

The Politics of Troika: A Case Study of Governance in Pakistan (1947-1969)

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Abstract: *Federalism with optimum provincial autonomy was the core idea behind the creation of Pakistan. As a symbol of shared sovereignty, federalism was never exercised in Pakistan in its real spirit. Despite apparent federal features during the military as well as democratic regimes, the political culture within the country scraps the dictatorial and centripetal. Pakistan remains unsuccessful to remain a federal state with the autonomy of federating units. This study, therefore, intends to look at the troika politics and governance catastrophe in Pakistan from 1947 to 1969. It also presents an analysis of the power of the Troika, especially in the context of major actors; the executive, the judiciary and most importantly, the legislative in the country. This study also seeks to examine the implications of this process on the political condition of Pakistan. The findings are based on the empirical arguments of prominent scholars.*

Key Words: Troika Politics, Governance, Implications, Bureaucracy, Military, Civilian, Hegemony

Introduction

South Asia witnessed the complex process of nation-building and state formation since the mid of 1940s. The circumstances under which they did so have generated multidimensional public and scholarly debate. Later, the critical and sceptical voices of this debate appeared to be justified as several symptoms of crisis indicative of a general malaise in the national developments of the South Asian region. Christophe Jaffrelot describes the origins of recurrent problems related to the political developments and constitutional stalemate of the Pakistani state. Following Gellner's theory, which illustrates the "objective" economic and social factors which led to the foundation of Pakistan as a state of Indian Muslims in 1947. Jaffrelot proves empirically that Pakistan's "national issue" has been identified because of historical, cultural and ethnic causes (Jaffrelot, 2022, 10). According to Sayyed Vali Reza Nasir, the governability crisis emerges as an

attendant of the democratization process because of the combination of law and effectiveness and the law of legitimacy of Pakistan's political leadership. (Nasr, 1992, 521).

Furthermore, the strategic partition of United India into Pakistan and India has been discussed by many scholars in political, constitutional, and minority factors with the shadow of religion and communal political contexts. Hamza Alvi discussed the "salarati theory arguing that the paid classes, such as lawyers of Central and United Provinces as well as Punjab and Bengal, strove to safeguard constitutionally to their economic interests". However, Khalid bin Sayyid has stressed Muslim separatism and long-term difference in religion, culture and perceptions as propelling factors behind the partition. Sayyid's thesis was grounded on civilizational differences between the non-Muslims of India. Sayyed,

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certainly, represented the two-nation theorists. Syeed, 1967, 4).

Alavi's major argument elaborates that Pakistan came out from British colonization to internal colonization. He explained three classes: military, civilian bureaucracy, and feudal lords. In the first phase of Pakistan from 1947-58, the civilians were ruling and called it a bureaucratic oligarchy. The second phase began after 1958 and the militarization of politics started the military took over the charge of politics and the bureaucracy became a secondary authority. The main cause why the military did not intervene in politics from 1947-58, was because the military was a weak institution. The military bureaucrats became stronger when Pakistan signed military pacts SEATO and CENTO in the mid-1950s. The root cause of all this British legacy. The British empire was bureaucratic and it was run by the bureaucracy such as Viceroy, Governors, military and civil service bureaucrats. After partition, this civil bureaucracy hijacked policy-making and inducted itself into political offices to become *de facto* rulers of the country after Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

Similarly, Waseem, on the other hand, believes that the Pakistan movement, structurally, started in the Muslim-Minority provinces whereas the two-nation theory was obliged as a basic ideology.

Organizationally, for the Indian Muslims, it was the All-India Muslim League, which provided the proper platform. Interestingly, the driving force was Jinnah's Weberian charisma which led Muslims of India. Moreover, Ayesha Jalal (1991, 16), also emphasized the personal factor. She views the historical perspectives differently, with a notion that Jinnah, essentially, did not stress winning independence, at all. However, Jinnah's political resilience was marked as he accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan in 1946. She also argued that Jinnah used it as a bargaining chip for the demand of Pakistan to maximize the Muslims' interests (Hussain, 2012, 15). This argument has been discussed by many Historians and political scientists in their literature. Ayesha Jalal's core argument is that Jinnah was the best constitutionalist. He used constitutional methods for political negotiations. He said, if there had been a united India after the departure of the British from

India it would have been permanent Hindu Raj. The Muslim community was over 90 million and they were not in minority. Though they were the second-largest community after Hindus. Jinnah tried for their equal rights in united India in his first phase and then for a separate state to safeguard their political and constitutional rights.

