Pakistan: Neither State Nor Nation

Sumit Ganguly

Pakistan, one of two states that emerged from the breakup of the British Indian Empire, had been created as the putative homeland for the Muslims of South Asia. From its very genesis, the precise social and political dimensions of the state have been contested. If it is the “homeland” of the Muslims of South Asia then what status should it accord to its religious minorities, as well as to sub-state nations? How should it accommodate the demands of linguistic, sectarian, and regional minorities? Beyond the shared Islamic faith, what other attributes could serve as the constituent elements of nation building? And even if Islam constituted the unifying basis of the state, what role would it play in the everyday life and practices of its citizenry? These are questions to

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1 For an early treatment of this subject see Binder (1965). Also see the discussion in Jaffrelot (2002).

2 After pursuing an inexorable campaign on the basis of religious nationalism and separatism, Mohammed Ali Jinah, the founder of Pakistan, in his inaugural speech to the Constituent Assembly, on August 11, 1947 stated that: “You are free; you are free to go to your temples, your are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State.” Available at: http://www.pakistanio/pakistan/legislation/constituent_address_11aug1947.html [accessed April 12, 2009].
which the founders of the Pakistani state had paid scant attention. Yet they came to the fore almost immediately in the wake of Independence and Partition. They have also dogged the existence of the country ever since, and they have been the subject of vigorous and violent contestation (Ahmed, 1997). Sixty years after its creation, Pakistan is no closer to addressing these vital concerns. Instead they pose a continuing challenge to national identity and integration. Specifically, Pakistan still faces important sub-state national movements in Baluchistan, in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), and Sindh.

In this chapter, I argue that these failures of the Pakistani polity to encourage and foster ideas of cultural, religious, and linguistic pluralism, and to craft the requisite political institutions in an extremely diverse polity, have been of no minor consequence for the country and substantial portions of its citizenry. The chapter will initially deal with colonial and nationalist legacies and their impact on the post-independence Pakistani state. It will then turn to questions of sectarian violence, sub-state nationalism in the province of Sindh, the secession of East Pakistan, the bilateral conflict with India over Jammu and Kashmir, and sub-state nationalism and terror in Baluchistan and the NWFP.

It is pertinent, at the very outset, to underscore that regime type in Pakistan has not been closely linked with greater regard for minority rights, decentralization, or cultural and regional autonomy. Pakistan’s political regimes, whether civilian or military, have evinced scant regard recognizing sub-state national demands, or even minority rights, more broadly. Nor have they been especially sensitive in addressing demands for local autonomy or federalism. Instead all regimes, to varying degrees, have remained comfortable with a highly centralized administration. Such a centralized structure has ill-served the needs of a highly diverse and plural society. Instead it has contributed to a range of regional tensions, which in turn has led the regime in Islamabad to resort to repressive measures to curb such demands. The problem of the Pakistani state is prior and deeper, located in a crisis of identity that prevents not

only recognition and accommodation of such minorities more broadly. It is also important to note that a single civilian regime has been allowed to take root in Pakistan. Invariably, the military has truncated the nascent liberal democratic government. Consequently, liberal democracy has had little opportunity to take root in the Pakistani polity.

The abject failure to adopt these policies of Bengali nationalism and the breakup of Pakistan’s eastern wing of the country succeeded after a prolonged conflict (1971-1974). India, Pakistan’s long-standing adversary and vociferous champion of the cause of Bangladeshi autonomy, has also contributed to the flight of some 10 million Pakistanis to India (Jackson 1975). I will show that Pakistan has accommodated the legitimate demands of others (or nascent ones) has also resulted in much lesser violence in the provinces of Baluchistan, while sectarian violence continues to stalk the land. We have acquired greater salience as a consequence of international politics. In turn, myopic regional considerations have encouraged these cleavages and differentiated the political and diplomatic ends (Nasr 2000).

What explains the failure of the Pakistani vision of nationalism while addressing the social, economic, and cultural minorities within an independent Pakistani state? The answer to this question is complex. In large part, it is due to the failure of the Pakistani state to accommodate and negotiate these demands stems from the inherent weakness and debility of the Pakistani state. This explains the high level of violence. Why did Pakistan, which emerged out of the colonial tutelage, fail to develop, nurture, and sustain democratic political institutions, while its neighbor India and other nations in greater ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity such as the United States, Germany, and Australia (Diamond, & Plattner 2007)? The answer lies in the failure of the Pakistani state to promote internal democracy and the notion of a nation and thereby to provide a foundation for the institutions. Second, the movement was based upon the vision of primordial ethnic nationalism. Understanding why this has been the case is the focus of this book.

For a particularly idiosyncratic account which argues that Muhammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of the Pakistani state, had not genuinely sought to create a separate state but ultimately became a prisoner of his own rhetoric and choices, see Jalal (1985).

For a broader discussion of these questions see Cohen (2002); also see the detailed historical discussion in Samad (1995).

For a particularly insightful account that traces the origins of the propensity toward centralization see Waseem (1992).

For a sophisticated Marxist analysis of this propensity toward centralization see Alavi (1972).

The classic statement on institutional debility and political failure in the post-colonial world is Shepherd (1968).
The Pakistani state had paid scant attention. Yet, immediately in the wake of Independence negotiations, the existence of the country ever since has been subject of vigorous and violent contestations and the country ever since has been subject of vigorous and violent contestations after its creation, Pakistan is no closer to its aspirations. Instead they pose a continuing challenge for the country and substantial institutions in an extremely diverse polity that is inherently sensitive to addressing demands of religious and linguistic pluralism, as well as to the post-independence Pakistan has been a nation of sectarian violence, sub-state nationalism, the secession of East Pakistan, the bilateral conflict with India and Kashmir, and the sub-state nationalism of the NWFP.

The abject failure to adopt these policies contributed to the rise of Bengali nationalism and the breakup of Pakistan in 1971, when the eastern wing of the country seceded from the country to become Bangladesh (Zaheer 1994). India, Pakistan’s long-standing adversary, felt compelled to intervene on behalf of the beleaguered Bengali population of the province in the aftermath of the flight of some ten million refugees into eastern India (Jackson 1975). I will show that Pakistan’s fundamental inability to accommodate the legitimate demands of other sub-state national groups (or nascent ones) has also resulted in much fratricidal and intercommunal violence in the provinces of Baluchistan, the NWFP, and Sindh. Finally, sectarian violence continues to stalk the land as Shia-Sunni differences have acquired greater salience as a consequence of both domestic and international politics. In turn, myopic regional and national governments have encouraged these cleavages and differences in order to pursue other political and diplomatic ends (Nasr 2000).

