



RESEARCH PAPER**Civil -Military Discordance and The Political Culture of Pakistan**

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ABSTRACT

Throughout history, the relationship between civilian governments and military institutions has been debated. Scholars like Huntington emphasized division of powers, while Schiff advocated collaboration. Pakistan's weak democratic foundation has led to struggles between governmental power and public demands. Unique challenges, including conflict with India and historical inequities, have amplified the military's political role, particularly due to the Kashmir conflict. Recent events, like the 2014 protests, strained civil-military relations, exacerbated by social media. This article uses mixed methods to assess trust between civilians and the military and explores expert insights into civil-military relations. The main objective of the article is to determine how a weak political culture has led to strained civil-military relations in Pakistan. Findings of the article indicate urban dissatisfaction with military politics and disillusionment with government and judiciary. The article recommends that improving relations requires a new political agreement, redefined military roles, more democratic political parties, a stronger Parliament, and enhanced civic culture, underdeveloped since 1947.

KEYWORDS Civic Culture, Civil-Military Relations, Democracy, Political Culture

Introduction

Throughout history, scholars have intensely debated to figure out an ideal situation for civil-military relations. During the Cold War era, when traditional concept of security prevailed with the emphasis on military defense of the borders and territory of a state, scholars such as Samuel P. Huntington emphasized on the objective control of the military by civilian government. However, as the nature of threats evolved and non-traditional aspects of security became highlighted, scholars such as Morris Janowitz and Rebecca Schiff asserted that the civilian government and military need to work in collaboration and concordance to address the dynamic threats of the current age. One defining factor in civil-military relations is the political system and political culture of a state. In a democratic political system where the government is responsive to the demands and needs of the citizens, there is stability and lesser need for the use of force. However, in cases of weaker democracies, where the political culture is weak and the government fails to draw a balance between its responsiveness to the citizens and the exercise of the governmental authority, a higher level of instability can be easily predicted. Additionally, social trust plays a pivotal role in the stability of political systems. The case of Pakistan presents a unique example of a democracy that has been marred with recurrent martial laws and complexly intertwined power struggle between the civil-military institutions. More

recently, as the criticism against the political involvement of military has exponentially increased, it has simultaneously raised questions about the political culture of Pakistan. To investigate the issue civil-military relationship, this study uses mixed-methods research to claim that while there is a dire and critically urgent need of improving civil-military relations in Pakistan, it needs to be accompanied with the improvement in the political culture of the state. Secondary data is used to trace the historical background of civil-military relations in Pakistan. Questionnaires have been used to assess the public opinion to evaluate in case there is trust deficit between the public, civilian government and military. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted to seek the solutions and recommendations for improving the civil-military relations and political culture in Pakistan.

Literature Review

For figuring out an ideal balance for civil-military relations, Peter Feaver has highlighted a significant problematique. According to Feaver, while the military should be strong enough to defend the state against any external threats, it should also not be coercive enough to itself turn against the state (Owens, 2017). Traditionalist school of thought, led by Carl von Clausewitz and Samuel Huntington emphasizes on the objective control of the military by the civilian government. By asserting that 'war is a continuation of policy by other means', Clausewitz established the primacy of civilian command and control over the military. War should be a decision of the civilian government rather than the military and that the civilian values are supposed to keep a check even on the war-time military actions. During the Cold War era, as the traditional threats dominated the security studies, Samuel Huntington adopted the Clausewitzian approach to emphasize objective civilian control on the military. According to Huntington, the recognition of autonomous military professionalism would render the military politically neutral (Huntington, 1957).

However, scholars such as Morris Janowitz and Rebecca Schiff assert that an objective control and practical disassociation between the civilian government and the military is neither achievable nor desirable in the contemporary age with a rather transformed nature of threats. The concordance theory by Rebecca Schiff asserts that it is not imperative for the developing states to adopt the Western prescribed model of separation between the civil-military institutions to achieve greater political maturity. Rather, the ability of three stakeholders to agree on some key indicators can help states achieve stability and political maturity. The three key stakeholders include the citizens, civilian or political elites and the military. While the concordance theory does not categorically indicate a single favorable form of government, it does necessarily prescribe that an active agreement between the stakeholders is required either in the form of legislation, decree or constitution. Domestic military intervention would reduce, while leading to political maturity when the military cooperates with the political elites and the citizenry based on consensual agreement. Schiff's theory highlights four main areas in which concordance should be achieved: the social composition of the officer corps, political decision-making process, military recruitment method and the military style (Schiff, 2009).

