

Faith and Power: A Comparative Study on Religious Influence in the State  
of Germany and Iran

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## Abstract

Religion serves not only as an individual's system of belief, but also as a tool for acquiring power. This research will examine the elements that comprise a religious state. A comprehensive comprehension of the concept of a religious state can be achieved by comparing two countries with contrasting characteristics, specifically Germany and Iran. This study uses a comparative technique and the process of collecting legal documents to examine Germany's unique church tax structure. This system erases the boundaries between the secular and religious domains, and it stands in opposition to Iran's theocratic rule that is based on Sharia law following the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The investigation incorporates an extensive examination of the literature, historical materials, and legal texts. According to the findings, Germany's financial and educational connections to the church make it challenging to retain the country's secular mentality however, it does not make it a religious state, despite its efforts. Iran exemplifies a religious state due to the significant integration of Islamic ideas inside its political and legal structures. Consequently, Iran is a theocratic state. The results of this comparative analysis reveal the intricate and subtle connections between governments and faiths and what makes a government a religious state, offering valuable insights into the political and social dynamics that are shaped by these numerous interactions.

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# Introduction

Religion plays a significant part in our day-to-day lives; it is a personal feature of the way we decide to conduct our lives and the way we choose to identify ourselves. It is also possible for religion to play a role in the functioning and governance of a nation, which can have both beneficial and harmful effects and vice versa. Generally speaking, the subject of study known as religion and state relations is concerned with the link that exists between religious organisations and governmental organisations. Through the course of history and even in the present day, this relationship has fluctuated between comprehensive integration, which occurred when religious leaders held political authority, and tight separation, which occurs when religious involvement in areas pertaining to the state is diminished. The Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Enlightenment in Europe are two significant historical events that have had a significant impact on the relationship between the church and the state in the modern day.

To gain an understanding of the relationship that exists between the state and religion is the purpose of this thesis. By providing a comprehensive explanation of what a secular state is and what a religious state is, as well as providing the necessary historical context, it will be possible to comprehend the relationship between religion and the state. The question "Does the separation of the church and the state in Germany really make it a non-religious state?" should serve as the primary research subject that will be investigated. This is accomplished through the use of a comparative investigation with two nations that are exceptionally abundant in this subject matter. Germany and Iran are the two countries. Making use of these two countries as examples because there are a lot of questions about whether Germany is independent from the church or not; yet, by bringing in such a religious example as Iran, it helps to see whether or not Germany is independent from the church.

The notion of the separation of church and state is one that has been around for a long time. The western world is the focus of this discussion. In Germany, for example, there is a distinct tax structure within the church that could make it impossible to differentiate between the church and the state financially. On the other hand, this does not imply that it is entirely separated from religion or wholly religious.

The process of secularisation in the Arab world achieved significant progress at some point during the 20th century; yet, political and social pressures have caused reversals throughout the century. Iran is an example of a religious state in which Islamic ideals are deeply established in public administration, which stands in stark contrast to the secular framework that Germany has in place. It is Edward J. Eberle's "Church and State in Western Society: Established Church, Cooperation and Separation" and Raymond Hinnebusch's "The Politics of Identity in Middle East International Relations" that will be the primary sources of material that will be used for this topic. Both of these authors have written extensively on the subject.

With regard to the manner in which this will be carried out or the methodology that will be used, this section provides a description of the research methodologies that will be used to investigate the relationship between the government and the church in Germany, as well as the comparative study with Iran and the manner in which Iran is a religious state. The primary focus of these procedures will be on legal documents, and they will involve the collection and comprehensive examination of pertinent data. In the beginning, we will begin with the first two chapters by doing a comprehensive review of the current literature in order to provide a solid historical foundation and perspectives that are pertinent. Finding significant concepts and analysing the ways in which church-state relations in Germany have evolved

over the course of time is the primary objective of this review. In terms of Iran, the literature review that will be examined will have a similar concept in order to compare the situation before and after the religious entrance on the country's territory. This collection will consist of scholarly articles, books, and legal documents that are pertinent to the investigation on hand. After that, it will be easier to comprehend the fundamental legal principles that govern these exchanges if you bring the legal material that is included in chapter 3 here as evidence. Within the context of that chapter, the primary concept is to do the comparison investigation. will make use of the information obtained from the examination of the documents and the literature in order to carry out a comparison.

