Theoretical Preliminaries of Military Intervention in Politics and its implications on Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Military intervention in politics is a common feature found in developing polities. Weak political institutions paved the way for military to intervene in the political process of state. The basic concern of this paper is to analyze the theoretical structure of military intervention in politics, the role of military in state as well as how its role varies in developed and developing world. It also concentrates on the implications of present theories of military intervention with special reference to Pakistan. This paper emphasis that which theory is most suitable on the case of Pakistan. The research study ends with the most appealing factors those make the political institutions weak and smooth the way for military to intervene and start their innings.

Key Words: Military intervention, Political institutions, Defence, Capacity building

Introduction

Military intervention is a general practice in most of the third world states. In developing polities military intervenes when the civilian regimes remained fail to manage their affairs properly. Military involvement fails in those states where people think that the civilian regime is legitimate and working properly. Pakistan also comes under this category where military intervened four times directly in political setup. There is also a long history of indirect intervention, involvement, interference and influence in political arena.

Since the inception of Pakistan in 1947, the national political structural framework remained weak. There were many internal and external factors those play their role regarding military intervention in politics. Political leadership never bothers to understand the demands of heterogeneous society. Power game among politicians remained continue and national interest of state remained neglected and treated as a secondary thing to think about. To understand the phenomenon of military intervention a deep theoretical understanding is required.

This research study is an effort to clarify the theoretical debate over the issue of military intervention and its variant role with respect to developed and developing world. The main objective of this research study include:

1. To examine the typology of military roles in different political structures with special reference to Pakistan.
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This study is purely a qualitative one, based on descriptive and analytical methodology to interpret the results. The data collection sources employed are both of primary and secondary nature.

The Role of Military

The word military was first used in 1585 in English. It comes from the Latin ‘militaris’ and French ‘militaire’ which possess the meaning of soldier. But now this word according to Oxford dictionary identified with meaning as someone skilled in use of weapons, engaged in warfare or military service.

The supreme duty of the institution of military is to remove direct military threat to one’s state. The conventional functions of military include:

1. Defense of the state from foreign threat and safeguard of territorial boundaries.
2. Defense of the state against internal challenges (political and public unrest)
3. To provide services in natural calamities.

The impact of military on important policy decisions varies from society to society. In some states military enjoys dominant political influence, while in some other states remains on the sidelines as a submissive servant in control of the civilian government. The role of military in politics can also be categorized differently in developed and developing world.

The Role of Military in developed world

In highly developed societies like United States, United Kingdom and Russia even the military coups are non-existent. It is obvious that in the presence of serious global security considerations and complex technological warfare needs in nuclear age have increased the importance of military over other interest groups within their societies. But still the role of this institution remain within the boundaries of civilian supremacy.

In most of the developed states mature democratic political culture prevails with high degree of political consensus. In such setup military is integrated with the political system in positive sense. The democratic norms and political values are exercised decisively through constitutional institutions. Government needs military support at a minimum to maintain itself. The institution of military pays massive support to civilian institutions and principles of constitutional and civilian supremacy prevails.

The Role of Military in Developing World

In developing world military exercised more dominant position over political affairs. In developing polities generally weak political system prevails. When political institutions lost their credibility then third force (which is military in most
of the cases) feel convenient to intervene in political process. According to Huntington’s hypothesis (1968), political institutions (i.e. political parties and interest groups) do not develop in the developing countries because social cleavages are too strong. (P.78-79) In the words of Huntington (1968): “In a praetorian system social forces confront each other nakedly; no political institutions, no corps of professional political leaders is recognized or accepted as the legitimate intermediaries to moderate group conflict. Equally important, no agreement exists among the groups as to the legitimate and authoritative method for resolving conflicts.” Under such conditions, ‘as Hobbes put it, when nothing else is turned up clubs are trumps.’ (p.196)

In certain situations the impact of military on important policy decisions increased, if this institution enjoy high public support. As well as when war seems a final possibility or public order is threatened by grave internal unrest and political disputes prevail without any solutions. These situations award the military a dominant position in society to exercise. In such scenario according to Claude, Jr and Smith (1974), military’s political role is a question not of ‘weather’ but of ‘how much’ and of ‘what kind’. (p.6)

