In this context, the Caliphate was the most popular political model, with 84% of the respondents rating it as a good or very good way of governing Pakistan. Meanwhile, that figure was 73% for democracy, 56% for technocracy, and only 27% for authoritarianism. Thus, as in the existing surveys, democracy and the Caliphate were the most popular forms of government. Moreover, simple correlations indicate that support for the Caliphate is positively and significantly related to support for democracy, suggesting that they may not be seen as oppositional at the mass level.

Additionally, the respondents were asked to rate the two most important components of democracy and the Caliphate, selecting from the following list of options: (1) "the chance to choose the government in elections," (2) "the freedom to criticize the government," (3) "relatively narrow gap between rich and poor," (4) "basic items (food, housing,

clothing) for everyone,” (5) “political stability,” (6) “fair and swift justice system,” (7) “application of *Shari‘a law*,” and (8) “other.” This list was also adapted from a question about the features of democracy included in the second wave of the Arab Barometer (Q515), with the latter three items added in this survey. The question allowed us to – for the first time – directly investigate the perceived areas of convergence and of divergence between the two systems. Following the primary argument, we would expect that the Caliphate will be viewed first and foremost in terms of its ability to provide broad material benefits throughout society, including effective systems of social welfare (4) and criminal justice (6).

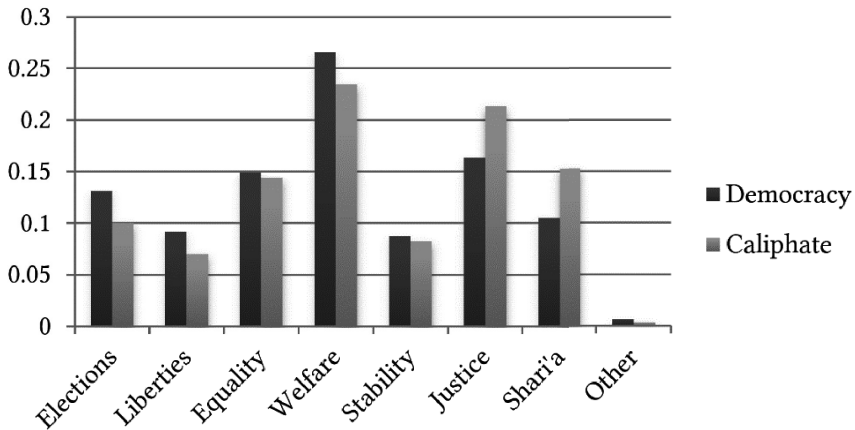


Figure 1. Pakistani Perceptions of the Two Most Important Features of Caliphate and Democracy

The results are summarized in Figure 1. The figure indicates the proportion of times each feature was chosen out of the total number of selections (combining both first and second place “votes”). As can be seen, the figure highlights several crucial distinctions between the perceived characteristics of democracy and the Caliphate. We calculate the significance of these gaps using t-tests for a difference in proportions. Doing so shows that democracy is seen significantly more in terms of the opportunity to select the government through elections ($p=0.002$)

as well as the freedom to criticize it ($p=0.011$). Moreover, democracy is also more linked to the provision of basic welfare throughout society ($p=0.026$). In contrast, the Caliphate is more closely connected to efficient and effective dispensation of criminal justice ($p=0.0001$) as well as the promulgation and application of the Shari'a ($p=0.0001$), which, as already discussed, is a complex and multifaceted construct itself. Overall, then, we can see an increased emphasis on democratic procedures and privileges under democracy, in contrast to a greater emphasis on a justice-based implementation of the Shari'a in the Caliphate system.

However, focusing exclusively on these disparities masks the similarity in the distributions. In fact, the two features that are viewed as most important in each system are the instrumentalist attributes of an inclusive welfare state and an effective justice system. On the other hand, the more normative characteristics of elections (and, particularly, liberties) are clearly seen as second-order considerations in both models, despite their relatively higher association with democracy. Indeed, this parallels some of the core insights gleaned from the public opinion literature on support for democracy examined earlier. For example, as concluded by Jamal and Tessler (2008, 99), results from the second wave of the Arab Barometer show that “economic issues are central to the way that many Arab citizens think about governance and, accordingly, that many men and women probably have an instrumental conception of democracy.” Our analysis shows that this holds true for the Caliphate as well: while there is some perceived space for elections and liberties, it is chiefly understood as an instrumental vehicle for the inclusive and effective delivery of social welfare and criminal justice programs.

Conclusion

The nation-state model has not been particularly kind to Muslims over the last century (Laurence 2021; Hallaq 2016; Kaminski 2022). Significant levels of support for the Caliphate system among Muslims therefore ought not be surprising when considering the state of affairs in which much of the Muslim world today finds itself. To date however, few scholars have focused on how the Caliphate is actually conceptualized

by contemporary Muslims in practice: is it perceived as a totalitarian theocracy, Islamic democracy, or something entirely distinct? To investigate, we first surveyed some of the more influential elite visions of the Caliphate system throughout Islamic history. While this only yielded a broad overview of several of the most prominent elite visions, it highlighted not only the concept's tremendous diversity but also some of the key autocratic, democratic, and technocratic models that have been promulgated and linked to the Caliphate by influential Islamic thinkers. This brings into sharp focus the building blocks of several different conceptualizations of the Caliphate, leading us to examine which ones have been "absorbed" by Muslim populations today.