The use of these methodologies will assist in providing us with a structured approach to investigate and comprehend the intricate connections that take place between the government and the church in Germany, as well as the interactions that take place between religion and the state in Iran, which serves as a comparison country. The purpose of this research is to provide significant information regarding the political and religious circumstances that exist in both countries.

# Chapter 1

## State Separation in the West

The moral and legal concept of "separation of church and state" holds that the government and religious organisations shouldn't interfere with one another's affairs. This is the meaning of "separation of church and state." Many democratic societies are built on this specific ideology, which aims to protect both religious freedom and a secular government.

Considering the background, the most famous and most mentioned example of institutional separation is found in the United States of America. In a historic letter dated 1802, Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, referred to the "wall of separation between church and state" (Jefferson 1802). "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," is a clause found in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which was added in 1791 (U.S. Const. amendment. I). This basically translates to giving you the right to be unhindered by state or religious organisations.

Historical speaking, however, the most well-known philosophers who supported a secular state throughout the 17th and 18th centuries of the Enlightenment were John Locke and Voltaire. They fought the notion of combining the power of the church and the state and defended religious freedom. This was the reason that the official division of church and state was created (Israel 2001).

One can see by examining the causes of the official separation of religion and state that a number of distinct elements contributed to it. Several politicians and intellectuals, including



those already mentioned, worked very hard to find ways to keep religion from causing conflict inside the state. This is so because, especially after the Reformation, religious disputes in Europe were important. Terrible wars, like the Thirty Years War, sprang from religious differences both inside and outside of nations (Israel 2001). Philosophers who flourished during the Enlightenment fought for civil liberties and the notion that secular principles should direct the government instead of religious ones. This concept affected not only recently formed democratic republics but also a large number of political figures. This philosophy was considered, for example, when the constitutions of France and the United States of America were being drafted (Israel 2001).

In the United States especially, individuals like priests, nobles, and kings posed a threat to create a perilous aristocracy. A campaign was thus launched to keep any one faith from seizing power of the state. Calls for religious liberty also surfaced. This made the state obliged to take a neutral position on issues related to religion (Ragosta 2018).

Many European countries had official churches before their national division. One fully fledged church that closely worked with the government was the Church of England. This is still the case; however, it serves more as a show. Religious leaders often wielded considerable political power, and occasionally the government would force people to follow a particular faith. Persecution of religious groups perceived as minority could follow from this (Eberle 2011). It is among the literary works that provide a thorough examination of the complex interaction between the state and the federal authority. This talk is a part of a bigger scholarly argument over how the church or religious intuitions affect the state. Edward J. Eberle wrote a work of literature titled "Church and State in Western Society: Established Church, Cooperation and Separation". We shall also be reading Paul Coleman's review of the same book.

Among the most significant things he does in his literature review is present fresh material, refutes the conclusions of past research, and takes a range of positions. He builds on the foundations laid down by earlier study and made room for historical and legal analysis of the interaction between the state and the church. Then, by combining three different countries, comparing them, and noting the differences between their models. A useful case study to help narrow and concentrate on the problem at hand and ascertain if the separation of church and state matters is Germany. Trying to grasp the subject better, it helps to compare and contrast Germany's past with the present circumstances.

