DEMOCRACY – IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR POST-COLONIAL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?

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ABSTRACT

The thesis focuses on Pakistan and Bangladesh, as two case studies in the search for a probable answer to the problem of failing democracies in post colonial developing economies. Both nations have the same post colonial legacy and have been committed to democracy in different periods of their history, only to revert to periods which have been markedly non-democratic.

Relevant literature has been reviewed for an understanding of the theories and the current status of democratization globally, and specifically for Pakistan and Bangladesh. For the analysis, I have applied a framework for quality assessment to evaluate how the “democracies” fare against quality standards and what dimensions are the most lacking.

From the readings, it is evident that military and civilian rule in Pakistan, benefitted only a small percentage of the population, with limited trickledown effect. While in Bangladesh, under civilian rule economic liberalization did lead to marginally better economic growth, the problems of corruption and lack of visionary leadership continue to plague the country.
Authoritarianism through military rule did not result in sustainable social and economic progress in both countries, and unlike in an electoral democracy, there is no embedded mechanism to change an authoritarian government. The failure of military rule at various times throughout the states’ interconnected histories, point towards liberal democracy based on rule of law and institutions of democracy, as an effective governance mechanism, that promises participation and access to all its citizens. However, there is weak bottom up pressure at the grassroots level and civil society, for government reforms, that are much-needed as pre-conditions for effective liberal democracy to take hold.

A top down approach through international pressure from donor governments, multilateral development institutions and aid agencies that tie development aid and for Pakistan, military assistance, to progress made on reforms that strengthen institutions of democracy and democratic processes, maybe the most viable option. This approach will be much less palatable to Pakistan, than to Bangladesh, and results initially will be incremental and barely visible; however the international community should persevere, while it still yields enough influence, as it continues to hold the purse strings.
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CHAPTER 1

KEY PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy is an idea which has very different interpretations throughout the developing world. Although considered a universal value, the far from consistent application of democratic values and processes has left widely mixed experiences of democracy in different regions. This holds especially true for post-colonial developing countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh that have large populations who are extremely poor, pre-dominantly Muslim and in the case of Pakistan, prone to ethnic tensions and ongoing conflict with its economically superior and more secular neighbor, India.

To lay the foundation for a deeper analysis of the condition of democracy in Pakistan and Bangladesh, this chapter will focus on some of the key principles that define democracy, the conditions that favor democracy, the factors that are important in determining the quality of democracy and finally a brief picture of the state of democracy in India which is the largest country in the region and is pivotal to any analysis of Pakistan and to a lesser degree to Bangladesh.

The Concept of Democracy

Diamond, Lindz and Lipset defined democracy as “a system of government that meets three essential conditions:

- Meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power through regular, free and fair elections that exclude the use of force
A highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, such that no major (adult) social group is prevented from exercising the rights of citizenship

A level of civil and political liberties – freedom of thought and expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and demonstration, freedom to form and join organizations, freedom from terror and unjustified imprisonment – secured through political equality under a rule of law, sufficient to ensure that citizens (acting individually and through various associations) can develop and advocate their views and interests and contest policies and offices vigorously and autonomously.”¹

This definition, the authors note describes a political system that is distinct from the associated social and economic systems. The definition strongly implies that the electorate will hold leaders and their representatives accountable for their actions and “that multiple channels exist for representation of citizen interests beyond the formal political frameworks of parties, parliaments and elections.”²

Given the broad definition of democracy, even established democracies satisfy these conditions to only varying degrees. There always exists a gray area between what is considered democratic and what is not and within this spectrum lie a range of governance systems that have very different legal and political structures as well as different levels of expectations between the leader of a country and its citizens.

Diamond in his recent book “The Spirit of Democracy” further refined the definition of democracy by distinguishing between the “thin” and the “thick” aspects of the concept. Diamond describes the “thin” side as a system defined by the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter “for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for people’s vote.”³
This refers to the electoral process of having a “free and fair” election. On the “thick” side, Diamond outlines a number of attributes for a system to be termed as a democracy:

- Substantial individual freedom of belief, opinion, discussion, speech, publication, broadcast, assembly, demonstration, petition and internet
- Freedom of ethnic, religious, racial, and other minority groups (as well as historically excluded majorities) to practice their religion and culture and to participate equally in political and social life
- The right of all adult citizens to vote and to run for office (if they meet certain minimum age and competency requirements)
- Genuine openness and competition in the electoral arena, enabling any group that adheres to constitutional principles to form a party and contest for office
- Legal equality of all citizens under a rule of law, in which the laws are “clear, publicly known, universal, stable and non-retroactive”
- An independent judiciary to neutrally and consistently apply the law and protect individual and group rights
- Thus, due process of law and freedom of individuals from torture, terror and unjustified detention, exile, or interference in their personal lives – by the state or nonstate actors
- Institutional checks on the power of elected officials, by an independent legislature, court system, and other autonomous agencies
- Real pluralism in sources of information and forms of organization independent of the state; and thus, a vibrant “civil society”
- Control over the military and state security apparatus by civilians who are ultimately accountable to the people through elections.
Given the expectations of what a democracy should entail, it is a challenge for most developing countries to attain to a system that is truly democratic. These attributes require a country to achieve a level of development that indicates that at minimum the citizenry is educated, aware of their rights, economically empowered and has had enlightened leaders. There is a wide difference in the degree of political, social and economic development across the developing economies which in turn lead to widely varying types of “democratic” systems. Diamond contends that at minimum for a system to be termed “democratic” there has to be “electoral democracy” where free, fair and regular elections is the mechanism through which leaders are chosen and replaced by the people. According to Diamond, a true democracy would aspire to the achievement of the ten “thick” dimensions. Based on the degree of achievement of these thick attributes, Diamond defines democracy as “liberal”, “illiberal” or “pseudodemocracy.”

Liberal democracy exists when aspects of the thick attributes exist at substantial levels while at the other end of the spectrum, illiberal democracies will only have these attributes at greatly reduced levels. Pseudodemocracy or electoral authoritarian regime relates to a governance system where there are formal institutions and processes of democracy including multiparty elections, but leadership cannot be voted out as the elections are rigged and the underlying institutions of democracy are not independent from the administration. Diamond qualifies these definitions by explaining that these labels are not distinct as you may have an electoral democracy, where the leadership
changes but the country is governed by a religious supreme leader who is not accountable to the people such as Iran.\textsuperscript{5}

Robert Dahl believes that certain conditions are necessary in a country for democracy to exist and flourish, while the absence of such conditions will make it unlikely or very difficult for democracy to survive. However, in a country where there is a mix of favorable and unfavorable conditions, case in point according Dahl is India, the existence and sustainability of democracy may be difficult but not impossible. Dahl has noted five such conditions among which three he considers essential and two as favorable. The “essential” conditions of democracy according to Dahl are: \textsuperscript{6}

- Control of military and police by elected officials
- Democratic beliefs and political culture
- No strong foreign control hostile to democracy

The favorable conditions of democracy are:

- A modern market economy and society
- Weak subcultural pluralism

For democracy to survive, control over military and police must remain firmly in the hands of a civilian government. In any state, the means to coerce, repress and perpetrate acts that suppress freedom of action and speech rests with the military and the police force. In the case of Pakistan and Bangladesh, the swing from a democratic form of governance to a more military backed authoritarian governance happened
through the hands of the military chiefs. Especially, in the case of Pakistan, the military has seldom been under the control of an elected civilian government.

Citizens must believe in that a democratic system provides the best outcome for the country. This firm belief in the principles of democracy bestows legitimacy to a democratically elected government and enables leaders to govern in times of crisis and economic hardship which are often the most common triggers for the collapse of a democratic system and a switch to an authoritarian or a military backed regime. The political culture of participation and freedom to vote are all very important elements. It is however, difficult for countries to have and sustain such a strong belief in democracy when they have had no experience of a true participatory, liberal democracy; or even worse when the only kind of democracy a country actually experienced was one of illiberal or pseudo democracy.

This again is certainly the case for both of Pakistan and Bangladesh, where both nations have swung back and forth between one-man or a military backed authoritarian leadership to a democracy which was less than liberal. A survey done in 2004, by the Asian Barometer notes that in South Asia, support for key democratic principles exist but there is also acceptance of the idea of military rule. In India, considered one of the largest democracy that continue to flourish under difficult circumstances, a slim majority (52% of people surveyed) reject the notion of a strong leader in lieu of a democratically elected parliament. In Bangladesh only a quarter of the people surveyed reject the concept of a strong leader in place of a parliament, while
in Pakistan, half the people surveyed reject the notion of a strong leader that supplants a parliament. Interestingly, only two in five oppose military rule in both Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Based on the survey data, it seems that both Bangladesh and Pakistan have greater faith in military rule than their elected parliaments and have less faith in the notion of one strong leader. The survey results alone of course cannot define a country’s quality of democracy and the above statement is a very general conclusion drawn from a set of data at a given point in time, the results however, does reflect clearly that the peoples’ experience with democracy in both these countries have not been very positive. At the time of the survey, Musharraf was leading a military backed regime in Pakistan, while Bangladesh had a democratically elected government. The two in five opposition to military rule indicates that Pakistanis clearly felt that the country was moving ahead under Musharraf’s leadership, while Bangladeshis who at that time were at the mercy of a democratically elected parliament that turned out to be corrupt, yearned for the ‘good old days’ of military rule.

Intervention by foreign countries often stalls the process of democratization. This was clearly true at the time of the cold war; witness the British and U.S role in overthrowing Mossadegh’s democratically elected government in Iran in the 1950s. In Pakistan, there is a strong preoccupation with India and hostilities over Kashmir still dominate the India-Pakistan relationship. India as the largest and the most economically powerful country in South Asia and being geographically wedged
between Pakistan and Bangladesh have intervened in the political affairs of the region. India has been credited with the breakup of Pakistan and the subsequent independence of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.

Dahl, among many others believes that a market economy driven by private ownership and enterprise as opposed to a socialist state-led economy is better aligned with democratic institutions and culture. A market led economy results in higher economic growth and a society based on individual enterprise, attributes which lead to favorable conditions for the sustainability of democracy. However, he points out that a market based economy also hurts democratic principles as it creates economic inequality which leads to political inequality. People with more economic resources have greater access to political resources creating a paradox that undermines democracy. Both Pakistan and Bangladesh are developing economies with large populations living under the $2 a day poverty line (Bangladesh 81%, Pakistan 60% by 2005 estimates). A market economy exists in both these countries; there are still barriers to free enterprise and growing inequality among the rich and the poor.

Notwithstanding the dangers of inequality, Martin Seymour Lipset attributes the rise of a free market economic system to be of paramount importance to the rise and continuation of democracy in a country. In particular, the growth of a capitalist free market economy leads to a commensurate rise of the middle class which in time will erode the authority of an authoritarian regime.
Lipset states:

Such an economy including a substantial independent peasantry produces a middle class that can stand up against the state and provide the resources for independent groups, as many twentieth century scholars such as Weber (1906: 346 ff), Schumpeter (1950), Moore (1966), Schocpol (1979) and Berger (1986, 1992) have also concluded.  

It is interesting to note that while there are different ways of measuring the size of the middle class in developing countries, the numbers in Bangladesh and Pakistan are comparatively low in relation to that of India. Rough estimates in mid - 2000, indicate that about 9% – 10% of Bangladesh’s population can be considered as middle class, which is an estimated thirteen to fifteen million people. The estimated number for Pakistan is about 18% of the population or about thirty million people.  

While the estimated number for India is almost ten times that of Bangladesh and Pakistan, ranging from hundred million to three hundred million people, the most conservative estimate of the size of the middle class in India is about hundred and twenty million people, which constitute roughly about eleven percent of the population. While in terms of percentages it is similar to that of its neighbors, however, in terms of absolute numbers, India has a much larger middle class population. This supports to a certain degree, Lipset’s theory of the linkage between the prevalence of a growing middle class and the prevalence of democratic processes in respect to India and the continuous challenge for democracy to take root in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Democracy has a better chance of surviving in a culturally homogenous society rather than a society that has many different sub-cultures. This may seem paradoxical,
since the most successful democracy the U.S as well as a number of developed countries in Europe such as Belgium, Switzerland and others have very different sub-cultures. These countries have learnt to adapt through assimilation, decision though consensus, representative parliament and other mechanisms. Pakistan is composed of a number of tribes with distinct cultures and loyalties which makes cultural homogeneity and thus sustainability of democracy a challenge. The breakup of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh to some extent was the response to a lack of accommodation and acceptance by the ruling party of a culturally different and economically deprived group of people. Since independence, Bangladesh can claim to be a fairly homogenous society.

Later chapters will focus in depth on the state and quality of democracy in Pakistan and Bangladesh, but a cursory review through the lens of Dahl’s essential and favorable conditions of democracy indicate that while not impossible, sustenance of democracy remains a continuing challenge.

**Quality of Democracy**

Diamond and Morlino has defined a set of indicators to assess the quality of democracy. They define “quality” democracy to be “one that provides its citizens a high degree of freedom, political equality and popular control over public policies and policy makers through the legitimate and lawful functioning of stable institutions.” The authors assess quality in terms of results, content and procedure. Results refer to the degree to which the citizen’s expectation of governance is met; content refers to the
concepts of freedom of speech and action as well as political liberty; while procedure refers to the authority of the people to assess whether the elected government is providing “liberty and equality according to the rule of law.”

Each of these dimensions have underlying indicators. Procedural dimensions are the rule of law, participation, competition, horizontal accountability and vertical accountability. The substantive or content dimensions are freedom embodied in respect for civil and political freedoms and equality measured by the progressive implementation of greater political (and underlying it social and economic) equality. The final dimension of responsiveness assesses how well the government enacts rules and laws that reflect the citizen’s demands and preferences.

While many of the indicators above are reflected in Diamond’s definition of the “thick” aspect of democracy, the assessment framework breaks each of the indicators down further to allow for a more indepth analysis. Following chapters will discuss the quality of democracy in both Bangladesh and Pakistan in relation to the above indicators.

Democracy in India: Fact or Fallacy?

“An Improbable Democracy” is what Dahl calls India. On the face of it, India does seem to defy conventional wisdom as to its chances of surviving as a democracy for over six decades. With over 1 billion people who are culturally and ethnically diverse, extreme poverty, growing inequality, and bordering often hostile neighbors such as Pakistan and China, India is hardly the likeliest country where democracy is
expected to survive and flourish. There have been periods in Indian society which were
decidedly setbacks for democracy; for instance when democratic rule was suspended as
when Indira Gandhi invoked emergency power in 1975; when basic rights were
ruthlessly violated for instance, communal riots in Mumbai and other cities, in the
wake of the demolition of the Babri mosque in December 1992; when political leaders
were involved in corruption – Rajiv Gandhi accused in the Bofors scandal in 1980;
multiple jail sentences for the Chief Minister of Bihar, Laloo Prasad Yadav; but what
has prevailed is the respect for democratic institutions and the citizen’s belief in
democratic processes.

However, both Dahl and Diamond point to the key factors in Indian society that
have sustained and encouraged the belief in democracy and support for key democratic
institutions. The military and police have remained under the control of successive
civilian governments, minimizing the risk of swinging towards authoritarianism
through the hands of the armed forces. The founding fathers of the nation state of
India, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatama Gandhi to name a few, were all true believers
of democracy; they adhered to democratic beliefs. Their beliefs shaped the
constitution, the political institutions and the political movements that they
championed. The Indian sense of nation is intertwined with belief in democratic
principles. To quote Dahl, “Democracy, one might say, is the national ideology of
India.”17 Although Hindi is considered the national language of India, the country
recognizes over fifteen languages and each region has its own state language or dialect.
There are many ethnic and culturally distinct groups living in India and although Hinduism is the predominant religion, there are as many Muslims in India as were in Pakistan at the time of the Partition.\textsuperscript{18} Given the mix of cultures, ethnic backgrounds, languages and religions, it is surprising that India still survives as one single political entity. Dahl’s explanation is that each minority is so small and spread across different parts of the country that it is impossible to have a coalition that would support a viable breakaway state. Indians have come to believe that to protect minority rights, ensure access to resources for its citizens, advance the economic prospects for its people, there is no alternative but democracy – the only viable option is to be part of the union and to continue to strengthen it. Dahl further asserts that the Hindu religion to some extent binds the majority and provides a common identity, as eight of out of ten Indians practice Hinduism.\textsuperscript{19}

Diamond points to similar attributes in Indian society that have supported the democratic institutions and principles over the decades. His analysis goes much further to detail the institutions and mechanisms that have been instrumental in the sustainability of democracy. Diamond attributes political culture, civil society, political management of diversity and accountability and the rule of law as the key dimensions India’s success in maintaining a democracy.\textsuperscript{20} Political culture is much the same as Dahl’s essential condition of democratic beliefs and political culture. However, Diamond believes that a vibrant civil society in India has played a pivotal role in providing the checks and balances that limit any potential abuse of power by the
An aware and proactive civil society coupled with a free mass media have highlighted the deficiencies of the system and pushed through reforms. The “Narmada Bachao Andolan” is one such instance, where civil society has prevented the Narmada river dam project from being implemented as it would have displaced poor villagers who typically had no representation in the government.

India has been particularly successful in managing diversity in the political arena. Federalism is one such mechanism through which India has managed to knit together a diverse group of people spread over a large geographic area. It is by providing constitutionally guaranteed authority at the state and local level to elected local governments that India has managed to promulgate a much more inclusive system where a wide array of people have a stake. Federalism also allows an element of ethnic and cultural pride by bestowing a distinct identity to different groups of people within “a larger national identity.”

Over the years, India has paid attention to addressing the social and political inequalities through the much-maligned “quota system.” However, inefficient and controversial the quota system has been, it has been the engine for social mobility and greater participation in politics by the “scheduled castes” (or the dalits or untouchables, roughly 17% of the population), scheduled tribes (about 8%) and to a limited extent by “other backward castes” (roughly 44%). The quota system confers reserved positions for the aforementioned groups in higher education in the most prestigious universities of India, in public sector employment and in political representation.
Accountability and rule of law has had some setbacks in India but it in the recent years its institutions of accountability have been independent and has served to strengthen the rule of law. For such a large country with limited resources, the Election Commission does a commendable job in institutionalizing administrative integrity and competence in holding elections and tabulating votes for over 600 million people in no less than 900,000 polling stations. The judicial system can be considered as the most significant institution in upholding the rule of law and ensuring deepening responsiveness from state and national leaders. In the 1990s, as corruption escalated Supreme Court ruled to increase the authority of the Central Bureau of Investigation, the key institution that is responsible for investigating corruption in the public and private sector. The CBI was no longer required to obtain “government concurrence” in order to investigate a ministry or its head. The Supreme Court rulings have also shut down over 200 companies that were polluting the Ganges while strengthening environmental regulations addressed to mitigate against air and water pollution.

Indians have come to believe in democracy over time. Democracy has gradually deepened and citizens at large have come to expect more than regular elections from a democracy; they have grown to expect responsiveness and accountability from their leaders. Larry Diamond believes that the democratic process in India has allowed peaceful ways to accommodate deep differences and have put in place legal structures that has prevented or contained violent conflicts. This level of accountability over time has resulted in increasing confidence and participation of the
citizens in the democratic process. The most important factor to sustain democracy in India has been steady economic growth and a perceptible improvement in the standard of living for the average Indian. Since liberalization in 1991, economic growth was well above the slow “Hindu rate of growth”. Even prior to 1990, India socio economic conditions had improved – between 1970 and 1992, life expectancy increased from fifty to sixty one years, infant mortality decreased by almost half and adult literacy improved from 34 to 50 percent.27

There are detractors to the notion of India’s success in sustaining democratic principles. Ayesha Jalal, in her book “Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia” points out that India’s democracy has strong underpinnings of authoritarianism. Jalal asserts that post independence, Nehru and the founding fathers inherited the British colonial system where the center controlled the states through a network of state representatives which Jalal describes as “reliance of bureaucratic authoritarianism allayed by the periodic bending of institutional rules to preserve the colonial state’s tenuous grip over the personalized networks of politics in the localities.”28 Nehru and Congress used the existing colonial structure to consolidate the party’s authority and the legacy of an inherently authoritarian structure ensured that the power of the elected officials superseded that of the non-elected bureaucracy and the state bureaucrats were considered subordinate to the elected representatives.

According to Jalal, post independence, federalism was the only way to govern a vast and ethnically divided country. However, pragmatism won over the principle of
Federalism, where sovereignty is divided among states to counter the authority of the center. While the principle of Federalism was acknowledged, power was not shared among the center and the constituent units. There was no question of a state’s voluntarily entering the union and by extension there was no provision of a state seceding from the union. The states have much less authority than the center and the center has the right to dissolve the state’s governing body and bring it under the authority of the center through the “president’s rule.”

Financially, states receive a small amount of the revenue income while the bulk goes to the center and politically smaller states are not always represented in the bicameral parliament since the indirectly elected Rajya Sabha is a mere reflection of the Lok Sabha, which is an elected body based on population.

Ayesha Jalal states:

With centrally planned economic development providing the impetus, electoral democracy in India and controlled politics in Pakistan as well as in Bangladesh have enlarged the scope of personalized transactions between state officials and dominant social groups. The politics of inclusion in formally democratic India and the politics of exclusion in military-bureaucratic Pakistan have been only marginally different in addressing the problems of economic deprivation and disparity. While the demands of an electoral democracy led to a wider distribution of economic spoils, India’s political economy of development has remained a grim matrix of deplorable inequalities and injustices.

Notwithstanding Ayesha Jalal’s less than positive analysis of the state of India’s democracy, it is important to note that the citizens of India believe that they live in a democracy that provides for a responsive government, allows for economic growth and protection of minority rights. It is equally important for the leaders of India to note that democracy has not reached perfection and to perfect the union, more power
needs to be shared with the states, the parliament requires increased representation and more distributive economic policies need to be implemented to reduce inequality. Despite the shortcomings, this structure whether labeled as “democratic authoritarianism” or just “electoral democracy” is something that India’s more than a billion people believe in and have faith in, as a way to propel the nation forward – this in itself, I believe, is an achievement in a region where military influence and ethnic tensions dominate politics.
CHAPTER 2
A HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF PAKISTAN – FROM GENESIS TO PARTITION

Pakistan, today is the outcome of the dissolution of two distinct polities; the partition of the British Raj in 1947, creating amidst bloodshed the two states of India and Pakistan; and the violent dismemberment of West and East Pakistan in 1971, again creating two separate states of Pakistan and Bangladesh. These events have greatly impacted the experiments with democratic forms of government that the Pakistani leadership has undertaken since the formation of the state; results of which are clearly evidenced in political systems and processes that are not particularly representative of the different ethnic and economic groups in the country, nor are they particularly responsive to the needs of the common Pakistani.

The following section will discuss the historical evolution of Pakistan’s politics, focusing on the key actions and decisions of the four periods of military rule. While the paper will review the period governed by democratically elected leaders, including the present leadership, the key focus will be on the military regimes since they have directly ruled Pakistan over half of its life as a nation state and even longer, if we consider leaders who had military origins, even if elected through national elections.
The Concept of Pakistan

The notion of Pakistan as a separate state for Indian Muslims was preceded by the concept of a separate status for Indian Muslims within an independent nation state of India. In 1929, the Indian National Congress called for the independence of India from Britain. A year after, the Muslim League called for not only an independent India, but that an independent India be comprised of two nations, one Muslim and one Hindu, with sufficient protection for its Muslim minority, within a Hindu-dominated society.¹

Indian Muslims were divided on the question of independence. The princes, who by that time were by and large educated in Britain and had good relationships with the British Raj, saw no benefit from an independent India or even a Muslim dominated state; some reluctantly agreed to the notion of independence and later to partition. If partition were to happen, a few Muslim princely rulers such as the Nizam of Hyderabad preferred to be absolutely independent and not be subsumed by India or if it were to happen, a Muslim ruled state. Other prominent Indian Muslim leaders such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who joined the Indian Congress after leaving Muslim League, preferred an independent undivided India, while others preferred a separate Muslim state within India or a confederation of Muslim states and India.² Pious Muslims opposed the entire idea of a separate Muslim state, as they believed that true Muslims should not pledge allegiance to a single state but instead to the larger Muslim community or Ummah.³
While the name Pakistan for a Muslim state separate from a Hindu dominated India was first conceptualized in 1930 by Choudhury Rahmat Ali, an Indian Muslim living in Cambridge, England, it was not used until 1945. Even in 1940, the Muslim League’s resolution formally calling for a separate nation state for Indian Muslims, the name Pakistan was not mentioned.\(^4\) Choudhury Rahmat Ali and a group of Indian students outlined a federation of ten states and named it Pakistan, drawing the letters from provinces that had a Muslim or close to a Muslim majority. The provinces were Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Baluchistan. As Stephen Cohen writes, “In Persian, Pakistan also means “land of the pure,” an implicit gibe at the ritually “pure” high caste Hindus who dominated the Indian National Congress.”\(^5\)

It was the poet/politician Iqbal and lawyer/politician Jinnah who rallied the masses and Muslim leadership around the idea of a “two nation” theory. While Iqbal’s reasoning for a separate Muslim territory was more “Islamist,” an attempt to establish territorial sovereignty that allowed integration towards a larger Islamic community; Jinnah’s on the other hand was more pragmatic. In an independent India, Muslims would be outvoted by the Hindu population, three to one, thus decimating the chance of any representation in greater Indian politics. Jinnah argued that Indian Muslims were not a true minority either as they comprised a majority of the population in four of eleven British provinces.\(^6\)

Interestingly, regional security issues at the time of partition revolved around the security of India, in the context of an independent Pakistan. The British believed
that given the small number of Muslim officers, India and Pakistan would have to form
a federation for defense purposes and be dependent on the British for military officers
and arsenal. Iqbal believed that Pakistan situated between India and Afghanistan as
well as India and Russia, would enhance the security of India.

