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## **A Democracy That Could Have Been: Pakistan's Military Rule and Who is to Blame?**

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**A Democracy That Could Have Been: Pakistan's Military Rule and Who is to Blame?**

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*Nations are born in the hearts of poets, they prosper and die in the hands of politicians.*

- *Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal*

## Introduction

On August 14th-15th 1947, the crown jewel of the British Empire was finally given their right to self-determination. After a struggle for independence that collectively lasted almost four decades, British India was cleaved in two – India and Pakistan. This separation was ostensibly caused by differing political visions between a large block of Muslims and a cross regional amalgam of Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, and Christians. Pakistan’s ideological basis is captured in the ‘two-nation theory’, first formulated by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, which outlines how there had always been two Indias; a Hindu India and a Muslim India, both of which deserved their own state. India and Pakistan were born out of one state under the same circumstances, but India has remained a stable democracy while Pakistan descended into a military dictatorship within a decade of independence. This paper presents an argument to explain the dominant nature of the Pakistani military which has orchestrated several coups since 1958. It argues that the post-independence Pakistani state was fragile, and traces the origins of its fragility back to the political party that inherited the state – the All India Muslim League.

## Chapter 1: Literature Review

Several scholars have attempted to explain the different regime trajectories that India and Pakistan took after the partition and the following section will explore some of the explanations offered by the current literature.

### *Civil-Military Explanations*

In his book, *Army and Nation*, Steven Wilkinson (2015) brings a fresh perspective explaining the regime divergence of India and Pakistan. However, the focal point of his analysis is largely India. Emphasising the role of ethnicity in the military, Wilkinson (2015) explains that despite inheriting an ethnically imbalanced army, a kind that many scholars assert is problematic for democratisation, India overcame those hinderances and “has had uninterrupted civilian rule since independence” (p. 324). He explains three main reasons why India was able to sustain her democratic nature: the broad and federal nature of the Congress party and its decision to institutionalise equality, India’s colonial inheritance was better than Pakistan’s, and lastly, India took several coup-proofing measures to control her military that Pakistan did not (p. 325).

The Pakistani army had a much greater ethnic imbalance which was a direct consequence of the British only recruiting certain ‘martial classes’. However, post-colonial Pakistan also made no effort to rectify the largely Punjabi composition of the military. Due to the overrepresentation of not just the Punjabis but West Pakistan as a whole in the military and political institutions, the region of Bengal (or East Pakistan) was systematically excluded from the officer corps (p. 335). However, Bengal represented over 50% of the population of Pakistan, yet they had to pay for a military that they were excluded from and saw the imposition of Urdu – a language not native to them – as the official language of the state. This led to some resentment amongst the largest ethnic group in the country – resentment that would eventually lead to the creation of the sovereign state of Bangladesh in 1971. It should be noted that Wilkinson offers the degree of party institutionalisation as another factor that explains the divergence but distinguishes his research from Maya Tudor’s (2013) by claiming a relationship between party institutionalisation/party strength and the civil-military relations that emerged after 1947 (p. 33).

Another scholar of military politics, Zoltan Barany (2012), asserts that the patterns of post-colonial politics in India and Pakistan had already been set “by the end of the first postcolonial decade” (p. 245). He states that the roots of their civil-military relations lie in the partition and the period immediately after, and that the colonial legacy had a profound impact on the regime trajectories in the Indian Subcontinent. Barany (2012) further outlines the colonial legacy of the British Indian Army that was inherited by India and Pakistan (pp. 246-250) but asserts that the disproportionate inheritance that Pakistan received during the partition, in terms of resources and assets, negatively affected the state (pp. 250-253).

However, Barany’s biggest argument is that democratic consolidation is difficult if the military elites are not themselves committed to democratic values and if they are not subordinated to democratically elected civilians (p. 3). After the partition, Pakistan’s only fully functioning institution was its military (Barany, 2012, p. 254), therefore it would not be much of a stretch to say that the Pakistani military adopted a weak state as opposed to the other way around. The military essentially functioned as a state-builder, and one that inherited British professionalism, where the military was strictly kept out of politics (pp. 248-255). If Barany’s claims about the need for a compliant military for democratic consolidation are correct, then Pakistan would have required a political elite that was committed to democratic values as a precondition to the military elite having democratic values. Of course, this does not mean that a military coup was an inevitability; Pakistan could have been an authoritarian or hybrid regime without bouts of military interventions. However, that is not how things happened and this thesis will attempt to explain why that is the case.

Concepts such as coup-proofing and military professionalism cannot be raised without briefly discussing the pioneers of civil military relations, Samuel Huntington and Morris Janowitz. While these two scholars are widely considered to embody opposing perspectives, where Huntington (1957) gave institutional control mechanisms and Janowitz (1964) presented sociological ones, they eventually converge. Briefly summarising their arguments – Huntington (1957) in his ground-breaking book, *The Soldier and the State*, presents the idea of ‘objective control’ which will simultaneously maximise external security and enhance civilian control.

For Huntington (1957), military professionalism was the key to objective control, ensuring that the military remains in the barracks. If the military is given internal control then norms of professionalism will develop organically and will lead to voluntary subordination, ensuring that the military remains apolitical. The Huntingtonian dilemma, however, is how does one ensure military effectiveness if there are such strict distinctions between the civil-

military spheres? Finer criticised this approach by stating that Huntington essentially states that a military that accepts civilian subordination will not reject it (Feaver, 1996). Huntington also said that civil-military relations are structured by the nature of an external threat and the dominant social ideology.

Morris Janowitz (1964) presented a competing analysis by arguing that a certain degree of politicisation in the military is an inevitability but pragmatic professionalism is essential for a democratic army. By claiming that military elites are usually conservatives, societal values need to be amalgamated into the military through conscription, as a way of bringing the army closer to the society it is supposed to protect.

While both these scholars offer different control mechanisms, there is some convergence in their arguments as they both believe that professionalism is the key mechanism of control. Coming back to the case study for this thesis, the Pakistani military can, to a large extent, be considered a highly professional institution. Resembling the Huntingtonian model of professionalism, the Pakistani military inherited this from the British Indian Army, where a strict separation between politics and the military was maintained (Barany, 2012, p. 248-250). In the British Indian Army, politics was considered a taboo subject to discuss and there existed a physical gap between the military cantonment and the civilians (Nawaz, 2008, pp. 16-19). The divide continued to exist even after the partition where each side functioned with their own social systems, worldviews and different preferences on national issues (Nawaz, 2008, p. 16).

