



Over-burdened Society, Over-politicised State: Understanding Pakistan's Struggles with Governance

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Abstract

Beset by serious governance problems, Pakistan is often called a failed state. Using the concepts of state-in-society, burdened societies and over-politicised states, this article argues that the nature of a society's social and political structures, such as social inequality and ethnic divisions, determines the quality of governance institutions that can emerge within it at any given time. These structures emerge from the country's pre-independence socio-political inheritances and then evolve under the influence of subsequent external and internal factors. In order to analyse a country's future governance prospects and socio-economic trajectory, one must study the trajectory of these societal structures. Using this framework, the article concludes that while doomsday predictions about Pakistan's collapse or take-over by religious extremists are inaccurate, it suffers from serious socio-economic problems, which will only resolve gradually if its societal structures evolve over the years in a positive direction.

Keywords

Pakistan, failed state, state-in-society, burdened societies, over-politicised states

Introduction

Beset by serious economic and political problems, Pakistan is called a failed state, the most dangerous place in the world and terrorism's supermarket (Cohen, 2011; Zakaria, 2010). These characterisations contrast sharply with its description as a rising economic star during the 1950s to 1960s and to a lesser extent the early 2000s. These accolades, in turn, contradicted the predictions by British and Indian Congress officials before independence that Pakistan would be an unviable state. Since 2005, Pakistan has experienced several serious, simultaneous shocks: governmental incompetence, two massive natural disasters, insurgency, terrorism and the global recession. Other countries have often withered in the face of fewer shocks, experiencing economic collapse, huge famines or complete breakdown of security. Pakistan has actually become a middle-income country during this tumult, highlighting its hardy nature.

It has also played hide-and-seek with democracy since 1947 but its dictators ruled with neither the same authority, nor longevity as in Africa.

Thus, Pakistan defies easy explanations and prescriptions. Scholars have linked its governance and socio-economic problems to the 'original sin' committed in basing its *raison d'être* in religion, the contested nature of its nationalism, the omnipotence of its army, American policies and the weaknesses of its political class (Jalal, 1985; Cohen, 2004; Ali, 2008). Each of these explanations describes a part of the picture without identifying the root causes of Pakistan's problems comprehensively. Pakistan's instability can be best understood by applying Migdal's (2001) concept of state-in-society, Rawls' (1999) concept of burdened societies and Sangmpam's (2007) concept of over-politicised states. The main insights from these concepts is that the nature of a society's social and political structures, such as the extent of social inequality and ethnic divisions, determines the quality of governance that can emerge within each society at any given time. These structures emerge from the society's pre-independence socio-political inheritances and then evolve under the influence of subsequent external and internal factors. In order to analyse a country's future governance prospects and socio-economic fate, one must study the trajectory of these societal structures. The most important societal structure in Pakistan's case was the presence at independence of a range of powerful societal forces with divergent aims jostling to shape Pakistan's trajectory according to their own narrow interests, rather than broad socio-economic development. This competition pulled Pakistan in different directions and obstructed the pursuit of a consistent and sustained development path. The next section presents an analytical framework for understanding the widespread failure of governance among developing countries. The article then uses this framework to trace Pakistan's governance trajectory since independence. Finally, it evaluates Pakistan's current situation and its likely future governance and development trajectory.

The Analytical Framework

In contrast with Weber's rational, objective and goal-oriented conception of the state, Migdal's (2001:11–17) state-in-society framework views the state as emerging from and reflecting the dominant structures of society. Under this framework, the state is an arena for intense competition between various social groups present in the society, each of which pursues their own interests according to their own worldviews and priorities. In some countries, a coalition of economically-dynamic social groups succeeds in eliminating the com-

peting authorities and access to the means of violence of other social groups. These successes allow such states to facilitate rapid development by largely routinising and institutionalising competition for political and economic advancement based on the liberal democratic compromise and its widely-accepted norms regarding merit and non-violence (Sangmpam, 2007). Although such 'merit-based' norms often encapsulate institutionalised discrimination against weaker groups, they still are largely accepted by almost everyone, leading to high predictability and low transaction costs. Such monopoly of authority and the means of violence fails to emerge in other states and they become what Sangmpam (2007:36–38) refers to as over-politicised states. In such states, the rules for economic and political advancement either do not exist or are often violated. Thus, there is unpredictable, cut-throat and often violent competition for advancement among various social groups, none of which can completely subjugate other groups. This competition crowds out the space even for those willing to follow rules, hence reducing predictability and economic dynamism.

Neither Midgal, nor Sangmpam discuss why certain states become institutionalised states while others become over-politicised ones. Rawls' (1999) concept of burdened societies is helpful in understanding the reasons for these divergent trajectories. According to Rawls, burdened societies are those whose historical social, political and economic circumstances make it difficult for them to achieve good governance. This concept seems especially relevant for post-colonial, developing states that achieved their independence after World War II. Adapting from the works of Kaplan (2008) and Rotberg (2004), this article identifies five characteristics of burdened societies at independence: (i) A lack of pre-colonial history as a unified state; (ii) harmful colonial experiences; (iii) the presence of several powerful social groups with highly diverse worldviews; (iv) a high degree of identity-based divisions and tensions; and (v) the pre-dominance of a patronage economy where resources and opportunities are largely attained based on personal contacts rather than merit. The first characteristic means that such states have neither the previous experience of running their own affairs as a single state, nor a well-developed sense of nationalism. Harmful colonial experiences may have also exacerbated internal divisions and destroyed economic resources. The third and four characteristics exacerbate internal conflicts and undermine national cohesion. Finally, the pre-dominance of a patronage economy undermines economic dynamism and results in low economic productivity. It also undermines good governance because people prefer to vote for political parties and personalities that promise immediate and particularistic patronage distribution, rather than rule-based good governance and long-term development.