According to Gabbriel Almond and Sidney Verba the political culture of a state has a non-negligible impact on the political system of the country. Quoting the examples of Britain and America as successful democracies, Almond and Verba assert that for a democracy to be successful, its citizens need to be well-informed and actively participating in politics. A passive and disinterested citizen will only lead to a weak democracy. For a successful democracy, the next thing required is the governmental role of balancing its position between diametrically opposed roles of governing and decision making on one hand, while being responsive to the needs and demands of the public on the other hand.

In times of crisis, such as wars, the tension between the roles of exerting governmental authority and being responsive to the demands of the public becomes the greatest. In times of crisis and in situations of intense politics, instability can arise in a democratic political system as the government would struggle to balance its role between exercise of authority and responsiveness to the public. If the demands of the public are met, politics can return to its normal discourse. However, when the government fails to meet the demands of the public in times of crisis, instability can be aggravated, and the democratic political system can be derailed.

The balance, according to Almond and Verba can be achieved through electoral process at regular intervals. By means of elections, a political party is given the authority to exercise governmental power for a certain period. The responsiveness part is maintained by making sure that elections are held regularly to make the parties in power accountable and responsive to the public demands. However, in practical terms a significant gap exists between the sense of obligation to participate in political life and the actual political participation. In situations where the public is less actively participating in politics, the weakness of the citizen allows the elitist groups to act.

Another sine qua non of democratic political system is the level of social trust between the citizens and the political elite. The citizens need to trust the political elite to delegate the power of decision-making to them. Social trust and cooperation get the citizens into a cooperative mechanism that leads towards political stability and prosperity.

Material and Methods

Mixed method research methodology has been used for this study. The data collected for this study is through the triangulation approach in which firstly secondary data was gathered for civil-military relations over the course of history of Pakistan. Secondly, the fact findings and analysis were done through quantitative data, gathered through survey (collecting closed ended questions) from general educated public. Thirdly, analysis and recommendations were presented based on interviews conducted with SME's. Interviewees include senior military officials, academicians and senior politicians.

The quantitative strand is conducted with the help of self-developed questionnaire employed to the participants to collect their opinions. The questionnaire was prepared and presented to a panel of experts to ensure its validity. The experts were asked to review and provide their feedback, the suggestions were incorporated. Afterwards, a pilot-test with 15 participants similar of the population but not part of it was conducted. The validity test was applied and the Cronbach Alpha value retrieved was 0.97 which was considered highly satisfactory. After ensure, the questionnaire was considered suitable to apply on the whole population.

The proposed model of analysis for this study is as follows:

Triangular Approach

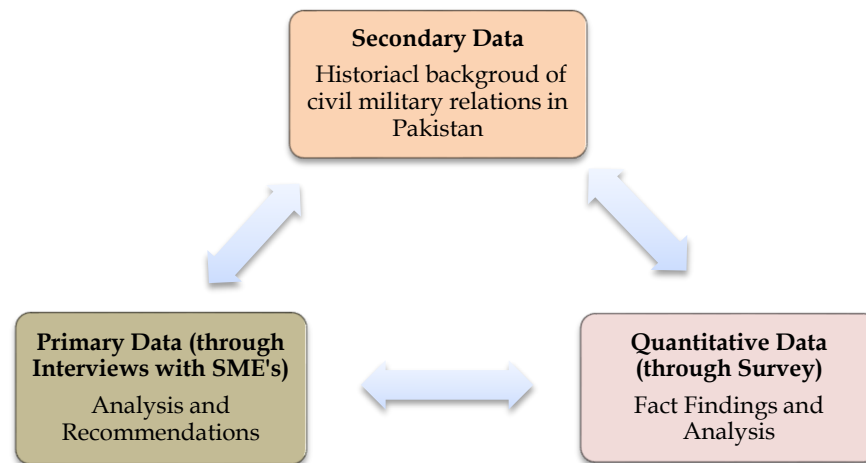


Figure 1 Triangulated Research Method

Data Collection

The data collection process for this study has been based on primary and secondary sources. For primary data collection methodology, surveys (based on closed ended questionnaire), one to one interview with (senior military officials, academicians and politicians) have been registered. The primary data available in open source (including official statements, official reports, treaties and books) has been harnessed and used for this research. The secondary data includes the research articles written by eminent scholars on the subject, Think Tank Reports, Magazine Articles and other available sources on the internet.

