The Affective State: Governance, Emotion, and the Shifting Meanings of Happiness in Pakistan, 1947–1988

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Abstract

I examine the socio-political and cultural construction of happiness in Pakistan during its formative four decades, from 1947 to 1988. I propose that 'happiness', far from being a simple private emotion, operated as a public and political concept, actively shaped and deployed by the state to legitimise its authority and navigate profound societal change. This essay explores how collective and individual conceptions of happiness were informed by political ideologies, social practices, and cultural texts during three distinct epochs: the foundational nation-building and internationalisation period (1947–1958); the age of developmental politics and populist socialism (1958–1977); and the subsequent era of state-led Islamization and military rule (1977–1988). Taking happiness as an emotion continually moulded by governance, economic policy, and religious discourse, I trace its shifting definitions. I establish that in the years following independence, happiness was constructed as a collective dream of national and democratic transformation, forged amidst the trauma of Partition. During Ayub Khan's 'Decade of Development', this definition shifted towards a discourse of material prosperity, which was later contested and reframed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's populist socialism. Finally, I suggest the Islamization programme under Zia-ul-Haq recast happiness entirely, linking it to spiritual satisfaction and public moral conservatism. This work contributes to the critical trend of affective history in South Asia, revealing the competing definitions of happiness that expose the underlying ideological shifts of post-colonial Pakistan's political culture.

KEYWORDS: History of Emotions, Pakistan History, Happiness, State Governance, Islamization, Post-Colonialism

Emotions, as multifaceted feelings, fundamentally define human lives, societies, and cultures. As Simon Thompson and Paul Hogget explicate, emotions are intrinsically socio-political and cultural phenomena (Clarke, Hoggett, and Thompson 2006). Of all human emotions, happiness holds a unique position as both a deeply individual goal and a grand societal ambition. Philosophers from Aristotle, who regarded it as *eudaimonia*, to Enlightenment thinkers like Jeremy Bentham, who framed it as a quantifiable condition of pleasure minus pain, illustrate that happiness is not a monolithic or timeless concept. Instead, I argue it is culturally, historically, and politically constructed. It is only in recent years that historians, such as Barbara Rosenwein, have begun to study feelings as historically contextualised experiences, products of defined 'emotional communities' (Rosenwein 2006). Darrin M. McMahon's seminal work, *Happiness: A History*, further traces how the concept has evolved in lockstep with governance, religious ideas, and societal constructs (McMahon 2006). These works establish a critical foundation: happiness is not mere joy, but a complex discourse that reveals the very structure and priorities of a society.

In the twentieth century, many modern nation-states were founded on an implicit, and often explicit, guarantee of securing the happiness of their people. Governments adopted this idea as a core policy goal, a framework for evaluation, and a tool for legitimising their ideologies. The newly formed post-colonial states of Pakistan, India, and Ghana, for example, all used the promise of happiness—allied with liberty, justice, and prosperity—to legitimise their hard-won statehood (Ayres 2009). For Pakistan, this concept is central to its national story, a story that begins with the profound trauma of 1947. Partition displaced around fourteen million people and claimed up to two million lives, birthing the new state amidst immense challenges (Jalal 1985). Yet, its early leaders, particularly Muhammad Ali Jinnah, articulated a crisp vision for the nation as a homeland where Muslims could live freely. In Jinnah's speeches, I find happiness consistently defined through the prisms of justice, equality, and faith, corresponding to the desires of a population that had endured immense suffering (Jinnah 1948).

I propose that this political definition of happiness was not static but was, in fact, redefined by each successive regime to suit its ideological aims. The political instability of the 1950s gave way to Ayub Khan's military rule in 1958, which ushered in an era that explicitly equated financial progress with national happiness (Burki 1999). This 'Decade of Development' hardwired industrialisation and consumerism into the national narrative. This materialist vision, however, exacerbated economic disparity, fuelling the unrest that brought Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to power. Bhutto, in turn, offered a populist, socialist vision, promising 'Roti, Kapra, Makan' (Food, Clothing, Shelter) and defining happiness as equitable social justice (Burki 1980). This era, too, ended in turmoil, leading to the 1977 coup by General Zia-ul-Haq, who initiated another radical redefinition. Zia's Islamization project recast happiness itself, detaching it from material or socialist ideals and linking it firmly to spiritual piety and public morality (Shaikh 2009). This essay will examine this history, tracing how political actors, economic structures, and cultural texts defined, deployed, and contested the meaning of

happiness in the first four decades of Pakistan's existence.