The subsequent developmental trajectory of such states is determined by the interplay of these initial endowments with external factors (for example, support from diaspora and global and regional powers; the impact of regional conflicts) and the reaction of internal actors to them. In some cases, external factors may provide opportunities and support to those groups, e.g., middle-class professionals, who are capable of providing good governance and fostering broad-based development. Such states become institutionalised over time. In other cases, external factors may exacerbate ethnic divisions and support social elites, such as military, criminal elements and landlords, who are incapable of providing good governance and fostering long-term, broad-based development. Such states then become over-politicised over time.

Thus, the concepts of state-in-society, burdened societies and over-politicised states together provide a powerful framework for analysing the problems of governance and development in developing countries due to several reasons. First, they focus attention comprehensively on a wide range of internal and external social, political and economic factors that affect the quality of governance in developing countries, resulting in holistic and comprehensive analysis. Second, they focus attention on the vast differences in the inheritances of developing countries at independence that are often ignored in mainstream analysis. Finally, they help in identifying concrete societal structures whose pace and trajectory of evolution can help in analysing the likely future governance and development trajectory of states.

Since Pakistan is often referred to as a failed state, the last aspect of this analytical framework focuses on the poorly-defined concept of state failure. In order to define state failure, one must first identify the characteristics of a state. Modern states have four key attributes according to the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (Chesterman, *et al.*, 2005): (a) defined territory; (b) permanent population; (c) effective government (with a monopoly over the means of violence and the formulation of binding legislation); and (d) the capacity to enter into formal contracts with other states (i.e., widespread international recognition). Thus, a state includes not only governmental, but also societal, territorial and international recognition. Zartman (1995) defines a failed state as one that does not perform its basic functions. However, this definition covers only one of the four state attributes, i.e., a functioning government. A focus on all four attributes yields several types of weaknesses and failures. An inability to maintain formal relations with other states could occur because a specific regime lacks widespread international recognition. This constitutes *international regime legitimacy failure*. It could also occur because, more fundamentally, some or all of the territorial claims of a population do not enjoy widespread international recognition. This

represents *international state legitimacy failure*. Countries where governments perform their functions poorly or inadequately are defined here as *weak and failed governance states* respectively, while states where government structures have almost completely disappeared are defined here as *collapsed governance states*. A country which faces peaceful or violent challenges to the survival of its current regime faces *internal regime legitimacy weakness or failure*. Finally, *weak or failed states* refer here to only those whose territorial integrity is under challenge or even highly unlikely respectively because of peaceful or violent secessionist movements. This classification helps in differentiating among countries with widely different situations that are currently classified together as failed states. For example, the list of the bottom 20 countries on the *Failed States Index* of the Fund for Peace Institute (FFP, 2011) includes Haiti (a failed governance state), Somalia (a collapsed governance and failed state), Burma (a weak state) and Afghanistan (weak or even failed internal regime legitimacy state).

Pakistan at Independence: A Burdened Society

An anti-colonial movement emerged in India in the late 1800s led by Congress. However, Muslims, a minority mainly concentrated in north-western and north-eastern India, were ambivalent about being ruled post-independently by Hindus, whom they had earlier ruled, often injudiciously and contemptuously (Cohen, 2004; Lieven, 2011). A Muslim separatist movement emerged during the 1930s led by the Muslim League — a pre-emptive one based on future fears unlike most movements globally based on actual discrimination (Jalal, 1990). Muslims also argued that they and Hindus constituted distinct civilisations and nations deserving separate states (Jalal, 1985). However, the movement was instigated less by a desire to live in an Islamic state and more by the economic interests of the main classes, including the Muslim salariat and landlords (Alavi, 1988). The British finally granted this wish in 1947. The physical separation of India caused widespread bloodshed and resulted in the migration of almost seven million people each way (Cohen, 2004). Pakistan inherited a broader range of burdening characteristics at independence than India, as will be discussed below.