Historically, the concept of Federalism was specified as one of the pieces of evidence for the formation of an independent state for the Muslim of the sub-continent in the Lahore Resolution. Nevertheless, "federalism has not been promoted as a symbol of shared sovereignty to establish a federal state. The Unitarian character of the state succeeded. During the rule of both the democratic governments as well as the military regimes, the political climate of Pakistan remained centripetal and dictatorial despite the apparent federal features, which the successive constitutions entailed. Since its formation in 1947, Pakistan has failed to establish an organic and effective covenant between the federating units nevertheless some incremental forward movements, towards provincial autonomy and devolution". (Kokreja, 2020,11)

Bureaucratic Oligarchy

Bureaucracy is considered the backbone of the state's administrative machinery which serves as a permanent organ for policy formation support and policy implementation. It plays a pivotal role in national development the backbone of any society and polity or administrative unit. Pakistan's civil service (as with its railways, armed forces, and many other institutions) is a straight continuance of the Indian Colonial civil service structure. The colonial system of the British had such essential assets for practical governance. Moreover, the civil service emerged as the most significant power broker, and sometimes as a king-maker in post-independence Pakistan. (Sheikh, 2017, 2)

Pakistan has been facing three major problems since its inception in 1947 and their persistence remained questionable in each political phase of its history. First, it was established as a role model of an Islamic state based on Islamic ideology. It entailed the

reconciliation of the exigencies of modern statecraft with Islam. The debate over an Islamic or moderate state demonstrated a substantial challenge for Pakistan during the constitution-making process. Second, Pakistan was comprised of a blend of numerous diverse cultural objects, races, and languages. Henceforth, incompatible regionalism in the second basic challenge to Pakistan's survival. The third issue was its incapability to attain a stable level of institutional growth which has also challenged the integrity of Pakistan's concerns. These challenges proved a serious hindrance to civil and military governments in Pakistan in consecutive terms. The continued exceeding reliance on the civil-military bureaucracy for the procedure of policy-making also created multiple issues for the stakeholders. Since the development of political institutions was observed by the civil bureaucrats as a latent to their authority. (Kennedy, [1987](#), 4)

According to Charles H. Kennedy, "It is impossible to adequately assess Pakistan's civilian bureaucracy without placing it in the context of Pakistan's political history. It has been noticed that the bureaucracy was the creation of the tradition, norms the practice inherited from the British Raj. The peculiar historical circumstances which led to the formation of the Indian Subcontinent's Islamic State and the troubled history of the new state since partition provided it with the opportunity to assert itself beyond its measure and effectively hold the levers of real power in the country. This helped it in assuming the role of a critical and decisive determinant in the process of political development of Pakistan." (Kennedy, [1987](#), 11).

The success of any political system and democracy depends on the strong and dedicated bureaucracy, especially in newly independent countries the role of bureaucracy assumes greater importance in the evolution and development of administration. In the case of postcolonial developing states in general, and Pakistan in particular, bureaucracy has failed to play its intended role in providing essential public services. Rather bureaucracy has been used as a platform for the pursuit of power politics, by indirect or direct means. (Shaikh, [2017](#), 16)

After Partition, both Pakistan and India inherited the bureaucratic legacy of the British Raj. In the context of a vast influx of educated and aspirant 'Indian' Muslims to West Pakistan, the indigenous feudal elite ensured that it continued to dominate politics, and many of its members joined the All India-Muslim League (hitherto primarily an Indian phenomenon) to further their vested interests in the newly recognized country. The All India-Muslim League itself manipulated the civil service for biased advantages, and intending to combine a permanent foothold with the establishment and feudal lords of Pakistan. The feudal manipulated bureaucracy in its favor by introducing their family members in the top-ranking. Individual changes in personnel thus denoted little more than a traditional exercise (a changing of the guard) while the center of a feudal family constantly furnished the most important bureaucrats; thus, they used the real power from the formation of Pakistan. (Shaikh, [2017](#), 16).

