



**Deep Culture and Political Shifts:  
Applying Causal Layered Analysis to Understand Pakistan's Post-2013 Authoritarian Turn**

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**Abstract:**

This paper addresses Pakistan's drift to authoritarianism after the 2013 General Elections using Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) as lens to deconstruct the various layers of political system. It looks at events, trends, institutions, policy, rhetoric/discourse, and myth/metaphor to give a conceptual analysis of why this transition has finally occurred and what cultural formations underpin it. The first level, the litany layer, analyzes how people and the media evaluated the changes in the political landscape. The second level, the systemic cause layer, discusses civil-military relations, judicial involvement, elections, economic issues, and changes in laws and policies. Security, nationalism, and governance within political discourses and how media and culture continue to either reinforce or subvert such authoritarian discourses are scrutinized in the discourse/worldview layer. The myth/metaphor layer examines archetypal cultural narratives, which shape people's actions in politics and their receptiveness to authoritarianism. This way, numerous and interwoven strands, including civilizational variables and political transitions, come to the fore.

**Keywords:** Pakistan, Causal Layered Analysis, authoritarianism, democracy, deep culture, political instability, civilian rule

**INTRODUCTION**

Due to the political volatility of Pakistan, the political map of the country has been colored with streaks of democracy and autocratic rule. Pakistan experienced a political carnival for a decade before the 2013 elections, including a mass movement for the restoration of deposed judges of the apex court, a military coup, and massive scandals about corruption. The 2008 general elections marked the transition to civilian rule in Pakistan. But the last years [2012–2013] of the Pakistan People's Party-Parliamentarians (PPPP)-led coalition government were characterized by political instability, economic problems, and insecurity in the buildup to the 2013 general elections.

The general elections of 2013 were significant to the nation and the world because they demonstrated the first transfer of power between two civilian governments. The Pakistan Muslim

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League-Nawaz (PML-N), led by Nawaz Sharif, came out as the winners for committing to enhance the economy and political stability. Initial optimism in the post-2013 period was replaced with a slow but steady move in the direction of authoritarianism. Some signals of this process included the enhanced role of the military in civilian life, the limitation of media rights, the oppression of opposition, and the legislation of severe laws encroaching on civil liberties.

Authoritarianism in the context of this paper defines the accumulation of political power in a single center, low political tolerance, and the discouragement and/or elimination of political opposition and civil liberties. These authoritarian practices came back to Pakistan, and there is a serious debate in the context of declining democratization. Thus, the purpose of this research is to investigate the primary causes of this phenomenon utilizing the Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) approach, focusing on Pakistan after the 2013 elections. In this regard, this research seeks to establish the hidden cultural, historical, and systematic foundations of this political metamorphosis.

The key questions addressed in this study are: What are major events after 2013 that depict that Pakistan is steadily moving toward totalitarianism? How civil-military relations as well as judicial activism contributed to authoritarian shift in Pakistan? Which discursive formations are in political discourses that can be either prescriptive for or oppositional to authoritarianism? Thus, the main question will be: In what ways and with what consequences does the pre-modern cultural imaginary permeate political action and the acceptance of authoritarianism in Pakistan?

It is imperative to provide an understanding of Pakistan's authoritarian turn for a number of reasons. Firstly, it helps to understand the processes of degeneration of the democratic standards and of the democratic values, important to the scholars and the policy makers, who are interested in the improvement of the democratic institutions. Secondly, this research has implications for the larger discourse about authoritarianism. Thirdly, it contributes to understanding the contradictions between the sub-structural tiers and recent political changes for formulating the strategies to sustain the democratic system in Pakistan.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper uses Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) a theoretical framework formulated by Sohail Inayatullah (2004, 2008) that explored the different layers of causation concerning the subject of Pakistan's drift into an authoritarian state. CLA is a research method that delves into four layers of analysis: litany, systemic roots, discourse, and myths. Thus, carrying out an analysis with the help of CLA, this study strives to deepen the understanding of the subject and reveals the genuinely underlying cultural and historical factors that have an impact on Pakistan's political development.

**Litany Level Analysis** considers the manifest events and behaviors, including the manner in which the emerging culture is either accepted or rejected by the public and discussed in media.

