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Journal homepage: [www.publishing.globalcsrc.org/reads](http://www.publishing.globalcsrc.org/reads)**Fragility of Nascent Democracies: A Case Study of Pakistan**<sup>1</sup>Syed Shahid Hussain Bukhari, <sup>2</sup>Waseem Din, <sup>3</sup>Imtiaz Ahmad warraich<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan.

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
<b>History</b> Revised format: 30 June 2019 Available Online: 31 July 2019	Democracy has always been targeted by the forces that are against this particular type of system yet it has emerged as an efficient and more delivering system around the world. In this research article, those forces have been identified and an exclusive analysis has been given with regards to the threats faced by the democratic system of Pakistan. A comprehensive study of the root-causes, which contributes to the destabilization process, has been given. Suggestions and recommendations have also been given to treat the malady of destabilization. Finally, it has been deduced that the states like Pakistan that are under threat of destabilization need socialization and awareness to reduce such threats by rationally coping with the situation.
<b>Keywords</b> Democracy, Destabilization, Pakistan	
<b>JEL Classification:</b> F50, F59, N25	

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**Recommended citation:** Bukhari, S. S. H., Din, W. and Warraich, I.A.(2019). Fragility of Nascent Democracies: A Case Study of Pakistan. Review of Economics and Development Studies, 5 (3), 421-427**DOI:** 10.26710/reads.v5i3.685**1. Introduction**

With more than 100 countries around the world (out of 193), democracy has taken its roots, and fruits of democracy have been relished by the people of these states. It is a system through which people elect their own representatives who come into the power and legislate for these people according to their wishes. Abraham Lincoln's definition is well known that "democracy is the government of the People, by the people and for the People". So in a democratic system, people are the master of their own will. But things do not go as smoothly as appear on the surface. Though people are the master of their own will yet there are many challenges which are being faced by this system for its sustainability. After World War II, many countries got independence from their respective imperialist powers. These independent countries mostly belong to the third world. As they were already facing many difficulties in the region i.e. economic, social, educational, cultural, etc. Liberty proved a mixed blessing for them. They have to confront on many fronts. To solve all these issues they need a strong and stable system of government that has the ability to address these issues along with international recognition so that they might not fall again into the hands of evil mongers. Most of these new states opted democracy as a viable system for their sustainability. They opted for it because it was a system at that time which was functioning smoothly and delivering successfully. Though it was not as favorable for these countries' condition but no other better alternative was also present. Some states found it better for them whereas others' experience was not very good. After World War II, the victorious alliance also suffered and the world was divided into bi-polar powers i.e. in USA and USSR. Each indulged into the cold war and tried to show its superiority and hegemony over the other through different means. There started a race of arms

and race of capturing as many states as possible to show their strength. USSR was a communist power whereas the USA was a capitalist power. To increase their influence both used all forms of ways whether legal or illegal through a policy of intervention into other states. The Soviet communists wanted to impose their ideology over as many states as they could gain by hook or by crook and vice versa. The United States and its Western allies decided to check the communist expansion. So through different plans, war-torn Europe was supported by the USA as it considered that USSR was bringing communism into the continent of Europe as well. Apart from the plans like Marshall Plan and formation of NATO by the USA and formation of WARSA PACT to counter the NATO attack by the USSR, another way to enhance the influence was to bring the newly independent states into their ideological whole. So both these powers adopted a policy of intervention and made these newly liberated states a parasite so that they could never stand at their own. To achieve this very end they exploited those conditions which were favorable for them. They gave them aid and debt, used the elite of these countries which include civil and military elite, fanned the religious extremism, supported the so-called nationalist, provided arms and aid to the evil forces working within a state, etc. Apart from this physical intervention they also poisoned these nations through many invisible evil practices which not only corrupted their entire system and made them sluggish, dependent, irresponsible, fanatic and insecure but turned these new entities of the world into such habits that they are even paralyzed to think better for themselves and their future generation to come as well.

