**Power politics: A new equation**

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Greed and power are the defining features of human nature. This has also been alluded to in Classical Realism, that the desire for power and conflict are inherent features of human nature. This inbuilt desire for power, when comes into play with politics, gives rise to ‘power politics.’ Ramesses, Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler, and Laquan are just a few examples of historical figures who sought absolute power. Its undesired consequences include corruption, power abuse, friction between state institutions, competition for limited resources, maintenance of the status quo, blame game, factionalism, rigging, clientelism, etc.

According to Professor Martin Wight, power politics is the relationship between independent powers. Independent powers are synonymous with major/dominating powers in the international arena. At the international level, power politics—realpolitik foreign policy—refers to using moral persuasion, economic sanctions, and military pressures to achieve desired objectives. While in domestic politics, power politics refers to the means upon which state actors rely to obtain their ends locally. According to Keith Dowding and James Bernard Murphy, ‘power is intimately associated with agency, flowing from individual actors’ conscious intentions and choices.’ Another powerful explanation of power politics can be found in Marxism. Marxists associate power primarily with control over state resources, decision-making processes, and exercising control over the hearts and minds of the public.

[PMD predicts dry weather in most parts of country](https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Sep-2022/pmd-predicts-dry-weather-in-most-parts-of-country)

Considering the above theoretical background, let us have a look at Pakistan’s political outlook. Pakistan’s political history is replete with examples that prove that political parties have been competing to strengthen their foothold rather than working toward a collective national goal. Pakistan is still lagging in democratisation as its political elite has been wrangling and conspiring against each other to take control of the government—a cult for power. It is also evident from the fact that out of 157 registered political parties, only two or three parties have dominated Pakistan’s political stage. Power has been oscillating between civil and military leadership. However, none has been successful in meeting and fulfilling the public mandate. The political tussle for power has also created rifts between the other tiers of government that no one is ready to co-exist and bear the burden of accountability while wishing to retain the power status quo.

The domestic political landscape of Pakistan is the perfect illustration of power politics. The current political landscape is dominated by blame-game tactics and moulding decisions and institutions to safeguard the political elite’s interests/mandate over national interests. State institutions are being criticised and ridiculed by the ruling elite and the opposition. They only hold regard for the institutions that favour them; otherwise, they are criticised for overreach. This has resulted in making Pakistan a polarised and unstable society. Such conduct of the political leadership poses severe threats to the security and stability of the country and is inimical to the long-term national interests of the state.

[Pakistan reports 43 coronavirus cases, three deaths in 24 hours](https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Sep-2022/pakistan-reports-43-coronavirus-cases-three-deaths-in-24-hours)

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, was a staunch advocate of a democratic state. However, his early death and lack of desire in his successors to carry his vision led to the power politics we see in play today. Such attitude on the part of his successors tarnished not only the image of Pakistan but has also become one of the constants behind the current political instability in the country.

Pakistan, as a nation, has tried and assessed both civil and military rule. Unfortunately, both executed agendas that fanned power politics and neglected their social contract with the people. It is time for a new equation. A new equation that focuses more on the principle of division/decentralisation of power, defined roles and responsibilities, the introduction of political and institutional reforms to bring them at par with democratic functioning, establishing a neutral base for the conduct of civil-military relations, limiting authority to curtail power abuse, and drafting of a mutual national mandate to be meticulously and religiously followed by all the state institutions and whoever comes into power. This process of political overhaul requires momentous efforts and time on the part of the political elite, state institutions, and the public to make Pakistan more stable, prosperous, and a better living place for future generations.