**Systemic Cause** focuses on the organizational and contextual factors such as civil-military relations, economic policies, and change of laws.

**Discourse/Worldview** examines the work of architects of the political language as well as the main narrative patterns and ideologies.

**Myth/Metaphor** studies how or why politics is ingrained in archetypal myths, symbols, and historical references.

### **Methods of Data Analysis Using CLA**

The information gathered was explained in relation to the CLA framework that helped determine the multiple causality of Pakistan's authoritarianism. The steps involved in the analysis are as follows:

**1. Litany Level Analysis:** Through the newspapers, magazines and other publications and through public opinion polls, relevant data on the incidents, trends and the increase and/or decrease in public awareness post 2013 was compiled. This gave a relatively closer view in terms of political transformation.

**2. Systemic Causes:** Official documents and scholarly works were reviewed in order to explore the causes related to institutional, economic and legal spheres that led to the authoritarian shifts. This provided the details of the structural factors.

**3. Discourse/Worldview:** Primary sources including newspapers, magazines, editorials, research articles, online websites, social media platforms, and radio/TV talk shows were closely analyzed. In addition, a public opinion poll was conducted to compare Pakistani perceptions of the political scene with the findings from the existing literature. This assisted in comprehending how such worldviews influenced outlooks and policies on matters.

**4. Myth/Metaphor:** Myths, metaphors and symbols that underlie political behavior and attitude towards authoritarianism was identified using cultural and historical analyses from popular political dialogues and discussion over a period of six months. This revealed the fundamental cultural stories in place.

Through incorporating these layers of analysis, the study's intention is to shed light on the nature of the multiple processes that led Pakistan to this autocratic shift in the post-2013 context by paying attention to both proximate factors and enduring cultural roots.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Historical Context**

Like most countries in the third world, Pakistan has had a history of time and again democratic shift and autocratic reversals. Following its liberation in 1947, Pakistan continuously passed through cycles of regime changes. It remained under the direct rule of military during Ayub Khan, (1958-1969), Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988) and Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008) era (Talbot 2012, 32-43). These regimes have made their indeterminable marks on the demography of political system of Pakistan and majority of them consolidated their power by building alliances with the feudal and religious elites and overly centralizing the state power (Cohen 2004, 120-34).

The transition to a civilian government in 2008 after Musharraf's surrender was considered as a new beginning for Democracy in Pakistan. But the democratic accomplishments achieved in this period were not consolidated and this could be seen from political turbulence and governance crises that were facing successive civilian governments (Rizvi 2013, 23-45). Another turning point was the 2013 general elections that led the Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N) to power. However, despite all optimism subsequent disappointments have emerged as in the

post-2013 developments witnessed the authoritarian comeback, which led to a question mark on the democratic governance in Pakistan (Waseem 2019, 41-46).

### **Civil-Military Relations**

Impact of military on the politics of Pakistan has been the area of concern in the previous studies. Pakistan's military has been a powerful force in the politics right from the country's formation, directly ruling the country on most of the occasions and during the civilian tenures has wielded a considerable power over the civilians (Shah 2014, 41-47). Researchers have noted the corporate priorities of the military that are in direct contradiction to democracy and civilian control paradigm (Siddiq 2007, 31-45).

After the general elections of 2013, civil military relations remained cold. The political influence of the military has continued, in matters touching on electoral processes, the management of media and the interference that has been reportedly exerted on the judiciary as well as other state organs (Rizvi, 2016). While the military continued to wielding political power, democracy was crippled, and an authoritarian political culture was sustained (Fair 2014, 32-39; Akhtar, 2018).

### **Media and Censorship**

In order to understand the general picture of the media, it is important to explore the political background of the country. Military rule has always had tight control over media with media censorship, freedom of speech has been limited and restricted and freedom of the press restrained and suppressed (Rahman 2012, 45-61). On the media freedoms some progress was achieved after civilian rule was ushered in 2008 though the situation was still volatile.

Available information shows that since the 2013 elections, the situation concerning the freedom of media was alarming in Pakistan. The government and military had used several strategies in order to regulate the media including; outright censorship, use of financial pressure and threats to journalists (Rehmat, 2019). There are also new dynamics in media censorship as the authorities have increased the control of media and social networks (Khan & Joseph 2018, 25-32). These trends reflected the growing restrictions on democratic rights of freedom of expression during this period.