According to Iqbal, the Muslims of Punjab and the North West Frontier
province ‘would be the best defenders of India against a foreign invasion, be
that invasion the one of ideas or bayonets. The Punjab with 56 percent Muslim
population supplies 54 percent of the total combatant troops in the Indian army
and (if Gurkhas are excluded) the Punjab contingent amounts to 62 percent of
the whole.’

The proponents of the Pakistan movement never conceived that the two
countries would be bitter enemies, or for that matter the armed forces would play such
a dominant role in Pakistani politics.

As Stephen Cohen points out, the Muslim League and Jinnah’s fight for a
separate Muslim state was not an epic struggle against the colonial rulers or with the
Indian National Congress, as Muslims were made to believe at that time. Both the
British Raj and the Indian National Congress were liberal at their core. Conservatives
and potential extremists in Congress were marginalized. Congress was led by like-
minded British trained lawyers who shared much of the same values and experiences
as that of the Muslim League leaders. B. R. Ambedkar, architect of India’s
constitution and an inspirational leader from India’s untouchable caste, believed that
the partition would benefit India. For one, India would hold a much more productive
resource base, leaving Pakistan to be the poorer and hence the weaker state. Secondly,
following World War II, India’s army had been dominated by Indian Muslims drawn from Muslim provinces. The breakup, would leave the Indian army weak and hence the country less vulnerable to the dictates of a powerful armed forces. Ambedkar had once commented presciently that “a safe army is better than a safe border.”

The British on the other hand saw an independent Pakistan as a pro-western nation state which would be a strategic British ally. They were wary of India’s allegiance, especially in the wake of Congress’s non-participation in World War II, when Gandhi and other Congress leaders started the Quit-India movement and spent the war incarcerated. The British Raj had then relied on Muslim League to recruit soldiers and Punjabi Muslims became the single largest recruitment class at that time. The British also had concerns that post-independence, India under the leadership of a left-leaning Nehru, may fall under the influence of the Soviet Union. The state of Pakistan would offer a strategic counterbalance in Asia, where the British still had interests in countries that had oil and other resources.

The economist-scholar Shahid Javed Burki summarized well how Pakistan held a range of implications for its various constituents.

The new state was meant to achieve different things for different people: emancipation from the Hindu landlords of the peasantry of Bengal and Assam; the creation of new economic and political opportunities for frustrated urban Muslim classes of Delhi, Bombay, and the United and Central provinces; and the establishment of an Islamic state.

Besides the divergent aspirations that different social and economic groups held about Pakistan, the British Raj as we noted above also had certain expectations. The
challenge to meld all of these aspirations into a blueprint of a functional state, born amidst bloodshed on the basis of religion was enormous; a challenge which Pakistan had a slight chance of rising to, had Jinnah survived longer than one year after Pakistan’s independence.

The Partition and its Aftermath, 1947 – 1957

August 14, 1947 witnessed the creation of Pakistan, the first nation state created after World War II. India’s independence came a day after. Pakistan comprised of five states, Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan, Northwest Frontier and East Pakistan. While the four states were geographically adjacent, East Pakistan was thousand miles apart, with India separating the two wings.

The Partition dislocated families, caused massive bloodshed and had a profound impact on the concept of Pakistan as an independent country for Indian Muslims. Jinnah was appalled at the violence and the mass migration that occurred during Partition and the Muslim League was unprepared to handle the fleeing refugees. One account suggests that almost six to eight million refugees flowed into Pakistan.\(^{11}\) While Jinnah had actively encouraged and welcomed skilled and trained Indian Muslims, he had not envisaged the “mass migration of the dispossessed, the fearful, and the deprived, many of whom fled to Pakistan not out of idealism but out of terror.”\(^{12}\) Four decades of emphasizing the differences between Hindus and Muslims and the threat to Muslims as a minority in the community played into the psyche of the masses. The few speeches that Jinnah made to the new nation of Pakistan emphasizing
unity and social cohesion was clearly insufficient to mitigate the distrust and fear between the two communities.\textsuperscript{13} As Shahid Burki noted, Hindus could not cease to be Hindus and Muslims could not cease to be Muslims, especially when the differences were emphasized and re-emphasized throughout the four decades leading to independence.\textsuperscript{14}

The Partition had a number of far-reaching consequences to the future of Pakistan as a state. The mass migration shifted the balance of power in West Pakistan from the local, traditional Pathan and Punjabi leadership to the migrant population who controlled the bureaucracy, government and commerce. Pre-independence, North India with its Muslim population in the minority had showed the greatest support for a separate Muslim State and the Muslim League as a political party. Pakistan however was created “on the periphery of the sub-continent” in a territory that had a Muslim majority, but weak support for the state of Pakistan.\textsuperscript{15} Independence saw the strongest proponents of Pakistan migrate in huge numbers to the new state, who were more educated, urbanized, wealthy, professionally qualified and experienced in statecraft and British-style bureaucracy than the local population.\textsuperscript{16} As a result, the immigrants or the \textit{Mohajirs} gained control of the state machinery, the administration, commerce and trade, dominating the local inhabitants and Unionist party members who had controlled pre-independence politics in pre-independence India. It was at that juncture, when the seeds were planted of an enduring alliance between the army, the bureaucracy, and the feudal landlords, that continue to dominate society and politics of Pakistan.
The violence and ethnic cleansing carried out during Partition by both communities along the newly drawn international borders were a further confirmation of the Pakistanis’ fear of India. Although, pre independence both Congress and Muslim League had fought each other, they had done so only in the confines of courts and legislatures, governed by British principles of fundamental constitutionalism. Neither parties were prepared for the massive violence nor ethnic cleansings that was perpetrated by the local population in the North West of India and larger cities of West Pakistan. The ensuing violence in the eyes of the Pakistani elite only served to validate the decision to establish a separate state for Muslims and confirmed India’s intolerance and hatred of Muslims.

The Partition underscored the importance of the role that state institutions play in serving the basic needs of the citizens of a new state and ensuring basic rights. The Muslim League failed to provide relief and rehabilitate to the refugees in Pakistan which then left the bureaucrats and young army officers to step into the role of protector and provider of basic necessities. This was invaluable experience for the army and the bureaucrats, firmly placing them at the center stage of Pakistan’s struggle for survival. This episode further highlighted the Muslim Leagues’ weaknesses as an organizing force and undermined its bid to be the leading party of West Pakistan. The importance of the army to the survival of Pakistan as a nation state was further demonstrated by the first India Pakistan war in 1948 over Kashmir. Although the
commanding officers were still British, the army was thought to have acquitted itself well, a reputation which was enhanced with each retelling of the war.\textsuperscript{18}

The Partition emphasized to Pakistan the notion of betrayal by India. Not only India withheld Pakistan’s assets, they manipulated the international borders in connivance with the British Raj and persuaded some of the princely states to join India rather than Pakistan.\textsuperscript{19} To cap it all, police action in Hyderabad and movement of troops into Jammu and Kashmir were still further signs of continuing Indian betrayal. It was Gandhi who undertook a fast unto death, to protest India’s appropriation of Pakistan’s assets and Hindu and Sikh attacks on Muslims in India; he then paid the ultimate price of death for being pro-Pakistani, when he was shot dead by a Hindu extremist.

The Partition altered the economies of both countries with Pakistan becoming the poorer state, as national leaders in India had predicted. Pakistan did not have the industrial base and had limited ties to the banking world. The local Muslim population was not involved in large scale production or in capital markets. A large majority of the hindu and the parsi communities who were traders and businessmen had moved to India at the time of the partition. However, an inflow of Gujrati Muslim business communities from India to Pakistan slowly developed the entrepreneurial base of Pakistan.

Pakistan inherited the Punjab area which produced large agricultural surpluses of cotton, wheat and rice. The main cash crop was cotton which supplied the raw
materials for the textile mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad. East Pakistan too had an agriculture based economy of rice and jute. Similar to West Pakistan, jute grown in East Pakistan fed the mills in Calcutta in India, which then produced the bulk of the world’s jute. Post partition the two countries could not agree to an exchange rate mechanism which posed structural problems in maintaining cross-border, production-processing supply chain operations. India hence ceased to process the cotton and jute produced by West and East Pakistan. The bifurcation hurt Pakistan more than India. With the exception of Calcutta where manufacturing declined, the rest of India with its vast resources, adapted well.

At the time of independence Pakistan as a state had many liabilities, but its assets were promising. According to Cohen, it had “a strong bureaucratic and legal tradition, an unthreatening military, a powerful uniting figure in Jinnah and an important strategic position, among other assets.” The legal framework that Pakistan operated under was the India Act 1935, right until 1956 when the stated approved its own constitution. Under the Act, the basic structure of a democratic administration had already been laid. There were parliamentary governments at both the center and provinces with clear divisions of power, authority by the states to collect revenue and in some states such as Punjab, Sindh, East Bengal and the administered parts of the North West Frontier Provinces (NWFP), a British system of courts and local bureaucracies remained active. What remained outside of the administration was a large part of NWFP, home of Pashtun tribes that were never directly controlled by the
British but operated under its own system of tribal governance. The British dealt with the population through political agents; post-independence, Pakistan continued to do the same.\textsuperscript{24}

Of the 1,400 individuals that comprised the Indian Civil Service, pre-independence, only 80 civil service officers joined Pakistan, post independence. Majority of the 80 that had joined the Pakistan Civil Service were from Northern India, or from the Bengal Cadre of ICS.\textsuperscript{25} Clearly short of resources to run a new state, Pakistan recruited many British officials to run the newly named Pakistan Civil Service.

The British and later the American’s recognized Pakistan’s strategic value not only in terms of its geographic location but also in the context of Congress’s earlier refusal to participate in World War II. For Britain, Pakistan would be a strategic ally that could aid Britain’s control over its remaining colonies in Asia as well as a potential bomber base in the Southern flank of Russia.\textsuperscript{26} This perception benefited Pakistan military the most with close ties to British and American military resources and aid while slowly becoming a conduit of Western influence within the administration.

The liabilities on the other hand were overwhelming. The new administration had to control two wings, a thousand miles apart, separated by a now hostile India, with whom the relationship was one of distrust and enmity. The cultural difference and the distance, made governing East Pakistan a challenge, but even within the Western
wing there was very little control over vast parts of NWFP and Baluchistan and even Sindh. The princely states in those areas were the most regressive and the British had historically very little or absolutely no control over those areas.\textsuperscript{27} Having managed their affairs through tribal laws and tribal councils, these unfettered states were not about to give up their independence to a \textit{mohajir} government, who were bent on establishing the same colonial bureaucracy and authority, that these provinces had successfully resisted for so long.

Apart from governance, economically too Pakistan was at a disadvantage. Cotton and jute were the only two raw materials that Pakistan could export. While cotton was important, jute had witnessed a decline following the popularity of synthetic materials. To compound the situation, Bengal had just experienced famine and there were uncertainties surrounding the sharing of water with India, which irrigated the agricultural lands of both West and East Pakistan. It was only in 1960, under the aegis of the World Bank, that the Indus Water Treaty was signed, ensuring steady flow of water to West Pakistan; however, in the case of East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh, issues with water still remains.

\textbf{Jinnah’s Legacy}

While there was a great deal of similarity between the national leaders in India and Pakistan in terms of their world view which was largely shaped by the British Raj, through education and at a later period, legislative experience within the Congress, the shift away from democracy for Pakistan was more a consequence of the challenge to
govern a hastily cobbled together territory, purely based along religion lines. Many authors such as Cohen, Talbot, Rose trace back the tendency towards authoritarianism in the present-day Pakistani leadership, to Jinnah himself. Jinnah’s decision to remain as Governor General set the tone towards a more authoritarian form of governance for Pakistan (in contrast to Nehru’s decision to serve as Prime Minister in the first post-independence government, set the course toward towards democracy in India).\footnote{28}

Jinnah’s decision was based on the need to preserve Pakistan’s sovereignty. There was a real effort for Lord Mountbatten to hold the position of a joint Governor General of both India and Pakistan, which Jinnah assessed correctly, would have been detrimental to the aspirations of a sovereign Pakistan.\footnote{29} Post independence, given the social, cultural and economic differences between the provinces and the lack of a political base and grassroots support for the new leaders in West and East Pakistan, only Jinnah, the “Quaid e Azam” commanded enough respect throughout the newly formed country to forge unity among its peoples.

Jinnah concurrently held the posts of Governor General and the President of Constituent Assembly.\footnote{30} Broad powers of governance was retained and centralized in that office, which sought to perpetuate the British Vice Regal system that they believed to have worked well the in pre-independence Indian sub-continent. The executive branch was strengthened, as Jinnah directly controlled important portfolios such as the Evacuation and Refugee Rehabilitation Portfolio and States and Regions Portfolio which at that point was justified given the fragile state of the union.\footnote{31} Jinnah set the
precedence of dismissing directly elected governments when he directed the Governors of Frontier and Sindh to dismiss the ministries of Dr. Khan Sahib and M. A. Khuro in August 1947 and April 1948.\textsuperscript{32}

Historians stress that Jinnah’s actions were not driven by any personal urge to control, but centralization was based on the need of the moment as the only tool available to unite and maintain a sovereign entity out of disparate territories. Leo E. Rose notes that Jinnah had not intended to set a precedence of centralized authority for the country, but his actions regardless set the tone of the power relationships between executive branch and other offices of the government.\textsuperscript{33} Jinnah in his one year in office was mindful of the limits of his authority as captured in Ian Talbot’s writings.

Nevertheless, it could be argued that despite his immense prestige as Pakistan’s founding father Jinnah never exceeded the limits of his authority as Governor-General laid down by the India Independence Act.\textsuperscript{34}

It is fair to state that Jinnah would have been sorely disappointed with the state of Pakistan’s union today and he certainly could not have foreseen the turn of events that led to such a dramatic failure of democracy. Stephen Cohen summarizes the sentiment well.

Perhaps the most troubling, according to one perceptive student of Pakistani politics, would have been way in which his (Jinnah’s) and his reputation were appropriated by those attempting to create a state at variance with his hopes and expectations; after all, Jinnah’s “was a middle of the road approach which viewed Islam as a civilization and culture, a social order, and source of law, rather than a set of punitive, regulative and extractive codes.”\textsuperscript{35}
The failure of democracy in Pakistan is however attributed, among other broader factors, to more on the rise of bureaucracy to “positions of authority” rather than Jinnah’s one year in office.\textsuperscript{36} Talbot while citing prominent writers on the subject, indicates three men during the early years that endangered democracy more than most and the set the stage for military takeovers: Ghulam Muhammad (Governor-General 1951-5), Iskandar Mirza (President, 1956 – 58) and Chief Justice Mohammad Munir. While Ghulam Muhammad and Iskandar Mirza had strong anti-democratic instincts which shaped their decision to dismiss elected governments, the Chief Justice was equally complicit. Mohammad Munir was said to have held an authoritarian world view as a result of his education and legal training during the colonial era. The Chief Justice facilitated the demise of democracy by giving the necessary legal cover for authoritarian actions perpetrated by Muhammad and Mirza and in the latter case, paving the way for military rule.

Of course, personal actions of key people in leadership positions could not single handedly lead to the decline of democratic principles within a country, there were certainly broader social, political and economic factors at play; but nevertheless, the actions of Muhammad, Mirza and Munir are considered as a major contributive factor in Pakistan’s failure to adopt democratic principles and allow broad representation of its constituents, in the early years.
Pakistan’s Struggle to Write a Constitution

It took nine years and several prime ministers to draft the first constitution of Pakistan. After Jinnah’s untimely death in September 1948, the sovereign Constituent Assembly stepped into fill the void and Liaquat Ali Khan became the first Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Objectives Resolution drafted by Liaquat Ali Khan was the first effort in defining the idea of Pakistan. The document outlines the state structure and combines federalism, democracy and popular sovereignty with Islamic principles. As one expert opines:

The generality of its terminology was in reality an attempt to accommodate Islamic modernists and traditionalists alike….However, the vagueness of the Resolution which may have been the reason for its general acceptance and for its durability, in due course became a source of conflicting interpretations.37

At the time of Liaquat Ali Khan’s assassination in 1951 not much progress had been made in writing a constitutional framework. The delay in framing a constitution on the part of Pakistan’s political leaders led to much distrust among bureaucrats towards politicians. This further empowered the bureaucracy and in quick succession, top civil servants assumed the highest offices of state. After the death of Liaquat Ali Khan, Ghulam Muhammad, the Minister of Finance became the Governor General. He had previously served in the Audit Branch of the Indian Civil Service. Similarly, Iskandar Mirza, an Indian Army Officer trained in Sandhurst, was a close associate of Ghulam Muhammad, later became the Governor General of Pakistan. Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, Secretary General to the Government, who eventually became Prime
Minister, had also served in the audit branch of the Indian Civil Service. With the rise of bureaucracy in positions of power, ideals of accountability and responsiveness towards the people eroded further.

It was only in 1956, that Pakistan saw its first written constitution, led by the efforts of Prime Minister Chaudhry Muhammad Ali. The Constitution provided a federal parliament system based on a unicameral legislature in which parity was artificially established between East Pakistan and a newly created West Pakistan, as one unit out of the erstwhile four provinces.\(^{38}\) This was done to balance the large population in East Pakistan which comprised of over 50% of the total population of Pakistan. Supremacy of the Constitution was sought by empowering the courts to give full effect to the Constitution.\(^{39}\) However, the framing of the Constitution did not guarantee political stability. Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, left office the year after the Constitution took effect, only to be succeeded by three successive Prime Ministers in the next one and a half years. Clearly the bureaucrats turned politicians had done no better than its political predecessors. The advent of Ayub Khan and military rule in stark contrast to the vacillations of politicians and ineffectual leadership by career civil servants was heralded as a welcome relief by the people of Pakistan.
On October 8, 1958, Iskander Mirza, President, who was bound by oath to preserve the two-year old Constitution, abrogated the Constitution, declared martial law and appointed General Ayub Khan Chief Martial Law Administrator. Hasan Askari Rizvi, a renowned scholar on Pakistan asserts that the abrogation of the constitution was a joint decision of President Iskander Mirza and the Commander – in – Chief of the Army, General Ayub Khan, however, with great encouragement from the General.

Both Iskander Mirza and Ayub Khan had arrived at the decision individually, but they would have discussed the idea between themselves given that they were close friends. Iskander Mirza’s motivation to assume all powers was driven by the uncertainty of his own political career if the elections scheduled for February 1959 were held. Mirza consolidated his authority through successfully manipulating the divided politics of the leaders of the national assembly. However, worsening economic conditions and increasing polarization of political parties were making it increasingly more challenging for Mirza to continue in his manipulative role. To top it all, there was limited visibility on the likely results of the elections planned for February 1959. Mirza was unsure of the leadership that would result out of the elections, especially in East Pakistan which had a large majority of Bengali population. This was a special threat to
his political future as the constitution required presidential elections to be held right after the elections to the National Assembly.¹

Ayub Khan on the other hand was concerned that the decline in both economic and political conditions would adversely impact the military’s professional and corporate interests and negatively affect the internal unity, discipline and order of the military. As Rizvi notes, Ayub Khan feared that “The divided political elements might try to cultivate support in the military or drag it into their struggle for power.”² Additional factors that influenced his decision included the threat by a Kashmiri leader, Ghulam Abbas to cross the Ceasefire Line in Kashmir (June), the ultimatum by Muslim League President to launch a civil disobedience movement and the mobilization of Muslim League National Guards for that purpose (early October), and a confrontation between Khan of Kalat (former ruler of the state of Kalat which acceded to Pakistan in 1948) and the government of Pakistan (early October). The plan for the takeover was ready by 3 October.

The coup happened on October 7, 1956 with utmost secrecy and very quickly. Only the very senior most staff at the Army headquarters were aware of it, the C-in-Cs of the Airforce and Navy were informed after the all the arrangements had been made, while the Prime Minister Malik Feroz Khan Noon was informed the same evening through a letter from the President, Iskander Mirza. The political leaders and the general public only came to know about the coup in the morning papers. What it is interesting to note that the US Ambassador to Pakistan, James Langley, was the only
person who had advance knowledge of the coup. Mirza and Langley were close personal friends and Mirza impressed upon Langley that if Mirza did not assume all power with the support of the military, Ayub Khan would. On October 11, the United States endorsed the coup in a letter from President Eisenhower to Iskander Mirza. The subsequent visit by the US Defense Secretary to Pakistan was intended to further reassure the new military government of American support. Rizvi notes that “American official and unofficial circles were optimistic that as a pro-West and modernized institution, the military would accelerate socio-economic development, ensure political stability and create conditions for constitutional and democratic rule.”

The relationship between the General the President quickly became strained. Within a week of appointing Ayub Khan as the Supreme Commander of the armed forces and the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA), Mirza could not accept the loss of power. While Ayub Khan was visiting East Pakistan, Mirza contacted his friends in the military to reverse the situation. The ruling Generals however were annoyed by Mirza’s turnabout and with the permission of Ayub Khan, they asked the President to resign. Mirza still as President, appointed Ayub Khan as Prime Minister and the new cabinet took the oath of office on the 27 October. Immediately, after assuming the presidency, Ayub Khan abolished the position of the prime minister, surrendered his position as C-in-C and on 28 October the cabinet was sworn in again, this time as a presidential cabinet. These events, for decades resulted in the end of Pakistan’s attempts at establishing democracy.
Ayub’s martial law administration tried to implement a wide number of policy measures in the administration, politics, social sector and in the economic areas. The two most important measures that Ayub supported were land reform and a new political and constitutional order which was termed as “basic democracies.”

Martial law was the source of all authority and was above all existing administrative regulations. A great number of martial law regulations were issued and existing laws and regulations were valid as long as it did not contradict or conflict with edicts issued by the Martial Law Administration. The Supreme Courts and High Courts were allowed to operate but they were not empowered to question any action or order by the CMLA or the ruling of military courts. The courts were hardly independent. In fact on October 27 the Supreme Court provided legal legitimacy to the military government by declaring in a judgment that ‘a victorious revolution or a successful coup d’ etat’ was an “internationally recognized legal method of changing a constitution.” There was a general ban on political activities, political parties and the press.

The military regime relied heavily on the civilian bureaucracy to run the country. The bureaucracy recognized that they had no leverage to work against the military as the military had the power to take punitive action against dissenters, which they had already done in some instances. The alliance between the two strengthened each other and served the professional and corporate interests of both the military and the bureaucracy. The military however, was first and foremost loyal to the central
command. The martial law authorities implemented strict measures to curb hoarding, black marketeering of consumer goods and food items as well as smuggling the same over to India and Afghanistan. The estimated value of contraband goods recovered by the authorities in the first two weeks of martial law was Rs. 1,564,000. The authorities also moved swiftly to curtail three corrupt practices: illegal possession of foreign exchange, evasion of income tax and other taxes and duties, and the sale and purchase of import permits. Foreign exchange voluntarily surrendered locally amounted to Rs 40.6 million, and the unauthorized foreign exchange held abroad by Pakistani nationals was Rs. 42 million. The government collected Rs. 240 million as tax on excess income and undeclared wealth totaling Rs. 1,340 million was brought on record. All purchase and sale of import permits were banned, punishable by 10 years rigorous imprisonment.

The military regime introduced the Family Laws in 1961 which is one of the most important measures adopted in the social sector. This new law replaced the traditional/Islamic family laws that had allowed much discretion to men regarding marriage, divorce and other related matters. This was a major step towards the rights of the women, while there was not much protest by Islamic groups during the Ayub years, they did become vocal after the Ayub regime had collapsed.