This study is built upon a theoretical foundation drawn from the history of emotions. The foundational text for my analysis is Darrin M. McMahon's *Happiness: A History* (2006). McMahon compellingly demonstrates how happiness evolved from a matter of luck or divine favour to a project of the self and, crucially for my argument, a responsibility of the state. His framework, which connects modern happiness to governance and the promise of progress, is the ideal lens through which I explore how Pakistan's leaders and institutions constructed happiness. Complementing this, Barbara Rosenwein's concept of 'emotional communities' (2006) provides me with an essential tool for understanding how emotions are shared and performed within specific social groups. I use her work to analyse the construction of national solidarity and well-being in Pakistan's early years, where shared feeling was paramount to national identity. Stuart Walton's *A Natural History of Human Emotions* (2004) further bolsters this framework by underlining the cultural contingency of feelings, allowing me to treat happiness in Pakistan as a historically specific construct rather than a universal biological state.

Turning to the specific historiography of Pakistan, the political analyses of Ayesha Jalal and Ian Talbot provide the socio-political scaffold for my inquiry. Jalal's *The Sole Spokesman* (1985) details the political mechanics of Pakistan's creation, outlining the popular desire for independence that I connect to a collective, albeit contested, dream of happiness. Talbot's *Pakistan: A Modern History* (1998) captures the immense difficulties the new state faced, including political vulnerability and economic pressures, which directly impacted the state's ability to deliver on its emotional promises. Furthermore, Shahid Javed Burki's *Pakistan Under Bhutto, 1971–1977* (1980) offers a granular look at the economic policies of the 1970s, particularly the 'Roti, Kapra, Makan' slogan, which I analyse as a state-led vision of happiness grounded in material equity. Farzana Shaikh's *Making Sense of Pakistan* (2009) is indispensable for the final phase of my study, as she unpacks the role of religion in forming the nation's ethos, providing a foundation for my analysis of how Zia-ul-Haq's regime tied happiness to spirituality and public virtue. This existing literature, however, focuses primarily on political and economic history, giving scant attention to the affective dimensions of these processes. My research seeks to fill this gap.

I employ a qualitative, interdisciplinary methodology, synthesising approaches from history, cultural studies, and the history of emotions to examine the narrative of happiness in Pakistan from 1947 to 1988. I argue that happiness, in this context, must be understood as a contested political and cultural discourse. My approach is rooted in McMahon's (2006) conception of happiness as a construct defined by governance and public desire, which I apply to the shifting socio-political dynamics of Pakistan. I also draw significantly on Rosenwein's (2006) idea of 'emotional communities' to discuss how national pride, religious identity, and cultural production worked to enact and contain shared feelings of happiness. This study analyses both primary and secondary sources to decode the multiple layers of meaning embedded in representations of happiness. The primary sources I utilise include official state documents, such as the

Sixth Five-Year Plan (1983–1988) (Government of Pakistan 1983), and the political speeches of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Ayub Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and General Zia-ul-Haq. These materials provide direct insight into how state actors formulated and projected ideas of happiness as part of a public agenda.

To move beyond the state narrative, I conduct a qualitative analysis of cultural and media texts, which I argue are key reservoirs of emotional history. I examine archival newspapers from the period, including *Dawn* and the *Pakistan Times*, to trace public discourse. Furthermore, I analyse cultural productions, specifically the poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz (2002) and Habib Jalib (1987), as critical sites where state-led narratives of happiness were both reflected and contested. These cultural artefacts offer profound insights into the popular affective landscape. My analysis is supported by interviews with individuals who lived through these periods, such as Makhdom Shahbudin Qureshi (2024) and Ghulam Muhammad (2024), which provide a community-based understanding of how these grand narratives were experienced. By triangulating state documents, media representations, cultural texts, and oral histories, my research bridges the gap between state discourse and lived reality, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how happiness was constructed, mediated, and struggled over during these formative decades.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF HAPPINESS IN EARLY PAKISTAN (1947–1958)