What explains the failure of the Pakistani state to develop an inclusive vision of nationalism while addressing the needs of its ethnic, linguistic, and cultural minorities within an institutional context? The answers to this question are complex. In large part, Pakistan’s failure to mediate and negotiate these demands stems from the chronic institutional debility of the Pakistani state. This explanation, in turn, begs another question. Why did Pakistan, which emerged from the same British colonial tutelage, fail to develop, nurture, and sustain viable representative political institutions, while its neighbor India, despite its problems of size and greater ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity, succeeded (Ganguly, Diamond, & Plattner 2007)? The answer, I argue, is twofold. First, it can be traced to the failure of the Pakistani nationalist movement to promote internal democracy and the norms of debate and argument, and thereby to provide a foundation for the growth of representative institutions. Second, the movement was self-consciously based upon a vision of primordial ethnic nationalism. Unfortunately, this conception...
of nationalism completely overlooked fundamental differences amongst the Muslim community within British India. Muslims, as thoughtful historical scholarship has shown, were hardly a monolithic community who had little or nothing in common with their Hindu counterparts (Hasan 1997). On the contrary, regional, sectarian, linguistic, and class differences characterized this diverse community.

Yet the exigencies of mobilizing significant segments of the Muslim population to oppose the secular, civic vision of the Indian National Congress prompted the leader of the Muslim League, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, to emphasize the distinctiveness of the Muslim community, its putative cohesiveness, and the ostensible inability of the Indian nationalist movement to grant equal treatment to this vast minority. This strategy of ethnic political mobilization obviously met with a level of success; Jinnah did carve out a separate state. However, since neither he nor his cohort had devoted any effort toward the creation and sustenance of representative institutions, the new state, hastily cobbled together on the eve of British colonial withdrawal, found itself singularly unprepared for the tasks of governance and national integration. In the absence of robust institutions, the nascent state proved utterly incapable of coping with growing ethnic, regional, and class differences and tensions in the wake of independence. Not surprisingly, the two institutions that had a degree of autonomy and coherence, the Pakistani military and the highly elitist civil service, quickly formed an iron-clad nexus in their quest for the maintenance of public order. As the Pakistani political elite struggled with the task of constitution making, these two entities, which were hardly imbued with democratic values, evinced little regard for fostering representative institutions. When the makers of the constitution finally generated a constitutional order, it proved fragile and incapable of coping with growing public disorder. The military and the civil service elites worked in concert to quickly stultify the growth of institutions. As early as 1958, barely a decade after its independence, Pakistan saw its first military coup (McGrath 1996). The military regime, which lasted until 1969, did little to address the question of building viable, working, representative institutions nor, for that matter, did it seek to address the fundamental question of Pakistan's national identity. Its principal preoccupation, beyond sustaining itself in power, was to promote anti-Indian propaganda and focus attention on the unresolved question of the dispute of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.  

To understand the failure of representative Pakistan it is necessary to briefly discuss the organization of the Pakistani nationalist movement. The nationalist movement can be traced to the writings and political activism of a person of Sayyid Ahmed Khan. When confronted with incipient nationalist political consciousness within the population of British India, Sir Sayyid quipped that Muslims of the subcontinent constituted a 1.2 million population prior to the advent of the British. More to the point, he contended that, as a style representative institutions, Muslim subcontinent prior to the advent of the British of permanent political inferiority and atomic population.

As he wrote at the time:

Let us suppose first of all that we have under everybody, chamar (i.e. persons of low caste) we suppose that all Mahomedan electors vote for a Hindu member ... It is certainly four times as many (votes) because their pop (A)nd how can the Mahomedan guard his dice in which one man had four dice and the Khan as quoted in Hardy 1972 p.130

Accordingly, he strenuously argued that Muslims of the region a special dispensation for their rights.

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8 Some of the difficulties of state formation are discussed at length in Jalal (1990).
9 For a more recent treatment of the subject see Siddiqua (2007).
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... (A)nd how can the Mahomedan guard his interests? It would be like a game of
dice in which one man had four dice and the other only one. (Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan as quoted in Hardy 1972, p.130)

Accordingly, he strenuously argued that the British should grant the
Muslims of the region a special dispensation which would guarantee
their rights.11

Sensing an opportunity to cast discord within the nascent nationalist
movement, in 1909 the colonial government enacted the terms of the

10 On the question of Kashmir see Dasgupta (1968); for a Pakistani nationalist perspective see Khan (1970).
11 For a discussion of Sir Sayyid's views see Robinson (1974).
Minto-Morley Reforms. These reforms, among other matters, created limited representative institutions in India, with Muslims being granted separate electorates. This institutional arrangement helped to artificially solidify the Muslim community within India because it showed scant regard for divisions of social class, regional ties, and sectarian differences within the community.

As Mushirul Hasan, an important historian of nationalist politics has written:

The Act of 1909, introduced to defuse the Congress demand for a greater share in administration and decision-making, was a calculated master-stroke. Separate electorates, along with reservations and weightages, gave birth to a sense of Muslims being a religio-political entity in the colonial image – of being unified, cohesive and segregated from the Hindus. (Hasan 1997, p. 35)

In turn, the creation of this system of electorates on the basis of religious orientation greatly facilitated the mobilization of the Muslim community around the sole issue of potential religious discrimination following the end of British colonial rule. Indeed, this became the principal rallying cry of the Muslim League under the leadership of the tenacious, British-trained lawyer, Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Jinnah carefully adumbrated upon the views of Sir Sayyid and insisted that Muslims and Hindus as religious communities shared little or nothing. Indeed he contended that the two groups constituted distinct, anti-theitical, and mutually exclusive groups, thereby amounting to two discrete nations. As he wrote:

Islam and Hinduism are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, two different and distinct social orders... The Hindus and the Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literatures... To yoke together two such nations under a single State, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and the final destruction of any fabric that may be built up for the government of such a State. (Mohammed Ali Jinnah as quoted in Jaffrelot 2002, p. 12)

This so-called two-nation theory emerged as the cornerstone of Pakistani nationalism. It faced vigorous opposition from the principal vehicle for Indian nationalism, the Indian National Congress, which was committed to an explicitly secular ideological nationalism. Despite its formal, stated rejection of the INC's efforts to realize its vision at the round table conferences, it was unable to fully contain those of a significant portion of the Muslim League, and at times even the Muslim League itself, who werelessly, and ultimately successfully, pursued the Muslim minority would be at risk of domination post-independence India.

Despite his success in promoting his vision of a separate Pakistan, Jinnah's Muslim League paid little heed to the factors that would ensure the success of the party. They did not invest time and effort into building support and fashioning a distinct political identity. Instead, they ignored or ran away from notions of primordial religious sentiment. This in turn paved the way for the rise of primordial religious sentiments, the myth of Independence and Partition, which were largely unopposed by the majority Hindu population of the two provinces.

NATIONALISM AND SECTARIAN VIOLENCE

Pakistan has justified its preoccupation with the Kashmir question on behalf of the pursuit of Pakistan's right to self-determination. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the Indian political parties have long characterized Pakistan's claims as those of a stronger state. This is evident not only in the Muslim League's vision of an independent Muslim state but also in the periodic rise of violent sectarian movements in the Indian polity. These movements have been characterized by the rise of the Pakistani state to recognize and support these movements.

