

Synopsis of Political Instability and Economic Stagnation in Pakistan

***Dr. Javed Iqbal¹, Fozia Akram², Dr. Muhammad Afzal Sajid³, Ali Hussain Farrukh⁴,
Samaiqqa Sadaqat Ali⁵**

1. Ph.D Political Science, University of the Punjab, Email: javed4n@gmail.com
2. Assistant Professor, Government Nawaz Sharif associate college for women Mandi Bahau Din
3. Ph.D Political Science, University of the Punjab
4. Assistant Professor - Government College University, Lahore
5. Government College University, Lahore

Abstract

Pakistan was orphaned in its infancy and the political instability supervened after the sad demise of founding father of Pakistan. Consequently, the state institutions remained weak, vulnerable and torpid. Economy suffered on the other hand. The state with achieved as a result of democratic process at that time and it failed to take roots. The combination of low productivity, heavy debt burdens, political instability, and economic mismanagement has created a challenging environment for Pakistan's economy. Without significant reforms and a shift in policy direction, the prospects for recovery and growth remain bleak. The vicious cycle of instability and low productivity with issues of governance had hampered the development of country. Political maneuvering had always destabilized the state institutions the constitution and politics. Political instability has led the state towards governance crises, economic disruption, constitutional breakdown and malfunctioning of state institutions. Consequently, the people have a perception that politicians are not working for the inordinate advantageous. Gerrymandering and voter suppression prevailed which undermine the integrity of electoral process. Sinking state existence in the economy, addressing business environment constraints and continuousness of sound policies and planning are required for a sustained economic recovery. Over the medium term with higher real incomes, better jobs and lower poverty the socio-political stability and consolidation of democracy is essential.

Introduction

Why does politician politicize? Many explanations can be posited to answer this question with reference to the emergence of democratic state of Pakistan on the globe. Politicians in Pakistan with their irrational approach are unable to strengthen the political system as well as the political institutions. Politics lies, in the first instance, in the fact, that it represents the earliest attempt to elaborate a systematic science of politics. Vicious cycle of politics can also be seen as a self-reinforcing pattern of deleterious behaviors, actions or magnitudes of policies that can plague a political system. This pattern of political maneuvering, however, ultimately leads towards descendent spiral of polarization in the state with dysfunction of the political and administrative institutions of state. Consequently, mistrust, skepticism and disbelief prevailed while the political process led to disengagement, severance and cynicism. Polarization is the first most substance of the vicious cycle of politics and consequently people lose trust in state institutions. In simple words, the politician's foremost concern becomes to attack opponents, criticizing, offending the positive and negative arguments and subsequently fueling further polarization. A very few are benefited from the policies that are protecting interests of the very few. The focus of political parties remains as manipulating public opinion in their favor by the use of propaganda, media or other social tools in the modern era. Polarization and partisan have further created gaps between the

individuals and this polarization and partisan has infused in families even. Rigidity of views, prioritize loyalty towards the political views over constructive dialogue. People consume only that information or pick up the line's best suites to their views or interests ignoring opposite views and, in this scenario, opponents are portrayed as enemies. This polarization has led to the legislative stalemate and affecting the governance as well as socio-economic progress of the country. Social segregation is also hall mark of this polarization and political havoc in the country. In these ways news sources also cater specific ideologies. This vicious cycle of politics is prevailing in under-developed and developing countries since their independence. This fact propagates a toxic political environment, empathy and social division.

The sacrosanct land of Pakistan is considered fertile for propagating chin-wags and sprouting of conspiracy treacheries for themselves. In these political maneuvering and conspiracies which are chronological in nature, resultantly political actors end up with nothing. Wining the situation by any political actor is impracticable. Its more about, who gets the blessings of power. Pakistani politics has never been managed to get out of the vicious cycle of back-door deals. The grandiloquence and pomposity, one perceives from political spearheads is enormously forged. The rivals in political streams are too much in a state of disarray to exhibit any serious threat to current dispensation. Lack of bipartisanship and compromise in the politics of Pakistan keep them at distance to work together. And, their unwillingness for national interest is apparent from their debates and legalism. This has led to gridlock; short term political gains relatively consolidation of political system and push to economy of State. Nuanced solutions are totally neglecting subtle perspectives while setting aside the national interests, disengagement and cynicism among citizens. Consequently, the people have a perception that politicians are not working for the inordinate advantageous. There exists a loss of faith in political institutions, disruption in laws and order and political process. It can be said that political pandemonium has interrupted the path to triumph status of developed country with disrupting governance, dissuading foreign direct investment (FDI) and ultimately leading to economic stagnation.