One major economic measure that Ayub Khan put in place was land reforms. Feudalism was dominant in rural West Pakistan. In Sindh, more than 80 per cent agricultural land, in Punjab more than 50 per cent and in NWFP, little less than 50 per
cent of land was owned by a few thousand absentee landlords. While different governments had promised to implement land reforms, none of them had managed to do it as these absentee landowners dominated the executive and the legislative branches. The main features of the land reform introduced in 1959 were:

- No individual could own more than 500 acres of irrigated or 1000 acres of unirrigated land, or individual total land holding should not exceed 36,000 Produce Index Units (PIUs). Additional land up to 150 acres could be retained as an orchard. The government could also allow the owners to retain the area being used as a stud and livestock farm over and above the ceiling. Furthermore, the excess land could be gifted to the heirs up to 18,000 PIUs. The upper ceiling did not apply to the land owned by a recognized academic institution, any charitable or religious institution.

- The land in excess of the above ceiling was to be taken over by the government on payment of compensation ranging from Rs. 1 to Rs. 5 per PIU in the form of “non-negotiable and non-transferable but heritable” bonds redeemable in 25 years with simple interest rate of 3 per cent per annum. Additional compensation was to be paid for any permanent installations and structures on the resumed land which could be used for agricultural purposes.

- The acquired land would be sold to the existing tenants who could make the payment in installments. If some land was still available it could be offered to others.

- The occupancy tenants were to be made full owners.

- A number of measures were announced for the security of tenures for tenants who could not be ejected except by making a recourse to a revenue court on certain specified grounds.

- All jagirs (land grants) were abolished without compensation.

The objective of the land reforms, combined with other measures was to help farmers consolidate fragmented pieces of land, have access to improved irrigation,
have control of water-logging and salinity, access to better seeds, use modern methods of farming, have access to more credit facilities and improved access to markets.

Under these reforms, over two million acres were retrieved by the government. However, the reforms were too moderate in nature to allow for structural changes in the land holding and alter the relationships between landlords and tenants. The military with ties to the landed aristocracy in Punjab, wanted to curb the authority of the feudal lords rather than completely destroy it. The feudal system continued to dominate and the feudal landowners held on to their positions of authority as one on one exceptions were granted and there were loopholes in the implementation process. Of the land recovered, a large part was unsuitable for cultivation which could not be distributed or even if the peasants happened to own it, they did not have the resources to make it productive. Despite the watered down outcome, Ayub should still be commended for the first leader to try and implement such a difficult measure as land reform.

On the political front Ayub sought to consolidate authority at the center bypassing political leaders. His political view was influenced by his military background, his experience of military rule and his personal ambition of holding on to power. The military inculcates a strong sense of order, professionalism, discipline and above all authoritarian values over decisions made based on broad consensus building through dialogue and accommodation, which is the hallmark of political participation. His professional background and experience in military rule, reinforced his understanding that a dedicated and goal-oriented administration could ensure socio
economic development of a country, if political activities were curbed and political leaders, whom he particularly disliked, were restricted in their roles. A more self-servin factor that shaped his political ideology was his personal ambition to maintain power and continuity of his policies after the inevitable withdrawal of military rule. As a result, the political system that he introduced was a reflection of his dislike for liberal democracy and his desire to remain in power.

Ayub Khan made no bones about his dislike of Western style liberal democracy, specifically the parliamentary system of government. He believed that for a truly functional liberal democracy societies needed demonstrate high level of political and social awareness, mass literacy, use of mass communication, enlightened and responsible political leadership and organized political parties. Ayub Khan claimed that Pakistan had none of the pre-requisites that would enable a democracy to function in a way that would promote socio-economic development in Pakistan. In his view the 1956 constitution was a “bundle of unworkable compromises”\textsuperscript{15} as the power structure was too fragmented for the government to pursue any meaningful change; the government had to depend on less than dependable political leaders whose loyalties and decisions were shaped by material and personal considerations, rather than adherence to an ideology or a common national objective. Rizvi notes that another reason for Ayub Khan’s resistance to liberal democracy was his belief that socio-economic development could not happen under this system because it dispersed power
in such a way that effective political and economic management could not be ensured.\textsuperscript{16}

In 1954, Ayub Khan had written a document titled “A Short Appreciation of the Present and Future Problems of Pakistan” which made public in 1960 revealed his strong opposition to the parliamentary system and proposed a centralized polity with a powerful head of state who had sufficient powers to deal with the affairs of the state at the federal and provincial levels.\textsuperscript{17} A limited role would be played by indirectly elected legislature. The document indicated that all the provinces and administrative units in West Pakistan should be one single indicated province, resulting in only two provinces East and West Pakistan, each of which had very limited autonomy.

In 1959, Ayub Khan circulated his outline of the shape of the new constitution to the cabinet members and to the two provisional governors, which was a revised and a more authoritarian version of the 1954 document. Once the cabinet had endorsed the new political and constitutional approach, the military government began a phased implementation. It had the appearance of a genuine effort to establish a political order based on broad consultation and support.

The first phase was the introduction of a new intricate system of local self-government, termed the Basic Democracies. The second phase involved the election of Ayub Khan as president through an electoral college formed by the elected members of Basic Democracies. The third phase was the appointment of a constitution commission whose task was to propose recommendations for a new constitution based on a review
of the political and constitutional history of the country. The final phase involved the review and implementation of a new constitution by the military government.

The objective of the Basic Democracies as Rizvi notes was “building support at the lowest level of the society without ceding any power at the highest level. It was a four-tier semi-representative system that began at the village level and went up to the divisional level; the representative and elective character was carefully neutralized with the presence of official and non-official nominated members and the assignment of some overriding powers to the bureaucracy.” While the structure had potential and useful development work at the rural level in healthcare, education, water supply, agriculture to name a few occurred, the system was essentially compromised by its deep dependence on government funding, overwhelming presence and influence of the official and nominated members and the powerful command of the bureaucracy. While the rule of nomination was removed in 1965, the system continued to remain very much under the control of the bureaucracy.

The new constitution declared by Ayub Khan on March 1, 1962 was very authoritarian and a deviation of the recommendation of the Constitution Commission. The Constitution Commission had consulted the populace through surveys and interviews and the key recommendations were:

- A presidential form of government with powerful President and Vice President.
- A federal system with assigned overriding powers to the center, which was a compromise between the demands for a greater autonomy and Ayub Khan’s preference for a unitary system.

- A bicameral legislature with direct elections for the lower house, President and Vice President.

- Universal adult franchise to be replaced with a restricted franchise based on literacy and/or ownership of property, and a franchise commission was proposed to determine voter’s eligibility. However, for the first elections it recommended using the Basic Democracies system to enable the end of military rule.

- A religion based separate electorate.

- Existing restrictions on political parties should be withdrawn.

- An independent judiciary and the enforcement of fundamental rights through the courts.

- The retention of the Islamic character of the polity and

- The continuation of the fiscal arrangements set out in the previous constitution.\textsuperscript{19}

However, the actual constitution was more authoritarian with the executive authority of the state vested in the President who could exercise it directly or through designated offices. Once elected indirectly by an electoral college comprising the Basic Democracies members for a five year term, the President had substantial powers in administration, law-making, policy execution and key appointments, which gave him the power to define the nature and direction of government both at the federal and provincial levels.\textsuperscript{20} Under the new constitution, the President had very few checks and balances.
While Ayub’s initial objective was to have a non-party system, but in the face of potential objections, he shifted to an extreme position of legalizing all parties that applied. He formed his own party combining a number of political factions. His authoritarian system disguised under the Basic Democracies and the newly declared constitution was never seriously challenged up until 1969. There were regular discontent in East Pakistan and minor issues in Baluchistan and NWFP, which were all dealt by carefully orchestrated carrot and stick approach of political repression followed by limited concessions. The political, social and economic developments that contributed to the rapid dismantling of the Ayub regime and the collapse of the Basic Democracies system were mainly the military reaction to the “civilianization” of the martial law regime in 1962, the aftermath of the 1965 war with India, the lack of support of the landed interests at the wake of the land reform and lack of economic advancement of the poor.

The reconstitution of the political system under Ayub in 1962 was never popular among the military. During the previous four years of Ayub’s martial law a finely balanced relationship had developed between the Punjabi-dominated military and the muhajir-dominated bureaucracy with a slight tilt in favor of the bureaucracy who was the dominant power in both the Basic Democracies system at the district level and the central government. Right until the 1965 Indo-Pakistani War, the military was well compensated in budgetary terms and had only limited number of genuine complaints. However, the aftermath of the war brought on budgetary pressures as the
US suspended all military assistance with the exception of funding for replacement of equipments destroyed during the war. Army officers had now fewer opportunities for payoffs and this genuinely disaffected the military.

Another impact on the military was the disappointing quality of leadership of the army commanders in the battlefield. The Pakistani public was given a very different picture and Bhutto (then foreign minister) resigned and condemned Ayub for accepting a cease-fire when “victory was in Pakistan’s grasp.”22 The truth was far from it, but for the military, Bhutto provided a very convenient cover for their embarrassing performance and many officers supported Bhutto openly, especially in the winter of 1968-69, when the political movement against Ayub had gained a crisis momentum.

Apart from losing support from its key constituent, the military, the benefits of the economic growth during this regime failed to be equitable and large percentages of the population remained poor, notably in East Pakistan. The second Five Year Plan (1960 – 65) was a success in terms of numbers. The plan which had considerable input from Harvard based economists, reflected a growth oriented model with complete encouragement to the private sector, was a resounding success in terms of numbers achieved. Per capita income increased by 14.8 per cent instead of the target 12 per cent, the Gross National Income was 30.4 per cent compared to the projected target of 24 per cent, while grain production was up by 27 per cent against a projected target of 21 per cent.23 However, the Plan did not address the distributive side of economic development.
Rizvi notes:

The government had consciously pursued a policy of “functional inequality” that ignored the equity imperatives on the assumption that such a policy would raise savings, encourage greater accumulation of wealth and promote rapid growth whose rewards, it was claimed, would later ‘trickle down’ to the lower strata of the society. This resulted in the neglect of the social sector, accentuated the existing economic disparities among different sections of people and increased regional inequalities.24

The landowners too were wary of Ayub Khan. Although the impact of the land reform was mild, the landed gentry, especially in Punjab and Sindh, who were traditionally supporters of Ayub, had begun to have serious concerns with his mildly socialist approach. Ayub in his effort to be more equitable in terms of administrative positions, government revenues and foreign aid between West and East Pakistan, managed to alienate his support base of West Pakistani muhajir and Lahori families who until then had enjoyed a near monopoly in the bureaucracy, but now were forced to share the spoils with mostly the Bengalis in East Pakistan. The Bengalis on the other hand were disinclined to automatically support Ayub, as this was only one small area of neglect in a long list of demands accumulated through years of repression and unresponsiveness to Bengali needs.

However, the tipping point in the opposition movement against Ayub was in late 1962 when he suffered a massive stroke. The uncertainty surrounding his longevity as well as his capacity to serve public office fueled a massive anti-Ayub, anti-Basic Democracies movement. To the astonishment of all, Ayub recovered sufficiently to resume office but by early 1969, he had lost the support of all major bases. Citing both
party and broad regional calls for Ayub’s resignation, the military persuaded him to hand over power to the commanding general Yahya Khan, who reinstated martial law, abrogated the 1962 Constitution, called for national elections for a constituent assembly to prepare and approve once again another constitution.25

The Establishment

Cohen notes:

Of all of Ayub’s achievements, the most enduring was not a particular policy, official state apparatus or even an idea of Pakistan and its history, but an informal political system that tied together the senior ranks of the military, the civil service, key members of the judiciary and other elites. Subsequently, dubbed the ‘Establishment,’ it resembles a classic oligarchy, and its roots lie deep in the psychology of the British Raj and the social structure of Pakistan’s West Wing.26

Huntington had once praised Ayub as a “Solon” 27 which was misguided, given that Ayub established an oligarchy rather than developing a legal framework that would govern Pakistan. The true irony of the situation is that Ayub himself a part of the Establishment was removed by the military members of the same established, when he later stumbled.

The “operational code” of Pakistan’s Establishment may have changed somewhat over the years but the key elements developed at Ayub’s time still remains:

- India was the chief threat to Pakistan, and the armed forces were central to the defense of the state. Therefore the armed forces deserved a priority position in determining domestic political issues and in the allocation of state resources.

- Pakistan’s security problem was first and foremost a military one: India had to be deterred from attacking Pakistan, and Pakistan itself had to be able to
pressure India to force it to behave properly. Strategically, the defense of Pakistan lay in the west and Punjab was Pakistan’s heartland.

- Military alliances were necessary because Pakistan could not afford to match Indian size on its own. “Borrowed” power was not something to be ashamed of; on the contrary, it was vital to the survival of the state and capabilities of the armed forces.

- Kashmir was an important issue even if the Pakistani masses did not think so. It was not only a strategically important territory; it was proof positive of Indian malevolence. Pursuing the cause of the Kashmiris, with the ultimate goal of incorporating them into Pakistan, would fulfill the original vision of Pakistan as a homeland for oppressed Indian Muslims. While the Establishment was sometimes divided as to how to deal with Kashmir, these were tactical not strategic differences.

- Other moderate Islamic states, notably Turkey and Iran, both of which were also secular, centralized, and Western-oriented, were Pakistan’s natural allies and role models.

- Domestically, the armed forces were the model for the rest of Pakistan. The army was seen as selfless, disciplined, obedient, and competent. Denigration of the army was not allowed.

- Deep or rapid social reform, while theoretically unnecessary, was too risky for a state that was already unstable and pressed from the outside by dangerous enemies. The Establishment accepted Pakistan’s low levels of literacy and the absence of serious social and land reform.

- The economy was problematic: Pakistan had great assets, but also a high defense burden, and the East Wing was very poor. One solution was the solicitation of massive military and economic aid – economic growth would march hand in hand with large amounts of foreign aid. This aid originally came from the West, especially the United States, but by the 1960s Japan was a significant donor and investor, and China emerged as Pakistan’s chief arms supplier after 1970.

- Democracy was theoretically desirable, but the Pakistani people were ‘excitable’ (President Zia’s term) and the standards of education and public disclosure had to be raised before the masses could be allowed to freely
express their opinion in the ballot box or the press. Popular passions had to be channeled where they might not interfere with the efficient operation of the state. These restrictions applied to both the ‘leftists’ and extreme Islamists.

- The state’s tight control over the media and academia ensured that the Pakistani masses were exposed to a correct history and that news was presented in such a way as to strengthen, not weaken, their faith in the idea of Pakistan and the legitimacy of the Pakistani state. Dissent and disagreement were suppressed or hidden from foreign observers.

- Radical or violent Islamic groups were regarded with disdain by the Ayub generation, but Yahya Khan employed them in East Pakistan, thus beginning a pattern of tolerating them if they could be uses as instruments of state policy, as demonstrated by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Zia, both democratic governments during the 1990s, and Musharraf.

- The leftist vision of Pakistan was incompatible with that of the Establishment, and Pakistan’s Western allies had to be shown that Pakistan was free from revolutionary impulses. The left was systematically suppressed and the Communist Party of Pakistan was banned. Ironically, oppression of the left continued after China became Pakistan’s leading ally.

- The Establishment made gestures towards Islam but never took seriously the idea of imposing a standard Islam upon Pakistan or altering Pakistan’s relatively secular and tolerant public culture. The army was even less tolerant of Islamists than the civilians.

- By merely surviving, Pakistan could demonstrate that the Indian opposition to both the idea of Pakistan and the new state of Pakistan was misguided. Sooner or later the Indians would reconcile themselves to the facts and deal honestly and fairly with Pakistan.  

Cohen cites a well-known chronicler of the Establishment, Syed Mushahid Hussain, when he suggests that the Establishment comprised of about 500 people and were a “small culturally and socially intertwined elite.” Many of them were educated in elite British schools and their view of governance borrowed heavily from the British
Raj which was one of a paternalistic government where power should be shared only when required to do so. Similar to the Raj, the Establishment did well for themselves but as Cohen notes “the level of corruption in Pakistan far exceeded that of the Raj’s.” While the Raj had accountability to London, the Establishment with limited check on their authority is answerable to no one. While foreign governments have some leverage through aid and military assistance, the Establishment over the years has diversified its external allies and donors such that no particular country has enough leverage to direct Pakistan’s course in a specific direction.

The Ayub period was one of a highly centralized political system with concentration of powers in the President. This led to a patron-client relationship between the President and other institutions of the state on one side and the political forces on the other. As Rizvi describes it, “The authoritarian patron created clients rather than partners in political management.”

The Yahya Interlude

The second military regime under Yahya Khan was considered by Pakistanis an interim transitional government to facilitate the shift to a more participatory approach to governance. Yahya Khan was designated CMLA, but unlike Ayub, he retained the command of the armed forces and combined all three offices in one position – the CMLA, the C-in-C and the President. The two year period was very different from that of his predecessors’ as he defined his role as preparations for national elections to a new Constituent Assembly; and encouragement of all political groups, including East
Pakistani parties with broad autonomy demands (the Awami League), to participate in the political and electoral process. The political movements came to an end with the scheduling of the elections end of 1970. While he put certain restrictions on political activities and public meetings, he did not ban the political parties but rather initiated dialogue with political leaders including with East Pakistan.

Yahya Khan was more accommodative of the demands made by East Pakistan. He made two basic concessions. First, he abolished the fifty-fifty distribution of seats between East and West Pakistan. Instead, applying the “one man, one vote” principle, he allocated a majority of seats in the new Constituent Assembly to East Pakistan. This was done with the knowledge that if only Muslim voters were counted the split between the two wings would be close to equal. However, given the large Hindu minority in East Pakistan, the balance in the Assembly was tipped in favor of East Pakistan. Second, in response to regional demands in West Pakistan, Yahya Khan eliminated the unified state system in the Western wing and reinstated the four states of Punjah, Sindh, NWFP and Baluchistan. This was also to the advantage of East Pakistan in terms of bargaining positions in the new Assembly. Ironically, it was the application of some basic democratic principles that complicated the political process and led to the eventual break up of East Pakistan.

The elections in 1970 were one of the most independent, free and fairly held national elections in Pakistan’s history. The results were a surprise to most because of the magnitude of victory for both sides and the results clearly showed polarization on
East – West Pakistan lines. Of the 162 general seats in the East Pakistan, the Awami League won 160, plus seven female seats, which gave them a total of 167 seats in an assembly of 313 seats. The strong showing at the elections gave them an absolute majority for the party and this without having contested one single seat in West Pakistan. In West Pakistan, Bhutto’s party the PPP won 81 seats out of the allocated 138 general seats. While Bhutto won both seats in Lahore and Rawalpindi, the party did not fare too well in rural Punjab or Sind. The party had won a large number of seats in rural Punjab, it did not do so through an overwhelming majority. The proportion of votes ranged from 35 percent to 45 percent and the victory was due to the division of the majority vote in each constituency. A similar situation prevailed in Sind. In muhajir dominated Karachi the PPP did not do well and in Baluchistan and NWFP, it lost out to the dominant ethnic parties. Bhutto may have won a large number of seats, but it was all from insecure bases and this was an important factor in the party’s policy towards the Bangladesh crisis.\textsuperscript{34}

The results were generally upsetting for the Establishment. The ruling generals were unhappy since based on the results they could no longer compel a political settlement through influencing political leaders. The results were upsetting to the older political parties since many well-known individuals from the different factions of the Mulsim League and NAP lost to Awami League and the PPP; many of the incumbents were elected for the first time and were not from politically established families. The Islamic and ideology-oriented parties also performed poorly.
The elections seemed to have laid the basis for a systematic and rational development of a new constitution. However, the main obstacle was Bhutto’s PPP who was the majority party in West Pakistan but only had one-third of the seats in the National Assembly. Based on the election results, the Awami League could have formed a government through coalition with other smaller parties, leaving the PPP out of the equation. The coalition would have been expedient based and would not have been viable in the long run, given the different social, economic, cultural and political considerations of the various parties. Bhutto was not open to the idea of being the leader of the opposition. He demanded a coalition between the dominant parties in the East and West wing with Bhutto as the deputy Prime Minister, which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the Awami League rejected. For the people of East Pakistan years of neglect and de facto ‘colonialization’ by West Pakistan, had seeded much resentment against the West Pakistan leadership and given the clear victory at the polls, Bengalis were not willing to accept anything less than absolute leadership at the center. Bhutto then tried to delay the formation of a national government but given their own vulnerable position in the West and Bhutto’s lack of confidence in the loyalty of some of his own MPs, this was an uncertain path for him. Experts such as Leo E. Rose think that Bhutto’s demand for coalition between the dominant parties in the Eastern and Western wings was the only possible solution and basis for the long term development of a democratic system or any kind of a political system. However, given the expectation of East Pakistanis, a coalition with Bhutto’s PPP would have
been a difficult sell. As Rose notes, “…the Awami League leadership was not particularly interested in a democratic system in a unified Pakistan.”

The events that followed the election resulted in the dismemberment of Pakistan, much to Yahya’s discredit. The ensuing defeat in the war with India compelled Yahya to resign and the military put in place an unusual political structure, where for the first time a civilian, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto would head a martial law regime.

While during Yahya’s tenor, much was done to change the balance of power between the two wings and introduce democratic principles and a more responsive political structure; he is forever known to be the leader under which Pakistan was defeated ignominiously by India. Yahya had taken a number of important steps to redress the non-distributive aspect of Ayub’s economic development plan. In February 1970, the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (Control and Prevention) Ordinance was issued to check “undue concentration of economic power, growth of unreasonable monopoly and unreasonable restrictive trade practices.” He established a new financial institution in Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan, to support the growth of small and medium enterprises in the private sector in East Pakistan and the less developed areas of West Pakistan and moved the headquarters of the Industrial Development Bank to Dhaka. The fourth Five Year Development Plan, initiated in July 1970, allocated more than half of the resources for the first time to East Pakistan: 52.5 percent as against 36 per cent in the third Five Year Plan. Since the impact of these
measures was more medium term than immediate, these measures were implemented too late to influence the outcome of the elections or the events that led to the breakup of Pakistan.
The Bhutto Government entered office with a set of advantages that positioned him better than his predecessors. The loss of East Pakistan was blamed on the military and to a lesser extent on the bureaucracy. Hence both the military and the bureaucracy were in no position to exercise authority over Bhutto, who was not only forceful and determined but had a vision for Pakistan which he was bent on implementing. He also used the shock and distress with the 1971 war to his advantage by calling on people to dedicate their efforts to nation-building. This was a useful strategy to unite a disparate group of interests. While in the first three to four years, the military and the bureaucracy found it expedient to use Bhutto as a shield, resentment grew as it was considered a particular blow to the pride and self esteem of the military and ruling elites who formed the Establishment.

Bhutto attempted to consolidate his power base in Punjab, NWFP and Baluchistan. Post 1971, the political heartland of Pakistan was Punjab, where he successfully managed to court a number of land owning elites in important districts away from opposition parties, into joining the PPP. This on the other hand caused a rift among the new secondary elite families who had joined Bhutto in the early years and had won seats in the national and state assembly elections, only to find themselves out in the cold. While some left to join the opposition, the defections did not strengthen the opposition in rural Punjab in any significant way.¹
However, in Baluchistan and NWFP he was unsuccessful in convincing the
ethic elite families to join the PPP. He resorted to a mix of repressive activities and
political maneuvering. By 1974, he had declared illegal any ethnic based political
parties in the NWFP and Baluchistan and had abolished the regionally led state
governments in both states with the “governor’s rule.”

This brought both states under the direct control of Bhutto. Following the revocation of state rule, Bhutto authorized
repressive and bloody police action to combat and subdue any political protests or
dissent.

As a counterbalance to the ethnic parties, Bhutto tried to include many educated
Pathans and Baluchis into PPP’s organizational structure. He focused on strengthening
the party organization and structure of PPP by using student organizations, labor
unions, and welfare and rural development programs as the institutional base to recruit
party workers and supporters. This is where the nexus between student politics and
national politics was truly formed and by the 1977 election, Bhutto’s PPP had turned
into an impressive organizational force to be reckoned with in the Punjab, Sind (other
than Karachi) and eastern parts of NWFP.

The 1973 Constitution reinstated a British style of parliamentary system similar
to the form of the 1956 Constitution but with significant differences. Bhutto shed the
title of CMLA/President and became the Prime Minister. However, he was careful to
retain a number of key features of the martial law regime that facilitated
authoritarianism. Pakistan finally had a Prime Minister and a cabinet that was required
to be accountable to the parliament but it was only in theory. In reality, Bhutto wielded very broad powers without any restraint, sense of accountability or any notion of power sharing either with his cabinet, the national assembly or his party executives.

Rose states:

The 1973 constitutional system thus was democratic in theory and format but no less authoritarian than the Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan Governments in practice. Indeed Bhutto was more skillful than either of his military predecessors in exploiting various “emergency” clauses in the constitution to his own advantage.

