AN ELUSIVE BALANCE: EXPLAINING PAKISTAN’S FLUCTUATING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Georgetown University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Security Studies

By

Wesley C. Jenkins, B.S.F.S.

Washington, DC
April 16, 2010
AN ELUSIVE BALANCE: EXPLAINING PAKISTAN'S FLUCTUATING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONSHIP

Wesley C. Jenkins, B.S.F.S.

Thesis Adviser: Natalie J. Goldring, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The fundamental question of this study is: What factors have distinguished periods of stronger civilian control of the Pakistani military from periods of weaker civilian control? I propose that three factors – a single locus of civilian political authority, a strong popular support base for the civilian government, and limited threats to military core interests – have been associated with greater civilian control of the Pakistani military. Five periods of civilian governance under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (1971-1977), Benazir Bhutto (1988-1990; 1993-1996), and Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993; 1997-1999) – representing three levels of civilian control – provide the basis for qualitative analysis. The findings of this study suggest that the set of proposed factors is largely associated with greater levels of civilian control of the military. The results also indicate, however, that the three factors must be analyzed as an integrated set, and that changes in one factor may be offset by changes in another. In order to maximize the likelihood of strong civilian control of the military, I propose that Pakistani policymakers encourage multi-partisan initiatives, create a public forum to discuss civil-military issues, limit the army’s internal security role, and find the appropriate balance of threat and compromise.
Chapter 1: Introduction and methodology

Project focus

Since gaining independence in 1947, Pakistan has alternated between military and civilian rule. Even when civilian authorities have nominally headed the government, the military has often wielded extensive political power behind the scenes.\footnote{See Husain Haqqani, Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005).} Frequent military intervention in the policymaking process has increased political volatility and hindered Pakistan’s democratic consolidation.\footnote{For a discussion of the relationship between democracy and civilian supremacy over the military, see Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, “Introduction,” Civil-Military Relations and Democracy, Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds. (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) ix-xxxiv. For the effects of military intervention on Pakistan, see Hasan-Askari Rizvi, “The Paradox of Military Rule in Pakistan,” Asian Survey 24.5 (1984): 534-555.} Yet Pakistan has at times made progress toward achieving civilian control of the military.\footnote{Civilian control of the military is a difficult concept to define, much less measure. In this study, I define civilian control as the primacy of civilian political authorities in all areas of national policy, including national security. However, I acknowledge that civilian control also requires that civilian authorities recognize and respect the military’s core interests, such as the preservation of minimum resources, autonomy within its professional sphere, the maintenance of military cohesion, and the survival of the institution and of the state. (I have adapted this set of requirements from Diamond and Plattner ix-xxxiv; Michael C. Desch, Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); and Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957)).} I argue that Pakistan has, in fact, experienced brief windows of opportunity in which civilian control of the military was relatively strong and democratic consolidation was possible. This paper seeks to identify factors associated with periods of greater civilian control of the Pakistani military in order to make policy recommendations for the country’s current and future civilian leaders.

Main question and hypothesis

The fundamental question of this study is: What factors have distinguished periods of strong civilian control of the Pakistani military from periods of weak civilian control? Like many
scholars in the field of civil-military relations, I seek to associate specific social, political, economic, and military factors with the level of military intervention in policymaking. I limit my analysis, however, to the particular civil-military dynamics observed in Pakistan.

In this paper, I analyze five periods in Pakistan's political-military history based upon their relative degree of civilian control of the military. I hypothesize that periods of greater civilian control of the Pakistani military have been associated with the following three factors: a single locus of civilian political authority, civilian leadership with a strong popular support base, and limited threats to military core interests. Conversely, I suggest that periods of weaker civilian control have been associated with multiple loci of authority, weak popular support, and significant threats to military core interests. These factors are the product of close study of both existing civil-military relations literature and historical information regarding Pakistan. I believe this set of threats and opportunities to be the most salient – though not the only – determinant of civilian control of the Pakistani military.

Importance of research

Pakistan has struggled to build and maintain democratic institutions in spite of frequent returns to military rule. Democratic consolidation, however, is inextricably linked with civilian control of the military. Despite multiple rounds of competitive and generally free elections,

---

4 See, for example, Desch; Huntington; and Samuel E. Finer, The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002).
5 Muthiah Alagappa, for example, emphasizes the role of political legitimacy and the salience of coercion in determining the level of civilian control (See Muthiah Alagappa, “Investigating and Explaining Change: An Analytical Framework,” Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia, Muthiah Alagappa, ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001)). Finer notes the importance of political culture – which is in some ways related to the government's political support base (See Finer 21). Desch highlights the importance of internal threats, although he does not describe the relationship between internal threats and military core interests (See Desch 12).
7 Diamond and Plattner xxviii.
Pakistan’s hold on democratic governance principles remains tenuous.\(^8\) Time and time again, democratically-elected civilian governments have been upset by either indirect or direct military intervention. The resulting political instability and near constant state of crisis have arguably limited the country’s opportunities for political, social, and economic growth.\(^9\) Moreover, Pakistan’s incomplete democratization has resulted in a prolonged transitional period, which may contribute to an increased risk of interstate conflict.\(^10\)

Some readers might argue that military rule would resolve Pakistan’s problem of instability. Yet Pakistan’s military regimes – like its civilian governments – have not been sustainable over the long term.\(^11\) Moreover, military governance has been associated with a number of disadvantages compared with democracy.\(^12\) One of the most widely accepted arguments in favor of democratic governance is that mature democracies are, in fact, less likely to go to war with each other.\(^13\) Disputes about the intrinsic value of democracy, however, still rage in the academic literature and the halls of government, and are ultimately beyond the scope of this study. But, if nothing else, democratic civilian governance is preferable in Pakistan because it is preferred by a majority of Pakistanis.\(^14\) Durable civilian control of the military may therefore be the best solution for Pakistan’s persistent instability.

---

\(^8\) See Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Pakistan.”
\(^11\) In all cases of military rule, internal and external pressures have eventually pushed the military to relinquish direct control, resulting in some form of democratic transition. This cycle suggests that military dictatorship is not the solution to Pakistan’s instability.
\(^12\) For example, Michael C. Desch explains, “Not only is civilian control necessary to preserve domestic liberty...but on balance it also produces better national policy” (See Desch 6).
\(^13\) Mansfield and Snyder 530.
Although Pakistan has experienced periods of relatively greater civilian control of the military, the country’s civilian politicians have generally been unable to fully exploit these windows of opportunity. In order to achieve genuine and lasting civilian control, I argue that Pakistani policymakers must appreciate the factors that have contributed to periods of both success and failure. Systematic analysis of multiple periods in Pakistan’s political-military history may provide a basic understanding of how to promote robust civilian control of the military.

**Original contribution**

My work relies on civil-military relations theory for definitions and relevant independent variables. Yet I also contribute to the field by addressing the relationship among existing explanations for the nature of the civil-military relationship in a single country. Many of the most acclaimed theoretical works – such as those of Huntington and Finer – are too broad to address the particularities of individual states. In limiting my thesis to Pakistan, I am able to provide more in-depth analysis that reflects the dynamic and fluid nature of the civil-military relationship. By applying established theoretical principles to a single case study, I can also offer more tailored policy recommendations than are found in the general literature.

While the existing research on Pakistani civil-military relations is extensive, it does not fully capture the reasons for variations in the degree of civilian control. Cross-country comparisons often fail to reflect subtle changes in a country’s civil-military relationship over time. And unlike most histories of the Pakistani military – which are largely descriptive in character – this project systemically analyzes and compares periods in Pakistan’s political-

---

15 See Finer; Huntington.
military experience. Although a number of studies have been written on Pakistan’s civil-military relations, most address either a single time period or a single aspect of the relationship.¹⁷

My thesis is most closely related to the work of analyst Hasan-Askari Rizvi. In “Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Pakistan,” Rizvi describes the history of democratic transition in Pakistan, taking into account his own view of the Pakistani army’s major interests.¹⁸ But whereas Rizvi focuses only on military interests, I examine threats to military core concerns, unified civilian political authority, and a strong popular support base as an integrated set of factors. Unlike Rizvi, I also include a full analysis of both Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto’s regime and the second government of Nawaz Sharif, which I consider to be the periods of strongest civilian control of the military. By considering both multiple time periods and multiple factors associated with civilian control, I am able to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the civil-military relationship than is provided elsewhere.

Roadmap

This study begins with an explanation of the methodology used, including the choice of case studies and their classification by level of civilian control of the military. I then define and operationalize the three dependent variables under consideration: the locus of civilian power, strength of the popular support base, and extent of the threat to military core interests. In the analytical portion of the paper, I evaluate periods of relatively strong, moderate, and weak civilian control in turn, based upon the three factors selected. Chapters on alternative explanations and policy implications and recommendations follow the core analytic sections.

¹⁸ Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Pakistan.”
Overview of case studies

In this paper, I analyze periods of governance under President and then Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (1971-1977); Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (1988-1990 and 1993-1996); and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993 and 1997-1999). Although these cases do not span the entirety of Pakistan’s political history, they do provide examples of varying degrees of civilian control of the military.

The earliest government under consideration is that of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan’s civilian leader from 1971 until 1977. Although Pakistan had experienced civilian leadership before 1971, Bhutto’s government was the first period of civilian rule following the country’s first military coup in 1958. Civilian leadership prior to 1971 existed when the Pakistani military was not yet fully established and the praetorian tradition had not yet begun. These early leaders share fewer commonalities with Pakistan’s more recent civilian authorities, and I have therefore not included them in this study. Nor do I consider Pakistan’s current civilian government under President Asif Ali Zardari. Because Zardari’s government is still in progress, authoritative sources on the subject are lacking, and conclusive analysis of the civil-military relationship is not yet possible. I do, however, include preliminary thoughts on the current government in the policy implications section.