### **Economic and Policy Changes**

It is pertinent to mention here that majority of the economic policies in Pakistan have political consequences. Literature reviews have revealed that economic fluctuations, along with policy breakdowns, are the major root cause of political upheavals and regressive leadership (Hussain, p.28). Following 2013, the ruling party faced a number of economic problems such as, fiscal deficits, high level of debt and problems of carrying out structural adjustments (Haque 2020, 32-38). The PML-N government that came into power in 2013 similarly concentrated on growth and development although, critics have stated that its policies only increased the levels of inequality while not addressing structural causes (Pasha 2015, 12-24). The economic policies implemented during this period have also had political effects, mainly arising from the response of the opposition and civil society groups to the government's strategies and the impacts on democracy (Kugelman 2019, 32-42). Such economic and policy factors have an influential role in engendering authoritarian features that are now a part of Pakistan's political environment.

### **Cultural and Symbolic Politics**

Culture is an important factor in the political organization's behavior and the ratification of authority in Pakistan. Religious and nationalist symbols have widely been used and have been particularly apparent. Leaders in the political and military spheres have recurrently used symbols to appeal to the people and justify their decisions (Jalal 2008, 51-83). Symbolic politics in Pakistan include the heroism of military generals and appealing to Islamic narratives. It writes off opponents as anti-national and anti-Islamic (Devji 2013, 45-57). Such narratives help consolidate authoritarian practices in political societies and encourage the authoritarian political culture (Lyon 2012, 32-49).

### **FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

The analysis of Pakistan's authoritarian shift post-2013 was initiated at litany level as it was depicting the most vivid picture of the events, trends, and perceptions displayed on media and daily popular discussions. The findings at this layer allowed building a basis for broad analysis of developments that took place after 2013 in terms of Pakistan's drift to authoritarianism.

#### **Litany Level Analysis**

##### ***Major Developments and Changes After 2013***

After the 2013 elections, it has been observed that many events and trends have taken place in Pakistan which suggests that the state gradually drifted toward a period of authoritarianism. As one of the most memorable events in the country's political history, the disqualification of the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif by the Supreme Court in 2017 on charges of corruption, followed by his imprisonment (Bhatti, 2017). Besides political instabilities it caused a controversy in terms of judges' impartiality and political intentions of the judicial branch. Another event of political evolution was the emergence of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) under the leadership of Imran Khan. The controversial 2018 general elections made the PTI as a leading party in the parliament with Imran Khan becoming Prime Minister. These elections were disputed on accounts of military influence and electronic fraud; hence political analysts accused the military of interfering with the electoral processes with an aim of achieving PTI's victory (Reuters, 2018). These allegations were intensified by two other related allegations, namely censorship and intimidation of the media, pointing to more of an authoritarian direction.

Another amazing trend was noted that the military has continued to play a prominent role in the provision of security and formulation of national security and foreign policies to the extent of overshadowing the parliament. It has been considered as prejudicial to the democratic dispensation and has led to the creation of nearly an authoritarian state power structure (Rizvi, 2016).

##### ***Public Perceptions and Media Representations***

The changes of political scene after 2013 have been welcomed along with fears as observed in the public opinion. At the same time, there was a group of people who voted for the authorities to take harsh measures against the extremist wings and use their authority in order to establish law and order and restore economy. This was often propagated by the state and its affiliated news outlets regarding the necessity of a powerful leadership coupled with coercive decisions contributing to the advancement of the country (Javed, 2019). On the other hand, the public remained very

sensitive with the decrease of democratic principles and civil liberties. The documented studies conducted by the organizations like Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) revealed that overall perception of the people of Pakistan towards democratic institutions remained skeptical (PILDAT, 2019). These perceptions were also seen in the media with journalists and bloggers, reporting cases of censorship, political oppression and persecution of the opposition.

