

The Struggle for Democracy in Pakistan

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Abstract

Ever since it came into existence in 1947, Pakistan is struggling to establish a viable political system. Democracy and democratic institutions have yet to take roots. Its polity has been battered by long spells of military rules and even longer spells of religious, ethnic and economic turmoil. An analysis of the political processes and the underlying socio-economic dynamics along with the bearings of regional and international factors, from 1947 to 1953 suggests that while the state was being constructed, the institutional balance of power shifted in favour of the bureaucracy and the military. During the post-military regimes, the democratic experiences provide an insight into the patterns of conflict that led the military elite to the restoration of a military-hegemonic system. Much of Pakistan's dysfunction is attributed to the disproportionate focus on ideology, military capability, non-state actors and external alliances. Pakistan requires reimagining and reconceptualization as an inclusive, pluralist democratic modern Muslim state.

Keywords: Institutional balance, military rule, civil-military imbalance, colonial state, feudal elites, post-military regime, reimagining

Introduction

Pakistan, as a post-colonial state, has a chequered history with few interludes of democratic rule for more than seventy years of its existence. Historically, Pakistan was envisioned by Quaid-i-Azam (the great leader) Mohammad Ali Jinnah as parliamentary democracy with federal structure. However, democracy could not

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strike roots in the country, manifesting an exceptional case of democratic instability and breakdown. Parliamentary democracy collapsed four times primarily on account of disproportionate development of institutional matrix and the political ambition of the 'man on the horseback'.

Democracy, the system ostensibly given by the various constitutions of Pakistan (1956, 1962, and 1973) was never allowed to function effectively and flourish. Since 1958, time and again, democracy has been strangled by the periodic and long spells of military rule. The right to freedom, political activities, and civil liberties have been denied and the constitution trampled under military boots.

The military has repeatedly intervened in October 1958, March 1969, July 1977, and October 1999 to arrest the development of democracy in the country. For nearly half of its existence (32 years), Pakistan has been under direct military rule or a military-dominated government. Even during the remaining period, the army enjoyed significant influence in Pakistan. Repeated military coups have hampered 'Pakistan's civilian institutional capacity undermined growth of representative institutions and fomented deep divisions in the country' (Shah, 2011, p.70).

Pakistan's Flirtations with Democracy

Pakistan's political history unveils a long drawn-out battle between authoritarianism and democracy. Despite some limited and tentative experiment with democracy from 1947 onwards, Pakistan repeatedly found it immensely difficult to create and sustain democratic institutions. 'Indeed it quickly became a garrison state where the ultimate power rested with the military as the most powerful political and social institution, with many privileges and risks that come with such a status' (Paul, 2014, p. 70). 'Seventy years after its birth', notes Husain Haqqani Pakistan remains 'a semi-authoritarian and volatile semi-autonomous, national security state, which has failed to run itself consistently under constitutional order or rule of law' (Haqqani, 2018, pp.13-14).

The democratic instability and breakdown have been interpreted mainly in terms of 'civilian-military imbalance', 'security state', 'garrison state' and 'overdeveloped state' syndrome/propositions. Pakistan's first democratic experience (1947-1958) was characterized by the trappings of parliamentary government, but throughout this period the soul of democracy had long been smothered in the absence of general elections and lack of interest aggregation and participation through elections and political parties as the vehicle for mobilization. Effective power was, throughout, firmly in the hands of a bureaucratic-military oligarchy, notwithstanding successive changes in the form of government and installation of political parties and political leaders in apparent change of the state apparatus.

In this context, Atizaz Ahsan aptly remarks: "Pakistan had retained the structure of the colonial state from its inception. Lacking an indigenous bourgeoisie, dominated by a feudal elite totally dependent upon the colonial bureaucracy, deprived of well-structured, programme-oriented and duly encadred political parties, and without a judiciary which would jealously protect civil authority and citizen's rights, Pakistan saw a general chocking of the democratic spirit from its early days. First, the civil and military bureaucracy and then the fundamentalists filled the vacuum" (Ahsan, 2005, p.141).

