

# An overview of political stability in pakistan politics essay



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An Overview of Political Factors, Political Institutions & Political Stability in Pakistan. Since the emergence of Pakistan as an independent state, the country has been engulfed in numerous instances of political turmoil and instability. The civil unrest caused over the course of six decades has not only hampered economic growth but has further deteriorated the image and progress of the country according to World Bank Indicators. With low productivity growth comes a higher rate of corruption and therefore increased instability within the country. This virtuous cycle is impossible to break until the root cause of the political instability is found and resolved. Political institutions and other political factors play a vital role in determining this variable.

Economic interactions are characterised by some form of exchange between economic agents involved in the process. This exchange has a monetary or intangible cost attached to it. In order to make this economic process less costly and ultimately lead to economic growth, there has to be an underlying institutional structure to facilitate exchange. Political institutions are therefore in place to determine the distribution of political power which in turn influences economic institutions established in the economy. Institutions usually serve the interests of the political elite in the country but if they are established through collective decision they serve the needs of the masses. An example of this is lack of property rights for landowners and merchants in Europe during the middle ages. Political institutions at the time gave political power to monarchs and landlords. Consequently the allocation of resources was such that economic institutions that were developed failed to foster

economic growth and instead strengthened the stronghold of elites on the economy.

Institutions consist of law and order which are the formal constraints; norms and conventions which are informal constraints; and enforcement characteristics. The competency of the bureaucracy, business government relations, the political order present, the type of party structure and the qualities of the political leadership are all important political institutions which further instigate other political factors affecting the type of order maintained within the country. The authenticity and credibility of political institutions is therefore at the helm of what the power play within the country is and thus predicting the future of the state.

Given the significance of political stability it is only fair that the variable is defined accurately and further investigated. A number of political factors are correlated with political stability, but which factors are responsible for this causation. Macroeconomic policies, estranged international relations and the inefficient use of natural resources are all important aspects that may affect the variable concerned. Political freedom, political activism and political confidence are factors that measure the public reaction to the various political institutions and decisions implemented.

The authenticity and credibility of political institutions is at the helm of what the power play within the country is. These institutions are built through the political factors and in turn determine the level of political stability within the country. This paper will attempt to unfold the relationship between variables such as judicial autonomy, the level of corruption and the amount of foreign

aid being granted on Pakistan's domestic political stability. An empirical approach using both past literature and new primary research will be utilized in concluding the causal effects.

The rest of the paper will be divided into so and so sections.

#### Background Information: Political History, Political Regimes & Stability

The most intriguing factors influencing political stability is political history. Over sixty years have passed since independence, yet the country has not been able to overcome its constant struggle with civil unrest. Most countries learn by doing, each policy implemented is taken with respect to the feedback received on previous policies made in similar fields. This however has not been the case with Pakistan. The continuous power struggle between the military and civilian governments has hindered the progress of long term policies or welfare programs. Every time a new government is sworn into office they discontinue all previous establishments and dissolve existing policies, this hampers the process of realizing the loopholes within decision making and thereby rectifying them appropriately.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan has experienced all types of political regimes and government structures, from having a government with no constitution for almost a decade, to a presidential democracy to a parliamentary democracy, all the way to repetitive martial laws and military coups. The post independence era can be divided into phases of military led governments and that of elected governments. Till present day, Pakistan has been served by the military for over 33 years.

This section is further divided into 5 sections. The first one will briefly explain what the structure of the All Pakistan Muslim League has been in the country after independence. Section 2. 2 takes a closer look into the internal class struggle and the instability caused due to inter class conflicts. Given the significance attached to the class structure, they have a certain bargaining power attached which influences political institutions and their decision making in their favour. This is described in section 2. 3. Section 2. 4 looks into political interventions which include both military interventions and international interventions. The final section within this heading describes the various political regimes that have existed and the quality of institutions during their era.

#### Formulation & Structure of the Pakistan Muslim League: Pre-Partition Perspective

After all struggles to bring forward a united India were disbanded and the concept of Pakistan emerged, Muhammad Ali Jinnah carved the stone by establishing the Muslim League in 1940. The primary goal was to create an independent state which provided the Muslims with their due rights and offered state protection. In the elections of 1946, the Muslim League won 425 out of 496 seats for Muslims hence marking the divide. After independence, the objectives of the party were used as a basis for the first constitution of the country and the ' Pakistan Muslim League' was created as the predominant political party.