Some of these movements emerged in the post-independence state. However, they continue to pose a threat to the well-being of the state. The sharing of religious and cultural pluralism.

4 One of the clearest statements of this vision of Indian nationalism is contained in the speeches of Nehru (1944).

5 The failure of Congress to reassure Jinnah and the Muslim League about their rights and privileges in a post-independence Pakistan is discussed in detail in the debates in the Phillips and White (1960) and also see the debates in Phillips and White (1960).

6 Even though he fails to trace the structural origins of such movements, in the aftermath of independence, the prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, was known to have praised the Muslim League's vision of an independent Pakistan. However, this support was quickly reversed after the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947.
committed to an explicitly secular ideology and espoused a vision of civic nationalism.\textsuperscript{14} Despite its formal, stated commitment to these principles, the INC’s efforts to realize its vision at the grass roots sometimes flagged. Consequently, it was unable to fully address Jinnah’s misgivings and those of a significant portion of the Muslim community.\textsuperscript{15} Jinnah forcefully, relentlessly, and ultimately successfully argued that the rights of the Muslim minority would be at risk in a notionally secular but Hindu-dominated post-independence India.

Despite his success in promoting his separatist agenda, Jinnah and the Muslim League paid little heed to the critical task of promoting internal democracy within the party, building a nationwide network of grass roots support and fashioning a distinct political ideology beyond the appeal to notions of primordial religious sentiment. Not surprisingly, in the aftermath of Independence and Partition, the Muslim League proved to be utterly incapable of coping with the daunting task of governance.\textsuperscript{16}

**NATIONALISM AND SECTARIAN VIOLENCE**

Pakistan has justified its preoccupation with and involvement in the Kashmir question on behalf of the putatively oppressed Muslim population. Nevertheless, it is important to underscore that important sectarian faults have long characterized Pakistan’s own polity and society. The strength of these sectarian identities have waxed and waned over time. However, their political mobilization has frequently raised questions about the cohesiveness and coherence of Pakistan’s national identity. The periodic rise of violent sectarian movements in Pakistan reflects the failure of the Pakistani state to recognize and accept the presence of cultural and religious pluralism.

Some of these movements originated in the early days of the Pakistani state. However, they continue to pose a challenge to the stability and well-being of the state in the contemporary period. The initial as well as

\textsuperscript{14} One of the clearest statements of this vision of secular, civic nationalisms can be found in Nehru (1947).

\textsuperscript{15} The failure of Congress to reassure Jinnah and large segments of the Muslim community about their rights and privileges in a post-independence India is the subject of a major historical debate. For a popular but thoughtful discussion see Guha (2007); for a critical account of Congress’ failure to assuage Muslims’ concerns at a critical juncture see Azad (1960); also see the debates in Phillips and Wainwright (1975).

\textsuperscript{16} Even though he fails to trace the structural roots of the problems of governance and the maintenance of public order, an admirable discussion of the problems that Pakistan faced in the aftermath of independence can be found in Bin Saeed (1969).
present-day problems with sectarian identities and their politicization bear discussion. Shortly after the creation of Pakistan, a small Muslim sect, the Ahmadiyyas, fell afoul of the conservative Muslim clergy. The Ahmadiyya community consists of the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908), a religious leader who had declared himself to be the second messiah of Islam. Orthodox Muslims, whether belonging to the Sunni or Shia sects, consider his declaration to be blasphemous. Accordingly, they accused the community of apostasy. As early as 1949, with the connivance of the Pakistani state, the Ahmadiyya community became the object of persecution. In 1953 the Pakistani religious party, the Jamaat-I-Islami, precipitated a riot against the Ahmadiyyas in the Punjab. The government of Pakistan instituted an inquiry into the origins of the riots, but the effort was mostly perfunctory. Discrimination against the community continued but the next major set of riots was to take place about two decades later, in 1974. Instead of coming to the aid of the besieged community, the civilian regime under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto chose to declare the Ahmadiyyas a non-Muslim community through a constitutional amendment. The condition of the Ahmadiyyas worsened under General Zia, who in 1984 again amended the constitution to place Islamic law over national jurisprudence. He also created a legal basis for the prosecution of anyone who professed the Ahmadiyya faith. Both Bhutto and Zia pursued these policies solely for the purpose of bolstering the sagging legitimacy of their respective regimes and to curry favor with the conservative Muslim clergy. The conditions of this small, beleaguered community are no better today.

Sectarian violence in Pakistan has hardly been confined to the hapless Ahmadiyya community. Since the 1980s Pakistan has also witnessed a steady rise in sectarian violence, especially between Sunnis and Shias. Such sectarian violence once again underscores that the common bond of Islam is an anemic basis for the construction of a robust and common national identity. The origins of such violence could be located in both domestic and external sources. Domestically, the rise of Sunni extremism can be traced to the policies of General Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988). In 1977 he undertook a program of Islamization to shore up his military regime. Despite professions of Islamic universalism it had a distinctly pro-Sunni tinge. Consequently, the Shia community saw it as an assault on its

interests. SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION IS THE GROWTH OF RADICALISM WITHIN THE SHI’I COMMUNITY. EXTERNAL FORCES, IN TURN, CAME TO QUESTION THE RELIGIOUS ORTHODOXY AND POLITICAL ASSERTIVENESS OF THE ZIA-UL-HAQ REGIME OWING TO ITS ATTEMPTS TO GOVERNMENT IN ITS WANNING DAYS. CONSEQUENTIAL INVOLVEMENT AND THE CONCOMITANT RISE TO INCREASING SHIA-SUNNI TENSIONS AND URBAN VIOLENT CLASHES. THIS SCHISM, WHICH OPENED IN THE 1980S, CONTINUES TO PERIODICALLY Erupt INTO公开 Bhattu and Nawaz Sharif did little to moderate it. Unfortunately, external meddling in Pakistan come to a close with the end of military rule and the development of close ties to Pakistan during the 1990s. It provided financial assistance to Pakistan that influenced the religious orientation of Pakistan and, through that, Nawaz Sharif, a relatively conservative politician who came to power in Saudi Arabia after General Pervez Musharraf's coup in October 1999.

The subsequent military regime of General Musharraf, although committed to limiting the sectarian conflict, did miserably in that endeavor. In the absence of an alternative to this brand of sectarianism, the government’s efforts provide the glue that can hold the country together against the divisions just discussed. It could not make for a cohesive national identity.