Also absent from the analysis are cases of direct military rule, such as the eleven-year regime of General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq. In governments directly and completely led by the military, civilian control is not merely weak – it is absent. The factors under consideration here – the locus of civilian power, popular support base, and threat to military core interests – prove less appropriate for analyzing such regimes. For example, while a civilian government with a

\[19\] In this study, I use Amos Perlmutter’s definition of the modern praetorian state: “one in which the military tends to intervene and potentially could dominate the political system” (See Amos Perlmutter, “The Praetorian State and the Praetorian Army: Toward a Taxonomy of Civil-Military Relations in Developing Polities,” Comparative Politics 1.3 (1969) 383). For a discussion of the beginning of Pakistan’s praetorian tradition, see Haqqani 16-38.
strong popular support base may be more likely to wield control over the military, a popular military regime would be unlikely to grant control to civilians. Threats to military core interests are also unlikely under a direct military government, and when they occur, their effect may be very different than that of threats posed by civilian leadership.

Classification of case studies

The concept of civilian control of the military poses significant measurement problems. Civilian control is a dynamic process – not an end state – and it involves complex relationships among a host of variables, institutions, and individual actors. Many of these relationships occur behind the scenes, largely hidden from the public eye. Even when a clear definition of civilian control has been reached, it is therefore often difficult to apply in practice.

Scholars have yet to agree upon the specific nature and indicators of civilian control of the military. Classification of case studies according to their degree of civilian control is therefore a challenging task. In this thesis, I have chosen to analyze cases according to Samuel E. Finer’s classic typology of regimes. Finer describes six possible types of regime: civilian; indirect, limited; indirect, complete; dual; direct, military; and direct, quasi-civilianized. For the purposes of this study – which excludes periods of direct military rule – only the first three regime types are of interest.

According to Finer, civilian regimes are those governments in which military involvement in policymaking only extends to the level of influence upon civilian leaders. That a government is characterized as a civilian regime does not suggest that its military makes no effort to alter policymaking. The military may use legitimate constitutional channels to achieve influence, or it

20 Finer 164-204.
21 Finer 168.
22 Finer 86.
may engage in minor “collusion or competition” with the civilian leadership. In limited indirect regimes, military intervention in policymaking is only intermittent. Although the civilian leadership, for the most part, controls the government in these regimes, the military wields a trump card on policy issues it deems particularly important. The military under complete indirect regimes, in contrast, is virtually in control of the government. While the military in such regimes does not necessarily manage the daily workings of the government, it has a central role in the policymaking process. Its interference may extend only to the level of blackmail, or it may go so far as to displace the civilian leadership and install new civilian authorities.

In the table below, I use these three regime types to classify the five case studies of civilian governance. I compare cases based upon the highest level of civilian control achieved during each period. As previously noted, the nature of the civil-military relationship makes it difficult to draw precise conclusions about the level of civilian control at any given time. The reader may judge the reasoning behind my own classifications, which appears at the beginning of chapters 2, 3, and 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of Civilian Governance</th>
<th>Regime Type</th>
<th>Level of Civilian Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benazir Bhutto (1993-1996)</td>
<td>Indirect, Limited</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993)</td>
<td>Indirect, Limited</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benazir Bhutto (1988-1990)</td>
<td>Indirect, Complete</td>
<td>Weakest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated by the table, I categorize two governments as civilian regimes, which boast the strongest level of civilian control. Indeed, these civilian leaders achieved – however briefly – what I consider to be full control over Pakistan’s policy process. However, the strongest civilian control experienced by Pakistan undoubtedly falls short of strong civilian control as

---

23 Finer 140.
24 Finer 166.
25 Finer 166.
26 Finer 165.
conceptualized by countries with established institutions and norms of military subordination. Even when Pakistan’s civilian leaders have wielded control over the military, I do not believe they have rivaled the robust civilian control of countries like the United States. By referring to the ‘strong’ civilian control possessed by the Bhutto and Sharif governments, I therefore imply only that these governments have met the minimum standards for a civilian regime.

Factors under consideration

I argue that the extent to which the Pakistani military intervenes in governance has largely been determined by the relationship between opportunities and threats. Specifically, I propose that three types of threats and opportunities – the locus of civilian political authority, the popular support base of the civilian government, and the extent of threats to military core interests – have been associated with changes in the level of civilian control of the Pakistani military. I analyze these factors as an integrated set. As I explain in greater detail in the analytic sections of this paper, all three factors act concurrently upon the civil-military relationship, changes in one factor may be offset by changes in another, and it is ultimately impossible to determine the relative importance of any single factor.

Factor 1: Locus of civilian political authority

The first factor under consideration is the locus of civilian political authority, a term I use to describe the extent to which political power is divided among rival civilian actors. A single locus of civilian power does not necessarily imply the presence of a single, autocratic ruler, or the absence of checks and balances. Rather, unified political authority occurs when competing civilian actors respect – or at least fail to actively undermine – the authority of the country’s

---

27 Other civil-military relations scholars have proposed similar theories. For example, in The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics, Finer explains civilian control by examining the military’s motive, mood, and opportunity to intervene. In Civilian Control of the Military: The Changing Security Environment, Desch emphasizes the interplay between internal (domestic) and external (international) threats.
elected civilian leadership. I suggest that multiple loci of political authority emerge where there are intense civilian rivalries and disunity among civilian political actors, both between the incumbent government and opposition parties, and within the government itself. These divisions may (1) weaken the authority held by any one civilian actor vis-à-vis the military; (2) increase the opportunity for the military to play civilian actors against one another, or for civilian actors to align with the military against the incumbent government; and, in extreme cases, (3) create such intense fragmentation that they threaten the integrity of the state.

In this study, I rely on qualitative assessments of the extent to which political authority is divided. Because the manifestation of divided political authority may take on several different forms, no single quantitative indicator is capable of accurately reflecting the phenomenon. A single locus of civilian political authority, for example, may exist when bureaucrats and opposition parties either respect and cooperate with the incumbent civilian leader or are too weak and fragmented to present a united resistance. Multiple loci of civilian political authority, on contrast, may arise when disunity among civilian political actors is high and no single civilian group or leader holds a monopoly on civilian political authority.

Factor 2: Popular support base of the civilian government

The second factor under consideration is the strength of the civilian government’s popular support base. As civil-military relations theorists Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner conclude, “Military establishments do not seize power from successful and legitimate civilian regimes.”28 It therefore stands to reason that the civilian government’s popular support base may help to determine the level of military involvement in policymaking. A strong popular base may limit the military’s opportunity for interference by reducing (1) the degree to which the

---

civilian government depends on the military to preserve its power, and (2) public receptiveness to military intervention.

The notion of popular support reflects public attachment to particular political personalities and parties – as well as to democratic governance in general. Public opinion polling would seem to be the obvious choice for an indicator of popular support. However, survey results in Pakistan are often unreliable, inconsistent, and unavailable for certain years. The accuracy of quantitative polling data is particularly questionable for periods of political suppression.\textsuperscript{29} Because no quantitative indicator of popular support is available, I again rely on qualitative assessments. An overwhelming electoral victory may indicate a strong popular mandate and initially high public approval. In contrast, increasing anti-government demonstrations and civil unrest and/or increasing use of repressive measures by the civilian government generally suggest declining public support.

\textit{Factor 3: Extent of the threat to military core interests}

The third factor under consideration is the extent of the threat to military core interests. I contend that threats to the military’s core interests may be observed in four areas: military resources, military autonomy, military cohesion, and military and state survival.\textsuperscript{30} When the military’s interests in one or more of these issue areas are sufficiently threatened, the military may have reason to take action against the civilian government.\textsuperscript{31} It is important to note, however, that respecting the military’s core interests is not the same as ceding policymaking

\textsuperscript{29} Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s regime, for example, tightly controlled the media and censored criticism of the government (see Shuja Nawaz, \textit{Crossed Swords: Pakistan, its Army, and the Wars Within} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 344-345).

\textsuperscript{30} Adapted from Desch 13. Desch argues that military core interests include “protection of budget share, preservation of organizational autonomy, maintenance of cohesion, and survival of the institution.” These four threat areas also roughly align with Hasan-Askari Rizvi’s explanation of the Pakistani military’s six major interests (see Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Pakistan” 99-100).

\textsuperscript{31} What constitutes “sufficient threat” for the Pakistani military may be different than for other militaries, particularly those in countries with an established tradition of civilian control. I suggest that Pakistan’s unique historical and geopolitical situation – and the truly existential dangers that the country has faced – has given rise to a military that is unusually sensitive to threats regarding its core interests.
power to the armed forces. While civilian control requires subordination of the military to civilian policy decisions, it also demands respect for the military’s core interests and professional expertise.\(^{32}\) As defined in this paper, threats to military core interests are either policies of the civilian government or problems that the civilian government is perceived as being unable to control. Even weak civilian governments may therefore pose threats to military core interests.\(^{33}\)

Military interests are the most complicated of the three factors considered in this study. They reflect the values, perceptions, and inner workings of an institution that is largely opaque to the outside world. Because they rely on intangible concepts like organizational culture, military interests do not lend themselves to quantitative analysis. I therefore use qualitative methods to analyze the many forms that threats to military core interests may take. Threats to military resources, for example, may include budget cuts, reductions in force size, or the loss of international military assistance. Military autonomy may be threatened by civilian interference in the military’s areas of expertise or internal organization, such as promotions or training. Threats to cohesion are even more problematic for the military. They may occur when the civilian government deliberately cultivates internal divisions within the army in an attempt to keep the institution off balance, or when the armed forces perform duties outside of their professional expertise. Finally, the most significant threats to military core interests are those – like civil war – that threaten the very survival of the military institution or the state itself.