Among such nations was the nation of Pakistan who got independence from British imperialists on August 14, 1947. Like many other nations, this nation also adopted democracy as a system of government for it. This nascent democracy was also hijacked by these evil forces that have their evil intentions to destabilize it. Therefore, this article discusses in detail about these hidden forces and explores how they work and exploit the circumstances into their favor.

## 2. Literature Review

The vulnerability of the democratic system lies in its very existence. Whenever everyone is invited to join the system, there is every likelihood that some opportunist would also penetrate through this open invitation. These are forces who try to monopolize or create influence on the system so that they could achieve their interests. They try to paralyze the system so that it always remains dependent. Khalid Bin Sayeed in his book *Politics in Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change* (Sayeed, 1980) describes the prevailing environment about the future government in Pakistan. Politics of Pakistan took different dimensions soon after the independence. Laziness of the leaders after the demise of Quaid-e-Azam in 1948 put the country on another track. The arguments started for the type of government in the country. In the meantime, the first constitution was formulated. The different leaders tried to influence in accordance with their school of thoughts which made the environment unstable. Hassan Askari Rivi in his book, *The Military and Politics in Pakistan* (Rizvi, 2000), shares that from the Governor Generalship of Quaid-e-Azam there started a race for keeping the maximum power with one person. After the death of Quaid-e-Azam, the military expanded its network to hijack the politics of the country. With the inclusion of Ayub Khan and Skinder Mirza, the military crept into the affairs of politics. Thereafter, the role of army increased in the politics of Pakistan, and with our sour relations towards India army further affirmed its position and dictators one after the other contaminated the politics of the country. Munir Ahmad in his book, *The Civil Servants in Pakistan* (Ahmed M. , 1964) elaborates how the civil bureaucracy got its hold in the affairs of government. From day one bureaucrats like CH. Muhammad Ali, Malik Ghulam Muhammad, and Amjad Ali were very close to Jinnah; and after independence, these bureaucrats played a nasty role in the political history of the country. They not only manipulated themselves but also joined hands with the army to be powerful in the country. S.M. Akhtar in his book, *Economy of Pakistan* (Akhtar, 1951), explains the precarious condition of Pakistan as the economy was a total collapse. The offices of the new country were held under tents, there was no food to eat, and India blocked the rightful share of Pakistan which also made the situation even worst. Economic condition was unexplainable. The expenditures to meet the needs of the country were below the requirements. The migrants were coming but there was nothing to give them. Then due to lack of proper system, for one and a half-decade, no progress could be made to improve the conditions. The economy was run under unstable conditions. Liaquat Ali Khan made a tour to the USA and the economic support was obtained from the countries apart from political support. Ch. Muhammad Ali in his writing *Emergence of Pakistan* (Ali, 1967), explicitly gives the overview of the situation what factors forced the Muslims of India to claim their self-identity. The struggle for an independent state gained momentum under the leadership of Quaid. He also explains in detail the manipulation of Lord Mountbatten and Jawahir Lal Nehro during the time of partition for the change of boundaries. Further, he describes the misfortunes, which Pakistan inherited from India and what happen to people who came from India. I.H. Qureshi in his book, *Islamic Elements in the Political Thoughts of Pakistan* (Qureshi I, 1960), elaborated those elements that were active and wanted to bring an

Islamic style of government in Pakistan. The people, who were a part of the struggle, were mostly religious in character. After independence, those who were against the formation of Pakistan also joined hands with the Islamic elements. The role of Maulana Modoodi and his Islamic team tried to implement Islamic laws and jurisprudence in the country. He was a part of heated debate to stop adoption of democracy as a system for Pakistan and gave cogent reasons how Pakistan was created in the name of Islam and that minorities should be treated as Zimis in the Islamic state and no administrative post should be given to them as it may prove dangerous for the interests of an Islamic state. G.W. Chaudhry in his book *Constitutional Development in Pakistan* (Chaudhry.W.G, 1958) said that the constitution development process was very slow in the country from the very first day said G.W. Chaudhry. From the first basic principles committee report to the form of the future constitution, every process was being impeded by the people of different schools of thoughts. After the promulgation of the 1956 constitution there started debates about its working. After two years it was abrogated and General Ayub Khan got his way into the politics. He gave his constitution of 1962. He legalized his government through the introduction of the Basic Democracies system. Constitution of the country remained a controversy after the independence due to lack of leadership and consensus on its basic form. Due to this reason institutions also could not gain proper ground as well. Mohammad Waseem in his writing, *Politics and the state in Pakistan* (Waseem, 1994) , depicts the development of Pakistan in political perspective. He also discusses how Zia ul Haq came to power, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's arrest and sentenced, Muhammad Khan Junejo's government, Zia's Islamization process, his support for Jihad in Afghanistan and his tragic death in August 1977.