The partition of British India in 1947, which birthed the new state of Pakistan, was an event of profound emotional duality. It simultaneously represented the fulfilment of a collective dream for a homeland and an unprecedented human catastrophe. I suggest that the concept of 'happiness' in this initial decade (1947–1958) cannot be understood outside this tension. It was an ideal forged in the crucible of Partition's trauma, defined by the struggle for survival, and articulated by the state as a collective project of nation-building. The state, on one hand, promoted narratives of unity, progress, and spiritual identity as the pathways to happiness. On the other hand, the lived realities of displacement, economic destitution, and political instability created a deep and persistent gap between this state-sponsored hope and the daily experience of millions of ordinary Pakistanis.

The immediate emotional landscape of the new nation was dominated by the refugee crisis. The arrival of nearly seven million *muhajireen* (refugees) into West Pakistan placed an unimaginable strain on the fledgling state (Talbot 1998). These individuals arrived having lost homes, land, and family members, carrying with them the profound emotional scars of violence and displacement. For them, happiness was not an abstract ideal but the immediate, desperate search for security, shelter, and sustenance. The government was overwhelmed, and many refugees languished in camps or urban slums. This physical and emotional dislocation meant that the very first expressions of happiness were intertwined with the simple act of survival and the resilience of finding a new home, a sentiment that state narratives of triumphalism often overlooked (Qureshi 2024).

In this fragile context, I argue that the state, under the leadership of Muhammad

Ali Jinnah, actively deployed a specific vision of happiness as a political tool for unification. Jinnah's speeches, particularly his address to the Constituent Assembly, defined happiness not in material terms but as the product of 'justice, equality, and tolerance' for all citizens, regardless of their faith (Jinnah 1948). This vision provided a crucial emotional anchor for a population fractured by trauma. It framed happiness as a collective goal, a promise that the state owed its people in return for their suffering and sacrifice. This narrative positioned the state as the ultimate guarantor of well-being, linking national success directly to the emotional fulfilment of its populace, a common strategy in post-colonial nation-building (Chakrabarty 2000).

To build this shared identity, the state leveraged the unifying power of Islam. As a nation explicitly created as a homeland for Muslims, Pakistan's leaders and institutions framed Islamic principles as the primary pathway to both individual and national happiness. Political rhetoric, educational curricula, and public sermons centred on the idea that moral and spiritual improvement were the keys to contentment (Aziz 1967). Religious festivals like Eid became particularly potent moments, officially promoted as expressions of shared joy and solidarity. These celebrations served to reinforce the link between religious piety and societal happiness, helping to forge an 'emotional community' (Rosenwein 2006) out of disparate ethnic and linguistic groups. This religious framing of happiness was a powerful tool for national integration in these early, chaotic years.

Simultaneously, the state promoted education and economic development as parallel tracks to happiness. The establishment of new schools and universities was framed as a mission to empower the nation's youth, casting education as the key to unlocking national prosperity and, by extension, personal well-being. However, the realities of Pakistan's nascent economy presented a significant obstacle. The country lacked an industrial infrastructure, faced severe resource inequality, and was beset by poverty (Talbot 1998). While the government initiated land reforms and industrial policies, these efforts were often inefficient and failed to meet the public's high expectations. This disparity between the promise of economic progress and the reality of scarcity created an undercurrent of disappointment, a theme that would persist for decades.

Cultural narratives played a critical role in mediating these tensions. The poetry of figures like Faiz Ahmed Faiz captured the complex emotional zeitgeist, balancing the aspirations for a better future with a stark acknowledgment of the people's suffering (Faiz 2002). His work gave voice to a population grappling with the meaning of independence. Early Pakistani cinema and state-controlled radio broadcasts, like those of Radio Pakistan, largely amplified the government's message, telling stories of resilience, unity, and progress (Abbas and Sulehria 2021). These platforms functioned to build nationalism by creating and disseminating aspirational narratives, offering an escape from daily hardships while reinforcing the idea that collective effort, guided by the state, would ultimately lead to happiness.

