

A CRITICAL STUDY ABOUT PAKISTAN'S NEW NARRATIVE FOR REGIONAL STABILITY

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Abstract

States and non-state actors have produced themes, values, and concepts to promote their agendas throughout history. Such purposeful and well-constructed ideologies are referred to as narratives, and they are used either to confront issues or to administer a rules-based national and international system while keeping their objectives and power apparatus in mind. Identity, history, ideology, geography, culture, foreign policy, and other national discourses are included into the construction of a national narrative. Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan has been in quest of a complete narrative that fits the state's fabric. The present narrative is no longer relevant for a number of reasons, including its failure to address the demands of the public. For a robust and resilient state and society, a new narrative for identity creation, political maturity, educational progress, strong security, economic success, excellent governance, religious reorientation, inventive talents, media maturity, and ethnic harmony is necessary. The development of such a new narrative is a strategic necessity that might contribute to Pakistan's national stability in the twenty-first century. A collection of recent top English newspaper has been opted in order to analyze the recently developing narrative of Pakistan.

Keywords: Sovereignty, Development, Regional Politics, Power Politics

Introduction and Overview of Research:

States create themes, ideals, and concepts to promote and safeguard their long-term objectives. These carefully produced beliefs are known as narratives. The narrative is a coherent account of events and a cognitive model that are linked logically and given either orally or in writing. It is considered a weapon in irregular warfare. 2 A fight of the mind and nerves in which either friend or adversary may be involved. The purpose of narratives is to establish our identities, ambitions, and objectives. It simultaneously builds the state's and society's identities. It reinforces the state's inherited common values and ideas in connection to its policies and initiatives. Regarding the

formation of a state and the development of its institutions, the narrative is contingent on an organisational hierarchy, whose proponents argue for their position using available resources. Since its inception, Pakistan has faced several obstacles and attempted to develop a narrative that could unify the country and promote internal stability. Despite the fact that Pakistan's narrative has shifted with each democratic and military rule. Pakistan itself has been adjusting to regional and global circumstances. Due to Pakistan's ever-changing political and security environment, a fresh strategic narrative is long overdue. A new narrative should be based on the idea that achieving our long-term national goals would result in prosperity and safety. It should attempt to formulate long-term policy choices concerning identity crises, ideological schisms, resource allocation, political paralysis, economic stagnation, governance crisis, civil-military imbalance, faulty regional strategy, and immature international vision. Conspiracies against the nascent state with its astounding economic progress, political instability, and unequal economic development. All stakeholders in Pakistan should contribute to the construction of the new narrative.

One might look at the international system to see how narratives have been produced on a global scale. From the Greek period through the current Western-backed Capitalist system, several narratives have dominated on the world arena, each with its own set of laws and procedures that benefit the ruling class. The United States, together with its strategic allies, is now the most powerful country affecting the international system. Global governance via the United Nations (UN) began to have an impact on governments in the post-World War II period. Global corporate corporations devised the concept of global governance in order to influence international architecture. Carnegie Corporation, founded on the revenues of the Carnegie Steel Firm, and J D Rockefeller, founded on the profits of a stranded oil company, began working for corporate charity. 3 The site on which the UN's New York headquarters stands was paid for with US\$8.5 million by the Rockefeller Foundation, which was founded by J D Rockefeller, who believed in corporate philanthropy. 4 Many influential organizations, including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a foreign policy pressure group, were funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and other private organizations such as the Carnegie Foundation in order to improve American foreign policy values. The CFR has 23 members among the 68 Foreign Secretaries of the United States. 5 The CFR had five members on the steering committee who worked for the UN. Except for George Woods, who was a trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation, all 11 members of the World Bank were also members of the CFR. The Ford Foundation, another organization that works to support national and international political movements, collaborates closely with the US State Department and supports and finances the Research and Development Corporation (RAND), a military think tank that conducts weapons research for the US armed forces. Similarly, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB), the two key components of the Bretton Woods System, desired that the US dollar serve as the world's reserve currency, allowing global capital to flow and standardised business processes to be followed in an open market. Many strategic narratives have influenced the global political scene on a global scale. The Cold War was one such story that divided the globe on political and ideological grounds. Both the United States and the former Soviet Union strengthened and defended their beliefs while promoting Capitalism and Communism. Similarly, after 9/11, which is regarded as the first strategic shock of the twenty-first century, the United States altered the global political and security landscape. The US used its political and military strength to persuade other nations that their current political and security systems were unable to