Vicious Cycle of Political Instability

When the political system or government is vulnerable to collapse due to power struggle leading to conflicts and control over political institutions, sudden or sometimes violent transition from one government to other which is referred to as regime change, the political instability prevails. Political instability consequently perpetrates economic instability, social unrest, crises of governance and institutional weakness. Mistrust prevails among the people against government and other organs of the state. Interference of influence from foreign states or actors is also considered very prominent in the regime change, political unrest and chaos in the country. Further, to dilute the process and undermine the integrity of electoral process gerrymandering and voter suppression prevailed. Political process is diluted to favor a specific faction of society while undermining competitive elections and ultimately undermining the democratic representation erode in the political and electoral process. Only the transparent electoral procedure can bring Political stability. Instability hovers all the time and mistrust towards the institutions. There are many causes of political instability. It can be seen in Pakistan in the form of frequent regime change, military intervention in the politics and de railing of the political process by sacking the political parties, politicians, and weakening of democratic institutions, supplementary internal conflicts pertaining to sectarian, ethnic and religious difference, sleazing corruption and crises of governance. Political instability in Pakistan exists since independence due to weak institutions that remained under developed or dependent. Political process has been disrupted by intervention due to weak political structure. Historical factors like legacy of colonialism and partition are also one of the causes of political instability in Pakistan. A vicious cycle of instability can be seen in Pakistan in its geopolitically located and strategic location in the world. Geopolitical and regional conflicts

can also be considered as one the causes of political instability in Pakistan. On the other hands, irrational approach by the politicians leads the state towards political violence. The dominant in group impose aggressive design and the state like Pakistan which have deep ethical, religious and economic cleavages have the potential for viciousness and sporadic episodes of violence. This game yields various comprehensions into the nature of pervasive politics, political volatility and political violence. The country is stuck in perpetual cycle of historical political instability. Its beginning can be traced back to the origin of country on the globe. The legacy is due to the muted role of legislature further weakening the state institutions.

Vicious cycle of political which is delineated as volatility of politics in country has obstructed the outgrowth of political system. Growth political leaders or political elites is incumbent only who remain in their safe and comfort zones, arguing over the inconsequential issues and nation strive solely at their own. Power outrage, growing mistrust towards the institutions and political system with growing frustration is the best definition of the lives of people of Pakistan. With the unfulfilled promises mistrust has grown significantly and political system limps along. So, the philosopher inscriptions about the political situation of Pakistan are not laughable rather tragic. Steer of political wavering and instability not leaving its track though unsympathetically heart-rending social and economic chapters.

Economic Stagnation

Economic stagnation is due to low GDP growth rate and a prolonged period of low economic growth. Economic stagnation adversely affects the consumer behavior, high unemployment and various other challenges including inequalities. Economic inequalities are insinuated to as income inequalities, social and regional inequalities are also annexed to the vicious cycle of politics in Pakistan. The class structure and the difference between rich and poor, socially limited access to health, education and opportunities created a vacuum between the two entities. Another inequality which is also due to the political instability is the disparities between the urban and rural population and even across the provinces. Economic struggle and persistent inequalities since independence in the state, the institutions could not grow. Due to the political instability economic crises emerged and in the changed political scenario even after World Wars where State was the center, political system and institutions could not focus the perspective. The States grown during the cold war but many states could opt the change and remained weak politically, economically and socially. Due to the reason crises of governance emerged and social structure suffered badly along with the political and economic constitution. Feudal system, poor governance of resources and institutions, corruption, inadequate education and skill development, limited economic opportunities, resource allocation and generation have nurtured economic challenges and economic inequalities in Pakistan. The state's substantial debt capability and to repay the loans or interest on it stems from tax collection. "Pakistan is one of the world's worst performers on tax collection," (Kozul-Wright, 2024). The economy of Pakistan is classified as progressing with low tax collection compared to GDP of the country. Tax evasion and fragmented tax system are the challenges faced by Pakistan. These Facts spearhead substantial structural imbalance of economy. Untaxed economy affects the national income adversely. There are multiple considerations of low tax collection which relate to political instability, trust deficit prevailing among the people, businesses and inefficiency of the government official. The state, therefore, facing lack of revenue for modernization, socio-economic welfare and good governance. Economic stagnation is leading the country towards stagflation. It does not respond to the Philips curve rather inflation and unemployment supposed to have inverse relationship. Stagflation is puzzling paradox and policy makers have to devise ways and strategies to solve the problem. Taking for example the political domain the dictator run, authoritarian or semi-authoritarian political regimes are predominantly vulnerable to political instability. The cause is apparent in the context of Pakistan and suppression of opposition and