Governance and public policy during this decade were defined by the struggle to make the state's promises of happiness tangible. The leadership, following Jinnah's

directive, stressed social justice as a cornerstone of its governance. Policies were designed to assimilate refugees and provide basic necessities, positioning the state as a welfare provider (Anwar 2024). However, the realities of entrenched elite power and bureaucratic inefficiency meant that these benefits were rarely distributed equitably. The concentration of power in the hands of a bureaucratic-military elite, as Ayesha Jalal has argued, quickly began to undermine the populist promises of the Pakistan movement (Jalal 1990). This created a growing disillusionment among the masses, who saw a widening gap between the promised 'land of justice' and their lived reality.

This tension was exacerbated by profound political instability. The first decade saw a revolving door of governments, constitutional crises, and the tragic assassination of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan. This constant political turmoil eroded public trust and severely hampered the state's ability to deliver on any of its promises, material or emotional. The increasing involvement of the military in politics further complicated the narrative. The imposition of martial law in 1958 by General Ayub Khan marked the end of this foundational era (Talbot 1998). It represented a decisive failure of the initial democratic project and set the stage for a radical redefinition of national happiness, shifting it away from Jinnah's ideals of justice and toward a new model of authoritarian development.

DEVELOPMENT, POPULISM, AND REDEFINING HAPPINESS (1958–1977)

The period from 1958 to 1977 witnessed two dramatic and conflicting redefinitions of national happiness, each orchestrated by a powerful authoritarian leader. First, I suggest General Ayub Khan's military regime (1958–1969) explicitly reframed happiness as a product of material prosperity and economic modernisation. This 'Decade of Development' was then aggressively supplanted by the populist-socialist vision of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971–1977), who defined happiness as social equity and the fulfilment of basic human needs. This era demonstrates with remarkable clarity how happiness can be instrumentalised as a core component of state ideology. Both regimes promoted their vision as the singular path to collective well-being, yet both of their state-led narratives ultimately fractured against the realities of public discontent, economic inequality, and regional disparity.

Ayub Khan's regime, which began with the 1958 coup, introduced a new, decisive vision for the country. I argue that Ayub's government was built on the premise that economic growth was not just a policy goal but the very source of national happiness and legitimacy. His regime pursued large-scale development projects with vigour, focusing on industrialisation, urbanisation, and agricultural modernisation (Burki 1999). Massive infrastructure projects like the Mangla and Tarbela Dams were promoted as tangible symbols of national progress, monuments to a future of prosperity. Government propaganda, disseminated through state-controlled media, relentlessly focused on how this economic modernisation would directly benefit the average citizen, effectively creating a state-sanctioned equation: development equals happiness.

This developmental vision fuelled the rise of a new urban consumer culture. As cities like Karachi and Lahore expanded, a

growing middle class gained access to consumer goods and lifestyles that had been previously unattainable (Ali 2015). This emerging elite embraced a Westernised ideal of material success, which was prominently displayed in media and advertising as the hallmark of a modern, happy life. However, I find this consumerist narrative was largely inaccessible to the rural poor and the growing urban working class. This focus on urban-centric growth and industrialisation created deep socio-economic divides, highlighting the tension between the state's aspirational ideal of prosperity and the lived reality of widespread inequality (Ahmed 2014).

Indeed, while Pakistan's GDP growth statistics during the 1960s were impressive, the benefits of Ayub's policies were highly concentrated, both geographically and socially. Industrial wealth famously pooled in the hands of a few elite families, while rural segments of the population were largely marginalised (Husain 1999). The 'Green Revolution', while increasing agricultural output, often did so at the expense of small farmers who could not afford the new technologies. This profoundly uneven distribution of resources generated widespread feelings of alienation and resentment, particularly in the geographically and ethnically distinct province of East Pakistan. This disconnect between the state's narrative of a happy, progressing nation and the actual experience of marginalisation was a primary driver of the political unrest that would ultimately topple Ayub's regime in 1969.

From the ashes of this unrest emerged the charismatic populist Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who offered a powerful counter-narrative. I propose that Bhutto's genius lay in his ability to capture this public discontent and redefine happiness entirely. He rejected Ayub's top-down developmentalism and instead championed a vision of populist socialism. His slogan, 'Roti, Kapra, Makan' (Food, Clothing, Shelter), was a masterstroke of political communication (Burki 1980). It viscerally defined happiness not as aspirational wealth or consumer goods, but as the fundamental right to dignity and the fulfilment of basic human needs. This message resonated deeply with the millions who had been excluded from Ayub's economic 'miracle', promising them social justice and a stake in the nation's future.