Khalid B. Sayeed noted:

Ever since Ayub seized power in 1958, Pakistan has been governed by a Bonapartist regime. By this is meant not just the rule of an arbitrary dictator but the rule of a leader who derived his power and authority from a well-established institution like the army, in the case of Ayub, or from a political movement, in the case of Bhutto.³

Bhutto’s exclusionary approach to governance, his arrogance and disdain for political leaders and his disastrous populist economic policies of nationalization and land reform, yielded a unique situation in Pakistan - an effective coalition of nine parties in all four states. The parties that formed the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), held wide ranging beliefs spanning from Islamic, conservative, and regional to moderate leftist. It also included the banned ethnic parties (NAP) who had remained active in the NWFP and Baluchistan areas. However, the PPP were well organized and controlled the Punjab rural heartland where 60 percent of the MPs were elected.⁴ There was a good chance that Bhutto would have won substantial majority in the 1977 election, since the PPP were better organized, well funded and Bhutto still popular with
the people (notwithstanding his unpopularity within some groups of the elite). However, either through his express orders or the zealfulness of party workers and bureaucrats, the election was rigged in certain constituencies in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi. The ensuing protests from the PNA were the very opportunity that the elites and the military were waiting for. They forced Bhutto to resign and hand over power to “a temporary military government.” Thus began the one of the longest military regimes in Pakistan’s history.

Despite his failure, Bhutto left a lasting imprint on Pakistan. He followed six broad strategies which many succeeding leaders later adopted.

- Outflanking the army. Bhutto had no military experience and he came from Sindh which produced very few soldiers and army officers. He had no military credentials and he rightly understood that the army considered him their last resort during the aftermath of the disastrous war with India. Bhutto moved very quickly to prevent a coup from happening against him. He tried to promote pliable officers to key positions such as the 1976 appointment of Zia ul-Huq, who people believed was open to implementing Bhutto’s will. Ironically, Bhutto managed to alienate even his closest allies in such a manner, that even Zia ul-Huq turned against him. Bhutto further restructured the military’s high command by reducing the status of the army chief, elevating the status of the other two forces and creating a new “joint chiefs” position that would be a buffer between the Prime Minister and the army chief. In addition, he formed an alternative paramilitary called the Federal Security Force (FSF), the nuclear weapons program initiated covertly to undercut the army’s influence and greater focus on weapons autarky. To quote Cohen, “Bhutto sought to divide, balance, and supplant the Pakistan army. His goal was to bring it under his own control and to whittle away its claim as the sole defender of Pakistan.”

- Reducing American influence. America’s decision to stop arms sales and aid to both Pakistan and India in 1965 was proof enough for Bhutto that America de facto was tilting towards India. Only military balance between the two states could ensure Pakistan’s security. Bhutto rejected America’s rationale for stopping military support which was stated as a way to reduce the high defense burden for
both India and Pakistan. While, Bhutto did not consider Pakistan’s defense burden high but rather a national security imperative, but he did think that America’s stance of discontinuing military support was an indirect indication of the policy tilt towards India. For Bhutto, anti-Americanism was hardly personal, rather a matter of strategy and politics.

- Asserting Foreign Policy Leadership. Bhutto wanted to undermine the army’s claim of being the sole defender of Pakistan by proving his leadership in the foreign policy arena. He defended Pakistan at the UNSC during the Bangladesh crisis and following the war, he had the skills and reputation to negotiate with Indira Gandhi to return 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war and reach an agreement with India. His view of foreign policy that India is the major threat, America is an unstable ally while China is Pakistan’s strategic ally, prevailed in succeeding regimes, (with Zia including Saudi Arabia in the sphere of strategic allies). Bhutto’s real lesson in foreign policy is that one of applying ‘flexibility’ which is not to take foreign commitment too seriously (except perhaps that of China), and be prepared if required to deceive formal allies and partners about Pakistan’s real objectives and capabilities. As Cohen suggests, “In doing so, Bhutto was merely applying to Pakistan’s foreign policy some of the principles that had become endemic in domestic politics: trust no one, power alone counts, and principles can be compromised.

- Transforming the economy and weakening the feudals: Bhutto attempted to put in place more effective land reform policies which alarmed the feudals and alienated them. The feudals however followed a time-honored practice of assigning land in the names of distant relatives, servants and friends and completely avoided the impact of land reforms.

- Undercutting the civil bureaucracy. Bhutto tried to undercut the reach of the Establishment by totally eliminating the civil service of Pakistan and instead replacing it with a District Management Group. The bureaucracy responded by using delaying tactics or not implementing decisions at all.

- Playing an Islamic card. Bhutto tried to present himself as an Islamic reformer, a role which no one accepted or believed. His policies dressed as Islamic and socialist did not convince the Islamic parties, alienated the leftists even more and set a bad precedence for future leaders – “when in trouble turn to Islam.” Furthermore, he blatantly approached the Islamic World for aid in return for nuclear technology to develop an ‘Islamic Bomb.’
Zia-ul-Haq: the Islamization of Pakistan

The central theme of the Zia-ul-Haq regime was Islamization. The initial agenda was to facilitate an election and transfer of power to an elected government. It was intended to be no longer than 90 days and would focus on restoring law and order and reducing the political tensions between the different interest groups and political parties. However, as the days progressed and he outsmarted his rivals, the goals of his coup expanded from elections to accountability, Islamization of the polity and induction of decency in politics. He assumed the role of a ‘messiah’ or a ‘savior’ whose sole mission was to transform Pakistani society along Islamic lines. Zia-ul-Haq maintained that no one could challenge a ruler in an Islamic state (e.g., Zia in Pakistan) if he performed his duties in accordance with Quran and the Sunnah, although he never gave operational criterion for evaluating the performance of a ruler in an Islamic state.

Zia-ul-Haq had intended to hold elections within the ninety day timeframe. Bhutto was imprisoned, his cabinet dissolved; there was widespread political agitation against the Bhutto’s government by the opposition and with the help of the media, the new military regime started to malign Bhutto’s government. Zia-ul-Haq assumed that the agitation, media attack and Bhutto’s imprisonment would be sufficient to ensure the defeat of the PPP in the following elections. However, after Bhutto was released from ‘protective custody’ a massive number of people turned out to see him in his visits to Karachi, Lahore and Multan. Encouraged by the support, Bhutto started
campaigning for the upcoming elections. The opposition party and the military were alarmed at Bhutto’s continuing popularity and employed various measures to curb his campaign. In the meantime, the new military regime uncovered evidence that linked Bhutto to widespread corruption as well as indications that he had directed the paramilitary force to eliminate his political opponents. Without delay, the military regime charged Bhutto with murder and corruption. Supported by the opposition who had wanted the trial to precede the elections, the military regime postponed the elections indefinitely “to pursue the accountability of the ousted Bhutto regime.”

Bhutto’s trial went on from October 1977 to March 1979. In March 1978, the Lahore High Court had sentenced him to death, which when appealed, the Supreme Court upheld. Prior to the execution, his family was under house arrest and many arrests were made to pre-empt any political agitation. Bhutto was executed on April 4, 1979.

Just prior to Bhutto’s execution, election dates were set for November 17, 1979 which was again postponed when the military regime saw that in the local government elections held on a non-party basis, many candidates with ties to political parties especially the PPP had been elected. During the period between 1979 and August 1983 the promise to hold elections at an ‘appropriate’ time were made often. The generals gave a myriad reasons for delaying the election including that elections could not be held without a guarantee of positive results. Askari states:

Zia-ul-Huq declared that Islam did not believe in the rule of majority and therefore if the majority made a wrong decision, it could be turned down. Only
a ‘correct’ decision needed to be honored in Islam even if it was supported by a minority, he maintained.\textsuperscript{15}

Zia-ul-Haq finally held elections after eight years in February 1985, under very restrictive conditions and closely regulated by the military regime. The candidates could not hold public meetings or processions or use loud speakers. In the preceding years, Zia’s regime had dealt with political dissent through media censorship, punishment for printers and disseminators of anti-regime publications, restriction on travel between intercities or provinces for political leaders, warnings to political activists including discouragement indoor meetings, periodic house arrests and detention of the middle and lower level political activists and the use of the intelligence services to infiltrate, report back and influence the decisions of the opposition parties.\textsuperscript{16} As a result, the incumbents in the 1985 elections were political new-comers, a quarter were from the noveau riche who made their fortune in the Zia regime and associated with manpower export to the gulf, government contractors, transporters, real estate agents and the like. Given the high stakes, the important feudal families, religious leaders and tribal chiefs fielded local candidates, the PML-Pagara supported a number of candidates, while the JI nominated candidates who contested the polls in their individual capacity.\textsuperscript{17}

Given the restrictions, the candidates’ campaign focused on parochial, provincial issues rather than major national domestic or foreign policy issues. The results were hardly a surprise, it was dominated by traditional feudal lords and tribal
leaders and the commercial and business elite. Zia made some constitutional changes that validated all the actions of the military regime and allowed him to become the President. He then appointed Mohammad Khan Junejo, a feudal from Sindh as Prime Minister.

**Islamization**

According to Rizvi, Zia – ul - Haq’s focus of Islamization was regulative, punitive and extractive.\(^{18}\) Rizvi further notes that very little attempt was made to project other aspects of Islam, that of social and economic egalitarianism and accountability of those in power, and the thus the socio-economic structural bases of the existing power arrangements remain unaltered.\(^{19}\) Some of the major steps taken to Islamization were:

- The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) was recomposed to include more orthodox Islamic scholars and priests for advising the government on Islamization of polity in line with that of in the Quran and the Sunnah.

- In 1979, the Constitution was amended to set up a Shariat bench in the four High Courts and an Appellate Bench in the Supreme Court, which was later replaced by the Federal Shariat Court (FSC). The President exercised wide discretionary authority over the FSC.

- Four laws were promulgated in February 1979 to enforce Islamic punishments for a whole set of crimes ranging from sex-related, to wrongful imputation of illicit sexual relations to theft, possession of alcohol and prohibited drugs. The punishments ranged from imprisonment, fines, lashings, amputation of the right hand for theft and stoning to death for adultery and rape. While the lower courts did award amputation and stoning as punishment, the appellate division of the Supreme Court, set aside these punishments. Women were also discriminated against in terms of compensation and viability as witnesses.
An interest-free banking system was introduced in 1981, which by mid 1985 all Pakistani banks had switched to.

A compulsory tax system, Zakat was introduced to which later widespread protests were lodged and the regime had to withdraw.

The educational system was influenced through reconstitution of classes and syllabuses that had to reflect Islamic principles and Ideology of Pakistan. A Sharia faculty was established in the leading Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad.

The media and press were instructed to reflect Islamic values and all cultural activities - art, music, dance, women’s participation in sports and on stage were actively discouraged.

Other measures included obligatory prayer breaks in government offices and the systematic persecution of the Ahmadiya community who had been previously designated as non-muslim by a constitutional amendment back in 1974.20

As noted by Rizvi, the Zia regime was the first instance in Pakistan’s history when the generals openly declared themselves to be conservative-Islamic in their orientations and cultivated close ties with political groups that were Islam oriented and was inclined to support martial law such as Jamat – I – Islami (JI).21 The regime systematically introduced military personal into civil administration, semi-government and autonomous institutions, thereby considerably increasing the presence and influence of the army in all aspects of the society. It is important to note that only army personnel of the Islamic mindset would have been rewarded by being appointed in such non-military positions. Material benefits such as foreign postings, assignments of land holdings, bank loan facility were extended to the Islamicized military as a conscious policy of distributing the rewards of power as far and wide within the military as possible.
Two main factors aided Zia-ul-Haq’s regime: a respectable pace of economic development fueled by inflow of funds through remittances from workers in the Gulf area and the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. Zia – ul – Haq, by then was considered in the international arena as a self appointed dictator who had murdered his main opponent, Bhutto. He had also developed serious issues with the US administration over the Nuclear Weapons Program. However, with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan overnight became a very important strategic partner and the Western world now perceived Zia-ul-Haq not as a tyrant, but as the savior of the values of the free world and a strong defense against communism. The resultant economic aid and weapons from the U.S helped support the regime while Islamization paid off as material and diplomatic support from the Islamic world flowed in.

Zia pursued an anti – democratic, authoritarian style of governance by suppressing political parties, banning mass rallies, and attempting to depoliticize politics. He formed temporary and expedient alliances with right wing, Islamist political parties such as Jamati – I – Islami. The military regime disbanded the para military forces and assumed control over the nuclear weapons program which his predecessor had initiated to counter-balance the power of the army. Cohen describes Zia’s power base as:

… a narrow political elite that drew heavily from the ranks of retired officers, shorn of idealism, suspicious of democracy, and convinced that it was the “savior” generation, rescuing Pakistan from grave domestic and foreign threats.22
Benazir Bhutto was first elected to office on December 2, 1988 but was forced to step down less than two years later on August 6, 1990. She came to power right after Zia’s mysterious death in a plane crash on August 17, 1988. She was immensely popular and had a sound political organization in PPP, which her father had built. However, she was unable to govern long as Prime Minister because of the army and Zia’s successor as president Ghulam Ishaq Khan (an Establishment pillar).^{23}

Benazir was very intelligent, had powerful contacts abroad and was considered the undisputed leader of her party. However, with the Bhutto name, she also inherited two grievances which worked against her during both her presidencies. The first was the mistrust that the Sharif family had towards her since the time in 1972 when her father nationalized many Pakistani businesses, including the Sharif family’s Ittefaq Foundry which was the mainstay of the family’s business empire. This mistrust was shared by the business community at large. The second grievance was that of the army’s fueled by suspicions of retribution by Benazir for what had been done to her father. The army also questioned her competence and did not trust her as she was not part of the Establishment.^{24}

During her first term, Benazir tried to avoid confrontation with the army-centered Establishment, she reversed her pro-dialogue policy towards India and instead pursued a demagogic policy on Kashmir and agreed to a low-intensity proxy war against India.^{25} She was supportive of U.S ties, despite being unpopular with her leftist
supporters. However she did manage to anger the army through certain revealing comments about the Nuclear Program during her visit in Washington, a program over which she had no control.

What impacted the credibility of the civilian government the most was the political and economic mismanagement under her leadership. She pursued a highly personalized style of governance, based on advise from ministers, advisers and special assistants who lacked experience and political vision. Her party had been out in the cold for a long time and she was more interested in rewarding party loyalists at the expense of professionalism and competence. To keep her coalition intact, unwise and in many instances unethical methods were employed at a larger scale, such as expansion of cabinets, partisan distribution of development funds and state patronage, allotment of plots of land at less than market rates, and bank loans. Despite this poor performance she survived a no-confidence vote held a year later, even though the army had employed the ISI to influence Benazir’s supporters.

She was also locked in bitter confrontation with the Punjab government headed by IJI-PML Chief Minister, Nawaz Sharif. The senior military leaders, the bureaucracy and the President gave their support to Nawaz Sharif as a way to neutralize Benazir’s growing authority. Nawaz Sharif and the Punjab government launched a massive propaganda campaign accusing her of being soft towards India, a perception shared by the army itself. As a result, Benazir Bhutto was removed from office in a coup-like manner on August 6, 1990. The interim government initiated legal
action against her for corruption and misuse of power while the bureaucratic machinery and state patronage was freely used in favor of Nawaz Sharif’s IJI. In the ensuing elections IJI led by Nawaz Sharif, won as the single largest party. The opposition leadership charged the interim government with vote rigging and manipulation of the general elections.

Benazir’s second term in office lasted just over three years (October 19, 1993 to November 5, 1996) and ended in her dismissal, this time by Farooq Leghari who she had elected as President. This time round, the liberals were disappointed by the policy compromises, the right was suspicious about her willingness to forgive and forget her father’s death, and everyone was surprised at the corrupt practices that she tolerated from her husband and the free hand that she gave him especially when it came to financial dealings. Most importantly, Benazir had not managed to address the core problem of the increasing power and influence of the military-bureaucratic complex, which by then included a more pervasive and powerful intelligence services. As a result, Nawaz Sharif again seemed to be the only reasonable alternative.

Unlike Benazir, who was outside Pakistan’s Establishment and hence never gained their trust, Nawaz Sharif on the contrary was very much a creation of the Establishment. Despite the clear advantage of being an insider, he failed as badly as Benazir had, to develop his own power base and reduce the influence of the army.

Nawaz’s introduction to politics was through Zia ul Huq who had appointed him the finance minister for the province of Punjab from 1982 to 1985 and
subsequently as chief minister from 1985 to 1990. After Junejo’s departure from politics, he assumed leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League which had a very limited political base, especially in Punjab. However, his most important asset was his family connections; his father, Mian Mohammad Sharif was one of Pakistan’s most successful businessmen, controlling one of the largest industrial empires in the country. His father remains a powerful force in Nawaz Sharif’s political career, while his brother, who is believed to be more capable and more articulate became the governor of Punjab, when Nawaz Sharif assumed office during the second term.

Nawaz Sharif’s first term was a result of the army’s manipulation and it ended after a little over two years, after being dismissed by the President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, over the appointment of the Army Chief. While Nawaz Sharif’s civilian government was generally accommodative it diverged from the army’s position on a number of key situations. During the Gulf War, the civilian government which was pro-US was at odds with the emerging position of “strategic defiance” supported by the army. The “strategic defiance” thesis argued that an act of defiance (i.e., Iraq’s refusal to bow to Western pressures) was a prerequisite for making deterrence effective and credible. General Beg publicly stated that the military campaign by the US and its allies against Iraq was an effort to destroy the power of any state that can threaten Israel. Once Iraq was destroyed, the next target would be Iran and nothing would stop Pakistan from being the next target. This was obviously at odds with the civilian government’s decision to support the U.S and its allies and more specifically, to make available 5000
troops to Saudi Arabia for security related matters, directly after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, during the first Gulf War.

Other issues that created tension between the civilian administration and the army was the security operation by the army in Sindh, which led to a number of arrests of party activists affiliated to the MQM who was Nawaz Sharif’s ally. While MQM wanted the operation to end, Nawaz Sharif could not do so. His policy of offering material inducements to officers of the armed forces to ensure loyalty and support also irked the military command. The government also failed in economic and political management. The policies of economic liberalization, deregulation and privatization were compromised by regular instances of kickbacks, nepotism and corruption. The civil administration used public funds for personal and party considerations while banks and other financial institutions were directed to give large loans to the elites in power and their cohorts. The final straw was his confrontation with the President Ishaq Khan on a number of issues ranging from the appointment of the Army Chief, to the curtailing of the President’s authority and a public statement by Sharif on the President’s intention to conspire against him. Ishaq Khan after securing his support dismissed Nawaz Sharif from power and appointed a member of the dissolved national assembly as caretaker Prime Minister.

The elections that led to the second term for Nawaz Sharif, was a marked departure from the previous term. While turnout was low, his party swept into power with a majority, following the Benazir government’s abysmal performance when in
power and reflected in the polls. While Nawaz Sharif engaged in pro-business policies, developed the infrastructure by building a number of freeways and toll roads, initiated popular but fiscally ruinous schemes (ie own-your-own taxi cab scheme) and generally added to Pakistan’s’ overall debt, it was his repressive policies to control the political system including the administration, the bureaucracy, the judiciary and above all the army, that led to his downfall. Some of the illiberal policy decisions were:

- He systematically eliminated or weakened his political opponents; he established a national Ehtesab (reform) commission that prosecuted Benazir and her husband on charges of corruption. (Ironically, this very commission was used as a basis by Pervez Musharraf to prosecute Sharif and his family). He purged his own party the PML of rivals and overtly pressured the press that was critical of this administration.

- He brought the government under his own control, by stripping the President of the constitutional power to dismiss the Parliament and by default prevented any future president from removing him, the Prime Minister from office. He manipulated the local elections, purged the bureaucracy, tried to directly control large province such as Punjab and without reservation transferred judges. His most crude and direct attempt to influence the justice system, was when his supporters undertook a physical attack on the Supreme Court of Pakistan in Islamabad. They invaded the courts premises and directly intimated the judges with security cameras capturing the whole event. In the wake of the nuclear testing in May 1998, under the state emergency laws, Sharif increased central authority which allowed him to interfere in the decisions of the provinces, which he retained much of, even after the state of emergency was lifted.

- He tried to reduce influence of the army by trying to make peace with India and placing a large number of Army officers in the railway and WAPDA (utilities). He had told one Pakistani PML colleague that his plan was “to induct 50,000 soldiers into WAPDA and the Railways each, and the next year to bring them into other areas, and at the same time make peace with India, thus reducing the effective size of the army its main mission.” He dismissed the professional army chief who went quietly and appointed General Pervez Musharraf who was a mohajir with no particular military tradition in his family.
He attempted to rein in the military operation in Kargil, under instruction from the U.S., which was not well accepted by the army and led to the final showdown between the Sharif government and the military.

As the Kargil crisis with India grew and the army was in no mood to withdraw despite the civilian government’s orders, Nawaz Sharif was sure that there was a coup-in waiting. To preempt this, he dismissed Musharraf while he was away and appointed a successor army chief (who had been the head of ISI and from the army’s engineering branch with no support base in the army which is dominated by infantry, armor and artillery). The move failed and Musharraf’s subordinates arrested Nawaz Sharif on charges of ‘attempted murder’ and corruption. Sharif had ordered the PIA flight to land outside Pakistan which was also carrying passengers. This was construed by the army as attempted murder of Musharraf. Sharif’s attempt to consolidate power had alienated many, while his illiberal policies and actions had done substantial damage to the democratic institutions. Still the Establishment would have endured with Nawaz Sharif’s rule, had he not interfered in army matters nor held divergent positions on foreign and security policy matters. Nawaz Sharif who was in power a little over two years from February 17, 1997 to October 12 1999, was not missed and many were cautiously relieved at his departure.39

**General Pervez Musharraf: The Rise and Fall of a New Order**

The coup that saw General Pervez Musharraf as the “Chief Executive”, brought in a regime that lasted almost 10 years, second to General Zia’s term. General Musharraf was not ready to transfer power over to civilians in the aftermath of the
coup – his refusal was grounded on the basis that the political system had to be cleansed and reorganized to ensure that the military-civilian balance was maintained such that civilians could not lead Pakistan to disastrous ends. In his address to the nation on October 17, 1999, Musharraf painted a dire picture of Pakistan.

Today we have reached a state where our economy has crumbled, our credibility is lost, state institutions lie demolished, provincial disharmony has caused cracks in the federation. In sum, we have lost our honor, our dignity, our respect in the comity of nations. Is this the democracy our Quaid-e-Azam had envisaged? Is this the way to enter the new millennium?

Musharraf set himself seven broad agenda items that he felt needed to implement to an extent where it would be difficult for civilian governments to easily reverse:

- Rebuild national confidence and morale
- Strengthen the federation, remove interprovincial disharmony, and restore national cohesion
- Revive the economy and restore investors’ confidence
- Ensure law and order and dispense speedy justice
- Depoliticize state institutions
- Devolve power down to the grassroots
- Ensure swift accountability across the board

He had a number of ideas as to how the above might be done, beginning with a commitment to the appearance of democracy, as long as checks and balances were in place to prevent a dominant political force from emerging. Measures were taken with
the objective of disciplining the politicians, giving the military a permanent and constitutional role, relying upon technocrats and building a new system of government that would link the center to the “people” of Pakistan.\textsuperscript{43}

As a first step, Musharraf used the one instrument at hand, which was Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s established process of Ehtesab or review commission which was set up to investigate political and economic irregularities. Musharraf renamed the commission the National Accountability Bureau which then prosecuted corrupt politicians and officials based on the Ehtesab Commissions files and records. NAB claims to be successful, since over a four year period, it has uncovered Rs. 90 billion in fraud, prosecuted 294 bureaucrats, 56 businessmen, 8 members of the armed forces.\textsuperscript{44} However, there are complaints from the international human rights groups that the Bureau circumvents regular judicial processes, has established its own closed courts and is often used as a political tool by the government.

Musharraf formed a new commission called the National Reconstruction Bureau to develop a new system that rebalances Pakistan’s politics with specific focus on transforming the governmental structure and the law and order mechanism. While he had no specific guidance for the commission except that there should be checks and balances on elected politicians’ excesses, the Bureau evolved from a think tank to an important part of the machinery. The new district government (Nazim) system is one major achievement of the Bureau. While it was never widely discussed, debated or invited inputs from the political parities, the system’s intention was to have Nazims
operate in a political vacuum, excluding national and provincial legislatures and Pakistan’s own services from local government.\textsuperscript{45} The politicians, whoever remained, and the bureaucrats predictably opposed the system. On the other hand, the Nazims and elected assemblies were happy with the system as it transferred funds directly to the district, circumventing the bureaucracy and the provincial legislators.

The new Nazim system on one level is a mix of recent theories of public administration with its aspects of transparency, accountability and responsibility, devolution of power, and public accessibility. On a second level, it mirrors closely the Ayubian principles of “basic democracies.” On a third level, which is important, it intentionally or unintentionally, weakens the power of bureaucracy and the power of provincial governments. Stephen Cohen believes that the actual purpose behind the system was to build political favor by creating a class of local notables who owed their position and hence allegiance to the military.\textsuperscript{46} With no constraint on how the funds were to be spent as long as it met the objectives of the local military commander, the Nazim system was bound to lose credibility and transparency.