Limited Governmental Authority Due to the Presence of Powerful Social Groups

Several powerful social groups existed in Pakistan at independence as Mogul and British legacies. *Middle-class professionals* dominated the Jinnah-led Muslim League, like Congress, as the constitutional independence route

adopted by both required educated leadership (Jalal, 1985). The Pakistan movement had been stronger among Muslims in Hindu majority regions as they feared Hindu domination more. Thus, these middle-class leaders were mostly migrants, unlike in Congress (Jaffrelot, 2002). The Muslim League, much younger as an active party, was less institutionalised than Congress, as well as less grassroots-oriented, lacking Gandhi's highly community-based approach (Oldenberg, 2010). Furthermore, Jinnah died within a year of independence, while Nehru, the Indian leader, lasted for 17 years, which helped in institutionalising better governance in India. The Pakistani *bureaucracy and military* were more indigenous but also more elitist as both were trained by the British to prioritise British interests over those of the masses (Alavi, 1983). They had been disproportionately recruited from areas that eventually joined Pakistan given the strong-armed resistance colonialism faced elsewhere (Jalal, 1990; Jaffrelot, 2002; DeSousa, 2008). *Rural elites* had emerged as non-hereditary tax collectors under the Moguls who were subsequently given hereditary land ownership rights by the British. They had also been historically stronger in Pakistani areas since the Mogul hold was stronger in North India (Maddison, 1971; Shivram, 2008). While India soon undertook land reforms, in Pakistan they remained masters of their rural domains (Cohen, 2004; Lieven, 2011). The *clergy*, which dominated the educational system under the Moguls but were later marginalised by the modern education system established by the British (Malik, 2010), was not part of the formal power structure, but could mobilise people in the name of religion. Finally, the *business classes* were also mostly migrants from India running family-owned trading houses that, with the exception of one or two individuals were not very active in the Pakistan movement (Gardezi and Rashid, 1983; Alavi, 1988). Thus, the groups most likely to favour good governance, i.e., the middle-class professionals (Alesina, 1994; Easterly, 2001), were less powerful, while the military, bureaucracy, clergy and landed elites, all of whom possessed goals that undermined democracy and good governance, were more powerful in Pakistan than in India. Hence, the middle-class leadership in Pakistan faced almost 360 degree-wide challenges at independence in establishing its writ and developing an institutionalised national polity and economy.

High Degree of Identity-Based Cleavages and Tensions

Pakistan was ethnically divided mainly into the Bengalis (more than 50%), Punjabis, Pakhtuns, Sindhis and Balochs, who were soon joined by migrants from India's Muslim minority areas, known as Mohajirs (Lieven, 2011). Pakistan then was the geographically most anomalous country in modern history, one

highly prone to further separation, as its two almost equally populated wings were separated by a thousand miles of Indian territory and significant ethnic diversity (Lieven, 2011). Although ethnic diversity was higher in India, no single group there dominated the ethnic landscape. However, despite their numerical majority, the Bengalis were not well-represented among Pakistan's powerful social groups (such as the military dominated by the Punjabis and Pakhtuns), the landlords dominated by the Punjabis and Sindhis, the bureaucracy dominated by the Punjabis and Mohajirs, the businesspersons dominated by Mohajirs and Punjabis, and the middle-class political leadership dominated by Mohajirs and Punjabis (Jalal, 1985; Alavi, 1988; Lieven, 2011). The West Pakistan-based elites attempted to nullify the Bengali numerical advantage by thwarting democracy from early on (Ali, 1970; Cohen, 2004). These ethnic sub-divisions and tensions undermined the coherence and integrity of the nascent Pakistani nationalism and the establishment of good governance subsequently.

The invalidity of Muslim claims about being a distinct and coherent civilisation and nation is often presented as a reason for Pakistan's troubles since independence. There is little consensus on the concept of civilisation despite Huntington's (1996) provocative use of the term. I define it here as *a large population group with a distinct combination of cultural, religious, economic, political and epistemic institutions and spread over a large territory for several centuries with significant contributions to overall human progress*. Did Muslims and Hindus constitute separate civilisations? Congress focused on the fact that beyond religion, a high degree of commonality had emerged among the cultural, political and economic institutions of Hindus and Muslims (Lieven, 2011). Muslims focused on the distinct Muslim and Sanskritic civilisations that existed centuries earlier in the Middle East and India. Thus, the Pakistan movement was based on past glories and future fears.

The concept of nation also lacks a consensus definition, though adapting from Smith's (2010) work, I view a nation ideally as *an internally cohesive identity group, based on primordial categories or shared experiences, and living historically with a high degree of physical concentration, exclusivity and boundedness in a region with political consciousness and autonomy*. Japan, an island existing as a unified state for several centuries with a highly homogenous population ethnically and religiously, probably is the closest to this ideal definition. Muslims in India clearly fell short on many aspects of this ideal definition. They possessed one strong basis for a common identity, i.e., religion, but lacked internal cohesion, consisting of many ethnic groups whose identities overlapped with Hindus (Cohen, 2004). They gradually developed a common political consciousness but lacked a high degree of physical concentration,

exclusivity and bounded-ness, with about two-thirds of them concentrated in north-western and north-eastern India and around one-third dispersed around India. However, it is also true that few states, especially developing countries, meet this ideal definition closely, meaning that Pakistan is not exceptional but normative in this regard. More importantly, united or even present-day India also falls short on some of these dimensions, although it is closer to the ideal than Pakistan. It has also faced significant religious tensions even after independence (Muslim Kashmir, Sikh Punjab and Christian/Buddhist north-east). Thus, it is difficult to conclude whether united India, which would have been more diverse than present-day Pakistan and India, and would have been more conflict-free than Pakistan. In summary, while there was nothing *fait accompli* about the emergence of Muslim nationhood, it was one of the many possible valid bases of nationalisms, including united Indian nationalism, which could have prevailed in India. While Pakistan's ethnic diversity represented a challenge, it was not an uncommon or insurmountable one that appropriate political arrangements could not handle. As we shall see later, it was mismanagement of ethnic relations that proved the decisive factors in enhancing the lack of nationalism in independent Pakistan.