Thus, it can be stated that the representations featured in media were of significant importance in putting together the general population's impression. Pakistani freedom of media had been restricted especially after 2013. There had been voices of threats, harassment and at times violence against media practitioners for certain stories (Human Rights Watch, 2020). These limitations aimed at media freedom have resulted in the current form of press that is self-censoring, and where journalists avoid, or least; report sparingly on the government and the military. Analyses of political events in the media tend to support the state's ideas of national security, stability and economic development, and suppress the opposition. This controlled media represents the political occurrences in a manner that kept the public more ignorant to the authoritarian shifts (Rehmat, 2019).

### **Systemic Causes**

The systemic cause layer goes further down to deal with the societal, economic, political, and historical structures that created the litany level events and trends. This section analyzes the role of institutions, the overall economy, and changes in the legal and policy framework that have led to Pakistan's authoritarianism after 2013.

### ***Institutional Dynamics: Civil-Military Relation, Roles of Court, and Elections***

Civil-military relation in Pakistan had been essentially characterized by military domination of civil politics. After 2013, the role had continued to be apparent as the military guided and sometimes even decided on the nation's security and policy on foreign relations and domestic politics. This hegemony eroded civilian control and democracy paving way for state fascism (Rizvi, 2016). The military influence in politics could be seen in the fact that the military interfered with the 2018 elections with a view of assisting the PTI to come into power leading to numerous complaints of vote-rigging (Shah, 2018). This had led to the loss of confidence on electoral activities and democratic institutions.

The political history of Pakistan had also witnessed various episodes of judicial activism. The judiciary disqualified Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 2017 for corruption charges in an unprecedented way. Although it was likely presented more as an anti-corruption drive, opponents had claimed that the decision of the apex court was highly political in nature reflecting the judiciary's cooperation with the military to undermine civil political leadership (Cheema, 2018). This decision had eroded the perceived neutrality of the Judiciary. Voting in Pakistan had also been accused of irregularities and fraud during the general polls held in 2018. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) came under considerable pressure for the conduct of the elections where the opposition parties and independent observers pointed towards the irregularities mainly noted in the counting of the votes and its reporting (International Crisis Group, 2018). Such controversies

had led to question the electoral processes and the state institutions involved in facilitating those vital democratic exercises.

### ***Impact of Economic Policies on Governance***

Policies related to economy after the 2013 have convincingly affected the governance. The government of Nawaz Sharif laid down a major emphasis on the construction and expansion of infrastructure projects and generally on more economic opportunities like CPEC. Even though these projects have many a time brought long-term gains, they have made available more debt and economic inequalities (Husain 2018, 60-71). The economic policies that were implemented in the course of this period have been described as neo-liberal and as having produced socio-economic inequalities in favor of the elites (Pasha 2015, 12-24; Yahaya & Hassan, 2013), and leading to public protest and political instabilities. This has raised a number of issues for the government in as much as the ability to borrow to finance its budget has reduced especially the provision of social services/development programs and hence the public dissatisfaction. Besides, economic insecurity has offered an excuse for authoritarianism, where the government and the military take more power and steps arguing that the economy and society require stability (Malik, 2019).

### ***Legal and Policy Changes and its Impact on Civil Liberties***

It is fairly evident that in the post-2013 era legal and policy developments have made profound impact on civil liberties in Pakistan. The Pakistan Protection Ordinance (PPO) was enacted in 2014 and was later continued as the Pakistan Protection Act (PPA) that provided power and authority to the law enforcement agencies that included the ability to detain suspects without trial secretly and conduct their trial too (Amnesty International, 2014). These measures, which were alleged to be required to fight terrorism, have been argued to erode civil liberties and justify state violence.

Other legal reforms are the modifications of the cybercrime laws; these have made the state to have even more control on the social media and the society as a whole to have even enhanced surveillance power (Digital Rights Foundation, 2016). These laws have been applied to suppress political opposition, and limit the freedom of speech, and therefore generate an atmosphere of fear and repression among journalists, activists, and the populations (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

The inclusion of such changes in law and policy has resulted in a limitation of civil liberties, and the state has borrowed the legal basis of authority to allow despotic measures. The submission of civil rights and freedoms as well as democracy has also come hand in hand with enhanced state repression – authoritarianism deepened in Pakistani politics.

### ***Discourse/Worldview Analysis***

The third level of analysis, such as the discourse/worldview level, looks into the subtexts and essential beliefs regarding the issues at hand. This layer helps understand how different political actors behave and make decisions due to the understanding that the systemic nature of different angles contributes to the brutal realities of power and culturally ingrained assumptions.