### *Elite driven Explanations*

Ayesha Jalal (1985b) drew up a non-conformist and influential analysis about the role of the President of the All-India Muslim League, M.A. Jinnah, during the run-up to the partition. In her book – *The Sole Spokesman*– Jalal asserts that Jinnah was a self-declared representative of all Muslims in British India, a statement which in reality was not true (p. xv). There was something essentialising about the category of ‘Muslims’ – there are regional, economic and cultural cleavages within this large classification. Despite his greatest efforts, Jinnah was unable to unify all of India’s Muslims (Jalal, 1985b, p. 33). This brings Jalal to ask an important question, how did Pakistan become a material reality when it “*fitted the interests of most Muslims so poorly?*” (p. 4). Jalal asserts that Jinnah in fact never wanted the partition, it was the Indian National Congress – a political party that led the Indian independence movement – that insisted on it. However, the forces Jinnah rolled into motion could no longer be stopped and he ended up with a kind of Pakistan he was once staunchly against (p. 262). In an attempt

to truly be the sole spokesperson, Jinnah had to consolidate and harmonise all the demands of a very splintered community of Muslim aristocrats, by preaching the idea of a metaphysical Pakistan.

Maya Tudor (2013) explains that part of the reason why the League was so fractionalised with a minimal intra-party organisational structure is that Jinnah was unable to break through the deadlock that was caused by opposing interests. For example, Punjabi landowning Muslims wanted to maintain their power and therefore preferred a weak federal government, while in the United Provinces, Muslims preferred a strong federal government (p. 88). In her book – *The Promise of Power* – Tudor (2013) further analyses the role that class interests and political parties played in pre-independence British India. She claims that the struggle for representation and desire for upward social mobility (and the fear of tumbling down social ranks) had a significant affect on the regime trajectories in the post-colonial states of India and Pakistan (p. 4).

Pre-independence domestic politics were dominated by three major players– the colonial administration, the Indian National Congress, and the All-India Muslim League. The Indian National Congress was an organisation that was founded by urban, English educated individuals who wanted more representative elected bodies, and later went on to become the architect of the Indian independence movement. The Muslim League was a party that was founded by landowning Muslims looking to oppose the Congress and went on to lead the Pakistani independence movement. The Congress was an umbrella organisation that united many ideologically divergent groups; from socialists to *Gandhites*. It was an inclusive organisation, dominated by the urban, educated, middle-class elite, with a highly robust and democratic organisation (pp. 4-6). The Muslim League, on the other hand, was intrinsically an exclusive organisation dominated by the landed-aristocratic elite, whose only political agenda– it seemed like– was opposition to the Congress (pp. 4-6). Tudor’s main argument is that the nature of the internal party organisation of the Congress and the League, as well as the extent to which their values and beliefs were institutionalised are the dominant variables that explain this divergence (p. 7). Therefore, she attributes India’s democracy to the role that the Indian National Congress played before the partition and attributes Pakistan’s authoritarian nature to the Muslim League.

## Chapter 2: Methodology & Research Design

Max Weber famously proclaimed that a state is an organisation that “claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence within a given territory” (Dusza, 1989). However, Pakistan is an entity where the military inherited a fragile state, and effectively progressed to become the most efficient and well organised institution in the country. What this means is that the Pakistani army is unrivalled in its monopoly over the use of violence (Fair, 2014), which has had severe consequences for Pakistan’s democratic aspirations. Meanwhile on the other side of the border, India managed to establish a strong civilian apparatus while ensuring that the military remains compliant to it. The objective of this paper is to explain why the Pakistani army became such a dominant institution in the country, and the answer will be unfolded by exploring what happened in British India

Pakistan was chosen as a case partially due to the personal interest of the author, but otherwise because it was one of the states that emerged out of British India but went in a diametrically opposite direction. India has sustained its democracy since 1947, with an aberration from 1975 to 1977. Wherein, as the result of an internal emergency declared by the President on India on the Prime Minister’s (PM) behest, the PM ruled the nation by decree. Whereas, Pakistan began to experiment with democracy only towards the late 1960s (Cohen, 2004, p. 54). What is interesting is that the Pakistani army created after the partition was a highly organised and professional institution, and as mentioned in the previous section, a professional army in Huntington’s terms should not have the incentives to engage in a military coup. Defying the logic that Huntington and Weber embodied in their definitions of professionalism and a state respectively, Pakistan’s army orchestrated the first of many military coups to come in 1958. All subsequent coups had similar patterns – the army chief overruns the state and suspends the constitution, which is followed by a Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) and dissolution of the parliament. The judiciary then attempts to legitimise the coup using the *Doctrine of Necessity*, which allows the judiciary to declare the coup to be in the interest of the state and public welfare (Fair, 2014, p. 121; Nawaz, 2008, p. xxix)

Interestingly, this implies that the military indeed has attempted to govern under the façade of a democracy, even though Pakistan was never a fully democratic state (Fair, 2014). Several scholars claim that the military coup of 1958 led to the demise of democracy, but in reality, democratic elements were already severely lacking. So, while the military was the catalyst, the judiciary acted as the facilitator to bring about regime change (Nawaz, 2008).

Another element that makes Pakistan an interesting case is its seemingly homogenous nature. Indeed, at face value, Pakistan may appear to be a state with a singular, homogenous nation, something that Jinnah himself propagated, but this is actually a case of essentialism. Muslim India was an amalgamation of several distinct ethnic groups – Pashtuns, Balochis, Punjabis, Bengalis, Sindhis, Kashmiris, Sairakis, Muhajirs, etc., with Islam as their lowest common denominator. Pakistan became a state that bundled these ethnicities into one Punjabi dominated centralised state (Jalal, 1985b, p. 3; Tudor, 2013, p. 33). This paper will touch upon this to explain how Jinnah was able to consolidate divergent interests within the Muslim community and how this process had severe consequences for the state that was subsequently conceived.