INCIPENT TENSIONS AND FRUSTRATION: NATIONALISM IN SINDH

One of the first fissures that emerged was between the so-called mughals and the indians at the time of partition, and the im

\[17\] Much of the material cited here has been drawn from Ganguly (2007).

\[18\] On the international sources of domestic developments see Gourevich (1978).
tarian identities and their politicization of the creation of Pakistan, a small Muslim state of the conservative Muslim clergy. The construct of the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a leader who had declared himself to be a prophet, was mostly perfunctory. Discrimination ensued but the next major set of riots was to come later, in 1974. Instead of coming to unity, the civilian regime under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and the Ahmadiyya leader, the latter being a non-Muslim community. The condition of the Ahmadiyya, which in 1984 again amended the constitutional amendment. The condition of the Ahmadiyya, who in 1984 again amended the constitutional amendment, was not better.

The country has hardly been confined to the hapless civilians. The 1980s Pakistan has also witnessed a move, especially between Sunnis and Shias. The construction of a robust and common bond of such violence could be located in both sects. Domestically, the rise of Sunni extremest of General Zia-ul-Haq (1977–1988). In the case of Islamization to shore up his military Islamism, it had a distinctly pro-Shia community saw it as an assault on its interests. Simultaneously, the Iranian revolution had also contributed to the growth of radicalism within the Shia community.

External forces, in turn, came to quickly reinforce this shift toward religious orthodoxy and political assertion on the part of the Shia community. The new revolutionary regime in Iran was hostile toward the Zia-ul-Haq regime owing to its attempts to shore up the Shah’s government in its waning days. Consequently, they moved with dispatch to both morally and materially assist the Shia within Pakistan. Such external involvement and the concomitant rise of Shia assertiveness contributed to increasing Shia-Sunni tensions and ultimately culminated in a series of violent clashes. This schism, which openly manifested itself in the early 1980s, continues to periodically erupt. The civilian regimes of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif did little to contain their growing differences.

Unfortunately, external meddling in Pakistan’s domestic schisms did not come to a close with the end of military rule. Saudi Arabia, which had developed close ties to Pakistan during the Afghan war years, continued to play an important role in the country’s internal politics. Specifically, it provided financial assistance to Pakistani madrassas in an attempt to influence the religious orientation of Pakistani Islam. It is hardly surprising that Nawaz Sharif, a relatively conservative politician, sought refuge in Saudi Arabia after General Pervez Musharraf deposed him in a military coup in October 1999.

The subsequent military regime of General Musharraf, though notionally committed to limiting the sectarian and religious tensions failed miserably in that endeavor. In the absence of enlightened state policies that seek to actively ameliorate this breach, the country will inevitably reenact the sectarian violence that has plagued it since independence. Clearly, Islam failed to provide the glue that can hold together Pakistan. Besides the sectarian divisions just discussed, it could not mend the ethno-linguistic divisions within the country.

INCIPIENT TENSIONS AND FRUSTRATED SUB-STATE NATIONALISM IN SINDH

One of the first fissures that emerged within Pakistan after independence was that between the so-called mukhtars, Muslims who migrated from India at the time of partition, and the inhabitants of the region of Sindh, has been drawn from Ganguly (2007). For a particularly thoughtful treatment of this subject see Nast (2000). For a recent discussion of sectarianism in Pakistan see Ollapally (2008).
in the southern part of Pakistan. Local Sindhis came to deeply resent the sudden influx of significant numbers of immigrants. Their reaction was not based solely on some form of intrinsic xenophobia. Instead, it could be traced to their straightforward anxieties about competition for scarce employment, housing, and access to various public goods (Khan 2002).

These tensions that emerged in the aftermath of partition have continued to periodically wrack the province, resulting in much internecine and fratricidal violence. Parties have coalesced around ethnic identities and have organized militias that have frequently resorted to strong-arm tactics to intimidate opponents, threaten voters, and rally supporters. To compound matters, instead of acting as neutral arbiter and enforcing social order, various military regimes at particular junctures have aligned themselves with specific political parties and organizations involved in this long-running feud, and have thereby fueled further tensions and violence.\(^{21}\)

At the same time, the Sindhis had developed their own sense of nationhood long before the idea of Pakistan itself emerged. A provincial autonomy movement had emerged in 1917 in response to British colonial rulers’ plans to merge the Sindh province with the Bombay presidency. The movement for a Sindhu Desh, however, quickly yielded to the growing mobilization for Pakistan, and many Sindhis supported the new state. However, after independence, the massive migration of Muhajirs discussed above disrupted the demographic make-up of the province. In addition, the overwhelming presence of Punjabis in the military and the civil service convinced many Sindhis of the necessity to push for provincial autonomy. These tensions led into early protest movements against the central government in 1968–1969.

After the independence of Bangladesh and the resignation of General Yahya Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became president of a truncated Pakistan. Bhutto, a prominent landlord from Sindh, successfully mobilized, thanks to his Pakistan People’s Party, the population of Sindh. As the head of that powerful political organization, he promoted the interests of the Sindhis at the provincial level and defended the interests of the oppressed at a national level. His populist agenda, for a time, undercut the idea of Sindh sub-state nationalism. However, after General Zia-ul-Haq arrested him in 1977, and after a sham trial had him executed, unrest arose again in Sindh. The population protested the domination by the military, but General Zia had the Mutahida Qaumi Movement (The United after MQM), and encouraged the rise of insecurity in Karachi, the multiethnic capital city. The ethnic strife in the major country’s inability to achieve national stability.

THE BREAKUP OF PAKISTAN

The most striking failure of the Pakistani state to pursue a viable language policy that met immediate resistance from the Bengalis. Despite protests, they refused to make Urdu the national language of East Pakistan.\(^{22}\) Worse still, thanks to the location and privilege in West Pakistan, the Bengali language was systematically discriminated against in every conceivable form. To compound matters, most foreigners in West Pakistan, and the largest share of those bussed there (Jahan 1972). Some states experienced widespread violence. Socioeconomic disparities will bolster the macroeconomic level in 1969–1970, Pakistan was 61 percent higher than in East Pakistan, and the social contrast was equally vivid. East Pakistan had 7,600 physicians, while West Pakistan had 12,400. Similar disparities existed in the other sectors. Between 1947 and 1969, the population of Pakistan only 5 percent of the arm force, and 20 percent of the province. Matters were no better in

\(^{21}\) For a nuanced discussion of the military’s partisan involvement in the conflict in Sindh see Ahmed (1996).

\(^{22}\) For a detailed discussion of the evolution of nationalism see (1996).
local Sindhis came to deeply resent the influx of immigrants. Their reaction was intrinsic xenophobia. Instead, it could be an anxiety about competition for scarce public goods (Khan 2002). In the aftermath of partition, the province, resulting in much internecine conflict, coalesced around ethnic identities. These often resorted to strong-arm votes, and rally supporters, acting as general arbiters and enforcing party policies at particular junctures. Many parties and organizations involved in these conflicts, thereby fueled further tensions and competitions.