The population for the survey included college and university students of public and private sector in Lahore. The sample size was based on 128 responses from multiple different institutes. The survey was conducted using Google Forms and the interviews have been conducted with the assistance of Google Meet and Zoom. The reliability of the study is derived from the fact that a standardized set of questions has been used to gather data from the respondents. Additionally, the validity comes from the fact that the data is collected from students who are currently associated with the political science and international relations studies; hence they have been expected to have an in-depth command over the subject. Lastly, the study has been carried out keeping in consideration the ethical standards as complete anonymity was guaranteed for the respondents and no social or political pressure of any kind was involved.

Historical Background of Civil Military Relations and the Political Culture of Pakistan

Pakistan, since its inception has faced turbulent, volatile and violent conditions. Among other discrepancies in the resource division between India and Pakistan the division of military assets was also unjustified in many respects, contrary to the agreement of 64% shares with India and 36% shares with Pakistan, Pakistan was forced to agree upon one-third of the share of military assets. Only 9 out of 46 training establishments were in Pakistan and all 17 ordinance factories were in India. The ammunition reserves were hardly sufficient for a week (Pakistan-Army-Web-Portal, 2018). With these limited sources, on the Western front was Afghanistan unready to recognize the Durand Line as the legitimate border, while on the Eastern front the contention with India over the division of princely states had resulted in the Kashmir conflict of 1947-48. Such circumstances had

turned Pakistan into a 'security state' right from the beginning and gave military a central role in the sustenance of the state. Additionally, as a part of the colonial legacy, while the civil and military bureaucracies were strongly developed, the political institutions were not developed equally.

With a weak political and democratic legacy, several factors like leadership vacuum after the demise of Jinnah and Liaqat Ali Khan and delay in the general elections have played a significant role in preventing the democratic political culture from gaining strength in Pakistan since the initial years. It took seven years to prepare the first draft of the constitution in 1954, only to be dismissed even before it was implemented. As claimed by Almond and Verba, in times of crisis, the government must deal with the strenuous task of balancing its role between exercising governmental authority and being responsive to the demands of the citizens. While the general elections had still not taken place, the rising political instability created a vacuum, providing space for military intervention in domestic politics (Parliamentary History, 2020). General Ayub Khan imposed martial law in 1958.

The subsequent history is a tug-of-war between the weak and instable democratic civilian governments and the strong military institution. As depicted in the table below none of the elected governments in Pakistan prior to the People's Party regime in 2008-2013 had been able to complete its elected term with a smooth and unhindered transfer of power to another elected government.

Table1
Tenure of Civilian and Military Regimes in Pakistan

Era	Administration	Causes of Coming to Power	Nature of Regime
1958-1969	General Ayub Khan	Martial Law due to political instability	Military
1971-1977	Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto	After the East Pakistan debacle, military handed power to civilian government	Civilian with attempts to control military
1977-1988	General Zia-ul-Haq	Military coup following political crisis and protests against Bhutto	Military dictatorship
1988-1990	Benazir Bhutto	General elections following Zia's death	Civilian
1990-1993	Nawaz Sharif	Elected after dismissal of Benazir Bhutto	Civilian
1993-1996	Benazir Bhutto	Re-elected after dismissal of Nawaz Sharif	Civilian
1997-1999	Nawaz Sharif	Re-elected after dismissal of Benazir Bhutto	Civilian
1999-2008	General Pervez Musharraf	Military coup against Nawaz Sharif	Military dictatorship
2008-2013	Asif Ali Zardari	General elections following Musharraf's resignation	Civilian
2013-2018	Nawaz Sharif	Elected after Zardari's tenure	Civilian
2018-2022	Imran Khan	Elected with alleged military support	Civilian

The instigation of Martial Law and the abrogation of the constitution by the military government of Ayub Khan referred to the fact that the constitution was superficial in nature and the political institutions remained inherently weak even after a decade of independence. It would simply be implausible to assume that a military regime would lay down the foundations of democratic political culture in Pakistan. In addition to the abrogation of the constitution, two other initiatives of Ayub Khan wreaked havoc on the democratic political culture of Pakistan. As the direct electoral process was replaced with the introduction of indirect voting by means of electoral college in the constitution of 1962, the political participation of the public was critically reduced. Furthermore, the crackdown against Fatima Jinnah, the more popular candidates in the elections disillusioned the public from the political system of the state- thus reducing the trust of public on the institutions.