### ***Dominant Narratives and Ideologies***

After 2013, certain narratives and ideologies had emerged and became dominant in the politics of Pakistan. In the public discourse one of the most distinctive discursive themes was the call for the

powerful political leadership which would guarantee stability and progress. This narrative had been founded on the presupposition that various problems in Pakistan such as terrorism, economic crisis, and the problems centered on the governance of the nation could only be effectively solved through the authoritative leadership. Its appropriateness had been supported by state organs and sections of the media which had further endorsed the consumption of authoritarianism (Javed, 2019).

Another dominant story was the protection of national integrity. The topic of national security can be used to explain the expanded participation of the military in politics as well as the application of strict security measures. This narrative painted the military as the ultimate custodian of a country's territorial integrity and sovereignty at the expense of civilian politicians and formal parliamentary democracy (Rizvi, 2016).

The narrative of anti-corruption had also contributed heavily toward the construction of political discourses. The ouster and subsequent jailing of Nawaz Sharif and his associates were legitimized as an effort to fight corruption. The populism of anti-corruption had been applauded and embraced by the population at the same time used as the tool by political leadership with an aim of eliminating political opponents. This selective eradication of corruption measures demeans the credence of the democratic bodies and encouraged authoritarianism (Cheema, 2018).

### ***Cultural Narratives and Symbols***

The political culture of Pakistan reflects many cultural-stories and symbols that are significantly entrenched in the country's past and social character. One of such Pakistani narrative is the Pakistan as the fortress of Islam. It has been employed to justify numerous political acts and policies. This narrative is also intertwined with nationalist attitudes and calls for the preservation of the Islamic way of life and the Pakistani state from threats from within and outside the country (Zaman 2018, 26-33). The wave of political populism and religious references legitimizes political regimes and their policies, which broadly outline anti-liberal agendas under the sign of defending the country's ideological borders.

Military protection of the country is another developed cultural value of the common people. This symbol is supported through the media representations, public events, and educational programs meaning that people are taught and encouraged to have pride and allegiance to the military. The aesthetics of the military and its leaders affects the consideration of the military in politics and diminishing civilian control (Shah, 2018). In a television talk show during PTI era one of the sitting ministers called military chief as the father of the nation.

### ***Media and Popular Culture***

Media constructions are instrumental in determining the social agenda and perpetuating dominant paradigms. The situation in Pakistan has evidenced that since 2013, the restrictions and censorship of the media have grown, with the bias towards the government and military. Freedom of speech is severely restricted and freedom of press regarded as a threat to national integrity (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

When it comes to politics, the media provides people only with state's version of the story, which is focused on stability, security and development of a country, and censoring or omitting the critical



views. This controlled media thus strengthens the autocratic practices (Rehmat, 2019). Semiotization of political processes and political communication through media to spread certain discourses and symbols play the part in manipulation of public opinion to endorse authoritarianism.

### **Myth/Metaphor Analysis**

The myth and metaphor layer looks at the latent cultural model or the secondary cultural codes, values, beliefs and images that inform peoples' identity and society's functions and roles. It is through these myths and metaphors that an understanding of the political culture that shapes the beliefs and attitudes that underpin actions in the context of Pakistan's authoritarianism post 2013 can be elucidated. It is often believed that there is one true leader meant to save people.

Another universally popular myth in the Pakistani political folklore is the myth of the messiah leader. Specifically, this myth presupposes that a great man can save the country from all its troubles: from economic decline to increased armed violence. This narrative has been persistent in the political discourse of Imran Khan who was portrayed as the 'sincere' and 'the honest' leader with the potential to change Pakistan (Jalal 2014, 39-67). This myth proves to be extremely relevant to the society, especially in the periods of the pandemic, and plays the role of the preparation of society for the acceptance of authoritarian practices as the only way for the successful functioning of the state.

### ***Metaphor of the Fortress***

Another explanatory factor is the narrative where Pakistan is referred to as a fort of Islam which also shapes the political actions. This metaphor seeking to portray the fact that Pakistan is surrounded by enemies from outside as well as within its borders and hence has to be protected at every cost. It also rationalizes the prevalence of security-driven politics and the military's leading position in the society. This metaphor also implements itself into the national security agenda, which emphasizes the military approach to the problems rather than the democratic institutions and personal freedoms (Lieven, 2011).