the weakening of democratic norms had remained the prime business of politicians in Pakistan. Governments involved in corrupt practices, gerrymandering, disrespect rule of law and impede political participation conceive an atmosphere apt for unrest, instability, inconsistency and low growth. The erosion of democratic institutions had remained untouched since independence that is a key driver of political instability in Pakistan, even in historically stable countries (Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018). Economically, instability results in capital flight at massive level, forfeiture investor confidence, low FDI and the descent of public services. Social development and governance crises followed consequently. This economic decline forges into a cycle of instability, enfeebled economies delegitimizing the already fragile government (Fukuyama, 2018). The economy of Pakistan is facing multiple challenges including the debt burden and dependency on aid to bridge the budget deficit, high inflation rate with increasing unemployment and low productivity growth. These factors are enough to contribute in the stagnation of economy. Besides vicious cycle of politics the country is also caught in cycle of debt trap and significant portion of national revenue is allocated for debt servicing. Due to low productivity and economic growth, the state has to face the challenge of debt servicing. Due to political unrest dependency on external financing is increasing day by day. The state remained unable to manage its own resources, to cut the expenses down, create opportunities and to place to state on developmental path. History of failed democracy further dented the socio-political and economic chapters of country.

A Land with Scratched Democracy and Growing Polarization

Heterogeneity in the political thoughts considered a key feature of democracy. Pluralistic societies are often groomed enough to acknowledge and respect the diverse opinion, trust building and belief of the people, therefore, it is considered as the essence of democracy. Unenthusiastic form of pluralism or diversity can also be seen when pluralism lack tolerance, respect for the rights of the people and miscellany, it can lead to political polarization in the state. Deep ideological divide in the community leads towards the political polarization, shutting all doors of negotiation, lack of patience and respect for the views of others. This diversity impedes the functioning of democracy. This type of polarization becomes a cause of divide in the society with no room for negotiation and respect for the views of others. An environment of mistrust and animosity, on the other hands emerges. This often encompasses zero-sum dissents on different testaments, procedures or programs or conventions surrounded by political system. This trend or phenomenon is common in the world in different political system and regarded as a global trend. The strongest and largest democracies in the world had have to face the issue of polarization as well. Pakistan, with its turbulent history of political instability, Constitutional crises, linguistics and ethnonational divides, civil-military relations, intervention in the politics of country, is not an exception carrying polarized politics and facing the challenges of consolidated democracy. Polarization, on the other hands, adversely affect the ethical values, rights of the people and respect in the society. There is clear divide in the society and socio-political constitution of Pakistan is significantly polarized at all levels from conferences, discussions, deliberations, debates to establishments and society. Therefore, there is fundamental and conspicuous deficiency of compromise or consensus on deep-seated democratic patterns.

Political polarization in Pakistan always followed a trickle-down effect on the society. It has never been grown as a bottom-line phenomenon. The role of political elites in this regard cannot be set asides. They built the political narrative without considering the ethical or moral impacts on the society. The political gains had always remained the priority setting aside the social built-up domain. Political elites built the narrative to influence the public opinion and sentiments. In this way the country has faced prolonged influence of polarization and greater influence of institutions in the political stream of Pakistan including direct military intervention consequently establishing dictatorial regime and judicial activism. The

history of Pakistan has witnessed very limited period of synchronization and convergence of politics among state institutions and political parties. The state is facing the unprecedented constitutional crises. Journey towards first Constitution took nine-years due to lack of political harmony, misgovernance of institution and their reciprocated association. The political parties stick to their personal gains rather national unity or changing the mode of governance and harmony between the institutions. Non-political factors and regime consequently further exploited the political parties and they turned into pro-establishment and anti-establishment. The founding father established the system of Pakistan on the democratic principles but it had remained a question that ever state experienced true democracy?