Amidst mounting public resentment of the military regime and growing popularity of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman in West and East Pakistan respectively, Ayub Khan had to succumb to the public pressure and thus resigned in 1969 (Khakwani, 2003).

Ayub Khan's regime was succeeded by another military regime of General Yahya Khan. Despite the fact that general elections were held in 1970, the failure to honor the mandate of the public culminated with other resentments to result in the secession of East Pakistan. After the creation of Bangladesh, the military returned to the barracks while handing over the political power to Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. As per the constitution of 1973, enacted in the era of Z.A. Bhutto, the civilian control was expanded and the military was obligated to take oaths of non-interference in political matters of the state. Numerous of the initiatives of Bhutto, such as the forceful retirement of over two dozen officers of the high command of military and navy as well as over-centralization and land reforms led him towards a political suicide on two fronts. On one hand, the civil-military strife was intensified, whereas the feudal lords and Islamists joined to form the opposition alliance of Pakistan National Alliance. Accused of rigging in 1977, Bhutto's government had to face intense opposition. As the government became incapable of balancing its role between asserting the governmental authority while also responding to the demands of the citizens. Ultimately, the vacuum created led the state towards another Martial Law under Zia-ul-Haq in July 1977.

The eleven years long military dictatorship of General Zia ul Haq further ravaged whatever was left off the democratic political culture of Pakistan. From altering the political system of Pakistan from parliamentary democracy to presidential form of government, to the appointment of high-ranking military officials as provincial governors and judges, Zia's regime witnessed the supremacy of the military over the civilian institutions. Additionally, as Bhutto had been penalized with death penalty in Zia's regime, it indicates a critically inappropriate imbalance of power in the civil-military institutions of Pakistan. The nail in the coffin for the disruption of political culture came with the crackdown on political parties and the elections of 1985 were held without political parties (Dawn-Staff, HOW ZIA RULED: 1977-1988, 2017). While the military regime of Zia ended abruptly with the plane crash of General Zia ul Haq, the political culture of Pakistan had been so weakened that neither the public was well-acquainted with democratic principles nor the political leadership was well-versed with the democratic ethos.

Consequently, the decade between 1988-1998 was a juggle of political power between the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz and the Pakistan People's Party, with none of them being able to complete their tenure. The elections of 1988 brought Benazir Bhutto to power with popular support, however, still not with absolute majority. Bhutto's strife with Sharif, the instability in Baloch assembly, the worsening economic conditions after the IMF Conditionality, the rift between President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and mounting tensions between Benazir and the armed forces resulted in President Ghulam Ishaq Khan applying article 52\2 (b) to topple down the government of Benazir Bhutto in 1990 (Sekine, 1992). Bhutto was succeeded by Nawaz Sharif as the 12th Prime Minister of Pakistan. Despite having a considerable majority in the parliament, Sharif too, could not complete his term. Sharif had major rifts with the armed forces over foreign policy decision making in cases of Gulf War and the relations with India (Pattanaik, 2000). Sharif's government had the same fate as that of Bhutto as President Ghulam Ishaq Khan using the Article 52\2 (b) dissolved the national assembly and ousted Nawaz Sharif. Bhutto was reelected in 1993, only to be dismissed three years later, once again without completion of the electoral term. Strain in relation with President Farooq Leghari, charges of corruption and incompetence,

rising stagflation and the rift with military over the Mirage Deal prepared the ground for Bhutto's dismissal in 1996 (Burns, 1996). The second tenure of Nawaz Sharif was marked with the Kargil crisis that also caused a serious strain in the civil-military relations. As it has been evident in the discourse of civil- military relations and the political culture of Pakistan, strenuous crisis has often resulted in the overthrow of democratic regimes by military dictators. The same happened as Nawaz Sharif was ousted by General Pervaiz Musharraf.