cope with this unconventional warfare, in which non-state actors had become the greatest danger to the state's territorial integrity and sovereignty. When discussing the war on terror, former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said, "in this fight, some of the most significant battles may not be in the mountains of Afghanistan or the streets of Iraq, but in newsrooms in New York, London, Cairo, and elsewhere." ⁶ Another regional development that has had an impact on world politics in general and Middle Eastern politics in particular has been the formation of narratives around the Arab Spring. Youth, using the power of social media, knocked down old unresponsive regimes such as Egypt, Yemen, Tunisia, Syria, Libya, and many others, and attempted to construct new orders with mixed success and failure tales. Philanthropist corporate lobbies and powerful nations developed political, economic, security, ideological, and foreign policy narratives in this manner. Through international regimes and institutional frameworks, strong politico-corporate lobbies have absorbed all major discourses throughout the globe, including media, education, entertainment, culture, sports, information technology, health, and social media, into the international system.

TEN NARRATIVES and REGIONAL STABILITY

National narratives are also developed with the state's evolving internal and foreign perspective in mind. The development of a national narrative includes identity, history, ideology, geography, culture, foreign policy, and other national discourses as part of the state's thought formation process. Since its independence, Pakistan has sought a dominant national narrative to guide its state and society. The nation failed to draft a constitution for a long time, and its first two constitutions were not based on consensus. State and society have suffered a huge loss due to the institution's downfall. The institutional strength and visionary leadership of India attempted to unite the whole nation to face all post-independence difficulties. Nonetheless, it still faces a lot of obstacles, such as the growth of Hindutva ideology, gender issues, poverty, separatist movements, etc. The Indian leadership emerged as entrepreneurs of the nation's identity, but in Pakistan the lack of a consensual constitution, a weak institutional framework, and the untimely death of major leaders caused turmoil. Therefore, the narrative that needed to emanate from contemporary and democratic forces arguing for Pakistan could not originate from traditional Muslims. It is considered that Pakistan was not established for this purpose. There has been uncertainty in Pakistan on the proper course of action. Pakistan lacked a healthy state and society narrative due to its immature political leadership, weak political parties, ambitious confessional parties, inexperienced civil workers, inadequate administration, and civil-military imbalance. Pakistan was incapable of constructing subsequent narratives, and those it did develop were incomplete.

1. Defining Pakistan's identity has been a source of debate for decades. Pakistanis either belong to a nation-state system or a pan-Islamic movement. Are we Muslims or Pakistanis? Which arrives first? All of these issues went unaddressed, causing national confusion.
2. The second factor is about the political system and government. Do we need a democratic form of governance, a dictatorship, or sharia law rule? How can ineptitude, dictatorship, and corruption be eradicated? A nation-wide sense of confusion and unreliability prevails.
3. The third factor is about education, specifically how English-Urdu "apartheid" was developed and how it may be removed. Youth reacted negatively to Madrassah education as an alternative to regular education and jihadi indoctrination.

4. The fourth storyline focuses on the economy and how Pakistan may have a robust and vibrant economy. In the lack of a stable political structure, economic stability was difficult to achieve. Constant dependence, resource scarcity, stagflation, borrowed growth, and widespread poverty all contributed to the economy's weakness.
5. The fifth account describes foreign policy goals that have not been met. Why has foreign policy failed on several fronts? Due to a weak political system or poor leadership. Isolation, strife, and alienation have contributed to the failure of foreign policy.
6. The sixth factor that has received little attention is demography. This text discusses the youth bulge, class instability, infectious illnesses, and religious conservatism.
7. The seventh factor focuses on civil-military interactions. The two most significant themes are the army's dominance and the inability of people to run the nation. This narrative has long plagued the state and contributed to political instability, including dictatorships and a type of "patronage democracy."
8. Urbanization is the ninth narrative that has been disregarded. In the absence of a census, the state lacked statistics, but with the 2017 census, statistics are now available and will be analyzed in this study. Thus, squalor, criminality, and ethnic conflict are on the increase. This has led to urban warfare and the shelter of terrorists in urban zones.
9. The ninth narrative, which has been one of the most ignored and significant, is about law and order. It has a direct relationship with the public and the maintenance of social peace and stability. It has been beset by the breakdown of governmental institutions and constitutional paralysis.
10. The tenth and last narrative focuses on terrorism and radicalization. National crises have been caused by violent extremism, sectarian terrorism, and ethnic secession. Despite it being one of the nation's most severe crises, every effort must be made to combat it.