### 3. Democratic Ideals

Briefly speaking the criteria which distinguish a democracy from a non-democratic state are democratic values and practices, institutions, rule of majority, opposition and competing parties, constitutional government, fundamental rights, equal opportunities for all, independent judiciary, free media, rights of minorities, responsible leadership, free and fair elections, absence of any social, economic, cultural or regional distinctions on the basis of caste, creed, sex, religion or nationality. A democracy that does not fulfill such criteria partially or completely may be termed as semi or pseudo-democracy. Following are the ideals of a successful democratic system.

- i. Faith in the common man
- ii. The state is the means and individual is the end
- iii. Freedom of expression.
- iv. Liberty and equality for all
- v. Participation on the broader scale
- vi. Peace and security
- vii. The welfare of the people
- viii. Guarantee of a stable government
- ix. Efficiency and deliverance

### 4. Stability/Instability of Democracy

As discussed earlier there can be many non-democratic forces working within a system to destabilize it so that they could get their ulterior motives complete. They use each and every method to bring instability in the system. Here question comes into one's mind that why democracy is a soft target for all evil forces to be attacked easily. The answer is that it is the only system through which everyone is invited to come and participate in the betterment of people. Finding this opportunity favorable these evil forces come into the system through exploiting those conditions which are poor and thus easy to target. Whereas in an authoritarian system no one is allowed to enter without the permission of the despot or the ruler. In a democratic system, such forces could be checked easily as well but it all depends on the proper performance of the system. If the people in government and people in opposition are functioning according to the constitution and laws of the land, institutions are independent and working within their jurisdiction, federal and provincial government (in a federal and parliamentary system) are doing their own job according to their mandate, judiciary is independent and delivering, a vibrant civil society is present, media is free, education is the priority of government, defense is strong and last but not least there is no politicking over the national interests by the political parties then there is no likelihood that any evil force with any ulterior motive could creep into the system. Though there are chances and possibilities of entering these forces in every system how developed it may be yet if the system is strong, stable and independent, it can check these things easily. There are different kinds of forces that contribute to destabilizing a democratic system. These forces utilize

different ways and method to penetrate into a system. Looking closely it is observable that there are mainly two kinds of forces that contribute to the fragility of the democratic system in some way or the other. Some of them are visible while the others are invisible.

- i. Military Establishment
- ii. Civil Bureaucracy
- iii. Ethnic Cleavages
- iv. Foreign Assistance/Intervention
- v. Political Crisis/Instability
- vi. Economic Depression
- vii. Poor Law & Order
- viii. Institutional Collapse
- ix. Weak Writ of Government
- x. Discontinuity of System

These forces, in general, may cause destabilization of democracy anywhere in the world. The more these forces shall get stronger more the fragility of democracy be enhanced. An analysis of the role of these forces in Pakistan with relevance to the stability/instability of democracy is given below.