The party suffered the blow of losing two of its leaders after the assassination of the Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan paving the pathway to

internal strife. By 1953 several other parties also began to emerge and in the 1955 national elections, the Pakistan Muslim League faced its first defeat. Ayub Khan's regime came into power in 1958 with a martial law that banned all political parties. This was the start of the disintegration and branching out of the Muslim League. At first only the Convention Muslim League and Council Muslim League were formed, but then with the onset of Yahya Khan's military coup we saw the emergence of the Pakistan's People Party and the Awami League. The sudden death and end of Zia ul Haq's regime brought in political activity in all provinces. In Punjab we saw a new stream of the Muslim League being created under Nawaz Sharif which although was completely unrelated to the original Muslim League took the name of Pakistan Muslim League - N (Nawaz). What was left of the original political party was soon sought under the name of Pakistan Muslim League - Q (Quaid - e - Azam). The PML-Q is in fact the largest of the political parties existing within the country.

### Class Conflict, Class Struggle & Political Instability

One of the greatest impacts the surge of nationalistic activity and ethnic conflicts within the country has had is on the emergence of a middle class and a very religious sect within the country. Social structures play an important role in determining the existence of the various classes. The middle class is the largest group and is thought to be the working class of the economy. As the economy grows the middle class becomes stronger threatening the power and status of the real upper class and further widening the gap between the poor and the rich. When the disparity between the highest and lowest quintile of income is extremely large,

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indicating great inequality there will be a strong class struggle as each try to better the other one and achieve the most resources available. The emergence of the strong religious extremist sect has caused class conflict as issues pertaining to the norms of the society are questioned regularly. Given that the various classes are unable to unite and live in harmony means that there is always some underlying tension if not an outright clash. Policies that are favourable to all the classes existing within the society are difficult to devise let alone implement, therefore leading to political instability as at any one time some class of people will be unhappy and rebelling against the government stature at a whole.

#### Class Conflict & Role of Political Institutions in Making of Constitutions

As the society is broken up into more and more classes, a greater number of political parties will come into power. Each society aims to protect a particular class of people, whether we are looking at the Pakistan People's Party whose goal was to empower the working class, the Muttahida Quami Movement represents the Mujahirs or the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan which is trying to defend the rights of Sunnis. While it is imperative that there exists a representative to fight for your rights, what is essentially happening is that a greater number of parties has only succeeded in dividing the power so that in a situation where a policy is to be divided no one has veto power and everyone is a standstill. Each class is in a constant internal struggle with another and therefore has adopted a type of tunnel vision whereby they are only concerned with their rights. This has created a deadlock in the making of institutions since there is never a unanimous agreement on policy decisions hence making political insitutions inherently inefficient.

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## Political Interventions: Martial Laws & External Interventions

Internal strife and political strife weaken the autonomy of the government making it susceptible to external threats from within the country such as the military and from international super powers that exert some form of bargaining power over the country. Pakistan has experienced 4 martial laws since its existence. The first martial law was imposed in 1958 whereby the President Iskander Mirza himself abolished the constitution and handed the country over to the military under General Ayub Khan. After a period of over ten years, General Yahya Khan declared a martial law in 1969. This was followed by the first martial law to be administered by a civilian in 1971 under the politician Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto. Despite not being a military coup, this martial law was not successful in restoring political stability within the country following the separation of East Bengal, and in 1977 General Zia ul Haq implemented the fourth martial law in Pakistan. After the death of the martial law administrator, there was a period whereby democratic led governments were in power. However this changed in 1999 where General Pervez Musharraf abrogated the constitution, overthrowing the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and taking control of the country. Since General Pervez Musharraf did not take on the position of Prime Minister or President, this is not considered to be a martial law, although the State of Emergency declared in 2007 was the equivalent to one.

External interventions have surpassed the constant India-Pakistan tensions. After independence both countries were constantly at conflict, the four wars fought between the two countries each required international assistance to bring forward a cease fire. The first Kashmir War in 1947 was brought to an

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end through a referendum that was promulgated by the United Nations Security Council. The 1965 War was brought to an end with the Tashkent Declaration which was moderated by the involvement of the Soviet Statesperson. The 1971 war in which Pakistan lost an essential part of the country constituted of a trifold international involvement. The Soviet Union was an active supporter of the Bengalis and India specifically and therefore was fighting Pakistan. The Republic of China and the United States of America were close allies of Pakistan and although they were unable to save East Bengal they brought about a ceasefire to prevent any further casualties. The 1999 war on the Line of Control also constituted of heavy involvement from the United States of America.

