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THE ARAB SPRING IN PAKISTAN?

Abstract:

Pakistan, although it is not an Arab state, has long lasting contacts with the Arab World. They are based on the same religious and cultural foundations and deep economic contact as well. Many Pakistanis work in the Gulf States. Pakistani military has been training and supporting armed forces of such countries as e.g. Jordan. So the ideas of The Arab Spring have influenced young elites of Pakistani society somehow. The goal of the article is to show similarities and certain differences between the political situation in Pakistan and Arab states (esp. Egypt as comparable by the size and population, and role of military in politics too). The Author tries to answer the question whether something like the Arab Spring possible in Pakistan and/or maybe something like that just has happened.

Keywords: Pakistan, Arab Spring, Imran Khan, Tehrik-e-Insaf Pakistan, Inquilaab, Politics

The aim of the article is to answer the question whether the phenomenon of mass protests involving young people that will result in the overthrow/reform of the political system existing nearly forty years possible in Pakistan? For this purpose, what is important are the similarities and differences between the society and the political systems of Pakistan and Egypt, which is the largest Arab state in which a social movement called the “Arab Spring” emerged.

The population of Pakistan is about 193 million and 239 thousand (85 million and 294 thousand in Egypt). For the analysis of the possibility of “youth revolution”

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the compaction of demographic structure of society is important. People between 25 and 54 years of age represent 35.1% of the Pakistani population (in Egypt it is a little more – 38.3%). People between 15 and 24 – 21.6% (in Egypt, 18%). The largest percentage – 34 are people under 14 years of age (in Egypt, 32%). Population growth rate is 1.52% (1.88% for Egypt). If we consider development of civil society, the important factor is illiteracy, which remains a serious limitation in access to a broader knowledge and active participation in social and political life. In Pakistan, people able to read and write, are on average, 54.9% of the population. Among men it is 68.6% among women – only 40.3%. In Egypt 72% in total, 80.3% among men and 63.5% among women. The difference is even more evident if one compares the school age. The average Pakistani starts school at age 8 (7 for females). Egyptians at the age of 12 (men go to school a year longer than women). Of course, these are estimates and very general statements. One should assume that the problem is more acute in rural areas and poor suburbs, than in inhabited by middle class urban neighborhoods. Unemployment rate in Pakistan among people between 15 and 24 years: 7.7% (in Egypt until 24.8)¹.

Comparison of the economic situation of both countries is also worth mentioning. For more objective image, as a starting point we adopted year 2010, so a few months before the overthrow of the Mubarak regime in Egypt. Egypt's GDP was then 498.1 billion (purchasing power parity). This gave 6367 USD per capita. Economic annual growth was 5.29%. 51% of the population lived below the poverty line, defined by the UN on \$ 2 a day² In Pakistan, in the same period the gross domestic product was 233.4 billion and per capita income was 1,254 dollars. The economy grew by 2.4% per year³. More than 60% Pakistanis lived below the poverty line⁴. It must be remembered that in 2010 Pakistan was hit by devastating flood, which destroyed not only buildings, but also farms, which are a major source of income⁵.

The above data can be summarized to the following conclusion: Pakistan is a country of poorer and less educated people than was pre-revolutionary Egypt. On the one hand, a lower standard of living may be the basis for socio-economic revolution, on the other hand, the percentage of people who have access to knowledge useful for a critical overview is actually relatively small. It limits the potential

¹ Demographic and social data for CIA World Factbook: [on-line] <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pk.html> (Pakistan) and <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/eg.html> (Egypt), 26 June 2014.

² "Egypt Economy", *Economy watch*, 29 March 2010, [on-line] http://www.economywatch.com/world_economy/egypt, 26 June 2014.

³ "Pakistan GDP and Economic Data", *Global Finance*, [on-line] <http://www.gfmag.com/gdp-data-country-reports/2014-pakistan-gdp-country-report.html>, 26 June 2014.

⁴ "Poverty headcount ratio at \$3.10 a day (2011 PPP) (% of population)", The World Bank, [on-line] <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.2DAY>, 26 June 2014.

⁵ "Flood in Pakistan", UNDP, [on-line] <http://undp.org.pk/flood-in-pakistan.html>, 26 June 2013.

flow of ideas from the Arab states to “Pakistani street”. What is the reason why Pakistani political elite do not use the situation in a power struggle? Or they do it to the extent that does not lead to violent social reactions? For this purpose, it is important to compare the political systems of the two countries. Especially in terms of democratic experiences. Focusing solely on the most recent history can be seen that in Egypt there was no democratic tradition at all. The major supporters of its introduction occurred are Islamic fundamentalists. The monarchy has been overthrown 23 July 1952 by the military coup of the Free Officers Movement, led by General Muhammad Negib. He has been replaced during the “palace coup” in 1954, by Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser⁶. His successors: Anwar as-Sadat and Husni Mubarak were also heavy-brass military. This meant that the armed forces have become the ruling power of the state. Only opposition (often outlawed by the authorities) was the fundamentalist organization Muslim Brotherhood⁷. Egyptian National Democratic Party (which is an emanation of the army), became de facto sole political power, resampling much more the model known from the Eastern Bloc, than that of the Western democracy. The situation in Pakistan is quite different. The state has emerged August 14, 1947. It inherited a political system that is the legacy of the slow transfer of power, performed by the British on the Indian Subcontinent. The first constitution of the state was India Government Act of 1935. What is important, it was passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom 2 August 1935 year, and then imposed on India⁸. The second source of law was another act of Westminster: India Independence Act of 1947⁹. This legal framework lasted until 1956, when it was replaced by the first “indigenous” constitution. A key figure who influenced the political fundamentals of Pakistan was its founder and first leader (formally as the Governor General – representative of the Crown) Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Unfortunately, he died in 1948, without finishing the process of creation of the political system. He was trained as a lawyer with the practice in London’s well known Lincoln’s Inn. A man belonging rather to the Western world, he opportunistically treated Islam as an argument for the creation of the state for Indian Muslims, not as a religion which he confessed himself (or at least follow/obey its rules). Therefore, the state he created seemed to be a secular republic, based on the traditions of Westminster democracy, not a dictatorship or a theocracy¹⁰. The postulate of a secular state has never been reached in Pakistan. The Objectives Resolution passed by the Pakistan’s Constitutional Assembly

⁶ A. Patek, J. Rydel, J. Węc, *Najnowsza historia świata*, t. 1: 1945-1963, Kraków 1997, p. 342.