The All India Muslim League (ML), which took credit for the creation of Pakistan, was unable to transform itself from a nationalist movement into national party with grass roots organizations that could led the nation on the path of democracy, constitutionalism, and planned economic development. The ML was not comparable in organizational terms to the Congress Party of India, as it failed to perform the twin task of interest articulation and aggregation and has played a pre-dominant role in the politics of India for decades. The analysis of the origin, organizational and support base of the ML the pre- and post-independence eras reveal that these factors had immensely impacted Pakistan's democratic experiences, including the accommodation of ethno-nationalist identity demands.

In October 1958, apprehensive of emergence of new political forces challenging the power of military bureaucratic axis, on the eve of country's first-ever general election the military demolished the constitutional order and established 'preventive autocracy' (Newman, 1959). Within eleven years of Pakistan's creation, the military effectively interrupted the process of democratic evolution, however tenuous and flawed it was.

After the long spells of military rule under Ayub Khan (1958-69) and Yahya Khan (1969-71), Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's advent to power in December 1971 seems to have ushered in an era of historic significance, for not only was it the first elected civilian government but also the longest to remain in power (1971-1977) in Pakistan. The military's low prestige in the wake of fiasco of 1971 created an opportunity to depoliticize the officers' corps. To bring the military under civilian control, Bhutto adopted several measures, such as, imposing constitutional constraints on the political role of the military, instituting changes in the military command structure and the creation of a para-military force—Federal Security Force. The function of the military had clearly been laid down in the constitution for the first time to put an end to the military's involvement in the politics. But these civilian constraints proved insufficient to tame the generals. The post-military regime of Bhutto provides an insight into the patterns of conflict that led the military elite to the restore of a military-hegemonic system.

The third spell of democracy came after General Zia's demise in 1988. The eleven years of democracy (1988-1999) were not without roadblocks and pitfalls. During this period a crisis of governability had emerged as a concomitant of the democratic process because the 'troika system' of power sharing blended the authoritarian tradition with democracy. The military continued to be the strongest political force that could veto Pakistan's transition to democracy. It is pertinent to note that the democratic regimes of both Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif had lived under the shadow of military. In the 'troika system' of power sharing comprising the president, the prime minister, and the

army, the army reserved the veto power. Benazir Bhutto (1990 and 1996) and Nawaz Sharif (1993) governments respectively became casualty of the Eighth Amendment.

Pakistan has made its latest revival of democracy for the fourth time in 2008 when the military disengaged itself from the governance once again after the eight years of General Parvez Musharraf's authoritarian rule (1999-2007). The contemporary post-Musharraf democratic transition from 2008 onwards reveals some incremental progress in terms of an elected civilian government completing full five-year terms (2008-2013), and (2013-2018), power being peacefully transferred from one political party to another. In 2013, Pakistan broke its curse of zero democratic turnovers (Shah, 2016, p. 23). All its previous democratic transitions had been aborted by military coups. However, the contemporary democratic experiment is labelled as 'hybrid democracy' because the civilian government is in charge but not given full control of the 'key levels of state power'.

Emergence of the Pakistani state

The creation of Pakistan was the result of a political and ideological movement that began as an idea in 1930s and became forceful with the passage of Lahore Resolution in 1940, which presented the two-nation theory and in 1947 Pakistan came into being. Partition of India and emergence of Pakistan in 1947 was an unparalleled instance in world history, as idea of Pakistan became a reality in a relatively short span of time. "The political movement for Pakistan lasted a mere seven years – for a whole variety of reasons – acquired a state of its own in 1947. Few nations in the world had such a short gestation period" (Varshney 2008-09, p. 10).

Interestingly, the demand for Pakistan evolved primarily among Muslim minority areas of British India i.e., the United Provinces of Awadh and Agra (presently Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand) and Bihar. The Muslim elite of these regions employed a nationalist ideology and that was over-determined by its socio-economic and political interests-which provide a validity

of Gellner's theory of Nationalism. Christophe Jaffrelot notes that Muslim nationalism 'did not derive from 'primordial' identity markers but was an ideological construction'. The Muslim intelligentsia employed identity markers through political organizations such as the Muslim League, to shape a nationalist Muslim identity. The 'manipulation of cultural symbols focused not only on Islam but also on Urdu'.... Muslim nationalism did not drive from, 'primordial, identity markers, but was an ideological constructions' (Jaffrelot, 2002, pp.10-11).