There have been other instances when the level of external involvement has been on the rise. The Soviet War in Afghanistan lasted over ten years and being a neighbouring country out of fears of a security threat to themselves Pakistan lent support to the Afghans to fight the Soviets. This changed soon with the occurrence of the tragic 9/11 event for which Pakistan supported the War on Terrorism which allowed British and American troops to take abode in the country to fight the Afghan insurgency in the form of the Taliban.

As discussed above political instability hampers economic growth and therefore over the years Pakistan has taken huge loans from the international community compromising their sovereignty and reducing their bargaining power and restraint to international movements within the country.

## Political Regimes & Quality of Institutions

The Constitution of 1956 was enforced as the first formal system of law in Pakistan, and based on the fundamental principles contained in the Objectives Resolution of 1949, established the country as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The Constitution of 1956 was, however, abrogated within two years of its enactment, and after a four year military regime in the country, a constitutional committee set up by the then President, Field Marshall Ayub Khan, presented the Constitution of 1962. In the years to come, the regime of Field Marshall Ayub Khan was referred to as the Decade of Development, not only by the local population, but by the global community at large. The Constitution of 1962 became the sovereign legal framework of the land, having outlived both the Objectives Resolution of 1949 and the Constitution of 1956. In 1969, Field Marshall pre-empted his successor by voluntarily abrogating the Constitution of 1962, and after declaring martial law within the country for the second time, installed General Yahya Khan as the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Following a struggle between the Awami League of East Pakistan, the Pakistan Peoples' Party of West Pakistan and the Pakistan Army, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, as founded by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, was divided in two, almost equal, geographical halves.

The disintegration did not inspire significant stability within the country. Subsequent to the separation of East Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto assumed the roles of the Chief Martial Law Administrator, then the President of the Republic, and finally the Prime Minister. During the infamous regime, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto enacted the Constitution of 1973, a framework that, despite the <https://assignbuster.com/an-overview-of-political-stability-in-pakistan-politics-essay/>

political upheavals, has managed to survive to date, and is referred to as the true and final constitution of the land. Bhutto's regime was followed by eleven years of a third military regime in the country, which ended only when the military dictator, General Zia-Ul-Haq was killed in a plane crash. The 1988 - 1999 period was highlighted by four successive and alternating regimes of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, and were only put to an end when General Pervez Musharraf led the fifth military takeover in the history of the country. General Musharraf's regime, which lasted for nine years, was a period of noteworthy political developments, including a public-mandated campaign for the restoration of the judiciary's independence and sovereignty.

Although, the Pakistan Army was formally ousted from power by the present democratically elected Government of the Pakistan Peoples' Party, the country is far from being categorized as one fostering a stable and inerratic political structure. The five military regimes that have taken control of the country since its independence have abrogated the existing constitutions, and made numerous amendments to these constitutions before reinstating them. This has been in addition to the Legal Framework Ordinances and the Provisional Constitutional Ordinances that have been passed by the military dictators as per their prerogatives as the Presidents of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. While the 18th Amendment Bill, proposed by the Constitutional Reforms Committee in 2010, aims to undo the changes previously made to the Constitution of 1973 and to make necessary modifications to protect geographical disintegration of the country, the fate of Pakistan's political forces and dynamics cannot be loosely predicted.

The political state of affairs of the country has impacted a wide-variety of aspects of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, which are far more complex than the conventional cultural, economic, ethical and social spheres. It is essential to explore the reasons for such an alarming degree of political instability, despite the country having been endowed with sovereign constitutions, numerous successful revolutionary movements opposing undemocratic regimes, and an intellectual and conscientious population.

### Sources & Types of Class Conflict & Distortions in Political Stability

Class conflict may be caused for a number of reasons. The social structure is the most common reason which includes ethnic and religious differences. The second reason is income disparity between the aristocrats and the proletariat or the feudal structure. Both cause great political stability and require efficient policy making and targeted welfare programs to tackle the root cause of the instability which is poverty, exploitation and extremism.

### Income Inequalities, Social Gaps & Political Stability

The main socio-economic objective of every country revolves around maximizing the total welfare of the society. This is done through improving the living standards of all individuals and not just a select few number of people. A more equitable society is able to save more and thereby invest more into the economy further increasing economic growth and development within a region. By solving for income equalities there is greater harmony as with poverty alleviation comes more acceptance of other ethical norms. Social differences exist in all societies but with increased

equality there is greater tolerance for other individuals, this in turn reduces the intensity and instances of conflict which lead to political instability.