Musharraf further used established the role of the army in the government by acquiring a formal constitutional role through membership in the National Security Council. Musharraf’s many supporters argue that institutionalizing the army’s role in the government allows for more stability since, the army has always been a ‘silent partner’ and the earlier model has not resulted in the army staying out of politics.
To acquire legitimacy for his actions, Musharraf paid lip service to the appearance of democracy by holding a national referendum on the military takeover in June 2002. The election was rigged and decried loudly by Pakistanis and foreign observers. The results showed that Musharraf had won 98 percent of the votes. Five months later he proceeded to hold national and provincial elections which were closely manipulated and monitored by the military and the intelligence services, and the more importantly without the participation of PPP’s and PML’s most influential leaders Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. By then both leaders were in exile in different countries and had limited opportunity of participating in politics. Nawaz Sharif had been deported to Saudi Arabia following the coup and his arrest, while Benazir Bhutto went into self-imposed exile in the Middle East to fend of criminal charges of corruption.

In the initial years, Musharraf was quietly supported by his country men and was looked upon as a welcome relief to the years of corrupt albeit “democratic” governments. September 11th gave Musharraf and his regime the opportunity and international credibility to remain as the uncontested leader of a nation which was considered a strategic ally of the US in its “war against terror.” After the events of September 11, Musharraf engaged Pakistan very quickly in the war against Al Qaeda and the Taliban, risking popular anger, given the Islamization of the army during President Zia’s time and the army’s historic and continuing links with jihadists during
the war in Afghanistan against Russia and most importantly the Kashmir conflict with India. An article in the Economist describes Musharraf’s position well.

Proclaiming himself an apostle of "enlightened moderation", he seemed, despite his embarrassing lack of democratic credentials, a relatively safe pair of hands to be in charge of a 165m-strong moderate Islamic nation--one that possesses nuclear weapons and is prey to a frightening extremist fringe.48

However, over the years, his goodwill dissipated. His alliance with the US to oust the Taliban cost him support at home. This was seen as a war aimed at both Islam and more importantly against their ethnic Pashtun brethrens in Afghanistan. Internationally and in domestic liberal circles, his refusal to remove his army fatigues and allow unrigged elections alienated his supporters. Hence, when Musharraf attempted to hold onto power through undemocratic means there was very little domestic or international support for him.

Musharraf overreached himself when he attempted to prolong his tenure for another five year term. His term as President was set to expire in October 2007. However, if he were re-elected (not by universal suffrage but by an electoral college composed of national and provincial legislatures), the constitution required him to retire him from the army at the end of the year. On the other hand, the general elections scheduled to be held in January 2008, would hand the ruling party a massive defeat, if of course, the elections were free and fair. Hence, if Musharraf were to hang on to power as most generals and politicians are wont to, he faced four options: have himself re-elected by the existing college which would be constitutionally dubious; declare an
emergency and postpone elections which would look terrible and not be acceptable at home or internationally; rig the elections, which is the usual and most favored option but again would be subject to criticism; and finally form a political coalition with either of the two exiled leaders, Bhutto or Sharif, which would signal a shift towards participatory politics and acceptable internationally.49

Since 2003, Musharraf held two positions that of the President and the Head of armed forces as a result of constitutional amendment brought about through the support of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), an alliance of religious parties. However, the war against the Taliban has cost Musharraf the MMA’s support. His original plan of prolonging his tenure past the 2007 expiry was to weaken the Supreme Court and have the courts rule in favor of the decision. However, this ploy failed terribly when his attempts to sack the confrontational chief justice, Iftekhar Chaudhry, in March 2007, resulted in months of pro-Chaudhury protests that persuaded other judges to reinstate the ousted Chief Justice in June.50

After his botched attempt to weaken the Supreme Court, Musharraf began discussions, which some say the US also encouraged, with the exiled Benazir Bhutto, with the aim of winning her support for a constitutional amendment enabling his election as president while still in uniform.51 In return, Ms. Bhutto would share power with the general in Islamabad and the provinces, if the elections were to be held freely and fairly. This too failed, when Musharraf succumbed to pressure from the ruling Muslim Leage (Q) party, which considers PPP as its arch enemy, to end the deal with
Bhutto. However, the discussions with Bhutto emboldened her to re-enter Pakistan as the leader of PPP and contest the elections scheduled to be held in January 2008. She announced her date of return to Pakistan October 18, 2009. Not to be outdone, Nawaz Sharif also proclaimed his interest to lead his party in the upcoming elections and tried to enter Pakistan in September, 2007. He was promptly deported, further alienating the people of Pakistan against the ruling party.

In September 2007, Musharraf informed the newly independent-minded court that he would step down as the Head of Armed Forces if the existing electoral college elected him president, which would allow him to stay in office after his term as President expires on November 15, 2009. About the same time, on September 20th, the Election Commission announced the date for the election would be October 6th and nomination papers to be filed by September 27th. In a controversial move, the Commission got rid of the rules that forbade government officials (i.e., army chiefs) to contest Presidential elections, unless two years had passed after retirement from public service.52

Musharraf’s insistence on having a Presidential election under the current electoral college stemmed from the assessment the January 2008 elections would bring about a new college which would more likely be hostile to Musharraf, given that he would have no authority either as a president or as army chief since both terms were set to expire before January 2008. However, several petitioners challenged General Musharraf’s right to be head of the armed forces and the president at the same time and
the validity of such a presidential action. The opposition parities in parliament protested that they would resign if Musharraf was allowed to file nomination papers. However, the elections went through and Musharraf was elected President for a third term. The Supreme Court however was set to rule on the petitions of legality early November which triggered series of events that led to Musharraf’s ultimate fall.

Musharraf, to pre-empt any adverse ruling by the Supreme Court headed by a Chief Justice who had opposed him previously, he pulled off a second coup on November 3, 2008. This article describes these events.

On his order, the Supreme Court and provincial high courts have been suspended. Dozens of dissident judges have been purged. The chief justice, Iftikhar Chaudhry, a popular and cussed opponent of the general, is under house arrest. An artful friend of the general, Abdul Hamid Doger, now has his job. Private TV news channels have been taken off the air. Critics of the army or General Musharraf face a new penalty of three years in prison. Political gatherings are banned. At least 2,000 lawyers, political activists, human-rights workers and journalists have been detained. They include famous opponents of army rule, including Asma Jehangir, a former UN special rapporteur. In an e-mail from house arrest, where she has been placed for 90 days, Ms Jehangir supposed that General Musharraf had "lost his marbles". The leaders of most opposition parties are also in the clink or in hiding. Speaking from a secret place, Ahsan Iqbal, the mouthpiece of Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (N) party, claimed that as many as 2,400 of his party workers had been rounded up.53

What Musharraf called a state of emergency to prevent the country from disintegrating, civil society and political leaders recognized it as martial law. The former chief justice under house arrest called for the ouster of Musharraf, joined reluctantly by Benazir Bhutto who was allowed to enter the country on October 18th.
and still had kept the option of power sharing with Musharraf in the next parliament following the January 2008 elections. Nawaz Sharif, once deported and still in exile was the most adversely impacted, given that the new supreme court would not be open to ruling in favor of his re-entry to Pakistan and Pakistani politics.

Following the coup, Musharraf replaced the previous supreme court judges with 12 pliant judges who then proceeded to legitimize Musharraf’s position as a president. As promised on October 28, 2007, the country still under emergency rule, Musharraf stepped down as army chief, handed over power General Ashfaque Kayani and became a civilian. The next day he was sworn in as President. However, his attempts to maneuver Pakistan politics to his advantage kept failing. His efforts to keep Nawaz Sharif away from Pakistan was proven futile, despite Musharraf’s visit to Saudi Arabia to convince them to hold on to Sharif till after the January elections. Instead, the Saudi rulers put Sharif on a plane to Pakistan on October 25, 2007 where upon arrival he was greeted by a massive number of supporters.

Musharraf’s options were fast dwindling. By December 2007, it was clear that any government following the January 2008 elections would need to legitimize his coup of November 3rd. To do so, Musharraf needed political support in parliament which he lacked. He had alienated the religious parties, the MMA with his involvement in war on terror and Nawaz Sharif’s PML was out of the question. That left him with Benazir Bhutto as the only possible ally.
In the meanwhile the law and order situation had declined rapidly, further fuelling the opposition's claim to a return to democracy. The rise of Islamists was evident by several horrific terror incidents such as the stand off at the Lal Mosque, the suicide bombing at Benazir's rally, the encroachment of pro Taliban Islamists and terror tactics in the Swat valley.\textsuperscript{55} The death knell for Musharraf’s political aspirations was sounded when Benazir was murdered on December 27, 2007 at the hands of a suicide bomber during an election rally. Musharraf was accused of complicity at her death but never proven—she had recently accused the presidency to be a den of conspirators.\textsuperscript{56}

The election was postponed from January to February 2008 and Benazir’s widower Asif Zardari took the reins of the party. The results were a victory for the Pakistan Peoples Party and utter defeat for Musharraf’s party, PML – Q (Pakistan Muslim League – Quaid). PPP won 264 of the 342 seats in the lower house of the bicameral parliament, while PML – Q secured only 42 seats in the entire house.\textsuperscript{57} PPP and Sharif’s PML (N) – (Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz) formed a coalition government led by Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gillani, the Vice Chairman of the PPP with Musharraf as the President. At Nawaz Sharif’s insistence, on the face of impending impeachment Musharraf resigned. However, the coalition was even shorter. On August 25, 2008, Sharif’s party split on the issue of Zardari’s bid for president.\textsuperscript{58} Sharif had wanted to run for president himself but the PPP refused and Zardari became the President of Pakistan.
Zardari’s House of Cards

Over twenty months of civilian rule, fourteen of which under Zardari’s leadership has little to show for. The country is bankrupt and debt ridden, propped up by a rescue package from IMF and considerable aid from the US, while the economy is weak and Islamic insurgency wreaks on. Two key events marks Zardari’s ineptness and weak leadership. First the standoff with his erstwhile coalition partner and then opposition leader Nawaz Sharif, when Zardari refused to reinstate the deposed Chief Justice Iftekhar Chaudhury, over whom the Musharraf regime had unraveled. Zardari had Sharif put under house arrest and himself barricaded in his presidential compound too terrified to venture out, only to recapitulate in the face of rising support for Sharif. The Chief Justice was reinstated. Both Zardari and the army were loath to reinstate the Chief Justice as the opposition may bring up issues regarding the legality of the amnesty for corruption charges provided to Zardari and the legality of the second coup in November 3, 2008.

Zardari’s government is currently fighting the Taliban in its own country. It is an unacknowledged, unstated civil war that is in progress. In a misguided bid to fend of Taliban attacks and obtain some stability, Zardari again proved his weak leadership by signing a deal with the Taliban leadership which ceded control over the Swat Valley to the Islamic extremists in April 2008. The deal signaled a victory for the Taliban leadership and further emboldened them to strike deeper and more ferociously. However, subsequent pressures from US and western allies have prompted Pakistan to
mount offensive military action to oust the Taliban which has been more successful than other actions. Following the military attacks, the death of Baitullah Mehsud, the Taliban leader in Pakistan is a testimony to the capability of the Pakistan military when dealing with Islamic insurgents.

In a recent interview with Meet the Press, Zardari seemed to be detached from the plight of Pakistan and resoundingly blamed the US for creating the Taliban threat during the cold war only to abandon Pakistan once the war was over. He was defensive in his response on whether he or the army was running the country. In the discussion and analysis that followed the interview, the experts on the panel were not convinced that Zardari was in full control, especially on the question of control over the nuclear arsenal, let alone him being able to lead the country at such a challenging point in time. Zardari, who was nicknamed “Mr. 10%” because of corruption during his wife’s’ time as Pakistan’s leader, demonstrates very little capacity for political brinkmanship or leadership. There is little doubt that nepotism, cronyism and corruption prevails in his government. If Zardari continues to be unable to deliver on an agenda that brings stability to the country, a strategy and action plan that successfully tackles the Taliban issue and an economic plan that addresses questions of poverty, inequality and access to basic social services, the promise of democracy will fail once more in Pakistan.
CHAPTER 5

A POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF BANGLADESH

The politics and history of Bangladesh as a new nation was shaped by the decisions and events that occurred in West Pakistan. While Pakistan was considered an independent nation after the end of the British colonial rule, East Pakistan never gained the degree of independence that its western counterpart had achieved. While the basis for the formation of Pakistan was religion, in East Pakistan, it was primarily ethnicity and not religion that defined the Bengalis. This basic difference in the perception of national identity by the East wing and the West wing, coupled with West Pakistan’s lack of responsiveness to the East wing’s dire problems of poverty and access to basic needs, ultimately led to the dismemberment of the Pakistan and led to the creation of Bangladesh, the first independent nation state after World War II.

The politics that followed the birth of the country was surprisingly reminiscent of Pakistan. The propensity to move away from democratic principles of power sharing and representative government was both true for the turbulent period preceding Ayub in Pakistan and during Mujib’s time in Bangladesh. Then came the long spell of army rule in Bangladesh first by Zia ur Rahman and then Ershad which was again similar to the periods governed by Ayub to Zia ul Huq in Pakistan. Ershad’s fall from power was especially reminiscent of that of Ayub and later President Musharraf where opposition demands backed by public support forced the leaders to step down. The ten or fifteen years of democracy that followed was marked by bitter rivalry between two parties with no real ideological difference but both equally corrupt. Despite being Muslim
countries both Pakistan and Bangladesh elected twice over female leaders, which is an encouraging sign. However, most people believe that at least for Bangladesh that Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina, were chosen less on their own merit, but more on the wave of popular support for their murdered (considered martyred by their supporters) husband and father respectively – a throwback to old feudal instincts that the people of the sub-continent still cling on to. Another interesting parallel between the two countries is the relapse into authoritarian rule – Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan and the army backed civilian caretaker government in Bangladesh. While Musharraf held on to power longer than he had promised, it is commendable that Bangladesh demonstrated more maturity in transferring power back to a civilian government through a fair and free election within the two year timeframe that the caretaker government had stipulated. Bangladesh in many ways is more politically developed, with limited influence of the army and the electorate more committed to democratic principles than in Pakistan. Whether the democratically elected governments in Bangladesh have been more responsive or more capable or less corrupt than their counterparts in Pakistan is however debatable.

**The Early Years of Mujib: 1973 - 1975**

Similar to Pakistan where the Muslim League was considered the party that brought in independence; in Bangladesh too the Awami League is closely associated to and is credited with the independence of Bangladesh. The Awami League was a breakaway faction of the Muslim League and its founding leaders were all Muslim Leaguers at different points in time.
However, unlike Pakistan under the Muslim League leadership where the constitution was delayed by many years, the Awami League government swiftly crafted a constitution which was modeled on parliamentary democracy. The new constitution closely resembled that of India with the exception of federal provisions, as the Bangladesh was to be a unitary state.\(^1\) It contained provisions for the basic rights of the people and set out “directive principles” that do not have the force of law, if they worked out, it would set the tone of the new regime.\(^2\) These basic principles, which subsequently came to be known as Mujibism or Mujibbad in Bengali, formed the political philosophy of the early years of Bangladesh. There were four central pillars to this philosophy: nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism.\(^3\) For Mujib and his government, the political philosophy was not difficult to translate into reality as the postwar political, social and economic structures had already shaped a number of the components such as nationalism, socialism and secularism.

Nation-building and nationalism was very much the spirit of the moment in post-liberation Bangladesh, with no dissenting minorities and overwhelming public support for Mujib, his party and the government. As one expert eloquently stated, “The participation in one way or another of the overwhelming majority of the people and the almost total absence of non-Bengali minorities made the first “pillar” of Mujibism something that was almost accomplished before it was stated.”\(^4\) In the early years, Democracy which embodied basic freedoms including free and regular elections was one of the goals that Mujib and his government aspired to. Although the commitment to democratic principles slipped in the ensuing years, at the time of drafting the
constitution, Mujib and his associates, secure in the support of the whole nation, had every intention of upholding the goals of democracy.

Socialism, not of the Marxist kind, but one that is more democratic in its application, was a widely accepted doctrine following independence. This again was more by accident than by design, when many West Pakistani industrialists fled East Pakistan during the liberation war and all their assets came into the hands of the government as “evacuee” and “enemy” property. The “pillar” of secularism embodied the basic creed of the Awami League which was that religion and politics should be separate and that all citizens regardless of religious beliefs were equal under the law. Mujib was adamant not to follow a path that led to the formation of an Islamic State, but instead to follow the one set by Nehru’s secular India.

The newly liberated Bangladesh was economically impoverished, with limited infrastructure, little or no industries or production facilities, very limited human skills and capacity both in government, administration and business. Add to that adverse weather conditions in terms of floods and famine. Mujib’s Bangladesh was quickly known as the ‘international basket case’ and countries such as Russia, India, China and later the US and UK provided aid to reconstruct the newly independent country.

Beyond the cards that Bangladesh was dealt, Mujib failed to lead and govern effectively. Mujib had very few people in the government, including himself, who had any previous experience governing. He himself had been a minister very briefly but an unsuccessful one. At that time it was easier to blame the central government in West Pakistan for all the ills of East Pakistan including a limited resource base, but once
Mujib assumed leadership, he was unable to transition to the new role, where he, and not West Pakistani leaders was the decision maker. He realized that Bangladesh still had the same limited resource base as it did when it was East Pakistan and it was now up to Mujib and his government to address this issue which was at the heart of the dissent between the two wings.

Problems of corruption within his family and the Awami League further detracted from the task of reconstructing the country. Local level Awami Leaguers heavily borrowed from the expression of Louis the XIV of France “The state is ours: let us enjoy it.” Corruption was endemic and was further compounded by Mujib’s hiring policy. Mujib immensely distrusted senior members of the civil service who he considered sympathizers to West Pakistan and in opposition to the freedom movement, as they had remained in their posts during the liberation war. He actively replaced or sidelined these experienced bureaucrats in favor of loyalists and supporters. Hence, gradually key positions in the civil service were taken over by people, for many of whom, the only qualification was to be of certain political persuasion. As a result, corruption and inefficiency throughout the system persisted and increased manifold in the ensuring years.

Bangladesh held its first elections in 1973 and the Awami League went to polls to elect a new parliament. It was still early days for the country and the party stood in good favor of the people, Mujib was still much loved by the people and was acknowledged as the “Father of the Nation.” The election results (307 out of 315 seats) placed the party in power for five years. Parties that were deemed to have opposed the
creation of Bangladesh was banned from participating, the challenge came from the left which was quite weak. In the heady years following independence, the majority of the population still had faith in Mujib and his government, hence minor shifts from democratic principles went largely unnoticed; and if at all noticed by few, was tolerated in the name of preserving the national unity.

Following the elections, the challenges increased. As corruption grew, respect for rule of law eroded and the law and order situation deteriorated. Private industries and production facilities had been nationalized and industries previously managed by West Pakistani industrialists, that were profitable pre-independence were now losing money post-independence due to poor management and corruption. This was compounded by food shortage brought about by famine. By 1974, the press had become increasingly critical of the new government and instead of addressing issues and failures in an open democratic manner, Mujib reverted to authoritarianism. In December 1974, he declared a state of emergency, suspended basic fundamental rights. A month later, he amended the constitution to allow for a presidential system with himself as President. In June 1975, he took steps to make Bangladesh a single-party state and thus acquired absolute power.

Mujib’s move to authoritarianism cost him the respect of the Army Chief, General Osmany who resigned in late 1974 in protest and later cost him his life. Mujib distrusted the military not only because it was run by officers who were trained by the Pakistan army, but also that the military heroes of the freedom struggle such as Major Zia, might command greater respect than himself. Mujib refused to give priority to the
demands of the military that was poorly equipped. As the government continued to fail the people and criticisms of Mujib personally grew, the Army remained relatively immune from public ire. Recognizing the inherent danger in such a situation, Mujib moved to form a praetorian guard that was loyal first to him and second to the country. The Jatiyo Rakhi Bahini (National Security Force) was established in 1975 and while the officers needed to have military training, the ranks were to be filled by ex-freedom fighters drawn from civilians. The Rakhi Bahini was better equipped and had greater allocation of government funds and was soon considered a rival organization by the army. In the short period that the Rakhi Bahini was in place, there were issues of lack of discipline and respect for the rule of law, which only compounded the distrust and the tensions between the army and the Rakhi Bahini as well as the government and the people.

As things grew to a head, in August 1975, a group of disaffected army majors assassinated Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation. His entire family perished in his residence, save for his two daughters who at that point were traveling abroad. Mujib’s ineffective leadership, his condoning of corruption and nepotism and finally shift to authoritarianism and the creation of the Rakshi Bahini led to his downfall. The gradual shift away from liberal democratic principles and corruption cost Mujib not only his life but left behind a governance model for Bangladesh that was rooted in corruption, nepotism and limited respect for rule of law.
Major General Zia –ur Rahman: Towards Liberalization

General Zia Ur Rahman assumed power gradually, first as the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) in November 1976, replacing Chief Justice Sayem who was the second President and the CMLA in the chaotic period following Sheikh Mujib’s death. In April 1977, General Zia became President when Sayem resigned on the grounds of “ill-health”. In May 1977, there was a referendum approved his holding the office but did not confer legitimacy on him or his system. It was not until February 1979, were multi-party elections held. His party, the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) won 207 of 300 directly elected seats; the Awami League was a distant second with 39 seats.

Zia put forth a nineteen point program for economic and social revitalization of the country. He emphasized the importance of family planning, the expansion of agricultural production with the goal of reaching self sufficiency in food grains as soon as possible. He was a popular leader and spent much of his time touring the country and listening to people. He first floated the idea of the region working as a unit to find solutions to the economic, social and technological problems affecting the whole region – his vision gained momentum and SAARC was formed - to become a regional forum for South Asian countries.

Zia’s main change to the Constitution was to recognize the Muslim majority by amending the “secularist” fundamental principle of state policy to read that the Bangladeshis had “absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah,” and that the Muslims could order their lives according to the Sunnah. While acknowledging the Muslim
majority, Zia was careful to reiterate that the rights of the minorities to preach and practice their faiths would not be restricted in any way and that all were equal citizens in the eyes of the law. Zia’s reason for the shift away from the secular nature of the state was more to assuage the Middle Eastern states that had reservations about donating large amounts of petro-dollars as assistance to Bangladesh, as the state was not deemed sufficiently Islamic.

Realizing that India would be concerned with the amendment in the constitution, Zia balanced this by defining the people of Bangladesh as Bangladeshis as opposed to Bengalis, the latter being the prevailing term. The distinction is important, as India has a large Bengali population in West Bengal and distinguishing between Bangladeshis and Bengalis, laid rest to any ideas of West Bengal ceding India and joining Bangladesh to form one “Bengal.” The one “Bengal” vision had always been a distinct albeit unpleasant possibility for India, as before the partition of India, Bengal, including West Bengal, Bangladesh and Assam, was ruled as one region by the British. This vision was subsequently espoused by many national and regional leaders during Partition, including Suhrwardy.

Zia’s government made laudable economic and social progress; a large part of it was due to favorable weather conditions and foreign assistance. His regime was considered comparatively clean, there have not been allegations of corruption or personal gain against Zia or his family. However, Zia was ruthless with his opponents and had an army colonel summarily executed, because of his involvement in a potential coup. The Awami League was against Zia’s army rule, his reluctance to put on trial
Mujib’s assassins, cemented the belief that Zia was sacrificing the basic principles of Mujibism. Zia restored the civil servants who were sidelined by Mujib, who were deemed by Mujib’s government at the time, to be less than sympathetic to the liberation war. Zia’s policy of reinstating the military officers who had been forced to remain in Pakistan during 1971 caused a split in the army between the groups roughly termed “freedom fighters” and “returnees.” However, Zia’s career ended abruptly in May 1981, when he was assassinated again by the army. The details of the reasons behind the assassination have not yet been revealed, but the general feeling is that his ruthlessness in ousting potential competitors even within the army coupled with his perceived shift away from Mujibism, cost him his life.

**The General Ershad Years: The Return of Authoritarianism**

Following the assassination of President Zia ur Rahman, the Vice President Abdus Sattar became acting president. In accordance with the Constitution, an election was held within the stipulated 180 days, in November 1981 and Sattar became President. Some, especially the military held the view that Sattar an elderly man was ineffective and his cabinet comprised of corrupt and or incompetent ministers. The chief of the army then was Lieutenant General Husain Muhammad Ershad who demanded a constitutional role for the military in the government. When Sattar refused to comply fully, in March 1982, General Ershad staged a coup and dismissed Sattar and his constitutionally elected government.

Ershad’s regime marked a return to authoritarian rule which had gradually acquired a patina of accommodation in the latter years under Zia. Political parties were
banned, the press was controlled, channels of access were closed or narrowed, and martial law was re-imposed. His rationale for the martial law and army takeover was no different than that given by many other military dictators: the conditions in the country were such that it was necessary for the only organized force in the nation needed to assume power, temporarily to set the government in order. A number of election dates were set, but polls were never held till almost four years later in early 1986, when he held a referendum seeking approval for his policies. While the referendum did not confer any legitimacy to Ershad’s rule, the government claimed that Ershad had won overwhelming support. Important to note that there was widespread allegations of vote tampering and that whole ballot boxes had been stuffed with “yes” votes.