Pakistan had developed its own sense of identity and had emerged as a separate entity in 1947 in response to British colonial rule. Desh, however, quickly yielded to the military, and many Sindhis supported the new state, the massive migration of Muhajirs from the Indian subcontinent to the province. In the face of Punjabis in the military and the dominance of the military, the wave of the necessity to push for provincial autonomy into early protest movements against the military. Desh and the resignation of General Zia-ul-Haq to become president of a truncated Pakistan, successfully mobilized the population. At the level and defended the interests of the people's agenda, for a time, undercut the military. However, after General Zia-ul-Haq's death, the population protested the dominance of the military, but General Zia had successfully conspired to use the Mutthahida Qaumi Movement (The United National Movement, hereafter MQM), and encouraged the rise of Islamist militancy, to increase insecurity in Karachi, the multiethnic capital of Sindh and Pakistan's largest city. The ethnic strife in the major port became emblematic of the country's inability to achieve national unity.

**THE BREAKUP OF PAKISTAN**

The most striking failure of the Pakistani state, however, lay in its inability to pursue a viable language policy that would accommodate the legitimate demands of more than 50 percent of its population, the Bengalis of East Pakistan. As early as 1948, Jinnah, in an attempt to forge a common national identity, chose to adopt Urdu as the national language of Pakistan (Oldenburg 1985). The choice of Urdu as the national language met immediate resistance from the Bengali-speaking population of East Pakistan. Despite protests, which were violently suppressed, the decision to make Urdu the national language of Pakistan was not rescinded (Ayres 2002). Worse still, thanks to the location of the bulk of political power and privilege in West Pakistan, the Bengalis of East Pakistan faced systematic discrimination in nearly every arena of government employment. To compound matters, most foreign investment was directed into West Pakistan, and the largest share of international assistance was disbursed there (Jahan 1972). Some statistical evidence on the prevailing socioeconomic disparities will bolster this argument. For example, at a macroeconomic level in 1969–1970, per capita income in West Pakistan was 61 percent higher than in East Pakistan (Jackson 1975). Other contrasts were equally vivid. East Pakistan, with a population of 75 million had 7,600 physicians, while West Pakistan with a population of 55 million had 12,400. Similar disparities were mirrored in the educational sector. Between 1947 and 1969, the number of colleges in West Pakistan grew from 40 to 271 while their number in East Pakistan went from 42 to 162. In the military realm, East Pakistani representation was equally lopsided. Even though East Pakistan had 54 percent of the total population of Pakistan, only 5 percent of the officer corps of the army, 15 percent of the air force, and 20 percent of the navy were drawn from the province. Matters were no better in the elite Civil Service of Pakistan

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**Footnote:** For a detailed discussion of the evolution of Pakistan's language policy see Rahman (1996).
This military crackdown led to the mass movement of refugees into India. The Indian political leadership was aware that Gandhi was thereby faced with both a crisis of conscience and a humanitarian challenge. India, which could not absorb close to 10 million refugees into its own congested economy, agreed to absorb them. However, the refugees’ presence in India soon became a crisis for India itself as they were already overburdened with the possibility of breaking up Pakistan. To counter this, the Indian political elite carefully embarked upon a media campaign designed to alert the major powers to the fact that the refugees were steadily drawing up war plans for an invasion of Pakistan. The Indian diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis were media-savvy, yet when the refugees failed, the major powers began to apply significant pressure on the military regime in Pakistan to come to terms. The crisis in East Pakistan, Indian forces managed to launch an attack on India in December 1971, and the war, which had begun with an effective military campaign in East Pakistan, lasted for three months. The war lasted for a mere twenty-two days, with India emerging victorious and culminating in the creation of Bangladesh.

The Pakistani political elite has yet to come to terms with the defeat of their military and political leadership. Despite the breakup of Pakistan in 1971, the Pakistan National Movement (PNM) continued to claim to the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir as part of Pakistan. Such a claim is rejected by India, which considers itself the legitimate successor state to the former Pakistan. The PNM’s leader, General Zia-ur-Rahman, attempted to use the PNM as a political instrument to influence the government of Pakistan. However, his efforts were unsuccessful, and he was later arrested and imprisoned.

Despite the breakup of Pakistan in 1971, the question of the status of Jammu and Kashmir remains unresolved. The United Nations has repeatedly called for a peaceful resolution of the dispute, but both India and Pakistan have been unwilling to compromise. The issue has become a major point of contention in their relations.

**JAMMU AND KASHMIR: THE ENDLESS DISPUTE**

Despite the breakup of Pakistan in 1971, the question of the status of Jammu and Kashmir remains unresolved. The United Nations has repeatedly called for a peaceful resolution of the dispute, but both India and Pakistan have been unwilling to compromise. The issue has become a major point of contention in their relations.
This military crackdown led to the flight of millions of refugees into India. The Indian political leadership under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was thereby faced with both a crisis and an opportunity. The crisis was primarily humanitarian. India, a poor country, could ill-afford to absorb close to 10 million refugees into its already overcrowded territory. However, the refugees' presence in India and the ongoing civil war within East Pakistan also presented India with an important opportunity: the possibility of breaking up Pakistan. To that end, after May 1971, India's political elite carefully embarked upon a politico-diplomatic strategy designed to alert the major powers to India's dilemma. Meanwhile, it steadily drew up war plans for an invasion of East Pakistan should these diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis and ensure a safe return of the refugees fail. When the major powers did little or nothing to exert significant pressure on the military regime in West Pakistan to end the ongoing crisis in East Pakistan, Indian forces managed to deftly provoke Pakistan to launch an attack on India in December 1971. Once the Pakistanis attacked, Indian forces, which had been carefully arrayed to carry out an effective military campaign in East Pakistan, put their plans into action. The war lasted for a mere twenty-two days, resulted in an overwhelming Indian victory, and culminated in the creation of Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{53}

The Pakistani political elite has yet to fully come to terms with the role of their military and political leadership in precipitating the crisis in East Pakistan that culminated in the genesis of Bangladesh. This was evident when General Pervez Musharraf, the Pakistani military dictator, visited Bangladesh in 2002. Instead of forthrightly accepting responsibility for the atrocities of the civil war of 1971 he merely expressed his "regrets" about them (Habib 2002).

JAMMU AND KASHMIR: THE ENDLESS WAR

Despite the breakup of Pakistan in 1971, all Pakistani regimes, regardless of political orientation or composition, have maintained an irredentist claim to the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (Dasgupta 2000; Hodson 1969). Such a claim is ironic because the collapse of the Pakistani state, albeit with Indian assistance, demonstrated the clear limits of Jinnah's "two-nation theory." Obviously, religion alone, as noted in the U.S. Department of State using the so-called dissent channel, which allows American diplomats to disassociate themselves from a policy that they feel that they cannot support. On the question of genocide in Bangladesh see Rummel (1998).