## 5. Democratic Stability/Instability in Pakistan

Pakistan is a country that got its independence after the Second World War from British imperialism in 1947. Before it was a part of undivided India. After getting independence it faced many problems which even challenged its very existence. The challenges it faced were so serious that Pakistan could not properly organize its internal structure of the governance. Then the death of Quaid-e-Azam in 1948 and unfortunate demise of the Liaquat Ali Khan never allowed it to stand on its feet. Economically weak, ideologically divided, educationally backward, internally distressed, externally vulnerable and ethnically diverse Pakistan fall prey to the forces of destruction. As the geostrategic location of Pakistan was very important so all the regional and international power tried to have their influence on Pakistan. So due to miserable internal conditions in the country and geostrategic position on the map it attracted the evil mongers to conspire against it. In every system, there are many forces and players who work for and against the system at the same time. Pakistan is a nascent democracy in the sense that since its inception it has faced four military interventions, weak economy, illiteracy, racism, religion fanaticism, sectarianism, terrorism, tug of war for power between center and provinces, slow judicial system, ideological differences, political unrest, weak institutions, controlled media, low participation, non-serious attitude of the political parties and many other problems which are normally faced by the nascent democracies around the world. Although the conditions are getting better due to the continuity of elections yet the system is facing a serious threat due to the poor performance of the civil government who never satisfied the masses, which resultantly will again provide a chance to non-democratic forces to intervene.

### 5.1 Military Intervention

Military intervention has always been a chronic problem for Pakistan since its inception in 1947. After the death of Quaid-e-Azam (1948) and Liaquat Ali Khan (1951), Ayub Khan, the first Pakistani commander in Chief of the Army got his way into politics. In 1954, the new government of Muhammad Ali Bogra gave him the portfolio of defense ministry (while he was army chief) and Maj. Gen. Sikandar Mirza was given the portfolio of the interior ministry. Both these men were not civilians but from military bureaucracy. They manipulated with the civil bureaucracy and during the period of Sikandar Mirza as Governor-General, the monopoly of the military bureaucracy was at its peak. Democracy could not take roots during this period. Then on October 1958 first Martial-Law was imposed by the Sikandar Mirza by abrogating the first Constitution of Pakistan 1956. Ayub Khan took control of the country as Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and later became the President. He introduced a new constitution in 1962. After ten years he gave control to another dictator Gen. Yahya Khan who abrogated the Constitution of his predecessor and imposed martial law in 1969. During his period East Pakistan became Bangladesh after being dismembered from West Pakistan on Dec 16, 1971. After him, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto took oath as the President and first Civilian CMLA on Dec 20, 1971. He later became the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Aug 14, 1973, after giving the first consensus-based Constitution of Pakistan 1973. Bhutto government was later on toppled by another dictator Gen. Zia-ul-Haq in 1977 by holding the constitution of 1973 in abeyance and imposing Martial Law again. He imprisoned the Z. A Bhutto who was later on sentenced to death in a fake case backed by the Gen. Zia. After that Gen. Zia reigned for another ten years till his death in a plane crash on Aug 17,

1988. Then the civilian government of Benazir Bhutto came in 1989 which lasted till August 1990 and was dissolved by the then President Ghulam Ishaq Khan on the corruption charges. Nawaz Sharif then became the Prime Minister in 1992 whose government was also dissolved by the same President on same charges. Then again the government of Benazir Bhutto came in 1993 which was dissolved by his own President Farooq Ahmad Laghari in 1996. (Yousaf, 1999) Nawaz Sharif came again with a heavy mandate in 1997 but due to his unpleasant policies and Kargil Crisis of 1999, his relations with the army got soured and his own hand-picked Gen. Pervez Musharraf toppled his government on October 12, 1999, through a military coup. General Musharraf later became the President of Pakistan and reigned till 2008, a period of almost ten years again in military control. Although for the first time in the history of Pakistan, Parliament has been able to complete its tenure from 2008-2013 and 2013-2018, none of the Prime Minister of Pakistan has yet completed his tenure in office for the 72 years long history after the creation of Pakistan. The role of the military establishment in the functioning of civilian government is increasing day by day and it has now become part of various important decision-making bodies in Pakistan. Therefore, one can conclude that democracy in Pakistan is yet nascent and needs to be strengthened.