Political crises faced by the country are not unprecedented. These are recurring loop or vicious cycle that repeats after few years or a decade. However, the political awareness has blamed the politicians for their ineligibility to strengthen the political and state institutions. An unprecedented level of openness can be witnessed in debates and discussions and public outrage against political and military institutions. Pakistan army, hitherto abstruse force operating from behind the panoramas, has shove itself into the public eye, shedding its taboo status and becoming a subject of public discussion with the passage of time. It is, therefore, of the essence that all the stakeholders identify and acknowledge the magnitude of issues and had displayed a collectively put an end to concentrate the socio-political downfall, bad governance and constitutional issues effectively. Political maneuverings and propagation of politician had polarized their supporters. This polarization put forth merciless, damaging, and prejudicial blow on the social lives of people in Pakistan. An environment of abhorrence and animosity is apparent from the acts and discussion of the society due to political polarization from last two decades.

Unusual Constitutional Crisis

Pakistan is in the midst of an unusual constitutional crisis. It was caused by the historic ineffectiveness of political and unanticipated issues faced by the constitutional organs of the state. The constitutional crises that are taking shape grows out of a vague disputed between the state organs and can be traced back to the constitutional and political phases since independence. Constitutional crises emerged when there are disputes over the legitimacy of country's Constitution. Political, economic, social and weak institution's structure are the causes of constitutional Crisis in Pakistan. Feeble or inefficient institutions e.g. judiciary specifically and legislature particularly propagates constitutional crisis. These crises incubate weak checks and balances on the departments. On the other hands, inadequate separation of powers, Constitutional ambiguities or loopholes and Inefficient or biased electoral systems are regarded as the factors of constitutional crises so as the political instability. The practice of amending the Constitution according to aspirations, interests and specific purposes had remained common practice of democratic forces in Pakistan. These Constitutional amendments or reforms have not played trivial role for socio-economic development, better law and order situation, security, safety and protection of common man's interests in the State. Intervention in the political process by non-political agents of the state is also derail the Constitution and its implacability.

The index of enforcement or abiding by the laws has declined due to undue political interference, nepotism, self-aggrandizement, flattery and self-glorification. Constitution crises emerged when it has gone through multiple amendments time and again for idiosyncratic or egocentricities of identifiable individual, party or entity. Judicial interpretation or revisions, legislative overreach, executive orders and conflicts between national and local laws had remained a major cause of Constitutional crises in Pakistan. To sum up the constitutional crises in Pakistan it can be said that Military coups, political polarization and judicial activism had remained at top with respect to the vicious cycle of

Constitutional crises in the country. Constitutional crisis had sprouted administrative paralysis and eventually democratic backsliding and loss of political legitimacy. Constitutional crises impede due to vicious nature of Pakistan's politics which had remained a cycle of power struggle among the political elites rather than stability and solidity. In spite of instability and misgovernance, the people endure with resilience, hoping from politicians to prioritize nation over personal gains.

Political Instability and Judicial Activism

Alexander and Schauer's argument are important, provocative, and unconvincing. To their credit, by grounding judicial supremacy on law's settlement function, they have reinvigorated the academic debate over democratic government's duty to obey Court edicts. Judiciary, in the case of Pakistan has greater role to play for political stability. The constitutional crises impede owing to the role of judiciary in Pakistan. The settlement of disputes had remained favorably and inclined. Nevertheless, if stability is the problem, judicial exclusivity is not the answer. Their historical analysis collides with everything we know about the court as a political institution. In particular, Alexander and Schauer do not take into account how concentrating complete interpretive authority in the Court would create political instability and undermine the fragile foundation that supports and sustains judicial power (Anon n.d.). No doubt at various times in our history the Supreme Court has attempted a more ambitious agenda, but it has done so at great cost to itself and the nation. The interests of few are protected at the cost of national integrity. Judicial system of Pakistan operates in hierarchal organization of courts ranging from Supreme Court of Pakistan to District and Session courts and Civil Judges-cum Judicial Magistrate. Constitution of Pakistan deals with the superior judiciary in a fairly comprehensive manner and contains elaborate provisions on the composition, jurisdiction, powers and functions of these courts. However, political interference has made the judicial organ not as effective as it ought to be. Constitutional crises emerges when there are frequent reforms in the Constitution leading to institutional gridlock, erosion of public interests and challenging the democratic principles of state. Judicial crises emerge due to the disputes among the stakeholders and office bears over the appointment of judges, structure of the courts and limitation imposed by the legislative organ of the state. Political interference, public skepticism and limited resources further hampered the judicial performance in Pakistan. Political instability, however, undermine the independency of judiciary, ultimately leading to a vicious cycle where weakened courts fail to uphold rule of law further exacerbating political turmoil. Judicial activism had not always benefited the populace or the institutional structure of state. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Judicial system is set up on traditional pyramid which needs to be upgraded to fill the gap as per present scenario. There are many other causes of Constitution and Political instability and economic stagnation that have adversely affected the socio-economic settings, good governance, judicial system,