For Salman Rushdie (1983) and others, Pakistani nationhood was 'insufficiently imagined', given the ambiguities inherent in the demand for Pakistan. 'The insufficiency of the founding imagination has led to enduring pathologies and self-inflicted injuries in Pakistan' (Varshney 2008-09: 3). The two-nation theory provided the country with a '*nationalist* ideology – it has even been described as an 'ideological state' – which has been formulated against India, the 'other nation'. But it did not endow Pakistan with the sociological qualities of a nation' (Jaffrelot, 2002, p.8).

However, the nation that was supposed to embody this new identity remained rather elusive till the last moment, since the Muslim majority areas did not adhere to the idea of Pakistan till the mid-1940s. In 1946, they did so as a reaction to the rise to power of the Congress and that was 'a brief moment of political unity', to borrow the phrase of Yunas Samad (Samad, 1995, p. 90). In this context, Jaffrelot aptly remarks that since, 'the Muslim League had not fully taken roots in the region where Muslims were in a majority. The domination of the 'nationalist' over a nation that was still to be mobilized – or whose mobilization had to be sustained – became clear immediately after independence in 1947' (Jaffrelot, 2002, p.15).

The first and foremost 'strain' according to president Ayub Khan 'was ideological'. "Till the advent of Pakistan none of us was in fact a Pakistani, for the simple reason that there was no territorial entity bearing that name... prior to 1947 our

nationalism was based more on an idea than on any territorial definition... ideologically we were Muslim; territorially we happened to be Indian; and parochially we were conglomeration of at least eleven smaller, provincial loyalties” (Ayub Khan, 1960, p.549). Since its inception, Pakistan was confronted the ‘monumental task to spell out an identity’ (Ali, 2000). Crafting a Pakistani identity was considered a matter of national survival which meant that “Pakistan wove an intricate pattern of ideological differentiation with India” (Pande, 2018, p.16). After independence, religion-based identity and a national narrative about Pakistan's creation were constructed through educational curriculum and media propaganda. Since its emergence in 1947, Islam and anti-Indianism have been the two 'master narratives' of Pakistan's polity. Islam both as a cultural idea and as a religion failed to unite Pakistan's disparate communities. 'In the end', notes Varshney “anti-Indianism, albeit suffused with touch of ambivalence, has turned out to be a stronger uniting force” (Varshney, 2008-09, p. 6).

Civil-Military Imbalance

The first eleven years of independence were crucial for moulding and shaping Pakistan's political and administrative profile. However, state building in the precarious circumstances in the early years of the young nation entrenched the centre and the bureaucratic-military elite at the cost of political institutions and political processes. Pakistan came into being in extremely difficult conditions with serious domestic problems coupled with acute sense of insecurity vis-a-vis India. State survival became primary concern of the rulers of Pakistan who equated survival with powerful central government, strong defence posture, high defence allocations, and emphasis on monolithic nationalism. The imperatives of strong, coercive state apparatus were given priority over the need to create participatory political institution. “The army and bureaucracy have been the self-appointed guardians of the Pakistani state since independence. Political parties and constitution have come and gone or been

transformed, but these twin un-elected intuitions have remained the pillars” (Talbot, 2000, p.215).

Muhammad Waseem argues that the process of state-building in the new state has led to ascendancy of the non-parliamentary forces — first the migrants-dominated civil bureaucracy and later the army (Waseem, 2009, p.191). Partition and migration, to borrow Waseem's terminology, created a ‘Punjabi-Muhajir state, in as much as the commercial and professional elite drew heavily on these communities’ (Waseem, 2005, p.56). In the case of the ‘migratory elite’, in particular their lack of an electoral constituency in Pakistan made them natural allies of the bureaucracy in their own efforts towards postponement of elections *ad nauseum* (Waseem, 1989, p.97). All this hampered the path of development of participatory democratic tradition and federal shared rule in Pakistan. Migrants shaped the psyche of the new nation in terms of focusing on the feeling of insecurity vis-a-vis India, commitment to Islamic ideology and relative intolerance to sub-national identity.

At the time of its emergence Pakistani leaders were confronted with the problem of virtually a non-existent administrative structure, ethnic division, geographical incongruity of the eastern wing, shortage of funds, unresolved issue of national identity, and insecurity vis-a-vis India along with gigantic problems of refugee rehabilitation. The solution they came up with to deal with these challenges had three elements, namely, ‘bureaucratization, centralization and homogenization’ (World Press, 2008/09).

