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Democratisation in Context

*A Phenomenological inquiry into the role of internationally funded
Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Pakistan*

By

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the degree of
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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work. Information and excerpts obtained from other sources have been duly acknowledged and cited. This thesis has not been submitted in part or in full for a degree or diploma to University of Warwick or any other university.

Abstract

By applying a lens of hermeneutic phenomenology, in this study I explore how democratisation is experienced by the internationally funded non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The argument is based on the hermeneutic analysis of 27 interviews with NGOs' personnel including the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), directors and programme staff of the internationally funded democracy promotion programmes. Another 13 interviews were conducted with senior parliamentarians, politicians, journalists, academics and the advisors of bilateral and multilateral British and US development organisations. The argument presented in this thesis, is therefore an attempt to articulate the lived-experiences of the research participants.

Adopting a contextual approach, I contend that the liberal conceptions of NGOs as well as their critiques in the Marxist and Gramscian traditions, give scant attention to what NGOs do in democratisation in their socio-political context. Existing conceptions and their critiques debate about what NGOs ought to do in democratisation and what they fail to do. Thus, they are limited to normative conceptualisation and are evaluative in nature. This thesis challenges this normative lens by advancing an alternative perspective. I suggest that contrary to the dominant academic standpoint on democratisation that sees NGOs as building democratic culture and institutions at grass-root level, the internationally funded NGOs in Pakistan operate as an elitist group. For my argument, I call them NGelites (elite NGOs).

By examining the socio-political context of democratic deficit and the roles of NGelites in Pakistan, I argue that democratisation now does not involve grass-root mobilisation, volunteerism, and ideological persuasion. It is 'projectised': Led by highly paid professionals, it is a depoliticised, bureaucratically managed and skilled activity. The projectised democratisation is a 'balancing act' by which NGelites navigate the space in Pakistan's elitist political edifice. I conclude that NGOs in democratisation are neither good nor bad. They are not only constituted by the socio-political culture in which they operate, they also constitute it.

Abbreviations

AIML: All India Muslim League
ANP: Awami National Party
APC: All Parties Conference
APWA: All Pakistan Women's Association
AusAID: Australian Agency for International Development
CEO: Chief Executive Officer
CPEC: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
COAS: Chief of Army Staff
CIDA: Canadian International Development Agency
CBO: Community Based Organisations
CDNS: Council of Defence and National Security
COP: Combined Opposition Parties
CSO: Civil Society Organisation
DAI: Development Alternatives Inc.
DANIDA: Denmark's Development Cooperation
DCHD: Democratic Commission for Human Rights and Development
DFID: Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
ECP: Election Commission of Pakistan
EU: European Union
FAFEN: Free and Fair Election Network
FATA: Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FIA: Federal Investigating Agency
HRCP: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
IJI: Islami Jamhuri Ittihad (Islamic Democratic Alliance)
ISI: Inter-Services Intelligence body
JUI: Jamiat-Ulma-e-Islam
KP Province: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province
LFO: Legal Framework Order (LFO)
ML: Muslim League
MQM: Muhajir Quami Movement
MRD: Movement for the Restoration of Democracy

NAB: National Accountability Bureau
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCHR: National Commission for Human Rights Pakistan (NCHR)
NDI: National Democratic Institute
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation
NED: National Endowment for Democracy
NORAD: The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRSP: National Rural Support Programme
NSC: National Security Council
NWFP: North-West Frontier Province
OSCE: Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAR: Participatory Action Research
PCO: Provisional Constitutional Order
PILDAT: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency
PML: Pakistan Muslim League
PML-N: Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz
PML-Q: Pakistan Muslim League – Quaid-e-Azam
PNA: Pakistan National Alliance
PPAF: Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund
PPP: Pakistan People’s Party
PLSC: Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Consortium
PTI: Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaaf
SAP-PK: South Asia Partnership Pakistan
SNPLG: Strengthening National and Provincial Legislative Governance
SPO: Strengthening Participatory Organisation
UK: United Kingdom
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UN: United Nations
UP: United Provinces
US: United States of America
USAID: United States Agency for International Development
VSO: Voluntary Sector Organisation
WAF: Women Action Forum

Glossary

<i>Biradiri</i>	Kinship
<i>Chaddar and Chardiwari</i>	A phrase which suggests that women should stay within the bounds of their homes and families.
<i>Chowk</i>	Intersection of roads
<i>Dharna</i>	A sit-in protest
<i>Dupatta</i>	Long scarves
<i>Jamat-e-Islami</i>	Islamist political party of Pakistan
<i>Hudood</i>	Plural of <i>Hadd</i> , lit. limit. The term is used in this thesis to refer to a series of Islamic Ordinances implemented in Pakistan under General Zia-ul-Haq's regime
<i>Jihad</i>	Holy struggle of Muslims
<i>Khilafat</i>	viceregency
<i>Madrassa</i>	Religious seminary
<i>Majlis-e-shura</i>	An advisory council or consultative council
<i>Mullah</i>	Clergyman
<i>Nazim</i>	District Administrator
<i>Qanoon-e-Shahadat</i>	Law of evidence
<i>Quran</i>	The religious text and primary source of Islamic law believed by Muslims to be the word of God. The Holy Book for Muslims.
<i>Salariat</i>	Emerging urban class of Pakistan consisting of professionals, salaried civil bureaucrats and politicians
<i>Sharia/Shariat/Shariah</i>	Islamic law, as a conceptual category
<i>Sunnah</i>	Tradition (the way of Prophet for Muslims)
<i>Wadera</i>	Feudal
<i>Ushr</i>	Agriculture tax

Zakat

annual mandatory tax on unspent wealth beyond a prescribed minimum, for the poor and needy

List of Legal Cases and Statues Cited

Cases

Moulvi Tamizuddin Khan v. The Federation of Pakistan [PLD 1955 Sind 96]

Federation of Pakistan and others v. Moulvi Tamziddun Khan [PLD 1955 Federal Court 240]

State v. Dosso and another [PLD 1958 SC 533]

Begum Nusrat Bhutto v. The Chief of the Army Staff and Another [PLD 1977 SC 657; 1977 (3) PSCR. 1]

Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif v. President of. Pakistan [PLD 1993 SC 473]

Syed Zafar Ali Shah and others v General Pervez Musharraf [PLD 2000 SC 869]

Shafqat Hussain v. The President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, etc. [W.P. 1096 of 2015 Islamabad]

Statutes

Bodies (Disqualification) Order (EBDO) of 1959, Pakistan

West Punjab Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1962, Pakistan

The Provisional Constitutional Order, 1999, Pakistan

The Constitution (Eighteenth Amendment) Act, 2010, Pakistan

The Foreign Contributions Regulation Act, 2015, Pakistan

Chapter I: Introduction

I did not enter in this research with a selected theoretical frame. My orientation to the research was personal and developed as I worked for Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) during 2004 - 2005. In this brief experience of promoting democracy from the professional platform of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) – which was financially supported by the international funding agencies – the puzzle of whether and how do internationally funded NGOs contribute to democratisation first emerged. I began to question more in-depth about the nature of democratisation itself. Since my motivation arose from my lived experience of working with NGOs, I was naturally inclined to learn through the experiences of the people involved in democratisation. I wanted to see their ways of seeing, engaging, assigning meanings to democratisation. This inclination of learning through the lived experiences, embedded my research firmly in the qualitative research domain. Hermeneutic phenomenology does not just provide the methods of investigating the lived experiences, it also frames my conceptual gaze. For this research, setting out this methodological and conceptual framework, I faced two challenges which at the time felt intractable.

Firstly, I needed to decide whether I was observing the lived experiences of NGOs as organisations, or of the people involved in NGOs. Secondly, exposing and reflecting on my own assumptions and becoming conscious of them was not easy. To the first challenge, I concluded that although I am focusing on NGOs as organisations, it was really through exploring and analysing the perceptions, actions and behaviours of individuals working for them that would lead me to the lived experience of democratisation. Therefore, separating them from their organisation might undermine their individual identity which was partially constituted by their organisations. I assumed, that their lived experiences of democratisation were partially constituted by their work environment.

Secondly, I became conscious of my own assumptions about NGOs and about the people in them with gradual interaction through interviews, writing reflective memos and rich descriptions during the eight months of my fieldwork. Such consciousness

helped me with questioning the dominant normative lenses which most academic literatures apply in either prescribing an axiomatic status to civil society and NGOs in democratisation or critiquing them against the liberal benchmarks of ‘good’ public institutions promoting democracy as the transformative force. Such ‘normative framing’ of NGOs does not help with examining the ways NGOs do things and what that teaches us about them. Revealing empirical contextual reality of NGOs in democratisation forms the rationale for my research. Thus, I began to see that the procedural and minimalist conceptions of democracy, constitutionalism and democratisation as advanced by O’Donnell and Schmitter¹ within the transition theory paradigm could be used to analyse the transitional democracy in Pakistan.

The thesis which I present, therefore, represents theoretically informed lived experiences of my research participants, including myself. Thus, the thesis contests the polarised understanding of democratisation and offers nuanced insights by showing that the NGOs in Pakistan are neither good nor bad: they are the product of the socio-political environment in which they operate. From this standpoint, this thesis suggests that internationally funded Pakistani NGOs are increasingly becoming a part of the political elite. They navigate their ways into politics by engaging and supporting democratisation ‘from above’ and consider it as a necessary condition to sustain and strengthen democratic institutions. In this sense, the thesis argues that democratisation in Pakistan is now perceived as projectised: steered by well-paid professionals, it is a depoliticised, bureaucratically organised, and skilled activity. This thesis unfolds in the following manner.

It is structured in two distinct parts. Chapters II and III form the first part of this thesis. Chapter II critically considers the wider theories and practices of democratisation and the roles of NGOs in it, while Chapter III describes and explains my research approach which responds to the calls for interdisciplinary approaches to researching democratisation, which by far, are rarely applied. In this sense, this study adopts a novel methodological approach. Chapters IV, V, VI and VII form the second part. In these chapters, I focus on researching and interpreting the lived experiences of NGOs in

¹ O’Donnell, G., and Schmitter, P., (1986) *Transitions from authoritarian rule: Tentative conclusions about uncertain democracies*. Johns Hopkins University.

democratising Pakistan. I conclude with my reflections on the nature of democratisation as a contingent and unpredictable process, embedded in its context. Below I briefly discuss both sections and explain how this thesis presents the argument.

Followed by the introduction, Chapter II explores the concepts of democracy, constitutionalism, civil society and NGOs as they form the basis for understanding democratisation. The purpose of this chapter is to situate the wider debates, and narrow the focus, in the context of this research, i.e. Pakistan's perpetual democratic transition. In doing so, the conception of democratic transition from authoritarian rules, developed by O'Donnell and Schmitter is explored in detail. With regards to defining the fundamental conceptions of democracy, constitutionalism and civil society, I settle for the procedural and minimalist conceptions which give importance to establishing the 'procedural minimum' of democratic governance focusing on regular elections, universal adult suffrage, partisan competition, associational recognition and access.

After finalising my theoretical assumptions in Chapter II, I move to introducing, describing and justifying my research methodology in Chapter III. I discuss hermeneutic phenomenology by examining its epistemological, ontological and axiological orientations and style of writing. I outline reasons for constructing the narrative in an evocative, reflexive and personalised manner. I also elaborate research methods with an emphasis on bracketing common sense; conducting interviews; producing thick descriptions and illuminating the essences through themes and interpretation and present an autobiographical tale about how and why I became interested in this research. The aim is to justify the suitability of hermeneutic phenomenology for this research.

Chapter IV is a beginning of my empirical section. It sets out the context of democratic deficit and resilience which shapes the roles of NGOs in Pakistan. I describe and analyse the history and practices of democratisation in Pakistan in four distinct 'waves': 'testing democracy' (1947-1958), 'idealising democracy' (1972-1977), 'personalising democracy' (1989-1998) and 're-constitutionalising democracy' (2008-). Categorised as periods of time with a focus on the key political events and actors, these waves capture the history of Pakistan's struggle in establishing democracy over seventy years. Chapter V begins to discuss that over the years, there has been a gradual shift in NGOs'

approaches to democratisation in Pakistan. It illuminates how that shift has come about and explores the meanings of the terms: ‘fight’, ‘movement’, ‘distorted process’, and ‘projectised democratisation’. I conclude this chapter by discussing how NGOs moved away from pro-actively advocating for a democratic political system against the odds of dictatorship in the 1980s, to implementing neatly designed and lucratively funded projects for instituting a democratic system from the late 1990s onwards. I also suggest in this chapter that though the research participants agree that democratisation - as a process – does not (anymore) involve dissent, fight or a movement for democracy, their opinions differ on what constitutes the projectised democratisation: its nature and purpose. In Chapter VI, I unpack this theme and illuminate the environment in which NGOs operate and how this circumscribes their roles in democratisation in distinct ways. In Chapter VII, I conclude the thesis by bringing together the theoretical discussions and empirical insights and discussing the theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions that this research makes in the academic literatures on democratisation.

Chapter II: NGOs in democratisation

In which concepts are defined, assumptions get exposed, and implications for theories are examined.

Introduction

What might we understand by ‘democratisation’ (as a process) and ‘NGOs’ (as actors)? How do the conceptions of ‘democracy’, ‘civil society’ and ‘constitutionalism’ underscore the dual concerns of this study? In this chapter, reviewing the literature on theories and practices of democratisation, I respond to these questions, discuss the key concepts and engage with the academic debates on NGOs in democratisation. It is imperative to gain deeper insights into the nature and role of civil society in general, and NGOs in particular, in theories and practices of democratisation. Through this in-depth review and understanding of the literature, lacunae in the existing conceptualisations of NGOs in democratisation will emerge and the *problematique* of the nature of democratisation, democratic deficit and NGOs in it, would become intelligible.

In this chapter I consider a range of theories and definitions encompassing the literatures on democratisation, civil society, constitutionalism, international development, democratic theory, elite theory and political philosophy. However, for the purposes of brevity and relevance in the context of Pakistan, where I have undertaken my inquiry, I gradually narrow the focus on debates in democratic transitions.¹

¹ There are distinct theoretical approaches to democratic transition. For a critical literature review, see Guo, S., (1999) Democratic Transition: A Critical Overview. *ISSUES AND STUDIES-ENGLISH EDITION*-, 35, pp.133-148.

On the ‘waves of democratisation’, see Huntington, S.P., (1991) *The third wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century*. University of Oklahoma press.

On the Structural Approaches to democratic transition, see Przeworski, A., (1991) Democracy and the market: Political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America. Cambridge University Press; Lipset, S.M., (1959) Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy. *American political science review*, 53(1), pp.69-105; Almond, G. and Verba, S., (1963) The civic culture: Political attitudes and democracy in five countries. Princeton University Press.

On the Strategic Choice and Institutional Approaches, see O'Donnell, G., and Schmitter, P., (1986) Transitions from authoritarian rule: Tentative conclusions about uncertain democracies. Johns Hopkins University; and Karl, T.L., (1990) Dilemmas of democratization in Latin America. *Comparative politics*, 23(1), pp.1-21.

Following the scoping of varieties of definitions, I settle for democracy, constitutionalism and democratisation as understood in their minimalist *procedural* conceptions. NGOs in this thesis are considered as part of the wider civil society. They aim to promote democracy by shaping government policy and legislation; are officially established; registered within the state law; run by employed staff (urban professionals or expatriates); well-supported either by domestic or international funding; and are often relatively large and well-resourced as compare to other civil society groups.

Next, I explore the relation between NGOs and democratisation. Staying within the debates on democratic transitions, I move beyond theoretical discussions to include empirical literature on democratic transitions from the global South. The purpose here is to draw insights from elsewhere to broaden the scope of the debate and develop the argument that a contextual approach to studying NGOs in democratisation is vital. In so doing, I contend that both the liberal conceptions of democratisation and their critiques are framed within the ‘normative’ conceptions of democracy which either *prescribe* or *evaluate* NGOs and their roles in democratisation against the liberal benchmark of a ‘good’ civil society. Such framing of NGOs does not help us to reflect upon the *ways NGOs do things* and what that teaches us *about them*. In this sense, the nature of internationally funded democratisation and the roles of NGOs in distinct spheres remain hidden. Therefore, to understand what NGOs in democratisation *actually* do, one needs to study them in their contexts. This contextual and methodological focus must leave aside normative framing of either appreciation or critical evaluation of NGOs against liberal benchmarks of democracy and civil society.

Finally, I articulate the theoretical contribution of this thesis. Informed by the lived experiences of NGOs in democratisation in the context of Pakistan, I highlight gaps in the existing democratic transition literature and its emphasis on the ‘resurrected’ civil society. With a particular reference to O’Donnell and Schmitter’s transition theory I argue that contrary to *how* the roles of NGOs (within the wider civil society) are conceptualised as generating norms for liberalisation; condemning and exposing

There are other models. For a detailed discussion on theories and models of democratisation, see Teorell, J., (2010) *Determinants of democratization: Explaining regime change in the world, 1972–2006*. Cambridge University Press.

regime's corruption; and creating a general climate "of intense ethical rejection of the (outgoing) authoritarian regime,"² NGOs with international financial and ideological support in democratic transitions may in fact emerge as the elite of civil society. Yet *similar to* the ways in which bourgeoisie political and economic elite act in democratic transitions, NGOs may also – for vested interests – support the political elite and push the processes of transition by advocating for a less radical and more procedural transition. I call them *NGelites* (a portmanteau of elite-NGOs). I then bring insights from elite theories in sociology to begin to comprehend the nature of NGOs as elite actors.

I conclude by reflecting on the usefulness of an interpretive and contextual approach to studying democratisation which enabled me to *see* and *acknowledge* the phenomenon of democratisation as it revealed itself in the lived experiences of NGOs and other concerned actors. I also outline the importance of this approach for further research on democratisation.

Theories and Practices

The complexity of global and local trends in democratisation, with their differences and commonalities, reveals its strongly political nature.³ On the one hand democratisation is profoundly dependent on the state and activism of its citizens, political participation, liberalisation and constitutionalism. On the other hand, democratisation corresponds to and is affected by global social and political developments. As a result, varieties of democracy – norms and practices – are developing.⁴ Such complexity and dynamism between theory and practice call for equally complex interdisciplinary academic perspectives and methodologies combining political, legal, historical, cultural, and social anthropological approaches to inform and expand the existing theories of democratisation and democracy.⁵ There have also been growing demands for studying

² O'Donnell and Schmitter (n 1) p52.

³ Munck, G.L., (2011) Democratic theory after transitions from authoritarian rule. *Perspectives on Politics*, 9(2), pp.333-343.

⁴ Diversity in the models of democracy makes the concept a 'norm' or an 'ideal' and essentially a contested and 'value-laden' project. See Arblaster, A., (2002) *Democracy*. Open University Press, Buckingham, Philadelphia.

⁵ Přibán, J., (2012) Varieties of transition from authoritarianism to democracy. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 8, pp.105-121.

democratisation from an ethnographic perspective which focuses on how it is *experienced* by the main actors themselves.⁶

To be sure, there is no dearth of quantitative and qualitative studies to inform theories and practices of democratisation. However, the key concerns remain: Why do some countries become democracies and others do not? Why and how do some countries consolidate democracy while others revert toward authoritarianism? How might we understand the democratic deficit and authoritarian trends in countries which oscillate between democratic and authoritarian forms of government? These and similar concerns with regards to conditions for a transition from some form of authoritarianism to democracy are an investigation of the overarching question of ‘What explains democracy?’⁷

In the context of Pakistan, the conundrum of democratic deficit (encompassing the questions above) remains unresolved.⁸ Recurrent reversals of democratic governments to long-term military dictatorships have marked the country in the category of states in which democratisation does not move from transition to consolidation. As one of the largest and by far the most strategically influential countries, in Pakistan, the “damage done to democratic institutions and norms, state capacity, public services, and civil society.....has been too great.”⁹ Diamond argues that Pakistan’s descent into a ‘potentially failed’ state must be carefully examined “for it starkly depicts the problems of governance and state capacity that threaten many third-wave democracies.....”¹⁰ It is also important to note however that the nature of democratic deficit in Pakistan is not just the recurrence of ‘reversals’ to military dictatorships; it is the ‘oscillation’ between democratic and autocratic rules.¹¹ This

⁶ Teorell (n 1) p156.

⁷ Munck (n 3). In this sense, questions of democratisation are essentially the inquiry of an ever-evolving nature of democracy as a normative ideal. Democratisation becomes a struggle about the very nature of democracy. On this debate, see Luckham and White. (1996), quoted in Burnell, P., ed., (2010) *Democratization through the looking glass*. Transaction Publishers. p11.

⁸ See Chapter IV which discusses democratisation in Pakistan for a detailed discussion.

⁹ Diamond, L.J., (2000) Is Pakistan the (reverse) wave of the future? *Journal of Democracy*, 11(3), pp.91-106.

¹⁰ Ibid. p94. Samuel Huntington first developed the conception of ‘waves’ to study the developments in democratisation. He suggests that a wave of democratisation is a transition from nondemocratic to democratic regime that occurs within a specified period of time. A reverse wave is when transition to democracy reverts to nondemocratic rule. See Huntington, S.P., (1991) *Democracy's third wave*. *Journal of democracy*, 2(2), pp.12-34.

¹¹ See Chapter IV which discusses democratisation in Pakistan.

suggests a desire for democracy even when state institutions are weak and conditions for democracy are failing. In this sense, the ‘pre-determined’ structure-oriented explanations for democratic deficit might not reveal much about the situation in Pakistan. One needs to also stress on the political ‘actor-oriented’ aspects in undertaking a systematic analysis. In view of this dual focus on structure and actors, I see the relevance of the transition theory developed by O’Donnell and Schmitter in early 1980s.¹² They begin with the ‘structure-actor centric’ approach and argue that in transitions from authoritarian rule to democracy, ‘democratisation from above’ as *pacted* democratisation is premised on the compromises between political elite. Accountability of the political elite (including the outgoing military rulers) is avoided and building autonomous institutional arrangements are discouraged. Yet democracy is established ironically by undemocratic means. Throughout this chapter, I will refer to these approaches and will gradually narrow my analysis to contribute to their theory with reference to the roles of NGOs and civil society in transition from authoritarian rule. Thus, a focus on transition theories in the context of Pakistan, is justified.

Coming back to academic debates on democratisation, there have been growing claims that the scholarship on democratisation is facing an impasse – “the democratisation bandwagon bogged down in the quick sands of so-called hybrid or semi- or pseudo-democratic regimes.”¹³ Moreover, despite the continued financial and ideological support provided by Western democracy promotion and development programmes to the emerging and neo-democracies,¹⁴ the rise of ‘illiberal democracies’¹⁵ is particularly troubling. This raises another concern about democracy promotion: should democracy

¹² O’Donnell and Schmitter (n 1).

¹³ Hinnebusch, R., (2006) Authoritarian persistence, democratization theory and the Middle East: An overview and critique. *Democratization*, 13(3), pp.373-395.p373.

¹⁴ To borrow the term by Schmitter. See Schmitter, P.C., (2012) Ambidextrous democratization and its implications for MENA. Manuscript, Florence: European University Institute. Available at <http://www.eui.eu/Documents/DepartmentsCentres/SPS/Profiles/Schmitter/AmbidextrousDemocratization.pdf>, accessed May, 14, 2016.

¹⁵ Zakaria, F., (1997) The rise of illiberal democracy. *Foreign affairs*, pp.22-43; See also Burnell, P. and Youngs, R. eds., (2009) New challenges to democratization. Routledge. Burnell and Youngs state that according to the Freedom House Annual Survey for 2007 the total number of democracies reached a plateau (121 democracies) but that levels of freedom were starting to erode. p2.

be promoted or supported where it does not exist?¹⁶ Answers to this and the previously listed questions remain elusive.¹⁷

Among other mechanisms in democratisation,¹⁸ the role of civil society is believed to be central to the success of democratisation. Civil society (NGOs included) is considered as the ‘crucial arena’¹⁹ for the development of democratic institutions and democratic culture of tolerance, compromise, and moderation; of ‘uncoerced human action’²⁰; and a buffer against the intrusion of state.²¹ But as the skepticism grew on approaches to democratisation, the role of civil society in democratisation is also being questioned.²²

These preliminary observations stress the diversity and complexity of theories and practices of democratisation. As I seek explanations behind the conundrum of a perpetual democratic deficit in Pakistan, the nature of democratisation and the roles of NGOs in it, this diversity and complexity call for critical reflections on the underlying conceptions of democracy, constitutionalism and civil society. It is important to *define* these conceptions for this study. I now turn to defining democracy, constitutionalism, civil society, democratisation and NGOs within it.

Conceptual Boundaries

In this thesis, rather than choosing a single theoretical framework for doing empirical research, I draw on a wide range of theories of democracy, constitutionalism, civil

¹⁶ Bridoux, J. and Kurki, M., (2014) Democracy promotion: a critical introduction. Routledge. p1

¹⁷ Burnell and Youngs (n 14) assert that the failures of democratisation must push scholars to think harder about the relevance of Western-derived analytical frameworks and models of democracy in diverse societies. p5.

¹⁸ Burnell, P.J. and Calvert, P. eds., (2004) Civil society in democratization. Psychology Press. Approaches to democracy promotion with foreign assistance includes use of force, political and economic conditionalities and democracy assistance to the states and civil society to promote democracy.

¹⁹ Plattner, M.F. and Diamond, L.J., (1994) Rethinking civil society. *Journal of Democracy*, 5(3), pp 4-17. p3.

²⁰ Walzer, M., (1991) The civil society argument. *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift*, 94(1). Pp 1-11. p1.

²¹ Cohen, J.L. and Arato, A., (1994) Civil society and political theory. MIT press.

²² This debate is discussed in the later part of this chapter. However, for prompt reference for the critique on the role of civil society in democratisation see Howell, J. and Pearce, J., (2001) Civil Society and Development: A Critical Exploration. Boulder, Co.: Lynne Rienner; Ottaway, M. (2005) Civil Society in Burnell, P., Randall, V. and Rakner, L. eds., Politics in the developing world. Oxford University Press; Fine, R. (1997) in Fine and Rai, S. eds. Civil society: Democratic perspectives. Taylor & Francis US; and Grugel, J., (2000) Romancing civil society: European NGOs in Latin America. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 42(2), pp.87-107.

society and democratisation. The usage of a single conceptual framework proved inadequate in conducting this research. Given that I wanted to study lived experiences of the people involved in NGOs in democratisation, each conceptual framework, I noticed during the process of this study, to a great extent, ‘structured’ their personal accounts and excluded certain vital realms of the experiences, which I was seeking to understand. Thus, this thesis has benefited from a wide range of conceptual discussions without getting inhibited by their structuring tendencies. It is in this sense an interdisciplinary study.

Below, I discuss the concepts of democracy, constitutionalism and civil society with reference to the debates in democratisation. I consider a range of theories and definitions encompassing the literatures on political philosophy, democratic theory, constitutionalism and democratisation. In the end, I settle for definitions of democracy, constitutionalism and democratisation as developed in their minimalist *procedural* understandings.

Democracy

Dahl posits that in discussing democratisation – either as *transition* from authoritarian rule or *consolidation* of democratic practices and institutions – we might well ask what we mean by democracy. “What is the transition *to*?”²³ In response, he observes that there is no single meaning or theory of democracy – only theories. This makes democracy a contested concept – “a norm or ideal by which reality is tested and found wanting.”²⁴

Democracy is also one of the most durable ideas in politics; transformative in nature, it has been evolving ever since its earliest formulation in ancient Greece. From the Greek articulation of ‘demo-kratia’, democracy is understood as a system of governing that must not warrant arbitrary rule of one person or a few to the rest.²⁵ In other words, ‘popular power’ must rest with the people. Arblaster asserts that popular power is that

²³ Dahl, R.A., (2005) Who governs? Democracy and power in an American city. Yale University Press. p2.

²⁴ Arblaster (n 4) p7.

²⁵ Held, D., (2006) Models of democracy. Polity; Terchek, J. R. and Conte, C. T. (eds.) (2001) ‘Theories of Democracy’, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

‘single thread of meaning’ which lies beneath the varied conceptualisations of democracy.²⁶ Beyond this single thread of meaning, however, disagreements prevail. Held argues that there has been plenty of scope for disagreement. For example, who are to be considered ‘the people’? How are ‘the people’ expected to participate? What is the scope of the ‘rule’? How is it to be exercised? What kind of people can qualify to rule? What structures must be agreed upon for the governments to rule and for the governed to consent?²⁷

Over the years, theoretical groupings have developed to respond to these questions. They converge around two main categories. A minimalist conception of representative democracy was originally outlined by Joseph Schumpeter offering a procedural notion in which democracy is a system of government in which citizens choose their political leadership in periodic elections.²⁸ Dahl subsequently developed it as ‘polyarchy’ which also focuses on a system of electoral competition but additionally gives citizens the opportunities to formulate their preferences and express them to other citizens.²⁹ On the other hand, a maximalist or substantive conception of participatory democracy is based on wider participation of the people and necessitates economic equality and social justice.³⁰

Converging the elements of both minimalist and maximalist conceptions, ‘liberal constitutional democracy’ emerged as the most resilient conception of democracy.³¹ Liberalism as a political philosophy is committed to the idea of individual rights and

²⁶ Arblaster (n 4) p9.

²⁷ Held (n 25) p1.

²⁸ Schumpeter, J.A., (1943) *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd.

²⁹ Robert Dahl, P., (1971) *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. Yale University Press. In *Polyarchy* elections alone direct policies. Competition amongst individuals or groups of individuals brings up the most desirable government. Dahl’s theorisation offers a dual dimension to rank democracies: open competition and inclusive suffrage. Polyarchy is a political system in which these dual conditions are *sufficiently* met. Dahl uses the term ‘democracy’ in which the dual conditions are *perfectly* met hence ‘democracy is the ideal type’.

On procedural democratic theories, see Doorenspleet, R. and Kopecký, P., (2008) Against the odds: Deviant cases of democratization. *Democratization*, 15(4), pp.697-713

³⁰ Terchek and Conte (n 25). In its ‘broader’ or ‘richer’ conceptions, democracy as a system of governance strives to be inclusive of the public will by going beyond the standard mechanism of public engagement such as periodic elections. The broader conceptions live under the rubric of classical consensus-based doctrine which emphasise on having a ‘common good’ which the public would relate to acting rationally.

³¹ Burnell, Randall, and Rakner (n 22); Held (n 25).

considered democracy as means to securing them.³² It advocates for a constitutional state, private property and the competitive market economy as the central mechanisms for coordinating individuals' interests. It stands for free, fair, and regular electoral competition and accountability of government to the people. Preservation of the rule of law; separation of powers between the branches of government; independent judiciary; and the protection of basic liberties of speech, assembly, religion, and property are the hallmarks of liberal constitutional system of government.³³ As it evolved over the years, concerns of justice and equality alongside liberty and freedom were added to the conceptions of liberal-democratic societies.³⁴

Constitutionalism

Inherent in the idea of liberal constitutional democracy is the conception of 'positive constitutionalism'. Katz and Murphy assert that 'positive constitutionalism' calls for citizens' right to political participation and applying limits to government's authority *even if* that government 'perfectly' mirrors the popular will.³⁵ It demands adherence not merely to any given constitutional text or order for a system of government, but to principles that respect human dignity and is binding to both private citizens and public officials. This conception of constitutionalism wars with totalitarianism and most forms of authoritarian government. Joseph Raz advances the argument to its extreme giving prominence to the institution of courts over legislatures to protect individuals' rights.³⁶ Considered as 'precondition' of liberal societies, constitutional review (making and

³² John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville developed liberal democracy in its richer understanding and stressed on taking democracy beyond mere representation to improving the conditions of associational life of citizens. Liberalism, in its earliest articulation sought to restrict the powers of both the Church and the absolute monarchs and defined a 'uniquely private sphere' – freeing civil society (personal, family and business life) from political interference. See Held (note 25). However, the notions of the 'consent of the governed' and the 'value of the popular institutions', introduced by John Locke were considered minimalist. See Terchek and Conte (n 25). See also Hardin, R. (2003) Liberalism, constitutionalism, and democracy. Oxford University Press.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ For example, Rawls' theory of *justice as fairness* offers a framework of a liberal-democratic society which speaks to the needs of its most vulnerable citizens, assigns basic rights and duties, and determines division of social benefits. See Rawls, J., (1971) *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.

³⁵ Katz, S.N., (2000) Constitutionalism and civil society. *The Jefferson Lecture, delivered at the University of California, Berkeley, April, 25*. p5, italics added. See also Murphy, W.F., (2009) Designing a Constitution: Of Architects and Builders. *Tex. L. Rev.*, 87.

³⁶ Raz asserts that "the existence of norm-creating institutions, though characteristics of modern legal systems, is not a necessary feature of all legal systems, though the existence of certain types of norm-applying institution is." Joseph Raz, (1979) quoted in Waldron, J., (1995) The Dignity of Legislation. *Md. L. Rev.*, 54, p.633.

interpretation of a constitution) is thus a general phenomenon under liberal democracy practiced today.³⁷ However the debates about the *site* of constituent power, constitutional authorship, the stakeholders involved, representation and competence, are fraught with fierce disagreements between those who give prominence to the courts over legislatures and others who consider parliament, as an elected representative institution, to be the location of ultimate decision making authority.³⁸ Jeremy Waldron in particular supports the principle of parliamentary sovereignty.³⁹ He asserts that disagreements on matters of policy and ethics as well as about the basic questions of political structure and individual rights need a sovereign decision-maker, which he believes is the majoritarian legislature and not the courts.

Linked to the question of *site* of constituent power, Arato and Pruess posit that democratic legitimacy or constituent authority must neither be reduced to popular power nor to mere legality.⁴⁰ They argue that in order to put limits to the exercise of political power, an autonomous civil society with plurality of ideas and interests, creativity and innovation could become a driving force of the idea of progress associated with the idea of constitutionalism. Arato goes further to suggest a model of consensus based multi-stage constitution making and interpretation process.⁴¹ One

³⁷ See for comprehensive discussion on the concept, Arato, A., (2000) *Civil society, constitution, and legitimacy*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Note that constitutionalists are divided on the question of who decides what limitations apply on the exercise of political authority and how to organise a polity.

³⁸ Walker, N., (2010) *Constitutionalism and the incompleteness of democracy: An iterative relationship*. *Rechtsfilosofie & Rechtstheorie*, (39) 3. Despite prominence of positive constitutionalism and the role of judiciary in it, constitutionalists are increasingly sceptical about ascribing a significant role for judges and jurists for the fear of 'juristocracy'. See for instance Waldron, J., (1999) *Law and disagreement*. OUP Oxford; and Blokker, P., (2012) *Dilemmas of Democratisation from Legal Revolutions to Democratic Constitutionalism?* *Nordic Journal of International Law*, 81(4), pp 437-470.

³⁹ Waldron opines that people ought to govern themselves, and democracy entails this privilege of self-governance. In doing so, democracies must respect individual rights and liberties; any disagreements that may arise in this endeavour, i.e. the questions of justice and morality, ought to be resolved democratically. See Waldron, J., (1995) *The Dignity of Legislation*, 54. *Maryland Law Review*, 2, pp.633-665, p640; and Waldron, J., (2009) *Constitutionalism: A skeptical view.*, in Thomas Christiano and John Christman (eds.), *Contemporary debates in political philosophy*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Also note that historically, constitutionalism and democracy have been interpreted as essentially opposed. See Loughlin, M. and Walker, N., (2007) *The Paradox of Constitutionalism*. Online publication 2008, p1.

For a discussion on the dual sources of legitimation, see Habermas, J., (2001) *Constitutional democracy: a paradoxical union of contradictory principles?*. *Political theory*, 29(6), pp 766-781.

⁴⁰ Arato, A., (2010) *Democratic constitution-making and unfreezing the Turkish process*. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 36(3-4), pp.473-487. Preuss, U.K., (2006) *Perspectives on post-conflict constitutionalism: Reflections on regime change through external constitutionalization*. *NYL Sch. L. Rev.*, 51, p467.

⁴¹ Arato (n 40) p7.

possible approach to achieving such consensus is the idea of ‘convention of civil society’. It would consist of an entirely different set of members than the parliament. However, parliament would still be responsible to pass the proposals put forward by the convention. These discussions of involving civil society in constitutional deliberations are premised on the idea of ‘democratic constitutionalism’ in which “laws must always be open to criticism, negotiation, and modification of those who are subjects of them as they follow them.”⁴² Democratic constitutionalism seeks non-imperial ways of organising and modifying constitutional democracy from within. Similarly Shivji, Owusu and An-Na‘im argue for ‘adaptation and indigenisation’ and ‘domestication’ of constitutional politics in the context of democratisation and constitutionalism in Africa.⁴³ Furthermore, Habermas’ Discourse Theory offers a sophisticated process to make law legitimate by forming a ‘dialogical consensus’ of an association of citizens who are both the authors and addressees of the law.⁴⁴ Thus for the purpose of this study, understanding the role of civil society in constitutionalism, particularly democratic constitutionalism, is imperative to understanding the nature of democratisation. These theoretical debates help with understanding and situating the roles of NGOs in constitutional deliberations, interpretations, and in legislating for civil and political rights in societies in transition to democracy.

Conceptions of democracy and constitutionalism are also contested in Islamic political thought. Since the empirical investigations in this thesis explore the nature of democratisation in Pakistan which is an Islamic Republic, these debates beg consideration. There are contrasting debates on Islamic conceptions of political governance with the Western conceptions of democracy and constitutionalism.⁴⁵ On the

⁴² Tully, J., (2008) The imperialism of modern constitutional democracy. in Loughlin, M. and Walker, N. eds., *The paradox of constitutionalism: constituent power and constitutional form*. Oxford University Press. Published online (January 2009) p20.

⁴³ An-Na‘im, A.A., (2008) *Islam and the secular state: Negotiating the future of shari‘a*. Harvard University Press; Owusu, M., (1997) Domesticating democracy: Culture, civil society, and constitutionalism in Africa. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 39(1), pp.120-152; Shivji, I.G. ed., (1991) *State and Constitutionalism: an African debate on democracy*. Sapes Trust.

⁴⁴ Habermas, J., (1996) *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*. MIT Press. See also Habermas, J., (2001) Constitutional democracy: a paradoxical union of contradictory principles? *Political theory*, 29(6), pp 766-781.

⁴⁵ For debates on the history of Islamic conceptions of constitutionalism, see Arjomand, S.A., (2007) Islamic constitutionalism. *Annu. Rev. Law Soc. Sci.*, 3, pp.115-140. Arjomand reviews a significant range of historical variation going back to the late 19th century with the drafting of the Tunisian Constitution of 1861 and the Ottoman Constitution of 1876. He argues that in its initial phase, Islam and *Shari‘a* were considered as limitations to the government and particularly on lawmaking. The subsequent phase of the ideological Islamic constitutionalism, considered Islam and *Shari‘a* as the ‘basis’ of the

one hand – democracy and constitutionalism are understood as compatible with the principles of Islamic state. Conversely, there is a conviction that the only constitution for the Islamic states is the *Quran* and the *Sunnah* of the prophet and therefore the Western notions of liberal constitutionalism are fundamentally incompatible. Al-Hibri⁴⁶ and Kamali⁴⁷ for instance argue for compatibility in relation to the procedure for selecting the head of Islamic state and securing popular legitimacy within the Islamic practice of *baya*, and with reference to the sources of law in Islam – *Quran*, *Sunnah* and other sources of *Shari'a* – that are mostly open to interpretation by the institutions of *mojteahds* and *shura* founded on the principle of consultation among the wise-ones. In this understanding, “government is essentially civilian, elective, and consultative and the religion also does not stand in the way of progress, science and civilization.”⁴⁸ Similarly the ‘*mashruta mashru'a*’ or ‘*Shari'a* permissible’ constitutionalism, puts firm limitations on the government and legislation of the autocratic governments.⁴⁹

In contrast, Kedourie asserts, “the notion of popular sovereignty as the foundation of governmental legitimacy, the idea of representation, or elections, of popular suffrage, of political institutions being regulated by laws laid down by a parliamentary assembly, of these laws being guarded and upheld by an independent judiciary, the ideas of the secularity of the state, of society being composed of a multitude of self-activating groups and associations – all of these are profoundly alien to the Muslim political

constitutions. And the third phase of the post-ideological constitutionalism is witnessing the return of Islam and *Shari'a* as a limitation.

See also Ali, S.S., (2016) *Modern challenges to Islamic law*. Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁶ Al-Hibri, A.Y., (1992) *Islamic constitutionalism and the concept of democracy*. *Case W. Res. j. Int'l L.*, 24, p1.

⁴⁷ Kamali, M.H., (2012) *Constitutionalism in Islamic Countries.*, in Grote, R. and Röder, T.J., (2012) eds., *Constitutionalism in Islamic countries: between upheaval and continuity*. Oxford University Press.

⁴⁸ Muhammad., (2002) quoted in Kamali (n 47) p22.

⁴⁹ Kamali (n 47). On progressive approaches to this comparison, see El Fadl, K.A., (2004) *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy: A "Boston Review" Book*. Princeton University Press. Fadl discusses the challenge of understanding Islam and democracy as concepts and practice. He asserts that there are both interpretive and practical possibilities in the tradition of Islamic political thought that could be developed into a democratic system. For example, the problem of divine sovereignty and its clash with democracy, when debated as a political system, would point to the fact that Quran itself does not specify a particular form of government. It does however outlines a set of social and political values that must be practiced in any Muslim polity.

