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Instrumentalisation of Religion in Electoral Politics: How Leaders Leverage Faith in Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey

[Instrumentalisation of Religion in Electoral Politics: How Leaders Leverage Faith in Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey](#) • Book • 2025 • DOI: 10.1007/978-981-95-2848-6

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Abstract

This book examines the critical intersection of religion, democracy, and political leadership in three prominent Muslim-majority states—Malaysia, Pakistan, and Turkey. It offers a comparative analysis of the political careers and strategies of Mahathir Mohamad, Nawaz Sharif, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, exploring how these leaders have strategically instrumentalised religion to shape their political narratives, mobilise public support, and consolidate power. By examining the adaptive use of religion as a tool for governance, the book sheds light on the broader dynamics of religious politics in contemporary democracies. Using qualitative research methods, the book investigates the political rhetoric, policy decisions, and symbolic actions of these leaders, analysing how they navigate the tensions between Islamic principles and democratic institutions. Drawing on extensive historical and contextual data, it categorises religious instrumentalisation into three fluid strategies:

conservatism, nationalism, and populism. This innovative framework offers readers a fresh perspective on how religion functions as a versatile political tool, making it highly relevant to scholars and practitioners in political science, sociology, and religious studies. © The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2025.

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Professional aspects

Engineering uncontrolled terms

Comparative analyzes; Electoral politics; Instrumentalization; Malaysia; Pakistan; Political career; Political leadership; Power; Public support; Qualitative research methods

Engineering main heading

Public policy

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Abstract

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