Finally in May 1986, Ershad held the first elections for parliament, where he won a slim majority against the Awami League and its allies, amid allegations of election fraud. The BNP, led by Zia’s widow refused to participate in the elections. In late 1987, calls for new election was raised by both Awami League and the BNP, but given the likelihood of electoral fraud, both parties boycotted the elections. Ershad claimed victory and again formed a parliament. Finally in the face of popular uprising in December 1990, again led by the two political parties, Ershad was forced from office.

During his nine years of power, Ershad gained popularity among the villages and townships. He decentralized the central government and created a system of local government with accountability and power at the local district level. Ershad created 64
districts instead of the prevailing 20 and had each district headed by a deputy commissioner drawn from the civil service. The district commissioner was also the district collector (of revenue) and district magistrate (responsible for law and order and judicial functions). He would preside over a mini cabinet that has representatives of most of the central departments (e.g., a superintendent of police, a district judge, a district health officer). He is responsible for the overall administration and development of the district.

Ershad’s objective in increasing the number of districts was to shift the decision making power closer to the people. While the former district averaged about 5 million people, the new districts would contain about 1.5 million people on average and the district headquarters would be much closer to the general residents of the area. Below the district was the sub-district which is governed by elected councils. Urban bodies in major cities cover the coordination with the districts. The devolution of power to the sub-district level although was difficult to coordinate and never reached its full potential under subsequent leaderships, the very effort made Ershad a popular leader at the village level. In addition, Ershad supported a land reform program which distributed unoccupied land to landless farmers and villagers which added to his popularity.

Ershad in a bid to appease the right, declared Bangladesh as an Islamic state, totally abandoning secularism. During his time, he supported the religious right by including the examinations held by the religious schools or madrasas as part of the general education system and the achievement certificates issued by such schools would be considered valid. This policy was detrimental to the general standard of
education in the country as the teachings in the madrasas were far from mainstream curricula. During his regime, army officers gained prominence and were gradually involved in government administration, in management of nationalized industries and to a certain extent in private sector activities. The army gradually became the new “elite” of the country.

Ershad’s regime was the longest autocratic rule that Bangladesh has faced, however it was commendable that the shift to power from autocracy to democracy was done without blood shed, without military involvement and more importantly the transition took place through a formal, constitutional process.

**Bangladesh’s Transition to Democracy**

The transition to democracy was cemented through elections held in 1991, where the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) came to power, under Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. The BNP government adopted a policy of economic growth through exports and trade liberalization. It pursued policies that strengthened female literacy, reduced child mortality and maternity health.

In 1994, a prolonged political deadlock began, when Sheikh Hasina Wajed’s Awami League (AL) party began boycotting Parliament to protest alleged corruption in Zia’s government. The two parties differed little on domestic policy - their disputes often reflected the personal animosity between Hasina, the daughter of Rahman, and Zia, the widow of a military ruler who was allegedly complicit in his assassination. The AL boycotted the February 1996 elections, then forced Zia’s resignation in March
and triumphed in elections held in June.\textsuperscript{17} The BNP, unsurprisingly, marked its time in opposition by organizing periodic nationwide strikes and boycotting Parliament.

In 2001, the AL was voted out of office and a new BNP-led coalition that included two Islamist parties took power. The elections were marred by political violence and intimidation sponsored by the state and the opposition. The AL initially refused to accept the election results and resorted to parliamentary boycotts, countrywide \textit{hartals} (general strikes), and other forms of protest to pressure the government on various issues.\textsuperscript{18} Political violence increased during the AL regime. Grenade attacks at AL rallies in August 2004 and January 2005 narrowly missed Sheikh Hasina but killed and injured party leaders and dozens of people.

General lawlessness mounted and following an escalation of violence later that year, a government cracked down on Islamic militants and criminals. The two Islamist groups’ leaders were arrested in March 2006, along with some 800 members, while in May, seven militant leaders were sentenced to death for the 2005 attacks, and six of the seven were executed in March 2007.\textsuperscript{19} The threat of Islamist violence subsided after the 2006 crackdown.

The year 2006 was marked by heightened political tension and violence stemming from partisan disagreement over plans for January 2007 general elections. The primary demand of the AL and its allies were reform of Bangladesh’s caretaker government (CG) system, in which a theoretically nonpartisan government takes power temporarily to oversee parliamentary elections. The AL further questioned the impartiality and the actions of the Election Commission (EC) and its preparation of a
new voter list. Violent rallies over the proposed “chief adviser,” or head of the CG finally led President Iajuddin Ahmed to appoint himself chief adviser; more rioting in late November led the president to deploy the army to maintain order.20

Faced with the possibility of an election that lacked both domestic and international credibility, the army on January 11, 2007 pressured the president to declare a state of emergency, cancel the elections, and resign as head of the Caretaker Government (CG).21 Fakhruddin Ahmed, a retired World Bank official and former Central Bank governor, was appointed as the new, military-backed CG, the next day. The Caretaker Government soon announced plans to address endemic corruption and prepare for new elections. Under emergency regulations, freedoms of assembly and association were suspended, and controls were placed on the media, while all political activity was banned, including indoor meetings, marches, and rallies.22 The right to appeal for bail was suspended.

The “soft coup” was carried out partly within the constitutional framework, stopping short of martial law and leaving a civilian CG in nominal control, military influence crept over key institutions.23 In February 2007, a new election commission was formed which was considered as relatively nonpartisan. However, it included a role for the army and it was with the army’s assistance that the mammoth task of preparing voter ID cards that were digitized, for an electorate population over eighty million people.24

The caretaker government pushed through a raft of electoral reforms in 2008, which led to elections that were held on December 29. The electoral reforms, including
the voter ID cards had the confidence of all the political parties. Many of the reforms were a result of extensive dialogues between the election commission and sixteen parties in three rounds of discussions. However, the government had less success in implementing an anticorruption drive and reducing the power and popularity of the two main political parties.\textsuperscript{25} Emergency regulations which included restrictions on civil liberties and political activity were removed just prior to the campaign period.

A large number of election officials and international and local observers and the army, oversaw the elections and although the old party leaders were still in place, there was a considerable infusion of new people into both the parties’ candidate lists. Turnout was extremely high, at 87 percent, and included a large proportion of first-time, women, and minority voters.\textsuperscript{26} An electoral alliance led by the AL won a landslide of 263 seats (230 for the AL), while the BNP-led coalition took 32 seats (29 for the BNP).\textsuperscript{27} After customary protests, Khaleda Zia accepted the results, and Bangladesh returned to electoral rule, after a two year break.

Sheikh Hasina has been in office for eleven months and already some of the reforms that the Caretaker Government had put in place are being undermined. The judiciary, the electoral commission and the anti-corruption bureau are ironically the first casualties of Bangladesh’s return to democracy. There is palpable mistrust between the Army and Sheikh Hasina’s administration compounded further by an horrific incident in February 2008, where allegedly the border para-military forces, the Bangladesh Rifles, staged a mutiny and killed nearly 70 army officers over two days in the heart of Dhaka city, while the wives and families were tortured. The violence did
not escalate beyond the premises of the armed forces, primarily because of the army chief who did a tremendous job of maintaining calm and working with the government to restore order. However, surviving officers accused the government of inactivity and worse of involvement. In response, the government has ordered an investigation into the matter and a large number of BDR personnel have been charged with the crime and have been punished. While it is too early to score Sheikh Hasina’s efforts in supporting a liberal democratic approach to governance, early indicators suggest that the seeds for liberal democracy sown during the caretaker government’s time, are not being nurtured. Bangladeshi politics has a high chance of reverting to its old image of corruption and cronyism.
Parallels can be drawn between the political evolution of Pakistan and Bangladesh where the most common factor is the inability to sustain democracy over a prolonged period of time. In both countries, military backed authoritarian rule dominated the early years, followed by a period of electoral democracy marked by corruption and unresponsive governance. The situation changed only to revert to direct military rule or military backed civilian rule with the stated objective of restoring economic and political stability to allow for free and fair elections to be held. Both Pakistan and Bangladesh have emerged from a period of military rule and military backed caretaker governance over the last year and a half, elections were held through which old political players, known to have led ineffective and corrupt governments, have been re-elected to office. It is important to note that the elections held in Bangladesh in December 2008 has been considered as one of most free and fair elections in the recent past, while the elections held in February 2008 in Pakistan was marked by allegations of fraud and the European Union election observers and watch dog organizations judged it to less than free and fair.

With the pendulum swinging between authoritarian to democratically elected regimes and back again, there is a general similarity in the pattern of political evolution of the two countries; however, the dynamics of the various political stakeholders are quite different. Bangladesh for instance has experienced more than sixteen years of democratic rule since its inception thirty eight years ago; this excludes the years of
Sheikh Mujib’s regime. Bangladeshis have consistently revolted against authoritarianism when coupled with unresponsive governance; witness the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, General Zia-ur-Rahman and the mass uprising against General Ershad which led to establishment of the first democratically elected government.

The swing away from democratic principles in early 2007 was more a reaction to the political stalemate that ensued when the political parties failed to reach an agreement on the 2007 election plan, including the appointment of the Head of the Caretaker Government. Mounting violence and political tension had led the country to a standstill, when, to break the stalemate, the President as head of State, appointed a new head of the caretaker government, a technocrat with no political affiliation and who was acceptable to all political parties. A new caretaker government was formed, with considerable support from the military, a situation which many foreign and local analysts and journalists define as a military backed civilian rule and claim that it been a “soft” coup. What was encouraging about the outcome of the most recent caretaker government was that a free and fair election was held within the stipulated two year time frame, resulting in a smooth transition of power to an elected government. Bangladesh has matured politically much faster than Pakistan in terms of adhering to the norms of electoral democracy. The application of democratic principles by elected governments may still be lacking, but Bangladeshis like the idea of having a process that allows them to change unresponsive and corrupt leaders periodically.
Pakistan, on the other hand, has experienced longer periods of military rule with only roughly over seventeen years of democratic rule in the sixty years since partition. The army has a well entrenched role in the political decision making and has time again dismissed democratically elected governments in favor of army rule. The most recent regime, led by General Pervez Musharraf was meant to be transitional, but it took eight years for Musharraf’s rule to end, but only after considerable international and local pressure to hold multi-party elections that would allow the popular leaders, Bhutto and Sharif to participate. Pakistan in terms of political evolution, has a longer road to travel than Bangladesh.

The failure to sustain democracy in Pakistan for prolonged periods as compared to Bangladesh may be explained in terms of Dahl’s essential conditions for democracy. In Pakistan, there never has been true control of the military by any civilian government, belief in democracy is marred by less than positive experience with democratically elected governments, coupled with limited political culture and finally Pakistan perceives India to be a hostile country, both have nuclear weapons capability, have fought four wars between them and are still locked in terrible dispute over Kashmir. Add to that the economics of poverty and inequality, complicated by the claims of multiple ethnic groups and divided loyalties, Pakistan is a very difficult case for democracy to flourish without true leaders.

In Bangladesh, on the other hand, the army, in the recent past has twice receded into the background once political stability had been restored. While there is limited experience with democracy, the region has always been opposed to authoritarian rule.
Going back to British colonial times, the mutiny of 1857 saw only the Bengal regiment rise up against its colonial masters, albeit unsuccessfully, whereas the Bombay and Madras regiments drawn from Punjabi and Sikh ethnic groups stayed true. This led to the doctrine of the “martial races” where the British considered the Bengalis unfit to be a martial race, not by virtue of skill, but based on the propensity of Bengalis to mutiny against colonial authority. Mascarenhas summarized the character of Bangladeshis very well.

However, volatile their politics and violent their political changes, Bangladeshis are paradoxically middle-of-the-roaders, eschewing extremism in both religion and politics. What else would explain the persistent eclipse of the left or the rejection of Ayatollah fundamentalism of the right whenever it reared its head? Their basic chemistry is constituted in equal measure of burning nationalism, unobtrusive piety in the practice of Islam, and an aggressive sense of equality combined with a penchant for instant outrage when confronted by injustice and wrong-doing in others.

While Bangladesh and India have a number of issues that need periodic resolution such as border security and use of water, and India is considered the “big brother” in the region, the two countries do not share a hostile relationship. There is no one single foreign power that influences the decisions that the Bangladesh government makes. Bangladesh, similar to Pakistan is poor but in contrast to Pakistan and India, has more or less a homogenous population. While it is difficult for Bangladesh to sustain the conditions for democracy, it is less of a challenge when compared with Pakistan.

**Assessment of Democratic Quality**

While we have ascertained in the above section, that it is more of a challenge for Pakistan to sustain democracy, the following section reviews the quality of
democracy for both Pakistan and Bangladesh, applying Diamond and Morlino’s framework. The eight dimensions of democratic quality as defined by Diamond and Morlino can be further classified under Procedural, Substantive and Results dimension. The first five dimensions are purely procedural; the following two are the substantive dimensions while the last is the results dimension. The dimensions are Rule of Law, Participation, Competition, Vertical Accountability, Horizontal Accountability, Freedom, Equality and Responsiveness.

The Rule of Law: As defined in the framework rule of law means that “all citizens are equal before the law, and that the laws themselves are clear, publicly known, universal, stable, non-retroactive, and fairly and consistently applied to all citizens by an independent judiciary.” The authors were careful to note that for a liberal democracy the “thin” version where civil order is maintained by government actors who have a monopoly on violence, will not be sufficient. Rather, the “thick” notion is more applicable, characterized by strong, vigorous, diffuse, and self sustaining rule of law that has the following elements:

- The law is equally enforced toward everyone, including state officials; no one is above the law;
- The legal state is supreme throughout the country, leaving no areas dominated by organized by crime, local oligarchs, or political bosses who are above the law;
- Corruption is minimized, detected and punished, in the political administrative, and judicial branches of the state;
- At all levels, the state bureaucracy applies the laws competently, efficiently, and universally, and assumes responsibility in the event of an error;
- The police force is professional, efficient, and respectful of individuals’ legally guaranteed rights and freedoms, including rights of due process;
- Citizens have equal and unhindered access to the courts to defend their rights and to contest lawsuits between private citizens or between private citizens and public institutions;
- Criminal cases and civil and administrative lawsuits are heard and resolved expeditiously;
- The judiciary at all levels is neutral and independent from any political influence;
- Rulings of the courts are respected and enforced by other agencies of the state; and
- The constitution is supreme, and is interpreted and defended by a constitutional court.\(^{31}\)

In addition to the above, the authors note that rule of law should embrace a legal system that defends the democratic procedures, upholds citizens’ civil and political rights, and reinforces the authority of other agencies or horizontal accountability.

In applying the thick notion of rule of law to both Pakistan and Bangladesh, it is evident that this dimension requires the most attention. Rule of law has been traditionally been weak in Bangladesh. Over the last decade, the judiciary had become increasingly politicized, with politically appointed judges at every level and frequent instances of executive-branch meddling in lower-court decisions.\(^{32}\) In 1999 the Supreme Court ordered the separation of the judiciary from the executive, and unlike past governments, the Caretaker Government made this reform a priority. In November 2007, the authority to appoint magistrates and judges was transferred to the Supreme Court from the executive branch. While the caretaker government in November 2007 began to take action to remove executive influence from the judiciary as promised,
observers and experts warned that the measures, while positively in the right direction, might not end the creeping politicization of the judiciary. The observers have been proven right, since in the eight months that the new elected government, led by Sheikh Hasina has seen the withdrawal over 300 cases, mostly against the leader and her political affiliates. The withdrawal was based on the rationale that the cases were “politically motivated” during the opposition’s rule and later under the last Caretaker Government.

According to the 2009 Country Report compiled by Freedom House, the judicial system is prone to corruption and severely backlogged; pretrial detention is lengthy, and many defendants lack counsel. Prison conditions are extremely poor with severe overcrowding. Suspects are often subjected to warrantless arrest and detention, demands for bribes, and physical abuse at the hands of police and law enforcement officials. Torture is routinely used to extract confessions and intimidate political detainees. Mass preemptive arrests and serial detentions, which were common under previous governments, remained a regular feature under emergency rule; in 2007, an estimated 440,000 people were arrested, while approximately 60,000 were arrested in 2008, including 30,000 in June alone. Although most are held for very short periods of time, this practice has led to even more severe prison overcrowding, according to Human Rights Watch.

In terms of curbing corruption, an Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) was established in 2004, to conduct investigations and try cases in special courts, but without financial and political independence, the ACC was never very effective. After
the Caretaker Government assumed power in January 2007, the ACC was reconstituted and a retired army chief was appointed as head. The ACC focused its attentions on political parties and their business associates and arrested an unprecedented number of high level politicians and their business allies. The detainees were held, pending financial investigations. While close to 100 suspects were tried and convicted in special courts, hundreds more fled the country in fear. Both the political leaders, Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia were arrested, and charged with cases of bribery, extortion and illegal financing. In response to calls from the lower levels in the army the ACC extended its investigation into the military as well. However, both leaders were released from their sub-jails in September 2008 on the basis of seeking medical treatment abroad and this marked the end of the anti-corruption drive and the Caretaker Government’s attempts to cleanse the political system from top down.

It is interesting to note that the CG’s actions in reducing corruption did materialize in positive results, notwithstanding allegations of human right violations. In the 2008 Corruptions Perception Index, Transparency International ranked Bangladesh 147 out of 180 countries.\(^{37}\) This was a marked improvement from being at the bottom of the list but still far off from the ideal. TI Bangladesh officials attributed three factors for the Bangladesh’s poor rating - absence of administrative reforms, influence on the judiciary, and insecurity and uncertainty in business and investment.\(^{38}\) The local office of TI in Bangladesh further noted in April 2008, that the actions taken by the Caretaker Government had reduced large scale corruption. However, smaller scale graft and bribery still persisted. Under the democratically elected government, the anti corruption
commission has lost more of its authority. The ACC head resigned in April 2009, and a new head was appointed a month later, but, the status of the head of the ACC was downgraded. During the time of the Caretaker Government the status was that of a minister which in May 2009 was downgraded to that of a Supreme Court judge of the appellate division.\textsuperscript{39}

Pakistan too has a history of weak rule of law and endemic corruption. The judiciary comprises of civil and criminal courts and a special Sharia (Islamic law) court for specific offenses. Lower courts are tainted by persistent corruption, intimidation by influential individuals, local official and Islamic extremists; and severe backlogs that result in long pretrial detentions. Under the military government of Musharraf, the executive branch assumed control of the Supreme Court. However, Supreme Court officials exhibited a degree of independence and activism that eventually triggered Musharraf’s fall.

The court, particularly Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, showed exceptional activism, which led Musharraf to remove Chaudhry in March 2007. In the face of large-scale protests by the lawyers, Musharraf was forced to reinstate Justice Chaudhry a few months later. When the Supreme Court attempted to strike down Musharraf’s November 2007 emergency declaration and suspension of the constitution, he dismissed a majority of superior court justices (13 Supreme Court and 30 provincial court justices) and ordered the arrest and detention of Chaudhry. Whoever opposed the executive action including other judges, lawyers, and legal activists were also arrested. Most detainees were released in early 2008, but Chaudhry remained under house arrest
until late March. In June, under the new government, the Supreme Court was expanded from 16 to 29 judges; by year’s end, 5 of the 13 dismissed Supreme Court judges were reinstated, 3 retired, and 5 remained off the bench, including Chaudhry. 

Box 1 provides a brief overview of the current status of the other parts of the judicial system.

Box 1: The National Accountability Bureau, The Sharia Court and the Frontier Crimes Regulation

Other parts of the judicial system, such as the antiterrorism courts, operate with limited due process rights. A 1999 ordinance vested broad powers of arrest, investigation, and prosecution in a National Accountability Bureau and established special courts to try corruption cases. The Sharia court enforces the 1979 Hudood Ordinances, which criminalize nonmarital rape, extramarital sex, and several alcohol, gambling, and property offenses. They also provide for Koranic punishments, including death by stoning for adultery, as well as jail terms and fines. In part because of strict evidentiary standards, authorities have never carried out the Koranic punishments. Pressure to amend or do away with the ordinances, which are highly discriminatory toward women, has grown in recent years, and the Musharraf government made limited progress toward reversing some of the worst provisions.

The FATA are governed under a separate legal system, the Frontier Crimes Regulation, which allows collective punishment for individual crimes and preventative detention of up to three years and authorizes tribal leaders to administer justice according to Sharia and tribal custom. Feudal landlords and tribal elders throughout Pakistan adjudicate some disputes and impose punishments—including the death penalty or the forced exchange of brides between tribes—in unsanctioned parallel courts called jirgas. In 2004, responding to growing concern over the potential for abuse in this practice, the Sindh High Court banned all trials conducted under the jirga system in the province. However, such proceedings continue to take place. Tensions between national laws and the efforts of provincial assemblies to pass restrictive Islamist legislation remain a problem. Militants in several tribal areas and NWFP’s Swat district have reportedly set up their own parallel courts, dispensing harsh penalties with little regard for due process.
Corruption is endemic at almost all levels of politics and government. During Musharraf’s regime, corruption charges were routinely used to penalize opposition politicians or coerce them to join the pro-government PML-Q party. However, a National Reconciliation Ordinance, passed just ahead of the October 2007 presidential election, provided for an automatic withdrawal of all corruption cases filed against public officials prior to 1999. Zardari, known popularly as “Mr. Ten Percent”, a reputation earned due to his alleged skimming of public contracts while his wife was in power, spent eight years in jail on corruption charges. Surprisingly none of the cases ever held up in court. In March 2008, the Pakistan government dropped last outstanding charge against, allowing him more active participation in politics; in August Swiss charges against him were dropped. Pakistan not surprisingly was ranked 134 out of 180 countries surveyed in Transparency International’s 2008 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Police are unreliable and extremely corrupt in Pakistan. The Freedom House Country Report 2009 on Pakistan states:

Police routinely engage in crime, excessive force, torture, and arbitrary detention; extort money from prisoners and their families; accept bribes to file or withdraw charges; rape female detainees; and commit extrajudicial killings.

Overcrowding in prisons is a terrible problem, worsening already poor prison conditions. Given huge case backlogs, the majority of prisoners await trial. Citizens critical of the Government are at risk of arbitrary arrest, torture, “disappearance,” or denial of basic due process rights. While the government has mandated the establishment of an official human rights commission to investigate cases and redress
grievances, progress on creating such a commission has been slow. A number of cases are investigated and some prosecutions do happen, but impunity remains the norm.\textsuperscript{46} In addition, private jails are operated by feudal landlords, tribal groups, and some militant groups where detainees are frequently maltreated.

Although cases of politically motivated detention and disappearance declined in 2008, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)—an NGO—estimated that by November at least 1,100 people continued to be illegally detained by state agencies.\textsuperscript{47} The Freedom House Country Report on Pakistan, 2009 suggests that while some are suspected of links to radical Islamist groups, the detainees have also included Baluchi and Sindhi nationalists, government critics, and some journalists, researchers, and social workers.\textsuperscript{48} Most alarming is that intelligence services function mostly outside the purview of the judicial system. The Supreme Court had taken a more active interest in the issue beginning in 2006, directing the government to either release or lawfully detain prisoners who were being held incommunicado, not much progress has happened on that front.

**Participation:** Diamond and Morlino defines participation in a good democracy beyond that of the right of political participation. The authors note that a good democracy must ensure that all citizens are in fact able to make use of these formal rights by allowing them to vote, organize, assemble, protest, lobby for their interests, and otherwise influence decision making process.\textsuperscript{49} It is only when citizens participate in the political process not only by voting, but by joining political parties and civil society organizations, participating in dialogues on public-policy issues,
communicating with and demanding accountability from elected representatives, monitoring the conduct of public office-holders and engaging in public issues at the local community level, that there is true participation. This requires above all the widespread diffusion of basic education and literacy, as well as knowledge of how the political system works – its procedures, rules, issues, parties and leaders.

In Bangladesh, there is considerable political awareness however given that majority of the population are uneducated, it is relatively easy for politicians to avoid accountability towards its electorate. Civil-society watch dog organizations are almost non-existent, and the limited number that exist are ineffective; there is no meaningful debate on public policy – majority of the discussion in the media is about blaming the previous government and throwing stones at others. The media itself is weak willed, has no independent voice and exhibits very limited journalistic or investigative skills.

The Freedom House Country Report of 2009 on Bangladesh states that endemic corruption and criminality, weak rule of law, limited bureaucratic transparency, and political polarization have traditionally undermined government accountability. The legislative process has been frequently rendered ineffective through boycotts by both major parties while in opposition. Parliament stopped functioning effectively for much of its last term. The two parties continue to retain links to criminal networks that facilitate their efforts to consolidate power, whether through elections or other means.