⁷ The role of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt as opposition describes prof. J. Zdanowski in the work *Współczesna muzułmańska myśl społeczno-polityczna. Nurt Braci Muzułmanów*, Warszawa 2009.

⁸ “Government of India Act 1935”, *Legislation.gov.uk*, [on-line] <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5and1Edw8/26/2/enacted>, 26 June 2014.

⁹ “Indian Independence Act 1947”, *Legislation.gov.uk*, [on-line] <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/10-11/30>, 26 June 2014.

¹⁰ H. Khan, *Constitutional and political history of Pakistan*, Karachi 2007, pp. 49-55.

12 March 1949 which is an integral part of every subsequent constitution of Pakistan, refers directly to the will of God and the Quran as a source of law¹¹. The quest for Islamization of the state does not have a chance to become directly flashpoint of revolution.

The first military coup's leader in 1958, general Ayub Khan did not intend to create military oligarchy as it has been done in Egypt. The mere fact is that the coup began on demand of the elected President Iskander Mirza. He invited gen. Ayub Khan to take power as the administrator of a martial law after a long period of instability and inability to form a government based on the stable parliamentary majority. Bloodless nature of the process show the specific of Pakistan: the army did not use the force to take power. It just threatens to do so. It only takes the opportunity caused by crisis of civil institutions and/or political organizations¹². Another characteristic of the Pakistani political practice, is seeking the legitimacy for the military rule in general elections. Pools are usually flawed, but the opposition is likely imprisoned (in exception of its leaders e.g. Benazir Bhutto and her hanged father Zulfikar; other civil politicians had been "just" exiled). The military has tried generally to make their rule as temporary as possible (although word "temporary" in the case of Ayub Khan meant seven years). The governments of Ayub tried to maintain a semblance of democracy, not only through the organization of the presidential election, but also the specific reform of the political system. He introduced unique solution, called "basic democracy". It has assumed participation of all citizens of the state regardless of gender in elections to the lowest municipal level. So elected local councilors (called "basic democrats") elected another level of administration. In the parliamentary elections half of seats were elected by indirect suffrage, and half – by direct one. In this way, General Ayub Khan wanted to rebuild democracy "from below", without any engagement of political parties. In fact, this idea was completely unrealistic. After the first such pools, Ayub announced the decree of restoring the functioning of political parties in Pakistan. He himself as newly elected president acceded to the party called the Pakistani Muslim League (the name referred to the political movement headed by former MA Jinnah)¹³. In addition, under the guise of "teaching Pakistanis democracy and responsibility for the state", the president has retained the right to appoint half of the members of parliament at their own discretion. Ayub won the presidential election on Jan. 2, 1965. His adversary was a woman, the sister of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Fatima, a recognized physician and dentist, formerly close associate of her brother. She had been respected, so then immune to possible negative campaign or arrest. Although the elections were probably rigged, their importance in shaping the political con-

¹¹ "The Constitution of Pakistan", *Pakistani.org*, [on-line] <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/annex.html>, 26 June 2014.

¹² S. Nawaz, *Crossed Swords. Pakistan, it's army and the wars within*, Karachi 2008, pp. 142-143.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 142-143.

sciousness of Pakistanis (or at least its elites) cannot be underestimated even today. Most of the Muslim jurists agreed that the woman can be the head of the Islamic state. This verdict opened the way for Benazir Bhutto to take up the office of prime minister almost 30 years later. The candidature of Miss Jinnah was also an opportunity for organized action of supporters of parliamentary democracy and civilian, secular government. She has been a symbol and pattern for young Pakistani women and the patron of schools and medical academies for women, and many women's organizations¹⁴.

These elections and the consolidation of opposition forces against the government have shown that there is a deep political awareness among Pakistani elites that democracy is an effective way to govern the country. On the other hand, it turned out that the military is not strong enough and determined to forcefully eliminate political opposition and its leaders. Significant role as the custodians of awareness of the value of representative democracy was played by the members of the Pakistan Civil Service (whose traditions reached the time of the British Raj, when they established Indian Civil Service, employing local representatives of the middle class)¹⁵.

One shall keep in mind the Pakistani elite is not homogenous. On the one hand, these include officers of the armed forces (the graduates of British universities of imperial India, or even British Sandhurst Military Academy like Ayub Khan) on the other, representatives of bureaucracy gathered in Pakistan Civil Service. In addition to these "new" elites functioned as the traditional elite: great landowners of Punjab and Sindh, and representatives of the nascent businessmen and industrialists.

An important factor in shaping contemporary Pakistan and its political scene were the elections of 7 December 1970. Although they were held under conditions determined by a military dictatorship, the first time they had fully democratic character. President General Yahya Khan (who took power of General Ayub Khan because of his illness) decided to carry them out, as the intelligence services wrongly predicted their effect, assuming that the largest group does not receive the required majority for the government. The army would act as "kingmaker" than. The majority of seats gained the Awami League – the party fighting for national autonomy for Bengalis. Than Pakistan consisted of two "wings": Western Province and Eastern Province (today's Bangladesh). Bengalis despite the fact that they were the largest ethnic group, felt country's second-class citizens. The official language of the state – Urdu was a foreign language for them. The largest nation of the Western Province – Punjabis was over-represented in the most State agencies and central offices. However, at that time, Bengal was the most important provider of

¹⁴ "Election Campaign 1965", *Nazaria-i-Pakistan Trust*, [on-line] <http://nazariapak.info/Madar-i-Millat/Election-Campaign.php>, 26 June 2014; vide: L. Ziring, *Pakistan in the twentieth century. A political history*, Karachi–New York 1997, pp. 281-283.

