

AYUB KHAN'S BASIC DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL CONTINUITY IN CONTEMPORARY PAKISTAN:

When one thinks of Pakistan and Pakistan's political system, one tends to quickly classify it as a military regime. It is easy to forget that Pakistan has also experimented with democracy on occasions since it came into existence in 1947, and elements of democracy or democratising tendencies have coexisted with strong authoritarian elements within the same political system. It therefore becomes important to view the nature of the political system of the country not so much in black or white terms, but to focus more on the areas or shades of grey. After all, there were military generals like General Ayub Khan who tried to bring some element of democracy to Pakistan, popularly known as 'basic democracy' in the existing body of scholarly literature, and there were also civilian leaders like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, from the Pakistan People's Party/PPP, who displayed strong authoritarian tendencies during his rule. In the words of Lieven, 'the civilian administration of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was in many ways more dictatorial than the military administrations of Generals Ayub Khan and Pervez Musharraf'.¹ He further argues, that 'democratic parties when in power have used illegal and dictatorial methods against their opponents-sometimes in order to suppress ethnic and sectarian violence, and sometimes to try to maintain their own power in the face of multiple challenges from political rivals, ethnic separatists and the military.'² It is the aim of this paper to focus on the areas of grey, looking at the coexistence of both democracy and authoritarianism within the Pakistani political system, although the paper acknowledges that there is more of a tilt towards authoritarianism in Pakistan. In doing so, the paper is especially interested in the regime of General Ayub Khan, and his idea of Basic Democracies. But before we go into the details of the Ayub regime, who was one of the first major military generals in the post-independence era, the paper takes a look at the roots of dictatorship within the country. This helps in setting the context. Finally, the paper looks at the post 2000 situation in Pakistan and argues that the current political climate in the country is not that different from the times of General Ayub Khan, and is basically a part of the same political trajectory.

Roots of Dictatorship:

General Pervez Musharraf writes in his 'In the Line of Fire: A Memoir' that 'A brief political history of Pakistan shows how we have failed to create a true democracy'.³ There is now a huge body of literature which has looked into the reasons as to why Pakistan faced waves of military rule since 1947, the year it was created. First of all it has been argued that the Muslim League, which was the political platform for South Asian Muslims in pre independence India and also the party that paved the way for the Pakistan movement, was highly fragmented and disorganised. There were figures such as Mohammad Iqbal and Syed Ahmed Khan who wanted a separate homeland for South Asian Muslims. They feared that they would face discrimination had they stayed back in a Hindu dominated India. But there were also figures such as Maulana Azad who was not in favour of partition, and the creation of a separate homeland for South Asian Muslims. Figures such as Azad saw the Pakistan movement, and the creation of a separate country as temporary madness. The Muslim

¹ A.Lieven, *Pakistan: A Hard Country*, Penguin Books, London, 2012, p64.

² Ibid.

³ P.Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A memoir*, Pocket Books, London, 2006, p156.

League was founded in 1906. Unlike the Hindu community in South Asia, South Asian Muslims lacked political organisation. There were disagreements within the community and amongst the leaders as to whether or not South Asian Muslims should have their separate homeland and if they did, what sort of a political system should they have: should it be Islamic or should it be a secular democracy? South Asian Muslims also lacked a strong national figure who could bring together the disparate sections of Pakistani society. Whilst the Hindus had a figure in Gandhi, South Asian Muslims had no such figure, until Jinnah joined the Pakistan movement which was much later. What problematized the situation is that although he had joined the movement, he died in 1948, shortly after the country came into existence, so there was no major leader like him who could lead the country. Even when he was alive, his dominant personality allowed no one to participate in methods of governance, and so when he died in 1948, there was a major political vacuum. Furthermore, the Muslim League leaders were not well socialised into western styles of democracy, and many came from a feudal/semi-feudal background. Whilst the Hindu dominated Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, and had much more political experience than the Muslim League leaders, which was founded in 1906, the Muslim League leaders also had no experience of working together collaboratively as a team. Hasan Askari Rizvi has captured this situation beautifully and writes,