In developing polities the mechanism to tackle heterogeneous characteristics of society does not work properly. These societies are multi-dynamic in nature with diverse traditions, cultures, tribes and even nations. This situation leads toward the composition of military of one or two nationals in majority. This raises homogeneity within the structure of military. Homogeneous structure further leads to strong cohesiveness in this institution and enables it to possess dominant role over political process of state. As an institution military has many justifications for seeking a political role. Major reasons include:

1. The military wants to increase its share in national resources.
2. One of the major reasons of military intervention in politics is the fear of national disintegration.
3. To maintain survival of the armed forces, when attempts are made to undermine military hierarchy by politicians.
4. The military also involves because of the extension in the concept of national security to include internal securities.

Above mentioned reasons of military involvement in politics are observed mostly in developing world. Many scholars have presented their views about civil-military relations to make understandable the role of military in political arena.

The Typology of Military Roles

A typology is the study of how things can be categorize and divided into different types. Various typologies of military roles are presented by different scholars. Those can be described as:
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S.E Finer

Finer’s classification about the role of military comprised on four levels. These levels deal with the role of military before coup as well as after it. The four levels of military intervention suggested by Finer (1962) are:

1. Influence
2. Blackmail
3. Displacement
4. Supplantment

He believes that at above two levels, military remains behind the scenes and works with the collaboration of civilian authorities. Military decides the policies by itself and sometimes its short term planning put in danger the national interest of the state. In developing world where the institution of military enjoys more dominant and strong position, the chances of military exploitation increase. In such situation military can pressurize the government to adopt certain policies. This strategy adopted by military is called blackmailing.

The third level of displacement refers to the removal of one particular civilian setup with another without overthrowing the civilian regime. The military feels itself unable to defend civilian setup against instability. That kind of political instability paved the way for military to intervene. The forth and most complete level of intervention is supplantment which sweeps away the civilian regime and establishes the military in its place. (P.86-87). The takeover of civilian setup by military can be with or without violence commonly known as a coup.

There is also a problem with Finer’s classification as sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between two types of military roles. For example the displacement of a civilian setup can be brought about by a military coup or by blackmailing of military.

S.P Huntington

Huntington (1962) categorized military coups in three terms,

1. Palace
2. Reform
3. Revolutionary or breakthrough coup (p. 23-24)

In proposing this typology, Huntington consider the outcomes of military coups in society. As breakthrough type of coup expand the political arena by incorporating the middle class in power sharing process while reform coup based on excluding the middle class. (P.32-33)

In reality it’s difficult to make a difference in reform and revolutionary type of coup. In most cases organizers of coup try to depict themselves as progressive or revolutionary even when they serve the interest of a small societal segment. The thrown out government may also claim that military wants to halt the progressive steps taken by government. For example in the case of Chile, supporters of the
Allende regime described the coup of 1973 as a reform or veto coup, whereas Pinochet define it as a breakthrough coup.

The major contribution of Huntington’s typology of civil military relations based on the view that military professionalism is inversely related to military intervention. In the soldier and the state, Huntington (1957) claimed that possibility of stable and unstable civil-military relations based on relations of power, professionalism and ideology.

Ideas and institutions help to govern the pattern of civil-military relations. He also believes that civilian control exists in two forms i.e. ‘Subjective’ and ‘objective’.

In subjective control, no clear line exists between military and civilian sector. While objective civilian control depicts the clear boundaries between military and civilian authority. The objective civilian control refers to the situation when civilian governments make an arrangement to grant professional autonomy in military affairs. This self-rule of military increase professionalism and neutrality in this institution.

But Huntington (1968) in his later work links the effects of military coup as a function of a changed social structure. He believes ‘the more backward the society is, the more progressive the role of its military; the more advanced a society becomes, the more conservative and reactionary becomes the role of its military’. (p.221) To prove his thesis Huntington quoted the examples of Argentina and Latin America from late nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century.