## 5.2 Civil Bureaucracy

Civil bureaucracy is another force which is responsible for weak democratic set-up in Pakistan. Bureaucrats often conspire against the elected representatives. Due to the absence of a constitution in the initial phases, the role of civil bureaucracy was unspecified. So the routine changes in the ministries allowed the civil bureaucrats to do according to their will and in this way, they penetrated into the political scenario of the country. Bureaucracy always joined hand with military bureaucracy to destabilize democracy. As they are chosen for the civil service through a tough competitive examination system, they think that they are superior to the elected representatives. So through different ways, they create hindrances in the working of government as they know that politician is dependent on them because of their low education and incapacibilities. Two governments, each of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were also dismissed by the bureaucrats like Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari. In the same fashion, bureaucrats helped the government of Gen. Musharraf to take ground. In the recent past to fail the PPP governments of Yousaf Raza Gillani and Raja Pervaiz Ashraf led by Asif Ali Zardari, the bureaucracy did play their silent role through creating hurdles following the policy of red-tapism and refusing to follow the government's instructions. Whenever the military takes on the civil government it is in fact bureaucracy that helps them to sustain long. Role of bureaucracy remains powerful as long as the politicians are depended on them. So finding the powerful and educated politicians above them becomes difficult because they paralyze the entire system through official tactics, which results in the failure of the democratic government to deliver. Pakistan has been a victim of this highly educated force of the country since its initial days. (Ahmed M. , 1964)

## 5.3 Ethnic Cleavages

Ethnic Cleavages have also haunted Pakistan from the very beginning. After the first eight or nine years of independence, Bengalis of East Pakistan started a movement of separation from West Pakistan. Although there were many injustices committed to them by the leaders of West Pakistan yet the movement gained momentum due to the Bengali ethnic slogan. Finally, Pakistan was dismembered and East Pakistan became Bangladesh on Dec 16, 1971 due to this ethnic cleavage. Currently, again Pakistan is facing an ethnic insurgency in the province of Balochistan. In Balochistan, the banned organizations like Bloch Liberation Army (BLA) and Bloch Liberation Front (BLF) are challenging the writ of the government. (Ahmed A. S., 1986)

## 5.4 Foreign Assistance and Intervention

Foreign Assistance and Intervention is another cause. All the anomic elements cited above have allowed the powerful nations to intervene in the country as it is dependent on others to survive. If we look back it is noticeable that Pakistan's history is replete with foreign assistance. As Pakistan could never stand on its feet so it always needed aid from other countries to sustain. From Liaquat Ali Khan to Imran Khan, all the governments whether military or civilian depended on aid and foreign assistance. From the USA, UK, Germany, France, China, UAE, Saudi Arabia, EU, Japan, Turkey, and Institutions like IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, USAID, UKAID, Pakistan is receiving assistance. The new government of Imran Khan, who came with a slogan of change, is also not an exception. The new government has also taken a loan from the IMF for its government's business to run. When these countries provide loan or aid to Pakistan they also interfere in the country's affairs through different ways. USA, UK, EU, China, Saudi Arabia all influence on the policies of the government. Therefore, even the popularly elected governments of Pakistan fail to perform in accordance with the wishes of the masses that consequently creates outrage against democracy, resultantly paving the way for non-democratic forces.

### 5.5 Political Instability

Political Instability is another reason for the fragility of Democracy in Pakistan. Since its creation in 1947, Pakistan is in a state of Political Crisis which has been further aggravated by the economic, social, ethnic, religious and linguistic problems. Two major mainstream political parties i.e. Pakistan People's Party and Pakistan Muslims League(N) have never been allowed to function properly by the establishment on the one hand, and due to their own weak intra-party structure and personal interests to fulfill on the other. After coming to power they misuse the power, appoint their diehards and loved ones on the lucrative positions, disrespect the law and ignore the merit policy. They stop the benefiting projects started by the previous government and play politics over the national interests e.g. Kala Bag dam, creation of new provinces, naming of the NWFP as KP, owning or disowning the war on terror in the country, etc. There is no democratic culture found in the political parties; harsh treatment is meted out to the opposition parties, no leadership qualities are seen while making a person party leader and also no culture exists to accept the mandate of successful political parties rather always alleging rigging in the elections. Although the civilian governments continue to rule in Pakistan in the wake of elections, the allegations of rigging continue to hinder their performance. Moreover, it has heightened polarization in the society which can provide a justification to the non-democratic forces to legitimize their intervention in the system.