Patronage Economy with Low Productivity

At independence, Pakistan was a poor country with a per capita income of around US\$ 170, an industrial sector accounting only for around 8% of the economy, a literacy rate of around 15%, a labour force employed mainly (around two-thirds) in the rural sectors and an urbanisation ratio of 17% (Zaidi, 2005:2–3). Pakistan also lagged behind India on most economic dimensions (Zaidi, 2005). To add to the dismal economic situation was the fact that the economy was highly patronage-based, where people's economic fortunes primarily depend on their social contacts (i.e., who they know), rather than merit-oriented, where people's economic fortunes would primarily depend on their professional skills, experience and knowledge (i.e., what they know). Within the rural sector, landlords controlled access to land, credit, agricultural inputs and government services for the poorer classes and forced them into exploitative patron-client relationships (Lieven, 2011). Even the large businesses were family-owned, dependent on cultural and patronage-based relationships. This patronage economy helped in some redistribution of wealth across economic strata but also severely undermined the potential for economic dynamism at independence (Lieven, 2011).

Short Pre-colonial History as a Unified Independent State

Like most post-colonial states, Pakistan had no pre-colonial history as an independent, unified state. The Muslim pre-colonial rule of India provided little value to the new state given the long intervening colonial history and the geographical discontinuities between Pakistan and the Moghul Empire. This lack of history meant that administrative capacities and national cohesion had to be crafted almost from scratch. Conversely, India inherited the bulk of the colonial state's structures within Delhi (Oldenburg, 2010). Congress had won provincial elections in 1937 and had run several governments after that. Nehru had also served as the Prime Minister of undivided India for a year after elections in 1946 (Cohen, 2004). Some Muslim leaders did participate in that government. Thus, their experience and that of the bureaucracy provided the only limited historical governance experience for Pakistan. Even this limited experience did prove helpful to some extent though, as we will see later.

Harmful Colonial Experience

Some scholars consider colonialism a blessing on a net basis as it introduced India to modern technology, infrastructure, etc. (D'Souza, 2007). However, such 'net' assessments are difficult to undertake because of the wide range of relevant dimensions (some concrete like trading patterns, others highly abstract like the impact on self-efficacy and political growth) and the long period of colonisation which ended several decades ago. An alternative mode of analysis is to compare British colonialism with other colonialisms globally. While British colonialism was not as rapacious as Belgian colonialism in Congo, nor did it induce the industrialisation and land reform that Japanese colonisation did in Korea and Taiwan, though the overall impact of Japanese colonisation was negative too (Savada and Shaw, 1990). In fact, the British actively de-industrialised India and strengthened landed elites. Moreover, the infrastructure and education provided by colonisation would ultimately have arrived in India through trade too without the negatives associated with colonialism. This was also true for Japan, which remained free but gained from the West through trade. Regions in current-day Pakistan, being the last to be colonised, benefited much less from the more positive aspects of British colonialism, such as education, infrastructure and industrialisation, and suffered some of the negatives more, such as the ownership rights given to the Jagirdars and the elitist military and bureaucracy (Jaffrelot, 2002). The British did develop an extensive irrigation system in Sindh and Punjab provinces though that benefited Pakistani economy later on (Low, 2002); however, the overall impact of

British colonialism from Pakistan's perspective was negative in enhancing the powers of undemocratic social groups like the bureaucracy, military and landed elites.

Pakistan's Trajectory since Independence

Immediately after independence, Afghanistan laid claims on Pakistan's North West Frontier province (NWFP), which, like Afghanistan, was dominated by the Pakhtuns and parts of which the British had captured from Afghanistan earlier. Within a few months, a war also broke out between Pakistan and India on Kashmir whose disposal had not been properly spelled out by Britain (Jalal, 1990; Cohen, 2004). Thus, Pakistan immediately faced tensions on both sides of its borders, both partially the legacies of colonialism (Shaikh, 2009). These early security concerns had three major influences. First, they diverted limited resources from development to defence as military expenditures averaged around 50% of Pakistan's budget between 1947 and 1959 (Jaffrelot, 2002). Second, they further marginalised the middle-class leadership, which was already losing its utility for other more powerful groups having negotiating successfully with the British and bureaucrats and military officers were gradually taking over senior political positions; even within the Muslim League's top echelons landlords were replacing the middle class (Ali, 2008). Finally, they marginalised weaker ethnic groups as the Pakistani establishment embarked upon a project to strengthen national unity in the face of these external threats by strengthening the federal government and discouraging sub-national identities (Ayres, 2009).

The 1950 Korean War created huge demands for Pakistani agricultural products and provided windfall profits for its trading families. Simultaneously, the tensions with India and the desire to reduce dependence on Indian goods spurred Pakistan to force farmers to sell their products at low prices so that trading families could invest their large profits in consumer goods industries (Gardezi and Rashid, 1983). Because of this rapid industrialisation, Pakistan's economic growth even exceeded India's and was soon dubbed a rising economic star by Western scholars (Zaidi, 2005). This progress resulted from several colonial legacies: the irrigation system, a bureaucracy well trained in siphoning off rural profits and the business class that had developed under the British (Gardezi and Rashid, 1983). However, this model enhanced ethnic grievances as Punjabi and Mohajir power-brokers were seen favouring fellow ethnic businessmen at the expense of farmers from other ethnic groups even though Punjabis constituted the biggest segment of landed elites as well (Jalal, 1990).

