

2. ELITE BARGAINING IN PAKISTAN DEVELOPMENT'S SAGA

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“Pakistan at a critical juncture of history” is a sentence usually echoed in Pakistan's political, military, judicial, media, and economic arenas. Pakistan's struggle for freedom of independence had been based upon freedom for all (minorities included), a separate homeland for Muslims of the subcontinent. However, Pakistan's freedom was questioned after independence as the country faced the dubious and controversial demise of its founder Quaid I Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and the First Prime Minister of Pakistan Liaquat Ali Khan. The two major upsets in the earliest phase of the newly independent state raised grave concerns and a lack of popular political leadership escalated difficulties and crisis. Solely representing the people of Pakistan, the All-Pakistan Muslim League (formerly known as All India Muslim League) had begun to crumble and new factions from APML ascended under new political leadership. Political hunger and lack of political institutions were paving the way for the military to think of intervening in politics, Governor General Iskandar Mirza himself convened General Ayyub Khan to act and stepped into politics while the Governor General was unwilling to hold elections on stipulated time as prescribed in 1956 constitution rather played delay tactics. In the book titled “Political Game Theory” authored by Nolan M. McCarthy and Adam Meirowitz, they define Political Science as the study of who gets what, when, and how²⁰. Then bargaining theory lies at its

foundation. The term ‘elites’ is the oldest concept but was developed after the Renaissance period when social ideas about progress were changed and who rules is still a constant and universal political problem throughout the world. Early philosophers like Aristotle, Plato, and Niccolo Machiavelli shed light on the subject while Plato proclaimed the idea of a philosopher king, who is an intellectual elite that comes out from a long and tiring process.

Elite Bargaining in Pakistan implies elites in Pakistan get what, when, and how in the aftermaths of deals. Elite capture refers to the situation in which powerful individuals or social groups manipulate political, economic, and social systems to serve their interests, often at the expense of broader social development. Elite capture in Pakistan is deeply rooted in the pre- and post-independence history of Pakistan. During the Colonial period, religious elites' traditional power was ceased. With the emergence of charismatic leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the rise of the Muslim League and the creation of Pakistan re-established religious elites' power and influence.

²⁰https://www.princeton.edu/~nmccarty/Political_Game_Theory%20.pdf

Through the objective resolution of 1949 religious elites' power was manifested through influence rather than direct authority. The political influence of religious elites and confrontations between rival sects in 1953 in Punjab resulted in the imposition of maiden martial law in Punjab. The Military elites were cautioned by the unprecedented rise of religious elites in the early phase, hence by dominating military stacks within the State, the Army was able to denounce civil power and leadership and imposed a coup on 27th October 1958²¹. With that army assuming direct authority made them realize that it was impossible to maintain a medieval-based religious state, rather laying down a base of a colonial-based modern army and secularizing a state. The secularization process was being carried out under the Central Institute of Islamic Research. Elective Bodies Disqualification Order of 1959 set a tribunal that imprisoned thousands of political actors and paralyzed political life in Pakistan, through such direct use of authority and institutional torture, Ayyub Khan enabled to dominate military elites in all spheres of Pakistan's society. The Basic Democracy Ordinance of 1960 introduced a new history, the primary purpose of which was to become a future president with the help of 80,000 democrats who were selected from 800 to 1000 constituencies. The intricacy of paradigm to dominate in political, Judiciary, and financial matters was justified under the 1962 constitution that bestowed the President with unchallenged and unparalleled power.

General Yahya Khan came next to Ayub Khan while his strict martial law regulations were opposed and students in Dacca demonstrated heavy resistance however through the martial law tool 'force' Yahya decided to sabotage youths' voices. The delay tactics to hold elections and then the inability to conduct free and fair elections in 1970 while failing to respect public mandate rather than making giant bargaining with West Pakistan-based political elites like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, resulted in a massive upset in the shape of the fall of Bengal (West Pakistan). In the earlier phase, the export of raw and processed jute accounts for 70% of Pakistan's foreign exchange earnings, this foreign exchange was used for the industrialization of West Pakistan, and Bengalis were deprived of industries and infrastructure. Feroz Ahmed in his research work titled "The Struggle in Bangladesh" narrates that the overgrown military rule in Pakistan until the 1970s consumed as much as 60% of the country's revenue budget. Therefore, under the circumstances, the exploitations and extraction of resources from East Pakistan benefited military elites the most²².