Crises of Governance

Crises of governance can be seen from the historical and traditional factors of widespread bribery, nepotism and embezzlement in different projects and departments of state. Lawful and honest use of natural resources and state possessions recuperates the governance by minimizing the crises of governance. Poor governance can also be seen due to lack of accountability and transparency and impunity for those in power. Bad or prejudicial governance increasingly considered as root cause of evils prevailing in our society. Good governance simply lies in the accurate decision making for the state by politicians for its welfare and progress. Politics and political structure as well as political actors are greater role to play to improve the governance in state. While, patronage politics further aggravate favoritism and cronyism. Poor governance emanates due to Disorganized or Inefficient public services: Underprivileged poor healthcare facilities, Insignificant and traditional education

ignoring the modern learnings, and infrastructure. Due to inefficient allocation of state resources, the crises of governance emerged. One of the most important causes of vicious cycle of politics in Pakistan and poor governance is fragmented political parties and their meager role in the national development. Feudalism, authoritarianism and dynastic politics i.e. family dominated political parties and leadership are the most important causes and factor of political instability and bad governance in Pakistan. Socio-economic status has not improved from years even with the democratic setup ruling the state. Economic stagnation and poverty are on the rise due to poor governance of social, political and economic resources of the State.

Political instability has disrupted governance in Pakistan. The country is facing the unprecedented crises of governance that had hampered the social and economic upheaval with rise in poverty and weakening of state institutions. Leadership crises, frequent changes, inbred politics has stopped the way of political growth in country enduring weak and short lived policies, corruption, poverty and unemployment. The nation's progress is contingent on spotlighting welfare over political contentions and ensuring accountability. Crises of governance further disrupted the economy with investor's deterrence. Political instability is also substantial to poor governance, disrupting economic and social policies. Misgovernance and instability has exacerbated poverty, mistrust, social and political pandemonium. When the governance crisis are sorted out the good governance brings stability in the societies with transparency, accountability, rule of law, effectiveness and efficiency, responsive and consensus. In order to bring stability and sustainability in the policies, it is necessary evil to resolve the crises of governance.

Socio-political injustice

Key political players in the state are the political parties which have been evolved with the different political phases of Pakistan. Every political phase since independence has given rise to new political party. Mostly the political parties are empowered when they have the support of State's powerful institutions. Key players are the: PML-N, PML-Q, PPP, PTI, MQM and other schismatic, factional and religious groups showing strength in elections process. Pakistan's politics is an endless saga. An empire in the minds of the people through political narrative is built by the politician just to grab or hold their seat on promises and hollow words. In these promises' dreams of an ordinary person fade, although emphasis of political elites remained distant from national and nation's interests. Political narrative and slogans of political parties whether old or new are traded for money and power. Interestingly, same political elite spread the slogan of nation's welfare from different political parties in every election by changing his / her loyalty. This vicious cycle is the melodrama of politics in Pakistan. Idea of obliging the nation to impart welfare with uncontaminated objectives feels like a relic of the past or a story from a fairytale. Their role is apparent from power outages, economic instability, and growing frustrations that define the lives of ordinary people. The political system limps along, weighed down by broken promises and misplaced priorities. But behind the satire lies a harsh reality. Pakistan's political situation is not just laughable it is tragic.