This thesis will attempt to answer the following question, *what factors can explain the dominance of the Pakistani Army?* The key focus of the analysis will be the role that the elite played in British India before independence and during the partition. The Congress was founded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as an organisation that wanted the colonial administration in the British India to be more representative and native. The Congress was fundamentally dedicated to democracy and maintaining national unity (Nehru, 1946, p. 388). However, this attempt at gaining social mobility was considered threatening by the Muslim community who believed that, if and when India gained independence, the state would become a tyranny of Hindus. In an attempt to counter-balance this, the All-India Muslim League was founded in 1906 as an avenue for Muslims to gain representation, initially only through separate electorates (Jalal, 1985b, p. 7).

Unlike the Congress, the League was dominated by landowning Muslims who represented a very narrow range of interests. It is important to note that these two organisations were initially part of the Indian independence movement together and it was not until 1940, that the intention to create a separate state for Indian Muslims was declared by Jinnah (Jalal, 1985b, p. 4). The aristocratic elite that dominated the League had very little incentives to institutionalise democratic values, making it “highly unlikely that a country governed by such a movement would be democratic” (Tudor, 2013, p. 4). The Pakistani independence movement had little to no democratic aspirations for post-colonial Pakistan, while, the Indian independence movement was incredibly committed to democracy, and these values were firmly reiterated by its democratic military (Barany, 2012, p. 272).

This paper expects to find a correlation between the role that the independence movements/political parties played in British India and the subsequent dominance of the

Pakistani army. The argument partially builds on Tudors (2013) claims that the level of party institutionalisation explains the divergence in regime trajectories after the partition. This paper will attempt to go a step further and argue that not only did the poor party institutionalisation result in a weak state in Pakistan, but a weak state in which the military held the monopoly over coercion from early on. It was entirely possible for Pakistan to have become a country where the state and the military were weak, however, that is not what happened. Using process tracing, this thesis will engage with historical accounts of the time period leading up to and including the partition of India in 1947. Process tracing allows for an in-depth, qualitative and sequential analysis of critical junctures in history. The paper will begin with an analysis of domestic politics in British India and will converge towards the case of Pakistan as it progresses.

## Chapter 3 : Politics in British India

### *The 1857 Rebellion and the Beginning of the Independence Movements*

The year 1857 is etched in the collective memories of South Asians, a year instantly associated with an event infamously known as the Indian Mutiny or alternatively the First Independence War. What started as a revolt of sepoys –both Hindus and Muslims– against the British East India Company in the town of Meerut, quickly spread throughout most of the United Provinces (today’s Uttar Pradesh) to eventually reach the capital of Delhi (Cohen, 1971 p. 36). The revolt was a turning point in Indian history and had several political and military consequences. Politically, this triggered the transfer of sovereignty of British India from the East India Company to the British Crown, with Queen Victoria eventually being proclaimed the ‘Empress of India’ in 1876 (Dalrymple, 2006). For a military that saw its own officers revolt against them, it triggered a reorganisation of the composition of the regiments. In order to prevent another revolt the British began recruiting solely from classes they considered to be brave and superior fighters or what they classified as the ‘martial classes’ (Cohen, 1971; Nawaz, 2008).

After 1857, the British ceased recruitment of Bengali Muslims and troops from the Hindi heartland, and instead increased recruitment from Western Punjab and the North-Western Frontier Province (N.W.F.P) (Cohen, 1971; Tudor, 2013; Wilkinson, 2015). The British established fixed battalions wherein each regiment consisted of multiple ethnically homogenous class units, which decreased the risk of a revolt (Wilkinson, 2015, p. 90). They also *balanced outside the army* by always keeping British and Gurkha (Nepali) regiments close to large concentrations of Indian troops (Wilkinson, 2015). This policy of balancing was deliberately deployed in the army with the intention of preventing the rise of sentiments of national unity, and communalism and tribal loyalties were actively encouraged (Nehru, 1946,p 330). Additionally, since most of the recruitment was done from two regions – Punjab and N.W.F.P – they received far greater benefits and developmental projects than the rest of the country, resulting in widespread inequalities between the regions (Wilkinson, 2015).

The rebellion can also be considered as the beginning of a new wave of nationalism amongst Indians. In 1858, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (2000) argued with the British that one of the reasons the rebellion occurred was that the native population was excluded from the Legislative Council. The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 by an urban elite who had gone through the English education system, and lobbied the government for more native

representation in the Legislative Councils and employment in the civil service (Krishna, 1966; Tudor, 2013). Though initially the Congress membership only included educated, urban, professionals, they eventually opened up to a larger constituency of people from different backgrounds (Tudor, 2013). The Indian Councils Act of 1892 which allowed for the election of local administrative bodies, opened up an avenue for the new middle class to further their influence (Tudor, 2013, p. 56). A large part of this English educated intelligentsia came from the province of Bengal and among them a large number of Hindus influenced the nationalist awakening of India (Azad, 1961; Nehru, 1946).

What followed was another attempt by the British to instrumentalise religion and weaken any possibility of national unity amongst Hindus and Muslims. Indeed, a large part of Bengal's population was Muslim; which led the colonial administration to partition Bengal with the intention of weakening the Hindus and orchestrating a religious divide in Bengal (Azad, 1961; Tudor, 2013).

The Congress had been pushing for democratic reforms which the colonial administration eventually conceded to, but these reforms were met with hostility by two constituencies – Muslims and the landowning aristocracy (Tudor, 2013). The landowning aristocracy wanted provincial autonomy and to maintain their relationship with the British on whom they greatly depended for patronage. In 1906, the All India Muslim League was founded in Dhaka (Dacca) with the intention of strengthening loyalty for the British Crown amongst Indian Muslims and to further advance Muslim claims for political power, partially by opposing the demand for independence that the Congress had declared (Azad, 1961, p. 96).

The League, dominated by Muslims from the United Provinces (U.P), who were a minority in their province and therefore looked for avenues to further their influence, had exclusive membership reserved for aristocrats and rich educated people, and even set an income requirement (Tudor, 2013, p. 63). The League can be considered to have a loyalist and anti-democratic ideology as opposed to a pro-Muslim one (Tudor, 2013, p. 63-64). The Ripon reforms of 1882 had already established separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims at a municipal level, but the British administration expanded this to include Provincial assemblies in an attempt to appease the League through the 1909 Morley-Minto Reforms (Jalal, 1985b; Pardesi & Ganguly, 2010).