\textsuperscript{53} For a detailed account of the process of Indian involvement and the breakup of Pakistan see Ganguly (2001); also see Lieutenant-General Jacob (1997).
previously in this chapter, failed to cement the two wings of the state. Nevertheless, for the Pakistani political and military establishments, the status of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir represents the “unfinished business of partition.” The origins of this dispute are complex. They are rooted in the British policies of colonial withdrawal from the subcontinent in 1947. At the time of Independence and Partition, there were two classes of states in the British Indian Empire. In the first, the states of British India were under the direct rule of the British Crown. The second, so-called princely states were nominally independent but recognized the “paramountcy” of the British Crown. With the end of British rule, the doctrine of paramountcy drew to a close. Accordingly, Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, informed the rulers of the princely states that they had the choice of joining either India or Pakistan, depending upon their demographic composition and geographic location (Ramusack 1977). Muslim-majority states would join Pakistan, while those states that were predominantly non-Muslim would go to India. The option of independence was effectively ruled out to prevent the balkanization of the subcontinent. For the vast majority of the princely states the issue was quickly settled because of their location or demographic composition. The state of Kashmir posed a unique problem. It had a Muslim-majority population, a Hindu monarch, and shared borders with the two emergent states. The ruler of Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, had little interest in joining either India or Pakistan. He was loath to join India because he feared that the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who had definite socialist proclivities, would dismantle his vast land holdings. Simultaneously, as a Hindu monarch who had done little to improve the lot of his Muslim subjects, he was equally leery of casting his lot with Pakistan. Even after Independence and Partition he had refused to accede to either state.

Ultimately, a decision was forced upon him when a tribal rebellion broke out in early October 1947 in the western reaches of his state. Sensing an opportunity to wrest the state from Indian control, the Pakistani political establishment promptly moved to support the rebels. Faced with the imminent fall of his capital, Srinagar, to the Pakistan Army-assisted rebels, Maharaja Hari Singh appealed to New Delhi for assistance. Prime Minister Nehru agreed to provide military assistance if the ruler met two conditions: he would have to formally accede to

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6 For a discussion of Pakistan’s involvement in and support for separatist jihadi movements in Kashmir see Swami (2006).


India, and Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, the state’s leading secular organization in the state, the United Nations Security Council, would have to grant his independence (UN & Rose 1990). Once these two conditions were met, the UN would have to formally recognize the state, but not before they had succeeded in creating a state. On the advice of Lord Mountbatten, the United Nations Security Council as a body would never vote for the creation of Pakistan as a state. The moral claim of Pakistan to Kashmir from a work by Pakistan’s erstwhile prime minister, Ali Bhutto, who wrote:

If a Muslim majority can remain a part of India, India will not collapse. ...Pakistan is incomplete without a religious and ideological justification. It would be fatal if it were to be abandoned, the struggle to be tantamount to abandonment, which is a death sentence for Pakistan. (Bhutto 1969)

Their legal claim to the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir is derived from a contested corpus of evidence about how the state was formed at the time of independence. Pakistani apologists have consistently shown partiality toward the nascent Indian government in the valuation of the Kashmir dispute. The evidentiary basis for a divided Kashmir is murky (Lamb 1991).

Leaving aside the strength and veracity of the legal claims, it is a fact that a range of Pakistanis downward have waged three separate wars.
cemement the two wings of the state. Political and military establishments, the Indian and Kashmiri identities are complex, with no clear national boundaries. The two states were nominally independent but recognizably distinct. With the end of British rule, the region drew to a close. Accordingly, Lord Mountbatten recommended the rulers of the princely states, whether India or Pakistan, depending on their location and geographic location (Ramusack 2016). India would join Pakistan, while those states in India would go to India. The option of partition was thus to prevent the balkanization of the princely states and ensure that the issue was resolved peacefully.

The problem. It had a Muslim-majority defined by a shared border with the two emergent states. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, the rulers of the princely states, the first Kashmiri war came to a close in January 1948.

The Pakistani claim to Kashmir has two components. The first is moral, and the second legal. At a moral level, even though their co-religionists in East Pakistan chose not to remain within the domain of the Pakistani state, the Pakistani leadership still insists that Kashmir, owing to its predominantly Muslim population, needs to be incorporated into Pakistan. The origins of the claim, of course, must be traced back to the very rationale for the creation of Pakistan, namely, that it was a homeland for the Muslims of South Asia. The moral claim is best illustrated with a quotation from a work by Pakistan’s erstwhile leader Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who wrote:

If a Muslim majority can remain a part of India, then the raison d’être of Pakistan collapses. ...Pakistan is incomplete without Jammu and Kashmir both territorially and ideologically. It would be fatal if in sheer exhaustion or out of intimidation, Pakistan were to abandon the struggle, and a bad compromise would be tantamount to abandonment; which, in turn might lead to the collapse of Pakistan. (Bhutto 1969)

Their legal claim to the entire state of Kashmir is based upon a highly contested corpus of evidence about how the partition line was drawn at the time of independence. Pakistani apologists claim that Lord Mountbatten showed partiality toward the nascent Indian state, while Indian partisans claim otherwise. The evidentiary basis for either claim is convoluted and murky (Lamb 1991).

Leaving aside the strength and veracity of the competing moral and legal claims, it is a fact that a range of Pakistani regimes from 1947 onward have waged three separate wars (1947–1948, 1965, and 1999)
with India in attempts to wrest control over the original territory of the disputed state. Despite the expenditure of considerable amounts of blood and treasure they have not met with any success in this endeavor. India has tenaciously and steadfastly refused to concede any ground on the Kashmir question.  

Since 1989, Pakistan has been deeply involved in directing, supporting, and steering an ethno-religious insurgency in the Indian-controlled portion of the state. The origins of the insurgency were mostly indigenous and could be traced to the political malfeasances of a series of national governments in New Delhi that had sought to manipulate the internal politics of this state. Despite this support for the insurgency, which Pakistanis refer to as a “war of a thousand cuts,” the country is no closer to undermining India’s continuing grip over the state (Ganguly 2006). Even though thoughtful Pakistani commentators have deemed this quest to be futile, the Pakistani military, and a permanent civilian establishment, have evinced no interest in abandoning this quest. In part, the continuing preoccupation with Kashmir enables the Pakistani military to justify its substantial budgetary allocations and thereby helps maintain its preeminent position within Pakistan’s polity and society (Racine 2002).

Pakistan’s own relationship with the portion of Kashmir that it came to control as a consequence of seizing the territory in the 1947–1948 war is quite complex. Notionally, “Azad Kashmir” (“free Kashmir”) has a considerable degree of autonomy and its own prime minister. However, for all practical purposes it is under the firm control of the regime in Islamabad. The inhabitants of Azad Kashmir were granted the right of adult franchise only in 1970, and those of the adjacent Northern Areas as late as 1994. Under the aegis of the 1974 constitution of Pakistan, two executive bodies were created for Azad Kashmir. They were the Azad

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India’s intransigence on the Kashmir question can be traced to two concerns. At one level, India, as a constitutionally secular state, believes that a Muslim-majority state should be able to thrive under the aegis of a civic polity. At another, Indian elites are convinced that the secession of Kashmir could generate a powerful demonstration effect and bolster other incipient movements for secession. For a more extensive discussion of this problem see Ganguly (2001).