Militarization of Politics

Pakistan was divided into East and West wings after the partition of India in 1947. The state aspired to develop democratic institutions within the existing units. (Cloughley, [1999](#), 126) Pakistan emerged as a newly independent state to create distinct political culture but failed for many reasons. First, as a founding father of the nation Jinnah aimed to put together a constitution by establishing a Constituent Assembly. Apparently, for the formation of a democratic constitution, the Constituent Assembly was formed, but in practice, there was a concentration of power in the office of Jinnah. (Cohen, 2005, 100) According to Philip Oldenburg (2010), Jinnah focused on the reduction of powers of legislative, and executive, increasing the authority of bureaucracy, military, and the prime minister, as the first Governor General of Pakistan. (Altaf, [2019](#), 9)

Moreover, Maulana Abu al-Kalam Azad predicted, the North West part of India, which Jinnah and the All-India Muslim League claim for Pakistan would become a power playground of Military and Bureaucracy. He also argued the AIML's leadership wanted to create a ground where real democracy will not work. The real power will be exercised by the

military and civilian bureaucracy. Furthermore, Kalam also predicted the eastern part of Pakistan would not remain together for a long time because of so many differences. (Haqqani, [2005](#),68)

Moreover, the founder of Pakistan had banned new political parties that “they will destroy and capture what the All-India Muslim League has achieved”. The same views was followed by Liaquat Ali Khan (the first prime minister of Pakistan), who demanded that “those who formed parties are liars, traitors, and hypocrites”. (Allen McGrath, 1996, 10). Furthermore, to the concentration of power, the early deaths of Liaquat Ali Khan and Jinnah also impacted the progression of evolution towards democracy. Governor General Ghulam Muhammad came to the power after the death of Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan. He dismissed the Constituent Assembly in 1954, which strengthened the alliance between the bureaucracy and military and also strengthened military supremacy. (Altaf, [2019](#), 10)

The military in Pakistan is a very powerful institution that is well-organized and completely disciplined organization. In fact, in the initial days after partition, the military was not a powerful institute nor intervened in Pakistani politics. It was bureaucracy that invited the military to become sharers or partners in domestic and political affairs in the early 1950s. Later on, military-led led the political affairs from the front line and the bureaucracy became a secondary thing in state matters. Similarly, in the initial two decades after independence military became a powerful source of ruling and getting maximum support from the bureaucracy. (Ahmed, [2013](#),45)

Search for Civilian Supremacy

The problems and threats to the democratic system of Pakistan originated from the irresponsible and powerful executive in Pakistan. The executive had been supported, aided and abetted by powerful bureaucracy in the initial two decades after independence. Since the inception of Pakistan, the executive remained extremely effective and dominating. Moreover, after partition, the governmental functions in Pakistan are dominated by such bureaucracy, the executive and the Army, in

particular. (Shaikh, [2017](#), 23). In fact, the internal battle between the three main players in Pakistan (the military, the civilian wing of the state and Islamic groups and parties) has instigated the state to face a strategic and diplomatic crisis abroad and political instability at home. (Shafqat,[1998](#),243)

The effects of migration, partition, Islamic militancy, regional instability and military rule have all paid to the country's instability. Competing forces whether driven by sectarian, religious, tribal, ethnic and linguistic identities or by modernist-Islamist and civilian-military struggles can harmfully affect the authority of the state in the long term. (Waseem, [2011](#),22) Muhammad Waseem discussed, that civilian supremacy in Pakistan remained for a limited period. The first stage was the civilian rule over the state affairs from 1947 to 1951, especially during Liaquat Ali Khan's tenure and the second, from 1973 to 1977, was in Zulifqar Ali Bhutto's period as Prime Minister. (Waseem, [2009](#),24)

Research Objectives

The four objectives are:

1. To explore the role of the civil services and army in Pakistan's political evolution.
2. To explore the institutional factors which have enabled civil servants and military dictators to commit acts that exceed their constitutional and legal mandate.
3. To explain the Pakistani civilian supremacy remained in the initial two decades or vice versa?
4. To explore if these factors continue to affect the impartiality and theoretically depoliticized bureaucratic and military structure of Pakistan today.

Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following four questions, to understand and analyze the phenomenon:

1. Has the civil services and the Army, played dominating roles in the overall politics in Pakistan?
2. Were the institutional factors responsible for strengthening the civil servants and military establishment far

beyond their constitutional and legal mandate?

3. How did Pakistani civilian supremacy remain in the initial two decades or vice versa?
4. Have the institutional factors continued to inhibit an effective, impartial and depoliticized bureaucratic and military structure in the country?

Methodology

The present research work is normative, qualitative, and descriptive. Both primary and secondary sources have been utilized for the collection of data. Primary data included the government official reports and national archives of Pakistan in Islamabad. The secondary sources included various books, articles, research journals, newspapers, speeches and internet sources.