### ***Myth of Corruption Cleansing***

This can be deemed as one of the most powerful political myths that have become firmly established in the political awareness of Pakistan. This myth can be summarized as implying that the fundamental cause of Pakistan's woes is corruption and that ridding the political and social spheres in the country of corrupt individuals will create a new and prosperous Pakistan. PTI and other political parties have witnessed this narrative as part of their political plan and appreciate massive welcomes from the judiciary and the military (Akhtar 2018, 51-79). Although combating corruption is crucial, the methodology of checking corruption selectively projects the political succession and strengthens authoritarianism.

### ***Metaphor of the Battle***

The case of the battle may be employed in the political context to denote the confrontation between various political players, their concepts, and outside forces. This represents politics in terms of a game with winners and losers; this shapes politics as a game that can only be won at the expense of the opponents. It creates a polarized political climate and rationalizes violent action. This battle

metaphor also dovetails into the overall narrative of constant threats to the nation's security, and consequently the lives of ordinary citizens (Hussain, 2017).

One of the important myths is the Myth of the Benevolent Authority, which describes people's belief in an authority that will always be on their side and protect them from adversaries. Peculiar to this myth is the notion that strong, centralized authority is always in the best interest of the nation, development-wise and stability-wise. The myth originates from peoples' historical experience regarding authoritative people as carriers of order and development. It is the foundation for social compliance with authoritarian control as a way of attaining national objectives. This myth is also related to cultural beliefs that approve authoritarianism in leadership and women's submission to power (Haqqani, 2013).

### ***Metaphor of the Motherland***

The use of the concept of the motherland is to describe a person's feelings towards the nation, as well as surreal feelings for a country which is as a mother to them. This metaphor is very commonly employed to generate nationalism and obedience, but it is also easily abused to stifle any and all forms of opposition by painting it as treason. The motherland metaphor legitimizes state authority and the regimes' actions as beneficial to the health of the national family (Siddiqui, 2015).

## **Discussion**

### ***Integration of Findings***

When applying CLA to discern Pakistan's authoritarian shift after 2013, the findings showed that there were indeed multiple forms of processes and activities at the societal, discursive, and organizational levels. The following is an example of the first category of symptoms: at the litany level, one can point to important events and trends, such as the events of the 2018 elections and media censorship as signs of the surface level of system pathology. The population thus ends up with such perceptions due to the controlled media, making these tendencies cyclic – a positive feedback to authoritarianism.

Sources attributable to the system include civil-military relations; judiciaries; and economics as the structural reasons for authoritarianism. Regulation of the military in politics, selective judicial activism, and economic policies that favor the elites resulted in decline of the democracies and civil liberties across the globe. Elements like the Pakistan Protection Act are responsible for worsening these situations since they give legal backing to repression by the state.

At the discourse/worldview level ideology like pro-authoritarianism, security, and anticorruption are dominant and provide legitimacy to the authoritarian responses to the crises. These kinds of stories are backed by cultural icons and media influences in a manner that situates authoritarianism as inevitable and perhaps, desirable for the nation's stability and progress.

1. The myth/metaphor analysis shows the ideological dimension of these myths. The notion of the savior leader and the notion of the care taking authority, the metaphor of the fortress and the metaphor of the battle remain alive in society's subconscious and stimulate authoritarian conducts and values. From the given cultural narratives and symbols, one gets a basic understanding of why societies accept and continue supporting authoritarian regimes.