Instead of dealing with these issues democratically, the bureaucracy and military adopted centralised and unrepresentative governance, and started emulating old-fashioned school principals who enforce unity and discipline through bland moral sermons and upon their unsurprising failure start administering corporal punishment. It enhanced the powers of the central government relative to provincial governments and emphasized the role of Urdu as the national language at the expense of regional languages. In contrast, India established its provinces on the basis of ethnicity and officially recognised regional languages (Ayres, 2010). Resistance to such measures was often met with armed crackdowns. Over-politicisation increased as accession to power became highly un-institutionalised, accomplished not through free and regular elections, but palace intrigues as the military-bureaucracy attempted to keep marginalised ethnic groups out of power (Gardezi and Rashid, 1983; Ali, 2008).

These tendencies were exacerbated once Pakistan caught America's attention as a possible ally in the Cold War. The Americans soon identified Pakistani generals as reliable clients in the Cold War (Ali, 1970). Fearing that a democratic government may adopt anti-American and anti-military policies, the Pakistan Army staged a coup in 1958 with tacit American support even though the US State Department had warned that military rule would intensify ethnic tensions in Pakistan (Ali, 2008:57–60). American advisors favoured Pakistan's economic policies, viewing inequities as the unavoidable price of development. America aid supported capital-intensive industrialisation and the Green Revolution in western Pakistan at the expense of the eastern part, and neglected the social sectors (Gardezi and Rashid, 1983). However, American help did not unleash the same kind of industrial upgrading as in South Korea and Taiwan around the same time and Pakistan remained confined to light industry. Corruption at the highest governance levels, another sign of over-politicisation, also emerged for the first time. The inequitable development model caused grief among other ethnic communities, although less so among the Pakhtuns since Ayub Khan, the military ruler was an ethnic Pakhtun too. Military rule ended in 1971 with East Pakistan seceding (after massive atrocities by the Pakistani army and a war with India) due to Bengali marginalisation within Pakistan. The shallow foundations of the economic model followed by the so-called rising star stood starkly displayed.

Pakistan experienced its first elected government in 1972 under Zulfikar Bhutto, a Sindhi landlord whose forefathers had been granted land by the British (Shaikh, 2009). Bhutto significantly increased spending on social and anti-poverty programmes, which helped reduce the grievances of Sindhis. However, his autocratic style alienated the Baloch, where an insurgency broke

out, and to a lesser extent Pakhtuns and Mohajirs. The Sindhis, as with the Pakhtuns under Ayub, replaced Mohajirs within the power structures, who consequently become an aggrieved ethnic group by the 1970s (Ali, 1983; Zaidi, 1992). He also attempted mild land reforms and the nationalisation and establishment of state-owned heavy industry (Gardezi and Rashid, 1983). However, Bhutto's attempts failed as his policies to increase representation for aggrieved ethnic groups in government jobs, conducted in a highly politicised manner, weakened the bureaucracy at the very time that it was being assigned new industrial responsibilities. Bhutto's period coincided with oil boom-led job opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis in the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia. Thus, poverty significantly reduced although the more mobile Punjabis, Pakhtuns and Mohajirs benefited the most. This large migration also exposed Pakistan to the conservative brand of Islam prevalent in Saudi Arabia. Bhutto's nuclear ambitions chilled relations with the US. He organised rigged elections in 1977, which led to massive political demonstrations in the country. The army, uncomfortable under a strong-minded, civilian leader, imposed martial law in 1977 with American approval, thus ending Pakistan's first brief democratic period (Ali, 2008).

Once the USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the US decided to support counter-insurgency activities there. General Zia, Pakistan's military ruler, became a willing accomplice for the American plans (Ali, 1983). Given Zia's religious bent, the Afghan insurgents were also religiously inspired groups. Pakistan again became a major US aid recipient as America ignored Pakistan's nuclear programme in laying a 'bear trap' for the USSR. American support allowed General Zia to rule for 11 years despite strong internal opposition. This long dictatorship enhanced ethnic and sectarian tensions, the flow of arms and drugs and fundamentalism as Zia, in order to checkmate Bhutto's party, sponsored numerous militant groups (Ali, 2008). The drug mafia, narco-terrorism and the transnational narco-jihad have dogged the entire region from Afghanistan to Central Asia, Pakistan and India since then. Thus, Pakistan's descent into an over-politicised state accelerated sharply under Zia as the last and most violent of the social groups that dominate Pakistan today — criminals and religious militants — appeared on the stage during his period with his active support. The Soviet Union started withdrawing from Afghanistan in May 1988 and Zia soon perished in a mysterious air crash in August 1988 (Ali, 2008). This started a decade of quasi-democratic rule where the army maintained control covertly and frequently instigated the dismissals of the governments of Benazir Bhutto, the daughter of Zulfikar Bhutto, and Sharif, a traditional industrial baron from Punjab, on charges of corruption and mismanagement (Burki, 1999; Ali, 2008; Cohen, 2011). With the Soviet Union defeated, the US once again dug up the nuclear issue to apply economic sanctions.