### 5.6 Struggle for Power between the Centre and Province

Then there is a struggle for power between the Centre and Province. The tug of war for power between the Center and Provinces has hung the whole system because neither the Center nor Provinces are ready to take/share their powers as well as responsibility. After the passing of the 18th amendment, it was hoped that the situation would become better but this struggle yet continues as the statements by the central government often show their apprehensions about the 18th amendment.

### 5.7 Economic Depression

Economic Depression: Constant economic growth is one of the indicators to be called a stable state. The states, in which the economy is downtrodden become a victim of endemic problems. Though no state can maintain the economic growth at a high level forever yet it does not mean that there could be no way out to bring it back to a higher level again. Pakistan is among those states who are economically depressed. The problem that it faced from its very first day is still faced by it even after a lapse of 72 years. The problems discussed earlier are a natural corollary that causes an economic depression. Pakistan's permanent dependence on others has made it economically vulnerable. It is well known that political stability and economic stability are interdependent. Economic instability leads to political instability which makes it difficult for the democratically elected governments to survive.

Towards the end, one can say that all the non-democratic forces irrespective of the fact whether they are visible or invisible, take advantage of their role in the system and weaken the democratic governments in Pakistan. Democratic set-up is extremely shattered by such forces which consequently hinder Pakistan to become a prosperous, independent, social, welfare and democratic state. The solution lies only in the continuity of the democratic system. Looking precisely the study has identified the following problematic areas which also accompany a set of recommendation to address the underlying factors. The study suggests the following.

- i. Destabilization happens when the internal situation of the country is precarious.
- ii. Larger participation with limited checks in the system invites the evil forces of destabilization to come into the system that further aggravates the precarious situation.
- iii. Dissatisfaction, despondency, non-deliverance, inherent weaknesses and economic depression fuel the fire of destabilization.
- iv. Foreign adventurism, repeated military interventions, terrorism, sectarianism, race and ethnicity, religious extremism, poor law and order, political crises, institutional collapse and weak writ of the government are the elements to be exploited by the mongers of destabilization
- v. Irresponsible civic behavior further disillusion the grim situation within the country which results in destabilization of a democratic process.
- vi. Stability could be achieved if practical measures are adopted to improve the present conditions.

Following suggestions can help to achieve this much-desired end.

- i. Internal weaknesses of the system should be addressed.
- ii. Aggrieved elements should be brought back into the system through dialogue and dispensation.
- iii. Economic independence and a responsible political attitude bar these evil forces to penetrate into the system.
- iv. System of checks and balance in every sphere of the country should be adopted to avoid breaches of internal and external security.
- v. National integration should be promoted to a larger extent.
- vi. Law and order situation should be improved.
- vii. Individuals must fulfill their civic responsibilities.
- viii. Democratic norms should be adopted by politicians and civilians on the whole.

In the nutshell, if one wants to support the democratic process one shall have to behave in a mature political way and will have to stop the interference of the forces cited above in the democratic process.

### Conclusion

Every system whether it is a monarchy, communism, dictatorship or a democracy suffers one or more than one problems. These weaknesses allow the forces of destabilization to utilize the poor situation by exploiting those elements which are angry or working against the system for one reason or the other. In this way, they create hatred towards the entire system by fanning the fire of deprivation. Increasing despair and despondency radicalize the people who finally refuse to come back in the national-whole. Democracy becomes prey to these forces easily because it is a more vulnerable system than the communism, monarchy or dictatorship. Those systems are controlled by the dictatorial and opportunist clique whereas democracy invites these elements into the system to participate and perform. If the democratic norms do not take roots, institutions are weak, leaders don't have the ability to deliver, and the country is not independent economically then the situation could be easily exploited. On the other hand, dictators control the weak system by not allowing much participation, despite poor performance and poor situation and reign for decades as it has been witnessed in Pakistan.

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