\(^{32}\) Diamond and Plattner, “Introduction” xxviii.
\(^{33}\) Of course, when this argument is followed to its logical conclusion, we may see that civilian control becomes so weak that the civilian government has no power whatsoever, and is no longer capable of posing a threat to the military. Such a regime would fall on the border between complete, indirect military rule and full military dictatorship.
Chapter 2: Periods of strongest civilian control

During the government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (1971-1977) and the second government of Nawaz Sharif (1997-1999), Pakistan experienced relatively strong – though temporary – civilian control of the military. Both cases support the hypothesis that periods of greater civilian control have been associated with a single locus of civilian political authority, a strong popular support base, and limited threats to military core interests.

Civilian regimes: Examples of relatively strong civilian control

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s government is the clearest available case of a civilian regime in Pakistan. Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) won an impressive majority in West Pakistan in the December 1970 elections. After the 1971 war between East and West Pakistan, Bhutto also obtained the powers of president and chief martial law administrator (CMLA) through a putsch by junior commanders. As Pakistan’s new civilian leader, Bhutto proceeded to consolidate his control over the military by first dismissing those generals whom he considered a threat. Bhutto’s White Paper on Defense Organization – which set forth the argument for civilian control – was met with full cooperation by Pakistan’s army. Although the army retained an important position under his government, Bhutto successfully limited the military’s influence to issues of security and defense. As one Pakistani Lieutenant General explained, “Each one of the top brass on the Army was to some extent beholden to Bhutto and to a larger degree scared of him.” Bhutto’s control over the military did not waver until the final months of his

34 Nawaz 262.
35 Nawaz 282.
38 Shafqat 168.
regime. During the period of martial law that followed the allegedly rigged elections of 1977, general resistance among the army’s rank and file escalated, eventually culminating in a military coup.\footnote{See Nawaz 346-352.}

Although Nawaz Sharif exercised slightly less control over Pakistan’s armed forces, his second term as prime minister was nevertheless a civilian regime.\footnote{It is important to note that Finer’s typology represents a spectrum, in which the boundary between regime types is not always clear. Even within each regime type, there is variation.} Sharif consolidated power by dismissing those military and civilian officials he considered disloyal or argumentative.\footnote{Arif 356.} During his time in office, he gained the power to appoint the heads of the armed services and successfully called for the early retirement of four service chiefs.\footnote{Arif 350.} When Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Jahangir Karamat publicly advocated the formation of a National Security Council, Sharif replaced him.\footnote{Nawaz 498-499.} Indeed, by the beginning of 1999, Sharif had “established a firm control over state institutions” and “appeared securely in power.”\footnote{Hasan-Askari Rizvi, “Pakistan in 1999: Back to Square One,” Asian Survey 40.1 (2000) 208.} But Sharif’s civilian regime was short-lived. As with Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Sharif’s control over the military would deteriorate in the final months before his ouster. In particular, events surrounding the 1999 Kargil War strained the prime minister’s relationship with the army leadership, agitated the military’s rank and file, and intensified Sharif’s fear of a military coup.\footnote{To this day, the accounts of primary actors involved in the Kargil conflict differ wildly. Sharif has stated that he was “hoodwinked” by the army, although General Musharraf and others deny this claim (see Nawaz 510-525).} By late October of that year, the army had retaken power and civilian control was lost once again.

A single locus of civilian power

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s government is a prime example of system with a single locus of civilian political authority. Both within the government itself and with regard to opposition...
parties, Bhutto was unchallenged for the majority of his seven years in office. A Pakistani Lieutenant General explained, “He accepted no equals, dissent, or challenges to his authority. He was the only decision-maker in the country.”

The 1973 constitution both converted the country to a parliamentary system and made it a treasonable offense to usurp the prime minister’s authority. In 1974, a constitutional amendment endowed Bhutto with the power to ban political parties. The prime minister’s opposition in parliament was also consistently weak, and never posed a significant threat to the integrity of Bhutto’s government.

Although religious parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami sought to counter the civilian government’s political authority, Bhutto successfully suppressed political opposition for most of his term. He initially maintained unified civilian authority through compromise and political bargaining. A deal with the opposition National Awami Party (NAP) and the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), for example, allowed those groups to establish coalition governments in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan. Yet Bhutto’s tactics for maintaining a single locus of civilian authority quickly shifted from compromise to confrontation. Within a year of his bargain with the NAP and JUI, Bhutto had dissolved both provincial governments.

Emphasizing the dangers of “antinational elements,” he began developing autocratic tendencies, and employed his Federal Security Force (FSF) to contain political dissent. Even after the announcement of elections in 1977, the Bhutto government continued to threaten and harass members of the opposition, apparently even going so far as to abduct opposition

---

47 Chishti 36.
48 Nawaz 342.
50 M. Asghar Khan 77.
51 Haqqani 96.
52 Nawaz 332.
53 Nawaz 332.
candidates to prevent them from filing their nomination papers.\textsuperscript{55} For years, Bhutto relied on coercive tactics to artificially suppress political conflict in Pakistan. However, the alleged “fixing” of the 1977 elections in favor of the incumbent government finally galvanized opposition parties into a single united front.\textsuperscript{56} As the political opposition grew in strength, the political authority of the Bhutto government diminished.\textsuperscript{57}

Like Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif during his second term successfully restrained alternative sources of civilian political authority. Sharif’s primary political opponent, Benazir Bhutto, was convicted on charges of corruption and banned from public office for seven years.\textsuperscript{58} Moreover, a compliant parliament and federal cabinet “placed Nawaz Sharif in an envious position that no other prime minister had enjoyed in Pakistan’s history.”\textsuperscript{59} With a more than two-thirds majority in the National Assembly, Sharif’s Pakistan Muslim League (PML(N)) repealed the 8th Amendment to the Constitution, which had allowed the president to dismiss the prime minister at will.\textsuperscript{60}

Army mediation during an argument between Sharif and Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah about the appointment of judges may have suggested some degree of military interference in the policy process.\textsuperscript{51} However, the incident led to the early retirement of both the president and the chief justice, which paved the way for Sharif to appoint a new chief justice and a “rubber-stamp president.”\textsuperscript{62} The result for Sharif was further centralization of political authority and, as a consequence, even greater control over the military. Even in the prime minister’s last days in office, opposition parties did not band together as they had in the final months of Zulfiqar Ali Haqqani 120.

\textsuperscript{55} Haqqani 120.
\textsuperscript{56} “Opposition Leaders Arrested,” Hong Kong AFP, 14 Mar. 1977, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 1 Apr. 2010.
\textsuperscript{57} Nawaz 346-347.
\textsuperscript{58} Arif 356.
\textsuperscript{59} Arif 356.
\textsuperscript{60} Kux 339.
\textsuperscript{61} For an account of these events, see Nawaz 487-489.
\textsuperscript{62} Nawaz 489.
Bhutto’s regime. Yet Sharif’s authoritarian tendencies did eventually alienate most of Pakistan’s political groups. By the time of his ouster in 1999, several of these groups had begun bargaining with the military to secure Sharif’s removal from power.

**Strong popular support base and clear mandate**

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto benefited from a more robust political support base than any other civilian politician considered in this study. Few leaders – military or civilian – in Pakistan’s history had “enjoyed such widespread public support, and none had come to power with such a clear mandate for massive social and economic changes.” Bhutto’s PPP had the unusual distinction of drawing support from nearly all segments of the population, from rural peasants to urban intellectuals and wealthy industrialists. His socialist economic policies also initially won him immense popularity among the working classes. When public dissatisfaction did begin to emerge, Bhutto suppressed it as he had suppressed political opposition. As Pakistani General K.M. Arif observed, “Prime Minister Bhutto was deeply entrenched in power, and his popularity graph was on the rise, despite his harsh rule.”

By the time Bhutto was ousted in 1977, however, he had lost much of the public support from which he had derived his power. Even before the 1977 elections, Bhutto had started to shun the masses in favor of the bureaucracy, wealthy landlords, and members of the *ancien regime*. He became increasingly unpopular with both large and small business owners, who

---

63 Rizvi, “Pakistan in 1999: Back to Square One” 210.  
64 Haqqani 245.  
66 M. Asghar Khan 56.  
68 M. Asghar Khan 64.  
69 Arif 168.  
70 Chishti 34; Nawaz 344.
were hurt by his economic nationalization policies.\textsuperscript{71} Bhutto’s ban on \textit{The Outlook}, Pakistan’s last remaining independent newspaper, and his authoritarian tendencies eventually also cost him the support of liberal intellectuals.\textsuperscript{72} True public unrest, however, did not erupt until the aftermath of the allegedly rigged 1977 elections.\textsuperscript{73} Dissatisfaction emerged within the top echelons of Bhutto’s own party, and PPP secretary general Mubashir Hasan resigned.\textsuperscript{74} In the spring of 1977, the government struggled to suppress the demonstrations occurring across the country.\textsuperscript{75} The seemingly unassailable Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had squandered his once enormous political support base and, in the process, lost control over the military.