¹⁵ "History of civil services in India and reforms", [on-line] www.arc.gov.in/10th/ARC_10th_Report_Ch2.pdf, 26 June 2014.

national income for the state, due to the jute crop grown there. The central government, however, had not shared export earnings to the poorer province. This was particularly acute during the catastrophic floods that hit Bengal in 1970. The complete lack of interest in helping the flood victims and rebuilding the province from the devastation caused that Awami League, seeking autonomy, won almost all the seats attributable for the eastern province. However, President Yahya nominated as prime minister the leader of the Pakistan People's Party, which came second in the election, winning elections in the Western Province. He sent the army consisting mostly of residents of the western part of the country's military, to break the protests. It has become a cause of disintegration of the state, third war with India and the emergence of an independent state of Bangladesh¹⁶.

The experience of military defeat, and the breakup of the state as a result of ethnic conflict is still traumatizing, at least for the Pakistani elite, including the military. It was also proven that contrary to the official propaganda, Pakistani armed forces are not omnipotent and are not able to fulfill its primary task: defending the territorial integrity of the state. Even contemporary Pakistan is not ethnically homogeneous, and so the process of decomposition of the state launched in 1971 can be expanded. The largest percentage of the population are Punjabis (44.68%), Pashtuns are 15.42%, 14.1% Sindhi, Siriaki 8.38% of the population, Mohjiri (descendants of people who fled India in 1947) 7.57%, and 3.57% Balochi. This is accompanied by a mosaic of languages spoken in Pakistan. Punjabi 48%, Sindhi 12%, Saraiki 10%, Pashtu 8%, Urdu (official language of Pakistan as a mother tongue) 8%, Balochi 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahui 1%, other languages 8%. Pakistan also witnesses conflict between factions of Islam. Muslims constitute 96.4% of the population. Among them 85-90% are Sunni, Shia 10-15%. Other religions constitute 3.6%¹⁷. For the ruling establishment in Islamabad the prospect of further division and separatism (supported by India or suspected of such support) is certainly very traumatic. On the other hand a struggle for political representation and the national aspirations of elites is an important factor constituting the political scene, especially in the provinces inhabited by Pashtuns: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and in Baluchistan.

Military rulers were very important for the political process in Pakistan. But there were also civilian governments. The most important were the years 1971-1977, when the head of state (first as president and later as Prime Minister) was charismatic leader of the Pakistan People's Party, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Under his rule not only was the oldest continuously operating political party founded, but above all the Constitution has been adopted, which is still in force today. It introduced a parliamentary-cabinet system of government responsible to an elected parliament. President's powers were limited to perform merely ceremonial

¹⁶ J. Kieniewicz, *Od Bengalu do Bangladeszu*, Warszawa 1976, p. 249.

¹⁷ *The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency*, [on-line] <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/gcos/pk.html>, 26 June 2014.

functions¹⁸. The Constitution of 1973 is still the reference point for the political parties calling for democratization. Pakistan People's Party hasn't met popular expectations. It proclaimed a socialist manifesto (similar to some extent to the ideology of Arab socialism) and competed in the elections under the slogan "bread, clothing and shelter" (Urdu: roti, kapra aur makan)¹⁹. In fact PPP became (and perhaps it was from the beginning) oligarchy of Bhutto family, one of the richest in Sindh province. Withdrawal from its ideals became the basis for numerous splits caused by those activists who considered leftist program not only as a populist tool to gain power. The founder of the party, the Prime Minister Bhutto, posed as "Pakistani Mao" (he used the term "chairman" rather than "Prime Minister"). He wanted to be seen as a defender of the poor, or a modern social democrat²⁰. However, the structure created by him, and the program framework exists till today, playing a significant role in the political scene. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has become a legendary figure. August 13, 1973, he was overthrown by General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, then after the bogus trial (based in false allegation of ordering assassination of a political opponent) hanged on April 4, 1979, in a prison in Rawalpindi²¹. His legendary "martyrdom" had been skillfully exploited by his daughter Benazir Bhutto, and today by his son in law Asif Ali Zardari (until December 2013 President of Pakistan). It should be noted that not only the army opposed to the rule of PPP, but primarily all those political forces that opposed the leftist policy, that is mostly dispossessed Pakistani industrialists. They became the major victims of socialist policies of Bhutto. They also became supporters of the new military regime that replaced the leftist civilian rule. The new authorities seeking political base, turned to the industrial middle class, whom they promised (and fulfilled these promises) the return of nationalized property. They also relied on religious constituency. Some researchers even sought family relationships between Gen. Zia ul-Haq and one of the leaders of the fundamentalist organization Jamaat-e-Islami²². Even General Zia decided not to completely eliminate the framework of a democratic state, and adapted it to his own needs. He introduced a presidential system by amendments to the Constitution of 1973. He also announced Islamic penal law "hudud" (however, the reluctance of the medical and legal professions meant that no such penalties as stoning or amputations were imposed to the legal system of the State). After the tragic death of Zia ul-Haq 17 August 1988, the arduous process of restoration of democracy had begun. But continuous perceptual presence of the army in the political process has been constant factor even now. Successively chiefs of staff of the army were consulted by

Bibl. Jag.

¹⁸ H. Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-287.

¹⁹ "Our history", *Pakistan Peoples Party*, [on-line] <http://www.ppp.org.pk/history.html>, 26 June 2014.

²⁰ I. Ziring, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

²¹ I. Talbot, *Pakistan. A Modern History*, New York 2005, p. 258.

²² A. Hyman, M. Ghayur, N. Kaushik, *Pakistan. Zia and After...*, New Delhi 1989, pp. 106-107.

civilian politicians. This custom took the form of so-called. “Troika” composed of the army chief of staff, the prime minister and the president. Personal nominations in the armed forces depend on the sole military circles, which civilian politicians do not have the courage to challenge. Also the “Afghan” and “Kashmir” foreign policy were practically excluded from civilian control, staying in the exclusive realm of “responsibility” of the armed forces²³.