Our first set of findings suggest that support for the Caliphate is intimately connected to popular support for the implementation of the Shari'a, but that the nature of the Shari'a envisioned in a Caliphate centers around providing broad and efficient systems of welfare and justice as opposed to policing public modesty and morality. This understanding of the Shari'a parallels Brandon Kendhammer's (2016) earlier empirical research on Nigeria which showed how the local Muslim population there commonly perceives of the Shari'a as the vehicle that will help unify the Muslim population behind a single religious identity, root out its problems of elite corruption and underdevelopment, and facilitate in better overall governance. It also parallels Fair, Littman, and Nugent's (2018, 460) findings on public perceptions of the Shari'a and Islamic government in Pakistan that showed how most people there understood as Islamic government, though not necessarily a Caliphate, as one that "implements shari'a by providing services and security for its citizens" which they go on to argue "is associated with increased support for democratic values."¹² Our findings also suggests that blind obedience to authority and opposition to the West are not influential in shaping the political attitudes of most Caliphate supporters. This suggests that, in line with our "good governance" model's assumptions, those who support the Caliphate are not necessarily motivated by its internationalist ends.

We then turned to an original survey conducted in Pakistan in 2014 to compare the two systems more deeply and directly. In this survey, we asked respondents to not only rate their support for the Caliphate and

democracy, but also to select the two characteristics most important to each system. The results of this method show that, despite some key differences, there is substantial convergence in public conceptions of the two models. Indeed, in both cases, the more normative considerations of elections, freedoms, and economic equality took a “back seat” to the more instrumentalist qualities of well-functioning systems of welfare and justice.

Our results thus resonate with Lars Berger’s (2019, 316) recent findings that support for following the Shari‘a “should not be understood as support for an [autocratic] Islamist political programme, but rather an expression of support for an instrument that is seen as facilitating ethical conduct or a just social and political order which reflects Islamic values more generally.” This has some important implications for our understanding of support for democracy and its competitors in the Islamic world. First, it illustrates the diversity of Caliphate conceptions in the Muslim world today and demonstrates that most ordinary Muslims do not view the Caliphate as either a repressive autocracy or a liberal democracy, but something compatible with a range of institutional forms. Second, it shows that the Caliphate, like democracy, is widely valued in instrumental terms as a vehicle for the broad social welfare and justice long lacking across the Islamic world. Third, it shows those who support the Caliphate are not necessarily driven by utopian or decolonial/counter-hegemonic motivations; rather their support for the Caliphate is anchored more so in what possibilities it provides for domestic economic and administrative improvements.

For pro-democracy activists, this is a double-edged sword. On one hand, stressing the congruence between democracy and the Caliphate might aid democracy promotion efforts in the Muslim world by endowing them with indigenous democratic legitimacy. Similarly, it might also help diminish the fear that the term incites in the West, which only fuels the focus on stability over reform in foreign policy toward Muslim countries. Yet, this similarity also suggests that the status of democracy as the “only legitimate game in town” within the Islamic world is not unalterably secure. If democracy delivers only descent into war and chaos – as it has in in the Arab Spring – the appeal of other models perceived as capable of meeting the fundamental needs of Muslim-majority populations, like the Caliphate, will only continue to grow.

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Endnotes

- 1 “President Discusses Global War on Terror,” *Office of the Press Secretary, The White House*, September 5, 2006.
- 2 In the World Values Survey, for example, the average percentage of respondents across Muslim-majority countries saying that democracy is a “very good” or “fairly good” way of governing their country is 89.3%. The figure is 88.7% across non-Muslim-majority countries.
- 3 “Arabs are Losing Faith in Religious Parties and Leaders” Arab Barometer, December 5, 2019. Accessed January 15, 2022 at: <https://www.arabbarometer.org/2019/12/arabs-are-losing-faith-in-religious-parties-and-leaders/>
- 4 Moreover, just looking at topline levels of support for the Caliphate assumes that its meaning is fixed and constant in existing surveys. We move away from this assumption by “looking under the hood” and probing what the Caliphate means through the beliefs of its supporters and direct questions about its characteristics in several different countries and contexts.
- 5 “Making Pakistan an Islamic welfare state is a top objective: PM Khan,” *Pakistan Today* [online], April 9, 2022. Accessed: December 28, 2023, at: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/04/09/making-pakistan-an-islamic-welfare-state-is-top-objective-pm-khan/>
- 6 See, “The World’s Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society.” Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, April 30, 2013, Question 79a. Accessed December 28, 2023 at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-overview/>
- 7 These three countries contained 28.4% of the world’s Muslim population in 2010, according to Pew data. Available at http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/muslims/pf_15-04-02_projectionstables74/.
- 8 Indeed, they parallel some of the agree/disagree statements often used to measure support for democracy, such as “democracy is a good way of governing my country,” and “democracy is better than any other form of government.”
- 9 We ran a factor analysis with the four different Shari‘a components to assess the validity of this division. We found that without rotation the variables loaded onto two separate factors as anticipated (e.g., the first and third variables on one factor, and the second and fourth on the other). We checked for multicollinearity with Spearman’s rank correlation matrix, and we found no evidence of substantial multicollinearity between the variables.
- 10 The results are substantively similar with ordinary least squares (OLS) and probit models, suggesting that they are not just artifacts of model selection. The results are also substantively similar with robust standard errors.

- 11 Source: PIPA 2007-08 data. Own calculations. Logistical regression models estimated with country-fixed effects, with Egypt as the comparison category, fixed effects for sectarian belonging (not shown), and clustered (robust) standard errors. Standard errors in parentheses. * = significant at the 0.1 level; ** = significant at the 0.05 level; *** = significant at the 0.01 level.
- 12 On the other hand, Fair, Littman, and Nugent (2018, 460) found that conceptualizations of “an Islamic government as one that implements shari‘a by imposing hudud punishments (physical punishments such as whipping, stoning, cutting off hands, etc.) and restricting women’s public roles is associated with increased support for militancy.”