There has been much discussion over the ineffectiveness of Pakistan's current narratives lack building a resilient society and creating a strong Pakistan. Consequently, a new narrative is required to provide the people with guidance about their future trajectory and the state's ability to compete with the rest of the world.

All ten narratives described in the preceding part will be detailed in this section in order to provide corrective solutions.

Critically Analyzing all Ten Narratives

The *first narrative* that requires revision is the one about identity. With the beginning of decolonization and the establishment of institutional frameworks such as the United Nations, universal ties weakened. On the basis of their local identities, states gained independence from colonial rulers. Creating in-groups and out-groups remained a defining characteristic of the colonial powers that constructed local identities. Insiders and outsiders led to their strategy of divide and conquer. Pakistan is the only nation to have achieved independence based on philosophy. Local identities existed, but for the sake of national cohesiveness, they had to be sacrificed or marginalized in the midst of larger identities. Islam has been a power in politics and society. It has been used for many purposes, including country building and security issues. Certain organizations have appropriated the Islamic narrative for varied purposes, including the extension of political influence and geographical dominance. These forces confused the populace, and the underlying elements of Pakistani nationalism remained weak. Certain Islamic

organisations continued to propagate pan-Islamist ideas that proved to be fallacious and overlooked the value of the nation-state structure. In spite of the fact that this has never occurred in either the Muslim or Christian worlds, such notions remained perplexing, as many continued to believe that something remarkable would eventually occur that would unite the Muslim world. The governments that failed to comprehend the western international order of nation-states and concepts such as sovereignty suffered the largest losses. In an age of nationalism, the people of Pakistan must comprehend the notion of power, which is the underlying aspiration of every human being. Strong ethnic identities dominate the social landscape. Instead of being confused by different identities, it would be beneficial for all segments of Pakistani society to recognize the value of nationalism. 10 The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), a multilateral organization comprised of Muslim governments, is a so-called unified face of the Muslim world that has failed to solve the plight of Muslims. Islam must be channeled as a positive force, and Islamic principles must be included into Pakistan's governmental framework, but exploitation of these values must be prohibited.

The *second narrative*, on democracy and effective government, need adjustment. In Pakistan, neither democracy nor democratic culture have completely developed. Nation has witnessed revolving-door democracy. With a well ingrained democratic culture and enduring democratic tenure, governance issues and political instability would cease to exist. This would bring in a new period of progress, stability, and effective government. Although the 18th Amendment delegated powers to the provinces, full-scale execution of these powers is still required since few provinces have yet to have the necessary capability. Similarly, President Asif Ali Zardari's administration launched the Seventh National Finance Commission with the approval of all provinces. Democracy and good governance cannot infiltrate the state system unless Local Body members are granted authority and provincial finance commissioners are proclaimed. Local Body elections have been held, however representatives have not yet been granted administrative and financial authority. Only an empowered institutional architecture can delegate authority at the local level, bringing about pleasure and stability. This new narrative is urgently required and may bring long-awaited excellent governance to the state, if not the whole nation. To do this, the media and civil society must exert pressure on provincial governments and political parties in particular to enact legislation that actually empowers local representatives.