‘the political leaders in Pakistan in the post Jinnah-Liaquat period did not possess a national stature, lacked imagination and were unable to inspire the people, let alone deal with difficult political and economic problems. Many had a feudal and semi-feudal background and were primarily motivated by their personal ambitions and parochial considerations....The Muslim League, which served as the vanguard of the freedom struggle, utterly failed to transform itself from a nationalist movement into a national party which could serve as an effective political machine for aggregating diverse interests and identities into a plural and participatory national framework...As the political forces fragmented and the political institutions declined, the bureaucratic elite gained the upper hand and dominated policy making. The appointment of Ghulam Mohammad, a former bureaucrat belonging to the Indian Audit and Accounts Service, as Governor General in October, 1951, who was succeeded by another bureaucrat-cum-military man, Iskander Mirza, in August 1955, set the stage for the ascendancy of the bureaucracy, bolstered by the military from the background.’⁴

Thus, it could be argued that the more authoritarian elements in Pakistan or those who were in favour of a military dictatorship found these conditions favourable to consolidate their position, and took full advantage of the fact that South Asian Muslims lacked political organisation. In other words, had the Muslim community in the subcontinent been better organised in the years before and after partition in 1947, it would have been harder for the military dictatorship to take root.

There are of course other reasons as to why Pakistan faced waves of military rule and struggled with democracy. Since Pakistan came into existence in 1947, it has been constantly at war with neighbouring India over the disputed province of Kashmir, and the military generals have always argued that till this problem gets resolved, democracy cannot be introduced in Pakistan. Pakistan has always perceived India as formidable threat, and its foreign policy orientation and its defence policy

⁴ H.A.Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan*, Palgrave Publishers, New York, 2000, pp3-5.

'are geared towards this single dominant factor'.⁵ Not only does Pakistan face threats from India from the east over the on-going Kashmir problem, but it also faces threats in the west from Afghanistan with regards to the spread of the Taliban insurgency (and Islamist groups in general) across the FATA/Federally administered Tribal areas. In addition to these external threats from both the east and the west, Pakistan has faced and still faces numerous internal challenges. For instance, Pakistan has had to deal with secessionist movements in the more peripheral parts of the country especially in Sindh, Baluchistan and North Western Frontier Provinces. Out of all the secessionist movements that have taken place in Pakistan, the one that created major turmoil and the one that destabilised the country was the secession of former East Pakistan, which came to be known as Bangladesh in 1971. Needless to say, all of these separatist groups have most certainly put a lot of pressure on the political elite in Pakistan, thereby strengthening the role of the military and delaying the process of democratization. The military has always argued that it needs to stay in power to deal with all these numerous internal and external security challenges. This has in turn pushed the civilian leaders away from the centre stage of Pakistani domestic politics. In other words, Pakistan has almost always been in a situation of emergency since its birth in 1947. It has often been described as a 'warrior state'⁶, since it has been in a state of perpetual war with itself.

In Pakistan, there have been no powerful organisations that can legitimately speak on behalf of large sections of the people, which could then pressurise the political system to become more democratic.⁷ Furthermore, Pakistan has a weak and ethnically divided civil society that has been unable to act as a force for democracy.⁸ The civilian leaders by and large seem weaker in comparison to their military counterparts, and often depend on the military for support and assistance especially in matters relating to Pakistani governance. This gives the military a strong image, and the more the civilian government depends on the military, the latter's prestige is raised. The military has traditionally had a strong powerful image and is often associated with the martial traditions of Punjab and also with the concepts of 'sayeed', which means martyr, 'jihad' or holy war and 'gazi', which refers to valour and courage. Traditionally, they were seen as the men who shielded the Empire, when the British ruled the subcontinent. Furthermore, the civilian leaders have not really used the interludes or the periods in between military rule to establish a strong civilian government⁹. Since Pakistan came into existence, it's not as if all the prominent military leaders have been in power continuously. 'Pakistan has undergone long spells of military dictatorship, interspersed with periods of democratic rule'.¹⁰ There have been gaps in between military rule. For instance Auyb Khan was in power from 1958-69, Yayha Khan was in power from 1970-71, Zia ul Haque was in power from 1977-88, and Musharraf has been in power from the late nineties till 2008. Now the civilian leaders did not use these gaps to create a strong civilian government. They made no attempt to consolidate civilian rule in Pakistan. There seems to have been a lack of