Bangladesh today is an electoral democracy having regained its status through the December 2008 elections. The elections which were the primary objective of the Caretaker Government were judged to be free and fair by European Union observers.
and other groups. The balloting was acclaimed for a high degree of transparency and professionalism, and very limited levels of fraud and violence.

The main rationale for the military-backed CG’s postponement of the 2007 elections to 2008 was the urgent need for the revamping of electoral procedures. A series of reforms were announced in July 2008 that required the registration of political parties; mandated that parties disband their student, labor, and overseas units; and obliged parties to reserve a third of all positions for women. The reforms also reduced the number of seats a parliamentary candidate could simultaneously contest from five to three, tripled campaign spending limits to 1.5 million taka ($22,000) per candidate, and gave voters in each constituency the option of rejecting all candidates on the ballot. The expectation was that the new regulations would limit the widespread bribery, rigging, and violence that had marked past elections. Another milestone objective that the CG achieved was the creation of a new voter registry completed in July 2008 which was considerably smaller than its predecessor, and contained around 12 million invalid names.

Prior to the national elections municipal level elections were held in August 2008. Peaceful and orderly elections in four cities and nine municipalities were held under caretaker governorship. However, emergency laws were left in place, and candidates could only run as independents, with a limited amount of time for public campaigning. Despite the limitations of time and lack of party affiliations, the municipal polls were considered fair by domestic and international observers, and the CG was judged not to have influenced the results.
Despite all these actions, expectations that the voters would reject corrupt and tainted politicians did not materialize; at least two candidates who were facing corruption charges won landslide victories from prison. Throughout the CG period, the two largest parties, the AL and BNP continued to shape the political process despite their arrest and corruption charges. In the December elections the Awami League won a landslide victory against the past party in government the BNP, despite corruption charges against its leader and ministers.

Their continuing popularity is a testimony to the lack of alternatives available to the people in terms of viable leaders. The Caretaker Government had the support of the civil society, working professionals and by far and large the general population, but by design there was no organized vehicle such as a political party to voice the peoples’ support for the CG. They had the support of the silent majority. I believe that had members of the CG run for elected office, they would have been a viable alternative to the candidates of the two political parties, but this in turn would have undermined the whole basis and mandate of the caretaker government and would have laid the reforms mandated by the CG open to further criticism and immediate revocation.

This is the crux of the dilemma, political history in Bangladesh shows that only a leader with no vested interest or the temptation for personal gain can make change happen. But for a person to aspire to that position through elections in the current political environment of quid-pro-quo, it is almost impossible without owing benefactors favors or having been part of something less than strictly legal. Actions that are necessary to reach the top through a popular mandate, then perpetuates more
corruption and illegal action, that enables the incumbent to remain at the top. The recent caretaker government experience in Bangladesh shows that technocrats can run a country well if not better than politicians, but there is no popular mandate for them to remain in power. There is also a more than likely chance that if a non-elected technocrat government ran the country for a longer period of time, some of the members over time could also be unwittingly implicated in illegal practices, through activities of family members or close associates.

Political participation in Pakistan is weak – the institutions are influenced by political parties, social and religious norms discourage women from fully exercising their political right while rules that prohibits political parties from operating in the FATA excludes large ethnic communities from the decision making process.

The Freedom House Country Report 2009 does not consider Pakistan as an electoral democracy, even though the country took significant steps toward that status in 2008. Parliamentary elections in February resulted in an opposition coalition to assume power. A possible impeachment process induced military ruler Pervez Musharraf to resign his position as civilian president in August. Musharraf had previously stepped down from the position of army chief in November 2007 so that he could remain as civilian President. Asif Ali Zardari, the PPP leader was elected to replace him as president in September. A 2002 amendment gave the president the authority to dismiss the prime minister and the national and provincial legislatures.

The 2008 elections, although an improvement from the 2002 elections were not totally free and fair. All through 2007 and early 2008, the Musharraf government
persisted in hindering opposition party activity through mass arrests and preventative detention. Pro government parties and candidates were supported through state run resources and media while opposition parties were sidelined. The elections itself was fraught with corrupt practices: inaccuracies in the voter list noted in 2002 were not corrected; the voting results were generally not displayed at each polling station, allowing for rigging in some areas as the overall constituency results were tallied; the European Union observer mission noted suspicious results in a number of constituencies.54

Pre-election harassment persisted for opposition party workers, particularly the PPP: they faced criminal charges in addition to police intimidation on election day itself. More than 100 people were killed in attacks on political gatherings or in clashes between party activists during the campaign period.

Participation in itself is restrictive. While women’s political participation is constitutionally ensured by the provision of reserved seats in the national and provincial legislatures and in local councils, however, in some parts of the country, women have difficulty voting and running for office due to objections from social and religious conservatives. Separately, a requirement that all candidates hold either a bachelor's degree or madrassa qualification prevents roughly 95 percent of the population from running for office.

Again the exclusions apply to The FATA who are subject to special rules under which the president and unelected civil servants are responsible for local governance. Elected councils were established in 2007 with the objective of increasing local
representation, have failed to change the established decision-making structures. Political parties cannot legally operate in the FATA, but leading up to the 2008 elections some religious parties openly disregarded this rule and vigorously campaigned there.

According to the Freedom House Country Report 2009 on Pakistan, the government operates with limited transparency and accountability, although this has improved somewhat with the resumption of civilian rule. The report states that “Following the 1999 coup, “army monitoring teams” were established to oversee the functioning of many civilian administrative departments. The army has a stake in continuing to influence both commercial and political decision-making processes, in addition to its traditional dominance of foreign policy and security issues. Serving and retired officers have received top public-sector jobs in ministries, state-run corporations, and universities, and they are given a range of other privileges. Nevertheless, the army withdrew several thousand active-duty officers from civilian jobs in 2008. The newly elected Parliament also began functioning more effectively than its predecessor, holding important policy debates on terrorism and overturning key Musharraf decisions.”

On a more positive note, civil society groups (such as the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) and private media continue to be strong and played a key watchdog role. They publicized incidents of violence and effectively monitored the conduct of the balloting alongside foreign observers, defying government threats. What is most promising is that despite the restrictions and irregularities, an opposition coalition
assumed power after a competitive contest, and the overall result one hopes reflected the will of the people.\textsuperscript{56}

\textit{Competition:} Multiparty competitive elections held regularly in a free and fair manner are at the heart of any democracy. The authors note that a tradeoff exists within the overall goal of competition: Electoral systems based on proportional representation score well on one element of competitiveness – ease of access to the electoral arena and a parliament on the part of multiple political parties – but at the expense of another element of competitiveness – the ease of alteration of power (or the efficiency of the electoral process).\textsuperscript{57} The authors assert that the latter is true because the presence of multiple parties with relatively defined shares of the vote tends to produce a succession of coalition governments that gain considerable continuity in party composition over time.\textsuperscript{58} While one cannot determine which electoral system produces a higher quality democracy, experts such as Lijphart argues that proportional representation does a better job of fulfilling other dimensions of democratic quality such as equal representation of women and minorities.\textsuperscript{59}

For both Pakistan and Bangladesh, while multiple parties exist and elections are competitive, issues of exclusion and access exist in both countries. In Bangladesh, historically leaders have emerged, not because of a democratic political process but more through military coups. In the early years, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was elected but in the euphoric aftermath of the liberation war, there was no real challenge to his leadership and when the challenge arose, Mujib became authoritarian in a bid to hold on to power. Both Zia and Ershad gained power by using their positions as army chief
and orchestrating a handover or a coup. The current leaders draw their popularity from their respective families and the loyal following that their assassinated fathers or husbands enjoyed. In the forty years since liberation, no new parties have emerged in the political scene and Bangladeshis have no real viable option but to alternately elect one of the two parties, when the other fails. Ershad’s party is unlikely ever to gain a majority, given that his popularity fades in comparison to that of the widowed wife of a war hero (Begum Khaleda Zia) and the daughter of the Father of the Nation (Sheikh Hasina). In addition, Ershad’s time in jail resulted in the disintegration of his party and with no state or other resources to support his campaign, his value to the political system currently remains as a potential partner to build a coalition with. The absence of viable choice in leadership goes back to the question of equality and access which will be discussed later in this section.

Pakistan has multiple parties as well, but again certain policies of exclusion do not allow full representation in government, nor does it encourage fair competition. As discussed above, the last election was not free or fairly conducted. The requirement for minimum education standards excludes a majority of the population as potential leaders, local or national. In addition, the FATA area is totally excluded and their voices are not heard in Islamabad which again feeds fuel to the insurgency and Islamic extremist activities in that region. In Pakistan too access to politics is skewed towards the people who are wealthy and have access to resources.

**Accountability – Vertical and Horizontal:** Vertical accountability is that which citizens as electors can demand from their officials in the course of campaigns and
elections, and which political and civil society actors can exercise at moments of political controversy. The dynamics of vertical accountability extend beyond elections and the interplay between voters and their elected representatives, encompassing also the efforts of civic associations, NGOs, social movements, think tanks, and the mass media to hold government accountable. Horizontal accountability as defined by Diamond and Morlino is when office-holders are answerable to other institutional actors who are more or less political equals and who have the expertise and legal authority to control and sanction their behavior. These actors are independent government agencies whose role is to monitor, investigate and enforce activities such as: the opposition in parliament, the court system, anti-corruption agencies, the central bank, an independent electoral commission and others.

In both Pakistan and Bangladesh, the notion of true accountability to its electorate is non-existent. In Bangladesh, it stems from the bureaucratic-authoritarian political culture that defined the political system in East Pakistan and continued in the form of a highly personalized style of governance by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the time of independence. While Sheikh Mujib was charismatic populist leader, he was inept as an administrator of state and did very little to foster institutional capacity to perpetuate the principles and application of a democratic, egalitarian and secular polity. Post independence, there is a limited culture of accountability in the bureaucracy. In addition, the parliament when functional is blatantly partisan and there is no effort on the part of the parliament to monitor the performance of the
bureaucracy. The bureaucracy, particularly in Bangladesh, is subject to political meddling and politicians routinely influence decisions on hiring, transfers, promotions as well as allocation and transfer of state funds between public projects.

One positive development in the electorate accountability is the preservation of an independent election commission. A constitutional reform in 1996 instituted the provision of a “caretaker government” whose responsibility in conjunction with the Election Commission is to ensure that elections are held in a free and fair manner. This innovation was required as the political parties in opposition did not have faith in the sitting government to ensure a neutral election. Under the rules of the system, the most recently retired chief justice is the head of the caretaker government.

Despite this model, political parties have questioned the neutrality of the caretaker government, especially when they fare poorly at the polls. The 2007 elections were delayed by a year, mainly because the opposition did not agree to the composition of the caretaker government or the head and a new caretaker government backed by the military and headed by a non-partisan technocrat took over the reins. The most recent caretaker government attempted to establish institutions of oversight, instill accountability mostly horizontally and cleanse the system off corruption in a relatively short span of time. The elections were held within the stipulated two years which were widely considered one of the most free and fair elections ever to be held in Bangladesh. The transition went smoothly and power was handed over to the new democratically government. The institutional changes implemented by the caretaker government would have instilled a higher degree of accountability, had the new
government shared the same vision. Sadly, the new government in power is reversing a number of initiatives which end up weakening accountability such as reducing the status of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), withdrawing criminal and civil cases against party leaders and affiliates, and influencing the activities of the bureaucracy.

According to Sumit Ganguly, a renowned political scientist, it is very difficult to obtain systematic and statistical evidence on vertical accountability in Bangladesh. While the Bangladeshi press is mostly free, it does not have the capacity to provide effective accountability. The level of professionalism is very low in Bangladeshi journalism. This is a legacy from its colonial past when press in both wings of independent Pakistan faced severe restrictions. A free press eventually emerged in Bangladesh, post independence. But freedom of press does not automatically translate into professionalism or competence. As Sumit Ganguly noted, “The press in Bangladesh – lacking adequate training, bereft of independent professional organizations that engage in self-policing, and subject to the demands of powerful owners – cannot be deemed autonomous. Instead, it is so bias-ridden, and so frequently publishes articles based upon rumor and innuendo, that it cannot serve as a useful and reliable watchdog role.” The lack of a competent and professional press coupled with limited institutional independence has resulted in very little accountability of elected politicians and government officials towards the electorate.

In Pakistan too accountability is poor especially in terms of horizontal accountability. Again the long tradition of the Establishment’s hold over Pakistan’s
politics has resulted in elected leaders exhibiting characteristics of feudalism. The authoritarianism exercised by successive army rulers have been perpetuated by successive democratically elected leaders. The bureaucracy’s supremacy and influence in the executive branch too has eroded any semblance of horizontal accountability. The army believes that as the only organized force, they are the custodians of a united Pakistan, rather than a democratic Pakistan. Hence, all democratically elected leaders are accountable to the army and the establishment first and secondly to the electorate.

In terms of the electorate itself, given the different ethnic tribes and culture of feudalism outside of urban centers, the notion of accountability of elected politicians towards the people is not strongly embedded. As discussed in a prior section, the institutions of government including the election commission and the national bureau of corruption are routinely manipulated by the party in power.

In terms of vertical accountability, the situation is slightly better when compared to Bangladesh. Media in Pakistan while facing restrictions, is professional and in many instances have proven to be fearless. Watchdog organizations have played a crucial role in the last elections in recording and transmitting electoral fraud. NGO’s have been active in protecting the rights of women and bringing to court cases of abuse and rape.

Freedom: The notion of freedom encompasses three types of rights: civil, political, social or socio-economic. Both Bangladesh and Pakistan rate as partly free in the Freedom House Index published in 2009. The index is based on a survey comprising of questions that address the status of civil liberties and political rights.
The survey questions are divided into several sub-categories which range from electoral process to rule of law and individual rights. Not surprisingly, the worst scores for both countries are functioning of the government and rule of law. Pakistan actually scored lower than Bangladesh on the issue of civil liberties, with rule of law scoring a mere two points in an ascending scale of 0 to 40. While the notion of freedom can be relative based on culture and history, both countries are unable to guarantee minimum civil rights.

In Bangladesh and Pakistan, the constitution guarantees a range of civil and political rights but the state cannot ensure that the rights can be exercised. In brief, an unresponsive bureaucracy, a weak court system, an unprofessional police force results in the abrogation of peoples civil and political rights. The constitution forbids torture and cruel and inhumane forms of punishment, while torture is routinely used by the police force. In Pakistan, by dint of being an Islamic nation, minorities do not have the same social status or access. Given the presence of so many ethnic tribes, only Urdu is considered the official language, other languages are not considered eligible for use. Women in Pakistan are routinely discriminated against and their rights are trampled on. Political rights as discussed previously are narrowly defined with narrow choices and very little room to engage elected officials and demand results.

In Bangladesh, there is acceptance of other religions and the country functions as a secular state – the government recognizes and has official holidays for all major religions. Despite social accord between the majority and the minorities, a perception exists of discrimination in political and governmental appointments based on religion.
Recognizing this, the past caretaker government had taken the step of appointing non-muslims in important government positions. The action, however nominal, signaled the executive branch’s interest to slowly change the perception. One only hopes that the newly elected government continues with supporting and encouraging minorities.

On the matter of minorities, the Buddhist Chakmas and other hill tribes in Bangladesh have faced discrimination – their linguistic rights have been denied and having no other options, they are forced to assimilate. Women on the other hand have gained a measure of civil liberties - they are much more a part of the workforce than in Pakistan. This integration into the workforce has resulted in women being able to exercise their civil and social rights much more than before. Bangladesh’s progress in universal female education through government schools and NGOs has empowered women to be part of the industrial workforce.

**Equality:** As Diamond and Morlino note, a good democracy ensures that every citizen and group has the same rights and legal protections, and also meaningful and reasonably prompt access to justice and power. This also entails the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, political orientation, or other extraneous conditions. The word democracy itself symbolizes the formal political equality of all citizens. Here then lies the fundamental dilemma of democracy: As a political system, democracy does not require the pre-existence of certain social or economic policies, on the contrary, the process is about the effort to shape those very policies and distributing the benefits across society and even generations. To be part of the effort to shape these policies, citizens must have political equality and for political
equality a level of equality in wealth, income and status is very much required. As Diamond and Morlino note, “The more extreme are social and economic inequalities, the more disproportionate will be the power of those who control vast concentrations of wealth and hence their ability to make leaders respond to their wishes and interests.” The authors continue to state that the above particularly holds true for rural sectors divided into a small class of wealthy landowners and a large number of landless and dependent peasants. This results in “semifeudalistic” relations and grievances accumulate, breeding radical politics and in response generates various forms of repression.

In Pakistan, where feudalist ways still permeates the rural and remote regions, the above holds true. Political leaders drawn from these areas are generally feudal lords who the locals elect out of tradition or habit – thus undermining the whole notion of political equality or even accountability. While as we saw in the previous chapters that both Ayub and Bhutto tried to do away with feudal ways but did not succeed in their efforts, one of the reasons being that the Establishment also draws its roots from feudal landlord families.

For both Pakistan and Bangladesh human equality faces insurmountable challenges in the medium term. Both are extremely poor countries (GDP per capita is $), in both countries wealth is concentrated in the hands of a very small percentage of the very rich and literacy rates are low. As opposed to Pakistan, where wealth is concentrated among landowners and old business elites, in Bangladesh, the wealth is in the hands of the urban elite who are generally business people or are well connected
to the ruling political party. While in Bangladesh, the provision of microcredit through the Grameen Bank, a recipient of the Noble Peace Prize in 2006 and NGOs such as BRAC and ASA have empowered rural people, especially women, the inequality in income and wealth continues to be a challenge that requires urgent resolution.

In Pakistan, the provision of microcredit to women is considered a threat by the local politicians and in the past local politicians has taken unprecedented steps to curb the success of the microfinance industry in rural areas. For instance, in 2008 a local politician absolved all microfinance borrowers from paying their debt to a certain institution that was serving the region, especially women, which resulted in huge losses for the institution, as the word spread from village to village and more and more borrowers showed up with pieces of paper signed by their MPs and refusing to repay their loans.

In terms of literacy, Bangladesh is progressing well on universal female literacy which in time should result in the expansion of the middle class. A commensurate closing in the income gap sufficient for large numbers of citizens to participate in the political process as political equals, can be a policy objective of the current government, assuming it has the willingness to do so.

**Responsiveness:** This dimension is a measure of how well government respond to the expectations, interests, needs and demands of citizens and is closely aligned with vertical accountability and hence, participation and competition. In both Bangladesh and Pakistan as discussed in the previous section, there is limited institutional capacity for the state to respond to citizens needs or grievances. What is interesting to note is
that both countries however are sensitive to donor needs and requests. Pakistan is
dependent on the US for military and other aid, $11 billion since 2001 and hence the
US and UK have certain leverage on the politics of the country. Musharraf’s removal
was also supported by the donor committee and it was the US State Department that
had encouraged Musharraf to seek a coalition with its former rival Benazir Bhutto a
number of years ago. The war with Islamic insurgents in its own territory is also a sign
of Pakistan’s failure to respond to the basic needs of the frontier regions.

Bangladesh too is dependent on foreign aid but for reasons of development and
poverty alleviation. It has responded well to donors and World Bank’s
recommendations on public programs. As a result, programs that addressed population
increase, child vaccinations and female literacy to name a few have succeeded. In
terms of responding to the people, the channels of vertical accountability require to be
developed further to ensure responsiveness from the government.

In summary, the quality of democracy in both Pakistan and Bangladesh is
decidedly poor and very much on the thin side. Pakistan is a pseudo-democracy, the
power remains clearly in the hands of the military – despite the handover over power
to a civilian government eighteen months ago. The war that is raging on Pakistani soil
between Islamic insurgents and the Pakistani and US army – in other words a civil war
– puts the control of the country firmly in the hands of the Pakistan armed forces. The
future of Pakistan and the fate of its politicians depend on the outcome of the war.
True accountability for the politicians in the Pakistani system of governance has
always been towards the army. The army has a seat in the National Security Council
and heavily influences foreign policy goals, which is primarily shaped by the hostile relationship it has with India. All the energy and focus of Pakistan’s governing body is devoted not to serving its people but to maintaining a semblance of parity with India and winning the war in Kashmir. This explains the lack of responsiveness to citizens needs and the dearth of public funding for education, infrastructure, and employment generation while the excessive focus on strengthening the armed forces and building nuclear capacity. This to a certain extent explains the policy of enlisting the ‘Islamic insurgents’ to help infiltrate and fight the war in Kashmir. Pakistan’s past association with Islamic insurgents and terrorists had been one of comradeship, partners in a common war against an anti-Muslim state such as India. The border between Pakistan and Afghanistan in the FATA is fluid and people on both sides of the arbitrary border are of the same tribe and share a common ethnic background. The Pakistan army has to play a very tight balancing act in its war against terror – aiding US efforts to destroy Islamic insurgents in Afghanistan has spillover effects, as many Pakistanis in the FATA area are hurt, maimed or killed. There are obvious sympathizers to the Afghan cause in the FATA region, since to the marginalized ethnic groups such as the Pashtuns, the US is no more an ally than India is or Russia was. Caught between international pressures and the responsibility of protecting its own people, Pakistan has very little room to exhibit democratic qualities of accountability, equality, freedom or responsiveness.
Economic Analysis

In terms of economic growth from 1990 to 2007, a little over fifteen years, there has been no clear pattern that suggests that the economy grew better under a military rule as opposed to civilian rule. Annex 1 charts the annual percentage of GDP growth for both Pakistan and Bangladesh, since inception and apart from double digit growth during Ayub and Yahya’s period, in the past fifteen years or so, economic growth has increased and decreased for periods both under military rule and democratic/civilian rule. However, if we consider a timeline from the very beginning i.e., 1960s, It is interesting to note that Pakistan experienced its highest percentage growth at 11% in 1970, during Yahya’s year in office and before that during Ayub’s time in 1965 at 10%. The average GDP growth rate was approximately 7% during Ayub’s regime. The economy during Zia ul Huq’s time also posted a double digit growth of 10% in 1980, and the average growth rate during his regime was also high at approximately 7%. The economic growth during Ayub’s time is well documented and has been attributed to the five year economic plans that Ayub’s government had crafted and implemented with the help of economists, trained by elite Western institutions such as Harvard. While in terms of results, the plans were considered highly successful, the benefits were skewed to a limited group of beneficiaries and inequalities between income groups and classes widened. The expected wealth accumulation and the trickle down effect did not materialize, as theorized. Yahya, on the other hand, benefitted from the economic plan that was put in place by his predecessor. However, the growth posted
during Zia’s time has been attributed more on the military aid that Pakistan provided during the Afghan war with Russia and beyond.

Interestingly, for Pakistan if one compares the average annual growth rate for the period under military rule vs. civilian rule, the growth has been greater at almost 6.2 percent during military rule, while it was only 4.5 percent during civilian rule. Conversely, a year on year analysis of the growth rate shows that under both types of governments, the economy has posted low growth percentages (one or zero percent), as well as high growth percentages (most governments with the exclusion of Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto and Yahya) have posted eight percent growth rates. The higher average for the period under military rule, indicates that the economy was performing better, because of Ayub’s five year plans, the massive amounts of military aid both during Zia and Musharraf’s time and relative political stability. The relative political stability can be explained in the context of an authoritarian regime, where there is no room for the leadership to change periodically (unless of course there is a coup) which although breeds authoritarian clientelism, it leads to a relative stable relationship between the government, the business people and the bureaucrats, that results in a conducive environment for economic growth. The growth would be certainly skewed towards a certain income class, without reducing inequality or addressing any of the important issues of economic and political exclusion.

The same analysis does not hold true for Bangladesh. The country, in average terms fared better under the civil/government era, rather than in the period under military rule. One of the reasons, could be that Bangladesh, even during military rule,
never really acquired political stability. During Ershad, both opposition parties were agitating against an authoritarian regime, both Zia and Mujib were assassinated. Even during the caretaker governments’ time, the two political leaders and their members, undaunted by criminal charges, (mostly true but never proven) agitated against the two year rule. Bangladeshis have very low tolerance for authoritarianism, compared to its erstwhile compatriots, the Pakistanis.

The Sheikh Mujib era was marked by dramatic upswings and downswings in economic growth. It started off with a deep recession marking a negative growth of minus fourteen percent in 1972 only to bounce back to a double digit growth of 10 percent in 1974, against swinging to a negative 4 percent in 1975, the year that he was assassinated. To a certain extent, the growth spurt is attributed to economic aid flowing into the country following the independence war, and the low base against which the growth is calculated.