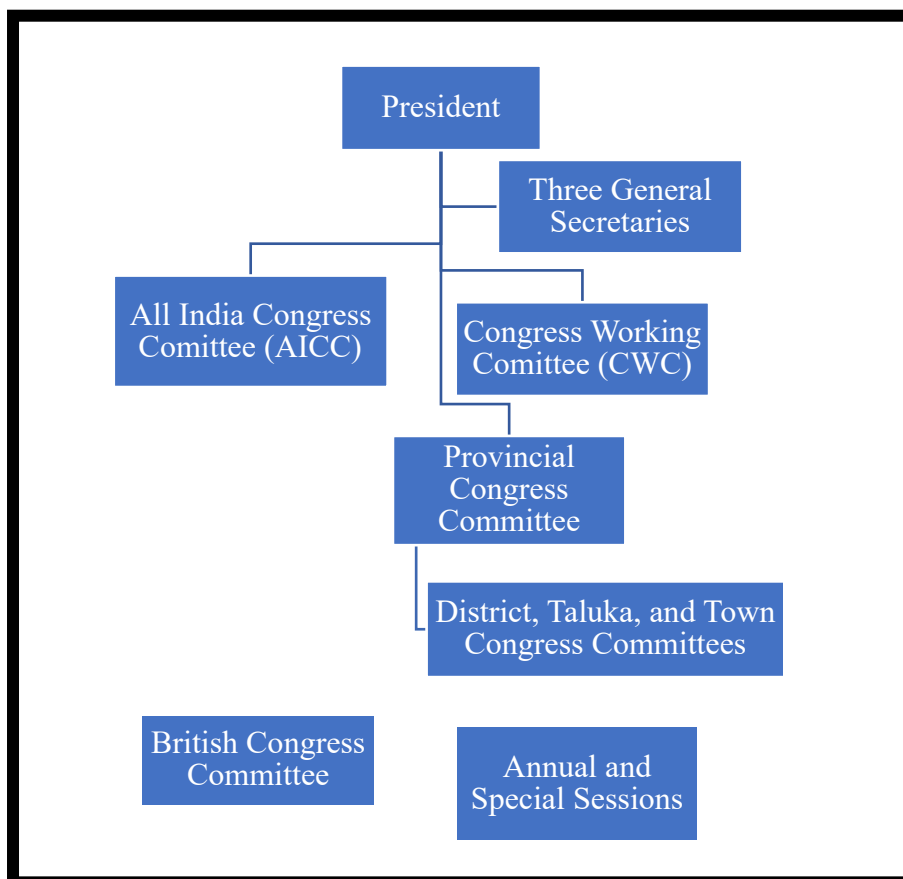
The British actively encouraged politics based on religious lines with the implicit intention of furthering the cause of the League, which they believed would weaken the Congress and its continued growth. Neither the League nor the Congress were initially established with the goal of independence; while the latter eventually leaned towards *purna*

*swaraj* or total independence in the aftermath of the partition of Bengal and the Great War , the former maintained its claim for more Muslim political influence. The partition of Bengal led to East Bengal becoming a Muslim majority province which the British believed would act to counterbalance the Congress.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this section are that two primary groups of elite interests were emerging; one was the urban and commercial class in the form of the Congress and the other was the League, representing feudal interests. At this point neither wanted independence, but the circumstances under which these organisations were established already indicates what kind of organisations they were going to develop into.

### *Party Organisation (1906-1931)*

*Figure 1: Organisational Structure of the Indian National Congress (Krishna, 1966, p. 414).*

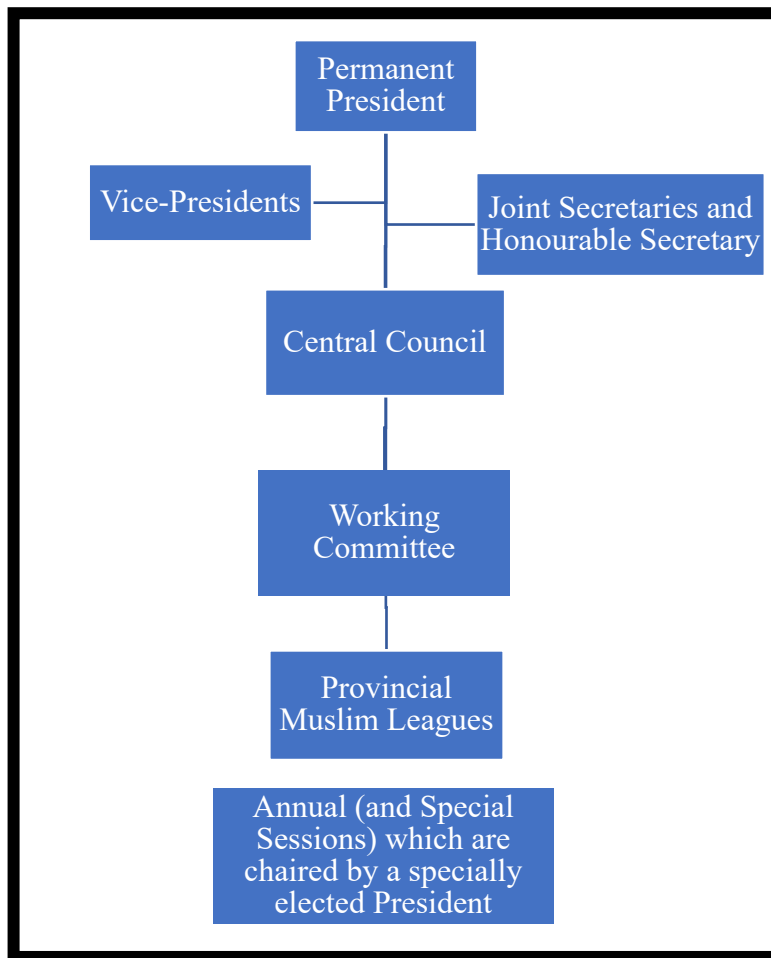


Many inferences can be drawn about the nature of the post-colonial states of India and Pakistan by looking into the organisational structure of the two parties that inherited the two states.