This vicious cycle of politics frontrunners the economic stagnation, inertia, weak state institution and consequently political instability. It further can include human rights violations and widespread human rights violation can be seen due to political instability and economic stagnation including suppression of free expression, arbitrary arrests and misuse of force by the state. Consequently, civil unrest, authoritarian regimes, economic disparities and weak governance is bequeathed to the nation. Secondly, economic hardship including economic disparities serve as a founding stone for political instability. Economic disparities are inherent in the case of Pakistan. The feudal lords rule the politics and policy formulation is not in the

hands of experts. There is no change resultantly and instability cycle sustained. Ultimately, regional instability and social fragmentation can be bequeathed to the nation. Social disintegration and fragmentation, predominantly alongside ethnic and religious lines, make worse these tensions. It can be observed how marginalized groups, when politically or socially excluded, often escalate their grievances into broader conflicts (Cederman, Gleditsch, and Buhaug, 2017). Inequality often correlates with violent ethnic conflict, making it a critical factor in political instability. The role of judiciary and judicial activism in Pakistan had benefited inadequately to the nation. Political phases embodies the role of judiciary in the political instability and ultimately affecting the socio-economic domain of country.

Breaking the Cycle: Strategies for Sustainable Progress

Politics is considered as an evolving science. Politics represents the earliest attempt to systematically study the dynamics of power, governance, and societal organization. As a field, it has been constantly evolving, with scholars and practitioners seeking to better understand the nuances and complexities of political systems. The consecrated land of Pakistan, with its rich history and unique geopolitical position, has been a fertile ground for the germination of various political theories and conspiracies. Pakistani politics has been marked by a seemingly endless cycle of political maneuvering and conspiracies. These intricate webs of power struggles and backroom deals have often been chronicled, with each new development adding another layer of complexity to the political landscape. Chronological conspiracies have greater role in the instability of politics and stagnation of economy since independence. Similarly, Impracticable Victories is an environment where political actors often find themselves caught in a perpetual game of one-upmanship, where the ultimate goal is not necessarily to enact meaningful change, but to outmaneuver their rivals. As a result, the pursuit of power becomes an end in itself, with little regard for the practical implications of their actions. Also, At the heart of this political drama lies the question of who ultimately wields the true power. The blessing of power, rather than its practical application, often becomes the primary focus, as political actors jockey for position and influence within the system. There existed a vicious cycle of back-door deals to gain power. The persistence of back-door deals in Pakistani politics can be attributed to the entrenched interests of various power brokers. These individuals and groups have built a system that rewards their influence and maintains the status quo, making it difficult for meaningful reform to take hold. Transparency is lacking in the policy formulation and implementation. The opacity of these backroom negotiations erodes public trust in the political process, as citizens are left in the dark about the true motivations and decision-making behind the scenes. This lack of transparency further entrenches the power of the elite and perpetuates the cycle of political maneuvering. Transparency along with accountability had remained at stake. The biggest loss to the state institutions is due to lack of transparency in the policies implementation and accountability of the politicians. The state had run without a clear and accountable political system; the public is left with little recourse to hold their elected representatives responsible. This lack of accountability allows the cycle of back-door deals to continue, as political actors are able to operate with impunity. There exist the conspiracy theories when one is in power and other engender such conjectures to derail the system. The complex and often opaque nature of Pakistani politics has made it a fertile ground for the proliferation of conspiracy theories. These narratives offer a seemingly simple explanation for the country's challenges, often scapegoating external forces or shadowy cabals. Distraction from real issues is common and can be considered another vicious cycle of appealing ordinary issues rather than addressing the factual ones. The prominence of conspiracy theories in Pakistani discourse has the potential to distract from the more pressing issues facing the country, such as economic development, social welfare, and democratic reform. This can further entrench the status quo and inhibit meaningful progress. The widespread belief in conspiracy theories can also undermine the credibility of key political

institutions, erode public trust and make it more difficult to enact lasting change. This, in turn, perpetuates the cycle of political instability and dysfunction.