Upon taking power in 1971, Bhutto's government embarked on a sweeping and disruptive reform programme. It nationalised key industries—from banking and insurance to education and manufacturing—with the stated aim of redistributing wealth and breaking the power of the industrial elites (Burki 1980). Land reforms were also initiated to empower the landless peasantry. These policies were explicitly framed as moral imperatives designed to create a more equitable society, directly linking state action to collective happiness. However, these ambitious initiatives were fraught with problems. The nationalisation process was often chaotic, leading to bureaucratic inefficiency and economic stagnation rather than the promised prosperity (Ahmed 2024). Resistance from powerful landed and industrial elites further hampered implementation, creating a new set of public frustrations.

Cultural production during the Bhutto era vividly reflected this populist shift. Folk music, regional cinema, and popular literature celebrated the struggles and hopes of the working class, echoing Bhutto's

rhetoric of collective empowerment (Jalib 1987). These cultural forms became arenas for expressing a vision of happiness rooted in social solidarity and resilience. Yet, this period also saw the rise of cultural critiques, often subtle, targeting government corruption and the state's failure to deliver on its grand promises. This mirrored a growing public disillusionment as the initial euphoria of Bhutto's populism confronted the harsh realities of inflation, political turmoil, and the government's own increasingly authoritarian tendencies (Talbot 1998). The gap between the promise of 'Roti, Kapra, Makan' and the state's ability to provide it widened.

Throughout this entire period (1958–1977), social movements articulated alternative visions of happiness outside of state-led narratives. The 1960s and 1970s were marked by vibrant student movements that challenged state authority and demanded greater political freedom and social justice (Ali 2015). Labour unions and industrial workers, feeling excluded from the economic boom, staged strikes and protests demanding fair wages and better working conditions. These movements were not just about material gain; they were claims for dignity and recognition, forwarding a definition of happiness rooted in justice and political participation rather than state-bestowed prosperity. These grassroots expressions of collective aspiration directly contested the state's top-down definitions.

Gendered narratives of happiness also evolved significantly during this time. Under Ayub Khan, women's education was promoted as essential for national progress, linking female happiness to the ideal of the 'modern' educated mother who would raise a strong, prosperous new generation

(Shaheed 1987). State-sponsored initiatives encouraged women to enter professional fields, though this was largely limited to the urban elite. Bhutto's era extended this discourse through the language of social justice, expanding labour rights for working women and increasing access to higher education. However, these progressive narratives often coexisted with conservative social expectations, and the benefits rarely reached rural or working-class women, revealing a deep contradiction between the state's modernising rhetoric and the patriarchal realities on the ground (Rouse 2004).

The role of media in shaping these perceptions was decisive. During Ayub's rule, state-controlled television and radio were powerful tools for disseminating the narrative of progress. Programming frequently depicted the idealized lives of urban, middle-class families, presenting aspirational models of modern happiness (Abbas and Sulehria 2021). These representations, however, systemically omitted the experiences of the rural poor and working class, creating a significant dissonance. Under Bhutto, media narratives shifted to align with his populist ideology, celebrating the working class and themes of social empowerment. Yet, censorship and state control of the press remained, narrowing public discourse and exacerbating the tension between the state's propaganda and the grievances of marginalised groups.

Perhaps the most significant challenge to the state's narrative of happiness was the growing economic and regional disparity, particularly with East Pakistan. Ayub's policies overwhelmingly favoured West Pakistan, leaving East Pakistan's largely agrarian economy underfunded and

exploited (Jalal 1990). This systemic inequality was the primary grievance fuelling the Bengali nationalist movement, which culminated in the 1971 war and the secession of East Pakistan to form Bangladesh. This violent separation was a profound national trauma, shattering the state's foundational narrative of unity and progress. It stands as a tragic testament to the consequences of a state-led vision of happiness that excludes and marginalises a significant portion of its populace. Bhutto's subsequent attempts to address regional disparities in the west, while genuine, were often insufficient, and the emotional scars of this division reshaped the national psyche for decades.