Although, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of the nation, was publically committed to a ‘constitutional social democracy’ and federalism, and believed that the best way to ensure the survival of the new state was through a unitary central government. In view of the urgent need to develop an effective administrative structure, and given the weak support base of the Muslim League in the new state, the ‘new leaders opted to continue their bureaucratic rule, and play down the political participation and

democratic processes. This laid the foundation for a weak democracy, which persists to this day' (Ali, 1983, p.42).

Hamza Alavi interprets the prevalence of the military in the state structure of Pakistan by constructing the 'Overdeveloped State' thesis. Alavi argues that Pakistan inherited a colonial state apparatus that were relatively overdeveloped in relation to society in which a Punjabi-dominated military-bureaucratic oligarchy dominated (Alavi, 1972, p.62). The institutional dominance of predominantly Punjabi civil-and military-bureaucracies within the state structure has curbed participatory politics and aggravated regional grievances. The representative government which may have provided a better functioning of federal democracy by providing better balance between the provinces and linguistic groups, has been kept under suspension (Kukreja, 2003, pp.13-14).

Colonial Legacy of the Vice-regal Tradition

For the political and administrative framework of the new state, Jinnah preferred to follow traditions and legacies handed down by the British Raj (Jalal, 1985) and arrogated more powers to him by assuming the office of the Governor-General (Sayeed, 1967, p.62). According to Satish Kumar, 'The dominant characteristic of the political culture that developed in Pakistan right from the beginning may be described as "Vice-regal"- a system in which power structure remained vertical and did not develop horizontally. It was thus inherently detrimental to the successful operation of a democratic federal polity' (Kumar, 1984, p.26). Jinnah, while being the Governor-General was also the Muslim League chief, and the president of the Constituent Assembly.

Jinnah's successors also used 'viceregalism' as a governing formula to consolidate state authority. 'Backed by the military', notes Aqil Shah (2016, pp.26-27), 'the viceregal executive sacked non-compliant civilian cabinets (1953), delayed constitution making, disbanded parliament when it crafted a federal democratic constitution (1954), removed an elected government in East-Pakistan (1954), and ultimately amalgamated the province

of West-Pakistan into 'One Unit' to create parity with East-Pakistan' (1955-1956).

Though both India and Pakistan inherited an identical colonial legacy and state apparatus at the time of independence, Philip Oldenburg maintains that in 1947 the balance of power favoured political leaders in India while it tilted towards the bureaucracy in Pakistan. What is referred to 'as the Punjab school of administration — epitomized by paternalistic colonial officers like John Lawrence — was central to Pakistan while it was peripheral in India. In addition, the Muslim League was a first-generation and relatively elitist party unlike the Indian National Congress which had over the years fashioned itself into a mass movement' (Oldenburg, 2010).

Under Jinnah's Governor-Generalship, control of the Muslim League cabinet and the political machinery was handed over to the governors and the bureaucrats. It was either Mudie or Cunningham who sent detailed reports about cabinet and party functions (Sayeed, 1967, p.63). The main tenor of their reports was that politicians were not allowing the government machinery to function with its pre-independence bureaucratic efficiency. A dying man, Jinnah could only think of short-term remedies. He decided to place the politicians under the bureaucratic tutelage (Sayeed, 1980, p.26). Consequently, 'Jinnah's charisma was tapped by the only well-organized and authoritative civil institution in the country, namely, the bureaucracy which enjoyed the former's patronage' (Waseem, 1994, p.338).

Hamza Alavi rightly observes: 'Jinnah's unintentional contribution to the future of Pakistan was a demotion of political leadership in favour of the bureaucracy' (Alavi, 1983, p.78). And it was the bureaucracy that had usually extended a willing hand to the military to intervene in Pakistani politics in 1958. This was in sharp contrast to India where Nehru, for all his considerable authority, was answerable to both the Congress party and the Parliament, and the bureaucracy and military were subordinate to civilian control of the elected leaders. The impact of bureaucratization

proved ominous for the democratization in Pakistan. The provincial government was subordinated to the center through the bureaucracy which rode roughshod over the politicians holding office.