The next decade was once again dominated by direct political control of military on the domestic affairs. Under General Musharraf's regime, most of the civil services institutions became dominated by serving or retired armed officers. Additionally, with the slogan of accountability, President Musharraf created the National Accountability Bureau that was used as a tool to ward off politicians who disagreed or countered Musharraf's policies. Later, in the name of reconciliation and 'fresh start', the National Reconciliation Order was passed. Inspired by the Turkish model of Mustafa Kamal Atatürk, Musharraf wanted to give a direct and constitutional role to military in the domestic affairs, for which the National Security Council was created. Furthermore, in case of foreign policy, President Musharraf made Pakistan the frontline state in America's war on terror- whether that aligned with the national interests of Pakistan or not. (Khan & Wazir, 2010).

The government of Pakistan People's Party that came in power in 2008 after the elections conducted in the aftermath of Musharraf's resignation, was the first elected government to complete its tenure. Three critical issues in the regime of Asif Zardari and Yousuf Reza Gillani indicated the strained civil military relations. The first issue arose as President Zardari insisted the ISI chief to collaborate with the Indian intelligence to investigate the Mumbai attacks. This was refused by the military intelligentsia. The second divergence arose over the Karry Lugar bill which included 1.5 US dollar of non-military aid being given to Pakistan. The military objected to it on the grounds that it might be a violation of sovereignty and national integrity of Pakistan. The third and major rift in civil-military relations arose after the killing of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad. While the military leadership claimed that it had allowed US aircrafts to use its airspace, the civilian government under Asif Zardari clearly refused any prior information regarding the US Operation (Haqqani, 2015). The matters worsened with the Memo-gate scandal, according to which, Asif Zardari had allegedly asked for American help to refrain the military leadership of General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani from overthrowing the government (Taj, Shah, & Ahmed, 2016).

As the government of Pakistan People's Party transferred the power smoothly through democratic electoral procedure in 2013 to Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz, strain in civil-military relations was evident from the beginning. As 2014 was the year of Dharnas, with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf staging a four month sit-in protest in Islamabad, there had been clear indications that the Dharna had the backing of men in uniform (Khan M. I., 2017). The backing of public protests by the military indicates the fact that during this era, even the political culture of the state had not remained independent of the military influence. Additionally, the civil-military relations had been strained over the action against terrorists. While the Nawaz government had been more inclined towards dialogue, the military unilaterally launched a security operation in Waziristan. As the TTP responded to the military operation in the form of APS attacks, momentarily it led to convergence between the political parties as well as the civil-military institutions as the National Action Plan was created. The convergence, however, did not last long as the military soon became critical of the civilian government for being incapable of handling multiple issues such as the settlement of internally displaced people.

As mentioned in the table above, the PML(N) government was succeeded by the democratically elected government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf. Imran Khan's ascent to power had been popular in the military circles who had kept on asserting that there was no divergence in civil-military relations. While the initial years of PTI's government showcased an unprecedented level of civil-military coordination, Khan's take on the military's involvement in politics shifts dynamically and dramatically when he got ousted by means of a no-confidence motion. As Khan began his direct and indirect verbal accusation of military's involvement in a US led conspiracy to oust him from the government, the populist base of PTI's leader became increasingly critical of the role of armed forces in the domestic political sphere of the country. The impact of Khan's jibe on military resonated to the point that the ex-COAS General Qamar Bajwa remarked "Army draws its strength from people and any effort to create wedge between army and population won't be tolerated" (Almedia, 2022). The gravity of the matter became more evident with the state's spymaster holding a press conference along with DGISPR to provide clarification for the rumors made against the army. According to DG ISI, Khan had offered extension to General Bajwa in exchange of extended support for his government, which was refuted based on being an unconstitutional act (Yousaf, 2022).