See also An-Na'im (n 43). An-Na'im takes a critical-reformist stance on understanding of constitutionalism from an Islamic perspective. An-Na'im challenges the current calls for the re-enactment of the Medina state and considers it inappropriate to seek to implement those historical models in the present context of governance with legitimacy.

tradition.”⁵⁰ With these beliefs, most modern Islamist movements including *Jammat-e-Islami* in South Asia are openly suspicious of Western style democracy and secularism, with some describing it as sinful and against the will of God.⁵¹

Syed Abul A'la Maududi's conception of an Islamic state is particularly relevant to Pakistan. As the founder of the *Jamaat-e-Islami*, the largest Islamic political organisation at the time of the Partition, his thought greatly influenced the early constitution-making in Pakistan. Maududi's ideology of an Islamic state was based on 'theo-democracy' which repudiated national sovereignty or sovereignty of people, replacing it with the sovereignty of *Allah* and vicegerency (*khilafat*) of men.⁵² This conception was developed as an antithesis of secular Western democracy.⁵³ Thus, in the first (and subsequent) constitution(s) of Pakistan, sovereignty of the state is declared as residing in *Allah* with *Quran* and *Sunnah* forming the basis of all laws.⁵⁴ In this sense, governments are only legitimate if they fulfilled the requirements of *shari'a*.

During the 1980s, Zia-ul-Haq as the President of Pakistan, established the Federal *Shariat* Court to determine the conformity of laws with *Quran* and *Sunnah* and nominated the judges of the court himself. With such observations, it can be argued that political governance in Pakistan is contrary to the Western notions of liberal constitutional democracy. However, stating this, is not straight forward. In Pakistan, and in many other Muslim states (especially in post-colonial societies with the history of Western-style governance and administrative structures) the strictly *Shari'a* based constitutional architecture, is simply absent in practice. Ali argues that the Muslim world has largely been selective in applying Islamic law.⁵⁵ Consequently, the diversity

⁵⁰ Kedourie, E. (1994) pp5-6 quoted in Tessler, M. and Altinoglu, E., 2004. Political culture in Turkey: Connections among attitudes toward democracy, the military and Islam. *Democratization*, 11(1), pp.21-50. p26.

⁵¹ Haqqani, H., (2013) Islamists and democracy: Cautions from Pakistan. *Journal of Democracy*, 24(2), pp.5-14. p7. *Wahhabi* scholars perceive man-made constitution as un-Islamic.

⁵² Maududi, S.A.A., (1976) Political theory of Islam. Islamic Publications, Lahore.

⁵³ Ibid. Maududi argued that the essence of theo-democracy is where the ruler is answerable to God on the one hand and on the other to his fellow caliphs (men) who have delegated their authority to him. Thus a 'limited' democracy is established in which not even the entire Muslim community has the authority to change an explicit command of God.

⁵⁴ Binder, L., (1963) Religion and politics in Pakistan. University of California Press. The Objective Resolution, adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in 1949 stated that "sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to God Almighty alone" and that "Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accord with the Holy Quran and the Sunna." See pp 142-143.

⁵⁵ Ali (n 45) p44.

in Muslim states' practices in application of Islamic law in domestic spheres, makes it an uneven and plural phenomenon – in this sense, it would be 'closer to reality to talk of Islamic constitutionalism(s)' as a multifaceted practice.⁵⁶ In a similar albeit progressive vein, An-Na'im observes that such plurality in approaches to the application of *Shari'a* allows most Muslim states to accommodate equality of human rights and prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sex or religion.⁵⁷ Many Muslim states today are parties to the international human rights treaties and openly express commitment to the values of constitutionalism and civil rights.⁵⁸

In Pakistan, the colonial legacy has led to the development of a complex constitutional path, combining an essentially secular framework of law that drew on British Common Law and the new ideological force of Islamic jurisprudence.⁵⁹ Contrary to An-Na'im's progressive observations on the plurality in the application of *Shari'a*, Waseem critically argues that the Constitution of Pakistan characterises contradictory strands of religious constitutional provisions which undercut various other provisions for example concerning equality between genders and religious communities.⁶⁰ Thus the two frameworks contradict each other. In fact, the Islamic ideology has historically provided an ever-expanding 'supra-constitutional' source of legitimacy to the usurpers of democratic governance.⁶¹ Lau asserts that the legal system and politics in Pakistan have been historically 'infused with appeals to Islam'.⁶² Lau's research further examines the role of the judiciary in infusing Islam in the legal system of Pakistan.⁶³ He asserts that contrary to the common perceptions that Islamisation of laws was introduced by Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s, a number of court rulings since 1947 reveal that in fact,

⁵⁶ Ibid. p49.

⁵⁷ An-Na'im (n 43).

⁵⁸ Ibid. In this regard, An-Na'im calls for the implementation of internal Islamic law reform in these states to address the general constitutional concerns which "contributes to the process of legitimizing and indigenizing the values of political participation, accountability, and equality before law, thereby enhancing the prospects of constitutionalism in Islamic societies" pp14-15. He further asserts that due to the vast range of perceptions and practices of Islam among Muslims, the role of Islam in the political, constitutional, and legal systems of Islamic countries must be considered as parallel to 'the role of culture' in the local settings.

⁵⁹ Waseem, M., (2015) 'Constitutionalism and Extra-Constitutionalism in Pakistan', in Tushnet, M. and Khosla, M. eds., (2015) *Unstable Constitutionalism: Law and Politics in South Asia*. Cambridge University Press. p147.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Lau, M. (2007) 'Pakistan Country Survey'. In: Cotran, E, and Lau, M. (ed.), *Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law*, Volume 12 (2005-2006), Brill: Leiden, pp 443-472.

⁶³ Lau, M., (2006). *The role of Islam in the legal system of Pakistan*. Brill.

Islamisation of laws has been a ‘judge-led process’ as the courts consciously strove to ‘indigenise’ and ‘Islamise’ the legal system soon after the end of the colonial rule.⁶⁴ Thus, arguably, the application of Islamic law in Pakistan was arbitrary, and yet, ideologically driven in response to the elite-led secular politics of that time.⁶⁵ Over the years, the arbitrary nature of Islamisation of laws continued. However, it would be simplistic to observe that the political and legal systems in Pakistan have been contrary to the Western notions of liberal constitutional democracy and preferred *Shari’a*. In fact, the practice on the ground continues to rest on political impulses – preferring Islamisation at certain political junctures and discarding it in favour of preserving the rule of law and representative democratic governance, at other occasions.

Notwithstanding these contested debates about constitutional democracy, global trends in the spread of liberal constitutional democracy looked promising in the mid-twentieth century with the abandonment of authoritarianism in Latin America and the end of the Cold War with many post-communist countries attempting to democratise.⁶⁶ Fukuyama called it ‘The End of History’ in which liberalism had defeated all other ideologies and forms of organising political and economic institutions.⁶⁷ Liberal capitalist democracy was promoted and required by international development agencies including the United Nations’ agencies, the World Bank, and the European Union (EU).⁶⁸ With this perceived triumph in the political and economic spheres, a distinct practice was instigated to make the ‘less fortunate’ or underdeveloped countries fit for development.⁶⁹ Liberal and constitutional democracy, was believed to be the vehicle

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Lombardi, C.B., (2009). Can Islamizing a legal system ever help promote liberal democracy: A view from Pakistan. *U. St. Thomas LJ*, 7, p.649. Lombardi states that soon after Independence, Islamists (represented in clergy, judiciary, and political spheres) gained swift popularity among the polity. Many repudiated the secular political elite and believed that the state action (including state law) must respect principles of Islamic law and the courts must be empowered to review and void any un-Islamic laws.

⁶⁶ Burnell, Randall, and Rakner (n 22); Held (n 25). Arblaster (n 4). See also Faúndez, J., (2007) *Democratization, development, and legality: Chile, 1831–1973*. Springer.

⁶⁷ Arblaster (n 4).

⁶⁸ Faúndez (n 66). On the merits of democratisation and US’s role in advancement of democracy See McFaul, M., (2004) Democracy promotion as a world value. *The Washington Quarterly*, 28(1), pp.147-163.

⁶⁹ Carothers, T., (2002) The end of the transition paradigm. *Journal of democracy*, 13(1), pp.5-21. Carothers opines that during 1990s the liberal democracy promotion was extended as a universal paradigm for understanding democratisation (p6). Also see Arblaster (n 4).

through which development could be achieved.⁷⁰ Democratisation became the task, which, many of the 'fortunate' countries in the West took upon themselves to deliver.⁷¹

Democratisation

Democratisation as a process, thus, sought to develop and preserve 'democratic institutions' and a 'democratic culture' which arguably leads to sustainable economic development.⁷² To democratise non-democratic states, Diamond, Linz and Lipset understood 'democracy' as:

A system of government that meets three essential conditions: meaningful and extensive competition, among individuals and organised groups (especially political parties).....; a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies....; and a level of civil and political liberties – freedom of expression, freedom of press, freedom to form and join organisations – sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation.⁷³

Understood in this manner, democratisation was premised on the conceptions of liberal constitutional democracy in its maximalist understanding. However, implicit to this understanding was the assumption of a polity aware of and able to express their civic rights.⁷⁴ Already in Latin America and Africa, the newly inducted democracies of the 'third wave of democratisation' were witnessing democratic erosion.⁷⁵ A persistent failure to 'export' parliamentary governance systems of the West to democratising countries in the South, had meant that many retained multi-partyism and elections but could not be considered 'liberal' as political freedoms for all citizens and basic civil liberties were consistently curtailed by the governments in power.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Sen, A.K., (1999) Democracy as a universal value. *Journal of democracy*, 10(3), pp.3-17.

⁷¹ Carothers, T., (2010) *Critical mission: Essays on democracy promotion*. Brookings Institution Press. See also Fowler, A., (1993) Non-governmental organizations as agents of democratization: An African perspective. *Journal of International Development*, 5(3), pp.325-339; and Faúndez (n 65).

⁷² Diamond, L.J., (1997) Is the Third Wave of Democratization Over?: The Imperative of Consolidation. *Kellogg Institute for International Studies*.

⁷³ Diamond, L., Linz, J.J. and Lipset, S.M., (1988) *Democracy in Developing Countries*, vol. 2. p xvi.

⁷⁴ Fowler (n 71) p327.

⁷⁵ Burnell, Randall, and Rakner (n 22).

⁷⁶ Santos, B.D.S. and de Sousa Santos, B., (2005) *Democratizing democracy: Beyond the liberal democratic canon*, VERSO. See also Carothers (n 69).

For the advocates of liberal constitutional democracy, the trend towards ‘pseudo democracy’ was striking.⁷⁷ Carothers critiqued the third wave of democratisation in which most of the democratising countries were neither dictatorial nor headed to democracy – they actually entered a ‘political grey zone’ and suffered from serious democratic deficit.⁷⁸ Zakaria called it ‘the rise of illiberal democracy’ where elections were held but were hardly free and fair; harsh restrictions were imposed on speech, assembly and even dress; and media was restricted and in some countries directly threatened by the elected governments; “[d]emocracy is flourishing; constitutional liberalism is not.”⁷⁹ For example across Africa, democratisation was merely confined to establishing political democracy – of elections and granting some civil and political rights; the process did not involve African peoples demands for economic empowerment, better living standards, and social welfare.⁸⁰

In search for reasons behind the surge of illiberal democracies, Santos asserted that Western modernity and global technological advancements, together, had failed to deliver on the promises of universal liberty, equality, and peace.⁸¹ The ‘proposal of democracy’ and the processes of democratisation were essentially ‘hegemonic’ and implied a “restriction of broad forms of participation and sovereignty in favour of a consensus on electoral processes to form governments.”⁸² Similarly, Tully argued that the imperialism of modern constitutional democracy had meant that in many post-colonial democracies, the consent of the people was ‘manufactured’ by a sovereign or a group of few people, making their non-constitutional actions appear constitutional in

⁷⁷ See for instance Diamond, L.J., (2002) Thinking about hybrid regimes. *Journal of democracy*, 13(2), pp 21-35.

⁷⁸ Carothers (n 69) p9.

⁷⁹ Zakaria (n 15) p23.

⁸⁰ Adejumobi, S., (2000). Between democracy and development in Africa: What are the missing links?. *İnternet Adresi: http://www.worldbank.org/research/abcde/eu_2000/pdf/files/ADEJUMOB1.pdf, Erişim Tarihi, 10(07), p.2004.*

For a discussion on ‘de-democratisation’ attempts, see Yilmaz, H., (2009) The international context. *Democratization*, pp.92-106. p101.

⁸¹ Santos (n 76).

⁸² Ibid. pvii. See also Shivji (n 43). Shivji argues that direct and participatory democracy speaks more to African needs as appose to the representative parliamentary system of government. p vii. See Okoth-Ogendo H.W.O., (1991) Constitutions without Constitutionalism: Reflections on an African Political Paradox, in Shivji (n 43). Okoth-Ogendo opines that the conflict over the site of legitimate constituent authority in the post-colonial African context has resulted in a paradox whereas, there seems to be a clear commitment to the idea of constitution but there is also an equally strong rejection of the classical notion of constitutionalism. The paradox is ‘essentially political’ with a deliberate disregard of legal or constitutional processes.

order to gain legitimacy.⁸³ The resulting inequalities, extreme poverty, dispossession, irresponsible foreign control, and destructiveness have been greater under post-colonial imperialism than under colonialism. Later in this chapter, I will review the critical empirical literature on failures of democratisation in the global South to illustrate this point further. Suffice to observe here, that the normative conceptions of liberal constitutional democracy and the related processes of democratisation, fell short of explaining the reasons behind the persistent failure to ‘export’ parliamentary governance systems of the West to democratising countries in the South.⁸⁴

Responding to the rise in democracies’ failures in the global South, in 1980s an elaborated effort to understand the unexpected political outcomes of ‘transitions’ in Latin America began in the Woodrow Wilson Centre.⁸⁵ A group of scholars including Juan Linz, Guillermo O’Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, Laurence Whitehead, Alfred Stepan and Adam Przeworski laid the foundations of examining the challenges to transition to democracy from authoritarian rule.⁸⁶ Having reviewed the varied conceptions of democracy and constitutionalism with regards to democratisation, in the context of democratic deficit in Pakistan, I subscribe to the transition theory offered particularly by O’Donnell and Schmitter.⁸⁷ I believe that their theorisation of *pacted* democratic transitions offers much needed insights to understand the prolonged challenges to democratisation in Pakistan. In the following paragraphs, I provide an overview of their theory. In so doing, I define democracy, constitutionalism and democratisation having *procedural, contingent and uncertain* nature. Furthermore, I acknowledge Shaw’s phenomenology of democracy.⁸⁸ He states that the ‘essence of democracy’ is that it constitutes decisions. In this sense, “the power of democracy

⁸³ Tully (n 42). Tully opines that modern constitutional democracy contributes to Western imperialism as it has been imposed on non-Western peoples without their consent or democratic participation.

⁸⁴ Whitehead argues that theoretical models derived from existing academic literature on democratisation are unlikely to offer much insight into the political future in countries where externally driven attempts to substitute liberal democracy for autocracy have clearly failed or continue to face a still uphill struggle, as in Afghanistan and Iraq. Whitehead, L. quoted in Burnell and Youngs (n 15) p7.

⁸⁵ Note that the explanatory theories of democratisation started to appear much before these scholars. See Guo (n 1) and Teorell (n 1).

⁸⁶ Munck (n 3). Munck asserts that the ‘Transitions from authoritarian rule: Tentative conclusions about uncertain democracies’ by O’Donnell and Schmitter became the major statement on understanding the challenges to transitions to democracy. Doorenspleet and Kopecky (n 29) assert that the exact meaning of the terms ‘transition’ and ‘consolidation’ and their empirical indicators and measures in the process of democratisation are debated extensively. p700.

⁸⁷ O’Donnell and Schmitter (n 1).

⁸⁸ Shaw, R. (2009) The Phenomenology of Democracy. *Policy Futures in Education*, 7 (3).

comes from the vote not being the decision”⁸⁹ whereas democracy aligns with governance as a practice.

Acknowledging ‘political democracy’ as a desired goal, O’Donnell and Schmitter build on Dahl’s earlier work on polyarchy and emphasise on obtaining a ‘procedural minimum’ as its necessary elements.⁹⁰ Informed by their empirical research in Latin America, they refer to procedural minimum as “[s]ecret balloting, universal adult suffrage, regular elections, partisan competition, associational recognition and access, and executive accountability...”⁹¹ Transition is understood as the interval between the dissolution of the old regime and the installation of a new regime.⁹² If successful, authoritarian regime will be on one end of the spectrum and a democratic regime on the other.⁹³ In such a transition from authoritarian regime to political democracy, change is ‘rapid’, ‘uncertain’, and ‘unpredictable’.⁹⁴ It is also ‘contingent’ to social cleavages, level of economic development, size of the country, international economic significance, previous form of autocracy, geo-strategic location, and mode of transition.⁹⁵ The extent to which substantive elements of administrative accountability, judicial review, public financing for parties are observed, is considered as ‘less essential’.⁹⁶ In this process of transition, the rules and procedures initially stay in the “hands of authoritarian rulers..... [some of whom belong to the outgoing autocratic regime and who] retain their discretionary power over arrangements and rights..... [but will gradually]..... modify their own rules in the direction of providing more

⁸⁹ Ibid. p346.

⁹⁰ O’Donnell and Schmitter (n 1) p3., Munck (n 3) p334.

⁹¹ O’Donnell and Schmitter (n 1) p8.

⁹² Ibid. p6.

⁹³ Ibid. p6.

⁹⁴ Schmitter, P. C., undated. Democratization and Political Elites or Political Elites and Democratization or The Process of Democratization and the Role of Elites or The Role of Elites in Democratization or Democratization: The Role of Elites., accessed on 06 May, 2016, <http://www.eui.eu/Documents/DepartmentsCentres/SPS/Profiles/Schmitter/DEMOCRATIZATION-AND-POLITICAL-ELITES.REV.pdf>

⁹⁵ O’Donnell and Schmitter (n 1). See also Schmitter, P.C., (2014) Reflections on “Transitology”: Before and After., in Brinks, D., Leiras, M., and Mainwaring, S., 2014. Reflections on Uneven Democracies: The Legacy of Guillermo O’Donnell. John Hopkins University Press.

⁹⁶ O’Donnell and Schmitter (n 1) p6.

secure guarantees for the rights of individuals and groups.”⁹⁷ Thus, liberalisation is characterised as ‘liberalised authoritarianism.’⁹⁸

O’Donnell and Schmitter assert that the opening of liberalised ‘spaces’ in turn will have a ‘multiplier effect’ as sporadic peoples’ movements will surface to demand citizens’ rights. These liberalised spaces, however, must not be an immediate threat to the transforming regime which firmly holds to its ‘arbitrary and capricious’ governmental power. The crucial thing to note is that none of these stages have any ‘necessary or logical sequence’ to them and even more significantly, ‘progressions in these domains’ are indeed reversible.⁹⁹

According to this theory, the transition phase is thus ruled by ‘polito-cracy’ in which some politicians govern.¹⁰⁰ The authoritarian ruling elite, as the key actors, have deep internal divisions about how to deal with rapid change and shifting political interests. On the spectrum of hard-liners and soft-liners, the ruling elite, for their vested power interests, settle their differences and recognise mutually-agreed upon goals. They then consider the long-term consequences of their actions. It is important to note that during transition to political democracy, “liberalisation and democratisation may not occur simultaneously” nor should they be considered as ‘synonyms’.¹⁰¹ Liberalisation, is a matter of degree and is not measurable according to any common or set scale.

With this procedural minimum conception of political democracy, which in early stages of transition “restricts the application of the citizenship principle to public institutions of governance,”¹⁰² O’Donnell and Schmitter refer to democratisation as:

the process whereby the rules and procedures of citizenship are either applied to political institutions previously governed by other principles (e.g., coercive control, social tradition, expert judgement, or administrative practice), or expanded to include persons not previously enjoying such rights and obligations (e.g., nontaxpayers, illiterates, women, youth, ethnic minorities, foreign residents), or

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ O’Donnell and Schmitter (n 1) p9. Pavone, T. (2015) Democratization Outline, Available at : https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/tpavone/files/democratization_outline.pdf (Accessed 2 January 2017).

⁹⁹ O’Donnell and Schmitter (n 1) p7.

¹⁰⁰ Schmitter (n 14).

¹⁰¹ O’Donnell and Schmitter (n 1) p9.

¹⁰² Ibid.

extended to cover issues and institutions not previously subject to citizen participation (e.g., state agencies, military establishments, partisan organisations, interest associations, productive enterprises, educational institutions, etc.)

Democratisation is therefore, also a matter of degree.¹⁰³ However, there are two key dimensions to democratisation in early transition phase which characterise it: firstly, the ruling elite will impose conditions that restrict party competition and electoral choice; and secondly it will ‘design’ mechanisms to avoid accountability to popularly elected representatives by establishing autonomous institutional arrangements that cater for their needs and are out of reach for elected representatives. Schmitter and Karl argue (in a much later work) that though transitions to political democracy can take different modes including reform and revolution as ‘democratisation from below’; and pacted and imposed as ‘democratisation from above’, the latter seems to be more common.¹⁰⁴

Democratic transition, is thus, an *uncertain* and *contingent* matter. It is a process in which political actors keep the political control to themselves. Breaking with the former structure-determined and the subsequent actor-oriented theories of democratisation, O’Donnell and Schmitter’s work on democratisation is considered as both ‘structure-actor centric.’¹⁰⁵ In other words, processes of democratic transition, shape up due to dynamic interaction between the ‘pre-determined’ macro-societal conditions including history, and the purposive (goal-oriented) action of the political actors.¹⁰⁶

A constitutionalisation of, and constitutionalism in, a transition regime also needs attention. Firstly, during the transition phase of acquiring political democracy, drafting of constitutions as “efforts to establish a single, overarching set of “meta-rules”...” are important but only to the extent of the *process* by which decisions are collectively made,

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Schmitter, P.C. and Karl, T.L., (1994) The conceptual travels of transitologists and consolidologists: how far to the east should they attempt to go?. *Slavic review*, 53(1), pp.173-185.

¹⁰⁵ Munck (n 3) p335.

For a discussions on the significance of structural factors in democratisation, see Doorenspleet, R., 2000. Reassessing the three waves of democratization. *World Politics*, 52(3), pp.384-406.

¹⁰⁶ For the Structure-Agency debate in democratic theory, See Imbroscio, D.L., (1999). Structure, agency, and democratic theory. *Polity*, 32(1), pp.45-66.

ratified and implemented.¹⁰⁷ Schmitter asserts, however, that in specifying and enforcing a hierarchical relation between the governing elite, constitutions are “rarely successful” in rendering these regimes coherent.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, constitutional norms remain vague and least prescriptive.¹⁰⁹ Secondly, constitutionalism – as giving substance to political demands and the rights of citizens – is a matter for eventual democratic consolidation.

The Woodrow Wilson Centre scholarship, with a particular reference to ‘Transitions from Authoritarian Rule’, offers empirically informed theorisation on the nature and processes of democratic transitions. Though the study of transition, i.e. ‘transitology’ abstains from indicating what kind of democracy is to emerge,¹¹⁰ the struggle in transitions is to establish a minimum procedural political democracy in which political actors – primarily the political elite – establish liberalised authoritarianism and open up controlled and limited spaces for individual or group action. Likewise, constitutionalisation is important to the extent by which decisions are collectively agreed and implemented amongst the ruling elite. With such prominence accorded to processes, I would argue *that the consequence of transition – i.e. acquiring procedural political democracy – is included in the action itself*. In other words, the process or act of democratisation – first and foremost – is *premised* to realising the political democracy in its minimalist and proceduralist nature. Conversely, where democratic transitions from authoritarian rule aim at achieving maximalist models of liberal constitutional democracy as *the consequence*, they may fail, revert to authoritarianism, or oscillate between dictatorship and representative democracy. In this sense, democracy, constitutionalism, and democratisation from authoritarian rules must be seen as having procedural, uncertain and contingent nature. I subscribe to this view in the context of understanding the nature of democratisation in Pakistan.

Similar to the debates on the conceptions of democracy, constitutionalism and democratisation, conceptions of civil society and NGOs with regards to

¹⁰⁷ Schmitter P.C. (2001) Contrasting approaches to political engineering: Constitutionalization & democratization. In: Becker M., Lauth HJ., Pickel G. (eds) Rechtsstaat und Demokratie. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p7.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Doorenspleet and Kopecký (n 29) p701.

democratisation are also varied and contested. I now turn to discussing these conceptions to *define NGOs* for this research.

Civil society

At the onset of the third-wave of democratisation the concept and agency of 'civil society' witnessed a revival from a relatively vague concept to becoming a significant, even exemplary concept in the policy and practice of development through democracy.¹¹¹ Conceptualised within liberal traditions of Montesquieu, Locke, Rousseau, and Tocqueville, Larry Diamond defines civil society,

as the realm of organised social life that is open, voluntary, self-generating, at least partially self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules...¹¹²

Robert Putnam's idea of social capital is influenced by Tocqueville as he contends that preservation of democratic institutions and citizen's capacity for self-government correlates with historical traditions of associational life.¹¹³ Walzer argues that the civil society is the sphere of 'uncoerced human association' where people associate with each other as they realise their natures as social beings.¹¹⁴ Thus, the existence of a vibrant civil society has been considered to be a prerequisite to facilitating and strengthening democracy. In the transition theory of O'Donnell and Schmitter, civil society is defined in terms of self-organisation, distinction from state authority and private economic activity, capacity to stand for the common interest and action, and working within mutually accepted civic rules.¹¹⁵ In this sense, even though democracy and democratisation are conceptualised in the minimal procedural manner, the conception of civil society is comparable with its conceptions in liberal democratic theories.

¹¹¹ Howell and Pearce (n 22); Ottaway (n 22); Arato (n 37) Fine (n 22); Grugel, J., (2000) *Romancing Civil Society: European NGOs in Latin America*. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 42(2), pp.87-107; and Chandhoke, N., (2001) The 'civil' and the 'political' in civil society. *Democratization*, 8(2), pp.1-24.

¹¹² Diamond, L.J., (1997) *Is the Third Wave of Democratization Over? The Imperative of Consolidation*. Kellogg Institute for International Studies. p6.

¹¹³ Ottaway (n 22). For Social Capital see Putnam, R. D. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 6 no. 1, (1995) pp. 65-78. *Project MUSE*, [doi:10.1353/jod.1995.0002](https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1995.0002)

¹¹⁴ Walzer (n 20).

¹¹⁵ O'Donnell and Schmitter (n 1).

Having said that, there are still wide-ranging conceptions and meanings of civil society within liberal democratic and constitutional theories.¹¹⁶ White asserts that the term “means different things to different people and often degenerates into muddled political slogan.”¹¹⁷ On the spectrum of conceptions, there are those who are sceptical over its potential and reject it as a fraud, and those who are faithful, privileging the concept and agency as a normative ideal and a potential locus for social change. Fine proposes a third way: “one that recognises the validity of the concept of civil society without romanticising it and without abstracting it from its social or historical ground.”¹¹⁸ Along the same lines, Howell and Pearce propose “The Alternative Genealogy” of rethinking civil society.¹¹⁹ They acknowledge the history and value of mutual support and solidarity in human societies but also consider civil society as the site of conflict rather than of universal harmony. They argue that inequality of class and social differentiation is embedded within civil society, whereas social, political and economic contestations are visible in the forms and functions of various kinds of civil society groups. Critically analysing the concept and agency of civil society in the context of India, Chandhoke argues that civil society should be seen as an ‘ambiguous’ source of democratic activism; in the structures of power, it may be closely tied-up with the state and emerge as a deeply fractured domain of social associations.¹²⁰ For the purpose of this thesis, I concede to these assertions. I will reiterate to these points later in this chapter.

The idea of civil society – in its present ‘autonomous’ understanding – gained currency in the age of enlightenment.¹²¹ From Roman times to the late eighteenth century, the term had been used to mean organised political society or the state society.¹²² The late eighteenth century saw a shift in the use of the term when ‘civil society’ was understood as a distinct sphere, separate from the political or ‘partisan’ activity.¹²³ Hegel (1770-1831) and Tocqueville (1805-1859) understood it as a ‘middle ground’ between private

¹¹⁶ Popularisation of the concept also led to blurring of its meaning. Ottaway (n 22). Also see Wood, E.M., (1990) The uses and abuses of 'civil society'. *Socialist register*, 26(26).

¹¹⁷ White, G., (1994) Civil society, democratization and development (I): Clearing the analytical ground. *Democratization*, 1(2), pp.375-390. p376.

¹¹⁸ Fine (n 22) 7-8.

¹¹⁹ Howell and Pearce (n 22).

¹²⁰ Chandhoke (n 112).

¹²¹ Carothers, T. and Barndt, W., (1999) Civil society. *Foreign policy*, pp.18-29; Fine (n 22).

¹²² Ibrahim, A.M. (2015) The role of civil society in Africa's quest for democratization., *Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development*. Springer.

¹²³ Harris, J. (2008) Development of civil society. In S.A. Binder, R.A. Rhodes, & B.A. Rockman. Eds. *The Oxford handbook of political institutions* (pp. 131-143). Oxford University Press.

life and the political sphere of the state.¹²⁴ This middle ground mainly comprised of the emergent middle classes who owned private property and influence in commerce.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) conceptualised civil society as having an uncivil character and being unconscious of its 'incomplete freedom'.¹²⁵ For Marx, civil society is manipulated by the state for its own political interests. It represents the interests of the dominant bourgeoisie who also occupy spaces in the state. Thus, civil society is not 'autonomous'. It also contributes to social and political inequality.¹²⁶ Sensitive to Hegel's conception of 'middle ground', Gramsci (1891-1937) argued that civil society develops between the economic structure of private interests, and the state with its coercive and legislative authority.¹²⁷ However, unlike Hegel and in Marxian spirit, Gramsci conceived of civil society as also forming the 'outer earthworks' of the state. It comprises the ruling classes (political and economic elite) who maintained their 'hegemony' or dominance in society not by coercion or revolution, but by creating consensus through public opinion and culture.¹²⁸ To challenge such 'hegemonic' acts of the ruling classes and to free civil society from their influence, Gramsci specifies an important role for the intellectual groupings of the working class. Therefore, for both Marx and Gramsci, the sphere of civil society is far from neutral to the state or to economic spheres. It is inherently political and violent.

The modern conceptions of civil society (especially relevant to democratisation) consider it as functioning in an idealised counter-image to the coercion of state; "it is an embodiment of social virtue confronting political vice: the realm of freedom versus the realm of coercion, of participation versus hierarchy, pluralism versus conformity, spontaneity versus manipulation, purity versus corruption."¹²⁹ White argues that such sloganeering reduces the value of the concept of civil society as a social scientific concept. He asks, "can we disperse this ambiguity (of diverse understandings) and come up with a serviceable notion of 'civil society' which will enable us to explore its

¹²⁴ Ibid. See also Fine (n 22).

¹²⁵ Ottaway (n 22).

¹²⁶ Tester, K., (1992) *Civil Society*. Routledge. p4.

¹²⁷ Gramsci, A., (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*: Ed. and Transl. by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. International Publishers.

¹²⁸ Morera 1990 cited in Ibrahim (n 123).

¹²⁹ White (n 118) p377.

implications for the establishment and maintenance of democratic political system?”¹³⁰ In response, he suggests that instead of resolving the definitional problems by adopting a restrictive notion of civil society, it makes more sense to adopt a practical approach which captures its breadth albeit sensitive to the underlining idea which is common to most current uses. In this sense, civil society,

... is an intermediate associational realm between the state and family populated by organisations which are separate from state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values.¹³¹

Furthermore, a consideration of myriad of factors encompassing the sphere of civil society in practice (different in different contexts) may offer a better understanding of its place as either obstructing or facilitating democratisation.¹³² At this point, I would revert to the earlier discussion on the ‘third way’ and ‘The Alternative Genealogy’ for civil society. In agreeing with these approaches, I also argue that in understanding the nature (or agency) of civil society, one should domesticate it in its context; romanticising civil society as necessarily an axiomatic force or a site of universal harmony and abstracting it from its social or historical grounds, will hide more than reveal about its contested nature in a particular political context.¹³³ The domestication of civil society in its context does not mean ignoring the external factors. The context is equally shaped by internal as well as external influences and transnational structures of power including the practice of international aid and associated conditionalities.¹³⁴ Thus, civil society’s role in democratisation ought to be seen as constrained by both internal and external social, economic and political intricacies. In fact, the ambiguity of the concept of civil society should be considered its strength, for it invites much needed empirical investigations of its roles in democratisation.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p379.

¹³¹ Ibid. p379.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ For a comprehensive literature review on de-romanticising the notion of civil society and NGOs in democratisation, See Mercer, C., (2002) NGOs, civil society and democratization: a critical review of the literature. *Progress in development studies*, 2(5), pp.5-22.

¹³⁴ Howell, J. January (1998) An Unholy Trinity? Civil society, Economic Liberalisation and Democratisation in post-Mao China, in *Government and Opposition*, 33(1), pp56-80. Howell suggests seeing beyond the oppositional dichotomy of civil society and the state and to acknowledge other potential social forces of democratisation.

To be fair to Hegel – who is considered to be the ‘representative theorist’ of contemporary liberal articulations of civil society¹³⁵ – his theorisation of the concept has not been given a thorough attention. Fine argues that Hegel fundamentally considers civil society operating in the sphere of contradictions.¹³⁶ For Hegel, civil society is neither good nor bad. In between the opposites of the political power of state and market’s power of commerce, and complexity between their relationship, civil society “affords a spectacle of extravagance and misery as well as of the physical and ethical corruption common to both.”¹³⁷ Understanding civil society as operating in the sphere of contradictions, I also concede with Katz who argues that civil society and constitutionalism are best understood empirically as processes rather than abstractions.¹³⁸ Hence, the challenge in thinking about civil society is to avoid a ‘normative trap’ and to approach it as an analytical category.¹³⁹ In other words, the mainstream Western liberal notions of civil society and their normative expectations should not jeopardise contextualised understandings of actually existing civil groups that are heterogeneous.

Finally, since the focus of this thesis is on NGOs, a succinct but critical discussion on the ‘term’ and ‘form’ deserves attention. There are many terms (with abbreviations) for associations that encompass civil society. These include non-governmental organisations (NGOs); community based organisations (CBOs); voluntary sector organisations (VSOs); not-for-profit organisations; grass-roots organisations or groups; third sector organisations; media groups; trade unions; street committees and neighbourhood groups; and of course, civil society organisations (CSOs). Whether the concept of civil society includes social movements, religious groups, political parties and trade unions; and could the term ‘civil society’ be considered as an umbrella term, are but few ambiguities fiercely debated amongst academics as well as policymakers.

¹³⁵ Fine (n 22).

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Hegel quoted in Fine (n 22) p21. Despite this, Hegel’s take on civil society is understood to be ambivalent, not of condemnation. Hegel proposed to preserve civil society by reconciling its contradictions at the same time as considering its positive worth in the name of general will.

¹³⁸ Katz (n 35).

¹³⁹ Kopecký, P. and Mudde, C., (2003) Rethinking civil society. *Democratization*, 10(3), pp.1-14.

Non-Governmental Organisations

Should NGOs be considered the heart of civil society, is another contested debate in academic and policy literature. One response is ‘not really’.¹⁴⁰ Properly understood, civil society is a much broader concept.¹⁴¹ However, it is a fact that democratisation programmes, especially the ones funded and supported by international agencies or states tend to be fascinated with NGOs, especially advocacy groups.¹⁴² This might not be considered a right approach to representation. Ottaway argues that in countries that do not have established democratic institutions, “the voice of NGOs adds an element of pluralism to the political system, and the distortions created by this imperfect form of representation may be an acceptable price for such a broadening of the political process.”¹⁴³

Conceding with Ottaway, for the purposes of this research, I focus on NGOs and consider their roles in democratisation in a *narrow sense*: i.e. NGOs, as part of the wider civil society, aim to promote democracy by shaping government policy and legislation. Their voices add pluralism in the political system which otherwise lacks democratic institutions and wider participation. NGOs are recognised for advancing public interest and related causes including human rights, minorities and women’s issues. NGOs are engaged in election monitoring; legislative strengthening and accountability support; anti-corruption research; citizenship education, and other “good things” that contribute to promoting democracy.¹⁴⁴ NGOs act as vehicles to reaching informal networks, broadening the avenues for participation and engagement of local voices. As organisations, NGOs are officially established; registered within the state law; run by employed staff (urban professionals or expatriates); well-supported either by domestic

¹⁴⁰ Carother and Barndt (n 112) p9.

¹⁴¹ Its sphere spans from the family to the state and the market. In addition to NGOs, it includes interest groups such as labour unions and political parties; religious and ethnic groups; informal street-based and neighbourhood groups; student unions and cultural groups; sports clubs and street committees. See Ottaway (n 22).

¹⁴² Ibid. p124; In defining and discussing the diversity of NGOs, Lewis asserts that ‘NGO’ as an analytical category remains complex and unclear. See Lewis, D., (2010). Nongovernmental organizations, definition and history. In *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society* (pp. 1056-1062). Springer.

¹⁴³ Ottaway (n 22) p129.

¹⁴⁴ NGOs organisational missions may include advocating on behalf of a certain group/community of people; promoting and campaigning for human rights; fostering citizen participation; educating and training relevant political actors to strengthen democratic institutions; undertaking research; and fostering a democratic culture. See Carother and Barndt (n 121).

or international funding; and are often relatively large and well-resourced as compare to other civil society groups.¹⁴⁵

Such a narrow choice does not, in any way, undermine the value and contribution of social movements, grass-roots resistance against tribal coercion, street level committees, ethnic and religious groups, students' groups, and others in promoting democratic culture and institutions. Nor does this underestimate the work of development organisations filling gaps in the provision of goods and services to local communities. The roles of political parties and lobby groups are also acknowledged but fall outside the focus of this research. I am aware of the risk that organisations chosen in this way might not represent the wider civil society. But as Tester argues, the study of NGOs will have significant insights into the nature of the civil society, or for that matter, the society as a whole.¹⁴⁶ In other words, researching NGOs in democratisation will illuminate the aspects of the wider civil society and its varied roles in democratisation; it will also provide insights about the society generally.

To conclude so far, I have settled in favour of procedural and minimalist conceptions of political democracy and constitutionalism for examining the challenges to democratisation from authoritarian rules. Conceding with O'Donnell and Schmitter, I understand that democratic transitions are *uncertain* and *contingent* to myriad of factors. Thus, democratisation is also *reversible* to authoritarianism. I have also conceded that civil society – including NGOs – is neither good nor bad. Diverse and heterogeneous, civil society and NGOs, operate in the sphere of contradictions, therefore must be understood empirically as processes rather than abstractions. And finally, I have argued for narrowing the focus for this research to studying NGOs, as part of the wider civil society.

In the next section, I endeavour to bind the above discussion on conceptual underpinnings of democratisation and NGOs into a tangible and empirical exploration of the roles of NGOs in democratisation. Focusing on the global South, I briefly review the critical literature on the 'real cases' of democratic transitions. In much of this

¹⁴⁵ In understanding NGOs as such, I have followed Mercer's definition of NGOs. See Mercer (n 133) p6.

¹⁴⁶ Tester (n 126).

literature, liberal approaches to democratisation are criticised for being ignorant of the local socio-political ‘contexts’. I try to understand the premise on which such criticisms are based. In turn, I develop my own critique of the critical literature.

Theoretically framing the context and the actor

The Global South

In a critique to the transition theories, Carothers argues that the assumptions on which transition theories were developed could not be more removed from the realities of democratisation.¹⁴⁷ For instance, the assumption that political elite, civil society and other bourgeoisie follow a sequence of events to progress democratic transitions was ill founded. Empirically, in most neo-democracies, these actors never conform to the technocratic ideal of sequencing their approaches. Instead there are chaotic processes of political change that go backwards and sideways as much as forward, and thus irregular. He also states that contrary to transition theories’ actor-centric approach, in many neo-democracies institutional legacies from predecessor regimes affect the political outcomes. In this sense, explanations of democratisation ought to be sensitive to the ‘structure-based’ theorisation.¹⁴⁸ Carothers’ suggestion to democracy-aid practitioners and policymakers is to ‘let go’ of the optimistic assumptions of transition theories and instead formulate a more open-ended query of “What is happening politically?”¹⁴⁹ He advises that instead of following a “check-list” or a template of ideal institutional forms, key political patterns of each democratising country should be the focus of analysis and policy decisions.¹⁵⁰

I agree with Carothers. Empirical realities do reveal the specifics of political context in a given democratising country. I also concede with Carens who argues in favour of adopting a contextual approach to political theory.¹⁵¹ Such approach does not grant a normative priority to the ‘way’ we do things; rather it “imposes an obligation to reflect

¹⁴⁷ Carothers (n 69) p15.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p16.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p18.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p19.

¹⁵¹ Carens, J.H., (2004) A contextual approach to political theory. *Ethical theory and moral practice*, 7(2), pp.117-132.

upon the way we do things and what they teach us.”¹⁵² In this sense, we pay attention to the ‘real cases’ that are more complex and ultimately more illuminating.¹⁵³ We highlight nuances by identifying gaps, revising, and challenging existing theories and possibly constructing new ones. We also become aware of the conflicts between theories and practices.¹⁵⁴ And finally, I take on board Saward’s ‘proceduralist’ and ‘reflexive’ approach which regards “political principles, mechanisms and institutions as open to constant change and adjustment of their meaning and importance”.¹⁵⁵

Following is a brief review of critical literature on the ‘real cases’ of democratic transitions in the global South. Based on the lessons learnt elsewhere and making links with the empirical investigations in this thesis, the next and final section of this chapter will aim at making a theoretical contribution to the conceptions of NGOs in democratisation. I will highlight the nuances of NGOs’ roles with a contextual focus on how ‘they do things’ and what ‘that teaches us’ about them and the nature of democratisation. I will also suggest revisions in O’Donnell and Schmitter’s transitology with regards to its understanding of civil society.