The Congress was quick to adopt an inclusive and mass political character. In the period after 1918, they were able to mobilise the masses by thoroughly penetrating vast areas of the subcontinent. Their 1920 constitution called for the organisation of the provincial committees along linguistic lines, which allowed the Congress to reach a broader constituency (Krishna, 1966). Looking at the illustration above of the Congress' organisational structure, it is clear that the party was incredibly robust. The functional equivalent of parliament, the AICC, was the most important organ which consisted of members who were elected by the provincial committees (Krishna, 1966). The CWC presided over the party by serving as the executive organ responsible for day-to-day decision making. The CWC was established by Mahatma Gandhi, who called for unanimity in decision making and accountability to the AICC. The ultimate authority for all policy related decisions was vested in the annual or ad hoc special sessions which were attended by delegates elected by all the committees (Krishna, 1966). Being an egalitarian and accessible organisation, the Congress, through its incredibly democratic structure, was able to instil these norms and values into its members.

Meanwhile, the Muslim League formulated their first constitution in 1910. The League was chaired by a President, who was elected at the annual session initially for a three year term, but an amendment reduced that to a one year term. However, he had a rather passive role in the organisation. The President was supported by Joint Secretaries, an Honourable Secretary, and Vice-Presidents, all of whom were elected at the annual session for a three year term. The executive organ of the party was the Central Council, a body of 40 members elected by the Provincial Leagues, in addition to the aforementioned office bearers. The members were elected from the provinces using proportional representation but access was restricted on the basis of education, financial condition and social status. The Working Committee was only established in 1931 and was elected by the Council and tasked with the implementation of the Council's resolutions. It had 21 members but eventually became inactive until 1937 due to splintering within the party. The provincial leagues were allowed to have their own constitutions which were subject to the Council's approval, but there was hardly any uniformity and eventually these leagues had bouts of inactivity with no growth (Afzal, 2013, pp. 32-62).

Figure 2: Organisational Structure of the All-India Muslim League (Afzal, 2013, pp. 32-62).



The difference between how these two organisations functioned was that the Congress, as a result of its structure, managed to create an environment where norms of representation were internalised. By including a diverse range of (competing) ideologies, the Congress spread its presence across a wide group of classes. Additionally, they were also present at every administrative level set up by the British (Manor, 1990). In contrast, while the League had a functioning party structure, they were unable to consolidate the Muslim constituency of British India. Partially because they still represented a very narrow range of feudal interests, and they were relatively more dominant only in the centre, because a whole game of provincial politics was at play. While the League and Jinnah constantly reiterated that they were the sole legitimate representatives of all Indian Muslims, the following section will explain that this was in fact from the truth, by looking at pre-independence provincial politics.

*Provincial Politics and “The Sole Spokesman” (1937 – 1946)*

As discussed earlier, Indian Muslims are not a homogenous community. Not only do they have ethno-linguistic differences but are also divided vertically along socio-economic lines. Both these differences were most prominent in the Muslim majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal. Before we delve into this section, it should be noted that the main focus of this section is to understand how and under what conditions the Muslim League operated at a provincial level to better understand the nature of post-colonial Pakistan that pursued.

While politics in British India may have been dominated by the Congress, there were several provincial parties that had a stronghold over their provincial electorate. The League was dominated by UP Muslims who were a minority in their own province, and therefore required the support of Bengal and Punjab to be able to successfully claim representation over all of India’s Muslims (Jalal, 1985b; Tudor, 2013). Indeed, if Jinnah was to be the sole representative of all Indian Muslims then he needed the legitimate mandate of a very divided Muslim Community.

The Government of India Act 1935 established provincial self-government in British India, a law that would go on to govern Pakistan until 1956 when they adopted their first constitution (Ayesha Jalal, 1985b; Newman, 1959). The Unionists— a secular feudal party— was the most dominant party in Punjab, whereas Bengal was predominantly in support of the Krishank Praja Party who lobbied for land reform, and the North Western Frontier Province supported the Congress (Jalal, 1985b, 35). The League had minimal presence in the Muslim majority provinces, and forming an electoral alliance with the provincial parties was tricky because in the latter, the oligarchs were dependent on a cross-communal electorate (Ganguly & Fair, 2013). The League needed the support of these provinces to gain momentum for the 1937 provincial elections but the deadlock between opposing factions within the Muslim community proved to be disastrous for the League, despite running a highly communal campaign (Ganguly & Fair, 2013; Tudor, 2013). Indeed, the League failed to win in any province—with the aforementioned provincial parties winning the popular mandate in their respective states – gaining only a few seats in the Muslim minority provinces (Ganguly & Fair, 2013). This indicates that the League was unable to generate the mass support it required in order to be deemed as a representative organisation.

However, this loss triggered Jinnah and the League to reassess and reorganise the party’s strategy. This turned out to be quite successful since they managed to win a sizeable

proportion of Muslim electorates in the General Elections (Central Legislature) of 1945 and the Provincial Elections of 1946. This was possible due to, as Tudor (2013) calls it, the League forging “coalitions of convenience” (p. 123) in Punjab and Bengal. The big win of the Congress in 1937 signalled to the Muslim electorate that an independent India might be one that is dominated by Hindus, or rather this was the rhetoric that the League projected. In the decade prior to the partition, religion had already started to dominate political discourse in British India and in 1940, when Jinnah first publicly propagated the idea of Pakistan, he purposely kept it vague and metaphysical so that formation of cross-regional coalitions would be less complicated (Ganguly & Fair, 2013). Indeed, Pakistan as an intangible entity allowed the Muslim elite to idealise Pakistan in a way that suited their preferences the most and the lack of a concrete definition meant that the fragile nature of Muslim unity would not be revealed (Jalal, 1985b; Tudor, 2013).