⁵ S.Patnaik, 'Governing a Security State: Prospects of Democracy in Pakistan', Strategic Analysis, 25,3, 2001, p412.

⁶ T.V.Paul, The Warrior State: Pakistan in the Contemporary World, Random House India, Gurgaon, 2014.

⁷ S.Wilkinson, 'Democratic Consolidation and Failure: Lessons From Bangladesh and Pakistan', Democratization, 7,3,2000, p218.

⁸ Ibid, p223.

⁹ I.A.Haqqani, 'The Failure of Democracy in Pakistan', Muslim World, Vol.96, April, 2006.

¹⁰ A.W.Waheed and J.Y.Abbasi, 'Rethinking Democracy in Pakistan', Asian Affairs, 44,2, 2013,p202.

interest amongst them, a sense of apathy. The dismal state of the judiciary has also allowed the more authoritarian elements of the country to flex their muscles, and in turn, tighten their grip over the polity. For the smooth functioning of a democracy, one of the chief requirements is to have a strong and independent judiciary, but this has never been the case in Pakistan. Other factors which have prevented the rise of democracy in Pakistan include the role played by the United States of America throughout the Cold War period. The security establishment in Washington has always felt that to further American interests in the region, it is much easier to deal with one man than to deal with an entire population of a country or the electorate. Thus, the Americans have always backed the military generals in their fight against Communism during the Cold War phase and have tried to do the same post 2000 in their fight against global terrorism. The United States has not supported civilian governments in Pakistan in a similar way. Thus, the support which the Pakistani generals have received from Washington has allowed them to stay in power for extended periods of time.

Well known historian on South Asian affairs, Ayesha Jalal has argued that one reason why Pakistan struggled with democracy is because it lacked the infrastructure which a country needs for the smooth functioning of a democracy. Jalal argues that the central state apparatus created by the British during colonial times fell on the Indian side, which allowed the Indian leaders in the post-independence period to use as a platform to take off with democracy¹¹. In other words, the courts, the universities, the centres of administration all fell on the Indian side. The Pakistani side did not get the same sort of inheritances, which India got, and hence it has had to start from scratch, thereby delaying its process of democratisation. Building on Jalal's argument, Mukherjee argues that not only did India inherit the central state apparatus left by the British; India also got the better geographical parts of the subcontinent, which helped in the democratisation process¹². For instance, after partition, in 1947, India received the fertile Indo Gang-etic Plain in the north which is very suitable for food crop cultivation and the Deccan in the south, which is well suited for cash crop cultivation like cotton. This obviously helped India's economy, and as the economy did well and as India industrialised, a rising middle class or intelligentsia, came into existence, who are generally the movers and shakers of change. The middle class intelligentsia which has high purchasing capacity also has access to tertiary education, and as we know education creates awareness. Out of this sense of awareness, the middle class tends to question old fashioned authoritarian style governments which tend to exclude people from the decision making process. Thus, the rising middle class that came into existence as a result of India's flourishing economy, democratic forces got strengthened in the Indian context. In contrast, Pakistan inherited the worst geographical parts of the subcontinent. Other than the Punjab area of Pakistan, large parts of Pakistan are mountainous or a desert, which is obviously not well suited for agricultural food crop cultivation or cash crop cultivation. As a result of this, the economy faltered, and there was no real rising middle class in Pakistan, which could have questioned the policies of the military generals. In other words, the harsh geography which Pakistan inherited has had an adverse impact on its economy, which in turn did not allow an intelligentsia class to grow, the way it did it neighbouring

¹¹ A.Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

¹² K.Mukherjee, 'Why has Democracy been less successful in Pakistan than in India?', *Asian Affairs*, vol XLI(1), March, 2010, pp67-77.