At the same time there were four changes of civil prime ministers. Most often, this was done on suspicion of corruption and met with full acceptance of the public. Both of those leaders: Benazir Bhutto of the Pakistan People’s Party and Nawaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League (an organization representing the interests of industrialists and Punjabi financial elite) has been suspended that way. Until 12 October 1999 the army remained in the barracks. Then there has been the last military coup in which General Pervez Musharraf took the power (first as the chief executive than as the president). The circumstances of the event are well known from the general’s memoirs, “In the Line of Fire” (Warsaw Polish edition of 2007), and with the development of Owen B. Jones “Eye of the Storm,, (Yale, 2002). Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has decided to dismiss Gen. Musharraf as head of the Army Staff, and forbade the crew of the airplane (civilian PIA flight from Colombo, Sri Lanka) to land in Karachi. But his comrade officers unlocked the airport, and put Mr. Sharif under house arrest. The prime minister, has been accused of bringing danger to life and health of passengers (an act that may lead to capital punishment Pakistan), but due to the mediation of Saudi Arabia, Nawaz Sharif found himself in exile. It was impossible to predict General Musharraf’s politics, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and accession to Pakistan “anti-terrorist coalition” had not taken place. Then, under pressure from the United States president has taken a number of democratic reforms, which he called “enlightened modernization”. This process was supported by the western financial assistance. President organized elections which had been probably rigged. Range of political parties participated: religious groups represented by two major parties. Also secular parties took part, among them specially created for the occasion, Pakistani Muslim League as “presidential” one.

What’s most important for the understanding of social processes taking place in Pakistan, is the growth of free media in the first decade of the twenty-first century (during military dictatorship of General Musharraf). This applies especially to electronic media. In addition to radio and public television stations, numerous are private. Particularly a fully professional TV – Geo.tv²⁴. Young Pakistanis are also very active on the Internet. There are many websites with current affairs and information²⁵. There are also active forums of fierce debate on the political situation.

²³ M.J. Gohari, *The Taliban. Ascent to Power*, Karachi 2000, pp. 18-20.

²⁴ Geo.tv, [on-line] <http://www.geo.tv/Default.html>, 26 June 2014.

²⁵ S.A. Siraj, “Critical analysis of press freedom in Pakistan”, *Global Media Journal*, [on-line] [http://www.aiou.edu.pk/gmj/artical1\(b\).asp](http://www.aiou.edu.pk/gmj/artical1(b).asp), 26 June 2014.

Internet users exchange news as spectacular as the killing of Osama bin Laden by U.S. commandos (reported live by one of the residents of Abbottabad)²⁶. The government did not take any attempts to censor the Internet, with the exception of blocking access to YouTube (and this is because some content is contrary to Islam). An access to the popular social networking Facebook is unlimited. Internet plays a significant role in the political debate which takes place among young Pakistanis. It connects them also with the large diaspora residing outside the country. In England alone, it has over a million people²⁷. Many of them maintain regular contact with their families in Pakistan, are interested in their problems and take part in political discussions that take place on the Web. They are using the high standards of freedom of expression, which are valid in the United Kingdom. Critical opinions about the Pakistani government also reach Pakistan, influencing local public opinion. For example, Pakistani bloggers revealed that during the catastrophic floods that hit Pakistan in 2010, President Zardari and his son were on holiday at their family estate in Normandy. They flew a helicopter that was missing in Pakistan to provide assistance to flood victims²⁸.

This information spread to the extent of Pakistani young people that eventually found their way into official circulation, which contributed to a drastic decline in support for the ruling Pakistan People's Party and Zardari personally. On the other hand, Internet users were able to mobilize philanthropic organizations in the English city of Birmingham (inhabited by many Pakistanis) have transferred the money to the needy flood victims²⁹.

There are also many NGOs in Pakistan, involved in a number of important issues ranging from the common social issues to the rights of women. In this way, especially young Pakistanis have many forums, and ways to express their opinions without censorship (beyond issues against Islam, and even that is "softening" as a result of globalization and constant communication with the diaspora living in the West) or repression from the authorities. Famous journalists act as independent experts in various fields. For example, the recognized authorities in the field of foreign policy are Ahmed Rashid and Musa Khan Jalalzai, often quoted and invited by international media as commentators and academic experts. They also have their own websites, which share the opinions and comments to readers both in Pakistan and abroad³⁰.

²⁶ The relation of the events in Abbottabad via Twitter, 26 June 2014.

²⁷ [on-line] <http://www.ethnicity.ac.uk/population/size.html>, 26 June 2014.

²⁸ "The skewed narrative on Pakistan flood aid: 'help me or I'll kill you'", *Reuters*, 10 September 2010, [on-line] <http://blogs.reuters.com/pakistan/2010/09/10/the-skewed-narrative-on-pakistan-flood-aid-help-me-or-ill-kill-you>, 26 June 2014.

²⁹ "Birmingham-based charity £350K for Pakistan flood survivors", *Birmingham Mail*, [on-line] <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/local-news/birmingham-based-charity-350k-for-pakistan-flood-129546>, 26 June 2014.

³⁰ *Ahmed Rashid*, [on-line] <http://www.ahmedrashid.com>, 26 June 2014; <https://www.facebook.com/jalalzai.musakhan>, 26 June 2014.

An example of the mobilization of Pakistani public opinion about social problems can be tragic event of 9 October 2012. The Taliban seriously shot a young resident of the Valley of Swat, Malala Yousafzai. Daughter of a local poet Ziauddin Yousafzai since 2009 ran an internet blog, describing her experience as a young schoolgirl, persecuted by the Taliban, who took her home valley and prevented her further education³¹. Texts written by than 12-year-old had shown not only to the West, but most of all the Pakistani public opinion how serious the threat of possible Talibanization to their former way of life is³². In this way, young Pashtun girl has become the most recognizable spokesperson for the rights of Pakistani women. She had been invited to the General Assembly of the United Nations³³. One of the leaders of the Pakistani Taliban, Adnan Rashid, stated in an open letter to Malala Yousafzai that her tragedy should never have happened. However, he didn't apologize. When asked if Malala should have died or not, he replied that it is by the judgment of Almighty Allah that she has survived³⁴. Of course, one must keep in mind that the availability of electronic media in Pakistan is in practice limited to the middle class.