It was this vague conceptualisation of Pakistani nationalism that became the foundational basis of the League’s campaign in the run-up to the 1945-46 elections. Although they won over 75% of the total Muslim vote in India, the League’s grip over the Muslim majority provinces was fragile and the provincial leagues were still poorly, if at all, organised (Jalal, 1985b, p. 171). The League’s success in the elections cannot be attributed to their organisational efficiency according to Jalal (1985b), but to local leaders who nominally aligned themselves with the Muslim League (pp. 171-72)

Elections in Punjab were skewed in favour of the party that managed to secure the support of the landowners because they had a lot of socio-economic influence over their home districts. During the 1937 elections, they supported the Unionists and during the 1945-46 elections, the League had their support (Talbot, 2016). However, Jalal (1985b) asserts that the main reason that Unionists defected to the League was that the latter popularised a narrative of Islam being in danger (p. 139). Indeed, Jalal (1985b) argues that had Punjabis known that the Pakistan they were being preached would be one where the Punjab province is bifurcated, then perhaps they would have withdrawn their support from the League. As cited in Jalal (1985b), Glancy, the Governor of Punjab at the time even asserted that

*“an authoritative statement would 'at least provide the Unionist Party with a rallying cry against Pakistan - something on which the electors would definitely bite (p. 138).”*

Alas, although the League secured the most votes, the Unionists formed a post-electoral coalition with the Congress to form the Ministry in Punjab. Regardless, this gave Jinnah and the League the confidence and political capital they needed to represent Indian Muslims at the eventual constitutional negotiations with the British and the Congress.

In Bengal, Muslims had their own conceptualisation of Pakistan, one where they gained sovereignty as a nation-state that would comprise of Bengal and Assam. The Bengal Muslim League operated as an extension of the Krishank Praja Party, which in the past decade had virtually disappeared due to splintering (Ayesha Jalal, 1985b; Tudor, 2013). The Bengal Muslim League (BML) under the leadership of Abdul Hashim – a socialist who ousted the oligarchs from the provincial league leadership– was able to mobilise the League by linking it to districts and villages (Tudor, 2013). The League ended up winning a clear majority in the provincial government and went on to form the ministry. However, there was also significant animosity between the BML and the central party, due to the centralised and autocratic atmosphere that Jinnah had encouraged in the latter (Tudor, 2013). In addition to Bengal and Punjab, the League also secured a significant share of seats in the Sind Provincial Assembly – another Muslim majority province– but failed to gain representation in the North Western Frontier Province where the Muslim majority was the largest (Azad, 1961).

While Jinnah was able to secure the Muslim majority provinces and gain the political capital he needed, the foundations upon which these alliances were built were weak. Jinnah was able to succeed because he ran a highly communal and religious campaign, a campaign that he himself would have been opposed to at the beginning of the century. However, he was able to instrumentalise religion and Pakistani nationalism to gain more bargaining power opposite the Congress. The metaphysical conceptualisation of Pakistan provided him enough room to convince a cross-regional political elite that Pakistan would be whatever they imagined it to be, even though these imaginations were very contradictory to each other. The consequences of this elite consolidation of power will be discussed in the next chapter, as these would have long-lasting implications for the post-colonial state of Pakistan.

## Chapter 4: The Partition

### *Cabinet Mission Plan 1946*

The League's electoral successes acted as the stamp of approval for the idea of Pakistan, though what Pakistan was supposed to be was still unclear. In March 1946, London sent the Cabinet Mission who were tasked with delineating the constitutional framework of independent India (Azad, 1961; Ayesha Jalal, 1985b). While the Congress wanted to discuss independence first and then the communal question, the League insisted on accepting Pakistan first, even if just in principle, before discussing independence (Jalal, 1985b). Jinnah's vision for the subcontinent was essentially a loose confederation that would have separate constituent assemblies for Hindus and Muslims, operating under a central executive body which would only have jurisdiction over defence and foreign policy, and where Hindus and Muslims would have an equal status (Jalal, 1985b, p. 194).

The Muslim provinces were still in favour of a weak centre, even if that centre was governed by the Muslim League. The one thing most parties agreed on was that partitioning the provinces was not an acceptable option; Maulana Azad (1961), who was the President of the Congress at the time, suggested the idea of a united federation to the Cabinet Mission. This federation would give extensive jurisdiction to the provinces while the federal government would only decide on three matters: defence, foreign policy, and communications. This proposal was amended by the British to add a three-tier classification of all provinces, where one section each would consist of the Muslim provinces in the extreme East and West of the subcontinent and the third classification would be the remaining provinces (Azad, 1961; Jalal, 1990). The British believed that this would provide the minorities greater assurance. While Jinnah and the League did not agree to this plan initially, they eventually accepted that this was the best possible alternative to the communal problem. With this, Azad had been able to construct a deal that was most satisfactory to everyone, while also ensuring that India was not partitioned.

The League Council, the CWC and the AICC all voted in favour of the Cabinet Mission Plan, and a peaceful resolution was in sight. However, when Maulana Azad's term came to an end, Jawaharlal Nehru was elected as the Congress President, and after making an unfortunate statement to the press indicating that the Indian Constituent Assembly could modify the Cabinet Plan, the League and Jinnah began to reconsider the plan, since the Constituent

Assembly would have been dominated by the Congress (Azad, 1961, p. 134). Even though Nehru's statement was incorrect, the League Council eventually voted to reject the Cabinet Mission Plan and re-emphasised that a sovereign state of Pakistan was the only alternative left, and with that the hopes of a united India slowly diminished. The Congress was eventually invited to form the interim government in the same year, and all pleas requesting Jinnah to join the government were firmly declined. Maulana Azad (1961) believed that Jinnah had hoped that the League's rejection of the Plan would compel the British to reopen the discussion and, in that event, Jinnah would have been able to use Pakistan to gain further concessions, but discussions were not reopened.

### *Planning the Partition*

In the time period between the formation of the interim government in August 1946 and the partition in August 1947, British India saw several communal riots take place all over the country. It was in the backdrop of this that the planning of the partition was being undertaken. Jinnah's demand for an independent state of Pakistan had finally been accepted but neither Jinnah nor the Muslim provinces that were rallying behind Pakistani nationalism knew how the new state of Pakistan would be delineated. The British had initially set the date for the official transfer of power to happen in June 1948 but when Lord Mountbatten became the Viceroy of India, the British decided on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1947 to move up the date to August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1947 (Jalal, 1990).