Table 2 survey results

Statement	Agree / Satisfactory	Disagree / Poor
The dynastic politics in Pakistan has not allowed democracy	93.7%	6.3%
The current level of public trust on judiciary in Pakistan to dispense justice is considered other important institutions is alarmingly high	93%	7%
The public trust on police in Pakistan to protect life and legitimate property of citizens is considered	96.1%	3.9%
The politicians and major political parties are mostly to be blamed for not allowing parliament to gain strength	84.9%	15.1%
Pakistan military has and continues to play significant role in providing territorial integrity and security against traditional (conventional and nuclear) threats from other countries.	87.5%	12.5%
Pakistan army should be completely apolitical	84.3%	15.7%
The current level of trust on Pakistan's military is considered	63.3%	36.7%
Throughout the history, political parties are to be largely blamed for disruption in democracy and military in intervention	80.3%	19.7%

Main Findings

- According to the perspective of Rebecca Schiff, it is significant to trace the political cultural history of a nation for stable civil-military relations. Pakistan, since its independence has inherited a system of strong military and bureaucracy with a weak democratic political culture. Inherited from the colonial legacy, the military and bureaucratic institutions were maturely developed while the democracy traditions had not gained strength.
- The incompetence of political elites in drafting a constitution, holding general elections and fostering a democratic culture by appealing to the masses had significantly weakened the public trust on political parties and political elite of the state. A large majority of the respondents also do not consider the politicians capable and qualified enough to foster a democratic culture.
- Not only has the public weak trust in the political elite, rather the trust deficit on other important institutions is alarmingly high.
- Out of seven and a half decades of its existence, Pakistan has spent more than 3 decades under direct military rule (Ayub Khan from 1958-1969, Yahya Khan from 1969-1971, Zia-ul-Haq from 1977-1988 and Pervez Musharraf from 1999-2008). Even during the

years of civilian government, there has been evidence of covert involvement of the military in the political sphere.

- Despite the critique against the military's involvement in politics, the public has been generally in reverence of the military. Despite the concerns of the political role of military, a vast majority of people consider that military has played a significant role in providing territorial integrity and security against traditional threats.
- Out of 127 respondents, approximately 65% consider that any federal or provincial institutions, other than the military, are not strong enough to thwart the threat of terrorism.
- A vast majority, with 85% of the respondents consider that no civil-political institutions, other than the military, are qualified enough to handle any natural disasters without the support from the military. However, more recently with the ousting of Imran Khan through the No-Confidence move has gathered immense and intense criticism against the armed forces of Pakistan.
- Approximately 74% of the respondents consider Pakistan military responsible for political instability in the country. Around 77% of the respondents consider the military responsible for corrupting politicians by facilitating changing loyalties amongst politicians. 80% of the respondents consider that the military intervention in politics has weakened democracy and reduced the role of parliament in Pakistan.
- A considerable majority of the respondents opine that the military should be completely apolitical.
- Over 80% of the people consider that there is need for comprehensive parliamentary oversight of defense budget. According to the respondents, the public trust on military is significantly declining
- However, with an increasing number of respondents claiming that the military interference in politics has been unjustified, a similarly large number of respondents upheld the opinion that throughout the history
- the politicians and political parties have been responsible for military intervention

Conclusion

Pakistan inherited a weak democratic system at its inception in 1947, with a history of colonial rule that did not foster democratic values and institutions. In contrast, the military, inherited from the British Indian Army, was well-organized and structured, initially playing a crucial role in maintaining order and security. This juxtaposition of a weak democratic foundation and a strong military institution has been a defining feature of Pakistan's political landscape. The military's role expanded over the years, becoming deeply involved in governance and national security affairs.

With the changed nature of threats, from hosting over 3 million Afghan refugees and 1 million Kashmiri refugees, high levels of environmental pollution and degradation, increased water scarcity, and the prevailing threat of terrorism, the security environment for Pakistan is highly complexed (Khan R. M., 2009). The Pakistan army had played a significant role in tackling with both traditional and non-traditional security threats. In addition to the practical and visible examples of the military combating with the wide range of threats, the fact that a significant majority of people believe that army successfully defends the state from external threats declare the centrality of military for security. Whether the task is that of infrastructure building in case of Karakoram Highway, or army extending help in times of 2005 earthquake or 2022 floods, Pakistan's military has been on its toes for dealing with traditional and non-traditional security threats (Janjua, 2021).

Furthermore, as the findings of the survey highlight, most of the people (84%) believe that no other institution would be capable of handling natural disasters without the support from military, and 65% consider that any federal or provincial institutions other than the military would be incapable in thwarting the terrorist threat. This perception of military as a more stable and efficient institution, compared to the often-fragmented civilian governments, has led to a greater reliance on the military for governance and decision-making, further weakening democratic norms and institutions in Pakistan.