To show how the state and the church did not totally split after their separation in Germany is crucial to connecting their ideas to the topic of this thesis. His work shows that the two facets of German society are still in close communication even if Germany has moved from a concept of unity between church and state to one of collaboration. Based on the taxation model, the new one of the relationships between the church and the state is developed. Church and state were separated, and this concept was created afterwards. Apart from forcing religious education, the state is in charge of taxing the church. This is one way, claims Eberle (2011), to show that the church and the state in Germany are interdependent in fundamental ways rather than being apart. Let us first grasp the idea of the German church tax. The robust bond between the church and the state is demonstrated by the church tax system. It affects their freedom in turn, and it makes others question how far apart they really are in Germany. The best illustration to use to comprehend the intricacy of the relationship between the state and the church is the taxing system used by the German church. Church independence is typical in secular regimes. Conversely, the Kirchensteuer is the name of such a tax in Germany. This means, according to Eberle (2011), that members of the listed churches pay a specific church tax to the state. By linking religious institutions to government funding, this strategy makes them dependent on the government and makes it difficult to tell the two apart.

When you examine the tax, structure related to churches more closely, you will see that it guarantees religious institutions a sizable sum of money, which helps them to keep up their social activities, cultural facilities, and services.

We shall start by giving some historical background and elaborating on the significance of Germany's shift from a state-church unity to a cooperative relationship in order to provide a historical context for the effect that Germany had.

Taking up the years before 1919, sometimes referred to as the pre-Weimar republic. By far the most powerful factor in the country was religion. More precisely, the country was ruled by the Protestant and Catholic churches. Germany at that time placed a great deal of weight on religion. The church was often handled as if it were a department of the state by several German governments at the time. Numerous religious laws influenced civil laws since clergy members were often in positions of responsibility in public organisations. The church at the period was very influential because the monarch was closely associated with it. Church and state were very much one (Eberle 2011). Nevertheless, a number of factors were taken into account when the Weimar Republic was founded after World War I. These many developments culminated in the division of the church and the state. This new approach of relating to one another now regards the state and the church as two different entities. Their law, which is contained in Weimar constitution article 137, brought about this. "There is no state church" (Artikel 137 GG) states this article. This established religious neutrality and proved that the state had behaved discriminatorily. Naturally, this protected religious freedom and finally caused the marriage between the state and the clergy to end.

When the Nazi administration took office, things were somewhat different from what they had been. Numerous problems between the church and the Nazi state emerged during that

time. This is because the Nazi administration primarily used the Catholic and Protestant churches to their advantage, or to argue that they were using them to further their ideology. Stated differently, the Nazi regime aspired to control the Protestant and Catholic churches equally (Eberle 2011).

The Nazi dictatorship wanted to build a church for the Reich. This idea was to merge all the churches into a single Reich church that would be used to propagate Nazi doctrine. With its huge membership, this amounts to the church being used as a weapon for power. As to Eberle (2011), the church was forced to work with the dictatorship for whatever reason rather than being voluntarily inclined to do so.

The deal came about through the Catholic Concordat, a contract negotiated for the Holy See by Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, who would later become Pope Pius XII, and for Austria by Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss and his Foreign Minister, Kurt Schuschnigg. On July 5, 1933, a contract was made between the Holy See and Nazi Germany to safeguard the interests of the Catholic Church in Germany in return for allegiance to the Nazi regime. It became operative on May 1, 1934. Signed on July 5, 1933, this agreement. It was more like cooperating under pressure than it was like being really divided or united, claims Eberle (2011).

The division of Germany into its eastern and western parts during the years after World War II brought about tremendous changes. When east Germany was a historical entity, the state forced its people to be atheists; this was seen as a model for separation since the state was seen to be prejudiced against religion at the time due to the communist. Given this, the church was quarantined and placed under observation. Conversely, things were pretty different in west Germany. There existed a unique kind of partnership between the church and the state. Their contribution was more of a team effort than it was of bringing a single

model. Instead than claiming authority over the government, the church worked with it in a number of ways, claims Eberle (2011). Laws and agreements controlling this cooperation gave religious institutions the chance to engage in public life while maintaining their independence. The nation continued to be a partnership model as soon as it was reunited. Its well-defined legal systems upheld government independence, but it also encouraged collaboration in fields like social services, education, and taxes (church tax), among other areas. The link is managed by the laws that protect religious freedom and the autonomy of religious communities. In this way, cooperation and maintaining separation in the matter are balanced. The church's standing in German society, which goes back to a time when the church held a considerable degree of political and social power, is where the church tax first appeared. People in contemporary Germany continue to be influenced by this historical connection when considering and comprehending the functions that the state and religious institutions perform in society. Some think that the tax structure for churches reflects the general attitudes of Germans on religion because religion still has a big influence on public life and politics. With this tactic, religious organisations are assured of financial support but are also kept in their ties to the government, which makes total separation challenging and convoluted.