Whilst the critique of international aid as imperialistic and hegemonic in the context of democratisation have been briefly discussed above, it is worth elucidating at this point that democracy promotion – financially and politically supported by developed countries in the West – has been a reality for many neo-democracies. Democracy promotion is an umbrella term for a variety of forms of democracy facilitation including the use of force, political conditionalities and democracy assistance for the civil society from the developed democracies to underdeveloped neo-democracies or autocracies.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, since the wake of the September 2001 attacks in the US and the subsequent declaration of the global ‘war on terror’, a closer interaction between aid, foreign policy and security agendas of the international funding agencies has led to ‘the securitisation of aid’.¹⁵⁷ Thus, the politics of democracy promotion – and of democratisation – is inherently infused with power inequalities between the ‘donors’

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid. p120.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Saward, M., (2003) Enacting democracy. *Political studies*, 51(1), pp.161-179. p161.

¹⁵⁶ Burnell, P. (2000) quoted in Bridoux and Kurki (n 16) p3.

¹⁵⁷ Howell, J. and Lind, J., (2009) Changing donor policy and practice in civil society in the post-9/11 aid context. *Third World Quarterly*, 30(7), pp.1279-1296.

and ‘recipients’ of aid and assistance. Nevertheless, Bridoux and Kurki argue that democracy promotion is also a practice in which openings to democratic participation and resistances can be found.¹⁵⁸ I concede with this assertion in my research and abstain from categorically rejecting the idea and practice of democracy promotion – and democratisation – without counting its merits, albeit critically, in the context of developing countries where democracy is still desired by many.

As I have already observed, according to liberal theories of democratisation, civil society and NGOs have been understood as necessary agents for bringing about democratic change. Post 1980s, the institution of state was criticised on the grounds of lack of accountability and representativeness, militarism and authoritarianism, corruption, distorting liberal market forces, protecting uncompetitive national industries, and the creation of large-scale state monopolies.¹⁵⁹ Instead of the support for states, the international donors embraced NGOs as partners in a shared agenda of democratisation, political participation and service delivery.¹⁶⁰ International organisations’ financial support and assistance for NGOs multiplied during 1980s and 1990s providing direct funds for improving and promoting human rights and democracy.¹⁶¹ For example, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was created in 1983 in the United States as quasi-autonomous NGO to provide support for NGOs in neo-democracies across the world. Alongside NED, United States Development Agency (USAID), National Democratic Institute (NDI), Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), European Union (EU), Department for International Development (DFID); United Nations (UN), and World Bank including many other established democracies today have distinct programmes and funds for supporting NGOs that are dedicated for the advancement and consolidation of democracy.¹⁶²

Much of the academic critique on NGOs in democratisation is directed at their unrepresentative and undemocratic nature; elite-led and personalised leadership;

¹⁵⁸ Bridoux and Kurki (n 16). Bridoux and Kurki assert that it is important to note that the practice of democracy promotion is not as ‘black-and-white’ as it is often believed.

¹⁵⁹ Howell and Pearce (n 22).

¹⁶⁰ Howell, J., (2009-2010) Civil Society, Aid, and Security Post-9/11. *Int'l J. Not-for-Profit L.*, 12, no.4. p22. Also see Grugel (n 22).

¹⁶¹ McFaul, M., (2004) Democracy promotion as a world value. *The Washington Quarterly*, 28(1), pp.147-163. See also Burnell and Youngs (n 15) and Mercer (n 133).

¹⁶² Ibid.

technocratic and professional urban set-ups; apolitical service provision; and the extent of their independence from donors' and states' influences. For example, in examining NGOs as agents of democratisation in African context, Fowler argues that NGOs were 'progressively created and used' by the political and bureaucratic elite for their vested political interests and therefore did not make any significant impact on democratic transformation.¹⁶³ In Bangladesh,¹⁶⁴ Pakistan,¹⁶⁵ and Africa,¹⁶⁶ NGOs supported by Western donors for democratisation are found to have little to no links with grassroots groups. They are not membership based organisations and therefore operate as 'closed structures'. In the case of Bangladesh, most NGOs lack internal democratic decision-making structures and their autonomy is heavily compromised by the pressures of the political elite.¹⁶⁷ In Pakistan, NGOs are charged with lack of legitimacy or having little to no representative claim on behalf of the wider civil society or the public.¹⁶⁸ In African context, Marcussen suggests that local NGOs are neither democratic nor representative of grass-roots institutions.¹⁶⁹ Kamat argues that the international funding is deliberately directed to 'operational NGOs' that operate within localities but are not organisations of the poor.¹⁷⁰

It has also been argued that the proliferation of donor funded large-scale democratisation and development programmes have 'engineered' NGOs' professionals, who are much like the civil servants with contacts and access to information in capital cities where donor agencies and foreign embassies congregate.¹⁷¹ My own research has seen a similar situation in Pakistan.¹⁷² Consequently, the urban NGOs phenomenon has been developed at the expense of the development and sustainability of wider civil society as many more local community based groups and

¹⁶³ Fowler, A., (1993) Non-governmental organizations as agents of democratization: An African perspective. *Journal of International Development*, 5(3), pp.325-339. p334.

¹⁶⁴ White, S.C., (1999) NGOs, civil society, and the state in Bangladesh: The politics of representing the poor. *Development and change*, 30(2), pp.307-326; Lewis, D., (2017) Organising and representing the poor in a clientelistic democracy: the decline of radical NGOs in Bangladesh. *Journal of Development Studies*.

¹⁶⁵ Bano, M., (2008) Dangerous correlations: Aid's impact on NGOs' performance and ability to mobilize members in Pakistan. *World Development*, 36(11), pp.2297-2313.

¹⁶⁶ Marcussen, H.S., (1996) NGOs, the state and civil society. *Review of African Political Economy*, 23(69), pp.405-423.

¹⁶⁷ Lewis (n 164) p17.

¹⁶⁸ Bano (n 165).

¹⁶⁹ Marcussen (n 166).

¹⁷⁰ Kamat, S., (2003) NGOs and the new democracy. *Harvard International Review*, 25(1), 65-69.

¹⁷¹ Mercer (n 133).

¹⁷² See Chapter V of this thesis.

NGOs in small cities have either lost financial support and rolled back their development and human rights projects or closed down permanently. Mercer argues that it is ironic to observe that as donors attempt to ‘scale-up’ the impact of their work, to handle more (foreign) funding and take on greater roles in service provision, they are simultaneously forcing NGOs to loosen their connections to their grassroots constituencies.¹⁷³ In fact, instead of strengthening the civil society, these NGOs may actually serve to weaken civil society and restrict freedoms for the citizens. Similarly, Kamat opines that the partnership between NGOs and economic institutions that fund them, such as the World Bank, has separated NGOs from their original mandate of organising the poor against the state and elite interests; the “democratisation that NGOs represent is thus more symbolic than substantive.”¹⁷⁴

NGOs are also found to reflect other social inequalities along class, gender, religious, tribal and ethnic divisions. In Afghanistan, Hill argues that USAID’s focus on developing a democratic culture through NGOs was ‘inherently flawed.’¹⁷⁵ Afghanistan’s Muslim and tribal identity, (torn with a prolonged conflict) could not possibly absorb liberal democracy and its associated roles for NGOs in a short-term and top-down manner employed by the USAID. As a result, identity divisions permeated the processes of state-society imbalance leaving the state institutions vulnerable to violent identity-based conflicts.¹⁷⁶

Apolitical nature of NGOs in democratisation is also critically observed. Often these NGOs are found to be driven by donors’ service provision and highly bureaucratised agenda at the expense of political activities. For instance, in Bangladesh, NGOs are increasingly adopting formal procedures required by donors and developing the conservatism by opting for less maverick processes that are usually characteristic of state agencies.¹⁷⁷ This leads to a complete compromise and abandonment of their early pioneering vision. In Macedonia, though NGOs have been lauded for their support in empowering citizens, particularly marginalised groups, in raising awareness about their

¹⁷³ Mercer (n 133) p16.

¹⁷⁴ Kamat (n 172).

¹⁷⁵ Hill, M.A., (2010) International actors and democratisation: Can USAID deliver a democratic culture to Afghanistan?. *International Relations*, 24(2), pp.155-174. p163.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. p164.

¹⁷⁷ White (n 164) p321.

rights and (to some degree) contributing to progressive legislation, overall, they have had no impact or influence on informing public policy and holding the state responsible.¹⁷⁸

In India, Arundhati Roy forcefully condemns international funding for democratisation resulting in the NGOisation of the civil society:

Why should these agencies (e.g. World Bank, USAID, and others) fund NGOs? Could it be just old-fashioned missionary zeal? Guilt? It's a little more than that. NGOs give the impression that they are filling the vacuum created by a retreating state. And they are, but in a materially inconsequential way. Their real contribution is that they defuse political anger and dole out as aid or benevolence what people ought to have by right. They alter the public psyche. They turn people into dependent victims and blunt the edges of political resistance. NGOs form a sort of buffer between the *sarkar* and public. Between Empire and its subjects.¹⁷⁹

The above critique on the roles and nature of NGOs in democratisation is premised on mainly qualitative empirical research on the 'real cases' of democratising countries. India, though an established democracy, also seemed to share the concerns about NGOs and their roles in democratisation.

In my view, while these critiques illustrate the contextual nuances of the roles of NGOs in democratisation, they are nonetheless framed within the 'normative' conceptions of democracy and civil society. Using Marxian and Gramscian articulations, critics either *prescribe* or *evaluate* internationally funded NGOs and their roles against the liberal benchmark of a 'good' civil society. In doing so, they list NGOs' deficits. To me, these evaluative critiques are the critiques of the liberal idea or conception(s). They do not help with reflecting upon the *way NGOs do things* and what that teach us *about them*. In this sense, the nature of internationally funded democratisation and the roles of NGOs in distinct spheres remain hidden. NGOs might not be *playing roles* by the liberal ideals, but they are still *doing something*. That something is often missed out.

¹⁷⁸ Cierco, T., (2013) Civil Society in Macedonia's Democratization Process. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 21(2), pp.202-217.

¹⁷⁹ Rai, A., September 25, (2014) NGOisation of resistance. In *Frontlines of revolutionary struggle*, available at <https://revolutionaryfrontlines.wordpress.com/2014/09/25/ngoisation-of-resistance-arundhati-roy/> accessed on 10 August 2017.

I understand that in order to capture what NGOs in democratisation *actually do*, we must look for a methodological focus which would leave aside normative framing of either appreciation or critical evaluation of NGOs against liberal benchmarks of democracy and civil society. The hermeneutic phenomenological research methodology in my research responds to this concern. In the context of Pakistan, I illuminate the nature of internationally funded NGOs in democratisation as urban, elite, technocratic, depoliticised and therefore leading ‘projectised’ democratisation. Yet, a deeper exploration unravels that NGOs are ‘all these things’ because (a) they reflect social divisions and historical developments in Pakistan’s politics, and (b) because in such context, this might be their way to influence local patriarchal and autocratic elite-led politics. By becoming elite themselves, they have a better chance to play their part in politics. In other words, *NGOs in democratisation are not only constituted by their context – i.e. political history and culture, they also constitute it by developing reflective responses to it.*¹⁸⁰ In this sense, I find myself situated within Giddens’s theory of structuration, whereas the ‘duality of structure’ connects structure and action – “this means that people make society, but are also constraint by it.”¹⁸¹ Action and structure complement each other and therefore cannot be analysed separately.

Framing NGOs in democratisation in this manner, O’Donnell and Schmitter’s ‘structure-actor centric’ approach to analysing transitions from authoritarian rules complements Giddens’s theory of structuration. With regards to NGOs and civil society, I see complementarities with Hegel’s conception of civil society as ‘a contested space’; Marx’s inherently political civil society having an ‘incomplete freedom’; and Gramsci’s ‘hegemonic’ civil society which maintains its dominance in society not by coercion but by creating consensus through public opinion and culture. In my study, I found that in transitions from authoritarian rule, NGOs emerge as the elite of civil society to occupy a ‘middle ground’ between the wider civil society and political elite. I call them *NGelites* (a portmanteau of elite-NGOs). In this sense, I bring novel contextual insights into the conceptualisations of NGOs in democratisation. In the next

¹⁸⁰ See Chapter VI ‘The Imperfect Necessity’ which shows that the ‘constituted’ and ‘constituent’ acts intersect.

¹⁸¹ Calhoun, C., Gerteis, J. Moody, J. Pfaff, S. and Virk, Indermohan. eds. (2002) *Contemporary Social Theory*. ‘Introduction to Part V – The Sociological Theory of Anthony Giddens’, Blackwell Publishing. pp222-223.

and final section, I begin to develop the conception of *NGelites*. I articulate how my understanding of *NGelites* contests with O'Donnell and Schmitter's articulation of the 'resurrected' civil society.¹⁸² In the end, through the lens of elite theories in sociology, I learn that NGOs in democratisation in Pakistan, possess many characteristics of elites. Thus, a theoretical contribution of this empirical thesis, is offered.

NGOs as NGelites

O'Donnell and Schmitter argue that in transitions from authoritarian rule to political democracy, a select set of actors including personnel from the outgoing military elite (hardliners and soft-liners) and the emerging political and economic elite will seek to define (or redefine) new rules for the exercise of power based on mutual guarantees for their vested interests.¹⁸³ However, "[i]ronically, such modern pacts move the polity toward democracy by undemocratic means."¹⁸⁴ The new power group will agree not to harm or threaten each other, configure institutions and rules of governance, and more importantly the authority of the military (as outgoing rulers) ought to be given a 'defused but not disarming' status; it will have a "credible and honorable role in accomplishing (but not setting) national goals; and they must be made more impervious to the enticement of their interest by democratic means."¹⁸⁵ Some of these 'pacts' will be negotiated by way of agreeing a constitutional framework. Alongside these negotiated and contingent compromises between the power elites, "a generalized mobilisation is likely to occur", which O'Donnell and Schmitter describe as the "the resurrection of civil society."¹⁸⁶ This resurrection will unfold in various stages, gradually transforming the polity into a liberalised citizenry to its ultimate goal of achieving socialization based on the citizenship principle of equal rights and obligations of a socialist democracy.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² I discuss this in detail in the next section. For prompt reference see O'Donnell and Schmitter (n 1) p48.

¹⁸³ Ibid. p37.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. p38.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. p32.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. p48.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. p12.

This ‘resurrected’ civil society must not be an immediate threat to the transforming regime which firmly holds to its ‘arbitrary and capricious’ governmental power.¹⁸⁸ Gradually established, yet with strong transformative potential, the civil society (as organised groups of exemplary individuals) will be the “catalyst” force who will begin to test the boundaries of behaviour imposed by the incumbent regime.¹⁸⁹ In stages of transformation, rebels (including artists and intellectuals) will begin to “poke holes” in the regime’s supreme governance authority, followed by semi-public forums and the privileged bourgeois, and finally joined by human rights organisations who will take “personal risks”¹⁹⁰ and emerge with “enormous moral authority.”¹⁹¹ Private and public international support will prove to be of great help to these actors as they will not feel isolated in their transformative actions against the repressive regime.¹⁹² O’Donnell and Schmitter further argue that subsequent to such development, a working class of low-ranking and unionised employees will emerge against the authoritarian regimes, and “as soon as it becomes possible to do so” there will be an explosion of worker demands joined by grass-roots movements.¹⁹³ This ‘popular upsurge’ of civil society is eventually short-lived. As the incumbent regime continues to negotiate contingent pacts, the upsurge in the civil society will become disillusioned and dissolve.¹⁹⁴

As I understand, in conceptualising the civil society, O’Donnell and Schmitter suggest an opposite route to democracy from the one suggested by the classical democratic theory and the theory of liberal democracy. Instead of grass-roots movements instigating the challenge against the repressive regime, in transition theory such movements emerge much later, as the resurrected civil society finds its feet gradually without openly threatening the governing elite. The civil society – with private and public international support – stays out of the elite ‘pact making’, and therefore does not become part of the “democratic bargain”¹⁹⁵ or political compromises. In other words, the sphere of civil society stays within the ‘middle ground’ between the political

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. p7.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. p49.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p51.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. p52.

¹⁹² Ibid. p51.

¹⁹³ Ibid. p53.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p59. Quoting Dahl’s expression.

elite of the state and the family, as a positive force with an ‘activist’ zeal and commitment.

With insights from empirical research in this study, I contest this idea of ‘resurrected’ civil society. I argue that however valid this conceptualisation might be in the cases of transitions in Latin America, for most other parts of the world and particularly in Pakistan, civil society produces its own elite to gradually become part of the democratic bargain. NGOs, with private and public international support in Pakistan, are emerging as *NGelites* and taking the position of influence to discreetly join the political elite and push the transition in democratic directions to establish a minimalist procedural democracy. In this manner, similar to the political elite in O’Donnell and Schmitter’s theorisation, NGOs are pressing for democracy by (possibly) utilising undemocratic means, for instance, NGOs’ lack of representation and reach to grass-root civil society groups. We may critique their agency as apolitical, elite, urban and so on, but they serve a purpose of advancing democratisation, much like the political elite and their contingent pacts with other elites in the society. In this sense, *NGelites* contribute to the ‘pacted democratisation from above’. They are neither good nor bad. Rather, *NGelites* are constituted by their context, i.e. political history and culture. In turn, they also constitute the context by developing reflective responses to it.

To reiterate, my insights about NGOs as the emerging elite actors of the wider civil society are informed by the empirical research, conducted for this thesis. As I briefly alluded in the Introduction chapter, I am guided by hermeneutic phenomenology as the philosophy and methodology which emphasises on narrating and theorising on the basis of the ‘conceptual structures’ that inform and underpin participants’ actions – i.e. to see the phenomenon from ‘their point of view’.¹⁹⁶ The conception of ‘*NGelites*’, in this sense, illuminates research participants’ conceptual structures and my interpretation of these.

To further develop *NGelites* as a conceptual category, I now turn to a succinct discussion on elite theories in sociology.

¹⁹⁶ See Chapter III on Researching Democratisation on methodology for this thesis.

In writing about Pakistan's highest tier of commercial, political and military elite, Armytage's ethnographic research explores the role of 'instrumental friendships' – the specific patterns of elite socialising – as a strategy for perpetuating elite power in politically and economically unstable environments.¹⁹⁷ The Pakistani elite, Armytage notes, is comprised of disparate groups – “the uppermost tier of politics, business, the bureaucracy and the military.”¹⁹⁸ Over the past seventy years, these groups have retained their cohesiveness, privilege, wealth, political and military influence and hold over powerful institutions “in pursuit of their broader shared interests in maintaining structural inequalities from which they benefit....”¹⁹⁹ These elite (mostly men) foster peer-to-peer relationships through pleasurable social activities including dinner parties, informal private gatherings and marriages between families. They make use of these ‘spaces’ to tackle challenges to their business and political success. Furthermore, the Pakistani elite is comfortably familiar with the ‘political life of the nation’ or the national politics. They either personally serve in a political capacity, or are related to the elected political leaders, army generals and top-tier bureaucrats. Armytage argues that this “intimacy with politics ... is one of the primary ingredients of ‘being elite’ in Pakistan.”²⁰⁰

Armytage's ethnographic exploration is illuminating. The reality of Pakistan's political elite and its ‘intimacy with politics’ is known to most Pakistanis, including myself. However, the vivid account offered by Armytage on how the elite *socialises*, brings to the academic discussion a much needed sociological perspective to studying the complexity of democratisation in Pakistan.

By the same token, I argue that much like the long existing political, military and bureaucratic elite in Pakistan, I see the emergence of a new sub-group of elites in the form of internationally funded NGOs in democratisation, whose ‘intimacy with politics’ is also an established practice. Lucratively funded, well positioned in the urban political scene and focused on strengthening procedural democracy, this NGO-elite operate as organisations. These organisations – whom I call *the NGelites* – are staffed

¹⁹⁷ Armytage, R., (2015) The social lives of the elite: friendship and power in Pakistan. *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 16(5), pp.448-463.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. p451.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. p452.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. p455.

with individuals who either belong to the existing social elite or the class of aspiring elite-entrepreneurs educated in top class educational institutions in Pakistan, the United Kingdom (UK) or the US. *NGelites*, like the other elite, also employ ‘instrumental friendships’ of elite socialising, as a strategy to establishing their power and influence in the existing elite circles. In the following brief discussion, I explore the ‘elite-ness’ of *NGelites* with reference to their autonomy, structure, values, social circulation and transformation. I will mainly (and broadly) draw upon the elite theories of Pareto and Mosca,²⁰¹ Michels²⁰², Mills²⁰³ and Bourdieu.²⁰⁴

Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) and Gaetano Mosca (1856-1941) are considered as the classical elite theorists. Portraying elite formations in modern societies as inescapable, Pareto and Mosca, both maintained that democratic systems based on free and open political participation for all are impossible because of the self-interested elites who would rule the *demos* as the governing elites.²⁰⁵ In Laswell’s words, “[t]he influential are those who get the most of what there is to get.... Those who get the most are *elite*; the rest are *mass*.”²⁰⁶ In this sense, elites can be identified in terms of their hold over the most formal political positions in a society, influence on other elite and capacity to make key political decisions. Pareto emphasised the *psychological and intellectual supremacy* of elites who possess the capacity to reach the highest positions, whereas Mosca believed that the elites are the *organised ruling class* in minority, having intellectual, moral and material superiority *over the majority class that is ruled*.²⁰⁷ Michels (1876 – 1936) held that the majority is ruled because it lacks the ‘technical’ capacity to govern; a dominant class having such capacity is therefore, inevitable.²⁰⁸ This technical governing leadership remains concerned with holding on to, and strengthening their power and control in social organisations – a technocratic and bureaucratic power structure for any organisation is the key to governing.

²⁰¹ Meisel, J.H. ed., (1965) *Pareto & Mosca*. Prentice-Hall.

²⁰² Linz, J. J. (2017). Robert Michels, political sociology, and the future of democracy. Transaction Publishers.

²⁰³ Mills, C.W., (1956) *The power elite*. Oxford University Press.

²⁰⁴ Bourdieu, P., (1996) *The state nobility: Elite schools in the field of power*. Translated by Clough, L.C. Stanford University Press.

²⁰⁵ Meisel (n 201).

²⁰⁶ Laswell, (1936) quoted in Dankwart, R., (July 1966) *The study of elites: Who’s who, when and how*. *World Politics*, 18 (3), pp690-717. p690.

²⁰⁷ Meisel (n 201).

²⁰⁸ Linz (n 202).

C. Wright Mills (1916 – 1962) in his book ‘The Power Elite’ argues that in the US, the political power rests on the group of elites composed of three institutional hierarchies – political, military, and economic elites. According to Mills, the American elite is ‘not bound by one community’ and possesses control over the means of information and of power, both of which are centralised and ruled by it.²⁰⁹ Mills asserts “Whether or not they profess their power, their technical and political experience of it far transcends that of the underlying population.”²¹⁰ This class of hierarchical and connected elite rules over ordinary men and women, because “they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences” which makes them some-what corrupt.²¹¹ The ordinary men and women feel that “they live in a time of big decisions; they know that they are not making any. Accordingly, as they consider the present as history, they infer that at its centre, making decisions or failing to make them, there must be an elite of power”.²¹² Politics, thus is reduced to an arena where power rests with very few and outside the reach of elected representatives.

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) refers to a social order in which elites are able to reproduce themselves, passing privileges to their children and families, for example in education.²¹³ In such a social order, the dominant class or the social elite attends the best educational institutions known in the society and gains access to best social positions. Their ‘natural’ talent and intellect is highlighted by the elite-structured social order as it conceals the inherent social inequality of opportunity in the wider society.

The above conceptions cohere the qualities of elite, as a relatively small dominant group of people who occupy a position of influence and privilege in a society; possess technical supremacy and political experience; have the power to make decisions; educated in superior educational institutions; and who pass these privileges to their children and families to reproduce themselves. They ‘circulate’ amongst each other as the reproduction of elite is not always hereditary – the elite allows entrance to the new elite and replaces the old to enable a certain social equilibrium and to keep in check any

²⁰⁹ Mills (n 203) pp3-4.

²¹⁰ Ibid. p3.

²¹¹ Ibid. p4.

²¹² Ibid. p5.

²¹³ Bourdieu (n 204).

possible rebellions to their power positions. In other words, the elite possess the capacity to co-opt the possible deviant sectors to secure itself.

The internationally funded NGOs in democratisation (and their personnel as NGOs) in Pakistan, possess many characteristics of elites highlighted by these prominent theories.²¹⁴ They have technical and bureaucratic power structures, political experience, material and psychological superiority over other NGOs and the wider civil society, and the ability to circulate amongst other elites. As *NGelites*, these organisations are more than often staffed by individuals who are educated in elite educational institutions in Pakistan or abroad. Though they claim to be (and perceived by other actors) as apolitical, it mainly refers to their impartiality in relation to specific ideological political position. Yet *NGelites* are ‘inherently political’ as they work towards procedural goals to establish democracy which benefits their vested interests in the historical, social and political context of Pakistan. Thus, the elite-ness of *NGelites* – though argued empirically in this thesis – is also discernible through the existing elite theories in sociology.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to explore the academic debates on NGOs in democratisation. By way of understanding theoretical and empirical debates on ‘defining’ and ‘understanding’ the conceptions of democracy, constitutionalism, civil society and NGOs, I settled for the procedural and minimalist conceptions of democracy, constitutionalism and democratisation as advanced by O’Donnell and Schmitter within the transition theory paradigm.

Acknowledging the diversity and conflicting conceptions of defining NGOs as part of the wider conception of civil society, I have argued that firstly, in understanding the nature (or agency) of civil society, one should domesticate it in its context – such a context is shaped by internal and external influences including the constraints of structures of power inherent in the practice of international aid and associated conditionalities. Secondly, I outlined the reasons for narrowing the focus on studying

²¹⁴ Chapters V and VI of this thesis offer a detailed empirical study of NGOs in democratisation in Pakistan as elite actors.

NGOs as part of the civil society. In this sense, NGOs as organisations aim to promote democracy by shaping government policy and legislation; are recognised for advancing public interest and related causes including human rights, minorities and women's issues; and are engaged in election monitoring; legislative strengthening and accountability support; anti-corruption research; citizenship education, and other "good things" that contribute to promoting democracy. NGOs are officially established; registered within the state law; run by employed staff (urban professionals or expatriates); well-supported either by domestic or international funding; and are often relatively large and well-resourced as compare to other civil society groups.

After clarifying the definitional and conceptual boundaries, I undertook a review of critical literature on the nature and roles of NGOs in democratisation in the global South. I argued that most critiques evaluate NGOs against the liberal benchmark of a 'good' civil society. Such 'normative framing' of NGOs does not help with examining the *ways NGOs do things* and what that teach us *about them*. In this sense, the nature of internationally funded democratisation and the roles of NGOs in distinct spheres remain hidden. I contend further that in order to understand what NGOs in democratisation *actually* do, a contextual and methodological focus must leave aside normative framing of either appreciation or critical evaluation of NGOs. Instead, studying NGOs in democratisation should reveal empirical realities of the specifics of political context in a given democratising country. Thus, revealing empirical contextual reality of NGOs in democratisation forms the rationale for my research.

Lastly, I articulated the theoretical contribution of this thesis. Informed by the lived experiences of NGOs in democratisation in the context of Pakistan, I have highlighted gaps in the existing democratic transition literature and its emphasis on the 'resurrected' civil society. With a particular reference to O'Donnell and Schmitter's transition theory I argue that contrary to *how* the roles of NGOs are conceptualised as generating norms for liberalisation; condemning and exposing regime's corruption; and creating a general climate of rejecting the authoritarian regime, NGOs with international financial and ideological support in democratic transitions may in fact emerge as the elite of civil society. Yet *similar to* the ways in which bourgeoisie political and economic elite act in democratic transitions, NGOs may also – for vested interests – support the political

elite and push the processes of transition by advocating for a less radical and more procedural transition. I call them *NGelites*.

To close this chapter, I bring insights from elite theories in sociology to begin to comprehend the nature of NGOs as elite actors. I show that the internationally funded NGOs in democratisation in Pakistan, possess many characteristics of elites highlighted by the prominent elite theories offered by Mosca, Michels, Mills and Bourdieu.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the research methodology for this thesis. I will establish the usefulness of an interpretive and contextual approach to studying democratisation which enabled me to *see* and *acknowledge* the phenomenon of democratisation as it revealed itself in the lived experiences of NGOs and other concerned actors.

Chapter III: Researching Democratisation

In which hermeneutic phenomenology reveals itself as the research methodology.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.¹

Introduction

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I have stated the reasons that underpin my motivation to explore and write about the roles of internationally funded NGOs in democratisation in Pakistan. I have stated that my motivation was essentially personal. I wished to arrive at crucial insights into the nature of democratisation in Pakistan and the roles of internationally funded NGOs in it. Since my motivation arose from my lived experience of working with NGOs in democratisation, I was naturally inclined to learn through the experiences of the research participants. I wanted to see their ways of seeing, engaging, assigning meanings to, and understanding of democratisation. This inclination of learning through the lived experiences, embedded my research firmly in the qualitative research domain.² The dual questions that I asked myself then were: how do I seek a way to understand what the research participants do and how, what the research participants feel and why? And how could this lead me to understand the nature and meanings of democratisation?

In learning through the lived experiences of the research participants, as well as through my own reflections, an epistemological stance was already taken. I needed to reflect, recognise and own it. I recognised that my research approach was going to be interpretive.³ Meanwhile, reviewing the existing academic literature on democratisation and the roles of NGOs in it, I was developing a critical sense of how the practice of

¹ Eliot, T.S. (1943) *Four Quartets*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 1st edn. p59.

² See Silverman, D. (2000) *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*, London: Sage. See also Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research*, Newbury Park: Sage.

³ On interpretive qualitative research, see Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks: Sage; Denzin, N. K. (1989) *Interpretive Interactionism* (Applied Social Research Methods Series, Vol (16), Newbury Park, CA: Sage; Mason, J. (1996) *Qualitative Researching*, London: Sage.

democratisation is constructed in different contexts. Accordingly, the reality or ontology, of democratisation through NGOs was produced by the NGOs themselves and by other concerned actors. I learnt that I was going to deal with multiple realities, meanings and understandings of democratisation and that there was unlikely to be single explanation of my inquiry.⁴ What remained unexplored, however, was the methodology which coheres my inclinations and lays down a research path.

To begin with, I chose the critical participatory action research (PAR). PAR aims at learning through conversations and communications of participants about the difficulties confronted by their social systems.⁵ Influenced by personal experience of working with NGOs, I idealised this approach for its ‘transformative’ potential.⁶ In other words, through this research, I wished to contribute to ‘de-imperialise democratisation’.⁷ However, once I immersed myself in the field, I had to rethink and eventually discard PAR. I had then little to no idea of another suitable methodology. This, for sure, presented a challenge (I will explain the reasons for discarding PAR shortly). What, in turn I learnt, was that undertaking research is a journey: I might have some idea to my destination, but the paths to destination are many. The path I take depends upon who I am, as a researcher but also as a person. In other words, my research has been a journey of self-exploration through gradual reflection; revealing at every step of the way, a new insight not only about my research but also about myself.

Before I set out in detail the research methodology which I gradually came to choose – or rather it chose me – let me explain why I discarded PAR. I discarded PAR for methodological difficulties and a shift in my epistemological stance. Methodologically, though NGOs as research participants were willing to share their experiences, their busy work cultures had little space for any transformative intervention which required

⁴ For a comprehensive discussion, see Vasilachis de Gialdino, I. (2009) Ontological and Epistemological Foundations of Qualitative Research, *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 10(2), Art. 30.

⁵ Kemmis, S. (2008) Critical Theory and Participatory Action Research, in Reason, P. and Bradbury (2008) (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*, 2nd edn, London: Sage Publications Ltd, pp: 121-138.

⁶ Sarantakos, S. (1998) *Social Research*, 2nd edn, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁷ Tully, J. (2008) The Imperialism of Modern Constitutional Democracy in Loughlin, M. and Walker, N. (eds.) *The Paradox of Constitutionalism: Constituent Power and Constitutional Form*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp: 315-358. I wanted to not only find meanings but also to build solidarity in resolving problems associated with the problems of democratisation. See Bohman, J. (2005) Critical Theory in Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (First published Tue Mar 8, 2005), Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/critical-theory/> (Accessed: 17 Jan 2014).

involving all the staff and board members over a considerable period. Logistically, this was difficult to achieve given the duration of the fieldwork (eight months) and the level of participation required. Moreover, the sensitive political nature of the research, involving questions regarding perceptions and meanings of democracy in Pakistan and the influence of international funding for democratisation, meant that the NGOs' personnel were apprehensive to share their thoughts amongst the staff and other actors.⁸ My epistemological stance was also shifting; whilst I firmly stayed within learning through lived experiences, I was keener to understand deeper meanings than to bring about transformation.⁹ PAR was restricting my pursuit.

It gradually became clear to me that I was seeking to understand the nature and meanings of democratisation, through the lived experiences of NGOs involved in promoting democracy. The phenomenon in question, was revealing itself in my interactions with the research participants through conversations. It is in this way, I believe, that phenomenology chose me; I was already guided by it even though I was not academically aware of it. Whilst in the field, I kept working with this approach applying research methods including undertaking semi-structured interviews, observations and writing memos. Upon returning to the University, at a discussion with my supervisors about the challenges I had faced, Professor Saward suggested a book entitled 'At the Existentialist Café: Freedom, Being, and Apricot Cocktails' authored by Sarah Bakewell.¹⁰ Reading it, I felt that I was situated within that approach – I was also in that 'Café'. Further explorations led me to read about Heidegger¹¹, Sartre¹²,

⁸ During the initial phase of research with a few NGOs, I noticed that they were reluctant to involve their board members or share their programme contracts with funding agencies to inform the research.

⁹ I felt that for any transformation in social systems, one must first know these and the associated problems as closely as possible.

¹⁰ Bakewell, S., (2016) *At the Existentialist Café: Freedom, Being, and Apricot Cocktails* with Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Others. New York: Other Press.

¹¹ Heidegger, M. (1988) *The basic problems of phenomenology*; Edited by Hofstadter, A. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Heidegger, M. (1962) *Being and time*; Translated by Macquarrie, J. and Robinson, E. Cornwall: Blackwell Publisher; Heidegger, M. (1971) *Poetry, language, thought*; Translated by Hofstadter, A. New York: HarperCollins.

¹² Sartre, J.P (1965) *Nausea*; Translated by R. Baldick. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Merleau-Ponty¹³, Gadamer¹⁴ and van Manen.¹⁵ Phenomenology, as a philosophy and methodology, frames this research. In the rest of this chapter, I discuss it in detail.

The chapter has three sections and it unfolds in the following fashion. Following this introduction, section one provides an overview of phenomenology with reference to hermeneutic phenomenology. I briefly discuss its origin and characteristics and examine the epistemological, ontological and axiological orientations. The purpose of this section is to draw philosophical insights for conceptualising a framework for the research. Section two discusses the style of writing in phenomenology and its adoption for writing in this thesis. I discuss reasons for constructing the narrative in an evocative, reflexive and personalised manner. I also elaborate research methods with an emphasis on bracketing common sense; conducting interviews; producing thick descriptions and illuminating the essences through themes and interpretation. In section three, I develop an autobiographical tale about how and why I became interested in this research. The aim is to outline reasons for my pursuit and expose my assumptions. In the same section, I also discuss the research participants. I conclude by highlighting the suitability of hermeneutic phenomenology for this research.

Phenomenology and Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Origin and characteristics

Phenomenology encompasses both a philosophical movement and a range of research approaches.¹⁶ It was developed before and during the First World War (1914-1918) when Europe ‘was shaken to its roots’ and the ideologies of capitalism and enlightenment were in deep turmoil for not explaining the causes or solutions to the

¹³ Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962) *Phenomenology of perception*. London: Routledge.

¹⁴ Gadamer, H.G. (2008) *Philosophical hermeneutics*. Translated and Edited by D.E. Linge, Berkeley: University of California Press; Gadamer, H.G. (2004) *Truth and method*, 2nd revised edn. Translation revised by J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marsh, London: Continuum.

¹⁵ van Manen, M., (2016) *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Routledge; Manen, M., (2007) *Phenomenology of practice*. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 1(1); van Manen, M. ed., (2003) *Writing in the dark: Phenomenological studies in interpretive inquiry*. Left Coast Press; van Manen, M., (1997) *From meaning to method*. *Qualitative health research*, 7(3), pp.345-369; van Manen, M., (1984) “Doing” *Phenomenological Research and Writing: An Introduction*, Monograph No.7, Curriculum Praxis, University of Alberta.

¹⁶ Kafle, N.P., (2013) *Hermeneutic phenomenological research method simplified*. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 5(1), pp.181-200.

wreckage of war.¹⁷ Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938), the German philosopher, developed phenomenology as a philosophical approach to offer ‘absolute certainty’ to the decaying European society.¹⁸ To be sure, though Husserl is commonly known to have initiated phenomenology as a philosophical movement, the term phenomenology can be referred back to Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804) with his ‘distinction between the *phenomenon* or appearance of reality in consciousness, and the *noumenon* or being of reality in itself’.¹⁹ According to Kant, we only know about a phenomenon through the means of our consciousness of it. *Noumenon* remains to be ‘*not known*’.²⁰ In this sense, reality is never fully known.

Husserl was opposed to Kant’s dualism in the understanding of reality. He called for a return of attention to the ‘things themselves’; to set aside abstract notions of reality outside human experience and study a phenomenon ‘as it presents itself to my experience’.²¹ In this sense, phenomenology frees us to talk about our experiences, as they are lived, without having to look for abstract theoretical explanations. Husserl’s response to Kant’s dualism asserted that the lived experience presents itself as the only reality.²² By digging deep and getting to the heart of that lived experience – through our consciousness of it – the phenomenon appears as we find reality. The method to do this is to set aside our presumptions and abstract thoughts and to be free from their influence on our interpretation of the experience.²³ Moreover, Husserl viewed consciousness as an “intentional and co-constituted dialogue between a person and the world”.²⁴

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) agreed to Husserl’s ‘reality as the lived experience’ to a degree. He conceded that human life is a practical affair in which reality reveals itself but contended the idea of setting aside presumptions to be free from their influences.²⁵ Heidegger maintained that this ‘setting aside’ was a fatal mistake: “Husserl had

¹⁷ Groenewald, T., (2004) A phenomenological research design illustrated. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 3(1), pp.42-55; Lavery, S.M., 2003. Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 2(3), pp.21-35.

¹⁸ Bakewell (n 10); Lester, S., (1999) An introduction to phenomenological research.

¹⁹ Lauer, Q., (1958) *Phenomenology: its genesis and prospect*. Harper, Fordham University Press, New York. p1-2

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Lester (n 18); Groenewald (n 17).

²⁴ Lavery (n 17).

²⁵ Kafle (n 16).

bracketed out the wrong thing. He bracketed out Being, the one thing which is indispensable”.²⁶ For Heidegger it is this everydayness of our lives, constrained by our presumptions and abstract thoughts, with all the influences of lifeworld²⁷ that presents itself in the reality of our experience. We cannot rise above these influences because we are thrown in the world which is already full of them. In this sense, our lifeworld is the starting point to the study of reality as we experience it.²⁸

Gunter Figal notes that in phenomenology, “there is a tendency, perhaps even a necessity to be hermeneutical.”²⁹ Hermeneutic phenomenology is also concerned with the lifeworld or human experience as it is lived.³⁰ But it is Heidegger’s emphasis on consciousness, *inseparable* from the lifeworld, which gives hermeneutic phenomenology a distinct edge from that of Husserl’s conception of phenomenology. For Heidegger, our consciousness of reality is formed through our historically lived experience. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger develops a concept of phenomenon as an ‘event’ that ‘shows itself’.³¹ A self-disclosure of the ‘historicity’ and ‘situatedness’ or one’s background, helps with the intentional co-constitution of a dialogue with one’s self to get to the essence of the phenomena.³² It is the ‘indissoluble unity’ between a person and the world.³³

It is here that hermeneutic phenomenology takes a shape as a method of research. Its application requires the observer or researcher to be aware of her own background or historicity in addition to the awareness of the fore-structures or situatedness of the observed event. In other words, researcher’s background is bound to influence her

²⁶ Bakewell (n 10) p65.

²⁷ By the term ‘lifeworld’ I understand a world, which we as human beings are conscious of, as existing precisely through our ‘living together’. A world that is given to us all, is dynamic and constantly functioning, and which we all shape. The concept of lifeworld was introduced by Edmund Husserl in early 1930s, and was further developed by Martin Heidegger and Alfred Schutz. The lifeworld coheres our experiences, in the sense that it is that background on which all things appear as themselves and meaningful. It is a dynamic background in which we live, and which *lives with us* in the sense that nothing can appear in our lifeworld except as *lived*. See Heidegger, 1988 (n 11).

²⁸ Heidegger, 1962 (n 11)

²⁹ Figal, G. *Hermeneutical Phenomenology*, in Zahavi, D. ed., (2012) *The Oxford handbook of contemporary phenomenology*. Oxford Handbook on Phenomenology. Published online in 2013 available at <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199594900.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199594900-e-26>, accessed on 24 September 2016

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Lavery (n 17).

³¹ Heidegger, 1962 (note 11).

³² Kafle (n 16) p187.

³³ Koch.,1995 quoted in Lavery (n 17).

interpretation of the lived experience which she is observing.³⁴ Interpretation thus becomes the essential task for hermeneutic phenomenological research. Heidegger extends it by arguing that the language, with which one engages with the everyday experience of lifeworld, is another inseparable aspect of interpretation to arrive at an understanding of a phenomenon.³⁵

The element of language and its necessity in interpretation within hermeneutic phenomenology is then advanced by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002). For Gadamer, hermeneutics was more than merely developing a procedure of understanding; rather it starts from the premise that the observer who is seeking to understand a phenomenon, has an existing bond with the subject matter; a bond that comes into language through the text and description of the observed phenomenon. For Gadamer, “language becomes the medium in which understanding occurs. Understanding occurs in interpreting”³⁶ and so it is language which reveals being.³⁷ He further asserts that “[n]ot just occasionally but always, the meaning of a text goes beyond its author”.³⁸ In this sense, interpretation of a phenomenon is an ever evolving process; it is unlikely to acquire a definitive interpretation or an absolute understanding of it.³⁹ For Gadamer, ‘prejudice’⁴⁰ of presumptions and historicity as well as the bonds of language that exist between the observer and the observed text, are the necessary conditions of knowing a phenomenon.

Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) stitched an existentialist turn to hermeneutic phenomenology. Living through the social, cultural and political disorder during and after Second World War, Sartre felt responsible for not just describing and interpreting the lived experience, but also ensuring that it is conducted with an attached, interested, engaged and evocative standpoint.⁴¹ It was believed that certain phenomena only show

³⁴ Lavery (n 17) p9.

³⁵ Heidegger, 1971 (n 11).

³⁶ Gadamer, 2004 (n 14) p384.

³⁷ Ibid. Also see Sloan, A. and Bowe, B. (2014) Phenomenology and Hermeneutic Phenomenology: The Philosophy, The Methodologies and Using Hermeneutic Phenomenology to Investigate Lecturers’ Experience of Curriculum Design, Quality and Quantity, 48(3), pp: 1291-1303.

³⁸ Gadamer, 2004 (n 14) p296.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ For Sartre, writing was a form of ‘acting in the world’ as it produces effects for which the author must assume responsibility. Rejecting “art for art’s sake,” Sartre insisted on the social responsibility of the artist and the intellectual in general. See Flynn, T. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), available at <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/sartre/>>.

themselves to the one who is engaged with the world ‘in a right kind of way’.⁴² In this sense, being human is not just something that ‘I am’ automatically but something that ‘I seek to be’ and at liberty to be.⁴³ With regards to the method of writing, the existentialist turn gave phenomenological movement a literary and artistic rigour. In this sense, writing ‘artistically’ carried a special power of communicating without alienating the reader.⁴⁴ Such writing has a gift-appeal in which the writer invites the reader to engage and realises the possibilities that the text offers.⁴⁵ In other words, the reader responds to the text by an act of re-creation as a mutual relationship develops between the reader and the text.

Kafle argues that the primacy of being has also been discussed historically in the literatures of eastern origin.⁴⁶ However, it is inadequately explored in research discourse. The idea, central to phenomenology is that truth has multiple existences, and therefore multiple interpretations. Similar understanding is held in the eastern traditions including Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. These debates are mostly theological with a focus on the ‘divine’ nature of truth (the ‘being’ of higher god) and existence of cosmos. This divine truth exists independent of the individual or practiced truths of the world, which are valid and multiple but possess a secondary value as compare to the divine truth.

More recently, Max van Manen (1942-) has been developing the hermeneutic phenomenological research approach with a focus on language and art of writing.⁴⁷ He summarises it with following characteristics: it is a study of lived experience, of a lifeworld as we immediately experience it; it asks for the very nature of the phenomenon, for that which makes a “thing” what it *is*. In this sense, it is the study of essences; it is a project of thoughtfulness – a mindful wondering about what it means to live a life; sociocultural and historical traditions give meanings to the lifeworld, therefore hermeneutic phenomenology searches for what it means to be human; and finally, for van Manen, interpreting and writing phenomenological research is a

⁴² Warthal, 2006 quoted by Kafle (n 16) p188.

⁴³ Bakewell (n 10).

⁴⁴ Flynn (n 41).

⁴⁵ Denzin, Norman. K. (1989) ‘Interpretive Interactionism: Applied Social Research Methods Series Vol 16’. Sage.

⁴⁶ Kafle (n 16) pp184-185.

⁴⁷ van Manen, 1984 (n 15).

poetising activity which is ever-evolving with no definitive conclusions. Sartre's notion of artistic writing as an act of re-creation between the reader and the text is relevant here.

To summarise the above discussion, I refer to Finlay who states that hermeneutic phenomenological research is the study of the *nature* and *meanings* of a phenomenon in which a researcher aims at providing rich description of a lived experience, accentuated by her interpretation to illuminate its essence that makes what it *is*.⁴⁸

Ontological, epistemological and axiological orientation

Hermeneutic phenomenological research is structured within the constructivist interpretive paradigm which aims to understand the complex world of lived experience from the view of those who lived it.⁴⁹ Ontologically, therefore, reality is perceived as constructed: just as the lived experience is dependent on multiple situations and influences, hermeneutic phenomenology rests on the belief that reality is not 'out there' but an intangible construction and context dependent.⁵⁰

With regards to the question of 'how do we know this reality?' hermeneutic phenomenology understands reality through human experience and perception whereas knowledge is created through interaction between and among the researcher and respondents.⁵¹ Thus, epistemologically it is inter-subjective and interpretive. And finally, an axiological orientation of the researcher in hermeneutic phenomenological investigations is driven by her values and attachment to the subject.⁵²

Researching and Writing hermeneutic phenomenology

In researching and writing in the frame of hermeneutic phenomenology, I am guided by Max van Manen⁵³ and Norman K. Denzin.⁵⁴ Langdridge asserts that van Manen's

⁴⁸ Finlay, L., 2009. Debating phenomenological research methods. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 3 (1), 6-25.

⁴⁹ Racher, F.E. and Robinson, S., (2003) Are phenomenology and postpositivism strange bedfellows?. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 25(5), pp.464-481.

⁵⁰ Ibid. Also see Denzin and Lincoln (n 3).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Kafle (n 16).

⁵³ van Manen (n 15).

⁵⁴ Denzin (n 45).

approach follows Gadamer's with a focus on how language reveals being or phenomena within some historical and cultural contexts.⁵⁵ In this sense, the following discussion on phenomenological research and writing has an implicit acceptance of phenomenology as hermeneutical. Denzin's 'Interpretive Interactionism' on the other hand, offers a mode of qualitative research to "make the world of lived experience directly accessible to the reader."⁵⁶ In other words, lived experience is brought to life in writing with rich descriptive detail including thoughts and feelings of the persons, act or phenomenon involved. In so doing, the author "brings the reader into the situation."⁵⁷

van Manen provides a path to phenomenological research, which is a dynamic interplay of the following procedural activities:

- a) turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
- b) investigating experience as it is lived rather than as we conceptualise it;
- c) reflecting on the essential themes which characterise the phenomenon; and
- d) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting.⁵⁸

With an emphasis on lived experience, let me first sketch my understanding of it.

Understanding 'lived experience'

The term 'lived experience' may at first seem superfluous; after all, "What an experience might be if it were not lived."⁵⁹ Burch reminds us, however, that the term 'lived experience' must be understood in its German etymological roots to appreciate how it is discussed in phenomenology. Derived from the German word, *Er-lebnis*, lived

⁵⁵ Langdrige, D., (2007) Phenomenological psychology: Theory, research and method. Pearson Education.

⁵⁶ Denzin (n 45) p10.

⁵⁷ Denzin (n 45) p13.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Burch, R., (1990) 'Phenomenology, lived experience: taking a measure of the topic'. *Phenomenology + Pedagogy*, 8, 130–60. Available at <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/pandp/index.php/pandp/article/view/15137/11958> accessed 3 June 2017.

experience is that which “unfolds and endures from life by virtue of life itself”.⁶⁰ Lived experience does not only consist in what is felt and lived by the observed beings in a specified time, but also what is meaningfully understood, singled out and preserved by it.⁶¹ This means that an understanding of lived experience is retrospective and reflexive; it refers to the “process of turning back on oneself and looking at what has been going on.”⁶²

Alfred Schutz introduced the notion of reflexivity in phenomenology.⁶³ Schutz argues that we gain knowledge of the everyday world through our empirical sensory perceptions and employ socially constructed concepts to organise and interpret them, resulting in our lived experience.⁶⁴ This suggests that in attaching meanings to actions, the already lived experiences are meaningful.⁶⁵ Furthermore, reflexivity for lived experience is not merely a process of attaching meaning to our own actions. It also involves interpreting the actions of others.⁶⁶ However, the genuine understanding of other self may require us to begin with reflecting on our own lived experience.⁶⁷ Conceding to this assertion, later in this chapter, I present an autobiographical tale of my experience of working with an NGO, which was focused on promoting democracy in Pakistan. It serves as my entry-point for this research and helps me to reflect on the lived experiences of the research participants.

I now turn to van Manen’s four procedural activities and their dynamic interplay that guided my research. Firstly, I outline how I became interested in the phenomena of democratisation and the roles of NGOs in it. I then discuss methods of investigating lived experience employed in this research. These include conducting interviews, making observations, bracketing assumptions and producing thick descriptions. Next, I discuss adopting a thematic structure and interpretation process. And lastly, I discuss writing artistically for this thesis.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p133.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Burrell, G. and Morgan, G., (2017) Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corporate life. Routledge. p244.

⁶³ Alfred Schutz (1967) quoted in Calhoun, C., Gerteis, J. Moody, J. Pfaff, S. and Virk, Indermohan. eds. (2002) Contemporary Social Theory. ‘Introduction to Part V – The Sociological Theory of Anthony Giddens’, Blackwell Publishing. p39.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

When the phenomenon calls

I can recall my interest in the phenomena of democratisation and the role of civil society in it from a very early age.⁶⁸ However, I started to reflect on it seriously when I began working with Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) in Pakistan during 2004-2005. It still took me another eight years to articulate questions for the academic pursuit.⁶⁹ Initially, I wanted to explore the role(s) of NGOs in democratisation and constitutionalism in Pakistan. Subsequently, I began to question more in-depth about the nature and meanings of democratisation (foremost) and of constitutionalism and civil society (as related concerns). Phenomenological inquiry requires a commitment to an abiding concern. In my case, democratisation became such a concern. This in turn requires deep questioning, a kind of ‘thoughtfulness’ that Heidegger refers to as a “single thought till it stands like a star in the world’s sky.”⁷⁰

For such a pursuit, gathering deep information becomes crucial. It is also crucial to establish a good level of rapport and empathy to gain such information.⁷¹ This proved not so difficult – ever since I left Pakistan in 2005, I had maintained links with PILDAT. Through friends in Pakistan, I also knew other actors in NGOs, academics, politicians and journalists that were engaged in promoting and/or writing about democracy and NGOs in Pakistan. They offered to help in selecting research participants.⁷² Whilst still in the UK, on recommendations, I began to contact the prospective research participants. However, my emails did not yield any response. I shared my concerns with a friend in an NGO, who reminded me, that in Pakistan it is really the ‘presence’ of the person which counts. I needed to be there to be able to engage and involve people.

I began my fieldwork in January 2015 which lasted until July 2015. I paid a follow-up visit during July-August 2016. I conducted 36 interviews in total. To observe the daily

⁶⁸ See biographical tale in Section 3.

⁶⁹ Meanwhile, I continued to work with the civil society both in Pakistan and in the UK.

⁷⁰ Heidegger, 1971 (n 11) p4.

⁷¹ Groenewald (n 17).

⁷² In this sense, the selection of participants was based on the theoretical sampling model developed by Glaser and Strauss. Representatives in the research are identified based on prior or emerging knowledge about the phenomena under study. See Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) cited by Flick, U., 2014. An introduction to qualitative research. Sage.

workings of NGOs, I requested PILDAT who generously agreed and provided me the space at their office for nearly two months during April-June 2015. I conducted two focus group discussions with two NGOs' staff members. In total, I spoke with 45 people including 27 NGO personnel; four politicians; six academics; three journalists; and five international donor and intermediary fund management organisations' representatives.⁷³

I interviewed people in three cities including Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi.⁷⁴ It was not always straightforward to arrange meetings. By nature of their work, meetings with politicians and donor agencies proved to be the hardest to organise.⁷⁵ I kept an excel worksheet to record appointments and meetings.⁷⁶ It often happened that scheduled meetings in Islamabad were cancelled at the last minute when I had already travelled there from Lahore where I was based. Such cancellations were unavoidable and were only to be endured.⁷⁷

Building trust through interaction: the interviews

To make sense of others' lived experience, one-to-one interaction is essential as it helps with the social situatedness of the researcher in the culture of the observed.⁷⁸ In this sense, semi-structured or open-ended interviewing is a collaborative effort between the interviewer and interviewee: framing of questions and responses to the questions generate a reciprocal 'give-and-take' understanding as meanings emerge during the course of the interview.⁷⁹ The inter-subjectivity came at play in our conversations through the use of probes and follow-up questions.

⁷³ I provide the details about participants in Section 3.

⁷⁴ See Chapter I. The focus of my research is on internationally funded NGOs that are mostly based in cities. Some of them have regional and local sub-offices.

⁷⁵ In some instances, I had to chase their personal assistants for weeks before they finally offered an appointment, some of which were then cancelled and rescheduled.

⁷⁶ The worksheet listed the number of people I have contacted; the number of positive and negative responses; meetings agreed, cancelled and rescheduled; places where meetings were to be held; participants' contact details and the number of time I called them.

⁷⁷ This proved difficult since it is a long journey on road, especially when my six-year old daughter was accompanying me every time I had interviews in Islamabad. I am very grateful to my friends in Islamabad for their hospitality and support, especially in taking care of my daughter when I was busy interviewing.

⁷⁸ Gubrium, J.F. ed., (2012) *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft*. Sage.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

With the impossibility to offer ready-made questions, van Manen suggests letting the interviewee think of a specific instance, situation, person or event to then probe with the ‘how’ and ‘who’ questions.⁸⁰ The probing should encourage interviewees to describe the ‘feel’ of the event or situation.⁸¹ I would begin by asking concrete question e.g. ‘What does your NGO do in promoting democracy? Research participants would usually describe their activities – projects and programmes with the details of what, who, where, how and to certain extent why.⁸² These responses would stay basic at first but the purpose of this specificity was to open-up the space for conversation. Once the conversations were established, I would bring in the questions of how do they ‘feel’ about NGOs’ ‘democratisation activities’ in the context of Pakistan? Or how, in their opinion, NGOs have contributed (or not contributed) to democratisation in Pakistan? The salience of historicity would naturally come to play as the participants attempted at understanding their own place in the history of democratisation in Pakistan. Most interviews followed a pattern in which the participants would begin with straight forward responses. However, once the trust would be established between us, they would open-up and conversations would take shape. The main goal of phenomenological research, as distinct from other qualitative research, “remains oriented to asking of what is the nature of this phenomenon (‘democratisation’ in this thesis) as an essentially human experience.”⁸³ This, however, was the question that I directed at the text of the transcriptions more than to the participants at the time of interviews. However, for some key participants, I phrased the question of ‘nature of the phenomenon’ during my follow-up visit.

Whilst facilitating the interviews, I stayed patient and silent to create an atmosphere of listening.⁸⁴ Occasionally, however, to establish a reciprocal conversation, I shared insights from my own experience which helped developing the dynamics of trust between the participant and myself, as well as filled the odd occurrences of silence.⁸⁵ With participants’ permissions, I tape-recorded all interviews and focus group

⁸⁰ van Manen, 1984 (n 15).

⁸¹ As I stated previously, I was not guided by the techniques of interviews in phenomenology *per se*, but the qualitative research method’s training in the first year of PhD guided me in conducting interviews. In engaging with the research participants, I would broadly introduce the topic of research.

⁸² I found that generally it comes easy to most people to list activities.

⁸³ van Manen, 1984 (n 15) p18.

⁸⁴ Gubrium (n 78).

⁸⁵ Denzin (n 45) p43.

discussions. It was not always possible to transcribe the interviews soon after they were held, therefore, I wrote reflective memos on the experience of interviews including details about how I felt about the environment and participants' responses to our meetings. I subsequently transcribed 28 interviews and two focus group discussions. For the rest, I took detailed notes.

As a general principle, phenomenological research is guided by 'minimum structure and maximum depth'.⁸⁶ Merleau-Ponty calls it 'the study of essences'.⁸⁷ van Manen opines that a good description reveals the essence of a lived experience "in such fashion that we are now able to grasp the nature and significance of this experience in a hitherto unseen way."⁸⁸ He further guides that the essence is achieved when the researcher attempts to creatively capture the phenomenon "in a linguistic description that is both holistic and analytical, evocative and precise, unique and universal, powerful and eloquent."⁸⁹ The following assertion explains the dynamics between description and interpretation:

[I]t is not enough to simply recall experiences others or I may have had with respect to particular phenomenon. Instead I must recall the experience in such a way that the essential aspects, the meaning structure of this experience as lived through, are brought back, as it were, and in such a way that we recognise this description as a possible human experience, which means as a possible interpretation of that experience. This then is the task of phenomenological research and writing: to construct a possible interpretation of the nature of a certain human experience.⁹⁰

Bracketing common sense

Before I allude further on the nature of description and interpretation (with reference to my research), a significant task in hermeneutic phenomenology needs attention. It is the task of explication of assumptions and pre-understandings. Phenomenological inquiry demands that we approach the phenomenon of study in such manner that our

⁸⁶ Lester (n 18).

⁸⁷ Merleau-Ponty (n 13).

⁸⁸ van Manen, 1984 (n 15).

⁸⁹ van Manen, 1984 (n 15) p6.

⁹⁰ van Manen , 1984 (n 15) p7. van Manen's emphasis.

‘common sense’, presumptions, assumptions, existing body of knowledge including our everyday knowledge do not obscure our gaze into the essence of the phenomenon. It calls for the ‘suspension’ or ‘bracketing’ of existing beliefs and knowledge. Recalling the discussion earlier on the characteristics of hermeneutic phenomenology, and Heidegger’s insistence that *being* of a phenomenon resides in the everydayness of lived experience, I am guided by van Manen that the best way for explication is to ‘see’ and ‘make explicit’ the existing beliefs and knowledge.⁹¹ The purpose of this action is to reveal the ‘shallowness’ with which we see the world and our phenomena.⁹²

In my experience, this explication of existing knowledge happened in two stages. Firstly, I reviewed the existing academic literature on democratisation and NGOs (within the wider debates on civil society). I noticed that the majority of books and articles were ‘framed’ within the liberal conceptions of constitutional democracy which take the roles of NGOs in democratisation as self-evidently positive. This lack of critical and *a-contextual* focus, was not helpful to reflect upon the *ways NGOs do things* and what that tells us *about them*. Thus, the nature of democratisation and the roles of NGOs remain hidden. On Pakistan, I found a few books and articles (specifically) on democratisation which advocate for and on behalf of NGOs (it seems) for their inevitability for democracy. The same was true for the literature (official documents and publications) produced by the NGOs in Pakistan.⁹³ No matter how compelling those researches are, they did not help me get closer to understanding democratisation in the context of Pakistan. In questioning the inadequacies of literature, I recognised not only the limits of prevalent views, but also the manner in which I was personally inclined to question these. I understood that for a contextual focus, one must leave aside normative framing of either appreciation or evaluation of NGOs against liberal benchmarks of democracy and civil society. In this sense, I contribute methodologically for studying democratisation by focusing on how it is *experienced* by its main actors.⁹⁴

⁹¹ van Manen, 1984 (n 15) p9.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ In their role to promote democracy, PILDAT, FAFEN and some other NGOs have published a good number of research reports and briefing papers on the problems of democratisation in Pakistan. These are available on their websites.

⁹⁴ Teorell, J., 2010. Determinants of democratization: Explaining regime change in the world, 1972–2006. Cambridge University Press.p156.

I took the challenge of explication once again when I set to transcribe and develop thick descriptions. Gadamer advises the researchers “to keep one’s gaze fixed on the thing throughout all the constant distractions that originate in the interpreter (researcher) himself.”⁹⁵ I kept reminding myself that I, as a researcher, needed to ‘stay’ within the words spoken and read, whilst being sensitive to the historical situatedness of participants’ described lived experiences. Whilst writing, I made links between the thick descriptions based on transcriptions and existing literature but only to an extent that participants’ understanding of the phenomenon is highlighted.

Illuminating the essence: conducting thematic analysis and interpretation

Munch asserts that in order to understand the meaning of action we must “identify the sense of the action as intended by the actor and recognise the context in which the action belongs and makes sense.”⁹⁶ In other words, the ‘intent of the actor’ and ‘the context in which the action belongs’, become the focus of exploration. van Manen advises that this exploration requires the researcher to “borrow” the lived experience(s) of the actor(s) in the research.⁹⁷ The actors’ retrospective reflections on their experiences “illuminate deeper meanings or significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole of human experience.”⁹⁸ So, in the phenomenological investigation of the experience of democratisation, I wish to understand what being an NGO personnel is like for individual participants, and therefore, by an extension, the possibilities for the wider civil society in democratising Pakistan.⁹⁹

To achieve this ‘parts-to-whole’ understanding, following conversations (interviews) and reflective memos, the next step was to produce thick descriptions. Going beyond facts and surface appearances, a thick description “presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another.”¹⁰⁰ It should allow a ‘space’ where the voices of the participants can be heard, feelings can be felt, and through the reciprocal sharing of views between the interacting individuals, meanings

⁹⁵ Gadamer, 2004 (n 14).

⁹⁶ Munch .P.A (1975) quoted in Ritzer, G. (1996). Sociological Theory, McGraw-Hill Book Co. Singapore. p116

⁹⁷ van Manen 1984 (n 15) p16.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ In making this assertion, I am guided by van Manen’s discussion on parenting. Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Denzin (n 45) p83.

emerge. It “re-creates a historical situation”¹⁰¹ based on the facts but offers more than mere facts – it offers the ‘feeling’ of that situation as lived by the research participants.

I produced thick descriptions by first transcribing the recorded interviews. I re-listened to the recordings whilst also considering my reflective memos. In bringing these sources together, I began writing creatively putting in the elements of wonder, emotions, historical facts, the details of the place, time and feel of the setting in which the conversations were held. Lavery asserts that thick descriptions can include the researcher’s personal reflections as well as the depictions of the experience outside the research participants including the arts, such as poetry and painting related to but not limited to the context.¹⁰² In writing this thesis, I was inspired by the poetry of dissent in the context of Pakistan and have quoted some to contribute to the evocative style of writing. It was in the process of producing thick descriptions, ‘in interactional, relational, and biographical manner’¹⁰³, that I began the task of interpretation.

Interpretation is a process of giving meanings to the thickly described lived experience.¹⁰⁴ It is important to note that interpretation of lived experience brings to surface multiple meanings of the experience, therefore no experience will have the same meaning for two individuals.¹⁰⁵ It is in this sense, that hermeneutic phenomenology stays deeply inter-subjective; not only between the researcher/writer and the text that is being interpreted, but also between the reader and the final prose.

In the process of developing thick descriptions, several revisions of the initial projections of meanings must be made. Gadamer, in discussing hermeneutic circle refers to Heidegger’s proposed method of arriving at interpretations:

The process that Heidegger describes is that every revision of the fore-projection (initial meanings as they emerge out of descriptions) is capable of projecting before itself a new projection of meaning; rival projects can emerge side by side until it becomes clearer what the unity of meaning is; interpretation begins with fore-conceptions that are replaced by more suitable ones.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Denzin provides examples of thick description quoting the works of Geertz (1973) and Foucault (1979) among others. pp84-86.

¹⁰² Polikingshorne 1989 quoted in Lavery (n 17) p18.

¹⁰³ Denzin (n 54) p101.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. van Manen 1984 and 2016 (n 15).

¹⁰⁶ Gadamer, 2004 (n 14).

In such process of interpretation, the themes begin to emerge. Phenomenological themes, according to van Manen “are the structures of experience.”¹⁰⁷ Through these themes, the ‘wholeness’ of meaning is illuminated. Themes allow the researcher to navigate through different understandings to arrive at the central idea and the meanings of the phenomenon. Hence, the process of hermeneutic circle is applied by the researcher through rigorous reading, reflective writing, and interpreting.¹⁰⁸

In responding to the primary and secondary research objectives of this thesis, I have given it a thematic structure. After listening to the recordings and reading the text several times, in producing thick descriptions, I asked myself “What statements or phrases seem particularly essential or revealing about the experience being described?”¹⁰⁹ I highlighted these and noted their ‘commonality’ in various descriptions.¹¹⁰ I then lifted out phrases that captured the essential experiences and began to develop a thematic structure.

The empirical part of this thesis is divided into two essential themes. In chapters 5 and 6, I develop these themes as I interpret the nature of democratisation. I have written in-parts creatively with the use of vignettes, biographical tales, and idiomatic phrases. The purpose of adopting the artistic expression is to grasp the essence of lived experience to not just ‘represent’ or ‘imitate’ the described experience, but to ‘transcend’ it in the act of reflection. An artistic text has a “reflective mood” which enriches the experiential lifeworld of human being; that is the goal of phenomenology.¹¹¹

Furthermore, interpretation must uncover theories that are often told in the form of stories.¹¹² Theory in this sense, refers to the conceptual structures that inform participants’ actions, to see the phenomenon from ‘their point of view’.¹¹³ To illuminate such conceptual structures and cohere the two themes, in chapter VII, I present a

¹⁰⁷ van Manen 1984 (n 15) p20.

¹⁰⁸ Lavery (n 17) p18.

¹⁰⁹ van Manen 1984 (n 15) p21.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p23.

¹¹² Denzin (n 45) p110.

¹¹³ Ibid.

vignette.¹¹⁴ Written as an autobiographical account of my meeting with an NGO personnel, this vignette is adapted from a number of interviews texts. As “symbolic expressions of lived experiences”,¹¹⁵ the vignette brings me, as a researcher, into the lived experience of democratisation. The main character is developed as a ‘composite character’ to combine the views expressed by a number of NGOs’ personnel. Thus, the character and setting of the vignette is fictionalised to imaginatively capture ‘thoughts’ and ‘feelings’ (theories) of the research participants. The vignette provides ‘a gaze’ into the nature of democratisation as it is lived by its actors. To develop vignettes and tales, I researched the sequence of events and places to develop their ‘setting’. I collected photos and journalistic information about the sites to re-create the detail as closely as possible. For example, for the vignette about a protest in Lahore, I collected photos, newspaper and magazine texts to narrate the event as it happened, whilst keeping the artistic expression and narrative style expected from a vignette.¹¹⁶

The art of writing

Writing in-part creatively brought to the fore challenges unknown to me. van Manen asserts that “to do the research, is to write”, to make contact with the things of our world.¹¹⁷ Our insights depend on the words we use, phrases, styles and traditions, metaphors and figures of speech. There is a bond that our written words create between us and the observed phenomenon. The words we use to communicate, develop yet another bond between the readers and the text of our research and writing. Writing creatively supports our endeavor to create this bond by reflecting deeply and communicating in a language which ‘makes sense’ to the readers in the context of research.

Reading and experiencing phenomenological research and writing, I have come to believe that just as our research must be aware of the context and its ‘situated-ness’, our writing should also be sensitive, not only in terms of the context of the ‘lived event’ but also in how it is ‘spoken’ and ‘told’. I have tried to capture this in writing the thesis. I aimed at ‘seeing’ the phenomenon of democratisation, in ways with which it has not

¹¹⁴ Denzin notes that the ‘critical-biographical’ method formulated by C.M.Mills, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, aims to build studies that make sense of the post-modern period of human experience. Ibid. p14.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p119.

¹¹⁶ See Chapter 5 ‘From Resistance to Submission’.

¹¹⁷ van Manen, 2003 (n 15) p237.

been seen before in academic literature. I also ‘integrate’ it into its semantic context (of Pakistan).¹¹⁸ With a use of vignettes and realistic biographical tales,¹¹⁹ I have written in an evocative manner for the textual representation of the lived experience of both the research participants and myself. My aim is to stimulate the readers’ imagination. The extent of my success in communicating the phenomenon of democratisation in Pakistan, depends on the readers and their interpretations of my writing.

The quality and ethics of research

This interpretive nature of phenomenological research brings me to the questions of its reliability, validity and rigour. In the absence of a universal criteria or agreed upon standards for assessing the quality of such research¹²⁰, I follow van Manen who enlists orientation, strength, richness and depth as the quality concerns for conducting and writing phenomenological research.¹²¹ Accordingly:

- My orientation (the abiding concern) to the phenomenon of democratisation is visible throughout my writing but specifically in the autobiographical tale presented in the next section. My interest in democratisation through NGOs reveals that it has been part of my being long before I became involved in its practice and research;
- With the use of rich quotes, the essential themes give (hopefully) a convincing account of inherent meanings of the phenomenon as understood by the research participants;
- the use of poetry, vignettes and biographical tales bring in the ‘reflective mood’ and enrich the narratives and perceptions of the research participants; and

¹¹⁸ Lavery (n 17).

¹¹⁹ van Manen, 2003 (n 15). van Manen divides ethnographic writings that include the voice of research in three categories. In this thesis, I use one of these in constructing vignettes as realistic tales. Realistic tales follow a conventional style to represent lifelike representation of people, events, and the social and cultural world and adds the authoritative voice of the researcher in the text.

¹²⁰ Lavery (n 17); Kafle (n 16).

¹²¹ van Manen, 2016 (n 15).

- the depth of the analysis attempts at expressing the intentions of the participants, as carefully and closely as possible. Additionally, the analytical rigour of the research has meant that all perspectives recorded are analysed and discussed in the research.¹²²
- To reiterate, the credibility of phenomenological research lies in its vivid and faithful description of the lived experience in a manner which ensures that the phenomenon is accurately identified and described.¹²³

With reference to the ethical concerns for conducting qualitative research, I have followed the standards proposed by Creswell¹²⁴ and Sarantakos¹²⁵ including clarifying the purpose and process of the research before interviews and where required sharing in writing what these involved; obtaining consent for tape-recordings, observations and examining of documents; and assigning assumed names or symbols to the participants to protect their privacy.

The question of generalisability

It is generally understood that phenomenological method makes no claims of generalisability.¹²⁶ Denzin asserts that interpretive research approaches (that underpin phenomenological research) “...reject the impulse to abstract and generalise.”¹²⁷ However, van Manen offers a different understanding of the notion of generalisability. He posits that in phenomenological research, attention to *the particular* contributes to an understanding of *the essences*; whereas, “*the essence of a phenomenon is a universal which can be described through a study of the structure that governs the instances or particular manifestations of the essence of a phenomenon.*”¹²⁸

¹²² Langdrige (n 55).

¹²³ Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G., (1985) *Naturalistic inquiry* (Vol. 75). Sage.

¹²⁴ Creswell, J.W., (2007) Five qualitative approaches to inquiry. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*, 2, pp.53-80.

¹²⁵ Sarantakos, S. (1998) *Social Research*. (2nd ed), Palgrave.

¹²⁶ Mottern, R. (2012) From Parzival to the Princess Bride: Generalizability in Phenomenological Research, Paper Presented at Tennessee Board of Regents: Qualitative Research Conference, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, October 15, Available at: http://www.academia.edu/7587105/From_Parzival_to_the_Princess_Bride_Generalizability_in_Phenomenological_Research (Accessed 2 July 2016).

¹²⁷ Denzin (n 45) p21.

¹²⁸ van Manen 2016 (n 15) p10. My emphasis.

In this sense, an adequate study of the structures – which underpin the formulation and articulation of the essence in its ‘lived quality and significance’ – could attain a “phenomenological nod” or an affirmation of its common understanding.¹²⁹ It depends on the reader to validate whether the description rings true, and in so doing, the reader extends its generalisability.¹³⁰ Furthermore, since the goal of phenomenology is to seek the essences or meanings of lived experience, the enquiry is not tied to an individual or group but is universal, and therefore generalisable.¹³¹

Subsequent to philosophical and methodological discussions on hermeneutic phenomenology, in line with this research tradition, I now narrate an autobiographical tale to authenticate my voice in the research and to claim democratisation as my abiding concern.

‘Personal is Political’: seeking the phenomenon within

(An autobiographical tale of my pursuit of understanding democratisation and the roles of NGOs in it)

Remember that your essence is experienced by you as a feeling
 The trap is this: wanting to know who you are which means you want
 to be able to say some words, think a thought, cling to a description.
 The question comes: how can I find out what my essence is?
 There is nothing to find out.
 Remember it. Experience it. Feel the feeling of it.¹³²

It was a cold but sunny morning of February in 2004. I entered the grand hall of a five-star hotel in Islamabad to attend an inaugural event of the Strengthening National and Provincial Legislative Governance (SNPLG) Project. The event was organised by an NGO - the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT). Just recently, I was offered a job at PILDAT as a projects manager. Attending the inaugural event was part of my orientation at PILDAT. In entering that five-star hotel,

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Thomas and Pollio 2002:42 quoted in Mottern (n 126).

¹³¹ Heidegger, 1962 (n 11).

¹³² Paul Williams (1999) ‘Remember Your Essence’, p10
http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1412926.Remember_Your_Essence Published July 1st 1999 by
 Entwhistle Books (first published 1987)

I also ‘entered’ into the phenomenon of my inquiry: the nature of democratisation in Pakistan and the role of internationally funded NGOs in it.

The SNPLG – the project of PILDAT – inaugural event was my doorway to the new post-9/11 wave of democratisation programmes in Pakistan. These programmes, focusing on strengthening democracy and good governance, were mainly supported by international funding agencies including USAID and DFID, CIDA, AUSAID and others. The SNPLG was funded by USAID.¹³³

The event had approximately 50 parliamentarians as confirmed participants from the Senate (the Upper House of the Parliament), the National Assembly and provincial assemblies. Nancy Powell, the then Ambassador of the US to Pakistan and Sigvard Hanson, Country Director of World Vision were also expected to attend. The speakers ranged from members of the National Assembly to senior members of the judiciary and academics.¹³⁴

I had arrived earlier than the scheduled start time to acquaint myself with the arrangements. At first, I felt a little unsettled and out of place. Having previously worked with a women’s rights organisation, I understood that NGOs were fundamentally pressure groups, working with limited resources and often depended on donations from concerned parties and volunteers to do the job. This meant that they were ‘out of cash’ most of the time. But this inaugural event was different. The grand hall ambiance was posh with tall windows covered in silk drapes. It was set up in a horse-shoe seating style with a head-table for the speakers. There were microphones attached to the tables, one each for every participant. At one corner of the hall was a small table with two computers set for the note-takers to record the proceedings. Behind the head-table, stood an impressively large banner, printed in modern digital design with event details and official logos of PILDAT and USAID. The table and chair décor was formal. The air of the hall was serious and comfortably warm for a cold day outside. In the soft rattling of cutlery, waiters in crisp white uniforms with black waistcoats, were ready to serve coffee and tea to the guests.

¹³³ See Chapter IV.

¹³⁴ PILDAT News, June 2004, Vol: 2, Issue 1. <http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/AnnualReportAndNewsletter/PILDATNewsLetterVol2Issue1June2004.pdf> accessed 23 July, 2016.

As part of my orientation, I was asked to help my colleagues handling the event registration and information desk. Various publications by PILDAT were on display. I had already seen some of these publications including briefing and background papers on the issues of parliamentary governance.¹³⁵ There was also promotional literature from USAID and World Vision and a glossy brochure on PILDAT's mission indicating its current and future programmes. PILDAT aimed at "strengthening democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan by building the capability of and instituting non-partisan monitoring framework for the elected representatives and legislatures while facilitating greater participation of all segments of the society in the democratic process and development of new political leadership."¹³⁶

Soon my unsettled feelings lessened, giving way to new feelings of pride and importance (reflecting much later, I figured those feelings were bordering arrogance!). I felt that, I, working at PILDAT, training and educating parliamentarians in grand hotels, would be at the top-game of influencing politics and policy for the development and sustenance of democracy in a country like Pakistan, where the idea as well as the practice of democracy had been a puzzle and a struggle for decades. And, most importantly, we would achieve all this in the midst of President Musharraf's dictatorship which began in October 1999.

It was then that a quick glimpse of memory took me to my younger self. I had seen my father and his friends meeting in our modest home; debating, arguing, planning and agreeing activities on various political issues. It was the 1980s. Pakistan was ruled by the most forbidding dictator, Zia-ul-Haq. I learnt later that civil liberties were curtailed; political parties were banned and freedom of speech was severely restricted. Our home was a hub where meetings of likeminded liberals, democrats, and literary revolutionaries were held. I also remembered my mother's mutterings on how useless those meetings were – a waste of time! The dictator and his fellow-men were far stronger and out of reach for people like my father and his friends and their insignificant get-togethers. Yet, these committed people, after finishing their daily jobs, tirelessly

¹³⁵ See PILDAT Publications available at <http://www.pildat.org/publications.asp>

¹³⁶ PILDAT Mission Statement, Annual Report July 1, 2003- June 30, 2004. Mission Statement can also be found at http://www.pildat.org/about_mission.asp.

gathered in the evenings. There was nothing posh or expensive. But it was their space to breathe their values of freedom, democracy and dissent. I listened to them, sitting in the corner of the room. I understood little but enough to know that they planned street protests and poetic gatherings at the city's press-club and Arts Centre, channeling the poetry of dissent. At the end of these meetings, they recited poetry on freedom, love, longing, dissent, hope and revolution. I sensed they had a mission against the dictatorship and for the return of democracy.

Now, in 2004, I could see a chain, connecting the experience of my younger self at home with PILDAT's programme for promoting democracy in Pakistan. (Or perhaps, I imagined the chain and connection out of my desire to do so?). I wanted to feel that I had taken the similar path as my father's. Little did I know that there was *hardly any similarity* in these paths; the mission of a modest home and the event at the grand hotel, were poles apart.

As I continued at PILDAT, I was initially made responsible for two projects. The first one involved conceptualising and organising four provincial briefing events for parliamentarians in each of the four provincial assemblies in Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, and the Northwest Frontier Province (now renamed as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP Province)). Focusing on the Effective Committee System, the briefing events were part of a wider programme of the Pakistan Legislative Strengthening Consortium (PLSC) supported by the USAID. The aim of the event was to invite and educate the parliamentarians about the importance of the oversight role of the parliamentary committees as an integral part of a democratic system. As per PILDAT's practice, background and briefing papers on Effective Committee System in Pakistan were to be produced. The events required intense event management including inviting a large number of provincial legislators to arranging project staff and senior staff travels to the cities in each province. Background and briefing papers were commissioned externally to academics and subject experts. Speakers were identified, invited, chased and confirmed. Their travels were arranged. To boost efficiency, the project staff and senior staff were to arrive a day before the event for an overnight stay at local four or five-star hotels. The four events were held within a short period of a month and therefore required an extensive paraphernalia of both human and material resources of PILDAT.

Besides organising briefing events, my other task was to produce a Directory of the Members of the Senate. Previously a similar Directory of the Members of the 12th National Assembly of Pakistan had already been produced. These Directories were part of PILDAT's "efforts to bring parliament and its members closer to people and the civil society and promote a closer and more frequent inter-action between the people and their representatives."¹³⁷ The Directories provided a list of important information about all parliamentarians including their photographs, constituency (for the members National Assembly), party and contact details. The project was funded by DFID.

Other than these projects, a lot more was going on at PILDAT. There were similar briefing events; study tours for selected parliamentarians to foreign countries; roundtable discussions; exchange visits of parliamentary delegations from Western democracies; parliamentary internship programme; dialogue on free, fair and credible elections and civil-military relations and preparation of parliamentary orientation curriculum for member and staff of parliament. Financial support during 2004-2005 mostly came from USAID and DFID. PILDAT produced over 30 publications during January 2004 - January 2005 including briefing and background papers in both English and Urdu; state of democracy reports and democracy updates and parliament programme reports; event proceedings; handbook and booklets; directories; case studies; and reports of the Senate Committees.¹³⁸

All activities had a common aim of strengthening democratic governance in Pakistan; more specifically through legislative capacity-building, political leadership development, performance monitoring of democratic actors and institutions and education in democracy and political management. Since 2001, PILDAT has been a prominent NGO in these areas of work and has grown stronger every passing year to this day.

My experience at PILDAT introduced me to the everyday workings of democracy in Pakistan through knowing the representatives and staff at the parliament and concerned

¹³⁷ See Directories of the Members of the Senate and of the 12th National Assembly of Pakistan published on December 2004 and January 2004 respectively. Available at Pildat's website <http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/Publications.asp>

¹³⁸ PILDAT (n 136).

outsiders. I was engaging with existing and former parliamentarians; parliamentary staff and other bureaucrats; and members of academia and media. There was a small group of ten to fifteen parliamentarians who were sensitive to PILDAT's mission, may be more so because PILDAT's President had developed good professional rapport with them. Then there was another bigger group who would turn up at the briefing events and were polite to PILDAT's invitations. Majority of the parliamentarians, in both the National Assembly and the Senate, never attended any event. Besides, the parliament itself was pretty much a rubber parliament elected under the controversial presidency of General Pervez Musharraf in October 2001 and governed by the army backed PML-Q (the President's political party).

I also observed and gradually began reflecting on our own role at PILDAT. We were a team of approximately 15 programme staff at PILDAT. Almost all projects officers and senior managers were locals with British degrees in development, politics and media studies. PILDAT offices was based in Gulberg, Lahore; in a high-class locality. The office culture was formal and functional with a good number of support staff. I headed a team of three people. There were three more teams. Each team worked on specified projects. Each project manager had a direct access to the President of PILDAT but I do not recall attending any programme staff meetings or collective deliberations on organisational strategy or foresight. This was strictly limited to the President PILDAT and Deputy Director. Working on only my projects, without having information on the overall strategy and direction of the organisation felt strange, and at times, isolating. The resources available to us were in abundance and there was absolutely no compromise on efficiency and quality of work. Expectations were high and given the quantity of work being produced, there were regular late evenings for most of us. We were paid reasonably well by Pakistani standards. Overall, it was a fast paced, performance oriented, formal and a rather top-down organisational culture.

Who were PILDAT's beneficiaries? Who were the agents of democratisation? What was the role of the international funding agencies and what difference did it make if projects and programmes were lucratively funded? Who were *we*? What were we doing *precisely* to promote democracy? What was the point in educating and training parliamentarians who were scarcely interested in learning and their way of 'doing' politics, in their context, had little to compare with democracies elsewhere. What *was*

that context? Since its inception, PILDAT has organised hundreds of briefing events, dialogues, foreign study tours, consultative roundtables, etc. and produced thousands of publications most of which were produced for the parliamentarians. In a parliament where majority of the members were barely educated, could we claim that a good number of them have read, understood and applied their acquired knowledge into everyday politics? I doubted it then and I doubt it now.