In Bangladesh, the average growth rates are higher at 5 percent under the civil/democratic period rather than in the period under military or authoritarian rule, which was 3 percent. One of the key causes of poor GDP growth rate, is the experiments in socialism that Mujib undertook in his first few years in office. After Mujib, both Zia and Ershad had started economic liberalization by making it easier for foreign investors to invest in Bangladesh, but it was not until late 1980s and early 1990s, when the ready-made garments industry took off, that Bangladesh’s GDP grew to a respectable 5 or 6 percent. To a certain extent, the democratically elected government of Khaleda Zia and successive governments should be credited for
providing the right taxation and other fiscal incentives for this particular industry to flourish as well as implementing an economic liberalization policy. This conscious policy decision on the part of each successive government has been reflected in the annual growth rates. Contrary to Pakistan, in Bangladesh, growth has been greater, between five and six percent after 1990, than the period preceding it, even posting seven percent in 2006, which was the latter end of Khaleda’s regime. Even during the military backed caretaker government’s regime, the economy posted a respectable six percent growth, despite escalating food and fuel prices and a very devastating cyclone in November of that year.

In both Pakistan and more so in Bangladesh, it can be inferred that economic progress is impacted given the type of governance, however, consistent economic policies and political stability, count more towards economic growth.
CHAPTER 7
RECOMMENDATIONS

The quality of democracy is thin in both countries. Both have colonial pasts, a corrupt present and a future which rests on electorates and political leaders that have not learnt from the lessons of the past. Pakistan, in an effort to balance the ever-increasing might of India and under pressure from the US has embroiled itself in a war against “terror.” The inherent problem with this war is that part of its own military, and not to mention the population, has historically supported these “terrorists” for various reasons. Ethnically, there is little difference between the populations and areas being bombed by US drones on the Afghan side, and the FATA region on the Pakistani side—casualties have mounted on both sides of the border. Despite the democratically elected (but possibly corrupt) government in office, the real power lies in the hands of the army; now even more so given the global strategic importance of the Pakistani armed forces, as allies to the US and other Western powers, in the war against Islamic militants. While in the near term there is no option for the military to retreat politically, this is one goal to which any elected leadership of Pakistan should aspire. While Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto tried to do exactly that in the early 1970s, he could not quite pull it off, for a number of reasons mentioned in the previous sections. The problem of moving towards a liberal democracy in Pakistan is identifiable and can be labeled as the supremacy of military rule in politics and an unhealthy obsession with India on the part of the leadership. While the problems are identifiable, the solutions are certainly not easy.
Bangladesh, on the other hand, has no real reason not to aspire to liberal democracy. As mentioned before, the pre-conditions exist, but what does not is true and visionary leadership. The leaders in the country lack vision, true patriotism, and above all, honesty. Both the democratically elected leaders have condoned corrupt practices within their immediate family, have been short-term in their policies and have not demonstrated any true intent to move the country forward. Rather, while in power both have devoted much of their resources and energies in amassing fortunes in foreign accounts, and consolidating their hold on the institutions of power, to facilitate re-election. The government is a large part of the social and economic life of the country; hence for any political and institutional change to be sustained, the government has to lead the effort, or in the very least, support the efforts. A bottom-up approach can make a difference, but will not be sustainable and at the worst can be subject to persecution.

Given the above, we circle back to the original question of whether democracy is the most appropriate form of governance for these two countries. While “democracy” in the current form, whether “pseudo-democracy” or “electoral democracy,” has not yielded the best results for the countries, neither has authoritarianism been the solution right up to the 1980s and even more recently under Musharraf for Pakistan. “Liberal democracy” may actually be a system of governance that could yield better results for its electorate.

Authoritarianism has worked in Pakistan, but only in the short term and not much in Bangladesh. Authoritarian rule depends on the character and the vision of one
leader. Human nature is such that sole authority over a period of time will corrupt. Hence, it is not reasonable to put the future of an entire nation in the hands of one individual. While there have been a few successful examples of authoritarian rule, such as in Singapore, notwithstanding some criticism and where the population is small compared to those of Pakistan and Bangladesh; there have been many more instances of authoritarian rule that has not worked, to the detriment of the populations. One of the greatest shortcomings of authoritarian rule is the lack of a civil mechanism to change the ruler. Typically an authoritarian ruler is forced out of office, most likely killed or exiled, by a challenger to his authority, often to be replaced by a leader who perpetuates the same governance approach.

Hence, there is no doubt that we need a system of collective checks and balances to diffuse power and distribute authority. The only system of collective checks and balances that has been close to successful has been liberal democracy. We need to strengthen the conditions that lead to liberal democracy. Honest leadership, untainted by corruption, is the most important element for both Bangladesh and Pakistan to move forward and cannot be stressed strongly enough. If the current leaderships do not exhibit these qualities, institutions such as civil society organizations, media and the courts need to be strengthened, and people need to be made aware of their rights, so that at a minimum, people can demand results and hold their leaders accountable for their actions.

The recent military governments in both Pakistan and Bangladesh have tried to create a political environment, in which new political leaders and parties can emerge,
but in both instances, the efforts failed and no new political leadership emerged. Unlike Latin American countries such as Peru and Brazil, and in India in South Asia, the condition that supported and sustained democracy, but is most lacking in both Pakistan and Bangladesh, is access to the political system and a mechanism to allow citizens to participate in the political process. As Diamond points out, one of the leading factors for invigorating democracy in Latin American countries, as well as in India, has been “the gradual decentralization of government power, which, as in India, has created more elected governments at the municipal, state and regional level”.\(^1\) With more local-level representation, Diamond asserts that the quality of democracy in those countries improved as many indigenous self-governing practices were adopted that put greater value on consensus-seeking, community participation and leadership rotation.\(^2\) While both Pakistan and Bangladesh have experimented with decentralizing power to the local level, it has not been successful for reasons that have been detailed in earlier sections.

Another factor that makes it difficult for new political parties to emerge in both countries, and which holds truer for Bangladesh, is the highly personalized nature of politics that revolve around historical legacies and the leaders who represent them.\(^3\) Hence, in Bangladesh it is unrealistic to expect acceptance for substitutes for the two parties that are closely intertwined with the birth of the nation. This would require a gradual social acceptance of democracy as a form of governance, and a belief in the system, which can only be brought about when the majority benefits from the policies implemented by its elected government. The governments have yet to deliver
consistently, while loyalties to the political party leaders run deeply among the electorate, despite obvious failures on both their parts.

The Caretaker Government in early 2007 had banned all political parties, but allowed Dr. Mohamamd Yunus, a Nobel Laureate, to float his newly formed party, Nagorik Shakti (Citizens Power), as an alternative to the corrupt parties of the past. However, there was a lack of grass-roots support for the party, and the effort never gained momentum and was eventually abandoned. The Caretaker Government, then following Musharraf’s footsteps, tried to exile the two political leaders in June 2007, which also failed. Ultimately, as in Pakistan, and in Bangladesh too, the traditional political party leaders had to be included in the political process.

Emergence of new leadership in both these countries would require gradual decentralization of authority to the local level, allowing participation of new political actors who represent local interests and needs - a condition which is contingent upon the intention of the elected leadership to sustain a true liberal democracy, at the expense of their future authority and influence. The following section presents a set of policy recommendations, which is a mix of the usual suggestions, as well as one or two ideas that could be tested.

**Strengthen local government, decentralize power:** The imperative to strengthen local government, from the standpoint of moving towards a more liberal democracy, is clear. What is also clear is the reason behind the reluctance of the political parties to do so. While both Pakistan and Bangladesh have tried to implement
a system of local government, beginning from Ayubs’ Basic Democracies, it has not worked for various reasons.

In Pakistan, the most recent attempt was by Musharraf, through the Local Government Ordinance, 2000. It was a three-tiered system, widely known as the Nazim system, where the Nazim or the Mayor of a district, was the head of the local government structure and received funds directly from the central government. While in theory, it could have worked; in practice it did not really link the local population to the federal government. Instead, it operated, as Stephen Cohen reflects, in a political vacuum, with no link to provincial and national legislators and Pakistan’s own services. Since the federal government provided block grants directly to the Nazims with little or no accountability, the system intentionally or unintentionally, shaved the power of the bureaucracy, while creating a new band of people loyal to Musharraf and the army. The system was under the auspices of the National Reconstruction Bureau, initially a think-tank, developed by Musharraf to put in “checks and balances” in the political system. The NRB developed the Nazim system, building on the principles of Ayub’s Basic Democracies, and at the outset, there was little discussion and input from the national and provincial politicians, legislatures or the bureaucracy.

For such a system to work well in Pakistan, true consultation needs to be done with the important stakeholders. The system needs to operate within the context of the political system with links to the provincial and national legislature. Funding allocation from the federal government would require oversight by a committee including provincial and federal leadership; each province would then have ownership
of the system and it could have a chance of succeeding. There would still be resistance, but if all the stakeholders are involved and the intent is true, in time, there can be a decentralized system of local governance.

In Bangladesh, the model that was the closest to success was one championed by General Ershad. The caretaker government again revived the system in 2008, and local-level elections were held with much enthusiasm. However, the present elected government has not indicated any interest in supporting the system. While during Ershad’s period the system gained momentum, it never achieved its potential under successive governments. Understandably, no succeeding government was interested in diluting its power, especially given that they both enjoyed and continue to enjoy immense popularity at the grass roots level. For Ershad, the local government structure was also a mechanism to build some popular support at the grassroots level, as he lacked the widespread public support or popularity his adversaries enjoyed.

For the local government system to be truly operational in Bangladesh, given the lack of interest on the part of the administration, the electorate must demand it. However, the rural electorate in Bangladesh, who are by and large impoverished, uneducated and unaware of the possibilities, would rather focus their energies on sustaining livelihoods that bring food on the table, than lobby reluctant (and in most cases corrupt) political leaders for local representation that may or may not bring yet-to-be-identified benefits to the community in the very distant future. The approach that would hold most leverage would be for the international donor community to put pressure on the government to re-introduce the system. Donor funds could be made
available to support the initial years of implementation. The World Bank and the donor community could tie their funding to the government’s progress on implementation of the system. The top-down approach in Bangladesh has a better chance of yielding results than a bottom-up grassroots approach.

**Address gaps in horizontal and vertical accountability:** In Pakistan, institutions of horizontal accountability have a mixed record. Among the most important for Pakistan are an effective opposition, the courts, the election commission, the anti-corruption bureau and perhaps the central bank. Among the five, the most well-functioning institution is the Central Bank, which is run independently by experienced bankers and officials. The opposition parties are effective, but the choice is limited to the existing parties; no new parties, except for Musharraf’s PML-Q have emerged. Even in established democracies, it is difficult for fresh politicians and parties to enter the race. In Pakistan, given the established record of corruption by both parties, it is very necessary that new political parties and leaders emerge who are not tainted by corruption and have a vision for the country. Local government representation and strengthening of the oversight institutions, in time, may give rise to more political choices for the electorate.

The courts in Pakistan have been manipulated in the past and have been subject to the administration’s directives, as when they supported martial law by Ayub Khan. However, in recent times they have not bowed down to administrative will – General Musharraf’s downfall was precipitated by a Supreme Court ruling and subsequent protests by lawyers and judges, when Musharraf chose to override the ruling.
The election commission and the bureau of anti-corruption are not fully independent. The last elections were not considered totally free or fair, while the bureau of anti-corruption has been subject to allegations that it pursues a political agenda, at the behest of the administration. How do you strengthen these important organizations when the government itself is corrupt and has no intent to have these institutions function independently? It comes down to vertical accountability. The electorate, NGOs and the media, monitoring, reporting and demanding change, may force the administration to be more transparent and accountable while ensuring that government agencies function as independently as possible.

However, in Pakistan, the most powerful and undesirable institution of accountability is the military. As we have seen over the years, the military time and again, has directly overthrown democratically elected governments or has supported opposition parties so that they come into power. This time around, in the face of popular demand and international pressure, the military had to strike an agreement with the very political parties that it had overthrown. The military in Pakistan has to retreat from its overt role as a watchdog of the political process and institutions to that of a functioning body answerable to the elected government and the people. While it still has a place in determining the country’s security policy through its seat in the National Security Council, it has to stop calling the shots. This will not be accomplished in the immediate term, given the civil strife with Islamic militants and the war in Afghanistan, but it has to be a medium-term goal. Again international pressure, tied to military funding and aid, will be very important in changing the role
of the military in Pakistani politics and strengthening the role of the independent government institutions. The military most likely will oppose any restrictions on the use of funding, but the international community must persevere.

In terms of vertical organizations of accountability such as the media and civil society organizations, Pakistan does have an independent media and there are a number NGOs and civil society organizations that operate in this space and continue to record and report on government failures and injustices, especially in the area of women’s rights. Under Musharraf, all trade unions and student unions were banned. The new government has allowed trade unions and student unions to be active again, but at present they lack support, organizational capacity and influence. In terms of professional associations, the chambers of commerce have some influence in directing government policies on trade, but typically they work with the prevailing governments, to ensure that pro-business policies are implemented and maintained. The lawyers association, surprisingly, played an instrumental role in ousting Musharraf, when the lawyers took to the streets to protest the removal of a popular Chief Justice. Even though agriculture is an important part of the economy, there is no effective peasants or farmers association that represent the interests of poor or landless farmers and peasants. Agricultural production is in the hands of large landowners and influential business families. There is a distinct urban-rural divide in Pakistan society, with the rural population being underrepresented.

In the last elections, civil society organizations and the media, despite threats and harassment, played an important role in monitoring and reporting fraud in the
election process and the results. The state has to protect journalists, reporters and officials of civil society organizations; and any threats or attacks have to be pursued seriously by the courts.

In Bangladesh, none of the government institutions of horizontal accountability at present are independent, beginning from the judiciary to the election commission. The interim caretaker government had taken steps to separate the judiciary from the administration, had reconstituted the anti-corruption bureau, had strengthened the election commission, and had refrained from interfering with the polls. The last elections held in December 2008, were considered by international and local observers to be the most fair and freely-held elections in the history of Bangladesh. The losing party, true to form, cried foul; an allegation which was summarily dismissed by independent international observers. Under the newly elected administration, the head of the anti-corruption bureau resigned and its authority and power has been clipped (the position of the head of the bureau has been downgraded from a ministerial position); the election commissioner resigned; the courts are no longer as independent and have dismissed cases pending against the elected Prime Minister and party supporters; and the opposition leaders are being harassed and prosecuted. The media and journalists, who had grown more vocal during the interim caretaker government, are now back to being ineffective and not really highlighting the various issues on which the government is failing to deliver. It is interesting to note that the media, both TV and print, are owned by corporations and individuals that have very distinct and open political followings. Each of the newspapers is biased towards specific political
parties and traditionally there has been no culture of investigative journalism. There are no effective civil society organizations or NGOs that operate in this space.

What has been a force in bringing about changes in government in Bangladesh, have been the students. The downfall of General Ershad was brought about with the help of the student community. Again, during the time of the interim government, the presence of the army on the university campus in Dhaka triggered a confrontation between the students and the caretaker administration. However, the important fact to note about student associations and student politics in Bangladesh is that they are typically aligned with one of the three national political parties, the BNP, the Awami League and the Islamic group, the Jamat-E-Islam. Student associations are extensions of these parties and students are typically used as the party muscle and rabble rousers. Clean student politics based on ideology is completely missing in the campuses – gun running and shootouts between rival political parties are the norm, totally disrupting the peace and quiet of a university campus. The student leaders are typically not even current students – their authority lies in their connections to the national party bosses. There have been discussions in the government on enforcing eligibility rules with regard to student leaders, such as age limits and solid academic records.

Trade unions likewise are highly politicized and represent the political parties’ interests rather than the union members. In terms of business or professional associations, the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturing and Exporters Association (BGMEA) is the most influential trade association, representing the most important
export commodity of the country – ready-made garments. However, the BGMEA is not really a voice for change, rather its priority is to have stability so that the ready-made garments sector is not impacted. In the past, it has advocated for the political parties to reconcile their differences to ensure a pro-business environment in the country. Likewise the Chambers of Commerce represents the interest of the business community and advocates stability rather than a specific form of government. While there are no effective farmers or peasant associations, in the past, farmers have banded together in an ad-hoc manner, to protest rises in the price of fertilizers and other inputs.

Again, a top-down approach from the international donor community is required, initially to strengthen the media and support the growth of NGOs and civil society organizations. The institutions of vertical accountability, beyond elections, are truly non-existent in Bangladesh. Awareness-raising programs for the electorate are very necessary, as is encouraging healthy debate on issues. Rather than just rehashing the failure of past political leaders, debate and discussion by civil society is crucial, to create and sustain pressure on the administration to deliver. Proper university-level courses on journalism, as well as training and exposure to international reporting, is very important, to strengthen the media. International aid needs to be channeled for these purposes, tied to very measurable progress in these efforts.

The army played a pivotal role in the last interim government, and to a large extent was instrumental in restoring democracy in Bangladesh, by supporting the efforts of the caretaker government. Despite several opportunities, the army retreated
from directly taking over, and according to experts the army’s decision to remain in the background was more a result of the personalities of the prevailing army chief and the head of the caretaker government, than an institutional decision. If the personalities of the army chief or the head of the interim government had been different, the outcome could have been the opposite. In any circumstances, the army cannot be the watchdog for democracy; what is required in Bangladesh is an effective opposition.

Historically, once in opposition, the party and its officials are marginalized and are quite often subject to scrutiny and harassment by government organizations such as the anti corruption bureau. Both parties, when in opposition, need to learn to work together for the common good. In terms of political mandates, there is very little difference between the two parties, and apart from intense personal dislike between the two leaders (or “Begums” as the Economist likes to dub them), there is no real reason why the opposition cannot work in a bi-partisan manner in parliament. At the very minimum, the opposition should be actively involved in any decision regarding the appointment of the Head of the Election Commission. A strong opposition presence in parliament may be an effective check on corruption and excess by the governing party. The opposition parties could be included in various oversight committees, and as a group could hold the elected ministers and officials accountable.

**Education for elected officials:** Given, that both Pakistan and Bangladesh have low literacy rates, the elected officials, including ministers and mayors, do not themselves have the benefit of a good education. While Pakistan has made it
mandatory for candidates to have a prescribed level of education before they are eligible to apply as candidates, this policy actually excludes a large percentage of the population from entering into politics. However, if both countries had education programs for elected officials after they have been elected, it might serve to bridge the gap between what is universally expected of political leaders and the perception by local politicians of what constitutes leadership and performance standards of political leaders. The structured courses would be extensive and should include at a minimum basic principles of liberal democracy, the political history of the region and case studies citing experiences of other countries in progressing towards liberal democracy. Again, this approach is something that the UNDP could suggest to the governments and provide funding for.

**Strategic alliance between India and Pakistan:** A strategic alliance with India will enable Pakistan to rebalance the civil-military relations, facilitating a transition to democracy without interference from the army. One of the main reasons for the Pakistani army’s influence in politics is the unhealthy obsession with India and the associated security concerns. The army’s whole focus is on containing India and for Pakistan to be at par with India – which may have been an achievable goal in the 1980s but it is a very unrealistic notion now, given that Pakistan in recent times have been dubbed a “failed state.” This agenda distorts the allocation of national resources heavily towards the military and ignores the real social problems and needs that require immediate attention.
Pakistan’s involvement in the current war in Afghanistan is also dictated by the army’s focus on India. Pakistani Major General Abbas, Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), in a recent interview with Michael Ware, CNN correspondent for the region, has gone so far as to say that the military could facilitate a dialogue with the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan, if the U.S made concessions on limiting both India’s role in Afghanistan and the other benefits that India is perceived to receive from the U.S. Not surprisingly, Pakistan’s security concern with Afghanistan is not so much on defending its own territory, which continues to experience considerable turmoil resulting in civilian loss of lives, but to limit India’s influence in a country which Pakistan considers its own client state. If a Pakistani government can reach an alliance with India, perhaps on trade and key economic issues to begin with, the military’s imperative to influence the politicians will recede. The stumbling block, of course, is the military’s resistance in any effort towards reconciliation with India and it will block any elected government’s effort in that direction. Pressure through mediation by an internationally renowned political leader such as Nelson Mandela or Bill Clinton may provide an elected government with some level of international support, to counter the military’s resistance.

**Empower women in Pakistan:** Pakistan in comparison to Bangladesh, has a very poor record of empowering women. The urban-rural divide is greater, when it comes to women. Unless women in the rural and remote areas are given equal opportunities in education, access and employment, Pakistan as a country will not move ahead and the ideals of liberal democracy will suffer. Greg Mortenson has
shown that it is possible to create schools for girls in difficult terrains and that the village population welcomes the opportunity and is proud of their girls’ achievements. The government needs to provide funds for education across Pakistan, but specially to support female literacy. Access to employment is needed, and individual rights need to be enforced. In Bangladesh, the garments export industry depends on the female labor force, which has resulted in greater emancipation for women across the country, as semi-educated women, more and more, are leaving their villages in quest of work in garment factories. In addition to the private sector opportunities, a large number of NGOs, are involved in supporting female education and employment generating activities, from the Grameen Bank, to BRAC, ASA and others. Pakistan can use models that have been successful in Bangladesh, including microfinance to create more empowerment among rural women. More importantly, Pakistan has to address age-old social practices that discriminate against women’s liberty.

A common thread among the recommendations is that they all hinge on the willingness of the respective governments to introduce and support actions that bring about social change to strengthen liberal democracy. History has shown, especially in Pakistan, that authoritarian rule has not benefited a large percentage of the population – while democracy has time and again brought back past corrupt leaders, further encouraging the adoption of their usual corrupt practices. In such a situation, it is wiser to err on the side of a system that intrinsically provides checks and balances and allows for a change in the government. Democracy is the only system that facilitates these elements. However, one hopes that with each iteration of the same political
leadership, the electorate will become more discriminating, more demanding and will hold politicians more accountable for their actions. While the bottom-up, grass roots, approach is a desirable one, in both Pakistan and Bangladesh the influence of the government is extensive – without the governments’ willingness to accommodate its electorates’ demands, no change will be possible. Hence, the international donor community and the aid agencies need to be stronger on their conditions for support, with firm links to the progress made on strengthening institutions and processes that ensure accountability.

The U.S can play a unique role in holding Pakistan accountable, given its strategic alliance with Pakistan. Given the quantum of funding to Pakistan, it can seize the opportunity to further hold the administration’s feet to the fire, to ensure that it follows through with actions that curb corruption, strengthen the electoral process and ensure that women’s rights are not trampled on. While experts such as Stephen Cohen, suggests that Bangladesh has in the past followed recommendations by donor agencies and international organizations and has tolerated the presences and activities ofnumerable NGOs, Pakistan is less likely to tolerate external interference in what it considers absolutely internal matters. However, the U.S does hold the purse strings of a poor nation, and it is worth recommending that these strings are attached to funding provided to Pakistan.

In both Pakistan and Bangladesh, for democracy to be consolidated it must be deepened institutionally and must provide material benefits as broadly across the society. This would suggest a simultaneous approach that mirrors Peruvian leader
Alejandro Toledo’s “three parallel paths.” First, would be to ensure that the fundamentals of economic policy are right, so as to generate sustained growth. This was successfully done by Toledo in Peru, leftist president Lula in Brazil, a number of times in Chile, and by successive governments in India, to mention a few. While Pakistan’s economy is hamstrung by military expenditures to cover both the war effort in Afghanistan, albeit heavily funded by the US, and the conflict with India, it still has posted a respectable average growth rate of 6.5% from 2005 – 2007, and Bangladesh has posted a similar average growth rate over the same period of time.

Within the broader context of economic growth, the governments would then need to implement targeted pro-poor policies such as microfinance and health services, and vocational training that address extreme poverty and inequality. Governments cannot wait for long-term investments to take gradual effect; pro-poor reforms need to take place simultaneously, as part of a targeted approach. Pro-poor programs sponsored mostly by local NGOs, including microfinance, which augment the government’s efforts, have been taken much more seriously in Bangladesh than in Pakistan, with encouraging results. At the same time, focused efforts must be pursued to strengthen democratic institutions of accountability and representation, including an independent judicial system, an effective apparatus to monitor and control corruption, a pluralistic and independent press, and elected regional and local government. In both countries, institutional strengthening, as we noted, is at varying stages of progress – progress being highly dependent on the political environment, the engagement of the people with the political process and the will of the political leaders.
Given the broad social change that must accompany any efforts for liberal democracy to take root in Pakistan and Bangladesh, any progress towards sustaining liberal democracy in both of these countries will be slow and incremental, but however slow and invisible the progress may be, there is no alternative but to persevere.
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9 Poverty numbers are based on World Bank estimates – World Development Indicators (WDI). Interesting to note that the percentage population living below the national poverty line in 2005 and 2000 was 40% and 49% in Bangladesh which is almost half the $2/day number. The percentage of people living under $1/day is 43% for Bangladesh as noted by Mark Schriener in “A Simple Poverty Card for Bangladesh” pp. 5 Microfinance Risk Management LLC. Microfinance.com. National poverty line estimates are not available for Pakistan.


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## Appendix 1: Annual GDP Growth in Pakistan and Bangladesh

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td></td>
<td>% Annual GDP Growth</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Ayub Khan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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