The tax structure the church uses illustrates how complex the relationship between the church and the state is in Germany. This is achieved by illuminating problems with state neutrality and autonomy as well as the historical background that gives this system its unique character. This interdependence is the reason why in contemporary Germany the line separating religion and state seems less genuine and effective. This mutual reliance affects the relationship between religion and governance.

Coleman's assessment shows just how hard it is to really divide the state and the church in

Germany. He shows that all these components are important in the development of this connection by looking at historical legacies, legal frameworks, and socio-political factors. The idea that the state and the church are two different entities is called into question by the fact that churches are represented on public and government advising bodies in Germany. Particularly evident is the mixing in areas like public broadcasting, where churches have long held duties that may affect the direction that public policy and culture follow. This is because religious leaders or representatives sit on German public advising bodies. Additionally, present are religious delegates. This does, in fact, raise the assumption that the church and the state are not separate institutions but rather deeply entwined. The church has always been vital to the way German society has operated. One can relate this kind of portrayal to German history.

Examining another work by Jurgen Moltmann, "Religion and State in Germany: West and East," offers a clear grasp of the church's function in public institutions and that it is similar to what it was in the past, albeit not as robust as the secular understanding that surfaced after the war. Church leaders' current roles on boards that oversee sectors like media and education are eerily similar to previous roles they had in the past in terms of the state-church connection. It is similar, claims Moltmann (1986), to the ways it had been entwined. It is quite clear from the German context that this kind of representation does not uphold the idea that the state and the church are entirely separate entities. Prejudice of course would arise from this, and it would include elements like the creation of public legislation that would affect moral and cultural standards. This is meant to illustrate that, although there is a complicated relationship between the state and the church in Germany, this does not make Germany a religious state; rather, it is not meant to be a bad thing. Naturally, one might view this as a perspective on the cultural past and social function of religious institutions in

Germany. Church members on public boards and the more general issue of how secular democracies handle their religious pasts are related. This means that in Germany one must reconcile respecting the laws of a modern secular state with recognising the historical importance of religious organisations.

The research that we discussed shows that, in theory, religion and state are kept apart. Practically speaking, though, there are connections that lessen the benefits of this division than they seem. Legal, social, educational, and financial ramifications are among these links.

## Chapter 2

### **During secularization and after in the Arab World.**

I shall illustrate the secular historical framework of the Arab world within the parameters of this chapter. A succinct historical perspective is necessary to have a basic knowledge of the elements that have shaped the Arab world of today. I shall use Iran as an example both before and after the 1979 revolution. This will enable me to narrow the subject. Before the revolution, Iran was a secular state; but, after it, it turned into a very religious state. Iran was a secular state prior to the revolution.

To give a historical context for the Arab world both before and after secularism was implemented, it is first crucial to define and understand the idea of secularisation.

Secularisation, or secularisation in the Arab world, is the process of emphasising secular institutions, laws, and administration while at the same time reducing the impact of religion in public and political reality. The historical, political, and social elements affected this process in the Arab world in somewhat different ways. There are unquestionably several reasons and causes behind the secularisation of such area. There is proof that the Arab world started to secularise in the early 1900s. Numerous noteworthy developments that were made helped this pattern. A case in point are the Ottoman Reforms. In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire—which at the time ruled most of the Arab world—implemented the Tanzimat reforms (Cleveland and Bunton 2016). Aiming to modernise the state and lessen the power of religious leaders were the Tanzimat changes. Moreover, later secularisation attempts could be carried out because of the foundation these modifications created. More developments were brought about by the major influence of colonialism, especially in the Levant and northern Africa. On their Arab colonies, European colonial powers including



Britain and France set up secular legal and educational systems. These regimes were also forced upon the Arab colonies. To give two examples, the French government founded secular schools and legal codes in Algeria and Tunisia (Goldschmidf 2009). Similar kind of push was given to the establishment of secular societies by the British presence in Egypt.