The *third story* focuses on education. The parallel schooling system has significantly exacerbated socioeconomic disparities. Public, private, and madrassah education systems all impart education with distinct curricula, hence creating a fertile environment for the development of rival worldviews. Due to these conflicting educational systems, English-Urdu "apartheid" was established. The incapacity of the state to develop the network of the public educational system made room for the private and madrassah educational systems. The aforementioned apartheid can only be eliminated if the state begins to educate students, and all alternative educational systems will cease to exist over time. The state may provide curriculum to all pre-intermediate educational institutions. 12 years of comprehensive education must be provided to all pupils. All students must have the option to specialize in their selected topics after 12 years. In this manner, the whole nation will be on the same page, since all pupils would be studying the same government-designed curriculum. Consequently, the harm caused by the madrassah education system, which remained a breeding ground for jihadists, may not allow society to become polarized.

The *fourth story* is on the shattered economy of Pakistan. Political instability, oligarchic

leadership, and the nation's dependence on borrowed growth have caused economic issues. Durable and responsible political terms may boost the economic health. If the state does not expand its revenue base, it will be impossible to achieve economic stability. Less than 1% of Pakistanis pay direct taxes. A strong tax culture with incentives must be implemented. The nation's budgetary problem is severe and requires immediate care. The effective tax-to-GDP ratio of Pakistan must be enhanced. Since the previous decade, the tax-to-GDP ratio has been below 10%. In India and China, the tax-to-GDP ratio is around 17%. This is why the economies of India and China are doing nicely. Pakistan's economy can only operate successfully if the tax administration is reformed; this would eliminate fundamental economic difficulties and bring about state stability.

The *fifth narrative* is a corrective to foreign policy that must be established in order to advance vital short- and long-term national goals and regain lost strategic space. In a global context characterized by anarchy, Pakistan would be compelled to modify its foreign policy goals and use all diplomatic means at its disposal. Peace in Afghanistan must be accompanied by a local political solution that addresses Pakistan's interests. Pakistan must maintain a Minimum Credible Deterrence vis-à-vis India. Pakistan must promote the issue of Kashmir in all international forums and assist Kashmir in attaining the right to self-determination in accordance with its rightful aspirations. While trade and economic contacts must be initiated, commerce with neighbors must be maximized due to the importance of trade. Strategic and economic collaboration with China must yield maximum advantages, with Pakistani exports skewed toward China in order to lower import bill. Pakistan must maintain a stable relationship with the United States in which Pakistan's legitimate political and security concerns are addressed, now that the United States has withdrawn its military from Afghanistan. However, the South Asia strategy of US President Donald Trump has almost isolated Pakistan in the region. Pakistan must adapt in order to compete in an anarchic environment. The sovereignty of Pakistan must be respected, and if it is violated, Pakistan must use all diplomatic avenues. It must renew its traditional ties with the Gulf Nations, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt, and other Islamic states. Few Islamic nations have not had a beneficial role in remaking Pakistan's socio-religious fabric, which must not be permitted in the future as Pakistan continues to struggle to weave this fabric.

Demography is the *sixth narrative* that must be built for national stability. As a multicultural and multiethnic state, Pakistan has demographic issues. Pakistan has traditionally been one of the greatest refugee-hosting nations in the world. In 2017, the nation held its sixth population and housing census, which revealed a population growth rate of 2.4%, compared to a regional average of 1.3% for all of South Asia. Pakistan's fertility rate is 3.5%, whereas South Asia's overall fertility rate is 2.4%. Youth comprise almost sixty percent of Pakistan's population. Pakistan must implement population control programs that educate and direct married couples. Cultural and religious obstacles to preventing births must be addressed. Respecting the concept that children are a gift from God and recognizing that birth control is banned in Islam, the state must pay close attention to the consequences of early marriages, optimal birth spacing, and improved health care for child and mother. Other Muslim nations have effectively used birth control strategies. Bangladesh, for instance, reduced its population increase to 1.6% by adopting proactive steps.

The *seventh story* focuses on civil-military interactions. The relationship between elected and non-elected institutions has been asymmetrical. This mismatch is a result of Pakistan's colonial

past, since the country's democratic institutions were nonexistent and weak, and bureaucracy governed everyday operations. Therefore, the civil-military system has dominated political institutions that are weak. The Indian-origin leadership of the Muslim League need a civil-military bureaucracy in order to contend with the indigenous political class. Now, 70 years later, civil-military relations in Pakistan have significantly improved. For the first time in Pakistan's history, the military assisted the civilian leadership in completing a five-year term from 2008 to 2013, so that the democratic system faced fewer conspiracies and General Musharraf's legacy demoralized the military. The military leadership is cognizant of the fact that they can only function properly if democracy endures. Only political stability would allow military operations to be completed. Political leadership must provide results and must not involve the military in politics. Those who are engaged in plots against the political government must be brought to court via a procedure devised by the military. In order for democracy to thrive at the grassroots level, politicians must try to propagate democratic culture and intra-party elections must be open and fair. Good governance must be enhanced in order to refute the military's claims that legislators are ineffective.