The removal of governments in NWFP, Sindh and Punjab by federal government in the first two year of Pakistan's birth, marked the beginning of a process whereby provincial aspirations as well as constitutionalism were brushed aside by the autocratic federal government (Bansal, 2012, p.123).

Ascendency of Civil-Military Oligarchy

In the post-Liaquat era Ghulam Muhammad's ascendancy marked the second phase in Pakistan's bureaucratic ascendancy, demonstrating the emerging power of bureaucrats who openly played a political role and manipulated politicians to suit their purpose (Kukreja, 1991, p.39). Soon, as Saeed Shafqat described it, the result was the 'conversion of the office of the Governor-General into an instrument of bureaucratic intervention' (Shafqat, 1997, p.26). Mass politics and Muslim League faded into oblivion and Pakistan by the early 50's was a captive of the bureaucratic-military arm of the state. A strong nexus also grew between the civil-bureaucracy and the military. Both were drawn and continued to be drawn from the same, mostly land-owning class and Punjabi ethnic group. It is not surprising, as Hamza Alavi observes, that in Pakistan's first two decades, 'the locus of power centred on the civil services rather than either the political leadership, whom it dominated, or the army with which it closely collaborated' (Alavi, 1983, p.72). Thus, the "ruling alliance, drawn mainly from the top echelons of the bureaucracy and army", adopted "a concerted strategy, to exploit and manipulate rivalries among the political leaders, which accentuated political fragmentation and ministerial crises" (Jalal, 1990, pp.295–296).

The civil-military oligarchy, supported socio-economically by feudal landlords, comprador bourgeoisie, and metropolitan capitalists, to use the phraseology of Hamza Alavi, never allowed democracy to flourish. The core leadership of the Muslim League

and civil-military bureaucracy came from predominantly the Punjabis and Muhajirs who had stakes in the central power. With a majority of the Bengali population, it was clear that an election on the basis of adult franchise would shift the power away from Punjabi-Muhajir elite to the Bengalis. The reluctance of the central leadership to introduce parliamentary democracy was directly linked with ethnic division of the country (Noman, 1988, p.9). By the use of ideological jargon, imposition of Urdu and schemes such as parity, One Unit, martial law or civilian rule, the powerful elite had denied heterogeneous communities any participation in the national affairs, or has simply manipulated plurality in order to perpetuate its own power. The culture of political intolerance and recourse to religion to impose unity could not forge national integration in the real sense of term. The colonial legacies of bureaucratic rule, centralism, government dismissal, assembly dissolution, the clash between regional identity and Muslim nationalism, and the system of ruling indirectly with the help of a collaborative network of local rural intermediaries, like landlords and tribal chiefs, lent Pakistan some very peculiar traits of elitist politics. Ayesha Jalal contends, "It was during the first decade of independence that an interplay of domestic, regional and international factors saw the civil-bureaucracy and the army gradually registering their dominance over parties and politicians within the evolving structure of the state" (Jalal, 1990, p.295).

Military: The Final Arbiter

The military is Pakistan's premier institution and is 'euphemistically referred to as 'the institution', or 'the establishment' to borrow Husain Haqqani's phrase (Haqqani, 2018, p. 161). The military started as the dominant institution in the new state and dominance it has perpetuated over the years. The institutional developments within the military had significant consequences for civilian politics because they reinforced the officer corps' emerging guardian in mentality. The partition of British India's assets in 1947 had left Pakistan with one-third of the British Indian army and only 17 per cent of its revenue sources

(Haqqani, 2018, p.161). Despite the lack of resources, the Pakistani armed forces enjoyed three massive political advantages over civilian organizations, as suggested by S.E. Finer, namely, a marked superiority in organization, a highly emotionalized symbolic status, and a monopoly of arms.

The Pakistani political elites conception of acute insecurity vis-à-vis India, including Kashmir conflict and irredentist Afghan claim on Pakistan's northwest territories spurred militarization of the Pakistani state in the earlier years and facilitated the expansion of army's role. It has been argued that Pakistan's pursuit of parity in defence capabilities propelled the army in a commanding position in the corridors of power. The obsession to attain parity with India has helped to boost the military expenditure at the cost of the developmental projects. 'As state-building and survival became synonymous with the 'war effort', the civilian leadership diverted scarce resources from development to defence and abdicated its responsibility to oversight over the military, thereby allowing the generals a virtual free hand over internal organizational affairs and national security management' (Shah, 2016, p.25).