During his rule Pervez Musharraf did not restrict the freedom of assembly. There were numerous demonstrations of both supporters and opponents of the government, as well as a variety of non-governmental organizations. The most popular place of political demonstrations is Aabpara Market in the capital Islamabad³⁵. This broad area of freedoms enjoyed by Pakistanis was not available for residents of the military ruled Arab states³⁶. Therefore, one cannot use a simple analogy when it comes to comparing Pakistan to the Arab countries and the conclusions that the wave of protests of young people who removed another dictatorship in the Arab countries, could spread to Pakistan. Currently, the Pakistanis have in fact other democratic tools that enable them to achieve their political aspirations. Pakistanis are a very active society, making use of the possibilities offered by modern communications technology. They participate in the elections, and they are not susceptible to radical fundamentalist organizations agenda³⁷. This does not mean the loss

³¹ *The Malala Yousafzai Blog & Story*, [on-line] <http://www.malala-yousafzai.com>, 26 June 2014.

³² "Malala Yousafzai: Pakistan Taliban causes revulsion by shooting girl who spoke out", *The Guardian*, [on-line] <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/09/taliban-pakistan-shoot-girl-malala-yousafzai>, 26 June 2014.

³³ Speech recorded in New York 26 July 2013, [on-line] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2F'RrBOlyf'k>, 26 June 2014.

³⁴ "Taliban commander: I wish Malala Yousafzai shooting had 'never happened'", *NBC News*, 17 June 2013, [on-line] http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/07/17/19516430-taliban-commander-i-wish-malala-yousafzai-shooting-had-never-happened?lite, 26 June 2014.

³⁵ "Aabpara Market: Extremely loud and incredibly closed", *The Express Tribune*, 6 May 2013, [on-line] <http://tribune.com.pk/story/544923/pml-n-rally-aabpara-market-extremely-loud-and-incredibly-closed>, 26 June 2014.

³⁶ M. Syed, "Prospect of Arab Spring in Pakistan", *IPRI Journal*, Vol. 12, 2012, no. 2, p. 158.

³⁷ "Is Pakistan in for an Arab Spring?", *The Voice of Russia*, 16 January 2013, [on-line] http://english.ruvr.ru/2013_01_16/Is-Pakistan-in-for-an-Arab-Spring, 26 June 2014.

of fundamentalist tendencies in Pakistan. Participants of peaceful demonstrations, and heated discussions on the Internet forums, are members/potential recruits for the armed groups, called generally, though not entirely adequately “Pakistani Taliban”³⁸.

Despite these significant differences there are some events or processes in Pakistan that may resemble the beginnings of the “Arab Spring”. They were particularly evident in the final period of the rule of General Pervez Musharraf. In March 2007, the President decided to dismiss Chief Justice Muhammad Iftakar Choudhary on charges of abuse of power³⁹. In fact, the reason proved to be a critical attitude towards government policies. He supported the verdicts against the government in favor of families of missing persons (which were kept by the Pakistani intelligence ISI without a legal warrant). The president’s decision caused demonstrations of many thousands lawyers across the country. They also had announced a general strike. Demonstrations were brutally pacified by the police⁴⁰. However, supported not only by the Local, but by world public opinion, the Supreme Court considered the decision to dismiss Choudhary illegal and restored him to office. This decision was proof of the existence of an independent judiciary in Pakistan, and civic awareness among elites who were active in the defense of the independence of the Judiciary⁴¹.

This decision severely weakened the authority of the president. However, there are indications that it was part of a political game. Namely, at a time when the demonstrations took part, talks were held between representatives of Musharraf, and former PM Benazir Bhutto. The result was a project of democratization of the country, assuming the president will remain in office in exchange for the holding of free elections in which the favorite was Mrs. Bhutto. October 6, 2007 presidential elections were held (under the Constitution of 1973 the Electoral College consisting of members of parliament and provincial parliamentary assemblies elected the head of State), which Pervez Musharraf. There was legal controversy, which became the basis of a complaint pending before the Supreme Court. Given an argument – first of all, that the Assembly of the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) should be dissolved. The inhabitants of that Pashtun province have

³⁸ D. Montero, “Why the Taliban appeal to Pakistani youth? The tribal system that once grounded young people no longer provides enough opportunities”, 16 June 2006, *The Christian Science Monitor*, [on-line] <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0616/p07s02-wosc.html>, 26 June 2014.

³⁹ “Musharraf sacks Pak chief justice”, 9 March 2007, *Rediff India Abroad*, [on-line] <http://www.rediff.com/news/2007/mar/09pakcj.htm>, 26 June 2014.

⁴⁰ “Crisis for Musharraf over justice chief’s sacking”, *The Telegraph*, 17 March 2007, [on-line] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1545843/Crisis-for-Musharraf-over-justice-chiefs-sacking.html>, 26 June 2014.

⁴¹ “Iftikhar Chaudhry reinstated as Pakistan Supreme Court Chief Justice”, *AndhraNews.net*, [on-line] <http://www.andhranews.net/Intl/2007/July/20/Iftikhar-Chaudhry-reinstated-8763.asp>, 26 June 2014.

not been taken into account, which disrupted the democratic nature of the elections. Second term of office of the parliament and assemblies ended in 2008, so they had a weak mandate to choose the head of state for another 5 year term⁴².