As World War I came to an end and the Ottoman Empire fell, nationalist movements progressively gathered steam throughout the Arab world. Apart from their religious commitment, these groups usually gave modernity, the establishment of states, and the creation of national identities a lot of attention. While not Arab, leaders like Mustafa Kemal Atatürk of Turkey had an influence on secular nationalist movements like to those in the Arab world (Hinnebusch 2019).

Secularisation was at its height in the 1950s and 1970s. Secularisation proceeded more quickly at this period because nationalist organisations were founded in the wake of World War II. Many Arab countries attained their zenith of their secularisation drive during this time. To give an example, this century was typified by Arab nationalism and socialism and began with the ascent to power of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt in 1952. As Cleveland and Bunton (2016) note, Nasser's policies encouraged industrialization, land reforms, and government control over religious organisations. Other nations, most notably Iraq and Syria—both of which were members of the same political party as Gamal Abdel Nasser—showed comparable trends. Middle of the 20th century, the Ba'ath Party emerged in these nations, bringing with it a secular Arab socialist philosophy. Reforms to education and the law also had a big impact. The legal and educational systems were heavily attempted to become secularised at this time. Secular educational establishments developed from the general suppression of religious education over time. For example, in Egypt the state seized control of the esteemed Islamic university Al-Azhar and changed its curriculum to include

courses unrelated to Islam (Goldschmidt 2009). Furthermore, there were laws meant to secularise family laws and other legal systems, therefore lessening the influence of Sharia, the conventional Islamic legal system.

An important reversal of Arab secularisation occurred in the late 1970s and lasted into the late 20th and early 21st centuries, resulting in the creation of religious governments. Time and the reverse to religious states. Several reasons contributed to this change. An example would be the Islam revival. The Iranian Revolution happened in 1979, and its victory encouraged Islamist groups all throughout the Arab world to revert to Islamic governance and principles (Tripp 2013). This incident proved that the foundation of a modern Islamic state may also be found in religious beliefs. Another instance would be Saudi Arabia's influence. Cleveland and Bunton (2016) claim that the growth of Wahhabism, aided by Saudi Arabia's oil industry's money, helped the region's conservative Islamic customs to unite.

Another aspect is political, which encompasses, for example, the collapse of secular governments. A general feeling of disillusionment resulted from political persecution, economic stagnation, and the fall of secular nationalist governments. The inability of these governments to uphold their promises to social justice and growth may be a factor in the growing popularity of Islamist substitutes (Hinnebusch 2019).

This reversal includes a major political element in the form of power struggles. Political leaders from many nations are using religious rhetoric more and more to maintain their positions of power. Especially noteworthy examples of this approach were Egypt and Syria, whose governments tried to mislead opponents of Islamism by implementing more obviously Islamic policies (Tripp 2013).

The people's urbanisation and the fast increase in population have led to serious socioeconomic problems. This is so because secular administrations usually struggled to

address these problems. Islamist organisations thus filled the void by offering social services and a feeling of solidarity (Goldschmidt 2009).

Movements at the local level would be another illustration. Popular grassroots Islamic movements in recent years include the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Hamas in Palestine (Cleveland and Bunton 2016). These groups are tackling economic concerns and applying pressure for Islamic-based political reform.

Early in the 20th century, the Arab world started the secularisation process; it gathered steam in the middle of the century and peaked between 1950 and 1970. But by the late 1970s, a multitude of reasons—including the resurgence of Islam, political disenchantment with secular governments, and economic concerns—had caused the tendency to reverse itself. The trend towards more religiously oriented regimes is still having an impact on the political and social climate of the Arab world.

Focusing on Iran both before and after the 1979 revolution as, in the view of the western world, Iran was a democratic and westernised country before to that upheaval. But it changed into a more religious state after the 1979 revolution.