After a decade in the background, the Pakistan army increasingly ran into friction with the independent-minded Sharif. Infuriated by his attempt to fire Musharraf, its Chief of Staff, the army staged another coup in October 1999. Afghanistan again brought the Pakistan army and the US to each other's doorsteps after al-Qaeda's 9/11 attacks — ironically a boomerang of the 1980s American policy as al-Qaeda emerged from the Afghan rebels initially supported but later snubbed by the US after the Soviet withdrawal. American aid resumed and the nuclear issue was again buried. General Musharraf rigged elections in 2002 without eliciting much condemnation from Western countries. The elections brought to power an alliance of religious parties, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) with links to anti-US militant groups in Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa provinces, which border Afghanistan. Thus, a bizarre love-hate triangle emerged as Musharraf overtly courted the US, needing its external support to survive, but pursued a covert affair with anti-US groups due to his internal political compulsions to keep Benazir and Sharif out of power (Rashid, 2008).

The rigging in favour of the MMA further fuelled violence. In Balochistan, the rigging against Baloch parties led to the revival of the long-simmering separatist movement there. In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa the rigging led to creeping Talibanisation as extremist groups, with the benign neglect of the provincial and central governments, cracked down on anything they perceived as being Western, first within the province and then gradually throughout the country and abroad. Thus, at one point, the Taliban-controlled territory within 60 miles of the capital rang alarm bells throughout the world about a militant take-over of Pakistan and its nuclear arsenal. Pakistan-based militants also staged terrorist attacks in India, including its capital, Delhi, and commercial hub, Mumbai. Given growing American and even Chinese pressure to act against them, Musharraf eventually launched a half-hearted operation against the Red Mosque in Islamabad in 2007 that had become a hub of militant activity. However, this provoked the militant groups to launch suicide attacks throughout the country, which continue to this day (Ali, 2008). Musharraf was also upended by strong opposition from middle-class groups such as journalists, judges and lawyers as the middle class finally started showing signs of attaining some power (Ghias, 2010). Alarmed by the growing popularity of militants, the Bush administration belatedly realised the follies of its blind support for dictatorship. It arranged a deal between Musharraf and the popular Benazir Bhutto in order to orchestrate a more popular pro-American government in Pakistan after elections in 2008 (Ali, 2008). While Benazir got murdered before the elections, her party (the PPP) won but soon engineered Musharraf's exit. Given the PPP's limited dependence on religious parties, it has launched more vigorous attacks on militants, freeing up much of the territory lost under

Musharraf. Since coming to power, the Obama administration has continued to support the democratic regime led by Benazir's widower. This is the first time in Pakistan's 60-year history that the US is providing strong support to an elected Pakistani government. However, it has also applied increased pressure on Pakistan to eliminate militant hideouts, increasing tensions with the powerful Pakistani military that still has a soft spot for some of them (Constable, 2011). The US has continued unmanned drone attacks in Pakistan's tribal areas, which further destabilise Pakistan and fan anti-Americanism in Pakistan. They have also fanned tensions with the Pakistan army as have the presence of American intelligence officials in Pakistan and the raid that killed Osama bin Laden in May 2011.

Current Status, Future Prospects

Pakistan's trajectory since 1947 has been shaped by the confluence of the initial burdening factors with several external factors, especially the Kashmir conflict with India, the Soviet Afghan invasion and the American tendency to favour dictatorship over democracy in Pakistan till recently. Each of the internal powerful groups has attempted to control Pakistan's trajectory according to its own interests resulting in the country's development trajectory being pulled in different directions. The military maintains tensions on the eastern borders and keeps Pakistan a security-oriented state that overspends on defence and under-spends on socio-economic development. The militants have attempted to convert Pakistan into a *sharia*-run state according to their extreme vision of Islam. The mafia has attempted to expand the scope of illegal activities at the expense of productive ones. Thus, violence and insecurity in major cities is high. The traditional businesspersons and landed elites relish a patronage economy and have used state resources for this purpose whenever in power. Finally, the middle class has recently started showing some signs of being able to fight for good governance. Pakistan today exhibits many symptoms of an over-politicised state. Exchanges among the rural elites and the poor continue to be highly exploitative and transfer of power highly unpredictable, as at independence. In addition, corruption is endemic from the highest levels down to the street cop, violence is common among political parties in Karachi (the largest city and commercial hub), drug and arm flows are highly backed in many cases by politicians, and tax evasion by individuals and businesses is rampant with the result that Pakistan has among the lowest tax-GDP ratios in the world (Ali, 2008).

However, it is useful to analyse the validity of two common doomsday predictions about Pakistan, i.e., outright control by extremists and failure as a

state. I review the first one using four dimensions, the first three being strategic in nature (i.e., they reflect the ability of extremists to gain control) and the last being operational (i.e., it reflects their ability to disrupt life without gaining outright control).