This meant that the planning apparatus had a little over three months to figure out the boundary of the soon-to-be independent dominions of India and Pakistan. In addition to this, all assets and institutions also had to be divided between the two, these included the army, civil service, finances, etc. A committee consisting of Mountbatten and representatives from the League and Congress was set up to oversee the partition process (Jalal, 1990). Eventually when Western Punjab, Sind, and Eastern Bengal decided to join Pakistan, this committee was transformed into the Partition Council and additionally, the Radcliffe Commission was set up to draw the new frontiers of India and Pakistan (Jalal, 1990; Tudor, 2013). The Radcliffe Commission used the census to determine which districts were dominated by which religion, meaning that Muslim majority districts in Punjab and Bengal would join Pakistan, provided they were on contiguous land (Tudor, 2013).

Pakistan and India gained formal independence on August 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> respectively, but the commission only announced the new frontiers on August 17<sup>th</sup> (Tudor, 2013). This meant that at the birth of these two nations, people in Punjab and Bengal did not know what side of the border they were on; the result was that minorities on either side of the ‘border’ were now vulnerable and thus began not only the largest migration in history but also incredibly violent communal riots. It is important to explicitly clarify that the post-colonial state of Pakistan had two territories, one on the Eastern and one of the Western extreme of the former British India, and they were separated by about 3000 kilometres by the Union of India. The two sides were called West Pakistan and East Pakistan – West Pakistan consisted of a multitude of different ethnicities and East Pakistan was Bengali.

### *The State*

Since the centre of British India was New Delhi and the Congress was essentially inheriting the state administrative institutions of India, Pakistan was principally like a seceding state. All administrative infrastructure, physical and otherwise was in New Delhi, therefore Pakistan had to rely on the limited administrative experience of the League to guide the state building efforts (Jalal, 1990). All British Indian civil servants were free to decide which dominion they wanted to join, although most Muslims decided to serve Pakistan. Therefore, only 80 out of the 1400 civil servants of British India were in Pakistan (Cohen, 2004, p. 41). Though most, if not all of them were not from what became West Pakistan; the civil servants in the West were North Indians or Muhajirs from the United Provinces, and the ones in Bengal were from the Bengali bureaucratic outfit (Cohen, 2004, p. 41). North Indian Muslims were also more urban, educated, and experienced with the colonial bureaucracy, and not only did they come to dominate the Pakistani Civil Service but also the League leadership (Cohen, 2004).

The traditional Punjabi-Pashtun leadership nexus was eventually side-lined, but the interesting detail about Pakistan is that provincial loyalties trumped national ones and the political elite that were dominant in their respective provinces had a fixed electoral and support base (Cohen, 2004; Tudor, 2013). The only two figures that could unite all ‘Pakistanis’ were Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan and neither of them had a fixed constituency because they came from mainland India (Tudor, 2013). It was also decided that Urdu– the native language of the Muhajirs– would become the official language of Pakistan, despite the fact that over 50% of Pakistan’s population resided in East Pakistan and spoke Bengali (Cohen, 2004; Tudor, 2013).

Pakistan was governed under the Government of India Act 1935 until it formed its constitution, which occurred after several failed attempts at reaching a consensus in 1956—two years before the first military coup. After the partition, Jinnah decided to become the Governor-General of Pakistan while asking Mountbatten to remain the Governor-General of India, which he believed would give him more control over the Pakistani territory and over the division of the army (Jalal, 1985a, 1985b). This also gave Jinnah the power to dismiss the provincial governments and the Prime Minister; indeed, Jinnah dismissed the government of N.W.P.F.—still a Congress ministry from the previous elections (Jalal, 1985a; Tudor, 2013).

Tragedy struck when Jinnah, the man who divided one nation to unite another, passed away in 1948 and left a ‘state’ that was suffering from severe provincialism (Nawaz, 2008). Before his death, Jinnah had been unable to consolidate the different preferences of the provincial leagues, something his successor, Liaquat Ali Khan (who remained the Prime Minister) also struggled with (Nawaz, 2008). Ideologically, Jinnah envisioned Pakistan as a liberal state but after years of running a divisive narrative, this vision was hardly reflected in the League or amongst its leaders (Cohen, 2004). On the contrary, the Pakistani elite were not interested in democracy, as evidenced by the complete discord between the centre and the provinces over the power sharing arrangements within the constitution. Indeed, in the period between 1950 and 1956, provincial leagues rejected the proposed constitution several times due to disagreement on two contentious issues; division of power between the centre and the provinces and between East Pakistan and West Pakistan (Cohen, 2004; Nawaz, 2008; Tudor, 2013). Punjabis in West Pakistan were especially concerned about the possibility of Bengali domination in the parliament given the size of the latter’s population (Cohen, 2004). This was in essence a consequence of keeping Pakistan a metaphysical entity prior to the partition, because these cleavages were simply resurfacing but behind different borders.

What resulted was a state—without a Constitution to mandate the direct election of the head of the government, where provincial interests still dominated national interest, with a civil service that was essentially dominated by refugees from North India who were governing a land that had only recently become their own, and where half of the population lived on the other side of another country.

### *The Military*

The military that Pakistan adopted was weak in comparison to the new Indian military, with the division of assets having a 64:36 ratio in favour of India (Cohen, 1984, p. 7). Before we go any further, it is important to state that several scholars have argued that Pakistan's bad inheritance, the inability of the League to effectively coup-proof the military, and the continuation of the recruitment of martial classes (predominantly Punjabis) are all significant factors in explaining Pakistan's authoritarianism (Fair, 2014; Nawaz, 2008; Wilkinson, 2015).

While these explanations are incredibly convincing, military culture is an incomplete explanation of the first military coup (Staniland, 2008). Indeed, up until the first coup, the Indian and Pakistani militaries had a similar organisational inheritance, where all senior military officers— including General Ayub Khan who took over from the civilian regime during the 1958 coup— were either trained at the Indian Military Academy or at Sandhurst in England (Cohen, 1984). Therefore, the Pakistani military maintained the ethos and structure of the former British Indian Army, with a highly educated, disciplined, and efficient officer corps (Cohen, 1984, 2004). The Pakistani Army showed its vitality for the first time during the First Kashmir War in 1948, and even though Pakistan was not successful in their mission to incorporate Kashmir into their territory, they nonetheless made an impact (Nawaz, 2008).