During his second term, Sharif’s popular support did not quite match that of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Nationwide turn-out for the 1997 general elections was only around 35 percent – the lowest on record.\textsuperscript{76} Yet Sharif’s PML(N) did secure a substantial majority against the PPP and other parties, winning 137 out of the 217 seats reserved for Muslim candidates.\textsuperscript{77} The electoral victory allowed the party to form the federal government, as well as local governments in three out of four provinces.\textsuperscript{78} An analyst at the time noted that Sharif was “seen as having received a huge popular mandate, greater than any won by his predecessors in office.”\textsuperscript{79}

Sharif had a secure hold on the country into 1999, but his support base began to dwindle in his final months in office. Although the prime minister was widely viewed as a “national hero”

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{71}] Adams and Iqbal 29.
\item[\textsuperscript{72}] Nawaz 345.
\item[\textsuperscript{74}] Nawaz 348.
\item[\textsuperscript{75}] M. Asghar Khan 124.
\item[\textsuperscript{77}] In the same election, the PPP won 18 seats, the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) won 12 seats, the NAP won 10 seats, and the JUI only won 2 seats. See Nawaz 487.
\item[\textsuperscript{78}] Arif 235.
\end{itemize}
in the wake of the 1998 nuclear tests, the worsening economic and domestic security situation gradually began to damage public confidence in the civilian government. When Sharif’s government froze $11.8 billion in private foreign currency deposits following the May 1998 nuclear tests, the prime minister also lost the support of business owners and the middle class. Like Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Sharif gradually exhausted his political capital, to the detriment of the civil-military relationship.

Limited threats to military core interests

During the 1970s, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto successfully consolidated power while limiting the overall threat to military core interests. To some extent, Bhutto did interfere in the military’s autonomy. He forced the early retirement of several military officers, including those he thought had helped bring him to power, and on multiple occasions interfered in the army’s internal affairs. But while Bhutto tightened his grip over the military establishment by exploiting the army’s vulnerability following the 1971 war, he carefully avoided actions which would provoke military backlash.

Bhutto’s efforts to reform the military’s command structure and limit its activities were initially well-received by army officers. Bhutto also offset his interference in areas of military autonomy by upholding the army as an institution and increasing military resources. As Husain Haqqani explains, “Bhutto ensured that the military received, in his words, its ‘fair share of the pie’ and gradually both the size of the military and the expenditure relating to it increased.” He launched a nuclear weapons program, enhanced the country’s arms production capabilities, and

---

81 Haqqani 247.
83 Nawaz 315.
84 Cohen 73.
85 Haqqani 105.
acquired military equipment from abroad.\textsuperscript{86} In an address to the country’s army commander, Bhutto himself noted, “We can consider no objective more important than that our armed forces be so equipped as to be able continually to improve their professional skill.”\textsuperscript{87} He also placed a high priority on the key military interest of defending against external threats – particularly India.\textsuperscript{88}

Despite Bhutto’s best efforts, however, threats to military core interests increased in number and severity in the final months of his government. In the wake of the 1977 elections, Bhutto tasked the Pakistani army with curbing civil unrest. His introduction of martial law in April of that year “brought the army face to face with the people of Pakistan,” thus compromising military cohesion.\textsuperscript{89} Military officers began refusing to act against civilians, and several brigadiers asked to be relieved of martial law duties.\textsuperscript{90} Soon, it was not only the military’s cohesion which was at stake, but also its survival. In the weeks before the military takeover, the scene in Pakistan was described as “a situation of virtual civil war.”\textsuperscript{91} The threat to institutional and state integrity had reached dangerous levels when the military finally intervened in July 1977.

Nawaz Sharif also tried to avoid major threats to the military at the beginning of his second term. Like Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Sharif at times intervened in areas of military autonomy and expertise. He pushed the 13\textsuperscript{th} Amendment to the constitution through the National Assembly and gained the power to appoint the heads of the armed services – a power he later used multiple times.\textsuperscript{92} However, Sharif avoided military backlash by discussing his plans in

\textsuperscript{86} Haqqani 115; Nawaz 339.
\textsuperscript{88} Haqqani 93.
\textsuperscript{89} Nawaz 349.
\textsuperscript{90} Nawaz 349.
\textsuperscript{91} Chishti 50.
\textsuperscript{92} Nawaz 487; Arif 350.
advance with Army Chief Karamat.\textsuperscript{93} He also maintained the army’s operational capacity and carefully avoided impingement upon military resources.\textsuperscript{94}

In 1997 and early 1998, when Sharif’s control of the military was at its height, threats to military cohesion and survival were also relatively limited. When Sharif entered office in 1997, Pakistan was already in a state of social and economic turmoil, and tensions simmered along the eastern border.\textsuperscript{95} This persistent, low-level domestic crisis continued unabated throughout Sharif’s second term.\textsuperscript{96} But while both internal and external conditions presented a vague, looming danger to the country, they had not yet materialized into specific, tangible threats to the military. In spite of the many problems he faced, Sharif successfully controlled the overall threat to the military for more than a year.

Sharif was less successful, however, in containing threats to military core interests in late 1998 and 1999. In the aftermath of Pakistan’s May 1998 nuclear tests, the economic crisis that had been building at the national level began to encroach upon military resources.\textsuperscript{97} By late 1998, official sources reportedly observed that Pakistan’s top military commanders were increasingly concerned about the country’s security situation.\textsuperscript{98} Diminished operational capability, combined with heightened tensions with India, presented an increased threat to the survival of the military and the country as a whole. When COAS Karamat complained of Sharif’s indifference toward the military’s concerns, the prime minister made matters worse by unceremoniously forcing him into early retirement.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{93} Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Pakistan” 107.
\textsuperscript{95} Syed 120-121, 124.
\textsuperscript{96} See Syed.
\textsuperscript{98} Khan, “Pakistan: Sharif’s Surprise Tactics Worries Army.”
By the time of the 1999 Kargil conflict, the military was especially sensitive to perceived threats, and civilian control was already waning. Sharif’s unconditional withdrawal from Kargil amounted to a major humiliation for the Pakistani army.\footnote{For a discussion of the army’s reaction, see Pervez Musharraf, In the Line of Fire: A Memoir (New York: Free Press, 2006) 95.} One Pakistani military official reportedly observed that the decision “brought disgrace to Pakistan [sic] army” and resulted in “almost a revolt situation” among the military’s rank and file.\footnote{Kamran Khan, “Report Details Sharif-Military Differences,” The News (Islamabad), 13 Oct. 1999, World News Connection, 1 Apr. 2010.} When Sharif attempted to replace COAS Pervez Musharraf in October of that year, he was within his constitutional rights. Yet by changing the military’s command yet again, during a period of intense domestic and international strain, and without consulting army leadership, he further threatened the military’s cohesion and the integrity of the state.\footnote{For Pakistani Lt. Gen. Mahmud Ahmed’s account of the events surrounding Musharraf’s dismissal, see Nawaz 527.} With the rise in the number and severity of threats to military core interests came a full government takeover by the army chief and the complete loss of civilian control.

Discussion: Hypothesis supported by cases of strongest civilian control

As the hypothesis of this study predicts, periods of relatively strong civilian control of the Pakistani military have been associated with a single locus of civilian political authority, a strong popular support base for the civilian government, and limited threats to military core interests. Indeed, the government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and the second government of Nawaz Sharif were unmatched in all three categories by any of the other cases under consideration.

As previously explained, while these two governments are the strongest cases of civilian control analyzed in this paper, civilian control was somewhat stronger under Bhutto’s regime. Although both governments shared a unified locus of civilian power and successfully minimized threats to military core interests, Sharif lacked the intense popularity that Bhutto enjoyed. Given
the initial hypothesis, it is not surprising that Sharif’s slight disadvantage in this category would be associated with a slightly lower level of civilian control.

It is important to note that stronger civilian control of the military has been associated with limited – rather than nonexistent – threats to military core interests. In fact, for the majority of their time in office, both Bhutto and Sharif shrewdly calculated the threat they posed to military interests. These civilian leaders strategically used limited threats to military autonomy as a means of consolidating their control. However, the preceding analysis suggests that these limited threats to autonomy only succeeded when balanced by minimal threats to military resources, cohesion, and survival, as well as a strong popular support base and unified civilian authority.

The eventual failure of the Bhutto and Sharif regimes is as telling as their initial success. In both cases, decreasing civilian control was accompanied by increasingly divided civilian political authority, a diminishing popular support base, and growing threats to military interests – particularly regarding cohesion and survival. Changes in these three factors were ultimately so severe that they coincided with the complete loss of civilian control. The hypothesis therefore has sufficient explanatory power to account for changes in the level of civilian control across the duration of both regimes.
Chapter 3: Periods of moderate civilian control

The second government of Benazir Bhutto (1993-1996) and the first government of Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993) exercised moderate civilian control over the Pakistani military. As predicted by this paper’s hypothesis, both regimes were also characterized by moderate levels of political division, popular support, and threat to military core interests.

Indirect, limited regimes: Examples of moderate civilian control

I interpret both the second term of Benazir Bhutto (1993-1996) and the first term of Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993) as limited indirect regimes. In both cases, the military refrained from sustained, overt intervention in the policy process, but was not fully under civilian control. In Bhutto’s second term, “civil-military relations appeared to have been maturing with increasing trust, mutual tolerance and non-interference in each other’s domains.” Despite growing domestic tensions, the military publicly supported Bhutto’s government. Yet Bhutto was not fully independent, and she succumbed to military pressure on such issues as Kashmir and Afghanistan. Bhutto’s initially moderate hold over the armed forces became more tenuous as her term progressed. When violent revolts erupted in the North-West Frontier Province in late 1994, the Pakistani army refused to intervene on behalf of the government. The army’s leadership increasingly distanced itself from Bhutto, and when President Leghari dismissed the elected government in 1996, the military helped to carry out the decision.