So, I have no reservations in stating that my understanding of democratisation in Pakistan and NGOs role in it, is mixed, to say the least. This autobiographical tale not only affirms my orientation to this research, it also invites a deeper and contextual understanding of the phenomenon in question. NGOs intrigue me as possible agents of change whose *agency* must be critically examined to reveal the contextual facets of democratisation, not only in Pakistan, but also elsewhere in the global South.

Illuminating research participants: seeking the phenomenon therein

In this section, I introduce the research participants including NGOs' personnel, politicians, academics, funding agencies, and journalists.

NGOs and research participants

Perhaps an account of a research participant's experience can serve to illustrate the "expression of the whole"¹³⁹ with regards to how participants reflected on their roles in democratisation:

When we refer to NGOs aiding to democratise Pakistan..... we (like to) say many groups are being formed, a silent revolution is creeping and people will soon occupy the state. That is essentially not happening..... These groups do not challenge the patronage system of our state.....they become part of it and bring benefit from..... There is no aggregation of demands from the lower levels. People are talking about lack of water, poor health facilities, right to health and right to education and these demands are not even heard let alone act upon.We (working in NGOs) take salaries and provide professional services. I am not a social activist. I am being hired by an association or a board of trust to deliver certain technical services and I am being paid for it. So I should not create the imagery that I am some big social activist. I am an employee. We need to get out of this contradiction..... What kind of activists are we? How can we be connected (with public)? The biggest disconnect is this.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ van Manen, 2016 (n 15).

¹⁴⁰ Interview 7, 10 April 2015.

Who are the NGOs in democratisation? The statement highlights the tensions that are felt by most research participants, albeit articulated differently. They reflected on the sort of lacunae that exists in defining *who they are* (as NGOs) and *what they do* (democratisation)? In so doing they pondered whether as leaders in their NGOs, they are activists, advocates, revolutionaries, professionals, the social or political elite, or just employees drawing salaries in exchange for their services. In their reflections, I look for my phenomenon: the essence of democratisation and what it means to be an NGO in democratisation.

Table 1 below lists the number of the research participants from NGOs. They are grouped according to their missions and functions. All NGOs aim at promoting democracy in Pakistan, however the ways in which they do so are varied. Some endeavor to build the capacity of parliamentarians and political parties by familiarising them with democratic parliamentary procedures. Others are purely focused on electoral processes and aim to ensure that free and fair elections take place. They monitor elections and work to inform and influence the Election Commission of Pakistan. There are also rights based NGOs who work to promote and protect human rights and seek to influence government policies and constitutional provisions through research, advocacy and lobbying.

Table 1: Number and profile of research participants from NGOs

No of Participants	Job role	Type of organisation according to mission statements*	Geographical spread/ based in (National scope)	Size (based on number of employees)
11	Director/ Executive Directors	7 Democracy Promotion NGOs 2 Human rights NGOs 1 Think Tank/ Research NGO 1 Media and Human Rights NGO	6 based in Lahore 3 based in Islamabad with 2 NGOs also have regional offices in Lahore 2 based in Karachi	2 NGOs 70-100 staff 3 NGOs 20-35 staff 5 NGOs 10-20 staff 1 NGO 5-10 staff
3	Head of Programmes	Democracy Promotion NGOs	1 NGO based in Islamabad & Lahore (2 participants interviewed) 1 based in Islamabad	2 NGOs 70-100 staff
5	Senior Managers	Democracy Promotion NGOs	3 based in Islamabad 2 based in Lahore	2 NGOs 70-100 staff 1 NGO 20-35 staff
8	Project Staff (Involved in focus groups)	Democracy Promotion NGOs	2 NGOs with offices in Islamabad and Lahore	1 NGO 70-100 staff 1 NGO 20-35 staff
Total number of participants from NGOs = 27				

*Mission statements of all NGOs refer to their roles in democracy promotion. However, where this is specified as central role, those NGOs are categorized as Democracy Promotion NGOs. NGOs with missions to advance and promote human rights for democracy are categorised as Human Rights NGOs; media for democracy as Media NGOs and so on.

In terms of the positions of people interviewed, I selected those who have been engaged in democratisation for a prolonged period to explore historical development of the phenomenon of democratisation. Not surprisingly, these participants were on leading positions in their organisations, from Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and directors to heads and managers of programmes.

All NGOs have a nation-wide scope. However, their projects may have only local or regional reach due to the nature of projects or resource limitations. They are, or have been, internationally funded for democratisation projects. Funding agencies include USAID, DFID, EU, UNDP, Denmark's development cooperation (Danida) and others. Their head-offices are based in cities with only a few having regional and local offices or partnerships with local and community based organisations. In terms of their size, they range from large NGOs with up to 100 staff to small organisations with 5-10 staff members. Size depends on the nature of their mission and available resources. Chart A also lists the geographical spread.

Finally, and most importantly, my choice of these personnel and NGOs is deliberate.¹⁴¹ I focus on these NGOs because they have been leading the democratisation agenda in Pakistan with extensive resources, scope, reach and length of experience. It is because of the leadership, long-term experience, commitment, and their vision that democratisation programmes have been negotiated, developed and implemented with international funding. On average, each research participant brings over twenty years of experience of involvement with NGOs for human rights, social and political advocacy and research, lobbying and campaigning for law reforms, and capacity building for parliamentarians and political parties.

The concerned others

In understanding democratisation and the roles of NGOs in Pakistan, it is crucial to involve people from other sectors who may have a direct interest and stake in the phenomenon. Politicians and funding agencies belong to this category. Politicians are

¹⁴¹ As 'phenomenology is the philosophy of the personal, the individual' all twenty research participants are worthy of my gratitude to agree to share with me their personal views and reflections as agents of democratisation in both their personal and organisational capacities. Not a single research participant held back or appeared reluctant to discuss critically what they do and do not do.

the recipients of support provided by NGOs and therefore have a view on the nature of the support and on NGOs as its providers. Funding agencies are guided by their development assistance and foreign policy goals towards supporting and sustaining democracy in Pakistan. They fund large programmes for promoting democracy in Pakistan. A significant proportion of their financial assistance is channeled through NGOs. They are, therefore, directly concerned to the phenomenon under investigation.

The wider civil society, in which NGOs in democratisation are situated, is also relevant to this research. However, given the nature of my enquiry into the internationally funded NGOs only, it is mostly media and academics who have views on related issues. Thus, in addition to NGOs' personnel, the research participants include politicians, journalists, academics and representatives of funding agencies. Grass-roots, development oriented, welfare and charitable civil society groups are not included in this research. This is because the scope of research is limited to internationally funded democracy promotion NGOs.¹⁴² Although there are NGOs with large international funding profiles, such as National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), etcetera, they target the economic and infrastructural development of local communities and do not directly claim to promote democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan. By the same token, small grass-roots groups and organisations that do focus on democracy promotion with human rights and social mobilisation perspective, but who do not wish to or do not hold international funding, are not included in the research.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reflected on my experience to frame this research within the hermeneutic phenomenological approach. I have outlined the origins and characteristics of this research approach (including philosophy and method) and established that it is the study of the *nature* and *meanings* of a phenomenon in which a researcher aims at providing rich description of a lived experience, accentuated by her interpretation to illuminate its essence that makes what it *is*.

¹⁴² See the Introduction Chapter and Chapter II for the scope of this research limited to the internationally funded NGOs for democracy promotion programmes in Pakistan.

In the process of identifying a theoretical and methodological framework, I have learnt that undertaking qualitative research is a journey of self-exploration with many paths to the destination i.e. understanding of a phenomenon. To understand the nature and meanings of democratisation and the roles of internationally funded NGOs in it, I have outlined the application of qualitative research methods for data-collection including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observations and reflective memos. I have also provided a chart on the numbers and nature of participants in the research.

In conducting analysis, I have followed van Manen's and Denzin's guidelines on interpretive and phenomenological research. I have stated that my orientation to the phenomenon was guided by personal motivation informed by my lived experience of working with NGOs in democratisation. I have discussed the interpretive technique of explicating data; producing rich descriptions; interpreting and lifting out essential themes which characterise democratisation; and writing creatively. I have also briefly discussed the issues of validity, ethics and generalisability of this research approach.

Referring to Eliot's Little Gidding, I feel that arriving at an understanding is indeed just a start for yet another journey of exploration. As Gadamer asserts that "... the meaning of a text goes beyond its author." It transcends the author and traverse into the domain of the reader who finds new meanings. In this sense, this research offers new interpretations while inviting the reader to arrive at theirs.

Thus, in this chapter, I have established that hermeneutic phenomenological research is the suitable approach for the purpose of my research which seeks to understand the nature and meanings of democratisation (as a phenomenon) through the lived experiences of internationally funded NGOs.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the socio-political context of Pakistan. Thus, the second part of this thesis will unfold consisting of chapters IV, V and VI.

Chapter IV: Carry on companions-Democratic waves in Pakistan

In which 'democratic deficit' and the roles of NGOs in democratisation are historically shaped.

Introduction

nahin nigh mein manzil to justuju hi sahi
nahin visal mayassar to arzu hi sahi

na tan mein khuun faraham na ashk ankhon mein
namaz-e-shauq to vajib hai, be-vazu hi sahi

kisi tarah to jame bazm mai-kade vaalo
nahin jo bada-o-saghar to hav-hu hi sahi

gar intezaar kathin hai to jab tallak ai dil
kisi ke vada-e-farda ki guftugu hi sahi

[Faiz Ahmad Faiz]¹

No matter if the destination is not in sight, keep the desire burning,
No matter if there is no embrace, keep the longing alive.

No matter if blood in the veins and tears in the eyes have withered,
Say your prayers of yearning, impure as they may be.

Carry on companions, the tavern must rejoice, however possible,
No matter if your goblets are empty, keep making your raucous
sounds.

If painful is the wait, till then Oh Love!
Let's recall the promises made to us, [keep the wait].²

¹ Available at <https://rekhta.org/ghazals/nahiin-nigaah-men-manzil-to-justujuu-hii-sahii-faiz-ahmad-faiz-ghazals>. Faiz Ahmad Faiz, was a Pakistani intellectual, revolutionary poet, and one of the most celebrated writers of the Urdu language, having been nominated four times for the Nobel Prize for literature. A notable member of the Progressive Writers' Movement (PWM), Faiz was an avowed Marxist, and he received the Lenin Peace Prize in 1962. He wrote many revolutionary poems during the time of Zia-ul-Haq's dictatorship that stirred resistance in the public to protest against the dictatorship. He was exiled repeatedly and had written about his experience of exile, craving for returning to Pakistan and for the return of democracy.

² My Translation.

Faiz wrote this poem while in exile, yearning to return to his homeland and longing for the return of democracy in Pakistan. He and many other poets, intellectuals, singers, artists, labour leaders, human rights activists and journalists took great risks upon themselves and their families to resist the formidable dictatorships of General Ayub Khan (1960s) and of General Zia-ul-Haq (1980s). They were jailed, tortured and exiled. Women rights movements led by women's NGOs received global recognition and support in their demands for reforming the discriminatory family and criminal laws. Civil society's struggles in democratisation have profound roots in Pakistan's politics. However, there is also an emerging skepticism about their potential for support of democratic culture and institutions. I will illuminate the nuances of these conflicting views in this chapter which sets the historical and political context for the empirical section.

Debates on democratisation in Pakistan fundamentally deal with one question: since India and Pakistan share the same colonial roots of a constitutional political order, why is it that they followed divergent trajectories to democratisation after independence in 1947? Democracy in India took root within two years of its independence, while on the other hand, Pakistan struggled to establish democracy and eventually failed as it witnessed the first martial law in 1958. In India, democracy grew deeper with elected parliaments governing the country. In contrast, Pakistan entrenched a political system of a 'perpetual oscillation' between the civil and military led governments.³ Even during the civilian rules, governments have consistently failed to deliver on the principles of democracy. Consequently, in Pakistan, democracy has substantially and systematically failed in relation to 'international standards of good practice' thereby creating deep-rooted democratic deficit.⁴

My review of the academic literature on democratic deficit in Pakistan suggests that while democracy has not taken root in Pakistan, the struggle for democracy has continued. Equally important, therefore, is the question concerning the resilience of

³ Kurzman Charles, (1998) The term 'perpetual oscillation' is used by Kurzman, C. March, (1998) Waves of Democratisation., *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 33 (1) pp42-64.

⁴ The term 'Democratic Deficit' is used here as defined by David Beetham. See Beetham, D. (2012) Defining and Identifying a Democratic Deficit in Lenard, P.T. and Simeon, R. (eds.) *Imperfect Democracies: The Democratic Deficit in Canada and the United States*, UBC Press. pp 76-90.

democracy. In making this argument, I reflect on the nature and role of civil society in Pakistan's democratisation. I show that the existing limited research offers conflicting stand-points. On the one hand, civil society and NGOs are seen axiomatically as necessarily good for democratisation. Conversely, they are critically appraised and considered elitist, unaccountable and eager to serve military governments. I suggest that these contrasting stand-points can be read in a different way: by situating civil society and NGOs in Pakistan's historical context, it is useful to see them as 'historical product', embedded in the edifice of Pakistan's politics and its democratic deficit.

This chapter is divided into six sections. Section one sets out the context of democratic deficit and resilience. In section two, I analyse the practices of democratisation in Pakistan in four distinct 'waves'.⁵ Categorised as periods of time with a focus on the key political events and actors, these waves capture the history of Pakistan's struggle in establishing democracy over seventy years. The first three waves were followed by the reverse waves to authoritarian rules. The fourth wave of democratisation is ongoing. Section six reflects upon the *premises* of democratic resilience and the development of the civil society and NGOs in Pakistan's democratisation. Finally, the conclusion summarises the chapter's key arguments.

Sustaining democracy in Pakistan

The problem of sustaining democracy in Pakistan is explained in many ways. It has been argued that the 'democratic deficit' in Pakistan is the inevitable consequence of the politics of the Independence Movement.⁶ The legacy of British Raj has left Pakistan captivated by the minority elite-led politics; weak and personality driven political parties; centralised governance; linguistic and ethnic divisions; and the innate incompatibility of Islamic doctrines with more liberal conceptions of democracy.⁷

⁵ Borrowing the term and conception of 'waves of democratisation' from Samul Huntington. Huntington suggests that a wave of democratisation is a transition from nondemocratic to democratic regime that occurs within a specified period of time. A reverse wave is when transition to democracy reverts to nondemocratic rule. See Huntington, S.P., (1991) Democracy's third wave. *Journal of democracy*, 2(2), pp.12-34.

⁶ The term 'democratic deficit' is used by Jaffrelot. C. (2015). *The Pakistan Paradox: Instability and Resilience*, Translated by C. Schoch, Hurst & Company: London and Talbot. I. (2015) *Pakistan: A New History*, Hurst & Company: London.

⁷ Alavi, H. and Harris, J. (1989) *Sociology of "Developing Societies"* South Asia Macmillan Education Ltd : London; Talbot (n 6); Tudor, M. (2014a) *The Promise of Power: The origins of Democracy in India*

Recurrence of armed conflicts with neighbouring India and the civil war of 1971 – which divided Pakistan into two countries – has resulted in Pakistan army's continuous involvement in directing national foreign policy.⁸ Pakistan's involvement in the Cold War as a proxy state to the United State (US) in Afghanistan further entrenched army's role in politics.⁹ Since the terrorist attacks in the US in September 2001, an alliance with US and other western countries in the 'War on Terror' has boosted the role of Pakistan army as an inevitable political force in global strategic affairs.¹⁰ Internally, there has been an alarming rise of militancy and insurgencies resulting in religious and political intolerance and violent conflicts amongst sections of the populace. Corruption and poor governance on part of the ruling elite, guided by self-interest and short-term planning, has worsened the governing apparatus both at national and provincial levels; citizens suffer with a general lack of availability of common goods and services in basic education, health-care and personal safety.¹¹ Constitutional architecture of governance and the guarantee of fundamental rights to citizens remain uncertain as the successive constitutions repeatedly altered by changing governments to suit their vested needs.¹² Moreover, there have been multiple legal systems operating in parallel, and at times in conflict, to each other adding ambiguity in the recourse to justice for the citizens.¹³ Unsurprisingly, most analysts regard Pakistan as a 'failing state', a 'troubled state', a 'fragile state' and a 'garrison state'.

Nevertheless, the struggle for democracy in Pakistan continues. Equally important, therefore, is the question concerning the resilience of Pakistan's democracy, and the resilience of Pakistan itself as a functioning state. At the time of its creation, British officials and the Indian Congress alike were doubtful about the survival of Pakistan.¹⁴

and Autocracy in Pakistan, Cambridge University Press: New Delhi; Weinbaum, M. G. (1996) Civic Culture and Democracy in Pakistan, *Asian Survey*, 36(7), pp: 639-654.

⁸ Jalal, A. (2014) *The Struggle for Pakistan: A Muslim Homeland and Global Politics*. Harvard University Press: London.

⁹ Cohen, S.P. (2004) *The Idea of Pakistan*. Brookings Institution Press: Washington, D.C.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, (2013) *State of Human Rights in 2012*. HRCP, Lahore. Pakistan. Pp4-9.

¹² Maluka, Z.K. (1995). *The Myth of Constitutionalism in Pakistan*. Oxford University Press: Karachi. Waseem, M. (2006) Constitutionalism in Pakistan: The Changing Patterns of Dyarchy, *Diogenes*, 53(4), pp:102-115.

¹³ Siddique, O. (2013) *Pakistan's Experience with Formal Law: An Alien Justice*, Cambridge University Press: New Delhi.

¹⁴ Talbot (n 6); It is true that Pakistan struggled to survive in its original formation; it lost its Eastern wing which became an independent state of Bangladesh in 1971. There were four wars between Pakistan

Yet, seventy years on, we have witnessed an unprecedented change in Pakistan's politics. The last civilian democratic government for 2008-2013 was the first ever to complete its full parliamentary term of five years, followed by reasonably fair and free general elections. Subsequently, governing authority was transferred to another civilian government.¹⁵ Currently, Pakistan is being governed by a civilian Prime Minister and a representative parliament. The next general elections are due in 2018. Recent polls show a positive trend in citizen's perceptions of democracy in Pakistan.¹⁶ New political parties are being formed and the established ones are being publicly challenged for corruption and governing malpractices. Political analysts argue that the recent expansion of the middle class, a stronger civil society, new media, and increasingly independent judiciary have been crucial to the continuation of democratic governance in Pakistan.¹⁷ With these recent developments, problems facing Pakistan are being considered 'surmountable', although they will require a gradual but far-reaching process of reform, involving governance, education, the country's economy and restructuring of the civil-military relations.¹⁸

Another dimension to the importance of Pakistan's democratic viability relates to its geo-strategic position in the world. For the US, Pakistan has a status of 'pivotal state' whose failure could risk regional as well as global stability.¹⁹ India, Iran, Afghanistan and China have borders with Pakistan. Except for Afghanistan, other states possess nuclear weapons. There are civil insurgencies in all states and inter-state relations in the region have been mostly tense. Afghanistan continues to have North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) residual troops (mainly from US) to fight Taliban and to maintain peace. Pakistan's North-West region, which borders with Afghanistan, remains insecure from the Afghan Taliban's influence; it has been the breeding ground for the Pakistani Taliban which is a separate militant group operating in Pakistan and is responsible for the several recent terrorist attacks aimed at civilians and foreign

and India and intense diplomatic relationships with the neighbouring Afghanistan since the Cold War. The country endured three decade-long dictatorships.

¹⁵ General elections were held in Pakistan on 11 May 2013 to elect the members of the 14th National Assembly and to the four provincial assemblies of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

¹⁶ PILDAT 'Assessment of the quality of democracy in Pakistan' (2015). Available at http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/Democracy&LegStr/AssessmentoftheQualityofDemocracyinPakistan_2015.pdf.

¹⁷ Lodhi, M. (2011) ed. *Pakistan: Beyond 'The Crisis State'*, C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd: London. Weinbaum (n 7). This point will be analysed in detail later in this chapter.

¹⁸ Lodhi (n 17).

¹⁹ Talbot (n 6); Cohen (n 9).

diplomats.²⁰ Pakistan has been regarded an 'essential ally' to the US in its 'War on Terror'.²¹ Since 2001, both military and non-military aid has been committed and granted to Pakistan in return for its support to curb and capture Al-Qaida and Taliban insurgents. It has, thus, been argued that Pakistan is 'too important to let fail.'²²

The international security and development experts have continued to produce numerous policy analyses emphasising the importance of democracy in Pakistan. Democracy, they believe, could save Pakistan from falling prey to religious extremism and becoming a 'rouge state'.²³ The Bellagio Papers on Pakistan's Future observe that "Pakistan needs to experiment with democracy; it cannot be run as an autocracy, whether by the military or a civilian leadership, no matter how charismatic he (or she) might be."²⁴ Bellagio Papers further emphasise the importance of the 'human capital' in Pakistan; its 'tiny elite' and the middle class that are competent and have a direct stake to transform Pakistan.²⁵ Similarly, Sir Hilary Synnott, the former British High Commissioner in Pakistan also observed that Pakistan requires a prolonged and well-directed effort to assist it with resolving its chronic domestic problems.²⁶ Key policies have been adopted in the US and the UK, among other western states, to enhance strategic partnerships with Pakistan aiming at preventing religious terrorism.²⁷

²⁰ Masood, W. 2014. *Taliban ya jamhooriyat: Pakistan dorahey pe*. Sanjh Publications, Lahore; For a broader discussion on the problem of terrorism and Pakistan's relations with the US, see Haqqani, H. 2013. *Magnificent delusions: Pakistan, the United States, and an epic history of misunderstanding*. Public Affairs.

²¹ Zaidi, S. A. (2011) Who Benefits From U.S. Aid to Pakistan? Available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/pakistan_aid2011.pdf (Accessed 5 March 2016). Epstein, S.B and Kronstadt A. K. (2013) 'Pakistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance', Congressional Research Service. Available at: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41856.pdf> (Accessed 15 Oct 2016).

²² Cohen (n 9).

²³ Epstein and Karonstadt (n 21).

²⁴ Cohen (n 9).

²⁵ Ibid. p58.

²⁶ Synnott quoted in Talbot (n 6) p3.

²⁷ An important policy on Pakistan was agreed by the US Congressional Act, namely the 'Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009'. It is famously called 'The Kerry-Lugar Act'. The Act committed the US for five years to provide substantial financial assistance to "consolidate democracy" and "re-establish an independent and transparent judicial system to extend the rule of law in all areas in Pakistan." The financial assistance also aimed at promoting "sustainable development and infrastructure projects, including healthcare, education, water management, and energy programs." Crucially, the Act committed US to work with the Government of Pakistan "to strengthen Pakistan's counterinsurgency and counterterrorism strategy" and "to strengthen Pakistan's efforts to develop strong and effective law enforcement and national defence forces under civilian leadership." Available at <https://www.congress.gov/111/plaws/publ73/PLAW-111publ73.pdf>.

Strengthening and empowering civil society – including NGOs – to consolidate democracy has been one of the foremost foreign and security policy imperatives for US and other Western states. In the case of Pakistan, civil society is considered as a ‘potential force’ against anarchy and authoritarian rule.²⁸ It could mobilise societal demands for institutional reforms, ensure rule of law and accountability, and educate citizens to help them understand and defend their rights.²⁹ The ‘lawyers’ movement’ in 2007 epitomised the roles of civil society and new media for making the army dictator accountable for expelling the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.³⁰ Ever since then, civil society in Pakistan has found a new prominence and continues to dominate political debates.³¹ In such an approach, civil society, particularly NGOs, are perceived as a constructive and axiomatic institution which develops as a defensive response to the state’s power and growth.³² In the case of Pakistan, the ‘activist’ role of NGOs against dictatorships, for promoting democracy, for protecting and advancing women’s and human rights, has been praised.³³ However, Pakistani NGOs have not always been the promoters of democracy. In 2007, Pakistani NGOs were ‘disproportionately’ the most vocal supporters of General Pervez Musharraf who overthrew the democratic government of an elected prime minister in 1999 and took charge as a dictator.³⁴ Zaidi observes that “far from challenging the state, a number of Pakistani NGOs have become the state’s partners, to the mutual benefit of both.”³⁵

In response to the question of divergent trajectories of democracy in India and Pakistan, compelling comparative explanations are produced by Ayesha Jalal,³⁶ Christophe

²⁸ Weinbaum (n 7); Diamond, L.J. (2000) Is Pakistan the (reverse) wave of the future?, *Journal of Democracy*, 11(3), pp: 91-106.

²⁹ Diamond, (n 28).

³⁰ Lau, M. (2007) Pakistan Country Survey, in Cotran, E, and Lau, M. (ed.), *Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law*, Volume 12 (2005-2006), Brill: Leiden, pp 443-472.

³¹ Zaidi, S. A. (2008) Pakistan After Musharraf: An Emerging Civil Society, *Journal of Democracy*, 19(4), pp: 38-40.

³² Whaites, A. (1995) The state and civil society in Pakistan, *Contemporary South Asia*, 4(3), pp: 229-254.

³³ Jaffrelot, C. eds. (2004) *A History of Pakistan and Its Origins*, Translated by G. Beaumont, Anthem Press: London; Malik, I.H. (1997) *State and civil society in Pakistan: Politics of authority, ideology and ethnicity*. Macmillan Press Ltd.

³⁴ Zaidi (n 31).

³⁵ Ibid., p39.

³⁶ Jalal (n 8). Jalal, A. (1999a) The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan. Sang-E-Meel Publications: Lahore.; Jalal, A. (1999b) Identity Crisis: Rethinking the Politics of Community and Region in South Asia, *Harvard International Review*, 21(3), pp: 82-85; and Jalal, A. (1991) *The State of Martial Rule: The origins of Pakistan’s political economy of defence*. Vanguard Books Pvt. Ltd: Lahore.

Jaffrelot,³⁷ Ian Talbot,³⁸ Sumit Ganguly,³⁹ Maya Tudor,⁴⁰ Ted Sevenson,⁴¹ and Katharine Adeney⁴² among others. Since a comparative political analysis is not the focus of this thesis, only the analyses on Pakistan's challenges for democratisation are considered. Historical insights on the crisis of identity and early state formation in Pakistan offered by Hamza Alavi,⁴³ Eqbal Ahmad,⁴⁴ Sibte-e-Hassan,⁴⁵ Akbar S. Ahmad,⁴⁶ Khalid bin Sayeed,⁴⁷ and Mubarak Ali⁴⁸ have informed my research. On civil-military relationship, Pakistan's foreign policy towards US and other western countries, on military insurgencies and terrorism, and military-democracy dichotomy in Pakistan, I have reviewed a rich body of research notably by Hussain Haqqani,⁴⁹ Aqil Shah,⁵⁰ C. Christine Fair,⁵¹ Hassan Askari Rizvi,⁵² Yunas Samad,⁵³ Michael Hoffman,⁵⁴

³⁷ Jaffrelot (n 6); Jaffrelot, (n 33); Jaffrelot, C. (2002) eds. *Pakistan: nationalism without a nation?*, Palgrave Macmillan: Plymouth.

³⁸ Talbot (n 6).

³⁹ Ganguly, S. (2016) A Tale of Two Trajectories: Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan and India, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 39(1), pp: 142-157; Ganguly, S. and Fair, C. (2013) The structural origins of authoritarianism in Pakistan, *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 51(1), pp: 122-142; Ganguly, S. (2008) The Burden of History, *Journal of Democracy*, 19(4), pp: 26-31.

⁴⁰ Tudor, M. (n 7); Tudor, M. (2014b) Renewed Hope in Pakistan?, *Journal of Democracy*, 25(2), pp: 105-118.

⁴¹ Svensson, T. (2013) *Production of Postcolonial India and Pakistan: Meanings of Partition*, Routledge: Oxon.

⁴² Adeney, K. (2015) How to understand Pakistan's hybrid regime: the importance of a multidimensional continuum, *Democratization*, 24(1), pp: 119-137; Adeney, K. & Wyatt, A.K.J. (2004) Democracy in South Asia: Getting Beyond the Structure-Agency Dichotomy, *Political Studies*, 52 (1), pp:1-18; Adeney, K. & Wyatt, A.K.J. (2001) Explaining South Asia's Uneven Democratic Career in J Haynes (eds.) *Towards Sustainable Democracy in the Third World*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, pp:113-140.

⁴³ Alavi (n 7).

⁴⁴ Ahmad, E. (2000) *Confronting Empire Interviews with David Barsamian*, South End Press: Cambridge.

⁴⁵ Sibte-e-Hassan. (2002) *Pakistan me tehzib ka irtiqa*. 11th edition. Maktab-e-Daniyal. Karachi; Sibte-e-Hassan. (2002) *Pakistan ke tehzibee-o-siyasi masail*. Maktab-e-Daniyal. Karachi.

⁴⁶ Akbar, S. A. (1997) *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic identity: The Search for Saladin*, Routledge: London. Reprinted Oxford University Press: Karachi, 2009; Akbar, S. A. (1997) *The Quaid: Jinnah and the Story of Pakistan (the Graphic Novel)*, Oxford University Press, Karachi.

⁴⁷ Saeed, K.B. (1968) *Pakistan: The Formative Phase 1857-1958*, Oxford Unity Press: Oxford.

⁴⁸ Ali, M. (2011) *Pakistan in Search of Identity*, Aakar: New Delhi.

⁴⁹ Haqqani, H. (n 20); Haqqani, H. (2013) Islamists and democracy: Cautions from Pakistan. *Journal of Democracy*, 24(2), pp: 5-14.

⁵⁰ Shah, A. (2014a) *The army and democracy: military politics in Pakistan*, Harvard University Press: Cambridge; Shah, A. (2014b) Constraining consolidation: military politics and democracy in Pakistan (2007-2013)., *Democratization*, 21(6), pp: 1007-1033.

⁵¹ Fair, C.C. (2011) Why the Pakistani army is here to stay: prospects for civilian governance, *International Affairs*, 87(3), pp:571-588.

⁵² Rizvi, H-A. (1988) *The Military and Politics in Pakistan 1947-86*, Konark Publishers Pvt Ltd: New Delhi.

⁵³ Samad, Y. (1994) The Military and Democracy in Pakistan, *contemporary South Asia* 3, pp.189-203.

⁵⁴ Hoffman, M. (2011) Military extrication and temporary democracy: the case of Pakistan, *Democratization*, 18(1), pp:75-99.

Steven. L. Wilkison,⁵⁵ and Ayesha Siddiqua.⁵⁶ For understanding the judiciary's role in Pakistan's democratisation, constitutionalism and Islamisation of laws, I have reviewed the scholarly works of Mohammad Waseem,⁵⁷ Martin Lau,⁵⁸ Paula Newberg,⁵⁹ Zulfiqar Khalid Maluka,⁶⁰ Shaheen Sardar Ali,⁶¹ and Osama Siddique.⁶²

Contrary to the rich academic debates on Pakistan's challenges to democratisation, there is limited literature on the role of civil society and NGOs in democratisation. I examined Iftikhar H. Malik's work entitled 'State and Civil Society in Pakistan' which provides a comprehensive analysis on the problems of an unequal relationship between the 'elitist' state structure and weak civic institutions.⁶³ The second, more recent academic research has been undertaken by Masooda Bano on the influence of development aid on cooperation in NGOs and other voluntary organisations in Pakistan.⁶⁴ Weiss and Gilani's edited volume 'Power and Civil Society in Pakistan' offers varied analyses on the complexities of Pakistan's political sociology.⁶⁵ On women's movements, Mumtaz and Shaheed's research on blurry boundaries between the social, political and cultural aspects of women's lives, law and politics, has been useful.⁶⁶ Shaheen Sardar Ali has provided a detailed examination of women's movement and its response to the state's Islamisation of laws.⁶⁷ Hassan and Sabir

⁵⁵ Wilkinson, S.I. (2000) Democratic consolidation and failure: lessons from Bangladesh and Pakistan, *Democratization*, 7(3), pp: 203-226.

⁵⁶ Siddiqua, A. (2007) *Military Inc. Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*. London, Anne Arbor: Pluto Press.

⁵⁷ Waseem, M. (2012) Judging democracy in Pakistan: Conflict between the executive and judiciary, *Contemporary South Asia*, 20(1), pp:19-31; Waseem (n 12).

⁵⁸ Lau, M. (2006) *The role of Islam in the legal system of Pakistan*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers: Lieden; Lau, M. (2007) 'Pakistan Country Survey'. In: Cotran, E, and Lau, M. (ed.), *Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law*, Volume 12 (2005-2006), Brill: Leiden, pp 443-472.

⁵⁹ Newberg, P. (1995) *Judging the State: Courts and Constitutional Politics in Pakistan*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

⁶⁰ Maluka (n 12).

⁶¹ Ali, S.S. (2016) *Modern challenges to Islamic law*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge; Ali, S.S. (2000) *Law, Islam and the Women's Movement in Pakistan*, in S.M.Rai (ed.) *Gender and Democratisation: International Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

⁶² Siddique, O. (n 13).

⁶³ Malik (n 33).

⁶⁴ Bano, M., 2012. *Breakdown in Pakistan: How aid is eroding institutions for collective action*. Stanford University Press.

⁶⁵ Weiss, A.M. and Gilani, S.Z. eds., (2001) *Power and civil society in Pakistan* (No. 101). Oxford University Press, USA.

⁶⁶ Mumtaz, K. and Shaheed, F., (1987) *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward. One Step Back*, London; and Shaheed, F., 2010. *Contested Identities: gendered politics, gendered religion in Pakistan*. *Third World Quarterly*, 31(6), pp.851-867.

⁶⁷ Ali. (n 61) 2000. On civil society and NGOs also see Mehboob A.B. 2010. *Civil society engagement in democratic transition in Pakistan* in Cheema, G.S. and Popovski, V. (eds.) *Engaging civil society: Emerging trends in democratic governance*. United Nations University Press: Tokyo, pp:193-213.

offered an historical account of how civil society and NGOs in Pakistan have faced stiff resistance from the ruling clique.⁶⁸ And finally, a more journalistic description on the history of people's movements in Pakistan is offered by Aslam Khawaja.⁶⁹

Additionally, key constitutional rulings by higher courts, NGOs' reports, and newspaper articles published in *The Dawn*, *Daily Jung*, have provided insights into the populist narratives on democratisation in Pakistan. Reports by international development agencies offered useful information and policy analyses on democratic trends in Pakistan and their significance for global politics.

Having set the context with these preliminary observations, I will now trace the problems of democratisation in Pakistan and the roles of civil society and NGOs in it. As alluded previously, the following discussion is divided into four distinct 'waves' of democratisation over seventy years. I have categorised these waves in specified periods of time as 'testing democracy' (1947-1958), 'idealising democracy' (1972-1977), 'personalising democracy' (1989-1998) and 're-constitutionalising democracy' (2008-). The first three waves were followed by the reverse waves to authoritarian rules. The fourth and final wave is ongoing and refers to the present democratic governance in Pakistan.

Testing democracy: the first wave of democratisation (1947-1958)

The founding father of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, envisioned Pakistan as a sovereign nation state whose government was "..... in the hands of its people."⁷⁰ Pakistan was to be governed by "... its provisional constitution based on the fundamental principles of democracy not bureaucracy or autocracy or dictatorship..."⁷¹ This adherence to the fundamental principles of democracy was proved a rhetoric by Jinnah himself. Jinnah appointed himself as the first governor-general of Pakistan as

⁶⁸ Hassan, T., and Sabir, M., 2011. Civil Society-Democracy Nexus in Pakistan. *South Asian Studies*, 26(2), p.325.

⁶⁹ Khawaja, A., 2016. People's Movements in Pakistan. Kitab Publishers Karachi.

⁷⁰ Jinnah quoted in Jalal (n 8) p48. Writing about Jinnah's leadership, Dr. Mubashir Hassan asserts that by 23 March 1940, Jinnah had discovered the spark in the hearts of his followers. Muslims were historically ruled by the Muslim emperors – they secretly desired to be ruled by a Muslim state. That desire was the key which Jinnah identified and understood, which made him Quaid-e-Azam (the Great Leader). See Hassan, M. 2014. *Awami Leader*. Authored, printed and published by Dr. Mubashir Hassan. Gulberg, Lahore.

⁷¹ Jalal (n 8) p49.

well as the President of the Constituent Assembly; declared his preference for ‘an Islamic democracy’; instructed that a presidential form of government was more suited for Pakistan; and forcefully seeded the centralisation of the state, leaving little space for provincial autonomy.⁷² All this was justified in the name of building a nascent state.⁷³ Clearly, there was a conflict between Jinnah’s claim and his approach to democracy. It could be argued that this ‘conflict’ in Jinnah’s rhetoric and action critically moulded the politics of Pakistan in its early years.⁷⁴

Pakistan gained independence in 1947 through the partition of British India, and consisted of two major territories – East and West Pakistan. Separated by a thousand miles of Indian land, the geographical divide between the two territories was further complicated by a much deeper divide of separate ethnicities – language, history, and culture. East Pakistan consisted the eastern territory of Bengal, with a distinct Bengali culture, history and language. It was also a numerically larger wing with more people residing in the region than in West Pakistan. West Pakistan consisted four geographical divisions as provinces: Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and North-West Frontier (NWFP). In addition, there were thirteen princely states. Contrary to East Pakistan, West Pakistan was culturally heterogeneous with diverse ethnic groups with their distinct cultures, languages and histories.

Notwithstanding the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, Jinnah sought unity by religion.⁷⁵ At the All India Muslim League (AIML) Lahore Resolution in March 1940, Jinnah asserted that Muslims were a separate nation; they were unlike Hindus and a significantly large minority in British India.⁷⁶ However, it was not the majority Muslim territories of the British India that demanded the creation of Pakistan. AIML, as the leading political party for Indian Muslims, was rooted in the United Provinces (UP) of the North India where Muslims were in minority. AIML was the brainchild of the

⁷² Jaffrelot, (n 33) p62. Soon after independence, Jinnah had dismissed the provincial governments of NWFP and Sindh invoking the Article 51(5) of the Government of India Act (1935) which governed the new state of Pakistan until its own constitution was drafted.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Aqil Shah argues that Jinnah had been committed to the creation of a democratic polity. However, certain choices that he made in the early days of the state had profound, long term consequences for the structure of civil-military relations in Pakistan. See Shah, 2014b (n 50).

⁷⁵ One nation, one culture, one language was Jinnah’s aspiration as well as justification for Pakistan. Jaffrelot, (n 37) 2002.

⁷⁶ Jalal, 1999a, (n 36).

established and educated minority Muslim elite of UP.⁷⁷ Fearing marginalisation in case of a united India, this minority Muslim elite demanded a separate state to govern on behalf of majority of Muslims in other parts of India. In articulating the demand for Pakistan, the notion of democracy had to be disregarded. Jalal writes:

What was unacceptable (to AIML) was a spurious notion of democracy that allowed the Indian National Congress to use the brute majority of the Hindu community to impose its will on the Muslims.⁷⁸

The imagined ‘unification’ of Muslims was subsequently considered as a defining factor for the national identity of Pakistan. ‘Urdu’ was made another defining factor. For the minority, Muslim elite leading AIML, Urdu was a mark of sophistication and refinement.⁷⁹ AIML, which was called Muslim League (ML) after the Independence, was governing Pakistan. It ignored the fact that Urdu was mainly spoken by the migrants from India; the settled majority of Pakistanis were predominantly non-Urdu speaking. The centralisation of power around Urdu as Pakistan’s official language sparked resistance from other regions, especially Sindh and East Pakistan.⁸⁰ This linguistic tension was manifested in the first draft of the Constitution known as the ‘Interim Report’ drafted by the Constituent Assembly in September 1950.⁸¹ The Interim Report not only officially elevated Urdu to the rank of national language, it also proposed an equal representation of the East and West Pakistan in the Upper Chamber of the Parliament. This proposal disregarded the fact that Bengalis were a majority in the united Pakistan. Bengalis fiercely opposed the Interim Report which was subsequently withdrawn within two months of its presentation.⁸² The minority ethnic ruling elite, evidently, seeded the suppression of the majority from the very outset of national governance.

Interim Report marked the beginning of what became an unending constitutional crisis. It also exposed the institutional demise of ML. Previously in 1948, after Jinnah’s death, Liaquat Ali Khan took charge as the first Prime Minister of Pakistan and appointed a new governor general. Soon after assuming office in January 1949, Khan had dismissed

⁷⁷ Tudor (n 40) 2014a; Jalal, (n 8); Ganguly and Fair, (n 39).

⁷⁸ Jalal, (n 8) p13.

⁷⁹ Talbot (n 6) p35.

⁸⁰ Sindhi and Bengali respectively have been the important linguistic element in defining ethnic identities. Jaffrelot (n 33).

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

the Punjab government on the charges of mismanagement, although it had a solid majority in the provincial assembly.⁸³ In their arrogance as the sole political party for the Pakistan independence movement, ML executives refused to recognise emerging political parties in the provinces.⁸⁴ With no national mandate to begin with, ML factionalised soon after the Independence and failed to establish either a political base or mobilise support at the grass-roots level.⁸⁵ While the demise of ML has been considered critically damaging for the new governing apparatus of Pakistan,⁸⁶ I argue that the emergence of other provincial political parties as a consequence of ML's demise, could be regarded as a positive development for democracy in that period. However, it is to be noted that the trigger for the emerging political parties was a separatist resistance in the provinces. This separatist dimension would soon fuel a constitutional crisis resulting in the first reverse wave of democracy as Pakistan's first dictatorship in 1958.