Fragility had begun to seep in and the Pakistani state was struggling to govern. As cited in Cohen (2004), Allen McGrath argues that 28<sup>th</sup> October 1954 was the day 'democracy' died in Pakistan, when members of the Constituent Assembly were prohibited by the police from meeting to vote on the constitution on orders of the Governor-General. The Governor-General's decision was then legitimised by the judiciary (Cohen, 2004). The army was subsequently asked to aid the government with civilian tasks on several occasions, making Ayub Khan and others worry about the integrity and efficiency of the military if the civilians kept interfering (Cohen, 1984, pp. 49-50). In addition to this, not only was the centre struggling to sustain a stable coalition, but separatism was also on the rise in the provinces of Baluchistan and the N.W.F.P., with the Kashmir dispute still on the agenda (Newman, 1959). When the 1958 coup occurred, it was in fact Pakistan's President, General Mirza, who declared martial law, dismissing all elected assemblies and making Ayub Khan the Supreme Commander of the Armed forces, who also later became the President (Nawaz, 2008).

Indeed, the military believed that it was, initially unwillingly, enticed into the political sphere and forced to act to save Pakistan from state failure (Wilkinson, 2015). However, Ayub

Khan was not entirely new to the political sphere, having held the position of the Defence Minister earlier, but he was a general who was known to respect civilian supremacy (Wilcox, 1965). Perhaps it was his political aspirations that made him accept the martial law or General Mirza's belief that he would be able to consolidate power with Ayub Khan as his Chief Martial Law Administrator (Nawaz, 2008; Wilcox, 1965). In reality, however, both men saw each other as rivals, with Ayub Khan eventually exiling General Mirza to London (Wilcox, 1965). The actual coup was bloodless and not the result of a mass uprising or a revolution; although Ayub Khan did call it the "revolution of 1958", as he sought to build a strong and stable state (Fair, 2014; Wilcox, 1965). The military, during this and all subsequent coups also had this extraordinary tendency to keep up a façade of being legitimate and 'democratic', given that Pakistan's democratic aspirations had barely taken off. The judiciary justified nearly all military coups in Pakistan using the *Doctrine of Necessity* – for public and national welfare (Cohen, 2004; Nawaz, 2008).

Theoretically, the likelihood of future coups d'état increases if a state has a history of them. This is exactly what happened in Pakistan, where the military saw a crumbling state with three Prime Ministers between 1956 and 1958 (Nawaz, 2008) and was essentially invited to overthrow the civilian regime. When Ayub Khan became the President, the military saw that they could push their policies, and since they had more strategic training and education than their civilian counterparts, the military began to have a vested interest in maintaining their influence (Cohen, 2004). The 1958 coup opened the avenue and essentially became the prototype for all future coups. Therefore, while military culture is not a sufficient explanation of the first coup, it, along with the alternative explanations mentioned above, cumulatively explain why the military kept on intervening into politics.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

This paper has traced the story of the dominance of the Pakistani military to the origins of the Muslim League at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The League's feudal and intrinsically exclusive nature was dissonant with the principles of representation, which is evident by the fact that the League was founded by aristocratic Indian Muslims who were concerned about the democratic reforms being lobbied by the Congress to the colonial administration. Under Jinnah's leadership the League had to consolidate and unify the Muslim electorate in India. During the decade prior to the partition, the League struggled with competing provincial interests, and while Jinnah eventually secured the confidence of the Muslim community, he did so after running a communal campaign, propagating the idea of Pakistan. Pakistan, however, remained an metaphysical entity up until the frontiers were drawn and a subcontinent, divided. The League had only been able to gain enough political capital from India's Muslims to be able to establish a sovereign state, but once the provincial cleavages began to resurface and dominate domestic politics, it limited the centre's ability to govern effectively.

This paper has argued that the inability of the League to develop a robust organisation with a concrete and clear ideology prevented it from channelling domestic politics after independence. The League had been so engulfed with pre-partition provincial politics that it disregarded its internal organisational structure and relied solely on the dynamic personality of Jinnah to secure the future of Indian Muslims. This also meant that after Jinnah's death, Pakistan lacked a cadre of vibrant politicians to ensure state stability. The insecure foundation upon which a seemingly unified Muslim population had established a sovereign state quickly began to erode after the partition. Post-partition politics began to crumble due to the organisational and bureaucratic inexperience of the League, and as a consequence of the consolidation of power by provincial elites. This paper has argued that it was this inexperience of the League and its senior leaders who formed the central government of Pakistan that led to state fragility. However, while the civilian apparatus was descending into chaos, the military, as argued – a robust and disciplined institution– was practically handed the tasks of the civilians. It can be argued that the Military, whose roots were grounded in a strong British tradition of staying out of politics, was forced to enter the political arena, as the result of the incompetence of the civilian elite.

This argument does not absolve the military of all the subsequent coups that came after 1958, because by then the military had been too intertwined within the state to be able to move back to the barracks completely. Therefore, the coup was not entirely orchestrated by the military but it was the civilians that held the door open for the military to take over the state. It could be argued that the dynamic between a stable and organised institution (the military) and an unstable and undisciplined institution (the state) made a coup d'état an eventuality as a mechanism for the transition of power in the absence of a constitutional mandate (Wilcox, 1965). In conclusion, Pakistan can be considered a case where the military held monopoly over coercion due to the inability of the civilians to anchor the country towards stability. It is a case where the civil-military problematique never had a chance to materialise because the civilians barely themselves held on to any coercive power.

Putting this into a broader perspective, this paper presents two key implications; firstly, the fact that a strong military existed in a country where the state was fragile makes for an interesting line of research into the role of the military in post-colonial state-building. For scholars of state building, it might indicate the need for controlling the military as a vital first step, while also ensuring democratic consolidation.

Secondly, Pakistan has had three consecutive—relatively— free and fair elections in the past decade, each of which saw an alteration in power. Yet Pakistan is still classified as a hybrid regime due to the invasive nature of its military and its bad human rights track record. For policy makers trying to initiate democratic reforms in Pakistan, the military is a good institution to start, with effective coup-proofing measures to restrain it. However, as this paper has argued, a weak state cannot effectively control a strong military, therefore, research into strengthening the Pakistani state could precede any efforts to democratise the military. Broadly, more attention can be drawn towards the correlation between a strong military and a fragile state, and prospects of military coups in such cases.

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