Sharif’s first term as prime minister was also marked by limited military interference. Although he had been supported by the military regime, Sharif sought to set his own policy

103 Shafqat 242.
106 Haqqani 242.
107 Haqqani 241.
agenda and establish his legitimacy as an elected official.\textsuperscript{108} Like Benazir Bhutto, he was forced to accept the military’s role in formulating policy on Afghanistan, Kashmir, and the nuclear program, and he “ran into rough waters when he tried to assert himself.”\textsuperscript{109} Sharif did contradict the opinion of COAS General Mirza Aslam Beg on Pakistani participation in the 1991 Gulf War, and later weakened the COAS by announcing the general’s retirement early.\textsuperscript{110} However, Sharif only did so with the consent of other top generals.\textsuperscript{111} As with the other civilian leaders under consideration in this study, Sharif eventually lost what control he held over the armed forces. When conflict erupted between Sharif and President Ishaq Khan in 1993, pressure by the military led both civilian leaders to step down.\textsuperscript{112}

**Moderately divided civilian power**

In her second term as prime minister, Benazir Bhutto was unable to monopolize political authority as successfully as her father, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Confrontation with her primary political opponent, Nawaz Sharif, was particularly intense.\textsuperscript{113} When Bhutto suggested in a BBC interview that the Pakistani government had helped India with its insurgency in Punjab, Sharif and the opposition accused her of being a national security risk.\textsuperscript{114} Although Jamaat-e-Islami and other religious parties openly opposed both Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto, they launched a campaign of violence during Benazir’s second term.\textsuperscript{115} Unlike her father, Benazir Bhutto was unable to fully suppress her political opposition. Yet she maintained a

\textsuperscript{108} Shafqat 236.
\textsuperscript{109} Nawaz 437.
\textsuperscript{110} Haqqani 222-223.
\textsuperscript{111} Haqqani 222-223.
\textsuperscript{112} Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Pakistan” 106.
\textsuperscript{115} Haqqani 241.
confrontational stance against her opponents, which ultimately created opportunities for military manipulation of the political process.\textsuperscript{116}

Benazir Bhutto’s one advantage in the realm of political authority was the civilian president. Farooq Leghari, who was appointed president in 1993, was a PPP supporter, chosen for the position especially by the prime minister.\textsuperscript{117} The initially pleasant and cooperative relations between Bhutto and Leghari allowed for a more unified political authority than had been possible in Bhutto’s first term. Yet even this relationship turned sour as Bhutto and Leghari fought over the nomination of judges and the selection process for COAS.\textsuperscript{118} By 1996, Bhutto’s already fragile political authority had been substantially diluted by political infighting.

Nawaz Sharif’s first term as prime minister was also characterized by moderately divided civilian political authority. In his quest to consolidate power, Sharif attempted to bolster the position of his own political party while limiting the activities of the opposition PPP.\textsuperscript{119} He pursued court cases against Bhutto and other members of the opposition and partnered with the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) in Sindh.\textsuperscript{120} However, Sharif’s suppression of his opponents was less complete than it would eventually be in his second term. Respected analyst Hasan-Askari Rizvi contends, “By the beginning of August 1991, it was quite clear that the major opposition groups who had lost faith in the existing political arrangements, would not be averse to their abolition by the President or the Army.”\textsuperscript{121} Sharif’s political power was also weakened from within when the National People’s Party (NPP), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), and MQM parties broke rank with his Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) coalition.\textsuperscript{122}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[116] Haqqani 231.
\item[117] Kux 338.
\item[118] Kux 338; Nawaz 482.
\item[119] Shafqat 237.
\item[120] Shafqat 237.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Civilian political authority was also divided between Sharif and civilian president Ghulam Ishaq Khan. Because Sharif and Ishaq shared similar views on Kashmir, their relationship was somewhat less combative than Ishaq’s relationship with Benazir Bhutto during her first term. Nevertheless, Ishaq typically sided with the military establishment in disagreements among the ruling Troika – composed of the prime minister, the president, and the COAS – and the tension between the president and prime minister increased over time. Sharif lacked sufficient leverage in the National Assembly to repeal the 8th Amendment and restrict the president’s powers. The division in political authority reached its apex following Ishaq’s attempt to dismiss Sharif – which was subsequently declared unconstitutional. It was in the midst of this intense civilian rivalry that the military intervened and secured the resignation of both Ishaq and Sharif.

Modest popular support base

Benazir Bhutto began her second term as prime minister with a reasonably large support base. In the 1993 elections, the PPP secured a narrow victory, winning 86 out of 207 seats in the National Assembly. But while Bhutto won out over her opponents, she did not possess a clear mandate. Soon, even this modest level of support was threatened by widespread civil disturbances across the Malakand Division of the NWFP, Sindh, and Karachi. Although ethnic and sectarian tensions and political demonstrations are not unusual in Pakistan, the

---

123 Nawaz 437.
124 Nawaz 469.
125 Nawaz 449.
126 For a description of events surrounding the attempted dismissal, see Tahir Amin, “Pakistan in 1993: Some Dramatic Changes,” Asian Survey 34.2 (1994) 191-194
129 The rival PML(N) party, in contrast, won only 72 seats. See Haqqani 228.
130 Nawaz 473.
131 Amin, “Pakistan in 1994” 143-144.
popular unrest which emerged during Bhutto’s second term was surprisingly severe.\textsuperscript{132} At the same time, economic stagnation, unemployment, and inflation “hit the average person hard, increasing his frustration with the government.”\textsuperscript{133} Charges of governmental corruption only served to intensify public dissatisfaction.\textsuperscript{134} By 1996, Bhutto’s perceived mismanagement of the country had seriously eroded her personal support base, as well as the popular base of her party.\textsuperscript{135}

The first term of Nawaz Sharif was characterized by somewhat greater public support than Benazir Bhutto would garner in her second term. The 1990 general elections were a major victory for Sharif’s IJI alliance, which gained 105 out of 216 National Assembly seats and the ability to form governments in all four provinces.\textsuperscript{136} Sharif largely managed to avoid the corruption charges that had plagued Benazir Bhutto’s first government, and his privatization and investment policies soon won him additional support from Pakistan’s business community.\textsuperscript{137} However, Sharif still lacked the popular mandate he would possess in his second term. In 1991, thousands of demonstrators protested the Persian Gulf War and Sharif’s decision to support the U.S.-led coalition.\textsuperscript{138} The following year, one analyst observed that “disillusionment and cynicism are evident in the nation” and “most people feel that the ruling elites have betrayed them.”\textsuperscript{139} When President Ishaq finally dismissed Sharif’s government in 1993, he argued that

\textsuperscript{132} Amin, “Pakistan in 1994” 143.  
\textsuperscript{133} Amin, “Pakistan in 1994” 144.  
\textsuperscript{134} Nawaz 480.  
\textsuperscript{135} Shafqat 249; Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Pakistan” 104.  
\textsuperscript{136} Nawaz 435.  
\textsuperscript{139} Rais Ahmad Khan, “Pakistan in 1992: Waiting for Change” 129.
“the National Assembly [had lost] the confidence of the people and that the dissention therein [had] nullified its mandate.”

**Moderate threats to military core interests**

In her second term, Benazir Bhutto worked to minimize threats to the military’s core interests. Unlike in her first term, Bhutto emphasized a softer, more cautious approach to relations with the armed forces. In particular, the prime minister protected military interests with regard to resources. She fought to maintain defense expenditures and successfully lobbied the U.S. government to release military equipment that had been withheld under the Pressler Amendment. As a result of Bhutto’s 1995 visit to the U.S., Pakistan procured a number of aircraft, missiles, and other military equipment. Bhutto also avoided threats to the military’s autonomy. The retirement of army officials and the selection of new service chiefs were “managed smoothly and efficiently.” Rather than attempting to subvert or interfere with military activities, Bhutto conferred with the head of the army and ISI on dealings with the United States. Most importantly, the prime minister emphasized the idea that “national security [would] not be compromised at any cost.”

Although Bhutto, for the most part, limited threats to military core interests, she was not entirely successful. Given the history of Benazir Bhutto and her political party, the Pakistani

---

140 However, the Pakistani Supreme Court subsequently declared the dissolution of the National Assembly to be “illegal” and “unconstitutional.” See “Dissolves Parliament, Dismisses PM,” PTV Television Network (Islamabad), 18 Apr. 1993, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 1 Apr. 2010; Tahir Amin, “Pakistan in 1993” 193.

141 Nawaz 474.
142 Shafqat 242; Nawaz 478. For a discussion of the Pressler Amendment, see Nawaz 431.
143 Nawaz 478.
144 Shafqat 241.
145 Nawaz 475.
army was likely predisposed to view her government as a threat. While she worked hard to counter the military’s suspicions, intensifying domestic unrest – particularly in Karachi – and the worst economic recession in decades increasingly threatened the integrity of the Pakistani state. By late 1994, the army was starting to become uneasy about the country’s deteriorating security situation. Threats to military cohesion or survival never reached the levels seen in the final days of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto’s rule or Nawaz Sharif’s second government. Yet unlike either Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto or Nawaz Sharif, Benazir Bhutto was never able to use limited threats to military core interests to her advantage.