For evidence of Pakistani involvement in and support to the Kashmiri insurgents see Byman (2005).

Available at: http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,257107-2,00.html [accessed April 12, 2009].


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Pakistan government located in the province and the Azad Kashmir Council located in Murree—called for the prime minister of Pakistan to do justice to the six Azad Kashmir members elected by its people. Finally, a six-member panel was to be constituted to look into Kashmir Affairs. Practically all subjects of concern to the population of Azad Kashmir fell within the purview of the Northern Areas Council.

The situation in the Northern Areas Council in October 1994, the first party-based and elected body in the region, was a sorry state. The Supreme Court of Pakistan, however, had granted the right to legislate on local matters and local taxes. However, the overall structure remained unchanged.

Pakistan’s professed commitment to the Kashmiris notwithstanding, it has abetted political aspirations of those Kashmiris. The denial of political representation to the Kashmiris, the fear of Indian domination have emboldened any substantial attempt on the part of the non-Hindus politically.

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SUB-STATE NATIONALISM REDUX: BANGLADESH, PAKISTAN, KASHMIR

Despite the emergence of Bangladesh, Pakistanis, and Kashmiri elites seemed incapable of crafting a strategy to cope with the demands of substate groups for autonomy in Pakistan have been significant. Particularly the Biharis in Patna and the Muslim Madrasis in Sind have often felt that the national government does not care for their needs. These sentiments have period...
Kashmir government located in the provincial capital of Muzaffarabad and the Azad Kashmir Council located in Islamabad. The constitution called for the prime minister of Pakistan to preside over the council and would include six federal ministers, the prime minister of Azad Kashmir, six Azad Kashmir members elected by its assembly, and the Minister of Kashmir Affairs. Practically all subjects of any significance affecting the population of Azad Kashmir fell within the purview of this council.

The situation in the Northern Areas of Kashmir was not much better. In October 1994, the first party-based elections were allowed in Northern Areas, and this culminated in the creation of a 26-member elected body known as the Northern Areas Executive Council. This entity, however, was only granted advisory powers. For all practical purposes, political power remained vested in the hands of the Ministry of Kashmir and the Northern Areas Executive Affairs Council in Islamabad. In the aftermath of a Pakistan Supreme Court judgment in March 1999, the first Northern Areas Legislative Council was elected in 2000. It was granted the rights to legislate on local matters and to impose and collect local taxes. However, the overall structure of administration remained unchanged.33

Pakistan's professed commitment to the self-determination of all Kashmiris notwithstanding, it has abjectly failed to address the legitimate political aspirations of those Kashmiris within its formal jurisdiction. The denial of political representation, systematic repression, and the fear of Indian domination have enabled the Pakistani state to contain any substantial attempt on the part of the Kashmiris to assert themselves politically.34

SUB-STATE NATIONALISM REDUX: BALUCHISTAN

Despite the emergence of Bangladesh and the ongoing problem of Kashmir, Pakistani elites seemed incapable of fashioning an institutional strategy to cope with the demands of sub-state nationalism. The demands for autonomy in Pakistan have been simultaneously regional and ethnic. Particular ethnic groups are concentrated in specific regions, and they have often felt that the national government has neglected their interests and needs. These sentiments have periodically come to the fore and have

manifested in attempts to secure regional rights in the western province of Baluchistan. This region, which accounts for almost 40 percent of Pakistan’s total land area, is rich in coal and natural gas deposits. It is also the poorest region of the country and is bereft of agricultural resources. The aridity of much of the region renders it unsuitable for sustained, settled agriculture. During the period of unified Pakistan, both civilian and military regimes did little to promote economic development or provide representation to the native Baluchis in either governmental services or the military. In addition, the government exploited the rich resource base of the region (Jety 2004). Ironically, it was after the emergence of the first democratic regime in Pakistan, that of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, that one saw the emergence of a violent Baluch nationalism. The Baluch resorted to violence against the Bhutto regime primarily because of the dismissal of an elected local government on tenuous grounds.

The regime’s response was nothing short of harsh. In the wake of East Pakistan’s secession, neither the Pakistani political elite nor the Pakistani military were inclined to permit the growth of yet another separatist movement. Consequently, they resorted to rather brutal military tactics to suppress the Baluch insurgency. In the East Pakistan case, the military establishment in Islamabad had faced two important handicaps. They could not fly over Indian territory, and they also had to deal with the military involvement of a far more powerful neighbor. In the Baluch case, there were no serious external supporters, and the geographic contiguity facilitated military logistics. Ironically, the military regime of General Zia-ul-Haq, while unwilling to countenance the emergence of any representative institutions in Baluchistan, nevertheless adopted a policy of co-optation and conciliation. To this end he released large numbers of Baluch insurgents and political leaders who had been incarcerated under Bhutto.

In the aftermath of General Zia’s regime the Baluch movement started to wane. However, in recent years it has shown signs of recrudescence. The regime of General Pervez Musharraf opted to pursue the same coercive strategy that had characterized the Bhutto regime. In its attempt to quell an incipient insurgency in the region, Pakistani forces killed Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, a former chief minister of Baluchistan. In the wake of his killing a spate of violence ensued to which the Musharraf regime responded with further repression.35

The regional rights in the western province which accounts for almost 40 percent of Pakistan in coal and natural gas deposits. It is also rich in agricultural resources, an renders it unsuitable for sustained, set- 

A problem of unified Pakistan, both civilian and military personnel, economic development or provide such services as governmental services or government exploited the rich resource base traditionally, it was after the emergence of the Atif, that of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, that of a violent Baluch nationalism. The against the Bhutto regime primarily because the central government was on tenuous grounds.

Nothing short of harsh. In the wake of East Pakistan political elite nor the Pakistani Army the growth of yet another separatist is the military mission. The cases, the military and faced two important handicaps. The story, and they also had to deal with the more powerful neighbor. In the Baluch case, supporters, and the geographic contiguity. 

Ironically, the military regime of General Zia has shown signs of recrudescence. Musharraf opted to pursue the same coerced the Bhutto regime. In its attempt to make the region, Pakistani forces killed Nawab Sadiq Sahir, minister of Baluchistan. In the wake of this, the Musharraf regime..

In subsequent years, thanks to significant military recruitment from the province and increased economic integration into the larger polity, some of the regional grievances subsided. However, demands for regional autonomy persisted because of the failure of the national government to promote significant economic development. One of the ongoing issues remains the issue of the proper share of royalties from hydroelectric power resources (Kukreja 2003). A related issue remains the opposition to the construction of the Kalabagh Dam on the Indus River. According to local activists opposed to the construction of the dam, the principal beneficiaries of this project would not be the inhabitants of the province but those of the Punjab.