Pakistan's weak political culture since its inception has significantly contributed to the country's struggles with democracy. Characterized by frequent military interventions, weak civilian institutions, and political instability, Pakistan's democratic journey has been tumultuous. The military has intervened directly in governance multiple times, citing reasons such as corruption and inefficiency in civilian governments. This has undermined the development of stable democratic institutions. Civilian institutions, including the judiciary and parliament, have often been weak and easily influenced by the military and other powerful actors, limiting their ability to govern effectively. Pakistan has experienced frequent changes in government, often through non-democratic means such as military coups or political assassinations, leading to a perception of political instability among the public. As a result, the military has been seen as a stronger institution.

However, despite the practical evidence and the public opinion indicating that military is one of the strongest and most competent institutions of Pakistan, there is a growing dissent regarding the involvement of military in the domestic political sphere. An in-depth analysis of the civil-military relations in the light of Rebecca Schiff's theory would reveal that the growing discordance in the civilian government and military leadership is now also combined with growing speculation of the public regarding the role of military in politics- all of which leads to the weakening of the internal fabric of the state.

While the civil-military relations in Pakistan have not been smooth since the beginning, the contemporary era has seen a dramatic episode of intense critique on the military that made the COAS and DG-ISI appear in the public eye to provide a clarification for the defense of the armed forces. Whether it's the excessive access to social and electronic media and information, or the use of a 'democratic tool' to oust a political leader that enjoyed populism, there have been increasing factions of public being delusional with the state's institutions-more specifically the military. The condition of the public's trust in the politicians, police, judiciary and other agencies for dealing with non-traditional security threats is equally poor, rather worse than the trust in military. While the military is criticized for disrupting the political democratic process, the politicians and political parties are not free of blame. The dynastic politics and incompetence of available leadership has prepared ground for military intervention. Additionally, in the contemporary era with the emergence of non-traditional security threats and blurring of the lines between peace and war due to hybrid warfare, it has become equally difficult to create a rigid distinction between the spheres of action of military and civilian governments.

Efforts to strengthen democracy in Pakistan have been impeded by this civil-military discordance. Achieving a more balanced civil-military relationship will require reforms that enhance civilian oversight of the military, which can be done through strengthening political culture and democratic institutions, enhance political awareness among youngsters in order to increase their participation in political matters and to promote a culture of democratic governance.

Recommendations

The subject-matter-experts consulted for their opinions have given valuable suggestions to improve the civil-military discordance that could hence improve the stability and security of Pakistan in traditional as well as non-traditional spheres.

- The respondent from academia sector asserted that ‘adherence to the constitution is the only solution’; since constitution is the unanimously agreed document to run state affairs. Unless the constitution is followed in true spirit and adapted through parliamentary procedures, the mobility and practicality between and among the state institutions would be futile.
- One of the respondents retired from the armed forces suggested that media should be controlled and true facts of services, sacrifices military provided for the nation over the course of history should be highlighted on different platforms, so that the young generation will know the truth. Military needs nation’s support at their back, they fight with the support of the nation
- One of the respondents, being a political activist claimed that the only solution is to make the let democracy bud, grow and prosper from the grass-root level; only that would be an actual representation of the public opinion.
- Lastly, another respondent retired from the military claimed that there is need of ‘larger consensus between the public, government and armed forces’. This exactly resonates with the Concordance theory of Rebecca Schiff in which she prescribes agreement between the same key stakeholders.

In Pakistan, strengthening the political culture is imperative for the country's democratic development. This entails fostering strong public political participation beyond mere voting and election processes. There is a critical need for heightened political awareness among the populace, ensuring that citizens are politically educated and informed about the issues affecting their lives and the nation as a whole.

A politically educated public is crucial for promoting informed decision-making and voting for wider national interests rather than narrow sectarian or personal agendas. Encouraging informal gatherings with political discussions can help stimulate political consciousness and debate, fostering a culture where citizens actively engage with political issues and hold their representatives accountable.

This shift towards a more active and aware citizenry is essential for reducing civil-military discordance and strengthening democratic institutions in Pakistan. It can lead to a more responsive and accountable political leadership, ultimately contributing to a more stable and vibrant democracy in the country.

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