President Musharraf, fearing unfavorable verdict of the Supreme Court decided on a desperate step and 3 July 2007, announced a state of emergency in an attempt to impose a new provisional constitutional order. However, the Supreme Court did not accept his actions. This decision had public support. People demanded democratization of the state and free elections. Also, the United States reacted very nervously, seeking the annulment of the decision to impose direct military rule. This meant the reversal of Washington's former ally⁴³. There was therefore a paradox: Musharraf became unacceptable by both the anti-American majority of society and by the U.S. administration. This meant that his days were numbered. The situation was even worse for the president. On December 27, 2007 his main opponent, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has been assassinated. Police protection of her election rally in Rawalpindi turned out to be insufficient. The former prime minister died in hospital due to injuries caused by a suicide bomber⁴⁴. Government investigation, supported by British experts from Scotland Yard, the blamed Pakistani Taliban and their leader Baitullah Mehsud, who's goal had been to destabilize the country and discredit its government⁴⁵.

The suspicion of connections of President Musharraf with the assassin has not been sufficiently proven and May 20, 2013, the court acquitted him of those charges⁴⁶. Death of a popular politician united Pakistani public opinion around her widower Asif Ali Zardari and their son Bilawal. Their Pakistan People's Party won the elections in 2008, and its new leader was elected president of Pakistan⁴⁷. This was possible because both the winning PPP and the largest opposition Pakistani Muslim League Nawaz Sharif were ready to carry out the procedure for impeachment, which Musharraf wanted to avoid⁴⁸. One could say that it is largely Pakistani public opinion who led to the democratization by the demanding of free elections. But here the similarity with the "Arab Spring" ends. Contrary to events in Egypt, the army from the beginning showed no interest in defending their commander

⁴² [on-line] <http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/forumy/2007/09/staying-pakistans-presidential-election.php>, 26 June 2014.

⁴³ "Musharraf Declares State of Emergency", *The New York Times*, 3 November 2007, [on-line] http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/03/world/asia/04pakistan.html?_r=0, 26 June 2014.

⁴⁴ "Benazir Bhutto assassinated", CNN, 27 December, [on-line] <http://edition.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/asiapcf/12/27/pakistan.sharif>, 26 June 2014.

⁴⁵ "Q&A: Benazir Bhutto assassination", *BBC News*, 3 May 2013, [on-line] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-22394552>, 26 June 2014.

⁴⁶ "Musharraf granted bail in Benazir Bhutto assassination case", *The Hindu*, 20 May 2013, [on-line] <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/south-asia/musharraf-granted-bail-in-benazir-bhutto-assassination-case/article4732893.ece>, 26 June 2014.

⁴⁷ [on-line] <http://www.app.com.pk/election>, 26 June 2014.

⁴⁸ "Pakistan's Musharraf steps down", *BBC News*, 18 August 2008, [on-line] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7567451.stm>, 26 June 2014.

and their own position in the state and the separation of the functions of the President (which was Musharraf) and the Chief of Staff of the Army (which took Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani). So they remained passive in the barracks, allowing democratization process to go on⁴⁹.

Is there any analogy between Pakistan and the Arab states when it comes to the process of democratic transformation? Is the concept of the “Arab Spring” present in the Pakistani public opinion? These questions can be answered positive. In the May 2013 parliamentary elections had been held and came in very calm conditions. Of course there is strong tendency of local authorities to support some candidates, and to block others during registration process, as pointed to the European Union observers⁵⁰. However, comparing these with previous elections, held in the shadow of a possible intervention of the army, we can talk about significant progress. It was particularly evident during the election campaign, which involved many, especially young people. The third force in the parliament was the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf of Imran Khan (former captain of the national cricket team, who led Pakistan in 1992 to the title of world champions, beating England). PTI obtained the second result after winning Pakistan Muslim League of Nawaz Sharif. However, because of the electoral system, PTI is third-largest fraction in the National Assembly⁵¹. Imran Khan’s Party won the provincial elections in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa⁵². In his election campaign Imran Khan directly referred to the “Arab Spring”, criticizing the existing political system as corrupt, riddled with nepotism and blocking prospects for young people. Also he paid attention to the widening social gap between the “ruling elite” and the masses.

Those terms are not “pure populism” in the case of a country whose citizens do not pay income tax, or whose amounts are about 60 USD per year⁵³. Tehreek-e-Insaf means “Movement for Justice”. The program of the party in many ways tries to follow the European social democracy and the concept of “third way”. Their slogans are addressed to young Pakistanis from the lower-middle class, experiencing the most painful consequences of the economic crisis⁵⁴. Anti-American agenda

⁴⁹ “Kayani supports democracy”, *The Nation*, 3 May 2013, [on-line] <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/columns/03-May-2013/kayani-supports-democracy>, 26 June 2014.

⁵⁰ [on-line] http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013%5C07%5C11%5Cstory_11-7-2013_pg1_2, 26 June 2014.

⁵¹ Pakistan General Elections 2013: [on-line] <http://hamariweb.com/pakistan-election-2013>, 26 June 2014.

⁵² “Tehrik-i-Insaf sweeps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa”, *The Nation*, 12 May 2013, [on-line] <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/elections-2013/12-May-2013/tehrik-i-ansaf-sweeps-khyber-pakhtunkhwa>, 26 June 2014.

⁵³ “Pakistan faces Arab spring, declares Imran Khan”, *The Scotsman*, 28 July 2011, [on-line] <http://www.scotsman.com/news/pakistan-faces-arab-spring-declares-imran-khan-1-1777035>, 26 June 2014.

⁵⁴ “Pakistan elections: ex-cricketer Imran Khan offers ‘third way’”, *The Guardian*, 3 May 2013, [on-line] <http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2013/may/04/pakistan-elections-imran-khan-third-way-video>, 26 June 2014.

(criticism of the government, which in fact allows making drone attacks on targets in Pakistan, and the operations of U.S. Special Forces, even in the immediate vicinity of the state capital) are in turn focused on moderate supporters of the Taliban. That strategy turned out to be a success in case of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa⁵⁵.