36 Two excellent journalistic accounts of the American efforts tackle the Al Qaeda as well as America’s ambivalent relationship with the Taliban? Coll (2004) and Wright (2006).

37 For some historical background see Eland (1981).

38 For an extraordinary ethnographic account of Khan and his Khudai Khidmatgar movement, see Baneriee (2000).

39 I am grateful to Azil Shah of the Department of Political Science, Columbia University, for bringing the contentious issue of the Kalabagh Dam to my attention.
In the February 2008 elections, the Awami National Party managed to successfully rout its opponents and won thirty-one out of a possible ninety-six seats in the provincial assembly. As the party with a plurality of seats it managed to stake a successful claim to the chief ministership of the province, a goal that had eluded it for the past sixty years. With a regional party now at the helm and with the restoration of democracy at the national level, the NWFP had hoped to secure a more equitable distribution of resources.

Unfortunately, two factors have vitiated such prospects for the foreseeable future. The country’s crude, inept, and harsh counterinsurgency strategy that is directed against an infestation of the Taliban forces in parts of the NWFP, most notably the Swat Valley, has alienated significant segments of the local population. Worse still, the Taliban have managed to gain ground in the Swat Valley through an amalgam of vicious tactics and the exploitation of the limitations of the flawed counterinsurgency efforts.40

A FISSURED NATION AND STATE

There is little question that after sixty years of its independent existence, an identification among the elites with the Pakistani state has emerged. In part, this elite nationalism relies upon a common hostility toward India to promote a sense of national solidarity. Yet beyond this perception of difference it is unclear what else the vast majority of Pakistanis can turn to as sources of national identification. Obviously, for a certain segment of the population, a return to some pristine variant of Islam as the basis of nation building remains the preferred alternative. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, key doctrinal differences remain among the Sunnis, Shia, and of course, the small but beleaguered Ahmadiyya community. These differences, in and of themselves, are not the sources of conflict. However, the tenuous legitimacy of various regimes, whether civilian or military, has often provided an important temptation to exploit these differences for short-term political ends thereby resulting in periodic outbursts of violence, and, in turn widening and sharpening the existing fault lines.

The return of viable representative institutions in Pakistan might provide an arena for the airing of divergent views about the country’s national identity and questions of the status of sectarian minorities, sub-state nations, and regional rights. Whether or not Pakistan will make such a transition to democracy remains an open question, even such a transition would not necessarily mean that these long-standing and vexing questions would be deeply embedded in Pakistan’s political life.

The military, thanks to its long history of managing to entrenched itself as a political order. With each successive regime, the military has perhaps most dramatically under the military’s control. Accordingly, even if the military nominally still remain an organization that is a state entity, it will not permit other institutions, particularly the military, to challenge its dominance. It is able to do so because the competing institutions within the polity, particularly those that are part of the political and social institutions within the country have, for all intents and purposes, been subdued to the military. Second, the military, Ayesha Siddiqua, has painstakingly managed to extend its reach across society (Siddiqua 2007).41 Any nascent civil society task as it seeks to roll back the spread of military influence.

Consequently, for the foreseeable future, the military will remain subject to intense scrutiny from international, and ethnic contestation. Such crises occur in institutional arenas. Given the weaknesses and groups repose little faith in military interventions, which are fraught with violence, and, in turn widening and sharpening the existing fault lines.

The return of viable representative institutions in Pakistan might provide an arena for the airing of divergent views about the country’s national identity and questions of the status of sectarian minorities, sub-state nations, and regional rights. Whether or not Pakistan will make such a transition to democracy remains an open question, even such a transition would not necessarily mean that these long-standing and vexing questions would be deeply embedded in Pakistan’s political life.

In the wake of the February 18, 2008 elections, a legitimately elected civilian regime has another opportunity to resuscitate the country’s political institutions. Simultaneously, the country is not quick to succumb to internal political logics, and policymakers will have to plan accordingly.


such a transition to democracy remains a fraught question. More to the point, even such a transition would not guarantee a prompt focus on these long-standing and vexing questions because they have become so deeply embedded in Pakistan’s political culture.

The military, thanks to its long history of interventions and rule, has now managed to entrench itself as a central component of the Pakistani political order. With each successive involvement, its role has expanded, perhaps most dramatically under the rule of General Pervez Musharraf. Accordingly, even if the military nominally returns to the barracks, it will still remain an organization that is primus inter pares. As a corporate entity, it will not permit other institutions to assert themselves without limits that it deems tolerable. It is able to exercise such control over other competing institutions within the polity for two compelling reasons. First, despite the recent assertiveness of the Pakistani Supreme Court, virtually all institutions within the country have been either rendered anemic or are subservient to the military. Second, as an able Pakistani political scientist, Ayesha Siddiqa, has painstakingly documented, the military has managed to expand its reach across every sector of Pakistan’s state and society (Siddiqa 2007). Any nascent civilian regime will face a Sisyphean task as it seeks to roll back the spread of military influence in Pakistan.

Consequently, for the foreseeable future Pakistan’s nationalist enterprise will remain subject to intense sub-state nationalist, regional, sectarian, and ethnic contestation. Such contestation will not be confined to institutional arenas. Given the weakness of formal institutions, individuals and groups repose little faith in them, and so they resort to social movements, which are fraught with the potential for conflict and frequently lurch toward violence. Whether the fragile institutions of the Pakistani polity can still manage to contain these differences and prevent them from erupting into large-scale violence is a question that both analysts and policymakers will have to ponder.

In the wake of the February 18, 2008 elections and the emergence of a legitimately elected civilian regime, the Pakistan polity may yet have another opportunity to resuscitate a number of its nearly moribund civilian institutions. Simultaneously, if the civilian government does not quickly succumb to internal political bickering and also avoid the temptations to raid the exchequer, it may be able over time to assert

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41 For the decline of political institutions and the growth of the military’s influence into civilian sectors see Kukreja (2003).
some semblance of authority over the military. The past performance of a range of civilian regimes does not offer substantial hope that they will be able to set aside petty partisan differences, avoid fiscal malfeasance, and insist upon the supremacy of elected civilian authority. However, after the rampant abuse of political power under General Musharraf’s military dictatorship after the coup of October 1999, it is possible that previously feckless politicians may finally evince some interest in restoring the autonomy, probity, and efficacy of Pakistan’s civilian institutions. Only through the reconstruction and eventual expansion of viable representative institutions can Pakistani polity begin to address the deep ethnic and regional fissures that have threatened its viability.

In *Multicultural Odysseys*, Will Kymlicka shows the way North America and western Europe and central Europe and Africa and Asia have come to see themselves not as nation-states, but as federations of nation states. Other states have rejected autonomously – the political claims of minority nations, for a variety of reasons – the legal strategies which empowered minority ethnic communities to exercise political power, and the threat of regional violence and social disintegration would disappear as a result of more equal political representation. Sri Lanka is one of the many examples.

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Constitutional Politics and Crisis

Sujit Choudhry