Contextual Framework

The available literature on pre-partition military and bureaucracy reveals their basic details in official documents but no particular work on the subject is available as a secondary source. The structure of colonial authority in terms of classifying the colonial economy, politics and military, has so many debatable views. In addition to this, most of the literature does not provide a detailed view, in terms of its structural links or any explanation of the colonial economy and the military, with that of Pakistan.

Montesquieu offers the theory of separation of powers or "*Trias politica*" that powers of a state shall not exercise by any single institution, an individual or a group of people rather than to be divided amongst three institutions i.e. Legislations, Executive and Judiciary. These three governance organs should have some checks and balance on each other.

Policies over government functions and exercise of powers by an institution within a state is as old as political thoughts, and many political thinkers as well as philosophers have expressed their views from time to time that how and by who's the power should be exercised. Likewise, regarding the angle of separation of powers, both Montesquieu and Jean Badin have contributed their ideas.

Aristotle did not separate them in his governmental structure and had observed all three functions of government "classification which was presented by Plato" in his book the statesman by Aristotle. (Fatima, 2013, 2)

Both Aristotle and Plato discussed that the second-best option for a constitutional democracy was in the favour of "concentration of powers in the hands of a monarch". They also argue that the worst type of government is an unconstitutional 'democracy'. Interestingly, both, Plate and Aristotle, are different in many ideal states and political views. Similarly, Jean Bodin "presented the theory of sovereignty in which he favours sovereign monarch alone exercises all the powers of government and against the separation of powers. Unlike, Montesquieu presented the theory of separation of powers which is the powers should separate among three parts of government executive, legislative, and judiciary." (Ahmed, 2013, 1). Moreover, this separation of powers theory also provides a check and balances to the system. This theory, in particular, has great influence in the formation of US constitution. (Ahmed, 2013, 1).

Literature Review

Christophe Jaffrelot, (2002) argues that within the country the regional problems are connected to sectarian and ethnic conflicts. Many examples are in the recent past as the Tehran group supports those Shia groups indulged in fierce conflicts with their Sunni counterparts in Punjab. Similarly, the Pashtuns of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (previously N.W.F.P.) have always entertained close links with their Afghan 'brothers'.

Jaffrelot endeavours to reveal how Pakistan indulged in regional strains and how it was destabilized by a high level of the ethnic problem. The book also provides an up-to-date account of information regarding the complex political situation. It also contained so-many questions about the intersection of religious and ethnic factors, the definition of identity, control of the state, the flawed institutionalization of democracy, and the potentially explosive interaction of regional and domestic politics. Satish Kumar, (2020) discussed the governability issues from 1988 to 1999 the era known as the third democratic phase in Pakistan's history. The scholar

analyzes the restoration of democracy after the eleven years long brutal rule of General Zia-ul-Haque, in the quarter of 1988, which over unexpectedly and suddenly with his demise in a mysterious air crash on the 17th of August 1988. This time, the country was being ruled by civilian governments, alternately headed by Benazir Bhutto of PPP and Nawaz Shairif of PML. Both leaders were elected as prime ministers twice, during the decade of 90s. However, both of them could not strengthen the overall democratic and political system in Pakistan. In other words, no political alliance took place during the 11 years of democratic rule, after the alleged assassination of General Zia-ul-Haque.

Charles. H. Kennedy, (1987) explained that Pakistan faced three major problems which were destined to determine its future. Firstly, it was established based on ideological demand for the foundation of an Islamic State. It entailed the reconciliation of Islam with the exigencies of modern statecraft. This was to prove a great challenge for Pakistan. Secondly, Pakistan was created through the merger of various diverse cultural identities, race and languages as well as economic diversity. Therefore, the second important challenge to Pakistan's survival was regionalism. The third important issue is the growth of institutions at the balance level. The military interference in the political structure of the country and the bureaucratic approach of not losing their authority if political institutions became strengthened. So the entire process of policy formulation are usually hijacked by the military or bureaucracy.

Mohammad Mohabbat Khan, (2018) discussed a very important source on the subject of bureaucracy and political system. It deals with the failure of reforms in the bureaucracy and critically analyses the role of bureaucracy in the implementation process. The author analytically describes the half-hearted role played by politicians in the enforcement of the reforms in bureaucracy. In this regard, he argues that the support of political leadership is not only desirable but essential if major administrative reforms are to succeed. In Pakistan, particularly during its early years, the political leadership was apathetic to administrative reform. This is evident by the fact that during the

parliamentary period (1953-1958), politicians were interested in jockeying for their particular positions, which led to bitter infighting, leaving little if any time to provide serious consideration to reforming the bureaucracy.