The pre-eminence of the security narrative made it difficult for Pakistan to debate fundamental policy choices. In this context, Husain Haqqani argues, 'Most nations raise an army proportionate to the size of threat to their security. In Pakistan's case, the magnitude of security threats has been expanded to match the size of the army inherited from the colonial era (Haqqani, 2018, p.161). The US military and economic aid in 1950-60s (and Pakistan's participation in Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), the 1980s and in the new millennium, enhanced Pakistan's capabilities qualitatively as well as quantitatively and contributed towards fanning the army's praetorian appetite.

Shuja Nawaz in his authoritative study notes that 'Pakistan's history is one of conflict between an underdeveloped political system and a well-organized army'. Nawaz further contends that 'the army grew in numbers and political strength as counter

weight to a hostile India, next door and in relation to the democratic political system' (Nawaz, 2008, p.28). Eventually, the army emerged as the power broker and moved to take complete control which was eventually consummated through a formal/direct takeover in 1958. During 1947-58 in a formal, constitutional sense, Pakistan's history has been marked by political instability. In a non-legal, non-constitutional sense it reveals a steady institutional development of the civilian and military bureaucracies. Slowly and gradually political power slipped from political parties into the hands of the civil services and the army (Kukreja, 1985, p.57). In this context Nawaz aptly remarks, 'The paradox that hobbled Pakistan's political development was that as the army grew in strength and size, it stunted the growth of the political system whose leaders either made no attempt to redress the power imbalance between the institutions of the state and that of the army, making the latter effectively the centre of power, or worse they invited the army to settle political differences among themselves' (Nawaz, 2008, p.28).

Both, Shuja Nawaz and Ayesha Siddiqi in their seminal works posit that the army has intervened only with the active support of civilian institution which are subsequently further retarded with every military takeover. The army has never come to power on its own. Rather, it has always come to power with the assistance of the civil bureaucracies and politicians. In fact, Pakistan's political leadership and the civilian bureaucracy aid and abet the erosion of democracy and entrenchment of military dominance. As Siddiqi poignantly notes that the army derives its potency from the civilians. The acceptance of the military as a political arbiter, compounded with its prominent role as the guardian of the country's security, sovereignty, and ideology (Siddiqi, 2007, p.58).

Nawaz notes that Pakistan has emerged as 'a persistent praetorian state with military or quasi-military rule for most of its life after independence from the British, wherein the army maintain patron client relationship with the bureaucracy and with Islamist parties whom it used in its efforts to fight populist leaders

in both east and west Pakistan and fuel the Kashmir insurgency against the Indian rule' (Nawaz, 2008, pp.29-30).

In Pakistan, the army is the final arbiter in the affairs of the state. It dictates politics, foreign policy and now increasingly has deep and entrenched interest in the economy. The army has penetrated the state apparatus and economy to such a degree that neither the political class nor any social class can have any meaningful share in power without its will (Siddiqi, 2007). In fact, 'the military has become incorporated and woven into the fabric of state, society, economy, and structure of Pakistan as the most dominant of all forms of the country's institutions, and increasingly, the possibility of Pakistan without the pervasive and intrusive role of the military, seems, mere wrongful thinking' (Zaidi, 2005, p. 5174). Over the years military has deeply entrenched its prerogatives over its internal structure and its function which limits the scope for the establishment of civilian supremacy over the armed forces. The military regimes of Ayub Khan and Zia-ul-Haq, respectively, included their personnel in government and semi-government jobs and professions.

The corporate muscle of the military over the years has also grown steadily, making it financially autonomous and self-reliant. The military today is the largest and richest corporate house and land owner in Pakistan, which includes source of industries, trading houses, banking, leasing, and insurance companies, transport corporations and real and housing estates. Five foundations, namely, Fauzi Foundation, the Army Welfare Trust, Shaheen foundation and Bahria Foundation are controlled by the military and are considered as the largest business group in Pakistan. The financial and the political autonomy of the military deepen its interest in retaining control of the country. Talat Masood labels it as 'institutionalized corruption' (Misra, 2011, p.11).