From 1991 to 1993, Nawaz Sharif also attempted to minimize threats to core military concerns. Like most of Pakistan’s civilian politicians, he took care to safeguard military resources and other corporate interests. The prime minister also respected most areas of military autonomy. As one analyst explains, “Sharif was always careful not to question openly the role of the armed forces or that of the COAS.” Because his perceptions of the threat from India and the importance of Kashmir were in line with the military’s own perceptions, Sharif’s security policies at first posed no threat to military cohesion or survival.

Sharif, however, was ultimately less successful in minimizing threats than Benazir Bhutto would be in her second term. Despite Sharif’s attempt to keep the military pacified with a substantial defense budget, the termination of U.S. aid to Pakistan in 1991 began to take its toll. By December 1992, as the economic climate worsened, the civilian government was

---

147 See Shafqat 228 for details regarding the military’s opinion of Bhutto at the outset of her first administration.
149 Rashid, “Political ‘Battle’ Seen Leading to ‘Anarchy.’”
150 For example, see “Sharif Reiterates Commitment to Meet Army Needs,” Radio Pakistan Network (Islamabad), 26 May 1991, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 1 Apr. 2010.
151 Yasseen 575.
152 Nawaz 437.
153 The suspension of U.S. aid, pursuant to the Pressler Amendment, had first occurred in 1990, and was therefore largely blamed on Benazir Bhutto’s PPP. However, the military became discouraged with
forced to announce a freeze on the defense budget.\textsuperscript{154} Not all of the growing threats to the military were out of Sharif’s control. The prime minister also began to assert himself through decisions that threatened military autonomy. For example, his appointment of a new head of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) – without consulting the army’s leadership or requesting the customary list of suggested names – was seen as an affront by then COAS General Nawaz.\textsuperscript{155}

As Sharif’s first term continued, threats to military cohesion and state survival also began to grow. Escalating violence in Sindh and Punjab provinces once again forced the Pakistani army to play an internal security role. Civil-military disagreement arose over the conduct of the operations and, later, the army’s desire to extricate its forces.\textsuperscript{156} Army leaders, as usual, bristled at the thought of being used as a political tool and perceived a threat to institutional cohesion.\textsuperscript{157} When the violence worsened, General Nawaz began to worry that civil unrest might become so severe that the army would be unable to contain it.\textsuperscript{158} While these threats to military cohesion and states survival never fully materialized, they contributed – along with threats to army resources and autonomy – to a moderate overall threat to military interests.

\textbf{Discussion: Hypothesis supported by cases of moderate civilian control}

Cases of moderate civilian control also support the primary hypothesis. Both the second term of Benazir Bhutto and the first term of Nawaz Sharif were characterized by moderate levels of political division, popular support, and threat to military core interests. However, the association between moderate control and specific values of the proposed factors is more

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{*}Sharif’s government when the prime minister failed to find another route for restoring arms procurement. See Rais Ahmad Khan, “Pakistan in 1991: Light and Shadows,” \textit{Asian Survey} 32.2 (1992) 204-205; and Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Pakistan” 105.
\textsuperscript{155} Nawaz 452.
\textsuperscript{156} Nawaz 454-455.
\textsuperscript{157} Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Pakistan” 105.
\textsuperscript{158} Nawaz 457.
\end{flushright}
ambiguous than in cases of strong or weak civilian control. Strong civilian control seems to require that all three factors – a single locus of civilian political authority, a strong popular support base, and limited threats to military core interests – are met. Weak civilian control, as we will see in chapter 4, generally occurs when none of the three factors are met. As one might expect, moderate civilian control covers a broad range of possibilities between these two extremes.

Cases of moderate civilian control of the military demonstrate the necessity of analyzing the three proposed factors as an integrated set. In Sharif’s first term, a moderately strong support base was offset by a more significant threat to military interests. In contrast, Benazir Bhutto, in her second term, enjoyed a more limited support base, but also more successfully avoided threats to military core interests. Moderate civilian control may therefore be associated with a variety of values within each of the three factors. Yet, in both cases studied, moderate civilian control has been associated with a moderate average value across the set of factors.
Chapter 4: Period of weak civilian control

Benazir Bhutto’s first government (1988-1990) is the single case of weak civilian control considered in this study. It also differs from all other cases when analyzed according to the three factors outlined in the hypothesis. Compared to instances of strong or even moderate civilian control, Bhutto’s first administration generally exhibited more divided civilian political authority, a weaker popular support base, and more significant threats to military core interests.

Indirect, complete regime: An example of weak civilian control

Of the cases included in this study, the first term of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto is best described as an indirect, complete regime. Although the civil-military relationship in Bhutto’s first term was initially courteous, the prime minister had almost no leeway for developing her own policy agenda. In those early days of the Pakistani power Troika, the COAS was heavily involved in all major defense, domestic, and foreign policy decisions. Bhutto, in fact, would reportedly later claim that she had been excluded from important discussions regarding Pakistan’s nuclear program. Samina Yasmeen explains that, “from the outset...the Bhutto government operated against the backdrop of a hostile military establishment that was prepared to use any opportunity to remove her from power.” While civilians nominally headed the government, it is evident that the army wielded immense political power and heavily influenced the policymaking process.

159 Nawaz 416.
160 Haqqani 258; Arif 347.
161 Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Pakistan” 99.
162 Yasmeen 573.
Highly divided civilian power

Benazir Bhutto’s first government epitomized the problem of divided political authority. According to the 8th Amendment of the 1973 constitution, the president was granted ultimate power in the Pakistani government.\textsuperscript{163} Although hostility between the president and prime minister was not apparent in the early days of Bhutto’s tenure, competing loci of civilian power existed from the outset. Following the 1988 elections, Ishaq and the military establishment delayed transferring power to Bhutto for fifteen days.\textsuperscript{164} Once Bhutto finally entered office, President Ishaq reportedly required that the prime minister consult him on all decisions – even those outside of his legal authority.\textsuperscript{165} The relationship was considered so poor that party leaders began expecting Ishaq’s dissolution of the National Assembly long before it actually occurred.\textsuperscript{166}

The resistance of opposition political parties was also especially forceful during Benazir Bhutto’s first term. Sharif had achieved a major electoral victory in the Punjab region, and he soon became the chief minister of that large and politically important province.\textsuperscript{167} Bhutto led a vote of no confidence against him in the Punjab legislature and charged Sharif, his family, and his closest associates with tax evasion, loan default, and other crimes; but her efforts to minimize his political authority were unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{168} During this period, “confrontation between Bhutto and Sharif would provide the army and the ISI with additional leverage for influencing domestic politics.”\textsuperscript{169}

\textsuperscript{163} Kux 294.  
\textsuperscript{164} Yasmeen 573.  
\textsuperscript{165} Yasmeen 576.  
\textsuperscript{166} Yasmeen 577.  
\textsuperscript{167} Nawaz 413.  
\textsuperscript{168} Haqqani 205.  
\textsuperscript{169} Haqqani 203.
Weak popular support base

In 1988, Benazir Bhutto’s popularity was sufficient to win her the position of prime minister. Her popular support base, however, was far weaker than the support base secured by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in 1971 or Nawaz Sharif in 1997. The 1988 elections had produced a “narrow victory” of Bhutto’s PPP over Sharif’s Islamic Alliance.\(^\text{170}\) As a result, Bhutto lacked a true mandate.\(^\text{171}\) Even in the euphoric atmosphere following the end of military rule, Bhutto quickly found herself facing substantial political difficulties. Within three months of taking office, she was confronted by mass demonstrations against her government.\(^\text{172}\) In November 1989, the prime minister narrowly survived a no-confidence vote in the National Assembly.\(^\text{173}\) By the time she was finally dismissed in 1990, a deepening domestic crisis – complete with widespread strikes and growing violence – had enveloped several of Pakistan’s major cities.\(^\text{174}\)

Significant threats to military core interests

During her first term as prime minister, Benazir Bhutto also consistently threatened military core interests. Upon first entering office, she was already at a disadvantage. Bhutto and the PPP were perceived by the military as being “anti-state, anti army” and a “security threat” to Pakistan.\(^\text{175}\) The army was therefore suspicious of her from the outset. Rather than dispel the army’s fears, the prime minister took actions that confirmed them. In her efforts to establish control over the military, Bhutto time and time again interfered with officer promotions and personnel management. Her appointment of retired Lieutenant General Shamsur Rahman Kallue as Director General of ISI – without first consulting the COAS – violated the norms of

\(^\text{170}\) Kux 293.
\(^\text{171}\) Nawaz 413.
\(^\text{174}\) Ziring 117.
\(^\text{175}\) Shafqat 228.
military promotion.\textsuperscript{176} Bhutto also attempted to assert her authority by replacing Admiral Iftikhar A. Sirohey as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee.\textsuperscript{177} Her perceived disregard for the military’s organizational norms and internal operations was greatly resented by the Pakistani army.\textsuperscript{178}

As Bhutto’s first term progressed, the prime minister also made requests that seriously threatened military cohesion. In 1989 and 1990, military participation in law enforcement and internal security reached an all-time high when the army was deployed to Sindh province.\textsuperscript{179} The army was forced to mediate when hostilities increased between Bhutto’s government and the MQM in Sindh, and it soon became frustrated.\textsuperscript{180} Although the Pakistani army had undertaken domestic activities in the past, its deployment in Sindh went beyond its professional military duties. At that time, “the Army felt that it was being used to serve the goals of a political party, i.e. the PPP.”\textsuperscript{181} Growing internal unrest, combined with the Bhutto administration’s perceived indifference to Afghanistan and Kashmir, also presented a threat to the military’s national security interests.\textsuperscript{182}

Like the three governments which would follow hers, Bhutto’s regime attempted to placate the military with access to greater resources.\textsuperscript{183} But Bhutto’s concessions on budgetary issues were not enough to offset the significant and sustained threats she posed to military autonomy and cohesion. Unlike her father, who had skillfully balanced threats and compromises, Benazir Bhutto adopted an increasingly confrontational approach.\textsuperscript{184} Her failure

\textsuperscript{176} Arif 364.  
\textsuperscript{177} Kux 303.  
\textsuperscript{178} Arif 364.  
\textsuperscript{179} Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations under General Beg” 19.  
\textsuperscript{180} Nawaz 429.  
\textsuperscript{181} Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations under General Beg” 19.  
\textsuperscript{183} Ayesha Siddiqa, Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan’s Military Economy (Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2007) 151.  
\textsuperscript{184} See Nawaz 425-432.
to respect military core interests eventually heightened the army’s distrust and precluded improvements in the civil-military relationship.