The Ability to Control Territory

By 2007, the Taliban fully controlled one of Pakistan's 121 districts (Swat) and one of its seven tribal agencies (South Waziristan). At their peak, militants controlled areas within 60 miles of the capital, which, as mentioned earlier, sent alarm bells throughout the world. However, since then, these areas have been liberated and the militants currently operate from isolated mountain areas.

The Ability to Control the Legislative Process

Islamic parties controlled two of Pakistan's four provincial assemblies as a result of Musharraf's rigged 2002 elections. One such assembly subsequently passed a bill to enforce strict Sharia. However, this bill was declared unconstitutional by Pakistan's Supreme Court (Dawn, 2006). Subsequently, the Islamic parties lost their majority once freer elections were held in 2008.

Control over Hearts and Minds in Society

Support for al-Qaeda and the Taliban fell from 33% and 38% respectively in August 2007 to around 18% and 19% respectively in January 2008. Only 1–3% of Pakistanis would vote for al-Qaeda or the Taliban if they ran in elections (TFT, 2008). There was little public outpouring of grief in Pakistan after Osama bin Laden's recent death in sharp contrast with the widespread grief on streets at the death of Benazir, a liberal female politician who opposed militancy.

The Ability to Carry out Random Attacks

Attacks against security forces and unarmed civilians picked up significantly in 2006 after the initiation of the crackdown on militants. Such attacks peaked in 2009 but since then have reduced modestly, though they remain unacceptably high (Livingston and O'Hanlon, 2011). However, such attacks do not by themselves give extremists the ability to gain control over Pakistan.

Thus, in contrast to commonly-held views, the ability of extremists to control Pakistan has actually weakened. Similarly, the case for labelling Pakistan a failed state is not strong. Pakistan has regularly appeared among the bottom ten countries over the last 5 years on the *Failed State Index* of the Washington, D.C.-based Fund for Peace but has improved its ranking this year to 12th (FFP, 2011).

However, this Index is not based on a systematic analytical framework on state failure. I had earlier identified several different types of state failures based on such an analytical framework, three of which are relevant to Pakistan's case. Pakistan's internal regime legitimacy is challenged by the Taliban insurgency. However, as shown above, their ability to fully capture Pakistan was never very strong and has become even weaker. Thus, they pose little threat of being able to establish their own government. Pakistan's territorial integrity is challenged by the Balochistan insurgency, which at best is a medium-level one, and has little chance of succeeding in the near future. Finally, Pakistan's governance is poor. Pakistan's rank on the six dimensions of the World Bank's governance index falls in the worst category on one dimension (political violence), the second worst in four dimensions and the third worst on one dimension (World Bank, 2011a). Thus, on only one of the six sub-dimensions of one of the six dimensions of state failure identified earlier is Pakistan in the bottom category.

What will be the trend of governance in Pakistan in the future? Governance can only improve if the burdening factors reduce significantly. Most of the burdening factors that it possessed at independence continue to haunt it even today although there has been some improvement on many of them (I do not consider the first two burdening characteristics, i.e., lack of pre-colonial history as a unified state and harmful colonial experiences, as they obviously cannot evolve over time).

Presence of Powerful Social Groups that Undermine Governmental Authority

The non-egalitarian social groups, such as the military and landlords, remain predominant and organised criminals and militants have joined their ranks. The most powerful of these groups is still the army which controls Pakistan's foreign and security policy, captures a large portion of the national budget and operates large private industries (Siddiqi, 2007). It also derives moral power from the positive image that it enjoys among large sections of the population. Thus, the military possesses military, economic, moral and informal political power although unlike some armies, it does not enjoy formal, constitutionally-mandated political power. This power was evident in a recent incident, dubbed Memo-gate by the Pakistani media, where it orchestrated the removal of Pakistan's ambassador to the US, Hussain Haqqani, whom the army viewed as working against its military interests. However, the chances of a coup have reduced as the international acceptability of military rule has decreased and the army's own relationship with its erstwhile patron, the US, has deteriorated. Landed elites still wield significant economic and political power and remain the main contender for power in free elections. However, their economic power has reduced due to large-scale migration among the rural poor that has

broadened their access to opportunities. This has affected the political power of landed elites and in the 2008 elections they only garnered 25% of the seats from Punjab, the country's most populous province, compared with 42% in 1970 (NYT, 2010). Militants continue to pose a serious threat, but their power to capture Pakistan is on the wane. The bureaucracy is a shadow of its powerful self in the 1950s. The narcotics and criminal mafias continue to wreak violence and are heavily supported by different political parties. Traditional businessmen have emerged as the second most powerful contender to power in elections through their hold on the Pakistan Muslim League. However, traditional businessmen are often not interested in good governance as they amass their fortunes by breaking rules. Thus, the main claimants to governmental power are the military through a coup, landed elites or traditional businessmen through elections or, far less likely, militants through civil war.