Islamization, Spiritual Morality, and Societal Tensions (1977–1988)

The military coup of 1977, which brought General Zia-ul-Haq to power, initiated the most radical and deliberate re-engineering of 'happiness' in Pakistan's history. I argue that the Zia regime (1977–1988) undertook a systematic project of Islamization that fundamentally redefined happiness itself. This new state-led vision was a stark departure from the material developmentalism of Ayub Khan and the populist socialism of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Zia's government detached happiness from economic or social equity and explicitly linked it to moral discipline, spiritual fulfilment, and strict adherence to a state-sanctioned version of Sunni Islam. This chapter examines how this Islamization project sought to reshape public behaviour, cultural practices, and emotional orientations, and how this state-imposed moral framework collided with the complex socio-economic realities of Pakistan.

Zia-ul-Haq's ideological vision was grounded in the assertion that true happiness and societal harmony could only be achieved through the establishment of a comprehensive Islamic moral order (*Nizam-e-Mustafa*). In his public addresses, Zia consistently spoke of happiness not as a material condition but as a spiritual state derived from obedience to divine commandments and the rejection of 'Western' materialism (Haqqani 2005). His government's push for Sharia law was presented as the essential path to both personal contentment and social justice. This narrative positioned the state as the primary enforcer of morality, with the well-being of its citizens contingent upon their piety. This ideological shift, however, frequently and conveniently ignored the persistent socio-economic problems and structural inequalities that continued to shape the daily lives of most Pakistanis.

Legal reforms were the primary instrument for engineering this new moral landscape. The introduction of the Hudood Ordinances and amendments to family law were designed to embed religious principles directly into the state's legal framework (Korson 1982). These reforms were publicly justified as necessary measures to ensure justice and societal well-being, thereby linking happiness directly to legal and moral conformity. However, as many critics pointed out, these laws were often vague, disproportionately targeted marginalised groups, and severely curtailed the rights of women and religious minorities (Shaheed 1987). This created a profound contradiction between the state's declared aim of a 'just' society and the lived experience of injustice, particularly for women, who found their autonomy and happiness constrained by this new legal architecture.

Education reform was another critical pillar of Zia's project. The national curriculum was comprehensively revised to prioritise Islamic teachings and the moral obligations of the individual. Schools and universities were repurposed as institutions for cultivating a generation aligned with the state's Islamic values, with happiness presented as the reward for piety and moral rectitude (Malik 1992). This ideological infusion into the education system succeeded in reshaping public discourse over the long term. However, in the short term, it often came at the expense of intellectual freedom, critical thinking, and cultural expression, placing restrictive boundaries on thought and creativity. This led to a muted, less vibrant public sphere compared to the preceding decades.

This Islamization agenda extended deep into the realm of cultural expression. Zia's government actively promoted cultural practices deemed 'Islamic' while censoring those considered 'un-Islamic' or 'Western'. Media and entertainment were placed under strict control (Sulehria 2020). Films, music, and literature that did not align with the state's moral ideals were banned or suppressed. State-controlled television (PTV) and radio programming were mandated to promote themes of religious morality, conservative family values, and spiritual fulfilment. These narratives relentlessly reinforced the connection between happiness and religious adherence, but in doing so, they ignored the rich cultural diversity of Pakistan, effectively imposing a narrow, monolithic definition of 'acceptable' happiness and culture (Durrani 2024).

Amidst this cultural austerity, religious festivals were elevated as primary expressions of shared joy and spiritual devotion. Celebrations for Eid and Milad-un-Nabi, in particular, were officially sponsored and encouraged as symbols of national cohesion and moral discipline (Naeem 2011). These events became central to the regime's effort to perform its Islamic identity and demonstrate a 'happy', pious populace. Simultaneously, this state-led emphasis on a specific interpretation of Sunni Islam had the divisive effect of exacerbating sectarian tensions, particularly with the Shia community. The state's narrative of religious unity often masked deepening communal fractures, revealing the difficulty of imposing a single religious framework on a diverse society (Shaikh 2009).

Despite the restrictive environment, cultural expressions of spirituality flourished, though often in prescribed forms. Religious songs (*naats*) and poetry praising the Prophet became immensely popular, reflecting a genuine public turn towards piety that the state actively encouraged. These art forms reinforced the regime's narrative of happiness being grounded in faith (Malik 1992). However, I also find that this era produced subtle forms of cultural resistance. Artists and poets, unable to engage in direct political critique, often used allegory and metaphor to contest the regime's authoritarianism and the social injustices that persisted beneath the veneer of public morality. This quiet dissent highlighted the tension between state-sanctioned piety and the public's continued desire for justice.