The *eighth factor* is about urbanization, which is one of the most overlooked topics. Since 1998, Pakistan has been unable to conduct a population census due to a lack of political will. The 2017 Population Census indicates that more over 36% of the population lives in urban areas. According to the World Bank, fifty percent of the world's population will reside in urban areas by 2030, up from the current 34 percent. Due to floods and earthquakes, a large number of people have relocated to cities in search of management flaws in safeguarding lives, property, and animals. In 2010, the new city of Zulfiqarabad was built to house the flood-ravaged residents of the Thata district. 21 25 billion rupees were provided for urban development at the federal and provincial levels in 2012-13. 22 The majority of the funds were allocated to infrastructure for sanitation, housing, water supply, and roads. Since the establishment of a national housing policy in 2001, there has been no new housing strategy, which is urgently required given the fast growth of the urban population. In all provinces and at the federal level, a new national resettlement strategy must be established, since the last policy was enacted seven years ago. Pakistan is one of the most water-scarce nations and hence requires a national water strategy. The inability to meet the water demands of a growing urban population has given rise to a water mafia in major cities. Similarly, to prevent urban mismanagement, the national sanitation policy must be enforced in word and spirit. The adoption of the above-mentioned policies will aid in the eradication of criminal activity in urban areas. This is necessary for successful government. Unless a new narrative including public engagement is created on urban challenges, severe social chaos is likely.

The rule of law is the *ninth narrative* that has to be recreated. Institutional conflict and failure have compromised the rule of law. The rule of law will result from a stable political system with appropriate checks and balances and power distribution to the local government level. Powerful governmental entities must not usurp one other's authority. Conflicts within the power structures serve the limited personal interests of those seated rather than the greater welfare of the state. Due to a lack of rule of law, the state was forced to pay a hefty price, which has strained ties between elected and unelected officials. Implementation of the 18th Amendment and the National Finance Commission (NFC) of 2010 would enable all departments to fulfill their missions. This institutional framework will provide provinces with enough finances to meet their demands in areas where the rule of law might be reinforced. In the case of the impoverished, the rule of law

of unelected districts attempts to provide room for them. As a result of the politicization of crime and the criminalization of politics, Karachi employs rangers to improve the rule of law. Consequently, such bad performance diminishes the effectiveness and credibility of civilian institutions, and thus offers scope for individuals to disregard democratic norms and ideals as an explanation for their poor performance. Being the biggest province in terms of population, Punjab is seen as more stable than other provinces. However, rule of law has not been upheld in areas where terrorist organizations operate freely; thus, the Punjab government has been criticized. The assault on Gulshan-e-Iqbal park in Lahore on March 27, 2016, which resulted in the deaths of about 73 individuals, has exacerbated tensions between civilian and military leadership. There were pockets of untargeted militants in Punjab, therefore the army conducted raids and killed several terrorists. It was the responsibility of the people to preserve some semblance of law and order, but they failed to do so for unknown reasons. There are rumors that Punjab, like Karachi and Islamabad, may need the support of the Rangers to preserve peace and order. Although the Punjab administration has rejected the necessity for Rangers, there are Rangers present. However, law and order must be preserved at all costs, and the federal and provincial governments must build an exhaustive narrative in this respect.