### Data Vendors on Assessment of Political Stability in Pakistan

As part of this paper certain statistical figures are required in both analyzing past literature and concluding causal relationships and also to forecast future conditions. The data vendors or sources of statistics being used include the 'Economic Intelligence Unit' which is predominantly one of the most well renowned research and analysis resources globally. Facts and statistics from the 'US AID' program are also used. US AID provides funds and assistance in the areas of education, health, energy and economic growth and development. The 'World Development Indicators' is a collection of development indicators and their respective statistics compiled by the World Bank from officially recognized sources. The 'World Governance Indicators' is another project of the World Bank which measures six variables of governance from 1996 onwards, including Voice & Accountability, Political Stability and Lack of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption.

### Key Terms & Phrases

#### Terms

#### Glossary Definition

#### Operational Definition

#### Political Stability

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(Dependent Variable)

The quality or condition of being constant or dependable. This includes the number of orderly transfers, armed conflicts, armed demonstrations, social unrest and international tensions.

Political stability exists when the government is able to provide its residents with a sense of security and well being.

Control of Corruption (Rating)

Corruption among public officials. (EIU)

This measures the level of corruption within the society.

Regulatory Control (Rating)

EIU defines this as measuring unfair competitive practices, price controls, discriminatory tariffs, excessive protections and discriminatory taxes.

This variable measures the extent to which policies implemented are successful, regulated and their scope of impact in terms of changing the decision making policy.

US AID (in Millions)

This is the amount of aid being provided by the US for education, health, energy and economic growth and development.

Measured in millions of dollars, this figure reports the amount of funding that Pakistan receives from the US.

## Judicial Autonomy (Dummy Variable based on Oaths to PCO)

Judiciary Autonomy is the concept that the Judiciary is completely independent or isolated in terms of decision making powers from the Legislative or Executive part of the Judicial System.

This is a dummy variable which is equal to 1 if there is judicial autonomy within the country and equal to 0 if there is no judicial autonomy within the country.

## Constitutions

The system of laws and basic principles that a state, a country or an organization is governed by.

(Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

It is a legal expression determining the fundamental political principles of a government.

## Political Institutions

An institution is any structure or mechanism of social order and cooperation governing the behavior of a set of individuals within a given human community.

(Miller, S., 2007)

Political institutions are not just limited to the bureaucracy, business associations or deliberation councils of a country, but also include the political order as the type of regime and the party structure.

### Political Party

A political party is a political organization that typically seeks to attain and maintain political power within government, usually by participating in electoral campaigns, educational outreach or protest actions.

(Political Party, 2010)

This is an organisation to gain power. Popular political parties within Pakistan include the PPP, PML-Q, PML-N, etc.

### Political Structure

The term political structure used in a general sense refers to institutions or groups and their relations to each other, their patterns of interaction within political systems and to political regulations, laws and the norms present in political systems in such a way that they constitute the political landscape of the political entity.

This defines the way different parties and institutions interact with one another in the political system.

### Class Struggle

Class struggle is the socialist aspect of a class conflict.



This is a purely economic conflict between the working classes and the supposed aristocrats.

### Class Conflict

Class conflict is the turmoil caused due to socio-economic or other dispositions that cause a conflict of interests within society.

This refers to the instability caused within the society due to a clash of people from different classes.

### Martial Law

A martial law is a temporary military takeover of the state when civilian rule fails to function effectively through a suspension or abrogation of the constitution.

This refers to the number of times that the constitution has been suspended to control political unrest within the country. The civilian martial law in 1971 is an exception the concept of a military takeover.

### Study Objectives

To analyse the inefficiencies of past elections and constitutions.

To determine causal relationships between political factors and political instability.

To explain the role political institutions play in determining the state of the country.

To test the effect of Control of Corruption on Political Instability. It is expected that there will be a negative causal between that two variables.

To test whether Judicial Autonomy will have a significant or insignificant effect on Political Instability.

To determine the relationship between Regulatory Control and Political Instability.

To test the relationship between US AID and the level of Political Instability.

Miller, S. (2007, January 4). Social Institutions. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved December 7, 2010, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/social-institutions/>

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. (2010). Definition and pronunciation of constitution. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Retrieved from <http://www.oxfordadvancedlearnersdictionary.com/dictionary/constitution>

Political Party. (2010). Wikipedia. Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political\\_party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_party)

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Socio-Economic Origins of the French Revolution: Class Conflict & Political Outcomes

Income Disparity, Class Struggle & Political Participation

Government Regimes & Functioning of Political Institutions

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Judicial Efficiency & Stability of Political Setup

An Overview of Theories of Political Mobilization & Participation

Stakeholders, Pressure Groups & Political Stability

External Interventions & Continuation of Political Regimes

Review of Indicators Assessing Political Participation, Political Stability & Polarization