Zia's moral project was fraught with tensions and contradictions. The most significant, I suggest, was its impact on women. The state's Islamization project relentlessly pushed women into the domestic sphere, casting them as the

primary guardians of family honour and national morality (Rouse 2004). The enforcement of dress codes, restrictions on women's participation in public life, and the discriminatory nature of the Hudood Ordinances created a reality where, for many women, the state's vision of happiness was a direct source of their marginalisation. This prompted the rise of courageous resistance from women's rights activists and organisations, who used protests, publications, and art to challenge the state's narrative and demand a more inclusive definition of justice and happiness.

The regime also attempted to align its economic policies with its Islamization agenda, redefining economic justice in religious terms. The state introduced 'Islamic banking' systems, designed to replace interest-based transactions with profit-sharing models (Haqqani 2005). This was promoted as a way to create a more ethical and fair economy, where financial well-being was aligned with religious piety. Furthermore, the state formalised the collection of Zakat (obligatory charity) and Ushr (agricultural tax) through the Zakat and Usher Ordinances (Government of Pakistan 1983). These policies were promoted as mechanisms for wealth redistribution that would care for the poor and thus foster social cohesion and collective happiness.

In practice, however, these economic reforms failed to address the deep structural inequalities of Pakistan's economy. The implementation of Islamic banking was often superficial, and the Zakat system, while providing some relief, was insufficient to tackle widespread poverty (Korson 1982). Furthermore, the state's interpretation of these laws faced resistance, notably from the Shia community, which objected to the state's mandatory collection of Zakat based on Sunni fiqh. Despite the regime's moral-economic rhetoric, wealth and power remained concentrated in the hands of military-linked elites, industrialists, and large landowners (Jalal 1990). The state's inability to meaningfully address this economic disparity exposed the limits of its Islamization project, revealing a stark gap between its ideological aspirations for a just, happy society and the persistent economic hardships faced by the majority of the population.

CONCLUSION

I have sought to explore the history of happiness in Pakistan from 1947 to 1988, arguing that it functioned as a dynamic and contested political concept, continually redefined by the state to legitimise its changing ideological foundations. This analysis, moving through the three distinct eras of nation-building, developmentalism, and Islamization, reveals that happiness was never a static or universal ideal. Instead, it was a fluid discourse, inseparable from the emotional and ideological underpinnings of each regime. My research illustrates the profound complexity of pursuing collective happiness within a diverse and politically volatile post-colonial society, highlighting the persistent interface between state narratives, cultural expressions, and the public's lived experience. The state's attempts to define and deliver happiness, while often rooted in genuine aspirations for national progress, were consistently undermined by structural inequalities, political instability, and the sheer diversity of the citizenry.

In the initial decade following Partition, I found that happiness was framed as the collective fulfilment of independence: a promise of justice, equality, and national unity articulated by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. This vision served as a crucial emotional anchor for a nation born from the trauma of displacement and violence. This narrative of happiness as a shared democratic project, however, quickly fractured against the realities of refugee crises, political instability, and the consolidation of elite power. The second chapter examined how this foundational ideal was replaced by two competing authoritarian visions. Ayub Khan's 'Decade of Development' explicitly tied happiness to material prosperity and modernisation, a vision that resonated with an emerging urban middle class but excluded the rural poor and exacerbated the regional inequalities that led to the 1971 secession of Bangladesh. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in turn, masterfully redefined happiness as populist social justice, capturing the public's discontent with his promise of 'Roti, Kapra, Makan'. Yet, his regime also failed to bridge the gap between its ambitious socialist rhetoric and the realities of economic stagnation and political turmoil. Finally, the third chapter detailed the most profound ideological shift, where Zia-ul-Haq's regime recast happiness in spiritual and moral terms. This Islamization project, while appealing to a sense of religious identity, I suggest, ultimately functioned as a tool of social control that constrained the rights of women and minorities, fostering exclusion and tension under a veneer of public piety.

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