India. The military generals in Pakistan took advantage of this situation, thus strengthening the roots of dictatorship. Now that we have set the context, let us take a look at the regime of Ayub Khan and his concept of 'basic democracy'.

Ayub Khan and Basic Democracy:

Although Pakistan has struggled with democracy, it has intermittently allowed for democratic elections and civilian rule. The Pakistan Army has played an important role in the constitutional development of the country.¹³ It should be noted though that even when civilian governments have been in charge, they were not fully in control of the key levers of state power since the military continued to control the main domains of the economy such as national security.¹⁴ That said, democracy has been introduced in the past in Pakistan on a temporary basis, and hence some scholars like Michael Hoffman talk about the concept of 'temporary democracy.'¹⁵

The first major experiment with a restricted form of democracy in Pakistan was during the time of Ayub Khan, 1958-1969. His military regime promulgated a system called, 'Basic Democracy'. Elections were held in January, 1960 for 'Basic Democracy Councils' with 80, 000 members.¹⁶ 'The different layers of this system consisted of divisional, district, municipal, towns and war councils, representing the different sections and administrative structures of the country.'¹⁷ These councils would then elect the president. In such an election in February, 1960, Ayub won by a vote of 95.6%. From 1960 till the early half of 1962, representatives of the council organised, interacted with officials, and advanced plans for economic growth and development. One reason why an overwhelming majority supported the referendum in 1960 establishing a form of controlled democracy called 'Basic Democracy' is because there was a general dislike for politicians, and it was widely believed that the army was a strong force that would be able to provide Pakistan with an element of both political and economic stability. The Pakistani people welcomed the military coup since they were exhausted with the disputes that went on amongst the politicians.¹⁸ T.V.Paul writes, 'Ayub Khan's Basic Democracy system was a cunning model designed to legitimize military control while at the same time providing the illusion of public participation'.¹⁹

Ayub Khan, along with his supporters from Washington and with local officials tried to devise civilian institutional foundations for his regime that took the form of a so called, 'basic democracy', which became the basis of the 1962 constitution, upon which the Ayub regime based itself.²⁰ 'The new constitutional

¹³ S.Pattnaik, 'Pakistan's 'Sustainable Democracy': Army as the Political Architect', *Strategic Analysis*, 28,2, 2004, p272.

¹⁴ T.V.Paul, *The Warrior State: Pakistan in the Contemporary World*, Random House India, Gurgaon, 2014, p74.

¹⁵ M.Hoffman, 'Military Extrication and Temporary Democracy: the Case of Pakistan', *Democratization*, 18,1, 2011, pp75-99.

¹⁶ T.V.Paul, p75.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p75.

¹⁸ Y.Saikia, 'Ayub Khan and Modern Islam: Transforming Citizens and the Nation in Pakistan', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 37,2, 2014, p298.

¹⁹ T.V.Paul, 2014.

²⁰ H.Alavi, 'The State in Crisis', in H.Gardezi and J.Rashid, eds, *Pakistan: the Roots of Dictatorship: The Political Economy of a Praetorian State*, Zed Press, London, 1983. P85.

system called basic democracy provided for indirect election of the president and members of the national and provincial assemblies by basic democrats, who were members of local councils in villages and towns.²¹ The whole structure was founded on a hierarchy of local councils whose work was very closely intertwined with that of the bureaucracy at the local level. By virtue of that, the bureaucracy and the state were directly linked with local level power holders, who benefitted hugely from state patronage, bypassing and isolating political leadership at senior levels.²² It was a system that was ideally suited to bureaucratic control and manipulation, while at the same time allowing for elections at the local levels, which was dominated by landowners, thus conferring a semblance of legitimacy on the government.²³ The whole system was very strongly associated with corruption and it greatly strengthened the power of the oppressive landlords in the country side. The system was universally hated due to its oppressive nature, and in the movement that eventually brought down the Ayub regime, the abolition of basic democracy became a major demand.²⁴