The drafting of the first constitution on democratic principles was painfully slow given the power struggles between East and West Pakistan involving the questions of national language and parity.⁸⁷ These power struggles caused an enduring distrust amongst Bengalis for the Punjabis of West Pakistan who were increasingly taking control of the national governance.⁸⁸ Another fundamental setback to the drafting of the constitution was Khan's conflicting approach to religion. Prior to the Interim Report, the Objectives Resolution of March 7, 1949 ruled out the notion of an Islamic state yet assured the Muslim citizens a right to live their individual and collective lives in accordance to the teachings of Islam.⁸⁹ This 'official' assurance was far less promising for religious minorities.⁹⁰ But it was surely "sufficient to embolden the religious lobby to periodically hold the state accountable to its professed commitment to ushering in an Islamic social order."⁹¹

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Tudor (n 40) 2014a.

⁸⁵ Adeney & Wyatt (n 42) 2001. p124.

⁸⁶ Ganguly (n 39) 2008.

⁸⁷ Jaffrelot (n 6); Talbot (n 6).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Jalal (n 8).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Jalal (n 8) p57.

Jalal, however, argues that it was not the question of religion which disturbed the early development of a steady political order in Pakistan.⁹² It was the problem of ‘the privilege of ownership’ of the rich and powerful elite of Pakistan whose materialistic aim for accumulating wealth and power in ‘their’ new state was forever unsatisfied.⁹³ Hamza Alavi coined the term ‘*salariat*’ to describe the emerging urban class consisting of professionals, salaried civil bureaucrats and politicians who spearheaded the Pakistan Movement.⁹⁴ Their primary interest was to create a state apparatus that would allow them more power and influence.

By 1952, five years into independence, ethnic tension between East and West Pakistan and within West Pakistan mounted rapidly. Eqbal Ahmad put it eloquently ‘[n]ationalism was trying to create new realities, and it had not succeeded very well.’⁹⁵ The continuing political uncertainty took its first casualty with the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan in October 1951. Ghulam Muhammad, the former Indian civil servant, was then appointed as the governor general of Pakistan. Muhammad distrusted the politicians and the parliamentary system.⁹⁶ This ‘new state’ of the executive and the bureaucracy assumed most of the legislative activity and a recourse to mass mandate was considered dysfunctional to govern the state.⁹⁷ In November 1952, Muhammad rejected the proposed new report to the Constituent Assembly by the then Prime Minister Nazimuddin.⁹⁸ The report suggested representation by majority in the Lower Chamber. Muhammad also disliked the proposed reduction in military expenditure in the report. The report was withdrawn but Muhammad’s distrust for democratic institutions led him to dismiss Nazimuddin’s government in April 1953, followed by the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in September 1954.⁹⁹

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid. The civil bureaucracy in Punjab and Sindh with the support of prominent Muslim League politicians were keen to grab the allotments of the abandoned properties by Hindus and Sikhs who had migrated to India.

⁹⁴ Alavi (n 7).

⁹⁵ Ahmad (n 44).

⁹⁶ Jaffrelot (n 33) p65.

⁹⁷ Waseem (n 12) p105.

⁹⁸ Newberg (n 59). Khan, H. (2005). *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*. 2nd edn. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

⁹⁹ Ibid. A state of emergency was declared on the alleged cause that the Constituent Assembly had become unrepresentative and was embroiled in political power struggle. Historians argue that the real objection was that the Assembly was about to adopt a constitution which sought curtailing the powers of the Governor General’s office.

With the backing of the army, Muhammad entrenched the politics of patronage by including two prominent Bengali political leaders in his new government.¹⁰⁰ This saved him from a possible public uproar against the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. However, the President of the Constituent Assembly, Maulvi Tamizuddin, (a Bengali) challenged the Governor General's actions and filed a petition in the Sindh High Court alleging that these actions were in contravention of the sovereign right of the Assembly.¹⁰¹ The Sindh High Court ruled unanimously in his favour and considered the Constituent Assembly to be a sovereign body.¹⁰² Muhammad's government appealed against the ruling before the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The subsequent ruling entitled 'Federation of Pakistan and others v. Moulvi Tamizuddin Khan' is considered a landmark judgement in Pakistan's political and constitutional trajectory as it would set course for the future politics.¹⁰³ It accepted the Governor General's actions as valid and ruled out the sovereign right of the Assembly to formulate valid laws unless they had been granted an assent by the office of the Governor General.¹⁰⁴ The infamous judgment also justified the imposed state of emergency on the basis of a new doctrine the 'civil law of necessity'.¹⁰⁵ The judgement instigated the problematic nexus between the higher judiciary and the executive.¹⁰⁶

Since the beginning, Pakistan's political economy revolved around security considerations to deter India.¹⁰⁷ Jalal asserts that "(a)n acute sense of threat from India moulded critical policy decisions, including on Kashmir, and saw the army becoming a key player in shaping the destiny of the country."¹⁰⁸ During the Cold War, American

¹⁰⁰ Jaffrelot (n 33).

¹⁰¹ Newberg (n 59).

¹⁰² The Judgement stated that people of India were given the freedom and the independence to frame any Constitution they liked with complete freedom from the Crown or Governor General. The Court Moulvi Tamizuddin Khan v. The Federation of Pakistan [PLD 1955 Sind 96].

¹⁰³ Waseem (n 12). Case Law ref: Federation of Pakistan and others v. Moulvi Tamizuddin Khan (PLD 1955 Federal Court 240).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. The unprecedented reasoning used by the Supreme Court was that as the Governor General never gave his assent to the laws under which Tamizuddin Khan filed his petition, the Sindh High Court could not possibly consider the petition and apply these laws in the first place. It must be noted that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, a Punjabi named Munir, was appointed by Muhammad just a few months earlier. Jalal (n 8).

¹⁰⁵ Newberg (n 59) p66.

¹⁰⁶ Waseem (n 12). Ever since then, the higher courts repeatedly validated the actions of the ruling elite with a rationale of maintaining 'public order' and 'national security'.

¹⁰⁷ Rizvi (n 52); Jalal (n 8).

¹⁰⁸ Jalal (n 8) p64. By 1955, Pakistan had signed up to the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) to benefit from the western, particularly American, support of which army was the main beneficiary.

support came in exchange for Pakistan's willingness to serve as a buffer zone against Soviet Union's interventions in Afghanistan. This financial support strengthened the army which consequently amplified its stakes in the foreign affairs of the state. Alavi argues that the principle reason behind the weakness of democratic practice in Pakistan was the emergence of an early and an unfortunate nexus between bureaucracy and military.¹⁰⁹ Ganguly blames ML which was unable to articulate a clear vision for the nascent state.¹¹⁰ He argues that the failure to provide effective governance paved the way for an elitist civil service and military to make an 'alliance of convenience' to suppress any openings for democracy.¹¹¹ This nexus became the foundation of 'conservatism' and came to be known as the 'establishment'.¹¹²

A second Constituent Assembly was elected in 1955 which produced Pakistan's first Constitution in 1956.¹¹³ The Constitution finally ended Pakistan's dominion status, and instituted the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as a federation. Based on a parliamentary system, the Constitution provided for a unicameral legislature with the Prime Minister as the head of the government, abolished the office of the Governor General, and established the post for a President. The Constitution combined parliamentary and presidential principles and empowered the President to dismiss the central as well as the provincial governments.¹¹⁴ The Objectives Resolution of 1949 was incorporated as its Preamble and provisions were made to ensure that the laws are not repugnant to Islamic injunctions. Muhammad resigned and Iskander Mirza, another bureaucrat, became Pakistan's first President.¹¹⁵

The Constitution was now in place but the politics of factions and patronage had already taken root. As a "failed compromise" on the Two-Unit scheme, it was too late for the constitutional order to unite the leadership of the two wings of Pakistan.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile, the gradual demise of ML continued. Its members were breaking up and forming new political groupings. Consequently, regional political parties emerged and gained strength in West Pakistan. United Front and Awami League were firmly in control in

¹⁰⁹ Alavi (n 7).

¹¹⁰ Ganguly (n 39) 2008, 2013.

¹¹¹ *ibid*, 2013. p132.

¹¹² Waseem (n 12) p103.

¹¹³ The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1956.

¹¹⁴ Jaffrelot (n 33).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁶ Wilkinson (n 55) p206.

East Pakistan. To control and govern, Mirza dissolved three federal governments in less than two years, a move which amplified political opportunism and administrative chaos.¹¹⁷ In October 1958, Mirza declared the first martial law in Pakistan.

To conclude so far, at the time of its creation, Pakistan was imagined to be a constitutional democracy. However, the democratic practice was yet to be tested. Charting the trajectory of the decade, it could be observed that although Pakistan displayed aspects of ‘procedural’ democracy as evident by the provincial elections and promulgating the Constitution, it failed to acquire ‘social’ democracy based on the principles of wider political participation and the lowering of social inequalities.¹¹⁸ I would argue that despite this failure, the ten-year ‘testing’ of democracy itself was crucial in establishing a polity in which democratic principles were debated, fought for, repeatedly ignored, altered and negotiated. Had Pakistan begun with autocracy, there would have been no such avenues. A beginning with democracy, however notional, might account for the subsequent ‘spaces’ for the resilience of democratic practice in Pakistan against the odds of authoritarianism.

Idealising democracy: the second wave of democratisation (1972-1977)

The Martial Law of 1958 marked the first ‘reverse wave’ of democratisation which lasted until 1971. Mirza dissolved the Assembly and abrogated the Constitution. He appointed General Ayub Khan as the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Ayub had long been preparing to “take control should Civil Government break down” and was convinced that Pakistan’s survival was dependent on army taking hold of politics.¹¹⁹ Military delved into politics for the first time. The judiciary validated the coup under the ‘Dosso Case’¹²⁰ arguing that since the military coup had effectively changed the basic norm of laws implemented in the country, this act could only be ‘extra-constitutional’ and therefore the courts were left with no authority but to work within

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Jaffrelot (n 33).

¹¹⁸ Talbot (n 6) p74.

¹¹⁹ Jalal (n 8) p86; Sayeed (n 47) argues that it was fundamentally the incapacity of civilian authorities to maintain public order that led them to increasingly turn to the military to come to the ‘aid of the civil’. See also Shah (n 50).

¹²⁰ State v. Dosso and another PLD 1958 SC 533.

the confines of this new law.¹²¹ By Dosso Case, courts found the ‘legal’ ways to resolve constitutional crisis whenever the elected assemblies were dissolved.¹²²

Ayub introduced radical changes to restructure Pakistan’s economy focusing on both agrarian reforms and industrial development. However only a minority gained from this prosperity. Jalal states:

These industrial families, together with an estimated 15,000 senior civil servants belonging to approximately 10,000 families, and about 500 generals and senior military officials, formed the core of the regime’s bases of support in the urban areas.¹²³

With his ‘Basic Democracies Order’ Ayub set a precedent for dictators in Pakistan to propagate their own ‘system of democracy’ in the years to come.¹²⁴ In the absence of political parties which were outlawed, and civil rights which were suspended, 80,000 ‘Basic Democrats’ were chosen as the electoral college for the presidential election.¹²⁵ Subsequently, Ayub was elected as the President. A new Constitution was promulgated on 8 June 1962 which gave absolute power of veto to the President against the Parliament.¹²⁶ Parliament too was elected through the ‘Basic Democrats’ “whose votes he (Ayub) could readily buy or force.”¹²⁷

Ayub’s political ideal was reminiscent of the British era in which elite civil servants led the administration with their preferences and disregarded popular participation.¹²⁸ The brightest bureaucrats, legal minds of the Judiciary, and ambitious politicians joined Ayub’s usurpation as ‘junior partners’.¹²⁹ With political parties initially banned, political organisation at the grassroots was stifled. After the Constitution of 1962 was put in place, the political parties of East and West Pakistan jointly revolted against the ban on political parties, which apparently compelled Ayub to legalise political

¹²¹ Newberg (n 59).

¹²² Waseem (n 12) p109.

¹²³ Jalal (n 36) 1999a. p306.

¹²⁴ Jaffrelot (n 33); Sayeed (n 47). A five-tiered local government system was established from the Union Councils and Town Committees (at the village and urban levels respectively) to the Provincial Development Councils at the top.

¹²⁵ Jaffrelot (n 33); Talbot (n 6).

¹²⁶ Sayeed (n 47).

¹²⁷ Jaffrelot (n 33) p72.

¹²⁸ Talbot (n 6); Jalal (n 36) 1999a; 1991.

¹²⁹ Jalal (n 8) p102.

parties.¹³⁰ However, a great number of heavy-weight political leaders were still disqualified to join the parliament.¹³¹ Confident to win, Ayub announced presidential elections to be held in January 1965 and formed his own political party, the Muslim Convention League in 1963.¹³² Meanwhile, the restrictions on the freedom of expression meant that the press activities were also heavily constrained. This not only undermined the politics of the opposition but also “hampered the long-term development of civil society” in Pakistan.¹³³ Notwithstanding restrictions, a coalition of political parties (both with left and right-wing groups) sprang under the leadership of Fatima Jinnah. It was named as the Combined Opposition Parties (COP) with a slogan ‘Democracy against Dictatorship’.¹³⁴ This was the first political coalition for the restoration of democracy and was unique as even the Islamist political party, *Jamat-e-Islami* which was against Ayub’s modernisation policies, joined in to oust the dictator.

Despite mass political mobilisation and support for Fatima Jinnah, Ayub won the presidential elections of January 1965 because of the indirect votes of the ‘Basic Democrats’ as the electoral college.¹³⁵ But the collective confrontation had left him weakened, particularly in the largest cities of Karachi and Dhaka.¹³⁶ Ayub’s political volatility had a decisive blow in September 1965 with the military defeat of Pakistan by India in the first war between the two countries since Partition.¹³⁷ In West Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto mobilised students against the humiliation of the defeat and the working class against economic inequalities.¹³⁸ Bhutto, who until recently was a ‘key defender’ of Ayub’s political regime as the former foreign minister, ascended to become a popular political leader with his political party, the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP).¹³⁹ Several street parades, led by masses against Ayub’s rule were organised in key urban centres on 17 March 1969 and culminated in him stepping down from

¹³⁰ Jaffrelot (n 33).

¹³¹ Talbot (n 6). With various corruption charges against them under Ayub’s Elective Bodies (Disqualification) Order (EBDO) of 1959.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Talbot (n 6) pp77-78.

¹³⁴ Fatima Jinnah: A sister’s sorrow Nadeem F. Paracha — Updated May 04, 2014 11:40am <http://www.dawn.com/news/1103505> accessed on 7th Jan, 2016.

¹³⁵ Talbot (n 6).

¹³⁶ Jaffrelot (n 33).

¹³⁷ Hassan (n 70).

¹³⁸ Jalal (n 8).

¹³⁹ Hassan (n 70).

office.¹⁴⁰ General Muhammad Yahya Khan took over by imposing another Martial Law.

The 1969 Martial Law was “harsher than the one imposed in 1958.”¹⁴¹ Political activities were banned, civil servants were dismissed and civilian courts were forbidden from scrutinising martial law. Yahya abrogated the Constitution and promulgated the Legal Framework Order (LFO) proposing new scheme for elections based on proportional representation.¹⁴² The LFO proposed a federal structure and provincial autonomy.¹⁴³ It also proposed for East Pakistan’s majority in the national assembly.¹⁴⁴ On the issue of centralisation of power, LFO retained the authority of the President at the expense of legislative authority.¹⁴⁵ The President was given sole authority to dissolve the National Assembly (yet to be elected) and to interpret the future Constitution; his interpretations were not to be challenged in the courts.¹⁴⁶ However, the LFO did not guarantee ‘provincial autonomy’ which was the principal demand of Awami League leaving the issue to be resolved by the drafting of the constitution post general elections.¹⁴⁷

In December 1970, after 23 years of political chaos, the first ever general elections were held in Pakistan. Largely considered to be fair, the elections resulted in PPP winning a majority seats in West Pakistan under Bhutto’s leadership.¹⁴⁸ Awami League under Mujibur Rehman, gained both a majority in East Pakistan as well as an overall majority in the National Assembly.¹⁴⁹ But the Punjabi-Muhajir ML elite, including Yahya and his army were unwilling to be governed by East Pakistanis.¹⁵⁰ Bhutto, a Sindhi *wadera* (feudal), was not keen on the Bengali-led parliament either.¹⁵¹ He demanded that PPP would share power with Awami League.¹⁵² The political turmoil became messier with

¹⁴⁰ Khwaja (n 69).

¹⁴¹ Newberg (n 59) p112.

¹⁴² Cohen (n 9).

¹⁴³ Jaffrelot (n 33).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Newberg (n 59).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Cohen (n 9); Jaffrelot (n 33).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Wilkinson (n 55) p207; Jalal (n 8). Jalal asserts that Awami League eventually agreed with Bhutto’s ‘two-majority’ thesis and was ready for a confederation of Pakistan. But the army was not willing to concede to the political demands of the Bengalis who they considered ‘traitors’.

¹⁵¹ Hassan (n 70).

¹⁵² Jalal (n 8), Jaffrelot (n 33).

Yahya's military 'Operation Searchlight' in Dhaka where hundreds of university students were killed.¹⁵³ Mujibur Rehman was arrested but some of his aides escaped to India and set up a government-in-exile in April 1971.¹⁵⁴ Awami League declared Independence from Pakistan and the civil war began.¹⁵⁵ Between April and November 1971, the Muslim army of West Pakistan ferociously killed the Muslims of East Pakistan. In December 1971, India launched a decisive attack on West Pakistani forces who surrendered within two weeks and suffered substantive losses of their ground and air forces.¹⁵⁶ More than two decades later, Pakistan was partitioned once again. However, the tragic irony of this partition was that it was the majority, and not the minority group, that seceded from the state.¹⁵⁷

By 1971, the politics of factions, co-optation and self-interest had ingrained in all political spheres, from army quarters to civilian political groups. Jalal argues that in its first 25 years, Pakistan developed an elaborate 'hydra-like' structure of the state mainly to "parry external and internal threats to its survival"¹⁵⁸ She asserts further:

Steeped in the classical tradition of colonial bureaucratic authoritarianism, the state sought to penetrate society, extract resources from the economy and manipulate the polity rather than devolve responsibility or serve as a two-way channel of communication between the rulers and the ruled.¹⁵⁹

On 20 December 1971, Bhutto assumed power as the President and the martial law administrator.¹⁶⁰ Bhutto's 'idealised' approach to democratisation meant curbing the power of the army so much so that it stays out of politics as a rule.¹⁶¹ Besides, the defeated and disgraced army also required time and resources to recover its stronghold.¹⁶² Bhutto fired a number of senior army officials including the chief of army staff (COAS) within four months of his rule.¹⁶³ With his own appointed men in the

¹⁵³ Ibid; Talbot (n 6).

¹⁵⁴ Jaffrelot (n 33).

¹⁵⁵ Wilkinson (n 55) p207.

¹⁵⁶ Wilkinson (n 55) p207.

¹⁵⁷ For an overview of the growing difficulties between East and West Pakistan, see Siddiqi, F.H. The failed experiment with federalism in Pakistan (1947-1971) in Emilian Kavalski and Magdalena Zolkos (eds.) *Defunct Federalisms: Critical Perspectives on Federal Failure* (Ashgate, Aldershot 2008) 71-86.

¹⁵⁸ Jalal (n 8) p145.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Newberg (n 59).

¹⁶¹ Jaffrelot (n 33).

¹⁶² Jalal (n 8); Wilkinson (n 55) p208.

¹⁶³ Jaffrelot (n 33).

senior ranks of the army, Bhutto moved on to restructure the civil service.¹⁶⁴ However, his 'socialist' measures, including big-scale nationalisation of private industry and agrarian reforms, forced him to rely increasingly on state bureaucrats to implement policies. The secession of East Pakistan and the fear of insecurity led Bhutto to embark upon a rapid nuclear weapons programme¹⁶⁵ which ironically strengthened the position of the army for many years to come.

Bhutto ended the Martial Law in April 1972 by promulgating a temporary constitution. Thus, a second wave of democratisation began. An incumbent government produced the new Constitution which was declared on 14 August 1973 with a unanimous support by different parties within the Assembly.¹⁶⁶ The 1973 Constitution manifested Bhutto's ideal: it introduced a constitutional democracy with a representative parliamentary system of government. It guaranteed fundamental rights to the citizens including the right of religion, freedom of speech, movement and the like. It established the national assembly and the senate as the main representative governing bodies and strengthened the powers of the Prime Minister elected by the Assembly. President's powers were significantly curtailed making him a figurative head of the state.¹⁶⁷ To please the religious lobby who supported Bhutto against dictatorship, the Constitution reaffirmed the Islamic character of the state with both the President and Prime Minister required to be Muslims.¹⁶⁸ The Preamble declared the 'sovereignty of God' and Islam as the 'State Religion' of the country.¹⁶⁹

With the Constitution in place, Bhutto became the Prime Minister. "Islam is our faith, democracy is our polity, socialism is our economy, all power to the people" was Bhutto's ideal in which he evoked the will of the *awam* (people) as the moving force in Pakistan.¹⁷⁰ Bhutto's appeal to populism and his political charisma led urban, educated, middle class professionals who were socialist by inclination to join Bhutto's mission to empower the people of Pakistan.¹⁷¹ However, Bhutto's populist appeal was short lived

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. By abolishing the Police Service of Pakistan and the Civil Service of Pakistan, absorbing them in a newly created All-Pakistan Unified Grade.

¹⁶⁵ Jalal (n 8).

¹⁶⁶ Maluka (n 12). The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973.

¹⁶⁷ Maluka (n 12); Newberg (n 59).

¹⁶⁸ *ibid*; Ali (n 48).

¹⁶⁹ Ali, (n 48).

¹⁷⁰ Jalal (n 8).

¹⁷¹ Hassan (n 70).

as he failed to work through participatory institutions and led with a strong personalised rule.¹⁷² His land reforms fell short of redressing the structural rural inequalities.¹⁷³ The nationalisation of private industries including financial companies did restore workers' rights and freedom of organised trade unions, but it backfired when small entrepreneurs and merchants felt alienated as their profits fell.¹⁷⁴ To please them, the government placed a crackdown on labour leaders with the help of the army.¹⁷⁵

Bhutto's haste in restructuring the governance meant that he had little time and attention for the development of PPP as a democratic political party.¹⁷⁶ PPP had not mobilised the public at grassroots level. As the elections of 1977 approached, Bhutto had no choice but to gain support from land owners for supporting PPP; he nominated a number of them to lead PPP with him.¹⁷⁷ This move estranged his middle-class educated supporters.¹⁷⁸ Bhutto's Islamisation policies also failed as the mainstream religious political parties vehemently opposed what they perceived were western, secular or socialist inclinations in Bhutto's governance.¹⁷⁹ Once again, to appease the religious lobby, Bhutto compromised democratic principles of the rights of minorities; Ahmadis (who believe that they are followers of Islam), a minority in Pakistan, were declared officially as non-Muslims in 1974.¹⁸⁰

To summarise, the second wave of democratisation was a lost opportunity to establish representative democracy in a broken Pakistan of 1971. Though initially Bhutto fostered the popular support, idealised parliamentary representative democracy with an ideological preference for socialist democracy, in the end he failed to deliver a liberal state with his intolerance for a legitimate political opposition. Like his predecessors, Bhutto chose politics of co-optation, personalised authority and control as opposed to strengthening democratic institutions. Wider participation and grass-roots political

¹⁷² Weinbaum (n 7).

¹⁷³ Jalal (n 8).

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Jaffrelot (n 36); Talbot (n 6).

¹⁷⁷ Weinbaum (n 7); Jaffrelot (n 33).

¹⁷⁸ Jalal (n 8). Hassan (n 70).

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ This legal negation of Ahmadis to be Muslims was clearly dictated by 'political concerns and motivations. See Rehman, J. (2000) Accommodating Religious Identities in an Islamic State: International law, freedom religion and the rights of religious minorities in *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* (7) p139.

mobilisation was restrained. On the problem of regional autonomy, though the Constitution was apparently sensitive to the smaller provinces and concessions were given to federalism, “the authority of the central government was left essentially unchanged.”¹⁸¹ In his zeal to centralise authority within the lower-house of the Parliament and to denigrate the army and bureaucracy, Bhutto paradoxically established more centres of authority and became increasingly dependent on the bureaucracy, police and the intelligence agencies.¹⁸²

In the end, Bhutto became the victim of his own doings. In 1976, the mainstream religious parties with other political groupings formed a political alliance known as the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) against Bhutto’s drastic nationalisation of agro-industries.¹⁸³ PNA simply wanted to break the PPP which proved not so difficult given that the PPP itself never managed to rise as a truly democratic party with public support. In these circumstances, PPP’s landslide victory in 1977 elections was challenged as fraudulent by the PNA and other opposition parties.¹⁸⁴ Street-demonstrations were held all around the country calling for Bhutto’s resignation.¹⁸⁵ To their side, the PNA’s religious leaders had the new COAS, General Zia-ul-Haq. The night Bhutto told the press that he would agree to all the demands put forward by the PNA including holding of the fresh elections in both the centre and the provinces, and would sign the agreement, the very next morning, on July 5, 1977, Zia ordered for the military coup and seized power.¹⁸⁶

Personalising democracy: the third wave of democratisation (1989 - 1998)

With General Zia-ul-Haq in power, 1977 set into motion a second reverse wave of democratisation in Pakistan which lasted until 1988. Zia belonged to a middle-class family of East Punjab who migrated to Pakistan in 1947.¹⁸⁷ He believed that Islam was the reason behind the idea of Pakistan and was keen to construct a stronger, religiously driven authoritarian regime, which naturally attracted support from the religious groups

¹⁸¹ Jalal (n 8) p193.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Weinbaum (n 7).

¹⁸⁵ Jaffrelot (n 33); Jalal (n 8).

¹⁸⁶ Jalal (n 8). Khawaja (n 69).

¹⁸⁷ Jaffrelot (n 33).

who led the campaign against Bhutto.¹⁸⁸ Like Ayub, Zia too blamed politicians for their failure to compromise and forcing the country near anarchy.¹⁸⁹ Unlike Ayub, Zia remained as COAS as well the Martial Law Administrator.¹⁹⁰ He promised free and fair elections within ninety days, dissolved the Parliament and placed the Constitution of 1973 in abeyance.¹⁹¹ With the Constitution not abrogated but ‘merely’ placed in abeyance, the President elected under the 1973 Constitution continued to be the President indicating a continuity of the constitutive order.¹⁹² Once again, Zia’s coup was validated by the Supreme Court of Pakistan with a ruling entitled ‘Begum Nusrat Bhutto V. The Chief of the Army Staff and Another’ on the grounds of ‘necessity’ in the interest of the state and public welfare.¹⁹³ This validity ensured a “durable basis for the garrison state.”¹⁹⁴ The ruling also empowered Zia to amend the Constitution “at will.”¹⁹⁵

The politics of patronage soon became evident. With political parties banned, Zia appointed his Council of Advisors in 1978, which was a combination of civil bureaucrats and the army officers.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, retired army officers were appointed as provincial governors and ambassadors.¹⁹⁷ Politicians were co-opted to join as ministers.¹⁹⁸ Chief Justice Anwar-ul-Haq was appointed by Zia who subsequently validated the coup and sentenced Bhutto to be hanged.¹⁹⁹

Unlike Ayub and Yahya who followed a ‘moderate’ style governance, Zia’s martial rule was focused on ‘a state sponsored Islamic ideology’.²⁰⁰ Given the power to amend laws, Zia passed a series of presidential orders in 1979, including the order to establish

¹⁸⁸ A.S.A., A. Ali. R.M.A (2006) Reading between the lines: The mullah-military alliance in Pakistan, *Contemporary South Asia*. 15(4) pp383,387. Benazir Bhutto opined that Zia wanted to impose an Islamic system on Pakistan. Islamist parties supported Zia until his death and provided him the “Islamic” legitimacy for his tyrannical rule. See Bhutto, B. 2008. Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, and the West. A CBS Company. London.

¹⁸⁹ Zia’s speech 5 July 1977 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJIFbJX-cY8>.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Newberg (n 59).

¹⁹³ Begum Nusrat Bhutto V. The Chief of the Army Staff and Another. (PLD 1977 SC 657=1977 (3) PSCR 1’.

¹⁹⁴ Newberg (n 59) p78.

¹⁹⁵ Jalal (n 8) p220.

¹⁹⁶ Wilkinson (n 55) p208; Jaffrelot (n 33) p79.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹⁹ Newberg (n 59); Jalal (n 8).

²⁰⁰ Jalal (n 8) p217.

the Federal Shariat Court and the Acceleration of Islamisation Committee as constitutional bodies to ensure that the legal and political frameworks conform to Islamic principles.²⁰¹ Other steps taken to implement Zia's Islamisation include the *zakat* and *ushr* (agriculture tax) laws, *hudood* ordinances (laws of Islamic punishment), interest free banking, and *qanoon-e-shahadat* (law of evidence).²⁰² Elected parliament was replaced by *Majlis-e-Shura* in 1981 consisting 350 members appointed by Zia as advisors on Islamic governance.²⁰³

The global political context was favourable to Zia's Islamisation. During 1980s, US supported Zia's Islamisation as ideological resistance to counter Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.²⁰⁴ Zia was not criticised for delaying the elections and returning Pakistan to a democratic order. Instead, billions of dollars were given to Pakistan in aid to finance *jihad* (holy struggle of Muslims) against the 'evil empire'.²⁰⁵ Ahmad asserts that the Afghan *Jihad's* adverse impacts became a curse for generations of Pakistanis.²⁰⁶ There was an 'extraordinary proliferation' of drugs and guns which came from Afghanistan and Iran. Proliferations of weapons fuelled violence between diverse ethnic and religious communities.²⁰⁷

The rampant civil unrest throughout the country may have shaken the foundations of Zia's military coercion. Pakistanis started doubting Zia's promise of general elections as the elections were never announced, despite his continuous promises.²⁰⁸ PPP had geared up gradually to launch and lead a multi-party Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) under the leadership of Nusrat Bhutto (late Bhutto's wife).²⁰⁹ MRD consisted of former PNA parties including the Islamist *Jamiat-Ulma-e-Islam* (JUI) and

²⁰¹ Maluka (n 12). Jalal (n 8) p223.

²⁰² Ali (n 48) p34. These laws greatly discriminated religious minorities and women thereby making a 'mockery of justice'.

²⁰³ Ali (n 48) p34; Jaffrelot (n 33) p79.

²⁰⁴ Ahmad (n 44) p44; Cohen (n 9) pp9-10; Jaffrelot (n 33) p79.

²⁰⁵ Ahmad (n 44). Talbot (n 6) p137.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. See also Jaffrelot (n 33) p81. Jaffrelot explains that Zia's Islamisation policy, particularly the law on *zakat*, was discriminatory to Shi'a practice. In reaction, Shi's set up a new political organisation called *Tahrik Nifaz Fiqh-i-Jafaria* (TNFJ) to establish the practice of Shi'a law. TNFJ received support from Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini whose rule and ideology was against the US interest.

²⁰⁸ Jalal (n 8) p225.

²⁰⁹ Jaffrelot (n 33) p81. Khawaja narrates a day-to-day development of the MRD and the government's violence in curbing it. See (n 69).

several smaller parties.²¹⁰ Consequently, to legitimise his rule, in 1983 Zia held local elections which resulted in ‘a class’ of local politicians, including large landowners, who looked up to Zia for patronage.²¹¹ Later, in December 1984, a country-wide referendum was held to ask the public whether they approved Zia’s Islamisation policies; MRD and many other political parties boycotted the referendum.²¹² Nevertheless, Zia secured a significant vote in his favour which was disbelieved by most observers and considered a massive fraud.²¹³ Legislative elections were then announced on a non-party basis in 1985 and were once again boycotted by MRD, now led by Benazir Bhutto (Bhutto’s daughter).²¹⁴ The opposition notwithstanding, Zia proceeded with the elections and ended up with an elected parliament of his choice. He then went on to establish a much larger political base for his rule in the form of a national political party, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), persuaded Muhammad Khan Junejo to lead PML and appointed him as the Prime Minister.²¹⁵ This was the Parliament which passed the controversial Eighth Amendment to the Constitution giving Zia overarching powers over the prime minister and empowered provincial governors with similar authority to dismiss the provincial governments.²¹⁶ Martial Law was finally lifted on December 31, 1985 and Zia became the President of Pakistan.

However, public’s opposition to Zia’s rule did not disappear. Pakistanis from various walks of life started organising themselves to challenge the dictatorship, both within Pakistan and abroad.²¹⁷ Political resistance to Zia’s regime inspired poets and intellectuals of Pakistan to denounce his ‘rule by whip’.²¹⁸ Contribution of the civil society and NGOs in resistance to Zia’s dictatorial rule will be discussed below. Suffice to say that poets, intellectuals, lawyers and teachers were coming out in support of the leading political parties, calling for the return of democracy and the MRD. Benazir had emerged as a beacon for democracy and received a warm welcome as she returned from London in April 1986, where she lived in exile.²¹⁹ PPP also gained the support from the

²¹⁰ Jalal (n 8) 236.

²¹¹ Wilkinson (n 55) p208.

²¹² Jalal (n 8) p243; Khawaja (n 69).

²¹³ Jalal (n 8) 243; Jaffrelot (n 33) p82.

²¹⁴ Jalal (n 8) p243.

²¹⁵ Wilkinson (n 55) p208.

²¹⁶ Maluka (n 12); Waseem (n 12).

²¹⁷ Jalal (n 8) p246.

²¹⁸ Ibid. Also see Malik (n 33).

²¹⁹ Jaffrelot (n 33).

Muhajir Quami Movement (MQM) – a rising political party in Karachi. MQM held demonstrations that disturbed the government in Sindh. To prove he was still in control, Zia dismissed Prime Minister Junejo in May 1988 and took Karachi under direct federal control.²²⁰ Until his mysterious death in a plane crash in August 1988, Zia retained his authority over the governing apparatus aided by the ‘ever-powerful military institutions’.²²¹ His death left a ‘power vacuum’²²² to be eventually filled by Pakistan’s third wave of democratisation.

Talbot argues that the ‘longevity’ and ‘severity’ of Zia’s rule had ‘an especially pernicious impact’ on the prospects for democratisation in Pakistan.²²³ Most importantly, Zia’s demise did not mean the demise of the army-bureaucracy ‘establishment’ which was by now firmly rooted in Pakistan’s politics. With army’s support, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, yet another bureaucrat of the colonial times and the Chairman Senate under Zia’s rule was elevated to the post of the President.²²⁴ The general elections were held at both national and provincial levels in November 1988, after eleven years of dictatorship.

PPP seemed as the most deserving political party to lead democratisation. Over the years, it managed to revive Bhutto’s charisma and attracted the public appeal for its discord against Zia’s authority. Benazir was leading the party. Educated in England, she possessed a modern, westernised and young persona. Daughter of the martyred leader, Benazir had an appeal in public, urban and rural at large, for her family’s sacrifices for Pakistan.²²⁵ On the other hand, PML had now broken into two distinct political parties: PML-N was led by Nawaz Sharif, while Junejo had formed a separate party after his dismissal known as PML-Junejo. Politics of factions once again took root, furthered by those who had clear vested interests in this emerging political arrangement. The outgoing military elite, led by Mirza Aslam Beg, with the support of other military institutions, guided opposition parties to form an alliance to counter PPP.²²⁶ The alliance was known as *Islami Jamhuri Ittihad* – IJI (Islamic Democratic

²²⁰ Jaffrelot (n 33) p82.

²²¹ Hoffman (n 54) p79.

²²² Ibid. p79.

²²³ Talbot (n 6) p121.

²²⁴ Hoffman (n 54) p79; Wilkinson (n 55) p209.

²²⁵ Jalal (n 8) p261; Jaffrelot (n 33) p84.

²²⁶ Hoffman (n 54) p79; Jaffrelot (n 33) 83.

Alliance). The elections resulted in PPP's winning just over 25% of the votes; highest in proportion to other parties but short to achieve an overall majority.²²⁷ Most significantly, Punjab retained its historical support for the PML.²²⁸ Benazir forged an alliance with MQM with their stronghold in Karachi, but needed more weight to lead the government. Like her father, Benazir tried to attract large landlords and big businesses with winning constituencies, and opened doors even for those who had historically been in opposition of PPP.²²⁹ Most importantly, Benazir had to assure the army her allegiance for its policies on Afghanistan and India; not to reduce the military budget; and for proliferation of the nuclear programme.²³⁰ She also accepted to let Ishaq Khan serve a full term in office as President and to appoint retired army officers as her closest aides in government.²³¹

In December 1988, Benazir formed the government as democracy returned to Pakistan. This apparently popular civilian government was essentially a 'compromised' ruling coalition.²³² Jaffrelot argues, that the 1988 Pakistan "re-established, under a new form, the old 'colonial diarchy'" of the British times of 1919 Reforms whereas the governors had control over the ministers and the executive was answerable to both the government as well as the governors.²³³ With the Eighth Amendment still intact, though Benazir was responsible to the elected Assembly, she remained subservient to Ishaq Khan who owed his presidency to the military high command. To revert the Eighth Amendment, Benazir needed a two-thirds majority in the Parliament which she simply couldn't muster.

In addition to the weak parliament, Benazir's government inherited a polity which was deeply divided on ethnic and sectarian lines; plagued by the culture of guns and drugs; and faced the Afghan refugee crisis post Zia's policies on Afghanistan Jihad. Externally, Benazir's friendly invitation to American diplomats, who were critical of Pakistan's nuclear ambitions after the fall of Soviet Union in 1989, was the most alarming for Pakistani army. Subsequently, Benazir's government collapsed.²³⁴ On

²²⁷ Jaffrelot (n 33) p83.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Jalal (n 8) p262; Talbot (n 6) p145.

²³⁰ Hoffman (n 54).

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Jaffrelot (n 33).

²³³ Ibid.p84.

²³⁴ Ibid. p85; Hoffman (n 54) p79.

August 6, 1990, Ishaq Khan dismissed Benazir and dissolved the National Assembly using powers vested in him under Article 58(2b) of the Constitution with the charges of ‘corruption’ and ‘maladministration’.²³⁵ Upon Benazir’s petition against her dismissal, the Supreme Court upheld the President’s decision.

On 24th October 1990, Pakistanis went to the polls once again. PPP lost against IJI’s supported Sharif who became the Prime Minister in December 1990.²³⁶ A Punjabi businessman, Sharif was a minister under Zia. He immediately sought to preserve the interests of the business community which supported him. Nearly 89 public companies were privatised and exchange controls were relaxed.²³⁷ However, external political developments were going against Sharif’s economic liberalisation. US having lost interest in Pakistan, suspended substantive American aid to rescue Pakistan’s economy.²³⁸ Consequently, new taxes were imposed which infuriated the businesses and the urban middle-class – the foundation for PML-N support.²³⁹ Despite introducing social schemes for improving the economic conditions for the poor, PML-N’s government was caught up with corruption and embezzlement of government resources for personal gains.²⁴⁰ PML-N also tried to revert aspects of the Eighth Constitutional Amendment with a proposed Twelfth Amendment seeking authority for the Prime Minister to take over control of the provincial governments; an act which upset a career bureaucrat turned President, Ishaq Khan.²⁴¹ The scrimmage for authority between the Prime Minister and President led to another dissolution of the Parliament on 18 April, 1993. Once again, the charges included ‘maladministration, nepotism and corruption.’²⁴² Nawaz petitioned against his dismissal in the Supreme Court. This time however, in an unprecedented U-Turn, the Supreme Court ruled in his favour and declared the dismissal non-constitutional.²⁴³ It is believed that the reason for higher court’s positive decision was encouraged by the new COAS’s neutrality towards the situation.²⁴⁴ In the next six months, Ishaq Khan and Sharif left no stone unturned to

²³⁵ Jalal (n 8) p271.

²³⁶ Ibid; Jaffrelot (n 33) p85.

²³⁷ Jaffrelot (n 33) p85.

²³⁸ Jalal (n 8) 272.

²³⁹ Ibid, p275.

²⁴⁰ Jalal (n 8) p275; Jaffrelot (n 33) p86.

²⁴¹ Yasmeen, S. (1993) The politics of dismissal in Pakistan, *Asian Studies Review*, 17(1), pp: 82-91.

²⁴² Ibid, p90.

²⁴³ Jaffrelot (n 33) p86; Jalal, 278 Mian. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif v. President of. Pakistan (PLD 1993 SC 473).

²⁴⁴ Jalal (n 8) p278.

defeat each other at the war of authority over provincial governments. In the end, army intervened for face-saving its aide Ishaq Khan and fashioned a compromise whereby both Ishaq Khan and Sharif resigned and the fresh elections were called.²⁴⁵

Between 1993 and 1996, PPP returned to power with the help of a political alliance like 1990s. Benazir's planned a stronger return by appointing PPP's senior member, Farooq Laghari as President. However, Benazir's personalised authoritative rule with her husband Asif Ali Zardari's infamous corruption and continuous political interference, significantly hindered any transition to democracy.²⁴⁶ As war in Afghanistan broke out, civil unrest in NWFP heightened and Shi'a-Sunni sectarian violence became worst.²⁴⁷ In the end, a dispute over Benazir's appointment of Lahore High Court judges against the Constitution alarmed the higher courts who managed to oust Benazir's government with President Laghari's decision to dismiss the government.²⁴⁸

Elections were held again in February 1997 and PML-N came to power with a significant majority. PPP was wiped out even in its stronghold in Sindh. Positioned comfortably in the Parliament, Sharif's government set out to amend the Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment annulled the Article 58(2) and Article 101 obliged the president henceforth to consult the prime minister for nominating provincial governors; similarly, governors were deprived of their powers to dismiss the provincial governments. The President also lost his powers to appoint military leaders. Now with absolute control, Sharif began to govern as Benazir did previously. He too sought to reign the higher judiciary and once again President Laghari objected. In December 1997, army brokered yet another compromise by which both the President and Prime Minister resigned leaving a vacuum of authority. Sharif, however, was called back to continue to lead the government as he sought to establish an 'elective dictatorship' rather than to strengthen parliamentary democracy. His government proposed the Fifteenth Amendment Bill on 9 October 1998 and began intimidating the media for criticising the government. The proposed amendment was to empower him to

²⁴⁵ Jaffrelot (n 33) p86.