Iran became an Islamic Republic led by Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979 from a secular state ruled by the Pahlavi family. In Iranian history, this incident signaled a major sea change. This revolution seriously changed the political, social, and cultural environments of the country. This thesis section aims to examine the major distinctions and consequences between Iran's religious government following the revolution and its secular state before it.

The Pahlavi dynasty ruled Iran in the years preceding the 1979 Iranian Revolution; Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was the last monarch to do so. Two of the main traits of the Shah's rule were secular orientation and Iranian modernization in the western manner. The Shah dominated the era during which a large number of secular policies were put into

place. Think of the westward marches, for example. The Shah put into place plans meant to quickly modernise and Westernise the nation. Among these was the start of the White Revolution in 1963, a set of steps meant to promote the industrial sector's expansion, land ownership reform, and the increase of educational possibilities (Milani 2012).

Part of the secular plans, which also included the reorganisation of education, a large sum of money was spent on education. Apart from lessening the power of religious schools, the government encouraged the introduction of a secular curriculum. The literacy rate rose noticeably, and universities were built to look like those in Western nations (Cleveland and Bunton 2016).

Apart from that, there were changes in society and culture, hence cultural westernisation was the process of spreading Western customs, clothing, and lifestyles. Dress regulations lifted at this time made Western-style attire more fashionable, especially in cities.

Whatever the state of secularism at the time, the Shah's government was incredibly repressive in terms of the political life of the nation. The well-known brutality that accompanied the suppression of political opposition was attributed, by Abrahamian (1982), to the SAVAK, sometimes known as the secret police.

Secular nationalism provided even another example of political life. The Shah tried to cultivate a sense of national pride apart from those connected to religious affiliation by promoting a nationalist philosophy that highlighted Iran's pre-Islamic past.

The creation of the religious administration is evident when one looks at the years that followed the 1979 Revolution. Leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution was Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The Islamic Republic of Iran was to be established and the Shah to be overthrown. Theocratic in structure and rigorously adhering to Islamic doctrine defined the new government. This statute created rule of law. The Supreme Leader is the religious figure who exercises ultimate power over Iran's theocratic political system. Cleveland and Bunton

(2016) state that the constitution was based on Sharia law and that religious members occupied several important government posts.

The Sharia was then accepted as the cornerstone of Iranian law. As the Islamic legal system developed, it was made the cornerstone of all legislation. This included, according to Keddie (2006), the application of Islamic criminal laws and the substantial power that religious leaders had over the court system.

Naturally, this then changed the national society and culture. The just elected government started a full-scale Islamization campaign. Keddie (2006) said that this involved imposing Islamic dress standards, such the need that women wear headscarves and other such laws, as well as promoting Islamic values through the media and education.

When one considers the political dynamic, opposition was suppressed, so political repression was a feature of both the Shah's and the Islamic Republic's governments. Abrahamian (2008) claims that disagreements against political activists, academics, and opposition leaders led to their imprisonment or even murder.

Furthermore, there was religious nationalism propaganda going on. There existed a type of state-sponsored nationalism closely linked to Shia Islam. The revolution was presented as a rejection of secularism and Western imperialism and a return to Islamic core values.

Iran became a religious state after the 1979 Revolution, after the Pahlavi dynasty had ruled it as a secular one. Significant modifications to the nation's political environment, social policies, and system of government followed from this. Whereas the religious state gave more weight to Islamic doctrine and theocratic government, the secular state gave modernization and Westernisation first priority. Iranian national identity and its standing in the world community are still shaped by these changes.

## **Chapter 3**

### **What makes a religious state religious? A Comparison Between Iran and Germany**

What is a religious state exactly? The easiest method to understand and comprehend what constitutes a religious state or what are the characteristics that define a religious state is by comparing Iran and Germany.