The military has always tampered with the constitution to introduce what it defines as democracy that is suitable for Pakistan.²⁵ Thus the military has tailored a Constitution to secure its interests as well as to introduce its own versions of democracy. Ayub, therefore, once described the 1962 Constitution as one which was a combination of democracy and discipline, which was needed in the context of the anarchical power struggle that preceded Ayub's take over. He introduced various measures to supposedly cleanse the system of corrupt politicians, and was of the opinion that parliamentary democracy would not suit Pakistan because of its high level of illiteracy. Hence what would work in Pakistan according to him was a limited form of democracy, which came to be known as Basic Democracy. 'Ayub kept the Army in the barracks and ruled through the civil services, structurally homogeneous to the British viceroy during the colonial era'.²⁶

Basic democracies was not essentially a new idea as far as South Asian politics was concerned, and it was really the formalization of a structure of local political power which had long existed in the Punjab in the village council of five elders (panchayat) and in Bengal in the union boards.²⁷ The convergence of Bengali and Punjabi antecedents was symbolized by the first announcement of Basic Democracies made by Ayub Khan in September, 1959, in which a new term, 'union panchayats', was used.²⁸ At the Governors' Conference in Dhaka on the second of September, 1959, this was changed to 'union council' and the new term was later used in the Basic Democracies Law. Using the union councils and Panchayat as a substructure, Basic Democracies also incorporated the traditions of the local self-government which had developed in India at levels of the village, district and municipalities. 'The innovation in Basic Democracies is their use as an integrated electoral mechanism at all levels of government through the province, by which members at each level are selected from those at the lower level. Other characteristics

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ S.Pattnaik, 'Pakistan's 'Sustainable Democracy': Army as the Political Architect', Strategic Analysis, 28,2, 2004, p273.

²⁶ F.Jan, 'Pakistan: A Struggling Nation State', Democracy and Security, 6,3, 2010, p241.

²⁷ R.Braibanti, Research on the Bureaucracy of Pakistan, Duke University Press, Durham, 1966, p203.

²⁸ Ibid.

such as fiscal power, defined authority and nominated elected membership are found in local bodies as they had developed on the subcontinent.²⁹ Basic Democracies was meant to be a part of the government's decision to reform and bring about change in Pakistan. Many other projected reforms in law, agricultural development, police, application of marriage law, and other areas of life were based on the delegation of powers to the union councils. They constituted the mechanism by which legislators and the presidents were elected. Ayub, in his September 1959 announcement, had mentioned that all the changes and reforms which had been introduced or at least thought about in the agrarian, educational, local and economic sectors were designed to prepare the base on which an upward pyramid of a sound political system could be developed.³⁰ Ayub on several occasions stated that the system of democracy that was to emerge in Pakistan should develop from the smallest units of society, and that representatives must be elected from small primary social groups, and that elected assemblies should participate actively in carrying out developmental schemes. The mechanism that was created to carry out these aspirations involved four tiers of councils. In this connection, mention maybe made of the union (one or several villages), tehsil or thana (groups of villages), district (groups of tehsils), and finally the division (groups of districts). In relation to the four tier hierarchical structure associated with Ayub's Basic Democracies plan, Mohammed Waseem writes, '80, 000 basic democrats were elected in both the wings (referring to both former East Pakistan and West Pakistan) on the basis of direct adult franchise. Members at each tier were elected out of those at the lower level. Through this ingenious method the regime tried to establish an institutional base for itself at the mass level. It had great hopes that the upper tiers of the Basic Democracies would provide leadership for the local population.'³¹