Political elites in Pakistan have been major stakeholders in the country's business. Their large-scale business sectors include agriculture, real estate, and export

markets. Either political elites joined nexus with land-owning elites or industrial elites, or they were part of these businesses. The devolution of power from top to bottom remains questionable, while the rich in Pakistan are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Any major change of command in government doesn't affect elites' position in politics rather powerful ministries or portfolios are granted to the powerful influential. Since Dr Mahbubul Haq identified the 22 richest families in Pakistan, according to his calculations, controlled 66 per cent of the industries and owned 87 per cent share in the country's banking and insurance industry, these influential families are still a part of Pakistan's main political landscape²³.

In 2007 General Pervez Musharraf enforced the National Reconciliation Ordinance which granted amnesty to politicians, political workers, and bureaucrats, who were accused of corruption, money laundering, murder, and terrorism from 1988 to 1999. According to the official list released by the Ministry of Law and Justice, Pakistan in Nov 2009, the ordinance benefited 8,044 allegedly tainted people including 34 politicians and 3 ambassadors. The ordinance was denounced by the Supreme Court in 2009. From 2008 to 2013 PPP led a coalition that governed the country, during which already politized NAB (The National Accountability Bureau) was ordered to close the cases against 60 leaders from coalitions, mostly from PPP. On November 20, 2009, The National Accountability Bureau report unveiled a list of 248 politicians and bureaucrats who have plundered hundreds of billions of rupees but were cleared by NAB under NRO.

Pakistan has never been a country experiencing long-term economic and political stability while short-term gains were achieved mostly under dictators to legitimize their rule. The failure of the economy and politics ultimately caused irreparable damage to Pakistan. Whether it was Pakistan's military establishment's choice to join hands in the Afghan Jihad against the Soviets in the late 1970s had negative far-reaching consequences for Pakistan or Pakistan with the US against the global war on terror for the two decades in Afghanistan, benefited military rule or elites while official press release by Pakistani military's media wing (ISPR) in January 2021 unveiled that the economic losses this country caused by the war on terror amounted to \$126 billion²⁴.

²¹(Elites and Political Development in Pakistan by Asaf Hassan) <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1746-1049.1976.tb00980.x>

²²https://cdn.theconversation.com/static_files/files/1513/The_struggle_in_Bangladesh.pdf?1615485722

²³<https://www.dawn.com/news/279413/people-who-own-greatest-amount-of-wealth>

²⁴<https://ispr.gov.pk/press-release-archive?cat=army&p=75>

Pakistan is among agricultural country where wheat and sugar used to be prominent parts of the export market however with mismanagement of resources, natural calamities, and poor governance instead of exporting the two said commodities Pakistan has been importing both in billions of rupees further deteriorating Pakistan's net international foreign reserves, According to official statistics, Pakistan imported wheat amounted to \$ 1 billion during July-March of FY24 compared to \$997 million in the same period of last fiscal year. In terms of quality, wheat imports rose by 36 per cent during the period under review²⁵. Wheat and Sugar scandals are usual practices in Pakistan that are worsening the economy of Pakistan while benefiting only a few hands. On April 4, 2020, the NAB probe revealed politicians and their right arms in sugar scandals and scamming like Jahangir Tareen Khan, Khusro Bakhtiar, Monis Elahi, and his relatives were found in major beneficiaries of the sugar scandal.

Pakistan has been blessed with uncountable natural potentials from its crucial geo-strategic and geo-economic position to vast rich fertile land and water resources, the unparalleled beauty of Pakistan has the potential to become the tourism capital of the world and home to ancient sites and civilization.

Pakistan's road to economic prosperity and a regional giant is linked to internal stability both political and economic stability. Through transparency, the rule of law, and harmony between institutions and common national goals, nothing could stop Pakistan from becoming a powerhouse in the region and at the global level.

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²⁵<https://customstoday.media/pakistan-spends-1b-on-wheat-imports-in-9mfy24/#:~:text=ISLAMABAD%3A%20Pakistan%20has%20imported%20wheat,during%20the%20ongoing%20fiscal%20year.>