The *tenth narrative* that requires the full attention of the state and society is about terrorism and extremism, including sectarian terrorism and ethnic segregation. The National Action Strategy (NAP), a twenty-point plan devised following the assault on the Army Public School in Peshawar on December 16, 2014, includes a comprehensive solution for all of the difficulties stated in the preceding paragraphs, and there has been a 48% decline in terrorist activity in 2015. However, a civil-military push toward an unified front is still required. The Pakistan Army is very concerned that the NAP fails to address issues connected to political leadership. For instance, effective laws in the execution of terrorists, since the army reports that terrorists are routinely freed due to the lack of solid rules of proof notwithstanding their capture. Strengthening and activating the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), which was created to cooperate among government ministries for combatting terrorism, is essential for cooperation, but it faces obstacles as both military and civilian leadership disregard its mission in using it. Despite tremendous improvement, the police are not strong on individuals who use hate speech and distribute hate material, despite the fact that more than 9,000 persons were detained and more than 9,000 charges were made about hate speech. Madrassah registration and curriculum review remain a pipe dream, and as a consequence, extreme tendencies are on the rise. Punjab and Sindh have geotagged their madrassas, however Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) have not. Political changes have not yet reached the Federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA), a tribal territory administered by the federal government that borders KPK. FATA must be mainstreamed in order to combat extremism and terrorism. One of the most important tasks is to monitor social media so that terrorists cannot use it to spread their message. Although the government has closed more than 900 URLs and approximately 10 websites, much remains to be done. Prohibited organizations operate social media profiles that must be banned to enhance the NAP. In conclusion, in order to curb extreme tendencies, social media must be closely monitored.

Conclusion:

The nation is in a severe need of national stability as it is through a crucial period. National stability requires a deep connection to nationalism. It is the only concept that transcends bigotry

and can unite individuals of different ethnic origins on a single platform. For the sake of national unity, the state's political structure must not be disrupted. National stability will result from the participation of all stakeholders in the system. Similarly, the style of governance must be contemporary so that marginalized groups are not isolated. Good administration and a sustained democratic culture will unite the country.

For national stability, the same curriculum must be implemented, so that all segments of society have the same perspective on state and society. People from Karachi to Gilgit must have a similar way of thinking in order to achieve ideological and intellectual cohesiveness among the populace. For national stability, the micro- and macro-economy must perform, which is only possible if the democratic political system continues on course. If all political party stakeholders contribute, a highly compelling story on foreign policy may contribute to national stability.

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament must be active in the formulation of foreign policy, since it will have institutional support and formulate a complete and coordinated foreign strategy. A demographic imbalance may lead to national instability if resources do not grow at the same rate as the population. Therefore, early planning and an emphasis on population management may contribute to national stability. For national stability, it is necessary to rectify the asymmetries of power between elected and unelected officials. When politicians believe that their mission is not being honored, they experience feelings of estrangement and isolation.

Excessive strength on any side may result in national instability. In order to maintain national stability, everyone must embrace their constitutionally designated roles. Excessive development without urban planning will result in national instability in which criminalisation, ethnic imbalance, and class warfare pose threats to social cohesion. Urban planning is a need for national stability. Strong rule of law ensures the people's safety and security. Insecurity in some regions of the nation and security for a select few may generate resentment among the populace against the political class. Strong rule of law is essential for national stability so that the state can keep its pledge to preserve residents' land and property. Extremism and terrorism have destabilized the state. Pakistan has never before been in such dire straits. NAP implementation is necessary for national stability. With much delay, a glimmer of optimism remains. All segments of society are perturbed by continued terrorism and extremist inclinations; thus, national stability might be reached if the state takes these issues seriously.

During the course of this research, it has become evident that an updated state discourse must be established. The old narrative must be revised since it does not reflect the contemporary reality on the ground. In crafting Pakistan's contemporary and progressive future, successive administrations have overlooked the realities on the ground. The incumbent political system confronted a challenging climate in which institutional strength and authority were disregarded. In concerns of state, the authority resides in the hierarchy and not in personal relationships. Our leadership would need to use hierarchical authority to achieve long-term national cohesiveness goals. National unity cannot be neglected since it weakens democratic norms and hastily crafted narratives may be counterproductive.

The state architecture must include a new narrative characterized by inclusion and supported by a broad agreement among all stakeholders. The many sectors of Pakistan's society have real concerns that can only be addressed if a new narrative is incorporated into the state in order to bring about structural stability. Those who have been excluded from the national political and administrative system and who are marginalized have either been exploited or have legitimate

complaints. A new story should be carefully crafted with global realities in mind.

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