Thus, the institutional framework of the Basic Democracy plan rested on a hierarchical order. Right at the bottom, at the primary level, were the union councils which comprised of several villages thereby making up one basic unit. The union councillor (Basic Democrat) represented about a thousand to fifteen hundred voters.³² The secondary stratum constituted the tehsil councils, which were made up of several union councils. At the tertiary level, were the district councils, which were made up of several tehsil councils and the final level was the divisional council, which in turn composed of several district councils. The chairman of each council was automatically a member of the next higher council. The total number of Basic Democrats was not more than 80, 000. Half of them were from former East Pakistan, or present day Bangladesh, and 'the whole system was intended to act as an electoral college to elect the president and members of the National and Provincial Assemblies.'³³

In order to maintain their power, military generals have had to rely on parliamentary coalitions made up of some of the most opportunist politicians in Pakistan. In 1962, Ayub created the Convention Muslim League as a political party 'to prop up his rule in the face of political pressure that he could not crush through repression. Ayub's 'party' was an alliance of independent local notables and bosses,

²⁹ Ibid, p204.

³⁰ Ibid, p204.

³¹ M.Waseem, Politics and the State in Pakistan, Progressive Publishers, Lahore, 1989, p153.

³² A.Hussain, Elite Politics in an Ideological State: The Case of Pakistan, Dawson, Kent, 1979, p136.

³³ Ibid.

and in no sense either a mass movement or a modern political party staffed by full time professional officials and volunteers.³⁴ The Convention Muslim League was part of a pattern whereby would-be reformist administrations have to depend on traditional and strongly anti-reformist power holders to maintain their rule.³⁵ This has always inevitably involved turning a blind eye to their corruption, and rewarding them with patronage which has in turn undermined and eroded political transparency, good and fair governance, and the state budget.

Democracy as a concept is not just about political democracy and free and fair elections. It is a multifaceted term and there are different facets as far as this term, 'democracy' is concerned. In this connection mention maybe made of the concepts of economic democracy and social democracy. Ayub's rule is often associated with economic growth and development. Despite the fact that Ayub's rule witnessed strong economic growth and development, this did not have a trickle-down effect and thus wealth was concentrated in very few hands. The regime's development agenda only exacerbated existing inequalities. The benefits of this growth did not reach the masses. By the late nineteen sixties, there was strong resistance to Ayub's regime. Ex-Pakistani President Musharraf writes, 'The main themes of the discontent were economic disparities between eastern and western Pakistan, the concentration of wealth in twenty two families, an acute sense of deprivation and alienation in East Pakistan, and a general political suffocation of the public.'³⁶

The situation in Pakistan is quite complex and the civilian leadership and the military establishment should not be seen as water tight compartments. The military takeover in Pakistan was brought about by men who were already actively taking part in the existing political system, 'and who had institutional bases of power within that system. Long before the coup, the military had been working as a silent partner in the civil-military bureaucratic coalition that held the key decision-making power in the country'.³⁷ The civil military bureaucracy has often looked down on politicians who were seen as obstacles to economic growth and development. One of the reasons why the military bureaucracy developed strong ties with the civil bureaucracy was because their views with regard to Pakistan's problems and solutions were quite similar. Both of them gave a lot of importance and priority to state building, government building tasks and had faith in a policy of centralization.³⁸ The first cabinet of the Ayub regime did not include any prominent political figures, nor did the subsequent cabinets during the martial law phase from 1958 till 1962. With the introduction of the 1962 Constitution, the regime was obliged to come to terms with the political elite and to include politicians in the cabinet. But even after 1962, none of the important cabinet portfolios whether in the areas of defence, planning, finance were given to politicians. 'Ayub's key advisers throughout his rule remained non-political: Manzur Qadir, Shoaib Q.A. Shahab, Altaf Gauhar, and Fida Hasan'.³⁹ Even when the regime allowed the renewal of limited political activity, it formed an alliance with the old non-

³⁴ A.Lieven, *Pakistan: A Hard Country*, Penguin Books, London, 2012, pp66-67.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ P.Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*, Pocket Books, London, 2006, p157.