²⁴⁶ Jalal (n 8).

²⁴⁷ Haqqani (n 49).

²⁴⁸ Yasmeen (n 241).

implement *Sharia* as the supreme law of the land. Passed through the National Assembly, the Amendment Bill was rejected by the Senate.²⁴⁹

Jalal asserts that Sharif in late 90s had become “one of the most powerful prime ministers in Pakistan’s history.”²⁵⁰ So far, the army stayed out of directly interfering in politics but it was not ready to accept Sharif’s supremacy. Despite a grave financial crisis, military’s expenditure remained very high and it continued to influence Pakistan’s foreign policy. Besides, with the controversial Eighth Amendment removed, the option for a ‘constitutional coup’ was unavailable to the army.²⁵¹ Tensions had grown between the army and Sharif’s government over the latter’s distaste for the Council of Defence and National Security (CDNS) – an advisory body on national security – through which army formally shared decision-making with politicians.²⁵² Finally, over the Kargil conflict with India, Sharif blamed the military and held it entirely responsible.²⁵³ Sharif also indicated that to improve Pakistan’s standing in the global community, he was likely to sign the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. That may have nailed it; COAS Musharraf carried out a coup on 12 October 1999. The coup triggered a third reverse wave of democratisation in Pakistan.

This eleven-year wave of democratisation was disorderly in the sense that despite the opportunity, major political parties failed to establish stronger democratic institutions and continued to undermine Pakistanis’ trust in democracy. Though crucial constitutional gains were made, they were mainly used to exercise ‘parliamentary dictatorship’. Both PPP and PML-N proved to be corrupt and internally undemocratic as they tried to establish their ‘personalised’ rule. Army retained its policy-making role with no compromises on military’s expenditure.

Re-constitutionalising democracy: the fourth wave of democratisation (2008 -)

General Parvez Musharraf began his coup with the arrest of Sharif and taking a full control of the national television network.²⁵⁴ As in the past, the army met with no resistance from the public or the political society. Hoffman argues that the failure of

²⁴⁹ Jalal (n 8).

²⁵⁰ Ibid. p302.

²⁵¹ Talbot (n 6) p147.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Jaffrelot (n 6) p258.

democratic regimes following ‘major divisions’ within the political leadership, develops a sense of ‘authoritarian nostalgia’ in which public looks back to the ‘good times’ of past dictatorships.²⁵⁵ Musharraf and his aides in the army had a good sense of public’s mood. Though the army did not have the constitutional means to legitimise its coup, it knew that the disorderliness of the outgoing democratic rules had left the masses with a desire for stability. An examination of the earlier reverse waves to authoritarian regimes highlights that army has ‘always’ taken over with the assistance of bureaucracy, political parties in opposition, judiciary and the members of parliament itself.²⁵⁶ There was not a single demonstration anywhere in the country against the coup. Sharif was tried in the court and found guilty of tax evasion, corruption, hijacking of Musharraf’s plane and terrorism.²⁵⁷ He was exiled to Saudi Arabia after a political arrangement with Musharraf.²⁵⁸

Musharraf’s approach to administrative rule was more or less the same as the dictators before him; government and parliament were dissolved and the Constitution was placed in abeyance; the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) was proclaimed in 1999 which denied courts the authority to challenge any orders of the Proclamation of Emergency and PCO.²⁵⁹ A new government was then installed with the chosen few as the cabinet members whilst judiciary was forced to take new oath of office in 2000 under the authority of the PCO.²⁶⁰ The Supreme Court validated Musharraf’s coup and declared that coup d’etat and revolution are ‘interchangeable’ to achieve certain objectives.²⁶¹ As the Chief Executive of Pakistan, Musharraf formed a National Security Council (NSC) consisting six members from military higher command and competent advisors on civil matters.²⁶² NSC supervised a council of ministers consisting of businessmen and professionals. Press was allowed ‘restricted’ freedom mostly to establish that the new regime followed a liberal agenda.²⁶³ Military budget continued to account for its biggest share in the GDP.²⁶⁴ Retired army officers were appointed to civilian posts and

²⁵⁵ Hoffman (n 54) p90.

²⁵⁶ Fair (n 51) p576.

²⁵⁷ Jaffrelot (n 6) p258.

²⁵⁸ Talbot (n 6).

²⁵⁹ Article 2(1) of the Provisional Constitutional Order, 1999. Waseem (n 12).

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Syed Zafar Ali Shah and others v General Pervez Musharraf (PLD 2000 SC 869) <https://pakistanconstitutionlaw.com/p-1-d-2000-sc-869/>

²⁶² Jaffrelot (n 6) p338.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Siddiqua (n 56) 174.

millions of acres of land was allocated to the military men, making them feudals, both in terms of land holdings and mentality.²⁶⁵

Musharraf's political rhetoric was similar to Ayub's as he proclaimed to build a 'real' democracy as opposed to what he termed the 'sham democracy' of civilian governments. Talbot writes:

Although Musharraf was initially adept at speaking the language of an internationally acceptable 'good-governance' agenda, with its vocabulary of transparency, accountability and empowerment, the attempt to build a 'real' democracy boiled down to the tried and trusted approaches of the country's previous military rulers: namely, a process of accountability to discipline political opponents, rather than root out across-the-board corruption; the curtailing of political activity; and the attempt to build direct links with the populace by means of local government reforms which bypassed the influence of the political opposition.²⁶⁶

Local elections were held in 2001 on a non-party basis during which Musharraf obliged aspiring politicians to get organised for the general elections planned for 2002. Like Zia, Musharraf held a national referendum in April 2002, seeking legitimacy and extension of his rule as the president for the next five years.²⁶⁷ As per plan, the referendum's fraudulent results brought victory for Musharraf. Under the 'grip of a history', Musharraf founded his own political party the PML(Q) – the 'Q' standing for Quaid-e-Azam.²⁶⁸ Patronage extended, the PML(Q) was soon filled with opportunist politicians. The October 2002 general elections brought a coalition government with PML(Q) and its allies, notably the Islamist parties, in power.²⁶⁹ Musharraf's term as President was extended until 2007. Being firmly in post, Musharraf led the parliament to pass the Seventeenth Amendment Bill which reverted the Eighth Amendment.²⁷⁰

Soon after Musharraf took power, Pakistan was asked to support the US and its allies in their 'War on Terror' against Al-Qaeda.²⁷¹ The terrorist attacks in the US in 2001 turned the initial international disdain for Musharraf's coup in his favour. Pakistan

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Talbot (n 6) p180.

²⁶⁷ Jaffrelot (n 6).

²⁶⁸ Jaffrelot (n 6) p348.

²⁶⁹ Jalal (n 8) p334.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Jones, O.B (2011) Pakistan: Eye of Storm. 4th edn. Yale University Press: New Haven. p40; Haqqani (n 49).

became an ‘essential ally’ to US and allowed the use of its air space and intelligence to capture Osama bin Laden. Musharraf told the nation that if Pakistan refused to cooperate with US, India would exploit the situation to convince the international community that Pakistan was a terrorist state.²⁷² The historic ‘fear’ and ‘insecurity’ that India would undermine Pakistan’s image was once again employed for political gains. In return for its cooperation, Pakistan received massive military and economic aid and removal of US economic sanctions which benefited Pakistan’s economy.²⁷³

Though Musharraf was initially successful in taming the religious based political parties and their alliance, they were not happy with Musharraf’s pro-US policies and military action to restraint Al-Qaeda and its supporters in Waziristan.²⁷⁴ Military insurgency was rising across Pakistan. At the same time, the international community was getting impatient with Pakistan’s ambiguous support as it has been unable to help with capturing Osama bin Laden or curb increasing religious violence. Pressure was built on Musharraf to return Pakistan to a democratic order.²⁷⁵

A parallel domestic development was lawyers’ movement of a mass dissent against the dismissal of the Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry by Musharraf on 9 March 2007 over his determination to investigate the cases of missing political activists in Balochistan.²⁷⁶ The dismissed Chief Justice had the support of prominent members of judiciary who were also political activists in their personal capacities.²⁷⁷ A protest movement turned into a political movement against Musharraf’s arbitrary rule. Subsequently, on 20 July 2007 Supreme Court reinstated the Chief Justice but Chaudhry’s activism had threatened the military’s usual disregard for the rule of law and accountability.²⁷⁸ In the following months tensions between Musharraf and the Supreme Court heightened over the issue of his dual roles as both President and COAS. Meanwhile, Benazir had also returned to Pakistan in October 2007 as fresh elections were due in January 2008. Upon arrival, there was a bomb explosion at her public rally in Karachi which killed and

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Talbot (n 6) pp172-173.

²⁷⁴ Haqqani (n 49).

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Siddique (n 62); Kalhan, A. January, 2013. ““Gray Zone” Constitutionalism and the Dilemma of Judicial Independence in Pakistan’, *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol. 46, No 1.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Farah Jan, Pakistan; A Struggling nation-state (2010) Democracy and Security, 6:3, 237-255. P244

injured hundreds of civilians. Benazir was unharmed but she indicated that Musharraf, and his men in the army, might have been behind the assassination attack.²⁷⁹

With both judiciary and political society revolting against him, Musharraf declared a state of emergency on 3 November 2007.²⁸⁰ To denounce Musharraf, massive resistance was organised by lawyers who took to the streets.²⁸¹ There was a media black-out and most political leaders were arrested. In the end, due to both foreign and domestic pressures, Musharraf gave up his post as COAS. Musharraf also had to allow Sharif to return to Pakistan ahead of the upcoming elections. At this point, it was risky even for the army to continue to support Musharraf's personalised politics.²⁸² On 27 December 2007, during the election campaign, Benazir was assassinated. Musharraf lost further credibility and support amongst the international community which was historically sympathetic to Benazir as the first female leader of a Muslim country. The responsibility for her murder remained unresolved like many other political murder mysteries in Pakistan.²⁸³ Following her death, massive protests and civil unrest racked Pakistan. The divided people and political society were now united against Musharraf who resigned as president on 18 August, 2008, after PPP's simple victory in general elections held on 18 February 2008.

The current wave of democratisation thus began in 2008. Since no party had a simple majority, in an unprecedented move, PPP and PML-N agreed to form a government. They agreed to restore the judges dismissed in the previous year. PPP's senior politician Yousuf Raza Gilani became the Prime Minister.²⁸⁴ PPP was now being led by Benazir's husband Zardari as the interim leader.²⁸⁵

The coalition civilian government faced immense challenges with regards to military operations against Islamist insurgents in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and areas of NWFP. It had to knowingly take the blame for fighting America's war against its own people; something that it was willing to do to keep the army away from

²⁷⁹ Jalal (n 8) p346.

²⁸⁰ Jalal (n 8) p348.

²⁸¹ Kalhan (n 277).

²⁸² Jan (n 279) 244.

²⁸³ Jalal (n 8) p349.

²⁸⁴ Jaffrelot (n 6).

²⁸⁵ Jalal (n 8) p350.

politics. Rifts between the coalition parties started to emerge, primarily on the problem of restoration of judges which led to PML-N leaving the coalition. PPP then rallied the support from other parties including MQM and ANP (Awami National Party) and remained in government. Zardari was sworn in as president in September 2008.

Being the President, Zardari showed surprising skills in managing the new coalition government by navigating compromises. But insurgency in northern areas worsened. Pakistan has long been at war with itself. The public mood was increasingly aggressive towards US for its drone-strike and collateral damage of thousands of civilians' killings in the troubled northern areas.²⁸⁶ Meanwhile, relations with India were also critical due to militants' attack in Mumbai in 2008, in which Pakistan was allegedly implicated.²⁸⁷ In these circumstances, against the mood of the public, Zardari let the military handle the foreign and defence policies. He strived to secure the required support in the national assembly to pass the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 2010.²⁸⁸ This Amendment introduced a great number of reforms most significant of which relate to: the removal of the Presidential power to dissolve the elected assemblies and greater powers to the Prime Minister;²⁸⁹ re-naming of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province from the earlier NWFP conceding to the demand from people of the region;²⁹⁰ establishing a local government system in all provinces;²⁹¹ repeal of LFO implemented by Musharraf;²⁹² and an express linking of the abrogation or suspension of the Constitution to the High Crime of Treason.²⁹³ Now, at least constitutionally, the parliament, the prime minister, the judiciary, and the provincial governments had more autonomy than ever in an otherwise military-dominated state.²⁹⁴

Political turmoil was rampant during the PPP led government as 2012 proved to be the judiciary's year. The Supreme Court not only asked for the resignation of the sitting

²⁸⁶ Haqqani (n 49).

²⁸⁷ Ibid. India believed that Pakistan based militant organisation, possibly supported by Pakistan army's intelligence service, was behind the attacks.

²⁸⁸ Gazdar, H. (2010) Democracy in Pakistan: The Chasm, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 45(22), pp: 10-12; Jaffrelot (n 6).

²⁸⁹ Article 17 of the Constitution (Eighteenth Amendment) Act, 2010.

²⁹⁰ Ibid, Article 3.

²⁹¹ Ibid, Article 140A.

²⁹² Ibid Article 2.

²⁹³ Ibid. Article 3(1).

²⁹⁴ Rabbani, M. R. (2011) The 18th Constitutional Amendment: A Paradigm Shift, *Pakistan Perspectives*, 16(1), pp: 5-12.

prime minister on 19 June 2012, it also maintained pressure on the succeeding prime minister to not pursue the allegations of corruption and money laundering against Zardari.²⁹⁵ Zardari managed to mobilise the National Assembly to pass a 'Contempt of Court Act' against the judiciary which the Supreme Court declared illegal in August 2012. Chief Justice Chaudhary also reopened old cases involving the former army officials and made the army's fraudulent practices open to the public for the first time in Pakistan's history.²⁹⁶ In his continuous assaults against the parliament, Chaudhary alarmed many of his former supporters from the lawyers' movement. They believed that Chaudhary was moving with a 'personalised power' agenda against the politicians. After all, judges were not elected representatives of the people and were now 'arrogating' power to themselves.²⁹⁷

Earlier in May 2011, Osama bin Laden was found and killed by the US army operation in the garrison town of Abbottabad without Pakistan army's knowledge. If the army had not collaborated with US, it must be incompetent not to be aware of the attack. Pakistani citizens were outraged against the army. One incident of mass-killing of civilians and security personals followed another. Meanwhile, US government kept praising Pakistan for being a good partner in the fight against terrorism while also acknowledging that the approach to fighting insurgency of the two countries was different.²⁹⁸

With the higher judiciary, army and opposition political parties, all against the PPP led government, it is surprising that it lasted for its full term. Zardari's 'legendary corruption' continued and dampened PPP's credibility, but it was not enough to collapse the government, which persisted against all odds. The next general elections were scheduled for May 11, 2013. The PPP and its ruling alliance with ANP and MQM was blamed for every ill of the past years, both by the opposition political parties and by the media. This time the election campaign was manipulated by the militant organisations who managed to restrain PPP and its alliance from holding public rallies and gaining support for their agenda.²⁹⁹ The main opposition parties including PML-N,

²⁹⁵ Malik A. (2014) A Milestone in Democratic Transition, *Asian Survey*, 54(1), pp: 177-189.

²⁹⁶ Jaffrelot (n 6) p401; Kalhan (n 277); SC strikes down contempt of court law as void, unconstitutional.

²⁹⁷ Abbas Nasir, Dawn, 28 Jan 2012. <https://www.dawn.com/news/684299/one-step-forward>.

²⁹⁸ Jalal (n 8) p365.

²⁹⁹ Pakistan election: Taliban threats hamper secular campaign

By M Ilyas Khan BBC News, Islamabad <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-22022951>.

Imran Khan's 'Pakistan *Tehrik-i-Insaaf*' (PTI) and religious political parties were 'permitted' to campaign by the militant organisations. It is an 'open secret' that the army and the ISI were behind this intimidation.³⁰⁰ Nevertheless, it was a risky election campaign under fear of the Taliban, who openly opposed democracy and election as 'un-Islamic'. Despite threats, with security of the polling stations on high alert, there was a good voter turn-out.³⁰¹ PML-N won the election and PTI emerged as a potential new political force, but mainly in the urban areas.

The election of 2013 transformed the image of the main political parties. Talbot asserts that PML-N emerged as more balanced and mature with a clear political agenda, a full grip in Punjab and with supporters in both urban and rural communities.³⁰² PTI appealed to the educated urban youth while PPP considerably lost its national appeal and came to be viewed as a 'feudal' party that was out of touch with its traditional rural base and urban workers. Religious parties retained their status as semi-popular and traditionally unable to win popular votes in big numbers. All parties remained 'dynastic' and 'undemocratic' institutions, but appeared to somewhat defensive against their structural and institutional ambiguities and democratic weaknesses.

The 2013 elections were soon accused of rigging and electoral malpractices. PTI most significantly accused the PML-N and the election commission for serious wrongdoings.³⁰³ Imran Khan led street protests, long marches and street sit-ins (famously called *dharna*) throughout 2014 calling for a judicial commission to investigate electoral rigging and for the resignation of Nawaz Sharif as prime minister. These protests, however, were to no avail. Judiciary remained active, but now with restraint as Chaudhry resigned in 2014.

Despite the outcry against Zardari in almost all political circles, his departure as the President was awarded with official honour and succeeded by PML-N's supported candidate, Mamnoon Hussain. General Raheel Sharif became the COAS in 2013 and retired after completing his full term of three years in November 2016. Throughout his tenure, General Raheel outshined politicians by keeping up with the crackdown of

³⁰⁰ Talbot (n 6).

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

Islamist militant groups. It seems that the army and the civilian governing elite worked together through a compromise whereby the army led foreign and defence policies while leaving domestic political working to the civilian government. Similar to previous years, army once again managed to win the support of the public. However, this time it remained officially behind barracks. Such a state may also be the result of Sharif's mature politics which involved compromises with the army and other political allies and opposition leaders. Against PTI's *dharna* politics, PPP supported PML-N's response for it respected the parliament as an institution to resolve political disputes.

At present, PML-N led government continues to be in power. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is under construction and is likely to add to the geopolitical significance of Pakistan in the region. The accountability of politicians' financial doings by the Supreme Court has recently resulted in the ousting of Nawaz Sharif as the Prime Minister.³⁰⁴ The court cases on the Panama leaks controversy have brought all political parties to accuse each other for corruption and financial wrongdoings. Sharif had appointed a new COAS Qamar Javed Bajwa who was believed to be much more reserved and 'apolitical' than his predecessor General Raheel and was expected to support the civilian government's authority. However, with Sharif's removal, General Bajwa's alleged partiality is in a limbo. Though Sharif was removed, the civilian government led by PML-N continued. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi of PML-N was sworn in as the interim Prime Minister in August 2017. It is widely speculated that he will remain as the Prime Minister until the next general elections to be held in 2018.

It may be argued that the unprecedented continuity of democratic governance is moving towards sustenance or consolidation of democracy in Pakistan. However, democracy's inexorability is still an open question. Pakistan has indeed witnessed promising developments since 2008. With the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, constitutional certainty for the continuation of parliamentary governance was secured and paths were outlined for the devolution of powers between the centre and the provinces. Yet, political parties' failure to amend the Articles 62 and 63 through the Eighteenth Amendment made it possible for the Supreme Court to use these for

³⁰⁴ Nawaz Sharif steps down as PM after SC's disqualification verdict The Supreme Court's has recently charged Nawaz Sharif as guilty of corruption. The Court has been investigating the Panama leaks controversy in which Sharif and his family were accused of financial corruption for holding offshore accounts, property and other assets abroad kept in secret.

dismissing Sharif in 2017. In the previous years, despite PTI's and other religious parties' *dharna* politics, the army and judiciary had kept their distance from delving into the mainstream politics. This changed with the recent Panama leaks controversy. The regional tensions still abound as Balochistan continues to resist Federal government's control over its internal affairs. Recurrent tensions with India and Afghanistan and the recent adversarial shift in the US's support for Pakistan's fight against terrorist networks is likely to result in the army keeping its grip on foreign policy and strategic affairs. Lastly, the mainstreaming of religious fundamentalist groups (of previously banned terrorist groups) is underway with many emerging as political parties under new names and openly touring major cities to gather support for the next general elections. These recent developments, given the historical trajectory of political organisation and democratisation discussed above, are perhaps not surprising. Yet they can be argued to be disappointing in the face of the optimism which, until recently, was associated with the continuation of civilian democratic governance and its promising future.

Democratic deficit

The four waves of democratisation in Pakistan unravel a discourse of 'democratic deficit' that is far more engrained in the Pakistani society than the simplified understanding of the causes and effects of political events. Yet, it is only by looking deeper into the events and actors' behaviours that the *premises* of this discourse could be articulated. I acknowledge the arguments debated above that the political, social and economic deficits for democratising Pakistan have been burdened by its history. Pakistan's beginnings with an elitist edifice of politics were inherited from the British colonial rule, in which the minority elite ruled at the expense of the participation by the majority. This left a cultural legacy where agreeing minority 'elite pacts' between political actors became the norm. Subsequently, the majority's claim on the governing apparatus by East Pakistan was nipped very early on by the minority ruling elite and the emerging urban *salariat* including bureaucrats. In the late 1950s, as the army began to intervene in politics, the discourse of 'national security' was instigated. Thus, the bureaucracy-army 'establishment' took roots in the already elitist political edifice of Pakistan. Furthermore, in the fear of India's regional hegemony, Islam was used as the unifying identity and as the justification for the otherwise unjustifiable military

resources. In establishing the legal architecture of a nascent state, Islam was ‘appropriated’ by the judiciary to claim a contrary ideological and cultural stance against the secular colonial legal systems which continued to govern Pakistan. Such elitism and ideological contestations were manifested in the fractured constitutionalisation of Pakistan in its formative years.

Yet, whilst the historical beginnings and structural factors of elitism, authoritarianism, the ‘infusing’ of Islam as the national identity and basis for the legal systems,³⁰⁵ and the discourse of national insecurity contributed significantly in creating the democratic deficit in Pakistan, these cannot be singularly attributed to the structural determinants inherited from the British rule. The choices that the political actors made in the last seventy years, and the effects of evolving external factors from the polarisation of the Cold War to the War on Terror, have considerably reconfigured the boundaries of political governance in Pakistan. In this sense, *political actors are not only constituted by their environment, they also constitute it*. Talbot and Adeney argue that in understanding the divergent trajectories of democratic governance in Pakistan and India, a structure-agency dichotomy will not be useful.³⁰⁶ In agreeing with this observation, I contend further that though such a dichotomy provides many structural factors as premises of democratic deficit, it does not explain the resilience of democracy. There is a need to shift our focus to a more dynamic and mutually constitutive relationship between politics and political actors.

In this sense, a few observations can be made to understand the resilience of democracy in Pakistan. Firstly, despite the minority elite-led politics of ML that undermined the majority claims over governance, other political parties emerged in ML’s opposition and developed and sustained their political role. They generated mass support against the ruling elites and the subsequent dictatorships. Even before the secession of East Pakistan, there were recurrent joint resistance movements by the political parties. In 1965, political parties formed the COP against Ayub Khan to demand the return of democracy. Similarly, in the 1980s, the MRD kept challenging the formidable dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq. Despite all encompassing co-optation of political and civil actors, General Musharraf’s dictatorship was brought down by the main

³⁰⁵ Lau (n 58) 2006.

³⁰⁶ Talbot (n 6); Adeney (n 42) 2004.

political parties with the support from the lawyers' movement in 2007. Though the main political parties have been persistently led by the feudal and tribal chiefs and have stayed 'elite' with a disregard for democratic and representative internal structures and grass-roots mobilisation, nevertheless, their contribution to demanding a representative democratic governing system cannot be ignored. It is also interesting to note that in all such democratic alliances, the main Islamist political parties were also involved!

Another significant factor in the resilience of democratisation in Pakistan is the rejection of the political actors against the tendency of personalised rule. Since the advent of the bureaucratic rule in 1947 to the present political architecture of Pakistan, the recurrent pattern of entrenched personalised rule is evident. Yet, it is also clear that whenever the ruling elite (military or civilian) concentrated the governing authority (at its extreme) in the hands of a single political leader or a small group, it faced the opposition of combined political actors. For instance, during the third wave of 'personalised' democratisation, both Benazir and Sharif tried to personalise authority to which they faced opposition within their own political parties and amongst allies. Their governments were toppled because of their arrogance and restriction of the space for political participation. Similarly, the personalised politics of General Musharraf was eventually resisted by the army itself.

NGOs and Democratic Resilience

Finally, the role of civil society and NGOs in democratisation is another important factor for democracy's resilience. However, there is also an emerging skepticism about their potential for the support of democratic culture and institutions. I will now briefly discuss the nuances of these conflicting views.³⁰⁷

A notable contribution of civil society and NGOs in Pakistan has been in the sphere of women's rights. Though the history of women's movements can be traced to the pre-independence period,³⁰⁸ soon after independence, in 1948, women's groups came together to protest against the state. They were demanding the property rights for

³⁰⁷ The reason for such brevity is the scarcity of the academic literature on this subject. With empirical observations in this research, I aim to contribute to filling this gap. Chapters V and VI are illustrative of such contribution.

³⁰⁸ Zia, S., (1996) 'The Women's Movement in Pakistan', Aurat Foundation; Mumtaz, K. and Shaheed, F. (1987) Women of Pakistan: Two steps forward, one step back? Vanguard; Malik (n 33).

women as recognised by the Islamic law, which were not part of the colonial inherited state law.³⁰⁹ Calling the legislature to adopt the West Punjab Shariat Application Act, these women had the ‘added advantage to invoke Islam’ in their favour.³¹⁰ Ever since then, many Muslim women’s civil society groups were formed including the All Pakistan’s Women’s Association (APWA); the Democratic Women’s Association and the Business and Professional Women’s Association.³¹¹ In the making of 1956 Constitution, women’s groups lobbied to “secure some economic rights, recognition of equality of status, reserved seats and the right to double vote, i.e. a right to vote for candidates to general seats as well as for women to reserved seats.”³¹² Earlier in 1955, as a result of APWA’s campaign, the Family Laws Commission was established. It discouraged polygamy in drafting the Family Laws Ordinance of 1961.³¹³ Women’s movements for the equality of status made significant headways in the subsequent years and gradually became visibly politicised during 1970s. During Zia’s martial law, women’s groups forcefully resisted the Islamisation of laws and the arbitrary imposition of the Islamic moral code on the society overall but more specifically on women. Women activists became particularly concerned about the promulgation of the 1979 Hudood Ordinances aimed at Islamising the state criminal law.³¹⁴ In 1982, the government promulgated the Law of Evidence (*Qanoon-e-Shahdat*) stipulating that a woman’s evidence in the court of law amounts to ‘half’ the evidence of a man.³¹⁵ This inequality of the legal status evoked a strong response from women’s groups and gave birth to the Women’s Action Forum (WAF). Led by WAF, nation-wide protests demanded the repeal of the law.³¹⁶ Bano opines that it was during 1980s when the term “NGO came into vogue” in Pakistan.³¹⁷ In early 1980s, the MRD led by PPP and joined by other political parties had begun. WAF, APWA, Punjab Women’s Lawyers Association and other women’s rights NGOs supported the MRD by launching

³⁰⁹ Ali (n 61) 2000.

³¹⁰ Ibid. p44.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Malik (n 33). The Family Law Ordinance 1961 made second marriage for men conditional upon the consent of the first wife and the decision of a locally constituted arbitrary council. Add ref of the ordinance.

³¹⁴ Ibid. The law did not make any distinction between rape and adultery and required the presence of four Muslim adults of good character to prove the crime.³¹⁴ The ambiguous and arbitrary nature of the law, in reality became the discretion of the adjudicators as women turned out to be the worst sufferers.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ See chapter 5 which includes a vignette of a protest against the Law of Evidence which took place in Lahore in 1983.

³¹⁷ Bano (n 64) p22.

women's protests in favour of democracy and political parties.³¹⁸ After Zia, women's NGOs – which were now firmly established with some supported by international funding agencies – continued to influence law reforms for the equal status of women.³¹⁹

Within the wider civil society, Pakistan's press and related institutions also contributed to democratisation. Malik argues that the authoritarian politics in Pakistan has profoundly affected the progressive potential of the press which has played an important role in the political sensitisation of the society about their civil and political rights.³²⁰ Khawaja describes the resistance movements and strikes observed by the trade unions during 1960s which crucially led to the resistance against the Ayub's dictatorship.³²¹ Other civil society groups including the human rights NGOs, most prominently the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), not only supported women's rights but also other minority rights. HRCP also led campaigns for the return of democracy and supported the resistance movements led by the political parties on various occasions.³²² At present there are several NGOs aiming at promoting democracy in Pakistan. These include the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), Democratic Commission for Human Rights and Development (DCHD), Aurat Foundation, South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAP-PK), Strengthening Participatory Organisations (SPO) and others.³²³ Almost all NGOs are funded by international development agencies or international NGOs. All have presence in Islamabad with many having regional and local outreach offices in the main urban localities.

Most of the existing, albeit limited, literature on the role of civil society and NGOs in democratisation is critical about the historical role of the state in curbing the progressive potential of these organisations.³²⁴ This literature considers the role of civil society and

³¹⁸ Khawaja (n 69).

³¹⁹ Omar Asghar Khan argued that the progressive civil society including NGOs rapidly developed during the 1980s against Zia's dictatorship and in response to the state's coercion. See Khan, O.A. 2001. Critical Engagements: NGOs and the State in Weiss and Gilani (n65).

³²⁰ Malik (n 33) p133.

³²¹ Khawaja (n 69). Also see Jefforlot (n 6) p429.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Most of these NGOs have been interviewed for this research.

³²⁴ Malik (n 33); Jefforlot (n 6); Weiss and Gilani (n 65). Shaheen, A. 2010. Major Facets of NGOs Impact on Culture and Society in Pakistan, *Pakistan Perspectives*, 15(2), pp: 81- 102; Bhatti, A. 2012. The 18th Constitutional Amendment: Understanding its Implications for Social Sector Governance, *Pakistan Perspectives*, 17(2), pp: 5-14.

NGOs as necessarily axiomatic in support of liberal and democratic values and culture. However, there has also been a criticism of the nature of civil society and NGOs. For instance, writing about women's movements and resistance against dictatorships, Jalal argues that the elitist class origins of women leading women's rights movements in the early days of Pakistan was the decisive factor in their relative success in an otherwise patriarchal social and political context.³²⁵ Zaidi suggests that the socially and culturally westernised Pakistani elite – the 'life-style liberals' in form of NGOs came out disproportionately to support General Musharraf's dictatorship in the 1990s.³²⁶ He further argues that members of the civil society in Pakistan are 'eager' to be co-opted and 'serve' military governments.³²⁷ More recently, Bano has followed a similar line of argument and contended that the international aid to NGOs has significantly contributed to the 'breakdown of cooperation' amongst groups for social developmental causes, which used to be functioning and voluntary.³²⁸ Bano's empirical research on the public perception of NGOs shows that NGOs in Pakistan are "elitist, unaccountable, lacking public trust, and unworthy of public donations."³²⁹ These contrasting standpoints can be possibly interpreted in a different way - if we accept the historical account of democratic deficit in Pakistan, then it can be assumed that the civil society and NGOs are also shaped by it. Therefore, they should be examined as 'historical product', embedded in the edifice of Pakistan's politics.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I set out to explore the context of this research. In reviewing the academic literature on the democratic deficit in Pakistan, I have argued that whilst it is evident that democracy has not taken root, nevertheless, the struggle for democracy in Pakistan has also continued. Therefore, it is important to consider the *premises* of the resilience of democracy. To explore this argument, I analysed the stages of democratisation in Pakistan in four distinct waves and reverse waves over the span of seventy years.

³²⁵ Jalal (n 36) 1991. p346.

³²⁶ Zaidi (n 31).

³²⁷ Also see Zaidi, S.A (2005) *Issues in Pakistan's Economy*. 2nd edn. Oxford University Press: Oxford. p512

³²⁸ Bano (n 64).

³²⁹ Ibid. p25.

I noted the key factors behind the ‘democratic deficit’ in Pakistan including its historical beginnings with British bureaucratic and administrative state structure; elite-led edifice of Pakistani movements; identity crises of the nascent state on the basis of religion and language; negation of the Bengali majority in organising national governance and the centralisation of state at the expense of provincial authority; development of the ‘establishment’ and its influence on politics; Islamisation of the state laws; and external influences from Cold War to the War on Terror. In explaining the key factors behind the resilience of democracy, I suggested that the development and survival of political parties and their resistance against the dictatorships as well as the repeated rejection of the personalised rule of the leaders at the expense of isolating other political actors have been the significant reasons. The third premise or reason behind resilience is the role of civil society and NGOs in democratisation. However, reflecting on the nature and role of civil society in Pakistan’s democratisation, I have suggested that the existing limited research offers conflicting stand-points. On the one hand, civil society and NGOs are seen axiomatically as necessarily good for democratisation. Conversely, they are critically appraised and considered elitist, unaccountable and eager to serve military governments. However, I have contended that these contrasting stand-points could be read in a different way: in situating civil society and NGOs in Pakistan’s historical context, it would be useful to see them as ‘historical products’, embedded in the edifice of Pakistan’s politics and its democratic deficit as well as a force of resilience. In this sense, the civil society and NGOs mirror Pakistan’s political developments in their making and functions.

In examining democratisation in four waves, I have argued that (a) despite its failure, the first wave of ‘testing’ democracy itself was crucial in establishing a polity in which democratic principles were debated, fought for, repeatedly ignored, altered and negotiated as compromises. Had Pakistan begun with autocracy, there would have been no such avenues; (b) the second wave of ‘idealising’ democracy was a lost opportunity to establish representative democracy in a broken Pakistan of 1971. Though initially Bhutto fostered the popular support, idealised parliamentary representative democracy with an ideological preference for socialist democracy, in the end he failed to deliver a liberal state owing to his intolerance for a legitimate political opposition; (c) the third wave of democratisation was disorderly and ‘personalised’ in the sense that despite the opportunity for the civilian governments, the major political parties failed to establish

stronger democratic institutions and continued to undermine Pakistanis' trust in democracy. Though crucial constitutional gains were made, they were mainly used to exercise 'parliamentary dictatorship'; and finally given the recent political developments of 're-constitutionalising' Pakistan, the future of the fourth (current) wave of democratisation is uncertain – democracy's inexorability is still an open question.

Given this detailed historical context of Pakistan, Chapters V and VI will present an empirical analysis of this research on the role of NGOs in democratisation.

Chapter V: From Resistance to Submission

In which a shift in NGOs' approach to democratisation in Pakistan is presented.

Over the years, there has been a gradual *shift* in NGOs' approach to democratisation in Pakistan. This shift is illustrative of a timespan, in which, NGOs moved away from pro-actively advocating for a democratic political system against the odds of dictatorship in the 1980s, to implementing neatly designed and lucratively funded projects for instituting a democratic system from the late 1990s onwards. This chapter illuminates how this shift in NGOs' approach has come about. It explores the meanings of the terms - fight, movement, distorted process, and projectised democratisation. My aim is to go beyond the literal meanings of these terms to understand what they signify to the research participants. The purpose is to 'get closer' to the phenomenon of democratisation through the lived experiences of the people in it, i.e. the research participants. In doing so, a narrative unfolds, beginning with a vignette which is followed by three sections.

The vignette is titled, 'the dissent'. It is creatively adapted from an actual event in Lahore in 1983. The purpose of narrating a vignette is to illuminate and introduce the focus of the theme. Following the vignette, I explore how democratisation has *diverged* from dissent and resistance to projects. Next, I describe the consequences of this divergence. With rich empirical insights, I analyse concerns of the widening gap and *disconnect* between NGOs and the civil society; NGOs and the political society; parliament and political parties; and parliament and the state. I then reflect on the nuances of political disconnect and discuss its consequences, in which, the dissent is now obsolete but the bounds of projectised democratisation are *disputed*. In conclusion, I discuss whether the projectised democratisation anticipates the consolidation of democracy in Pakistan - with regards to the role of NGOs in democratisation, should we be hopeful or disillusioned?

The dissent

*Ab dehr mein be-yaar o madadgar nahin hum,
Pehley ki tarah be-kas o lachaar nahin hum,
Aata hai hamain apne muqaddar ko banana,
Taqdeer peh shakir pas-e-deewar nahin hum.*¹

No longer are we helpless, no longer without friends,
No longer weak and dependent on others,
We can make our own destinies,
No longer are we grateful for our pre-ordained fate,
No longer are we, behind the walls.²

Habib Jalib, the famous revolutionary poet in Pakistan, recited these verse at the 1983 protest organised by Women's Action Forum in Lahore.

February 12, 1983, was a cold but sunlit morning in Lahore. A few hundred women were gathered at Lahore's iconic Regal *Chowk* to stage a protest against General Zia's Islamisation laws. At the heart of Lahore city, Regal *Chowk* links the Temple and Lawrence Road with The Mall. A site known for staging protests since the Independence Movement, Regal *Chowk* was surrounded by concrete commercial buildings, some really old trees, hundreds of shops and stalls of Lahore's celebrated street food. Always busy with commuters and sellers, the *Chowk* was walking distance from the Lahore High Court and the Punjab Assembly.

Some women protesters were sitting on the street, forming a circle between them. Others were standing around. They were all surrounded by policemen in khaki uniforms, who armed with batons, far outnumbered the protestors. This protest had been called by a network of women activists, the Women Action Forum (W.A.F). Women of varied ages, classes and ethnicities were there including prominent women activists, lawyers, writers and poets. Soon, they would march to the Lahore High Court with a petition against the military government's proposed *Qanoon-e-Shahadat* (The Law of Evidence). They were holding placards and banners which read; '*kaley qanoon wapis*

¹ Jalib, H. (1983) Women's Action Forum Anthem, Available at: <https://jehanara.wordpress.com/2010/03/08/waf-anthem-by-habib-jalib/> (Accessed: 19 February 2016).

² My translation.

lo’ (withdraw dark and draconian laws); ‘*naam nihad shariat bill na manzoor*’ (No to the Shariat Bill); ‘*aurat ki aadhi hasiyat na manzoor*’ (half-recognition of a woman unacceptable); ‘*Aaeen bahaal karo*’ (reinstate the Constitution), ‘*jamhooriat ke haq me awaz buland karo*’ (raise your voice for democracy); ‘*khawateen mahaz-e-amal*’ (Women in Action); and ‘*Islam hum sab ka mazhab hai*’ (Islam is our religion too). A small group of protesters began to burn their *dupattas* (long scarves) chanting, ‘*Mullah raj na manzoor*’ (Mullah rule unacceptable).

Disbelief, disdain, and ridicule was visible on the faces of the policemen. There were a handful of male supporters standing with the protesters. As Jalib arrived, women hailed to welcome him. Encircled by them, Jalib recited his poem ‘*Ab dehr mein be-yaar o madadgar nahin hum*’. The powerful verse may have heightened the passion of protesters as their slogans grew louder. All of a sudden, policemen began the baton charge. The protesters were shocked and chaos followed. They were hit, pushed and shoved to the ground, randomly and aggressively. Perhaps, as women, they had not anticipated such a reaction by the police forces. Some were frightened and ran to the sides of the road. Most were undaunted. They fought back with bare hands, shoes and batons wrested from the policemen during the scuffles. Struggling against the onslaught of police batons, they helped fellow protesters with water and wiped their blood. The police then sprayed tear-gas to disperse the protestors. In few moments, the peaceful but passionate protest had turned ugly. Many protesters were injured and taken to the nearby hospitals. Many others were arrested. Jalib too, was beaten and arrested. By early afternoon, Regal *Chowk* was left empty with burnt logs, *dupattas*, blood, batons and tattered shoes. The passionate chants with lively presence of the protesters could no more be heard. A silent roar of violence and fear filled the air.

[In conversation with an NGO personnel on the role of NGOs in democratisation]

If you look at women’s rights, Women Action Forum was a network not funded by foreign organisations, it was funded by women themselves. Not a rupee was taken from abroad by the forum. They played a small, momentary, but significant role for democracy at a very important time when the Mujahedeen Movement was on, Islamisation was being pushed..... and Pakistan was proxy-fighting the Cold War through the prism of Islam. The women in Pakistan broke down the framework that they (the government) had created for women. I think that they played a very important role. Perhaps it has not been given as much credit as it should.... It jolted

people not just in Pakistan, but even the international community woke up to the fact that General Zia was not such a benign dictator as he was being painted out to be by the Western powers.³

Awe and pride are shared sentiments amongst most research participants as they referred to the 1983 Regal Chowk women's protest against the dictatorship. They considered the demonstration as what *used to be* the essence of democratisation in Pakistan. It was a fight against coercion and in support for the values of freedom, equality of rights and political participation. It was a movement for democracy as an ideology and as a practice. And, most importantly, it was a collective fight of both political society and civil society, together, against the dictatorship. As another NGO personnel observed:

The women's movement of the 1980s against General Zia-ul-Haq became the movement for democracy. When women stood up against the Law of Evidence in 1983, that to me, if you analyse it, was the time that women came forward and fought for their rights and for democracy. It started as a movement against the Law of Evidence, moved into opposing Zia's laws, and it soon incorporated other political activists, who were demanding democracy, in it.⁴

Since then, however, democratisation has not been a fight or a movement. Rather, it has become a 'distorted' process:

In my opinion, civil society participation, grassroots mobilisation and activism existed prior to the introduction of donor funding. People used to work voluntarily with dedication. We have a long tradition of democratic resistance to all military rulers. The trade union movement, women's activism, minorities' struggle, struggle for economic and social rights was far more vibrant, widespread and organised at the grassroots level. With the introduction of donor money, the whole process got distorted. It has been projectised by NGOs. It is no longer a movement. It does not even have the potential to be a movement.⁵

Participants' reflections indicate a shift in NGOs' approaches to democratisation. Various terms are used to express and explain this shift. In the following sub-sections, I explore the meanings of these terms including fight, movement, distorted process, and

³ Interview 8, 15 April 2015.