Hassan Askari Rizvi (1991) deals with the civilian bureaucracy, it provides valuable information about the coordination between it and the military and elaborates on the full support of the former for the latter in overthrowing civilian governments. The close association between the military and bureaucracy are part and parcel of postcolonial developing nations around the world. They are organized in rigid hierarchies and have a special involvement in political stability as well as modernization. The armed forces, due to their strategic position in society, displaced the civil government, alone or in collaboration with the bureaucracy. The author further argues that the military lacks the necessary administrative expertise to rule without service from bureaucrats.

Choudhury, G. W (1998) give a taking a detailed and special note of the facts regarding the failure of democracy and the bureaucratic role in politics in Pakistan. He assumed that the initial years of Pakistan remained very crucial whereas the powerful bureaucracy did not allow Pakistan to have strong and stable democracy in Pakistan. The author believe that the ill-powerful and irresponsible executive supported by the bureaucracy was the main hurdle of democracy. From its inception, the executive has been extremely dominating and effective". The performance of the governmental functions, since it emerged as a state in Pakistan, has been dominated by this bureaucracy, executive as well as the army.

Ishtiaq Ahmed, (2011) gives a commentary on several recent publications on Pakistan, especially Hussain Haqqani's *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, Ayesha Siddiqi's, *Military Inc.*, Anatol L. Pakistan: *A Hard Country*, A. Rashid, *Pakistan on the Brink*, Ahmed proves, convincingly, "that Pakistan's armed forces have virtually become the state and the main custodian and proponent of Political Islam, including one championed by the *Jamaat-i-Islami*, *Deoband* clerics, the *Taliban* and other Islamist extremists."

He rightly “traced the roots of the Garrison State to the British occupation of Punjab in 1849 and their subsequent reliance on the province as the sword arm of the empire till the end of the British Raj”. This volume, is the critical appraisal and beautiful narration of the post-independence history of Pakistan, about the further entrenchment of the body politic and military in the country. The book also reveals that “how and why the bulk of Pakistanis often legitimize military rule and consider the military custodians of their dignity, freedom and most importantly, Islam.” There are well-written eighteen chapters in the book, very useful for which, analysts, academics, security practitioners and policymakers within and outside of Pakistan.

Conclusion

The current study analyzes why the Pakistani bureaucracy and military intervention in the political affairs of the state, particularly the initial two decades after partition. Pakistan, being a newly independent state, lacked blueprints for a democratic state after partition from India. It also had weak leadership and was constantly uncertain about its national security from Afghanistan and India. The military became economically and politically dominated as these factors weakened the position of politicians within Pakistan. For dispute settlement and political developments, the constant use of the military enabled the military to develop political skills and understanding, a field that is non-professional to them.

Initially in Pakistan Military was a second major force in political affairs. After the end of civilian supremacy with the death of the nation's first Prime Minister in October 1951, the bureaucracy holds the political affairs. Bureaucracy also invited the military to join hands in political affairs. Hence the military became the first major and leading force to make a decision in political matters with the support of bureaucracy in the next two

decades. In fact, from 1951 to 1969, the military dictatorship was supported by both bureaucratic and civilian forces along with the judicial branches. Similarly, bureaucracy hegemony was also supported by military and civilian forces.

In fact, after 75 years of independence of Pakistan, half of the time military ruled over the country, and half of the time fragile political forces. There are various factors leading to this delicate democratic system. The unnecessary role and interventions of the military and bureaucracy in the political and domestic affairs of the state. The bureaucratic forces remained very active to support the rule of the military and civilians. In both forms, bureaucracy played its role in making or breaking the political government in Pakistan from 1947 to 1969. Furthermore, Ghulam Muhammad, the Governor General had dissolved the first constituent assembly of Pakistan in October, 1954, and also used the judiciary for the dissolution of the assembly, which was supposed to remain an independent state institution. This operation of the judiciary for political interest set a tradition which smoothly and accurately followed by all bureaucratic, military, and government in future.

After the enforcement of the nation's first constitution, four prime ministers have been dismissed or forced to resign in a period of two and half years. As with many others, the authors highlighted the role of the bureaucratic institution especially calling the gang of four by Muhammad Waseem, etc. Civilian supremacy remained in state affairs for a very limited period. Moreover, there are two terms of civilian supremacy in the Pakistani state. First, from 1947 to 1951, till the death of the first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan. Second, from 1973 to 1977, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's regime as Prime Minister, and the rest of the time military-bureaucratic partnership hold the political and government affairs.

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