³⁷ R.Jahan, *Pakistan: Failure in National Integration*, Columbia University Press, New York/London, 1972, p52.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p56.

vernacular 'national' political elite. 'The vernacular political elite was still anathema to the regime'.⁴⁰

One of the major problems with Ayub's regime was that the political leaders who had popular support and strong organizational backing were not allowed a share in the power, whilst those who had a share in the decision making process were either without a party or were without mass support and hence not very effective vis-à-vis the bureaucracy and the commercial elite. The other group that lost some of its power was the landed aristocracy or the feudal elements i.e. the zamindari class. This was in some ways a positive development, but not positive enough to allow democratic elements to take root in Pakistan. 'The first Basic Democracies election of 1959 indicated the declining influence of landlords in rural politics'.⁴¹ The declining influence of landed magnates and the aristocracy was also visible in the 1962 national and provincial assemblies. However, there were glaring contradictions in the whole process because as the Ayub regime politicized itself, it began to fall back on the support of the landlords to some extent. This was partly because the regime had entered into an alliance with the old national political elite whose major source of support was the landed aristocracy.

In relation to Pakistan's political system under Ayub Khan, Mohammed Waseem writes, 'The bureaucratic polity of Pakistan under Ayub presented an involuted form of paternalistic rule. Its involution came from applying new sources of legitimacy to the maintenance of the political order of a previous era. The state increasingly eschewed the language of public participation in the name of nationalism.'⁴² National unity was emphasised over local differentiation in popular opinion. For instance, the Ayub administration established the Bureau of National Reconstruction to bring together the disparate linguistic, ethnic, racial, sectarian and social groups together as a cohesive nation. The regime's system of keeping police spies and allocating funds for 'secret services' made the then political climate increasingly oppressive. Mohammed Waseem further argues that, 'in the constitutional context, this cult of unity was conceptually embedded in the need for a strong centre and a very strong chief executive, representing the focal point of authority'.⁴³ Such concentration of power was combined with a patriarchal vision to produce a closed system of rule without any role for the public at large.

Agreeing with Mohammed Waseem, Asaf Hussain, also follows a similar line of argument. Hussain argues that Ayub Khan was very much aware of the recalcitrant sections of Pakistani society when he formed his military government and was very much aware of the destructive internal political forces in Pakistan which could have a destabilising impact on Pakistan's domestic politics. Thus, his main objective was to free the country from these recalcitrant, centrifugal forces that posed a threat to the national and territorial integrity of Pakistan.⁴⁴ As the first power holder of a military regime, he had to prove to other elite groups that he had more power and authority than them. Thus, he enacted the Electoral Bodies Disqualification Order/EBDO to get

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid, p57.

⁴² M.Waseem, *Politics and the State in Pakistan*, Progressive Publishers, Lahore, 1989, pp164-165.

⁴³ Ibid, p165.

⁴⁴ A.Hussain, *Elite Politics in an Ideological State: The Case of Pakistan*, Dawson, Kent, 1979, p134.

rid of all forms of resistance and opposition.⁴⁵ Those who suffered the most under the Electoral Bodies Disqualification Order were the professional elite from former East Pakistan, what is now Bangladesh. To a lesser extent, the land owning elite also suffered.

In the final analysis, scholars such as T.V.Paul have criticised Ayub's Khan model of Basic Democracy. Paul writes, 'it was neither basic nor democratic, because it simply did not follow the key principles of democratic rule-the freedom to contest elections by independent political parties. It was a top-down model designed by the military and its chief so that real democratic forces would not emerge as a challenge to the garrison state.'⁴⁶

The Current Situation in Pakistan:

The post 2000 situation in Pakistan is not very different from the times of Ayub Khan. Since the army has been in power for decades ever since Pakistan came into existence, elements of the military still have an entrenched position in politics, economics, the corporate sector, education and communications in the post 2000 phase. It may seem that democratic groups have come to the political forefront of Pakistan's domestic politics, but the real power still by and large lies with the military. Ex-army generals have often been appointed in senior civilian posts to run the civilian administration. In present day Pakistan, although the army does not rule directly, it continues to have the real power and it exercises its authority from the margins or from 'behind the scenes'⁴⁷. This is not a direct take-over. It is indirect rule or soft intervention. The military has thus 'cast long shadows over civilian politics, directly ruling the state for more than half of Pakistan's time as an independent state and indirectly exerting its political influence for the rest.'⁴⁸ Real power lies in the hands of not just the army but also with the Pakistani intelligence services like the ISI/Inter-Services Intelligence which has strong links with the army. The relationship between the civilian government and the military is often strained, and most civilian leaders (including the current Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif) are seen as puppets in the hands of the military.