Definition of a religious state is the first stage. It and the theocratic administration have certain parallels, but the latter places the authority of the clergy. Not every time is a religious state the reality. Under this type of government, all other power is subordinated to the supreme ruling authority. This cannot happen unless a religious leader or individual—it can even be an institution—has a substantial impact on the state's administrative and legal frameworks. The way this is done is by fusing political administration with religious ideas. A state is deemed religious if religious beliefs directly or significantly influence its laws, policies, and government. The whole population being subjected to religious laws regardless of individual religious connections and religious leaders having total control over political authority are two instances of how this blending of religion and state may manifest. These two are but two instances.

One can see the features of a religious condition. For instance, the religious leaders of the state are usually people of great spiritual and political power. The application of this dual function guarantees that religious teachings will stay the guiding principles.

Moreover, the laws of the religious belief system usually serve as the foundation for the legal system of a religious state. Application of Sharia law under Islamic theocracies, which would

impose Islamic norms for both civil and criminal concerns, would be an excellent example of this. The following would be another example: Usually, and occasionally negatively, religious states promote one religion at the expense of other religious traditions like Iran or Saudi Arabia. A lack of religious freedom may result from this as the state may encourage and spread one religious perspective while stifling all others.

Theocratic monarchy, clergy theocracies, religious republics, secular governments with a religious influence (sometimes referred to as religious republics) are among the various varieties of religious countries. Governments can be categorised based on their religious affiliation provided they have the political authority to do so and the manner in which religion affects government. Theocratic monarchy are those forms of regimes where the head of state is regarded as a deity manifest or as divinely guided. Take the Dalai Lama-led Tibetan government from before Chinese rule was established, for example. In this government, the Dalai Lama was the spiritual and political head (Goldstein 1991). Religious leaders with independent temporal and spiritual power run clerical theocracies. Iranian Supreme Leader, a religious cleric, is ultimately in charge of all political decisions, as one modern example (Abrahamian 2008).

Having religious influence in secular governments is not strictly speaking theocratic, but certain states do have a considerable degree of religious influence over politics and culture even in the absence of official religious governance institutions. Though Saudi Arabia is a monarchy, Islamic law forms the basis of the legal system, and religious officials have a big say in the course the government follows (Al-Rasheed 2010). We speak to such political systems when we discuss religious republics, which are republics in which a constitution is drafted based on religious ideas and all legislation are in compliance with the official religion. For instance, Pakistan bases its judicial system on Islamic principles and regards

itself as an Islamic republic (Ziring 1997).

To ascertain if Iran and Germany are religious nations, one must look at their individual legal systems and constitutions and then contrast them with the traits that have been previously identified as being linked to religious regimes.

From 1781 until 1789, the United States of America had its first constitution, the Articles of Confederation. Together with creating a restricted central authority, it also created a "league of friendship" among the states and gave them all a great deal of autonomy. The Constitution Centre and the National Archives (2021) claim that the Articles of Confederation avoided the concentration of religious power and instead stressed state sovereignty. Rather, they stressed the need of secular governments cooperating in their governance.

One may classify Iran as a republic, and more especially as a theocratic republic. It is quite clear from a constitution passed during the 1979 Islamic Revolution that Islamic values are ingrained in the administration. The judicial system is one of the various arms of government under the considerable authority of the religious Supreme Leader. Military services are one of the other branches of government. Every law and regulation must be based on Islamic principles, according to the Islamic Republic of Iran's constitution (1989).

Iranian constitutional law and Sharia law are deeply entwined, and religious authority greatly impact legislative and executive actions. Comprising Islamic jurists and clerics, the Guardian Council is in charge of making sure that all laws fully follow Islamic precepts. Because Iran blends religious authority with political power, Abrahamian (2008) concludes that it is categorically a religious state.

With a theocratic government strongly based in Islamic doctrine, Iran is a prime illustration of a religious state. Rewriting of the Islamic Republic of Iran Constitution between 1979 and 1989 is an example of this fusion of religion and state. The Iranian Constitution mandates



that every rule and regulation must be based on Islamic principles, especially the Qur'an and the Sunnah, in order to highlight the importance of religious law in the governance of the country (Constitution of Iran, 1989).