Fred Von Der Mehden

Mehden’s classification (1964) of military role comprised on three types. Those types are described as:

1. Constitutional caretaker
2. Reform or revolutionary

Above both typologies presented by Huntington and Mehden are similar in sense and based on the same criteria. That criterion revolves around the political objectives of military coup. This presented criterion is subjective in nature. He also discussed that military intervention may start with one type of coup but after throwing civilian set up, military rule has to undergo many changes. These changes may include the transformational steps by military to legitimate its rule.

Morris Janowitz

Janowitz’s typology about civil military relations is quite comprehensive as compared to the typologies discussed earlier. He presented two different models of civil military relations for developed western nations and developing states. According to Janowitz (1964) three types of civil military relations can be identify in the developed western states. Those include
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1. Aristocratic
2. Democratic
3. Totalitarian

For developing polities following types are suggested by him.

1. Authoritarian-personal
2. Authoritarian-mass
3. Democratic-competitive
4. Civil-military coalition

Military oligarchy

The problem lies with Janowitz model is that, the strength of military and civilian institutions is not properly analyzed. The degree of independence of the civilian leadership with relation to military is also not properly examined. As a result the difference between the role of military in a democracy and in authoritarian regimes is not clear. All the civil-military coalitions are grouped in the same category by Janowitz. But the civil-military coalitions in all countries must not be the same in nature or structure presented by Janowitz.

A.R Luckham

The typology of civil-military relations presented by A.R Luckham is quite comprehensive and vast as compared to earlier discussed typologies. His typology not only covers the direct involvement of military in politics but also deals with its indirect influence over civilian setup. He minutely analyzed the strength and weakness of the institutions of military and civilian as well. His typology also deals with the role of military in developed and developing world as well. Military roles according to Luckham (1971) includes:

1. Objective control
2. Constabulary control
3. Apparat control
4. Nation in arms
5. Subjective control
6. Garrison state
7. Guardian state
8. Praetorian state
9. Political vacuum

Luckham in his typology used the concept of praetorianism and applied this concept to a particular situation in developing polities. Praetorian society according to Huntington is a society in which social forces confront each other directly without any accepted legitimate arbitration body. No conflict resolution mechanism or agreement is being accepted by conflicting groups of society.

According to Norman (1978), “a modern praetorian state is one in which the military tends to intervene and potentially could dominate the political system. The
political process of this state favor the development of the military as the core group and the growth of its expectations as a ruling class; its political leadership is chiefly recruited from the military, or from groups sympathetic, or at least not antagonistic, to the military. Constitutional changes are effected and sustained by the military, and the army frequently intervenes in the government. In a praetorian state, therefore, the military plays a dominant role in political structures and institutions. A modern praetorian government may develop when civilian institutions lack legitimacy or are in a position to be dominated by the military,” (p.301)

Luckham further divided the underdeveloped states into two categories i.e. the integral (non-praetorian) and the fragmented (praetorian) to analyze the role of military in different social structures. Huntington also believes that praetorian conditions prevail in all developing politics but Luckham does not clearly admit his view and showed reservations by stating that it’s hard to identify. Luckham also ignore the impact of international environment on domestic civil-military relations of a state.

Sang Seek Park

Park’s typology is made on the basis of Luckham’s classifications with slight modifications. Park (1977) has categorized civil-military relations as,

1. The military dominant
2. The civil military fused
3. The civilian dominant
4. The civil military balanced system (p.313)

The military dominant system presented by Park is basically resembles with the military oligarchy in the Janowitz typology. But in Park’s classification, this system is further sub-divided into two types as permanent and temporary. If military decides to stay in power then it has to undergo from many transformational changes to prove its legal status.

Park also examines the role of military regarding its interference in politics and separation of military elite from civilian elite. He tries to differentiate between permanent military dominated system and civil military fused system by analyzing the role of military, either it participate actively in political process by controlling governmental power or collaborate with civilian setup.