'The military has consolidated near hegemony over key domestic and foreign policies and few civilians dare to challenge its prerogatives.'⁴⁹ Since the civilian leaders have often depended on the military for support during times of political crisis and emergency, this has gone a long way in enhancing the prestige and power of the military. It should also be noted that the civilian leaders have not really been that different from their military counterparts. For instance, 'civilian politicians, as much as military leaders, have used Pakistan's state machinery to mobilise voters.'⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Ibid, p135.

⁴⁶ T.V.Paul, *The Warrior State: Pakistan in the Contemporary World*, Random House India, Gurgaon, 2014, p75.

⁴⁷ V.Schofield, 'Can Democracy Work in Pakistan?' *Asian Affairs*, 40,2,2009, p246.

⁴⁸ A.Shah, 'Constraining Consolidation: Military Politics and Democracy in Pakistan', *Democratization*, 21,6, 2014, p1011.

⁴⁹ S.Ganguly and C.Fair, 'The Structural Origins of Authoritarianism in Pakistan', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 51,1, 2013, p138.

⁵⁰ I.Talbot, 'General Pervez Musharraf: Saviour or Destroyer of Pakistan's Democracy?' *Contemporary South Asia* 11(3), 2002, p313.

To prove the point that this paper made earlier at the outset that Pakistan's political system is more grey and not so much black or white, this gets best captured in the words of ex-military general Pervez Musharraf, when he openly expresses his sympathy for democracy:

'I ardently believe that no country can progress without democracy, but democracy has to be tailored in accordance with each nation's peculiar environment. Only then can it be a functioning democracy that truly empowers the people and produces governments to address their needs. If it does not function, then it merely creates a façade without spirit or substance.... Sadly, a functioning democracy is exactly what has eluded Pakistan ever since its birth on August 14, 1947. This lack lies at the root of most of our ills. The problem is that while most of us know that the Greek word *demos* means 'the people', hardly anyone takes notice of the other vital Greek word, *kratein*, 'to rule'. Thus 'people's rule' or 'rule by the people', which is the spirit of democracy, is entirely forgotten. What we in Pakistan have consciously constructed instead is rule by a small elite-never democratic, often autocratic, usually plutocratic, and lately kleptocratic-all working with a tribal-feudal mindset, 'in the name of the people' with democratic camouflage. This small elite comprises feudal barons, tribal warlords, and politicians of all hues. In Pakistan we inherited a feudal, patriarchal society. The population is divided into vertical compartments of provinces, tribes, clans, castes and sub-castes. People generally do not vote across these compartments or across their tribe, caste or clan boundaries. Elections therefore involve shifting coalitions of different clans or tribes, negotiated by tribal or clan leaders, rather than appeals to independent voters. The system lends itself to incompetence and corruption, leading to poor governance. It creates the illusion of democracy because we do have elections; but we forget that elections are but a tool of democracy, not an end in themselves.'⁵¹

The above comments made by General Musharraf also shows very clearly that Pakistan's political trajectory is part of the same continuum that started since Ayub's time and that there is no real break with past politics. It is clear that there are strong elements of continuity between Ayub's time and Musharraf's time, especially when Musharraf talks about elections in the above passage, and how the Pakistan political system creates an 'illusion of democracy', which is exactly what we saw with Ayub's so called Basic Democracy.

⁵¹ P.Musharraf, *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*, Pocket Books, London, 2006, pp154-155.