Middle-class professionals, the social group most interested in good governance, have never re-captured power since losing it in the early 1950s in contrast with their continued dominance in India. However, the middle class is expanding rapidly and constitutes around 40% of Pakistan's population currently, though the bulk of it lives precariously close to the poverty-line (ADB, 2010). The growth of the middle class generally leads to better governance (Alesina, 1994; Easterly, 2001). While it still cannot win outright in elections, it is exerting itself through the media and the judiciary (Ghias, 2010). The middle class also gains support from the fairly large Pakistani diaspora of around 5 million in North America, Europe and the Middle East and which constitutes the world's 7th largest diaspora population and remits around US\$ 10 billion every year to Pakistan currently (World Bank, 2011b). These remittances play a crucial role in maintaining Pakistan's external balance of payments and foreign reserves. However, while the diaspora still does not provide access to sophisticated technology and capital to the extent that the Chinese, Israeli and Indian diasporas do, this could change in the future as it increases its numbers and financial clout. The diaspora, linked relationally with the growing middle class, could also become a source of pressure for improved governance. Already, the Election Commission of Pakistan has recommended giving representation to overseas Pakistanis in the national parliament (Abbasi, 2010). In short, the groups whose interests are antithetical to good governance are strong but are weakening, while the group most interested in good governance is weak but growing stronger.

Identity-based Cleavages

With the exit of the Bengalis, Punjabis became more than 50% of the remaining population. Thus, Pakistan continues to experience a domineering ethnic

group. Ethnic tensions still simmer, although they translate into outright demands for cessation only in the case of the Baloch today, with others integrated into power structures to varying degrees. Punjabis are well represented in every social group, while Mohajirs have a strong presence among business elites and professional middle classes. Pakhtuns are well represented within the military, bureaucracy and business elites, while Sindhis are well represented among the landlords (Zaidi, 1992; Ahmed, 1998). However, even the Baloch insurgency does not seriously challenge Pakistan's territorial integrity but their grievances must be addressed politically.

Patronage Economy with Low Productivity

Patronage relationships still remain the most powerful basis for economic and political advancement in Pakistan not only in the rural, but also in the urban sector (Lieven, 2011). However, while the landed elites still retain considerable hold over the masses, their power is receding. Most of the largest business groups in Pakistan continue to be family-owned. Tax evasion and other forms of rule-breaking are endemic among Pakistani businessmen (Ali, 2008). However, a small professionally-managed industrial and services sector is gradually developing. Thus, business groups in Karachi and Lahore, Pakistan's biggest two cities, have established high quality private business schools, reflecting their desire to hire meritorious people. The manufacturing and services sectors represent around 25% and 50% of Pakistan's economy today respectively. However, only 1% of Pakistan's exports can be considered high-tech (World Bank, 2010). Pakistan is also one of the largest recipients of American aid but does not enjoy the type of preferential market access (Elliott, 2010) and technology transfers that helped Taiwan and South Korea become sophisticated manufacturing producers. Given America's own economic woes and political frictions with Pakistan, it is unlikely to play that role anytime soon. However, the centre of the global economy is gradually moving to Pakistan's neighbourhood as China and India gradually become the world's biggest economies. These economic changes could provide opportunities for Pakistan, especially with China but also with India if relationships become normalised.

Conclusion

This article utilised the concepts of state-in-society, burdened societies and over-politicised states to develop an analytical framework for understanding the reasons for serious governance problems and insecurity in many developing countries. It applied the framework to Pakistan's case since it is often seen

as being on the brink of state failure. The analysis has shown that Pakistan's subsequent trajectory was influenced heavily by its inheritance of a range of five burdening factors from earlier eras, including: (i) A lack of pre-colonial history as a unified state; (ii) harmful colonial experiences; (iii) the presence of several powerful social groups with highly diverse worldviews; (iv) a high degree of identity-based divisions and tensions; and (v) the pre-dominance of a patronage economy. The impact of these inheritances was exacerbated by a range of negative external factors, e.g., the Kashmir dispute, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and American support for dictators, resulting in its gradual transformation into an over-politicised state marked by intense and non-institutionalised competition for advancement among ethnic groups and social classes. The burdening factors have not allowed middle-class professionals to retain control over the government, unlike in India, and power has largely resided with the military, landlords and criminal elements. Most of the burdening factors and the subsequent external factors continue to haunt Pakistan today and will disappear only gradually. However, doomsday predictions about state collapse and militant take-over are over-exaggerated. Pakistan's precarious security situation could improve visibly within the next three to four years if there is a resolution of the Afghanistan dispute. Other, more substantial changes will only come gradually over two to three decades as middle-class leadership emerges through elections. The movement of the centre of the global economy to Pakistan's neighbourhood and its own rapidly changing demographics of increasing urbanisation, education and income will strengthen the middle class, which have a positive bearing on Pakistan's future trajectory.

This analysis of Pakistan's case using the concepts of state-in-society, burdened societies and over-politicised states to develop an analytical framework for studying the underlying causes for poor governance and insecurity there provides a powerful approach for studying other countries facing similar problems. This approach allows a holistic and comprehensive analysis of the social, economic and political factors, both internal and external, undermining governance in many developing countries. The approach also helps in understanding the linkages among societal structures, societal institutions and the quality of governance. It highlights the extent to which inheritances from the pre-independence era continue to have an enormous impact on the developmental trajectory of countries decades after independence due to their confluence with subsequent external factors. Finally, it provides a basis for evaluating the future trajectory of countries by tying it into a causal relationship with concrete societal structures, such as ethnic divisions and social inequality. Thus, this approach may help in undertaking more insightful analysis and developing more meaningful policy prescriptions for assisting troubled societies.

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