The civil-military coalition is further divided into two types i.e. of a guardian type and of a watchdog type. In guardian type of setup military elite replaces the ruling civilian government with the new one. In such scenario, newly established government is supported and protected by the military. On the other hand the civil-military coalition of the watchdog type is a setup where military elite replace one civilian government with another and supervise it performance fully.
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Eric Nordlinger

Nordlinger (1977) believes that there is no single civilian model which can be effectively applicable widely. He paid much focus on the strategies adopted by military personals to exercise governmental power. Nordlinger assert three types of praetorian officers;

1. The moderators
2. The guardians
3. The rulers

- The moderators try to influence governmental decision without having to assume political power by themselves.
- The guardians assume political power for a limited time after overthrowing the civilian regime. They possess the aim to safeguard the state from the destructions caused by status quo. They consider themselves the savior of state. But they don’t have long term planning to stay in power.
- Third category i.e. the rulers not only want to control the government but ambitiously want to transform the society by introducing policies at grass root level. (p. 21-32)

Nordlinger argued that the actions of military forces are mainly determined by their own corporate self-interest rather than by any concept of national interest. He believes that the chances of military intervention in politics increase when military feel their interests threatened by civilian authority. So to avoid the role of military in politics, civilian setup must guarantee the military about their insecurities and reservations.

After analyzing few typologies of military roles, one should not look at them as a strict set of categories. Every state possesses a different history, culture, ideology and system. Those diversities gave birth to a different position of civil-military relations with special reference to that specific state. So one state analysis cannot be used as an example for other states. Now the focus of this research study is to analyze different theories presented about civil-military relations.

Civil-military Relations: a theoretical perspective

The study of civil-military relations requires a deep thought provoking analysis to understand its complex nature. Many scholars have presented their views in the form of theories in this regard. Theories are basically a set of assumed principles those attempts to provide rational cause and effect relationship of different phenomenon. As this research study is Pakistan’s oriented, so efforts are made to create a link between theoretical perspectives and examples of military coups in Pakistan.

Following theories are considered major regarding military intervention in politics.
**Socio-Economic development Theory**

There are many prominent names those believe on the hypothesis that socio-economic development decrease the chances of military intervention. Finer (1962) believes that propensity for military intervention decrease with increased social mobility. (p.87). Although the term of social mobility was not used by the Finer itself. He used the term of public involvement which possesses the close meaning with the term social mobility.

Social mobilization is defined by Karl. W. Deutsch (1966) as:

“The process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior”. (p.493)

Robert D. Putnam (1967), in his ten year analysis of Latin America presented five major indicators of social mobilization with relation of military influence on politics. Those indicators include urbanization, literacy rate, newspaper circulation, higher education and the distribution of radio sets. (p.96) But now in present era many new trends as mass participation, level of political culture etc. are emerging with relation to social mobilization.

According to UNICEF, mobilization is a broad scale movement to engage people's participation in achieving a specific development goal through self-reliant efforts. It involves all relevant segments of society: decision and policy makers, opinion leaders, bureaucrats and technocrats, professional groups, religious associations, commerce and industry, communities and individuals. It is a planned decentralized process that seeks to facilitate change for development through a range of players engaged in interrelated and complementary efforts. It takes into account the felt needs of the people, embraces the critical principle of community involvement, and seeks to empower individuals and groups for action.

Huntington (1968) consider in this regard that it’s not the social mobility which decrease the chances of military intervention in politics, but the incompetence of civilian institution to meet the expectations caused by rapid social mobility. (P.195-196).

This hypothesis presented by Huntington fully applies on the case of Pakistan. In Pakistan from its inception up till now institutional imbalance proves to be the one of the biggest reason of military intervention in politics. As ‘Pakistan had seven prime ministers and eight cabinets during 15th Aug1947 till October 1958’. (Rizvi, 2003, p.62) Due to the incompetence of civilian setup, in October 1958 the military swept aside the fragile political institutions and established its direct rule. After the first military coup in Pakistan, history repeated itself four times in the case of Pakistan.

Another hypothesis proposed by Germani and Silvert (1961), based on the reason that military intervention is inhibited by the rise of middle strata in the
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social structure. They argued that middle class has the motivation and capability to create and sustain stable political institutions. (P.62-80).