It is hard to idealize Imran Khan and his party. There are serious allegations that behind antiestablishment slogans such as “Pakistani tsunami that will sweep away the ruling system” there is the Pakistani ISI military intelligence (sometimes called a “hidden government”). Khan has thus been a kind of safety valve, which will engage the Pakistani youth discontented by difficult economic situation. So it would prevent the “real”, uncontrolled “Spring in Pakistan”. Khan reproaches good contacts with Gen. Hamid Gul (known from supporting the Taliban), and the support which PTI granted Pervez Musharraf during the referendum legitimizing his coup⁵⁶. This undermines the credibility of the Khan, along with his un-orthodox private life: not only marrying the daughter of British-Jewish millionaire Jemima Goldsmith, but also rather “easy” way of life, far from Islamic ideals is what is currently being challenged. On the other hand, that celebrity ex-cricket star, divorced from millionaire with a reputation of playboy criticizes “thick English women in mini-skirts”. Khan is an excellent representative of Pakistani middle class. They often have such “double life” too⁵⁷. In contrast, pointing out that he leaves far from conditions of the poor commoners – his potential voters, it should be remembered that exactly the same were political beginnings of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a socialist from a wealthy family of landlords of Sindh province. It is therefore difficult to assess to what extent the agenda of Imran Khan is his real program, and to what extent it is only a part of the political ritual. The fact that the candidate was perceived as a significant threat to the largest parties, providing use quite sharp, populist arguments in a negative campaign. Reproached Khan Ties with “a Jewish family in the UK”, which was to prove the existence of a “conspiracy of Jewish-Indian servant ready to weaken or even to destroy Pakistani people”⁵⁸.

PTI activists were trying to reach the voters with the message of the party program using not only traditional but also modern means of communication such as Twitter and Facebook. On the social network are profiles of a few dozen supporters,

⁵⁵ “Imran Khan: A prayer for Pakistan”, *Support Imran Khan*, [on-line] <http://www.supportimrankhan.org/Articles/story.aspx?id=139>, 26 June 2014.

⁵⁶ 26 June 2014.

⁵⁷ “Can a millionaire ex-cricket star go from playboy to prime minister? Yes he Khan!”, *Mail Online*, 12 November 2012, [on-line] <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2230965/Imran-Khan-Can-millionaire-ex-cricket-star-playboy-prime-minister-Yes-Khan.html>, 26 June 2014.

⁵⁸ “Imran Khan, Jewish agent!: welcome to the wonderful world of Pakistani politics”, *The Conversation*, 7 May 2013, [on-line] <http://theconversation.com/imran-khan-jewish-agent-welcome-to-the-wonderful-world-of-pakistani-politics-13975>, 26 June 2014.

and local branches of PTI. There are also Imran Khan's numerous fan pages. Some of them are run by Pakistanis residing abroad from the U.S. and Australia to the Great Britain. Similarly, were supporters of the thesis of the rigging of the elections in 2013 were active on the portal. They have tried to convince the audience that elections had been rigged and Imran Khan shall be the new Prime Minister⁵⁹.

From July 2013 ruling Pakistani Muslim League Nawaz Sharif has a stable majority in parliament, allowing the exercise of power without a coalition partner. This was confirmed by the presidential election that took place on 29 June 2013. Chosen as the candidate of PML Mamnoon Hussain, former governor of the province of Sindh has been elected easily⁶⁰. His opponent was Wajihuddin Ahmad from PTI. It is difficult to predict future developments. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif undoubtedly is the representative of the political elite that has ruled Pakistan intermittently since 1947. Any serious change cannot therefore be expected in policy whether internal or foreign. So it is no indication that he tried to carry out some measures to improve the standard of living, especially of young Pakistanis. For example, economic difficulties such as shortage of electricity supply to households due to insufficient power plants. The Prime Minister wants to focus public attention on the complex relations with India. Pakistanis are historically sensitive about the relations with their bigger neighbour. On the other hand, some analysts notice a positive change in the look that Sharif is taking towards India. It is now closer dialogue or even easing tension. We shall remember that Mr. Sharif had best relations with BJP government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, so his understanding with Modi is much similar. Also Imran Khan vows for the comprehensive dialogue with New Delhi⁶¹.

Talking about prospects for social or economic revolution, much depends on the further economic development of Pakistan as well as the equitable distribution of its positive effects. Pakistan has been called by the IMF experts as one of the 11 fastest growing economies in the world (so-called Next-11), ahead of members of the BRICS group (including traditional enemy – India)⁶². The problem of unequal distribution of “fruits” of economic growth is noticeable not only by Imran Khan and his party, but also by foreign observers. The UK Department for International Development depends on further assistance for Pakistan to perform a major

⁵⁹ “Tehrik-i-Insaf sweeps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa”, *The Nation*, 12 May 2013, [on-line] <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/elections-2013/12-May-2013/tehrak-i-insaf-sweeps-khyber-pakhtunkhwa>, 26 June 2014.

⁶⁰ “Mamnoon Hussain elected as new Pakistani president”, *BBC News*, 30 July 2013, [on-line] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23493649>, 26 June 2014.

⁶¹ “Indian views of Nawaz Sharif’s election”, *Shashank Joshi*, 15 May 2013, [on-line] <http://shashankjoshi.wordpress.com/2013/05/15/indian-views-of-nawaz-sharifs-election>, 26 June 2014.