Discussion: Hypothesis supported by case of weak civilian control

Whereas a single locus of civilian political authority, a strong popular support base, and limited threats to military core interests were present in both cases of strong civilian control, all three factors were absent in the case of weak civilian control. These analytical findings reinforce this paper’s hypothesis. During Benazir Bhutto’s first term, multiple loci of civilian power, a weak support base, and continual threats to multiple military core interests were together associated with low civilian control of the military and, eventually, a military-backed transition within the civilian government.
Chapter 5: Limitations and alternative explanations

Study limitations

The data I have analyzed suggest that all three factors under consideration in this paper have been associated with changes in the level of civilian control of the military. However, I acknowledge that there are limitations to the conclusions I have drawn. Civil-military relations in any country are exceedingly complicated, ongoing processes, which are subject to countless political, social, and economic variables. Although the set of factors I have outlined appears to be the most salient explanation for changes in Pakistan’s level of civilian control, it is impossible to establish a clear causal relationship. Moreover, the model I have presented cannot – and is not designed – to predict the precise timing of governmental transitions. While the three factors under consideration provide a useful framework for understanding broad changes in the civil-military relationship, the proximate causes of military takeovers and military-backed civilian changeovers are outside the realm of this study.

This thesis is also limited by the information currently available. Reliable accounts of political dealings in the top levels of government and the military are rare in any country. In Pakistan – a state known for its conspiracy theories, intense political rivalries, and opaque government structures – complete and unbiased information is even more difficult to come by. Even today, many of the facts and events studied in this analysis are surrounded by mystery and multiple interpretations. My conclusions are therefore subject to the constraints imposed by imperfect data on complex phenomena.

Alternative explanation 1: The illusion of civilian control

It is possible to examine Pakistan’s political-military history and conclude that true civilian control of the military has never been achieved. The Pakistani military has seemed to
step into and out of policymaking at will. One could argue that when the military has the ability to displace or supplant the civilian government as it sees fit, civilian control is only an illusion. However, it is a misconception that civilian control must always entail forcible subordination of the military by the civilian government. In fact, civilian control often requires action by both the military and civilian establishments.\textsuperscript{185} Most militaries have the brute strength needed to overpower the government by force, though not all could successfully govern once in power. Militaries under civilian control, however, \textit{choose} not to intervene in the policymaking process, whether because they lack the motive to do so or because the response to such an act would be overwhelmingly negative.

The civil-military relationship is constantly recalibrated in response to multiple, shifting variables. Where strong institutions and norms of civilian control do not yet exist, the level of civilian control may be especially changeable. While civilian control of the military may be strong at a given moment, it is almost never guaranteed over the long term. Consequently, the failure to sustain civilian control of the Pakistani military does not mean that control has never been achieved.

\textbf{Alternative explanation 2: The role of individuals}

Some readers might argue that individual personalities – not broad threats or opportunities – have determined the extent of civilian control of the Pakistani military. Indeed, the personal convictions and ambitions of individual actors have played an important role in shaping Pakistan’s civil-military relationships. General Asif Nawaz, for example, had surprisingly little personal political ambition.\textsuperscript{186} During his tenure as army chief, opportunities for military intervention and threats against military interests steadily increased – yet Nawaz

\textsuperscript{185} Diamond and Plattner, “Introduction” xxviii-xxix.
\textsuperscript{186} Nawaz 444-445.
resisted politicization. Likewise, relations between Benazir Bhutto, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, and COAS General Beg were undeniably colored by Ishaq and Beg’s personal ties to President Zia, the man who had executed Bhutto’s father.

While individual actions and personalities have clearly affected the course of civil-military relations, they do not provide a sufficient explanation for the changes observed. Although Beg is said to have had his own political ambitions, he never attempted to supplant the civilian government. In contrast, General Zia, who would ultimately mount a coup against Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, had been chosen precisely because he was seen as “quiet and pliable.” As this analysis has attempted to demonstrate, both military and civilian authorities have acted within a broader framework of threats and opportunities. The proximate causes of fluctuations in the civil-military relationship can therefore only be understood when these threats and opportunities are taken into account.

Alternative explanation 3: Military professionalism

One of the most enduring explanations for civilian control of the military is what Samuel P. Huntington terms military professionalism. A professional military, as defined by Huntington, is characterized by expertise, social responsibility, and corporate character. By this argument, professionalism is what keeps the military out of the realm of policymaking. But changes in the norms and culture of the military – much like changes in the norms and culture of a society – would be expected to occur over years and decades, rather than months. Moreover, broad, cultural changes would likely follow a general trend in one direction or another. It is

---

187 Nawaz 448.
188 Kux 303.
189 Nawaz 411.
190 Nawaz 337.
191 See Huntington’s The Soldier and the State.
192 Huntington 8-10.
therefore unlikely that arguments based on organizational culture can account for the rapid fluctuations in Pakistan’s civil-military relationship.

Explanations rooted in Huntington’s theory are also problematic because military professionalism can explain periods of both strong and weak civilian control. Professional militaries – like the Pakistani army – prioritize the nation state, emphasize the importance of external dangers, and seek to protect military resources.\(^ {193}\) It is reasonable to expect that they may feel compelled to intervene when threats to those priorities become severe. As Finer explains, “The military’s consciousness of themselves as a profession may lead them to see themselves as the servants of the state rather than of the government in power.”\(^ {194}\)

\(^{193}\) Huntington 65-67. For professionalism in the Pakistani army, see Rizvi, “Civil-Military Relations under General Beg” 18.

\(^{194}\) Finer 25.
Chapter 6: Policy implications and recommendations

Policy implications

This analysis has demonstrated that it is possible to associate certain factors with a greater likelihood of civilian control of the military in Pakistan. Unified civilian political authority, a strong political support base, and limited threats to military core interests have been shown to accompany periods of stronger civilian control. There are undoubtedly other factors that have shaped Pakistan’s civil-military relationship, and no precise formula exists for achieving and sustaining strong civilian control of the military. Nevertheless, the association of these three factors with higher levels of civilian control may have significant implications for current and future Pakistani policymakers.

As challenging as it is to analyze the civil-military relationship during past periods of civilian rule, it is even more problematic to analyze a government that is still in progress. Whereas historical cases have the benefit of primary sources released after the fact and analyses written in hindsight, much of the relevant information about the current Pakistani government remains hidden from public view. The policy implications drawn from my analysis therefore rely on press reports that are, in many cases, speculative.

A difficult start for the Zardari government

Since his election in 2008, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari has faced considerable problems regarding all three of the independent variables considered in this study. Like the first government of his late wife, Benazir Bhutto, Zardari’s government has confronted substantial opposition from rival political parties. In early 2009, a Supreme Court ruling banning Nawaz Sharif and his brother Shahbaz from elected office was seen in some quarters as an attempt by
Zardari to suppress political challengers.\(^{195}\) Zardari, however, was not nearly as successful in this regard as Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had been – or as Sharif himself had been during his second term. The following months were marked by political infighting that was intense even by Pakistan’s standards. Sharif and his supporters clashed with police as they led a ‘long march’ of anti-government protests across Pakistan, partly in response to the dismissal of chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry.\(^{196}\) The march was only called off when Zardari made a “stunning concession” to his political opposition by reinstating the chief justice – a move that hinted at his severely weakened political authority.\(^{197}\) Even within the government itself, the locus of civilian power has been divided by well-publicized disputes between Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani.\(^{198}\)

Public opinion of the civilian government quickly soured after Zardari took office. The jubilation that followed the return to democratic governance soon gave way to charges of corruption, mismanagement, and incompetence.\(^{199}\) As of July 2009, over 60 percent of Pakistanis polled disapproved of how the president was running the government.\(^{200}\) The army, too, has grown restless, as threats to its core interests have become apparent. When the president reportedly downplayed the military threat posed by India, Pakistan’s army likely feared the consequences for the institution and the country at large.\(^{201}\) Zardari’s perceived capitulation

\(^{199}\) Pamela Constable, “For Pakistani president, goodbye to goodwill; After little more than a year in office, Zardari faces criticism over U.S. alliance, battle with insurgents and widespread shortages,” The Washington Post, 16 Nov. 2009: A10
\(^{200}\) “IRI Index: Pakistan Public Opinion Survey.”
\(^{201}\) Isambard Wilkinson and Dean Nelson, “Zardari in power struggle with army over India détente,” The Daily Telegraph, 26 June 2009: 20.
to Washington’s demands – including conditions placed on military aid – has also made him increasingly unpopular with the army leadership.\footnote{202}

The aforementioned data challenges make it impossible to determine precisely how weak civilian control has been under the Zardari government. Yet it is safe to say that Zardari’s control of the military has not been strong. Although the civilian government is presumed to run the economy, national security – including the country’s foreign policy toward India and Afghanistan, much of the nuclear program, and aspects of the military budget – has allegedly been under the control of the Pakistani military.\footnote{203} When the president attempted to bring the ISI under firm civilian control, he was sharply rebuffed by the army.\footnote{204} According to journalist Ahmed Rashid, the goal of the army and opposition parties has been “to weaken Zardari so irreversibly that he is forced from office and a new, more pliant president could be appointed who would do the bidding of the army.”\footnote{205} Given the divisions in civilian political authority, weakening popular support, and sizeable threats to military core interests, it is not surprising that strong civilian control has not materialized.