Aristotle also has the view that middle class is like the backbone of society. This class consist on philosophers, teachers, doctors, engineers etc. those lay the foundations of any civilized society. In the context of economic development, Finer stated that economic development especially industrialization decrease or minimize the chances of military intervention. In the case of Pakistan, the era of Field Marshal Ayub Khan is known as a golden period of industrialization and development. But this era created two classes in society i.e. privileged and under privileged class which gave birth to unstable society and afterwards toward the disintegration of Pakistan 1971.

Keith Hopkins (1966) maintains that military intervention is the characteristic of developing countries and especially lower income developing countries observe more military interventions in politics. (p.175).

Gorman (1967) also stated that lower income status countries are more prone to military coups. Jenkins and Kposowa (1990) also contributed that foreign debt problems pave the way for military coup.

Deteriorated economic conditions increase the chance of military intervention and when civilian setup remains unable to solve the core economic issues, then the chances of intervention increase. Huntington (1968) also presented a view regarding military intervention “as the political system becomes more complex, coups become more difficult” (p.17-20)

**Political development theory**

Many scholars believe on the hypothesis that political development of a society decreases the chances of military intervention. According to Riggs (1963) political development “refers to the process of politicization: increasing participation or involvement of the citizen in state activities, in power calculations and consequences.”(p.139)

simple words the indicators of political development includes strong civil institutions, strong political institutions and strong democratic values. If these indicators lack in any society then government may face the legitimacy crisis. Legitimacy crisis can open the door for military intervention. Gavin Kennedy (1974) provided statistical prove about military coups in his twelve year research (1960-72) in third world states, which shows that the more fragile the political legitimacy, the more chances of military coups. (p.25).

The political development leads toward modernization but where it lacks, participation crisis emerge. That crisis gave intervention opportunities to military. Huntington (1977) in his approach of “Political development and decay” focuses on the political institutionalization, organizations and its procedures. Imbalance between social mobilization and political development became the reason of
political decay in a society. In the scenario of social mobilization, if political institutions will be weak and unable to fulfill public demands and resolve conflicts then military would get an opportunity to intervene in politics.

In Pakistan from its inception the phenomenon of political development remained as a least concerned area. People were not given with the chance to elect their representatives. Elections were not conducted for a long time. First general elections were conducted in 1970s, after twenty three years of Pakistan’s creation. After those elections, lack of peaceful power transfer norm leads toward the disintegration of state. Political institutions remained weak and unstable to face any crisis. Constitution formation took long nine years. Suppressive Government policies created the sense of alienation in the people of East Pakistan which leads toward debacle of Dhaka.

Finer’s (1962) division of states according to maturity of their political culture focus on the view that only states with a mature political culture are actually protected from military coups. Finer has presented four types of political culture, those include mature, developed, low and minimal. The mature political culture is a culture where consensus and mobilization level is very high. He stated that all other states where even little imbalance prevail between mobilization and consensus, the chances of military coups increase. (P.88-89).

**The centrality of military theory**

The advocates of this theory believe that the greater military resources and cohesion of this institution increase the chance of military intervention. (Mayer and Burnett, 1977). If military’s economic resources increase over civilian resources or military enjoy a big share in national economy, then it emerges as a very strong institution in the state. In present era of insecurity and terrorism, states like to maintain large professional armies. These large armies demand higher resources. This situation leads toward more chances of military intervention.

According to Finer (1988), a centralized chain of command, military discipline and extensive communication increase the cohesion (feeling of that group’s solidarity) of military. These all factors made military a cohesive group. This group becomes an ever threat of intervention for civilian setup. On the contrary Huntington (1957) believes that military professionalism is inversely related to military intervention. (p.8-11). he argued that modern professional sense keeps military away from intervention.