⁶² “Watch out for the Bries ... and for the Next 11”, *The Guardian*, 18 February 2011, [on-line] <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/fcb/18/brics-next-11-economy-transformation-uk>, 31 June 2013.

tax reform. It would hit poor citizens in the first place⁶³. A serious problem that can be a source of social unrest and a brake to economic development is the lack of electricity. Current infrastructure comes mainly from the 60s and 70s, and is based on imported raw materials such as gas and oil. Domestic stock of it is insufficient. Existing possibilities, as hydro power, are running out, as population growth increases the demand for water for human consumption. Nuclear energy looks as the best solution but the construction of new power plants takes time, which Pakistan does not have. The search for their own gas deposits is in progress, inter alia, with the participation of Polish experts, but even if it is successful, it will not fully satisfy the demands. Australian experts suggest, however, that Pakistan could use more natural potential which is solar energy by building solar collectors in the desert⁶⁴. Until this problem is solved it is bound to get worse, and it will increase social discontent arising from the progress of civilization, which takes place in contemporary Pakistan. The reason for the protests could be prolonged power outages, causing that life in the summer with high temperatures and humidity will return again to the level of half a century ago. Young people from affluent families today are not accustomed to living without air conditioning and access to the Internet or even a television. The economic crisis in West caused that emigration is no longer the simplest alternative for ambitious people seeking a better life, although the rate of migration is still negative and last year reached a value of -2 (i.e. 2 immigrants per 1 thousand inhabitants)⁶⁵.

Summarizing the above considerations, one should notice that despite significant similarities to the Arab countries and close contacts resulting from the civilizational affinities, there are significant differences that cause that Pakistan has not experienced a phenomenon similar to the “Arab Spring” and there is little evidence that such a massive social rebellion of representatives of the young generation existed in Pakistan. This stems primarily from the fact that the political system of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is now a democracy and has all the instruments for channeling social discontent, such as free media, and above all elective parliament and local assemblies, and the indirect presidential elections (a solution found in mature democracies as often as the general elections). Even temporarily exercising power, military in the country is not ready for such a fierce confrontation with society as it is today in Syria. It does not look ready to crack down free media and political opposition, as it happened in Tunisia and Egypt. The party system of Pa-

⁶³ “UK aid to Pakistan should continue but future increases must rest on domestic tax reform”, *The Telegraph*, 4 April 2013, [on-line] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/9969525/UK-aid-to-Pakistan-should-continue-but-future-increases-must-rest-on-domestic-tax-reform.html>, 31 June 2014.

⁶⁴ “Pakistan has a bright energy future”, *The International News*, 31 May 2013, [on-line] <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-181003-Pakistan-has-a-bright-energy-future>, 31 June 2014.

⁶⁵ Index Mundi, [on-line] <http://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?v=27&c=pk&l=en>, 31 June 2014.

kistan is so pluralistic that reflects different trends of religious fundamentalism, moderate conservatism of the socialism. Fundamentalist forces, however, have not enough social support to be able to take power in the country alone or in coalition, as it happened in Egypt in the event associated with the Muslim Brotherhood Party of AKP in Turkey. The two religious parties: the Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam have in fact a total of 12 seats out of 265 seats in National Assembly (lower house)⁶⁶.

Armed group called “Pakistani Taliban”, although being a serious threat to state security forces does not have enough popular support to seize power in Pakistan by force. The army remains the guarantee of moderate secularism. In contrast, characteristics of the “Arab Spring” social demands, especially related to the expectations of the younger generation, have become just part of the political game, which took place during the last election campaign. Whether the political system will absorb the revolutionary ferment depends on several factors, including the responsibility of the political elite, especially the opposition leader Imran Khan. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif does not seem to be interested in the use of undemocratic methods. But it doesn't mean he is not ready to defend his post using police force against demonstrators gathered by Imran Khan. Prime Minister's activity is focused on the fight against the former president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who removed him from power in 1999 in a coup d'état. Of course, an important factor here is personal revenge, but it can have a positive effect: a chance to judge a politician who has abused the law to gain power in the state. But it also generates serious threat: it is hard to predict if the Army allows prosecuting its previous chief, or not.

It is difficult to clearly assess how optimism towards the democratic process, which some of the media and Polish analysts exhibit, is justified. Previous parliamentary elections of 2008 were held in an atmosphere of plebiscite. Voting for the Pakistani People's Party was in fact expressing disobedience to the than military government and wowing for transfer of power into civil hands. So the election of 2013 can be called a real election based on the dispute on the shape of the state. Until the next election one cannot not know for sure whether parliament will survive a full term without the intervention of the army or the High Court (one has to remember that the first term of Nawaz Sharif ended early, because of corruption charges, during the second it was overthrown by the army). It will also be a test of strength for the opposition: if it is ready to participate in the next elections, or will its followers tried to move out into the street effectively. The economic situation home and abroad would surely have some influence on the stabilization of the internal situation in Pakistan. The crisis clearly deteriorating social mood and makes young people particularly vulnerable to radicalization. The realization of positive forecasts for economic growth and the existence of a group of Next -11 with Pakistan in the composition, will surely be a stabilizing factor and a favorable political

⁶⁶ Pakistan General Election: [on-line] <http://hamariweb.com/pakistan-election-2013>, 31 June 2014.

scene rather than moderate parties. Unfortunately last events in Islamabad look like “somebody” lost his nerves. Imran Khan organized large demonstration of his supporters urging Nawaz Sharif to step down and to organize new elections. For the first time in Pakistani history, a mainstream politician used the word “Revolution” (Urdu: *Inqilab*) to explain his action against the government. He also called for the civil disobedience (e.g. by refusing to pay VAT). Until 31 of August the Prime Minister refused to listen to such suggestions and has ordered the police to crack down those rallies⁶⁷. The popular opinion is turning in favor another military takeover. The Chief of Army Staff called the meeting of corps commanders (the highest brass of Pakistani armed forces) because of the unstable situation in the country⁶⁸. At the moment it is impossible to predict if gen. Raheel Sharif decide to take power himself, or whether he will just force the Prime Minister to step down and to organize new elections. Is once again the army perceived by the majority of the public opinion as the protector of the State against the civilian, too-ambitious and to-selfish politicians?

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⁶⁷ “Inqilab – when blood comes cheap”, *Dawn*, 31 August 2014, [on-line] <http://www.dawn.com/news/1128999/inqilab-when-blood-comes-cheap>, 31 June 2014.

⁶⁸ “Political crisis must end through political means, Army says”, *Dawn*, 31 August 2014, [on-line] <http://www.dawn.com/news/1129001/army-chief-calls-corps-commanders-meeting>, 31 June 2014.

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