Revival of Democracy in the Post-Musharraf Era (2008 Onwards)

The developments in the Pakistani state suggest that the unelected but a well-entrenched military-bureaucratic

establishment, the bedrock of the Pakistani state structure, constitutes a thinly-based edifice. These monopolistic power elite has too often opposed measures such as democratization, decentralization, accountability, land reforms, freedom of media and the independence of judiciary (Malik, 1997). The post-Musharraf revival of democracy in Pakistan is depicted as a 'new' beginning or 'significant' transition towards democratic institutionalization. However, the institutionalization of democratic governance has not taken place. There is little evidence to suggest that balance of civil-military relations has shifted in the favour of civilian rulers. Despite democratic transition, military continues to retain its core institutional privileges, in terms of control over its internal structure, national security, and budgetary allocations. Military remains strong enough to maintain its political and strategic influence in the governance. Overall, the military has continued to retain its core institutional prerogative in terms of budgetary allocation, the management of national security policy, and the conduct of foreign policy. 'At the same time', Aqil Shah remarks, 'it has successfully resisted periodic civilian challenges to its core institutional prerogative through both active and passive non-compliance, thereby undermining authority of elected government led by the PPP and on occasions threatening its survival....The military's relationship with the current PML-N government too has been fraught with tensions over Sharif's decision to prosecute Musharraf as well as his attempts to seek peace with India' (Shah, 2014, p.51). Under Nawaz Sharif, the army initiated a new offensive approach to roll back the democratic space by expanding its monopoly to key internal security issues through 21st Amendment which gives the military a legal basis to intervene in the internal matters (Samad, 2017, p.518). The armed forces aversion to civilian control is enabled by their considerable autonomy from civilian oversight. Military's continuous exercise of undemocratic prerogatives entails the authority of the democratic governments and erodes the

prospects of the institutional consolidation of democracy in Pakistan (Shah, 2014, p.52).

The PPP's civilian government of President Asif Ali Zardari (2008-2013) and PML government headed by Nawaz Sharif and later Shahid Khaqan Abbasi (2013-2018) have 'typically operated in the military's lurking shadow' (Shah, 2011, p.71). Pakistan's status today, to borrow T.V. Paul's phrase, Pakistan is a 'rare garrison cum-hybrid democratic state' (Paul, 2014, p.79). He further notes: Pakistan ended up as a garrison praetorian state and whenever the military ceded power to elected civilian governments, it did so only partially. This left Pakistan a hybrid democratic model where the ultimate power rested not with the people but with the military as a veto player in any decision of that civilian government would take (Paul, 2014, p.74).

Conclusion

Seventy three years of tumultuous political history and the ongoing crisis of governability in Pakistan, which has experienced and a patron of long periods of military rule interspersed within the country's power structure. The absence of consensual politics, enduring constitutionalism and a properly agreed – upon mechanism for electoral transfer of power is reflected in the country's periodic phases of instability. Such intermittent crises, multiplied by an uneasy ethno-regional polarization, the rising clout of religious fundamentalism and Jihadism, recurring economic crises coupled with the heroin-kalakshnikov culture, have raised questions about Pakistan's survival as a state and have often allowed analysts to view Pakistan as either a 'failed' or a 'failing' state (Malik, 2002, p.205).

The present (post-Musharraf) democratic experiment in Pakistan can be labelled as 'puppet democracy' functioning under the shadow of military veto. Democracy as a political system which permits sustained and full participation of people, independence of judiciary, free press, rule of law as yet to strike roots in Pakistan. The task of civilian institution-building can be

undertaken only through a strong national, grassroots, mass-based political party led by a skilful political leadership.

In sum, Pakistan's traumatic political history justify the description of Pakistan being 'insufficiently imagined', to borrow the phrase from Salman Rushdie. However, imagination is by definition is not a finite process. 'To end its march of folly', Hussain Haqqani calls for a reimagining and reconceptualization of Pakistan. To reimagining Pakistan as an inclusive, pluralist, multi-ethnic democratic modern Muslim state needs to abandon the narrow ideological paradigm of Pakistani Nationalism, hostility with India, Punjabi-dominated establishment, and rental political economy (Haqqani, 2018).

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