A Jacques van Doorn (1969) state that, Huntington’s view of professionalism is far from reality as far as developing countries are concerned. In developing polities where political structures are weak, “military professionalism rather than constituting a mainstay of order is a time bomb without a prearranged moment of explosion” (P.30)

This was the same case with Pakistan. After independence, all institutions has to take a start from zero except Military and Bureaucracy. As these institutions
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were already well established and trained, independence of Pakistan just bring about the division of these institutions between the two states. Due to the enmity with India, Pakistan has to spend a major portion of her budget on defence purposes. It is stated that Pakistan spent 59.51% of the total expenditure on defence during the period 1948-59. (Rizvi, 2000, p.58). These circumstances awarded military with an autonomous and powerful status in society. Military started to feel itself parallel and even superior over fragile political institutions under the shadow of Indian threat perceptions. That is why military face no difficulty to intervene in civilian political setup.

Organizational format theory

The attributes of this theory maintained that military is an organized institution and hierarchical in nature. In military, commands are obeyed not debated. Strong chain of command can be seen in the institution of military only. These all characteristics give military a distinctive status as compared to other institutions. According to Finer (1962), “the armed forces enjoy three massive political advantages over civilian organizations: a marked superiority in organization, a highly emotionalized symbolic status and a monopoly of arms. (p.6)

Another major intention showed within the organizational format theory is the highly nationalism and patriotism of military officers. Janowitz suggests that at the core of these themes is the strong sense of nationalism and national identity on the part of military.

Conflict and regional differences theory

The proposers of this theory pay focus on the view that internally weak and divided societies are more prone to military intervention. According to Jenkins and Kposowa (1992) the ethnic resentment includes cultural diversity of groups, ethnic supremacy, ethnic competition and rivalry as causes of military intervention in mostly heterogeneous societies. (P.271-92)

Morrison and Stevenson (1972) maintain that the greater the number and cultural diversity of the groups, the greater the elite instability is. The larger the number of groups and potential cleavages, and so less stable coalitions which creates the greater likelihood of intervention. (P.82-86). This theoretical notion can be observed practically in separation of East Pakistan in 1971. When regional differences and internal conflicts become so worse that military also remained unable to settle down the situation.

In diverse societies when government remain unable to solve internal conflicts then this situation may lead to a disastrous for the state. The unstable political setup always give way to military intervention. The Governments must technically deal with this situation and try to satisfy all societal segments.
Custodian Theory

One of the prominent names of the presenter of this theory, Dibie (2003) stated that the institution of military is the custodian of state’s constitution. When constitution is being violated by civilian authority, then military thought its responsibility to intervene and save the country from constitutional crisis. (p.102). Huntington argued that military intervene in politics when civilian government lost its legitimacy and remain unable to deliver according to the wishes of people.

Pakistan experienced four times direct military intervention in political arena. Whenever a military dictators assume power, they showed their sincerity towards state and nation.

Few examples are as: (Rizvi, 2000)

“This is a drastic and extreme step taken with great reluctance but with the deepest conviction that there was no alternative to it except the disintegration and complete ruination of the country.”

Ayub Khan, 8 October 1958

“The armed forces could not remain idle spectators of this state of near anarchy. They have to do their duty and save the country from utter disaster.”

Yahya Khan, 26 March 1969

“I was obliged to step into to fill the vacuum created by the political leaders.”

Zia-ul-Haq, 5 July 1977

“I wish to inform you that the armed forces have moved in as a last resort to prevent any further destabilization.”

Pervez Musharraf, 13 October 1999

Conclusion

While concluding the theories of military intervention, one can state that all theorists presented their views with rationale. But one theory cannot be used as an example for all cases. To understand the phenomenon of military intervention, multi-factors model have to keep in mind while analyzing. In the light of above discussed theories major reasons of military intervention includes:

- Weak political institutions
- Deteriorated economic situations
- Constitutional crisis
- Security threats
- Weak consensus building
- Weak political parties
- Incompetent and corrupt leadership
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- Low literacy level
- Sense of identity crisis in different societal sections
- Weak social mobility
- Low level of political culture
- Foreign influence

Above stated reasons are interlinked with each other. It’s a vicious circle of different factors, those move on not with same intensity in every case of military intervention but with slight modifications with the context of specific circumstances. So while concluding one can analyze that in the case of Pakistan, all above stated factors perform their role in bringing military out of their barracks. The need of hour is to overcome the major causes responsible for military intervention.
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