Conclusion

Strengthening the institutions and rule of law is necessary evil to arrest the Constitutional crises for political stability in the state. Confidence building measures, (CBMs), dialogues while engaging civic engagement for resolving the mutual disputes for the interests of the state. Fostering national unity among the citizens, institutions in the case of Pakistan and social cohesion is essential for disputes resolution and to bring stability accordingly. Independent judiciary and impartial media can play better role in fostering national cohesion, national unity and interconnection. Nevertheless, to bring democracy into practice and reinstate the sanctity of institutional boundaries, Pakistan needs to take certain measures. First and foremost, Pakistan army would have to take a clear and strong stance by distancing itself from politics, maintaining neutrality, and avoiding involvement in political processes. Such a step can be a significant turning point in Pakistan's democratic journey. Similarly, the judiciary in Pakistan should not confine itself to juristocracy and hyperactive judicial activism, which can encroach upon political sovereignty. Instead, it should operate within a balanced framework that respects the separation of powers. Legislative assemblies should introduce reforms aimed at strengthening democracy and minimizing external influences in political processes. Political parties have a vital role to play in upholding democracy. They should strive to build political consensus on shared norms and a code of conduct. Key aspects such as free and fair elections, civil liberties, free media, equality, and peaceful transfer of government must be areas of convergence among political parties. It is crucial that all political parties accept the democratic practices and results thereof. Populist rhetoric should be avoided to gain public support, as it can undermine democratic processes. Transparent and good governance, consistent long-term policies and prioritizing national welfare over personal political gains and political rivalries are essential for political stability and economic growth. A focus on democratic processes and genuine political engagement is essential for fostering long-term stability in Pakistan. Addressing the persistent challenges of Pakistani politics requires a clear-eyed assessment of the key roadblocks to reform. This may involve untangling the web of vested interests, power dynamics, and systemic barriers that have entrenched the status quo. Fostering transparency, increasing transparency in the political process, through measures such as improved access to information and strengthened accountability mechanisms, can help to restore public trust and create an environment more conducive to meaningful change. Developing political institutions that are truly representative of the diverse interests and perspectives within Pakistani society can help to break down the barriers to reform and pave the way for more equitable and effective governance. Navigating the complex and often turbulent waters of Pakistani politics will require a sustained and multifaceted effort, drawing on the expertise of political scientists, policymakers, and civil society. By addressing the root causes of the persistent challenges and seizing opportunities for meaningful reform, Pakistan can chart a path towards a more stable, accountable, and sustainable political future. The fundamental point of the discussions and debates vestiges whether the political system grows? Will Pakistan take necessary steps to overcome its social, political, governance and economic challenges and build a prosperous future for the generations to come?

References:

- Loughlin, M. (2019). The contemporary crisis of constitutional democracy. *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 39(2), 435-454.
- Abramowitz, A. I. (2021). The great alignment: Race, party transformation, and the rise of Donald Trump. Yale University Press.
- Branch, A., & Mampilly, Z. C. (2021). Africa uprising: Popular protest and political change.

Zed Books Ltd.

- Bose, S. (2021). *Kashmir: Roots of conflict, paths to peace*. Harvard University Press.
- Cederman, L.-E., Gleditsch, K. S., & Buhaug, H. (2017). *Inequality, grievances, and civil war*. Cambridge University Press.
- Connolly, J. (2021). *The changing politics of climate change*. Wiley.
- Fukuyama, F. (2018). *Identity: The demand for dignity and the politics of resentment*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Haggard, S., & Kaufman, R. R. (2016). *Dictators and democrats: Masses, elites, and regime change*. Princeton University Press.
- Heydemann, S. (2022). *Beyond regime change: Managing instability in the Middle East*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Kim, S. H. (2020). *North Korea and Northeast Asian regional security*. Routledge.
- Krastev, I., & Holmes, S. (2020). *The light that failed: A reckoning*. Penguin Press.
- Kozul-Wright, A. (2024, February 6). In Pakistan, old hopefuls jostle to turn around struggling economy. *Al Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2024/2/6/in-pakistan-old-hopefuls-jostle-to-turn-around-struggling-economy>
- Levitsky, S. (2020). *How democracies die*. Crown Publishing Group.
- Levitsky, S., & Ziblatt, D. (2018). *How democracies die*. Broadway Books.
- Salehyan, I., & Gleditsch, K. S. (2021). Refugees and the spread of civil war. *International Organization*, 60(2), 335-366.
- Shlaim, A. (2021). *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- Thompson, M. R. (2022). The military coup in Myanmar: A return to the past?. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 43(1), 89-111