2. There are implications for the way policy and governance is approached and the subsequent diverse impacts on the society. Thus, the conclusions arrived at in this research are useful for policy and governance in the context of Pakistan. To offset this drift, it requires tackling the directions globally while also fighting the sources of the phenomena systemically and culturally. Key policy recommendations include:
  - a. **Strengthening Democratic Institutions:** To increase the role of democracy, it is necessary to increase the independence and effectiveness of democratic institutions such as judiciary, election commission and parliament. This is why safeguarding the electoral processes and decreasing militarization of the political processes is important on this path.
  - b. **Promoting Media Freedom:** It is important that it becomes a tradition to defend media freedom in a healthy democracy. Government and political institutions should come up with policies that would ensure safety of journalist, less or no censorship and freedom of media houses. Existing hegemonic discourses in societies around the world are supportive of authoritarian regimes; therefore, views from other critical perspectives can potentially undermine these messages.
  - c. **Economic Reforms for Equity:** Economic policies should focus on growth that would give chance to every person a fair shot at the available resources. Therefore, means to tackle socio-economic injustice may help to decrease social discontent and stabilize the political situation.
  - d. **Legal Reforms to Protect Civil Liberties:** This includes repealing or amending the laws which permit state repression in democratic Pakistan such as, Pakistan Protection Act. Legal measures should conform to the international human rights norms in as much as they preserve the freedoms and the rights of individuals and democracy.
  - e. **Challenging Dominant Narratives:** There is need to engage advocates to counter hegemonic discourses that help authorities to act in ways that infringe on people's rights. The cultivation of counter-frames that are aligned with democratic ideology, individual freedoms and tolerance for diversity can therefore play a part in changing citizens' perceptions and therefore, support for autocratic systems.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

Candidly, this research furnishes vast theoretical contributions to the overall knowledge on authoritarianism as well as the usage of CLA. Thus, applying CLA, this research offers a systemic analysis of the processes that led to Pakistan's shift to authoritarianism. It raises awareness of not only empirical, vertical, and tangible situations but also structural, discursive, and cultural processes of authoritarianism.

This utilization of CLA in the current study helps to point to the methodological versatility that characterizes the methodology as a tool for analyzing socio-political processes and relations. It underlines the important necessity to use the approaches at different levels to study the processes of authoritarianism development comprehensively. This approach can be used in other settings to examine how system level and cultural features impact on political actions and administration. Besides, this study enriches the problem of authoritarianism by showing how cultural story-telling and iconography support authoritarian projects. It reveals the fact that more attention should be paid to cultural and symbolic politics within the studies that focus on authoritarianism, as it enlarges the perspective.

## CONCLUSION

Analyzing Pakistan's authoritarian trajectory after 2013 employing CLA hence offers an appreciation of the various and mutually constitutive layers that make up the country's politics. Thus, analyzing the events with reference to the litany, systemic, discourse/worldview, and myth/metaphor levels the study has revealed significant intertwined patterns and factors that determined the consolidation of authoritarianism in Pakistan.

### Summary of Key Findings

In the litany level, the detailed events and trends identified included the elections of 2018 and state's control of the media as well as the perception that was instilled to the public through the media they were allowed to access. These manifestations at the readily recognizable level point to the structural pathologies that have contributed significantly to the process of Pakistan's shift into an authoritarian state.

The systematic factors indicated the effects of civil military relations, role of judiciary, and economy on governance. The interference of the military in political affairs, selective activism of judiciary and the policies which work in the interest of the ruling elite have eroded the democratic structure and limited civil freedom. Consequently, legal and policy measures like the Pakistan Protection Act have reinforced autocratic practices.

The category analysis of discourse/worldview revealed the discourses that rationalize the application of authoritarianism. Authoritarian governance has become normalized because issues like strong leadership, national security and anti-corruption have influenced public speaking. These are cultures that are backed up by symbols of culture and media of the country in a manner that instills in the people a certain understanding as to why there should be authoritarianism in order to ensure that the country gains its stability and also its development.

The concept of myth/metaphor, as used in the study, explored the other structural-ideological level of these hegemonic stories. Myths, including the savior leader, the benevolent authority, and others; as well as the metaphors involving the fortress and battle, remain deeply imprinted on the people's psyche, thereby supporting authoritarian patterns of thought and behavior.

Therefore, the authoritarian turn in Pakistan after 2013 is the outcome of interactions of specific incidents, structures, discursive frames, and archetypes. Giving these factors different layers in their combination through the results of CLA gives useful orientation into the nature of authoritarianism and shows that only extensive sets of measures will be sufficient to prevent the destruction of democratic institutions and violation of civil rights. Thus, this study stresses on the fact that only dealing with the manifestations of political culture in Pakistan is not effective solution; however, there is also a need to target core causes that are systemic and cultural.

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