The supreme leader of Iran is a religious cleric who exercises considerable influence on the military, the judiciary, the media, and the government officials by looking at the organisation of the country. This stance guarantees that Islamic values will stay the compass for state administration (Iran Chamber Society, 2024). To be sure that legislation passed by the parliament complies with Islamic law, this committee of six Islamic jurists and six legal experts evaluates it. All legislation is to be ensured by the guardian council. Supervising elections is another duty of this council, which further entails the introduction of religious control into the political system (Constitution Project, 2024). There is the Judiciary in addition. Judges are expected to be conversant in Sharia since the judicial system is founded on Islamic law. This procedure is meant to guarantee that all court rulings follow Islamic principles (Iran Chamber Society, 2024).

States that are secular include Germany. The German constitution, or Grundgesetz, is the foundational law of the Federal Republic of Germany and it stresses the division of religion and state. The freedom of conscience and beliefs is protected by Article 4 of the Basic Law, thus a state religion has not been established. As to the 1949 Grundgesetz, religious bodies are allowed to handle their own affairs free from state intervention, and the government functions apart from religious organisations.

Moreover, because Germany has a secular legal system, religious groups have no political power or influence over state law, even though they are free to engage in social and cultural events. The state is obviously secular since it is dedicated to preserving its neutrality in

religious issues and defending the religious freedoms of all of its citizens (Grundgesetz, 1949). The German constitution emphasises the division of religion and state rather strongly. Secularism rules in Germany. Known by another name, the Fundamental Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Grundgesetz was passed in 1949 and emphasises the ban on the creation of any official religion while protecting the right to religious freedom.

The freedom to practise one's faith is one of the elements that shows this. Article 4 of the Basic Law ensures that people may follow their religious activities without government interference, therefore preserving their freedom of conscience and faith. This clause emphasises how much the state is dedicated to upholding religious neutrality (Grundgesetz, 1949). Still another example is the handling of secular issues. There is no affiliation with any one religious' denomination by the government or its institutions. Religious organisations are free to engage in social and cultural events, but they cannot sway state law or exercise political influence (Grundgesetz, 1949). As stated in the 1949 Grundgesetz, the legal system in Germany maintains the rule of law independent of the prevailing religious beliefs.

How very different their views are on the function of religion in governance are shown by comparing the legal systems of Iran and Germany. Being a religious state, Iran gives religious leaders a great deal of power. This is because Islamic concepts are included into the political and legal systems of Iran in its constitution. But Germany's Basic Law guarantees that the government stays secular and that religious freedoms are safeguarded from official meddling.

## Conclusion

Through our investigation of Germany and Iran, we have acquired knowledge about the elements that make up a religious state, as well as the traits that define such a state and how it operates. This understanding has been derived from studying these two different contexts. Through the analysis of historical trends, legal frameworks, and present behaviours, we have gained a more comprehensive comprehension of how religion and state can either become interconnected or maintain their separation.

Germany saw a significant historical change from a unified church-state partnership to a cooperative approach, which exemplifies one of the most notable forms of secularism. The presence of a church tax system signifies ongoing financial and social connections between the church and the state. However, it does not categorise the state as a religious entity. Despite the establishment of a formal separation between the church and the state by the Weimar Constitution, this distinction was upheld shortly after World War II.

Iran exemplifies a religious state where Islamic beliefs are deeply embedded in the government's governance. Since the 1979 Revolution, Iran has firmly constructed its political and judicial systems based on Sharia law. The Supreme Leader and the Guardian Council have the duty of ensuring that any law adheres to Islamic teachings.

To address the research issue, "Does the separation of church and state in Germany truly render it a secular state?" The conclusions were derived from the analysis of legal documents.

In response to your query, the current model of Germany is not seen as a religious state in comparison to Iran, which can be classified as a religious state. Considering the absence of religious sovereignty or superiority held by Germany over its subjects. By leveraging the legislation established by the German government, individuals are empowered to enjoy their

entitlement to religious freedom, while the church lacks the power to dictate the governance of Germany.

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