\textit{Some cause for hope}

Pakistan’s current situation indicates that the civilian government will continue to have significant difficulties in consolidating control over the military. Zardari’s public support base will not be easily rehabilitated, pressure from Washington to curtail the army’s political role may well be met with a military backlash, and growing internal unrest may seriously threaten the integrity

\footnote{202 Given the Pakistani army’s reliance on U.S. assistance, however, the threat of non-compliance with U.S. demands may be equally troubling for military interests (see Constable, “For Pakistani president, goodbye to goodwill”).
205 Rashid, “VIEW: President Zardari’s loss of control.”}
of the state. Of all the civilian administrations considered in this study, none transitioned from weak – or even moderate – civilian control of the military to strong civilian control of the military. In both instances of strong civilian control, the civilian leadership capitalized on initially favorable circumstances to further consolidate its power.

That no civilian government has drastically improved its level of control does not mean that it cannot be done. Recent developments suggest that the outlook for Pakistan’s civil-military relationship is not entirely grim. The most notable changes are occurring with regard to the locus of civilian political power. Prime Minister Gilani has reportedly stated that he will support President Zardari in any situation.\textsuperscript{206} Even Nawaz Sharif has tempered his campaign against the incumbent government.\textsuperscript{207} At the time of this writing, the 18\textsuperscript{th} Amendment to the Pakistani constitution – which would strengthen the position of the prime minister vis-à-vis the president – has been approved by the National Assembly. Although the bill would significantly weaken Zardari’s personal authority, it also has the potential to unify civilian political authority by empowering the parliament and limiting the autocratic tendencies that have caused trouble in the past.\textsuperscript{208}

As we have seen, military intervention in policymaking is not inevitable. Pakistan has experienced briefs windows of opportunity, in which civilian control of the military was growing stronger and true democratic consolidation was possible. However, past failures hint at the difficulty of achieving future success. Pakistan’s current civilian government is unlikely to gain solid control of its military without innovative measures and a good deal of luck.

\textsuperscript{206} Mir.
\textsuperscript{207} Pamela Constable, “Pakistan’s Zardari holds off his political foes – for now; President gives up some powers, faces pressure to relinquish more,” \textit{The Washington Post}, 1 Dec. 2009: A08.
Even if gained, civilian control can be easily lost

This analysis has demonstrated that strong civilian control is not an endpoint, but a continuous process. Even under the best of circumstances, establishing durable civilian control of the Pakistani military is a Sisyphean task. A complacent, reckless, or merely unlucky government that allows its authority to be divided, loses public support, or threatens military core interests may rapidly lose control over the military. Even when civilian control has been institutionalized – as it was under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and during the second term of Nawaz Sharif – it has often been fragile. Time and time again, civilian leaders have inadvertently created threats and opportunities that encourage the military to remain involved in policymaking. As a result, policymakers who had every advantage at the outset of their term have eventually squandered the opportunity to establish lasting civilian control. If and when the Pakistani government regains civilian control, the battle will not be over. Until the norms and traditions of civilian control truly take root in all sectors of Pakistani society, civilian control of the military will be lost far more easily than it is won.

Policy recommendations

The results of this study indicate that Pakistani policymakers seeking strong control of the military should preserve a single locus of civilian power, maximize their popular support base, and limit threats to military core interests. Because these three factors are the product of both strategic decisions and given circumstances, some are more amenable to policy solutions than others. Nevertheless, current and future Pakistani policymakers have several options for increasing the likelihood of strong and sustained civilian control.
Recommendation 1: Encourage multi-partisan collaboration

Pakistan’s current civilian government should unify civilian political authority by leading collaborative efforts among the country’s political parties on a variety of issues.

Under the leadership of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and during the second term of Nawaz Sharif, consolidated political authority was achieved through active suppression of political challengers. Although this method allowed both prime ministers to successfully consolidate power, it was ultimately unsustainable. Centralized decision-making and the limitation of political freedoms, however, are not the only means by which politicians can concentrate political authority. Where a single locus of civilian power is lacking, it may also be formed through partnership with potential political rivals.

Cooperation among political parties does not preclude the presence of a vibrant political opposition. Rather, it entails respect for the authority of the incumbent civilian government. Multi-partisan initiatives need not directly address the civil-military relationship to be beneficial. The goal is to give all civilian political actors a stake in the continuation of democratic institutions. When political parties and civilian leaders consistently work at cross-purposes, they create opportunities for military intervention. In contrast, when politicians truly collaborate on issues of national importance, they may build relationships and democratic traditions that discourage praetorianism. By extending even limited offers of cooperation, the current leadership may begin laying the foundation for a strong civil-military relationship.

In Pakistan, a country in which political infighting has long been the norm, securing agreement among parties is an immensely difficult task. After brief periods of relative harmony, opposition groups often revert to backstabbing, deals with the military, and violent demonstrations, while the incumbent government re institutes political suppression. Yet Sharif’s
more conciliatory approach in recent days, along with the newly approved 18th Amendment, may suggest that political rivals are becoming more open to cooperation.

Recommendation 2: Create a public forum to discuss civil-military issues

The government should also develop an open forum in which civil-military issues may be brought to light.

The results of this analysis have suggested that public opinion plays a role in shaping the civil-military relationship. As we have seen, a civilian government with a weak popular support base generally wields less control over its military. The problem, however, is much larger than public confidence in individual political parties and personalities. The civilian government’s popular support base is also a product of public confidence in democratic civilian governance writ large. It is not surprising that, in a society in which democracy has been so flawed for so long, popular attachment to elected governments has often easily dissipated.

Although Pakistani public opinion is notoriously fickle, policymakers would likely benefit from the creation of an open forum on civil-military issues. There are many details of the military’s inner workings that would likely be neither revealed by the military nor appropriate for a public forum. Yet by beginning to open the relationship, civilian leaders can harness the power of popular support. An initiative that gives a voice to the population through education and discussion of broad civil-military issues may immediately boost the popularity of the current civilian leadership. More importantly, however, even modest improvements in the transparency of the civil-military relationship might increase public involvement in and attachment to the democratic process. By subjecting the civil-military relationship to some level of public scrutiny, the government can create an enforcement mechanism to reduce opportunities for military politicization.

Finer draws a similar conclusion in his discussion of political culture (see Finer 21).
Admittedly, this recommendation would create problems for a civilian government that wished to use the current opacity of the civil-military relationship to its advantage. But civilian leaders must choose which they value more: the prospect of genuine civilian control of the military, or the opportunity to manipulate the democratic system.

**Recommendation 3: Limit the military’s internal security role**

The civilian government should limit requests to the military to perform internal security duties and avoid the use of the military as a domestic political instrument.

One clear lesson of this study is that the use of the military for domestic political or law and order functions has often jeopardized Pakistan’s civil-military relationship. These tasks not only threaten military cohesion, they also jeopardize popular support and bring the armed forces into the political process. Given the extent of internal conflict in Pakistan today, it would be difficult – if not counterproductive – to end domestic military operations. In some cases, the use of the military for domestic security is not only warranted; it is the only solution available. Yet policymakers must be aware of the problems they create when the military is deployed for purposes outside of its professional purview. As Stephen Cohen explains, frequent appeals to the military to resolve domestic problems often result in the downfall of the civilian government, either through popular rebellion or resistance from the military itself. 210

Reliance on coercive measures of conflict resolution may at times be necessary, but it carries significant risks. For the sake of both popular support and military core interests, Pakistani politicians should, whenever possible, find alternative means of quelling civil unrest and settling political disputes.

---

210 Cohen 48.
Recommendation 4: Find the balance of threat and compromise

Pakistan’s civilian government should work hard to limit threats to military core interests while still making progress toward civilian control.

This thesis has suggested that reduced military involvement in politics is often associated with limited threats to military core interests. Unfortunately, the distinction between illegitimate military participation in policymaking and the legitimate protection of military core interests is not always clear. Policymakers need to differentiate between respect for the military as an institution, which is vital for a healthy civil-military relationship, and appeasement of the armed forces, which perpetuates the military’s role as a policymaker. Civilian governments that are unable or unwilling to curtail any of the military’s political activities are unlikely to achieve strong civilian control.

On the other hand, civilian leaders should also avoid confrontational policies that breed insecurity and mistrust within the Pakistani army. Active efforts to establish civilian control of the military are crucial, but a heavy-handed approach is likely to elicit a backlash. To avoid a hostile reaction, the overall threat these efforts pose to military resources, autonomy, cohesion, and survival should remain low. In some cases, limited threats to military resources or autonomy might successfully be used to institutionalize civilian control. However, politicians must remain cognizant of their own political authority and popular support base. Limited threats are only likely to produce strong civilian control when civilian power is unified and popular support is strong.
Bibliography

Primary sources


52


**Secondary sources**


Constable, Pamela. “Pakistan’s Zardari holds off his political foes – for now; President gives up some powers, faces pressure to relinquish more.” The Washington Post. 1 Dec. 2009: A08.