⁴ Interview 4, 21 March 2015.

⁵ Interview 17, 4 May 2015.

‘projectised’ democratisation. My aim is to go beyond the literal meanings of these terms to understand what they signify to research participants. Before I do so, let me discuss how democratisation has *diverged* from dissent to projects.

The divergence

In my discussions with the research participants on democracy and the role of NGOs in democratisation in Pakistan, a sense of *divergence* in democratisation – from fight and resistance to funded projects – emerged as the most explicit aspect.

If we look at Pakistan’s history, the biggest challenge to Zia-ul-Haq’s dictatorship was from the civil society. W.A.F and other women from NGOs were on the street. (At that time) workers of political parties were under arrest. If we trace back, that is where civil society’s contribution to democracy began. Since the corporate model has been introduced to NGOs, the zeal, commitment, issue of social transformation, feeling of gratification has all been converted from project to project.⁶

There was resistance in the early 80s.....street level demonstrations.....the dynamics of that were very different. Genuine people came out against that dictatorship. It was not salaried people like us. We take salaries and provide professional services. I am not a social activist... I am being hired by an association or a board of trust to deliver certain technical services...to do evidence based advocacy, collect research data, publish reports, etc.Now the international business model (of NGOs) has completely transformed that resistance.⁷

It appears that the 80s movements for democracy by NGOs, diverged into projectised democratisation with the introduction of international funding, specifically for democratisation programmes in early 2000s. It is difficult to state the exact time-period when the divergence was initiated as none of the research participants specified it. However, they did refer to some key aspects of the diverged *purpose* and *nature* from the fight and movement to the projects and programmes. Whereas during 80s, people demanding democracy “were on the streets” and possessed “the zeal, commitment, issue of social transformation, (and) feeling of gratification”, the projectised democratisation is seen as “the corporate model”. Instead of “social activists” and

⁶ Interview 1, 3 March 2015.

⁷ Interview 7, 10 April 2015.

“genuine people” in the fight for democracy, the projectised democracy has “salaried people” and “technocrats”. Activism gets transformed into professionalism:

Activism is now a professional category. It is a job sector.....We (internationally funded NGO) talk about fixing paths, fixing ideologies, understanding differences, other people’s ideologies, etc. [But] fixing norms is not easy. You can’t create them. They cannot be fixed and may never be fixed. The rot is too large.⁸

Voluntary work with commitment became a story of the past. People started running after so-called projects fulfilling the project requirements, meeting the criteria. *From social and political activists they became technocrats who could handle this NGO business.* The competition was about who was more competent in framing this.....what you call them..... logical framework matrix and playing around with outputs and outcomes, capacity building for model organisations with a lot of spending on the personnel or employee side.⁹

Likewise, persistence, commitment, eagerness to work with others and even to negotiate with adversaries, volunteerism and above all being local and knowing domestic realities that allowed prolonged follow-ups and persuasion are referred to in democratisation as a fight. A parliamentarian observed:

I think their (women’s rights NGOs) basic resource has been persistence, having done their homework and the willingness to sit down and negotiate.....You would wish them away but they wouldn’t go away. They knew what they wanted. They wouldn’t come to me and say Mr. Senator, there should be a law against acid throwing and it should be this. They would come to me and say, Mr. Senator, this is the law on acid throwing. Kindly go through it and if you have any issues, tell us and we will sit down with you and discuss.....They would even go and talk to the Mualanas (religious scholars). They would go to the right wing religious parties in parliament..... It is not that they always reached an agreement, but they tried to open a dialogue. It has to be the people of Pakistan to be able to stand up and protect their rights which flow from the Constitution. It cannot be the experts coming in from XYZ university or organisation in the US or UK through the doors of the so-called national NGOs. They come here for 3-4 days, they carry out the workshops and then they leave. That is of no use to me.¹⁰

⁸ Interview 10, 20 April 2015.

⁹ Interview 13, 28 April 2015. (My emphasis)

¹⁰ Interview 27, 5 July 2015.

The extent to which the research participants doubt NGOs' intentions for bringing about social change, based on their perceptions of NGOs being professional instead of social activists, is open to interpretation. They do, however, seem to suggest that the corporate models of project planning, counting outputs and measuring outcomes compel them and their NGOs to recruit professionals on high salaries. Professional requirements notwithstanding, high salaries and fancy offices for the people in internationally funded NGOs and funding agencies appear to be a substantial matter of concern for the research participants. This suggests another aspect of projectised democratisation diverged from volunteerism in the past:

There should be an element of volunteerism in the work of every civil society organisation, including NGOs that has disappeared with international funding. Yes, you need money to survive, but the kind of money that USAID, DFID, and local NGOs funded by them offer falls under corruption in my opinion.¹¹

They [international donors] have damaged the parameters of the development dynamics which used to stand on principles and volunteerism. Their people [working in internationally funded NGOs or in International agencies] have lavish lifestyles. [Other] people see them. They create a brain drain... as the brightest of people in the NGO sector get employed by them and other International NGOs and UN agencies. Only those which are far fewer in number, who have long term commitment to local NGOs, stay to work for their organisations. I have begged women to stay in our NGO. I have told them that money is not everything. I said to them 'you owe something to this movement [women's rights].' I may have been able to stop a few. Most people break. Their [funded NGOs and agencies] administrative costs are unnatural. Our ratio is low. Theirs' is almost 50-50. They have many cars and stuff. They get criticised for it and should be. They have high management fee. We don't have them. There is a big tussle between these funded projects and programmes and the local NGOs working with limited funds. You may call it a hegemonic tussle.¹²

A significant aspect to democratisation as a fight is concerned with owning a political standpoint or following a political ideology. Freedom, equality, and human rights against dictatorship were the values and ideals endorsed by democratisation as a fight.

¹¹ Interview 2, 4 March 2015.

¹² Interview 11, 21 April 2015.

Referring to the Regal Chowk demonstration, an NGO representative observed: “There has to be some ideological commitment to what we (NGOs) do.”¹³

On the contrary, the projectised democratisation appears to be depoliticised. An international NGO professional asserted:

I am working for ---[naming their INGO for democracy]. I am supposed to be non-partisan. I cannot even like something on Facebook. I am tired of this. I used to be openly political. Worked for an NGO for women’s rights. They [naming that NGO] too are no longer at the street level; they have been drowned by USAID funding. When I was in Peshawar, their Director used to call some people and within an hour we had about 70-100 people in front of the press club or governor’s house demonstrating against this or that. We believed in women’s rights. But when they got so much money from USAID they went into nice offices and posh locations. Now they are trapped in fund management. There is no one there to lead the movement. What they used to do and we used to work with them on, I want to do that. Now they have big cars, big rooms, big salaries, etc. This is now the face of NGOs in Pakistan.¹⁴

Here, the lack of ideological commitment gets equated with ‘nice offices in posh locations’, ‘fund management’ and USAID funding. There is anger in the above assertion as the respondent feels constrained for not being able to express their political views openly. There is also a feeling of nostalgia for the past leadership which was openly political and led ‘the movement’ for democracy. To another research participant, there is a deeper meaning which underpins and explains the depoliticised nature of NGOs at present:

In terms of voice, they [NGOs] are much disengaged from the street. They are a voice only through media and social media. I will add here something that is very important. After all, the sponsor has an agenda. We have to understand the external input into Pakistani NGOs and civil society. You cannot understand it without seeing where the money is coming from. Colonial rulers have packed up and gone but imperialism has not gone. They rule us through other means – economic, financial. But there are various ways of doing it. How do you regulate states? The new way is through its civil society. Reach and create civil society. Islamabad is full of donor agencies and their funded local NGOs. What is going on?¹⁵

¹³ Interview 8, 15 April 2015.

¹⁴ Interview 12, 22 April 2015.

¹⁵ Interview 25, 2 July 2015.

NGOs are depoliticised because they “do projects for the masses but they are not the masses”.¹⁶ Whilst their work on raising awareness of the vote and functional input in electoral processes cannot be ignored, it must be understood that it is limited:

I would not dismiss it because it is definitely important to teach the voter. But again it is limited. Then they [NGOs] have been doing something with the legislatures. They made a library for the National Assembly. These are the sort of stitches they are putting in democracy. They have their election studies and training sessions for the parliamentarians. But after all this, there is this thing that democracy is a political thing.¹⁷

The depoliticised nature of NGOs in democratisation is further explained with an emphasis on social class of their professionals. According to another academic research participant, since most of these individuals belong to the middle class, their progressive causes are closer to the ideals of the middle class. Middle class in Pakistan, the academic asserts, “[S]hies away from politics”:

They hate politicians. They hate political class. They think of them as corrupt, mostly illiterate, landed elite etc. They [NGOs] are gentlemanly and lady-like. They are ‘moral’. Middle class in their own view, is morally superior. They think that politicians are thieves. In Pakistan, it is the middle class vs the political class. Who dominates? The middle class. The middle class [in Pakistan] has been the recruitment area for the army and bureaucracy. The tribal and feudal classes or the tribal and the landed elites are typically involved with political parties. [Today, professionals in] NGOs, if you individually look at their fathers’ careers, they are bureaucrats or have military backgrounds..... Their [senior NGO professionals] children are World Bankers or those who have links with the World Bank, etc..... leading NGO members have an upper middle class or middle class background. Therefore, there is a disjuncture in the political community and them. It was easier for them [NGOs] in 1999 to go to Musharraf because actually they have their own critiques of how politicians operate. *They [NGOs] are socially progressive because of their middle class urban background. But they are politically conservative. They don’t belong to the political community. Nor do they support it. I think they are depoliticised which comes from their class background.*¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Interview 18, 10 May 2015 (My emphasis).

These are critical assertions. The divergence for NGOs in democratisation – from having a political standpoint against the dictatorship during 1980s to supporting Musharraf’s autocracy in late 1990s – is analysed through the lens of the social class which dominates NGOs, especially in urban areas in Pakistan. In 1999, most NGOs welcomed General’s Musharraf’s dictatorship. Only a few NGOs opposed his autocracy openly.¹⁹

To learn whether the assertion of middle class being depoliticised has any currency, a deeper investigation into the class profiles of NGO professionals, during 1980s and in late 1990s, is needed. However, this assertion is also echoed in the following dialogue between the staff members of an NGO in democratisation and myself. They are a group of younger, foreign educated, urban middle-class NGO professionals.

Staff member A: We take our watchdog role very seriously. Also, we are not a political institution. At [name of the organisation], we provide a balanced and professional view. What I have seen in the past one year working here is that we don’t favour political parties or governing elites. When we worked on governance, we did not favour PML-N or ignored PTI. We are doing an apolitical job.

Staff member B: We meet people. We meet politicians. We have these workshops. We try to look at the situation on the ground. We interact with all kinds of legislators. I believe we are raising the right questions which should be asked.

Me: I understand. But if you were to critique on your work on democracy or the nature of democracy in Pakistan, what would that be? Do you feel satisfied with the work you are doing?

Staff member B (with a mocking tone): There is hardly any democracy in Pakistan.

Staff member D (nodding to agree): Democracy in our country is just on paper.

Me: Please explain.

Staff member D: There are historical reasons. Generally speaking, we have a propensity for shortcuts and quick fixes. This is my take. I

¹⁹ A detail account of NGOs supporting Musharraf is provided in Chapter VI.

think it is simply because the system has not been able to take roots. Our governance is particularly bad. Leadership has always been a problem.

Staff member E (with a mocking sigh): And the promises that they [political leaders] make!

Staff member D: *Yes, we have been stuck with the same corrupt leaders.* You see, in Pakistan, you [politicians] are not looking after the concerns of the common man who is a victim of abject poverty and whose basic rights are not being met. They don't even know what democracy is. These politicians and their families cannot provide for that. What we need is a system of good governance. At [name of the organisation], we focus on this. *We* work to improve parliamentary processes and systems in political parties so that *they* [politicians] learn to improve their role in governance, in the parliament, and in their political parties.²⁰

Staff member A: We try. But the fundamental problem is that Pakistan is ruled by patronage. What actually happens is that politicians take up our work and basically use it to further their own political means. If a report favours PTI, then PTI will pick it up and promote it and since it is going against PML-N's workings, PML-N will try to discredit it. Our message does go through to the policymakers but it depends on their political interests what they choose to highlight and what they choose to ignore.

Me: Do you feel frustrated when that happens?

Staff member A: Yes, often I do feel as if we are failing. But we cannot do more. In Pakistan, politics is a dirty business. *Politicians need to be sober, educated to a certain degree, and apt in policymaking. Our politicians have none of that.* Most are meagrely educated. They belong to landed or business aristocracy who get votes because of our patronage system.²¹

This dialogue illuminates the negative perceptions of the urban middleclass professionals of politicians, their ways of doing politics, and democracy in general in Pakistan. It also highlights that this particular NGO, admittedly, has a depoliticised approach. The depoliticised professionalism is also justified on the basis of acquiring economic benefits and projects for delivering services, even if it is a dictator who provides for it:

²⁰ My emphasis.

²¹ A group discussion with NGO personnel, 14 April 2015.

NGOs also supported Musharraf because he said that he would bypass political actors and will make them [NGOs] service providers and get them to do service delivery. International donors, whose governments supported Musharraf, brought in quite a bit of money that was then used through local NGOs after the devolution. This is why, Musharraf suited them [NGOs]. *There were material, economic interests; it was simply economically good for them [NGOs].* They [NGOs] supported Musharraf's apolitical or depoliticised decentralisation. In 80s and early 90s, many organisations had a big political role. They were involved in social protests or progressive protests for women or minorities. They used to protest outside the parliament. In the 2000s this did not happen. They [NGOs] were turned into service deliverers or champions of democracy without political mission.²²

It emerges that democratisation through NGOs is no longer an ideological commitment. It is depoliticised. It is a process which does not always involve or work with the masses. It does not need to appreciate the political society either. The divergence from political to depoliticised, movement to projects, volunteerism and committed leadership to middle class professionals with high salaries and posh offices, and self-financed to lucrative funding for NGOs in democratisation, has been gradual and illustrates a change in time from 1980s to 1990s onwards. We now turn to the consequences of this divergence, which help us further to explore the meaning and nature of democratisation in Pakistan and the role of internationally funded NGOs in it.

The disconnect

Out of a sense of frustration, many research participants judged the democratisation programmes of internationally funded NGOs as alien to the local contexts in Pakistan. They felt that the *divergence* from democratisation as a fight to projectised democratisation has extended the social and political *disconnects* at multiple levels in Pakistani society. These *disconnects* denigrate any meaningful possibilities for democracy in Pakistan. Socially, there now exists a deepened disconnect between citizens and the civil society and between the civil society and internationally funded NGOs. Politically, citizens are disengaged from political parties; political parties' involvement with the parliament remains patchy; and the divisions between the parliament and the state have widened.

²² A second group discussion with NGO personnel 08 May 2015.

Referring to the social disconnect, research participants observed that NGOs in democratisation are increasingly detached from citizens and the wider civil society which includes community based voluntary organisations and traditional welfare organisations. Community and welfare organisations have existed historically in Pakistan mostly providing support in education, health and poverty alleviation. This detachment is worse in rural and northern areas as a research participant points out:

I was conducting a research with a colleague. We went to Chitral. Everyone there criticised NGOs especially women for ruining their culture. We asked them what NGOs are? They said NGOs represented the West and its culture. They did not know what NGO meant but its bad profiling had reached them. NGOs do not have mass support.²³

These groups [NGOs] - their role is basically to make educated elite conscious of what is democracy. They do not reach the lay person.²⁴

For meeting project and programme outputs which often involves reaching and influencing local communities, NGOs claim strong links with local voluntary groups. International funding agencies (in theory) seek local reach and impact. However, according to a research participant, there is a set of local voluntary groups that operate at village and *tehsil* levels and claim to represent most localities. They are ready to do everything, as long as, there is a grant/funding for it:

They (local groups) do everything. They are in retail development. They will distribute condoms for an HIV or AIDS programmes (on the one hand) and they will do advocacy for the local government project for (another internationally funded) programme. [We] could have a project or programme with these groups in which they will become institutions working for electoral reforms. They are basically retailing their services for us (NGOs). In this they have a structure, 4 mobilisers, 1 finance and accounts person and 1 CEO or manager. They say they will do community meetings. They even have a ready-made group for that! They provide services to NGOs and use their name. For instance, we can say that we work in 64 districts and another NGO can say that they work in 45 districts. But if you go into Gujranwala, then we will have the same person acting as local implementer as for the other NGO. Now these groups are not civil society that NGOs claim to be connected with. They are a service sector that caters to the project needs of big NGOs. They have no

²³ Interview 24, 30 June 2015.

²⁴ Interview 15, 30 April 2015.

connection with the community. A big problem here is that people are shy of admitting to these contradictions.²⁵

In the academic literature, Pakistani civil society and NGOs have been traditionally considered as the strong, resilient and transformative force to challenge dictatorships, their oppressive laws and restricting the civil and political rights.²⁶ Welfare NGOs for women topped the list. Furthermore, as alluded in Chapter II, in democratisation studies, NGOs' links with and influence over the wider civil society is often presumed positively. However, this presumption is challenged by the above assertions. As it stands now, Pakistani NGOs' connection with the wider civil society in the context of democratisation, is complex.

Understandably then, there is a need to re-examine the structure and agency of civil society itself. Whether NGOs are the face of civil society and represent its interests, is contingent to this re-examination. An academic who also runs a research NGO observed:

I say that in post-colonial societies like ours, we need to theorise civil society differently. We simply don't have a civil society which converges to liberal democracy with capitalism as its base. We have not evolved the way other countries have. *There are civil societies of multiple systems here and they overlap, too. Which combination of civil societies is pro-democracy depends on the class interests and which classes want that democracy. We are basically maintaining a fiction that there is one civil society that according to some theory may be pro liberal democracy.*²⁷

Thus, the connection between internationally funded NGOs in democratisation and the so-called civil society in Pakistan, is experienced as distant at best and made-up at worst.

The divergence from resistance and movement to projectised democratisation has not helped with lessening the existing political disconnect. Despite NGOs' training programmes for parliamentarians and political parties' reform, the engagement and influence of parliamentarians in the parliament remain patchy. Furthermore, the extent

²⁵ Interview 7, 10 April 2015.

²⁶ See Chapter IV.

²⁷ Interview 21, 20 June 2015.

of any improvement in citizens' political participation due to NGOs mobilisation programmes, is difficult to discern.

They [NGOs] are engaged in this futile debate about how to reform political parties and train politicians, hoping that there can be improvements. Why are they not looking at the weaknesses of political parties, parliament and the parliamentary system in relation to society? If feudalism and tribalism are intact, we are not bringing any social reforms in this country. Our society remains stagnant; it could not possibly improve politically. Most of their efforts [NGOs] are implanted. They have not been internally generated. There exists a significant disconnect between our society and our so-called democratic institutions.²⁸

Democracy entails an active citizenry not just at the time of elections. This should be the focus of NGOs. They should spread consciousness of citizenship rights and privileges. NGOs that work on citizenship education better serve democratisation than those who focus on "capacity building of parliamentarians".²⁹

Parliamentarians themselves are profoundly critical of NGOs' capacity building and the training programmes. They believe that NGOs' hardly contribute in strengthening democracy or building democratic institutions. Their training programmes are "essentially a hit and run exercise"³⁰ without any substance or connections with the local ways in which parliamentarians and the parliaments actually work. Most importantly, unlike in the past where women's NGOs were particularly effective in bringing about law reforms or lobbying for constitutional change, "the influence and contribution of the internationally funded NGOs at present is almost minimal"³¹:

Majority of them (NGOs), I won't say it is a rule, but majority carry a significant agenda of maximising earnings for their NGOs and justifying it by holding various seminars, workshops etc. Whether the content of these workshops carry any long-lasting effect is, according to me, least of their concerns. Particularly NGOs that are lucratively funded by international agencies including UN and EU. They follow their [donors] agenda. They have a number of programmes which are essentially very high sounding – assistance to parliament, building capacity of parliamentarians etc – but when you look at them in their

²⁸ Interview 19, 19 June 2015.

²⁹ Interview 25, 2 July 2015.

³⁰ Interview 15, 30 April 2015.

³¹ Interview 27, 5 July 2015.

nitty-gritty or the results that have come out of them, it is a big fat zero. I am saying this as a senator of the national assembly.

Explaining further with an example of the drafting of laws in Pakistan, a Senator stated:

Take law-making for example. The drafting of laws in the UK or the US is a different cup of tea as compared to drafting of the law in Pakistan..... The basic concept of the law being home-grown or adaptable to Pakistan's conditions is alien to them [NGOs] from the get-go. I cannot be expected to learn drafting, no matter how bright I may be, in three days. We have asked them to kindly bring their experts, mesh them in with local experts, so that the basic principles of drafting I can learn from them but the nitty-gritty of Pakistani drafting, I can learn from my own people. This, they are not able to do. *They say this is what we can provide, this is the manner and style they will be held in, take it or leave it.* Mostly, we take it for the simple reason that much of our bureaucracy and political class is very fond of small perks that emanate from it.....As a participant, I go and take part and have a nice cup of tea and lunch at a five-star hotel. I get a nice pen, a dairy or a bag and I come back home without learning anything.³²

Using law-making and the roles of NGOs in it as an example, the Senator asserts that in the provisions of developing skills in the drafting of law, the internationally funded NGOs are insensitive to the local dynamics. It seems that the Senator is pointing out the insensitive approach with which NGOs offer their training programmes. There is frustration in his statement about disconnect in the ways in which NGOs try to 'train' parliamentarians. Parliamentarians' learning styles, capacities and preferences might be different from how they are perceived or assessed by the foreign experts. Yet, NGOs do not accommodate these nuances. This approach to the provision of training is ultimately fruitless. More importantly, as the statement suggests, NGOs providing such training workshops (guided by their funded outcomes) are not willing to accommodate parliamentarians' needs. To what extent this ignorance is deliberate, should be a matter of concern for democratisation and supporting democratic institutions. It is evident however, that NGOs' plans are based on agreed deliverables for the received funds. In this sense, democratisation is *driven by funds* whereas funds are available for the agreed sets of formulations only. However, given the lack of political maturity, possibly due to the historical democratic deficit in Pakistan, more than often, parliamentarians attend these workshops for the 'small perks'. As a result, NGOs get away with demonstrating

³² Ibid. (My emphasis).

to their funders that they have achieved the legislative strengthening programme outcomes. Reality is most certainly, the opposite.

The senator posited further that the problem of this mismatch between the trainings offered and the context, lies in the NGOs compulsion to their donors. “They [NGOs] themselves may understand, but the donors do not. They cannot convince their donors. We, as the parliament are unable to convince the donors.”³³ Another parliamentarian agreed with the senator without being sympathetic of NGOs:

The disconnect of NGOs’ democracy programmes with the way things work here is due to the indifferent attitude of their donors. That is the truth. They [donors] are so comfortable with the perks. They think they have a nice office, a Pajero (a large vehicle), a house and servants (something which they don’t see in their own countries) so why should they go the extra mile? This is what they are expected to do, hold trainings and workshops. They do it and send their reports back and say I was given X amount of budget and this budget was utilised to do blah blah blah. That similar attitude sinks into local NGOs. They think they are getting part of the kitty which will keep them going and their NGO going. Fair enough. Why go into hassle with principles? Why get into a hassle with the parliament? Let’s just have a workshop at Serena or Marriot (five-star hotels). Get it over with. Have a nice glossy report printed subsequently. Circulate that to a limited number of people, majority of whom won’t even read it. The work is done and contractual obligations met.³⁴

This ignorance of the political context on part of NGOs and international donors – intentional or unintentional – does not help with minimising the perpetual disconnect that exists between the parliament and parliamentarians in Pakistan. An NGO professional in Islamabad observed:

If we look at the legislation in the parliament from 2008 – 2015, 134 of 139 laws have been passed in the 13th or previous National Assembly and 5-6 have been passed in the last year. A bulk of the legislation, more than 90% of legislation, has been in response to the demands of the state institutions, such as making the FIA (Federal Investigating Agency) Deputy Governor a chairman, so and so institute needs an expansion in its mandate and scope etc. How much legislation has been done in response to the demands of the people? There was one on acid throwing in which existing laws were improved and punishments were increased. There was another on

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Interview 24, 30 June 2015.

women's rights. There are only a few bills 12-14 in which we can say that the source of the bill is perhaps due to the demands being raised by the civil society or citizens. In the architecture of this state no one is aggregating the demands of the citizens or converting them into a legislative product. Political parties are responsible for doing this. But political parties have their own disconnect from the parliament and from the people. Manifestos are not followed in the parliament. State does not follow the direction of the parliament, rather the parliament follows the directions of the state. Even the 18th Constitutional Amendment, in which we tried to change the entire architecture of our state. The demand for it was essentially rooted among the political elite. NGOs like ours with so-called training programmes have failed to lessen this disconnect.³⁵

The political and social disconnects, that existed historically in Pakistan's politics for many reasons, have been expanding despite large-scale democratisation programmes. Informed by the observations above, it seems that the depoliticised and projectised democratisation in the recent years has not been sensitive to the local context. Echoing the Senators quoted above as referring to the context-blind, technical, formal, and corporate approach of NGOs, a long-time activist and lawyer disdained:

I often meet NGO professionals who think they know better than everyone else. I have people come to my office and say they want to train lawyers. I simply laugh at them. They are not lawyers themselves and yet they want to train lawyers. They have no idea that people get best trained by their own seniors. (I ask them) How are you going to train lawyers? What is that extra thing you have to train them in? Is it your command in English language? They feel that simply because they have command on the English language, they can train lawyers! This is the kind of strangeness that I find in them. They want to train the police without having read the police laws. They want to train the politicians without knowing the realities that politicians operate in. Contesting elections by itself is a great experience. NGOs don't have to go through it. That lack of respect for politicians is visible in their [NGOs] approach.

So in my opinion, where they (NGOs) claim all-round expertise is very problematic. These people are not lawyers, but they are pretending to be super jurists giving critiques to legislation. This is not fair. This is like me telling journalists how to run their shows on their television stations. I am not trained to do that. They feel parliamentarians need training! Parliamentarians need space. The way parliamentarians passed the 21st Amendment on military courts shows they do not have space. Don't go on the surface. You have to

³⁵ Interview 7, 10 April 2015.

dig deeper to the root causes of what is going on here. Obviously, this government – not just this government – this country, is being controlled by the military. Parliamentarians know everything that is happening. Do they dare say anything? No, they cannot. So you want to train them to do what?³⁶

Table 2 illustrates the basic features of democratisation as a fight and movement and as a projectised and corporate model. Multiple interviews with NGOs' professionals, politicians, academics and journalists, as well as my interpretation of their experiences, have informed this table. In other words, some of the listed 'terms' were employed by the research participants whilst I have added others as my interpretations. My aim at presenting this table is to provide a visual comparator for understanding the *shift* in the nature of democratisation, as the central concern for this chapter.

³⁶ Interview 8, 15 April 2015.

Table 2: Democratisation as.....

Fight/Movement/Resistance	Projectised/Corporate Model
Political	Depoliticised
Activists Zeal and commitment for social and political transformation	Professionals with specific skill-sets
On the streets	In posh offices, cars and five-star hotels
Volunteerism	High salaries and perks/ International travels
Prolonged campaigns	Short-term projects
Guided by principles	Guided by material and economic interests
Visible leadership	Dispersed professionals
People led - Of and for the masses	Middleclass, foreign educated professionals - a service sector for the governing elite and international development agencies
Sensitive to the social and political context	Oblivious of the social and political context
Value - Mission driven	Funding driven

The divergence from democracy as a fight to projectised democratisation has evidently been taking place. Internationally funded NGOs with their corporate style democracy programmes, are implicated. They are implicated both by their own reflections on their lived experience in democratisation, and in the accounts of concerned observers. But is this charge absolute? Or are there caveats in these claims that we must be mindful of? I now turn to these questions.

The dispute

A political activist in the past who is now the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a prominent NGO in democratisation is rather optimistic of projectised democratisation. For him, though it is hard for most NGOs to stand firm on principles and volunteerism in the face of funding requirements, “all is not lost.”³⁷ International donors for human rights and democracy projects including USAID, DFID and/or UN and EU agencies and others are increasingly “trying to follow the wave that human rights activist organisations initiated in Pakistan.”³⁸ For example, his own NGO has been successfully funded by USAID but he claims that the objectives of the funded programme were derived from the organisation’s core objectives formed thirty years ago. In this sense, projectised democratisation is not always *driven by funding*. It can retain the aspects of *driven by values* and keeping to the original mission depending on the NGOs that are negotiating funds.

They are funding us and our goals match with theirs. Sure they [donors] have foreign agenda. But if they are saying something which make sense to us, what can you do.....[but to accept funds]. What we ought to do is that in ten to twenty years, we and other NGOs become self-sustainable encouraging volunteerism and community development with minimal external input. This is what we must do for future.³⁹

But a CEO of another NGO, also a political activist in the past, disagreed:

This culture of working for money has spoiled things. Especially USAID funding has turned NGOs into contractors. It has become a mockery of the entire civil society. How did you run schools? We just had students. USAID started to pay parents to send their children to school. Then in other education projects, parents started asking for money. We said no, we are educating your children and training you. We do not offer money for that. The difficulty was created by NGOs funded by USAID. It has all changed for worst. I think for NGOs to be autonomous, dynamic and organic, they need to keep working on few resources and funds and set small priorities. But they have been turned into mercenaries who look at funding plans of the donors and have experts sitting in their offices with high salaries, who will be surfing the net and finding things they can apply to and they will apply everywhere... from child rights to democracy to environment to microfinance and what not.⁴⁰

³⁷ Interview 10, 20 April 2015.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Interview 13, 28 April 2015.

⁴⁰ Interview 4, 21 March 2015.

The extent to which the international funding presents itself as a problem in democratisation is discussed in a subsequent theme. The purpose of this argument here is to show that the opinions on the *nature* and *purpose* of projectised democratisation are disputed. There are also inconsistencies in the arguments of research participants of NGOs, which illuminate a struggle within themselves - a struggle concerning whether to regard their experience of projectised democratisation as positive or detrimental to meaningful possibilities for democracy in Pakistan.

Similarly, on the technical nature of projectised democratisation, a CEO of a large democracy promotion NGO focusing on parliamentary accountability and election observation stated:

When you ask about our role in democratisation, our framework is very conservative in the sense that we are talking about the legal and constitutional framework of rights. We are not going beyond that. If you want a revolution or rebellion, go and join a political party or form a political party. You don't see DFID or any other donor, funding for revolution. Our role is to advocate and spread awareness of rights enshrined in the constitution. We do quite a bit of technical research work. It is very important to point out that we are purely a technical organisation. We are not an activist organisation. And we see value in it to gradually support democratic practices based on evidence.⁴¹

Being technical with specific skills and project focused is considered imperative for democratisation. NGOs in democratisation are not seen as the spaces for revolutions. Besides, there is no funding available for this. But there is also a contrary stance. A director of an NGO promoting human rights and democracy stresses on the revolutionary aspects of democratisation:

Just like dictatorship has a history in Pakistan, stiff resistance to dictatorships also has a history. NGOs role in this resistance has been prominent. Activists led and formed NGOs played a significant political role. We cannot deny their contribution. People have died for it. People went to jail for it. There has to be an element of dissent in our work. What's happening to us? As NGOs, we have developed a sort of fungibility – we are ready to even support a dictator! None of our NGOs has any consistent devotion or commitment to

⁴¹ Interview 17, 4 May 2015.

democracy, except HRCP. What then is the significance of our claim that we are promoting democracy?⁴²

Opinions of research participants clash when the usefulness of internationally funded democratisation programmes and projects is debated. However, it is clear from the reflections on the lived experience of NGOs' professionals that NGOs, involved in democratisation with large programmes and presence, international funding and profile, are not the spaces for dissent and rebellion. The perceptions that a divergence from democratisation as a movement to projectised democratisation, is widespread and strongly argued amongst the research participants.

Concluding reflections

Through the lived experiences of the research participants, in this chapter, I have studied a shift in NGOs' approaches to democratisation. It has been shown that until 1980s, NGOs approach to democratisation involved resistance, fight and movement. Despite limited funds and structured organisational setups, NGOs were able to gather global support for their issue based advocacy for human rights and democracy. They were defiant even against the dictatorships. However, in the late 1990s, NGOs developed a strong focus on projects and programmes. With the help of international funding, large projects on parliamentarians training and capacity-building were focused on neatly defined outputs and outcomes. Corporate style organisational structures were introduced with city based posh offices for NGOs. Volunteerism and commitment for the cause were replaced with highly paid professionals with technical skills. In other words, approaches to democratisation diverged from movement and resistance to projectised democratisation. I concluded the theme with opening a dispute amongst the research participants as to what constitutes projectised democratisation.

In Chapter VI, this dispute is discussed in detail. It is argued that the nuances of projectised democratisation cannot be understood without carefully considering the context in which NGOs in democratisation operate in Pakistan. Thus, the multiple dimensions of the context are explored, followed by an analysis of the roles of NGOs

⁴² Interview 1, 3 March 2015.

in the specified context of democratisation. The following quote from one of the research participants neatly connects the two chapters:

The basic flaw is that whether their (NGOs in democratisation) understanding of democracy is procedural or political. If it is political, then the basic contest is between one institution that is powerful beyond its constitutional mandate and asserts that power (referring to Pakistani army). To maintain constitutional democracy, you have to understand the politics. If it is purely procedural then you are concerned about electoral procedures, elections within political parties etc. There is a link between these two that is claimed. If you fix the procedural issues, they say, then you will also win the political battle. This is a view. But in my view, this is the basic problem in their theory of change. The politics of democracy or the political conflict of whether there should be democracy or not is not being understood as a fight anymore. It is possible that the solution to this fight is procedural. But it is only one solution. And you have to acknowledge that this is a fight.⁴³

⁴³ Interview 21, 20 June 2015.

Chapter VI: The Imperfect Necessity

In which 'projectised democratisation' reveals itself and the roles of NGOs are examined.

So far, in the thesis, I have observed that democratisation, as experienced by NGOs in Pakistan, signifies a projectised development of democracy. In its essence, it is depoliticised, professional, technocratic, funding driven, distant from the masses, middle-class led, urban, alien to the context, and possibly guided by material and economic interests. However, in closing the previous chapter, I also noted that though the research participants agree that democratisation - as a process – does not (anymore) involve dissent, fight or a movement for democracy, their opinions differ on what constitutes the projectised democratisation: its *nature and purpose*. In this chapter, the Imperfect Necessity, as the second essential theme, unpacks the phenomenon of projectised democratisation. In so doing, it illuminates the milieu in which NGOs operate and how this circumscribes their roles in democratisation in distinct ways.

I begin this theme with a vignette about the 1999 Military Coup in Pakistan. The narrative illustrates NGOs' unprecedented assertion and support for the dictatorship, and thereby, puts into perspective the changing roles of NGOs in democratisation. Next, I bring together rich empirical insights to understand the social and political context in which NGOs operate. The insights of NGOs unpack the inherent challenges of the historical democratic deficit in Pakistan, as *they* face them and *within which* they navigate a space for themselves. The final section explores the roles NGOs play in specified political and social context and discusses what might be the opportunities – if any – for a sustainable transition to democracy in Pakistan.

The big shift

The roads felt silent, almost too silent. In the evening hours of 11th October 1999, my car was heading towards the diplomatic enclave area in Islamabad. I had been invited for dinner at a friend's house in the Sector F-6/3. It is often unsettling how beautiful trees of the day light look mysterious and dark at nights. The diplomatic enclave was situated next to the Parliament House. Surrounded by trees, despite the soft lights on

the pavements and well-lit official buildings, the roads were overwhelmingly dark and silent. Earlier that day, I had heard rumors about an imminent coup d'état. Perhaps, it was due to my anxious state of mind that the surroundings felt like the 'silence before the storm'. There was, however, nothing observably strange or different to suggest that an event, that big, was about to happen. Or maybe, I wanted to believe that it wasn't going to happen. The banality of the 1999 coup surprised very few of us in Pakistan.¹ It was, as if, the coup was almost expected, rather desired.

The next morning, on October 12, I picked up the newspaper and the headline read, 'Army moved in as last resort to save country, says Musharraf – Nawaz government dismissed.'² In the early hours of that morning, the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief of the Army, General Pervez Musharraf had dismissed the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. In addressing the nation on the national TV and radio, General Musharraf claimed that the "country was perfectly calm, stable and under control."³ Over the next few days, the electronic media reported that the Constitution was held in abeyance; parliament and other official buildings were sealed; and the prominent politicians of the outgoing regime were being arrested. On Oct 17, in a television and radio address, General Musharraf assured the people of Pakistan that there was no martial law in Pakistan." He promised "to give true democracy".⁴

Over the next few days, my friends and I talked about the unfolding political events. At our regular evening gatherings, the coup remained the topic of our discussions. Working for NGOs in Islamabad, most of us had family members or friends working for the government. We all had 'insider' information. None of us, however, knew what directions the coup would take. We all expected that the dictatorship would unfold much like the previous ones did. We all expected that despite promises, Musharraf's coup would stay. But, some of us secretly and others openly, accepted Musharraf. He was unlike Zia-ul-Haq. We talked about his liberal 'look' as the newspapers carried

¹ For a detailed academic discussions on the reasons behind the coup, Ishtiaq Hossain (2000), Pakistan's October military coup: its causes and consequences Asian Journal of political science; PTV Documentary 12 Oct 1999 -- The Story of a Coup -- a documentary by Asghar Abdullah <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYADmJ6B4Gw> ; See also Shah, A. (2014) *The Army and Democracy*. Harvard University Press.

² Dawn newspaper front page Wednesday October 13, 1999.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Dawn front page Oct 17 1999.

photos of him in civilian clothes, holding a poodle and playing with his granddaughter. Besides, we were for long unhappy with Nawaz Sharif's soft Islamisation of Pakistan's politics! There were no voices of dissent; no calls against the dictatorship. Secretly, perhaps, all of us were relieved. We kept quiet. Some of us subsequently, supported Musharraf. The silence and the dark evening of 11 October 1999 lasted for years to come.

In the thick of contestations

Over the course of many years, there has been a systematic undermining of people who have progressive views. It has not just happened by the by. You look at the bar room – you had a promising young man, left-leaning – today he is brief less. You look at poets, writers, etc. All these people have been marginalised. The right wing is soaring. You opposed the military but your children did not disappear. Now children disappear. Human rights activists and journalists get killed. It is a very violent place. Those people who have been the blue eyes of the establishment, the sky is the limit. The rest of us have struggled all our lives. I have not known a day in my life when I have not struggled. There is a lot of disparity. How will you empower the progressive thought again? It's not just people, it is the thought and ideas that have been systematically marginalised.⁵

In this statement, a human rights activist and a trustee for a human rights NGO, reflects on her struggles against the odds of unfavourable political and social settings in which NGOs have operated in Pakistan. With a sense of despair for the rising right-wing extremism, she is concerned about the systematic weakening of the progressive (liberal) political thought and ideals. The activism of civil society – including human rights NGOs, poets, writers and lawyers – has been undermined by the coercion of the state (particularly the army) and the right-wing extremists. Activists' and their families' lives are at stake. For her, struggle has been the only way of living. The statement paints a picture of an obstinately hostile and aggressive environment for NGOs in democratisation.

Reflecting on *the big shift*, it could be that NGOs' recognition of General Musharraf and their support for his dictatorship was a consequence of systematic undermining of a progressive and active civil society. In other words, it is plausible that owing to the

⁵ Interview 8, 15 April 2015.

recurrent suppressive dictatorships and civilian rules; restrictions on freedom of speech and association; (c) overt violence and state's hostility for human rights activists as well as its support for religious extremism in the name of national security, that, over time, civil society and NGOs had to first compromise and then gradually lose their 'radical progressiveness'. On the other hand, supporting Musharraf might also be understood as an opportunity that arose for NGOs, where they could support instituting liberal practices in the face of mounting religious extremism. Whatever the reason, in 1999, the *big shift* in NGOs' approach to dictatorship did take place. This event and the above statement call for a study of the nuances of the social and political context in which NGOs operate and where their ethos and roles are contested.

Through the lived experiences of NGOs and other research participants, this section comprehends the nuances of this contested environment. From Pakistan army's historical influence over politics to the rising religious extremism and hostility towards civil society and NGOs, the environment has multiple tones, creating a web of contestations for NGOs.

One such tone is the *hostility of the state* towards the civil society and NGOs in Pakistan. Research participants disdain the fact that this hostility has not reduced, even though, many NGOs today promote and support democracy by working directly with the government and political parties. They view this hostility as a legacy of the state's historical insecurity to allow mass political participation, in cracking down dissent for democracy and calls for the majority rule, and army's direct role in politics and frequent martial laws.⁶ A senior human rights activist and director of an NGO states:

Historically, our state does not recognise civil society. During Ayub Khan's era, there was regulated effort to hegemonise civil society. All institutions were required to be under the control of the state. They had radio. They began television. They made their own new rules for cinema – for here and for East Pakistan. They made a writer's guild for writers. Bar councils were made for lawyers and the chairpersons were attorney generals and the provincial bar council's chairmen were advocate generals.....This experience became a part of the state's psyche..... As a result,

⁶ See Chapter IV for a historical discussion on NGOs in democratisation in Pakistan.

governments of today think the same way. Rights-based NGOs are negatively perceived by the government and lack the resources to operate. Many of them have made agreements with foreign organisations. Some are good, some are bad. Some have their own agenda, others follow donors' agenda. But the government looks at all of them in the same way.

With their democracy programmes, NGOs are trying to help the government, but their interaction is limited to government officials – it is not an interaction with the state.⁷

This statement also speaks for the times when the fieldwork for this research was on-going. During April and July 2015, the government of Pakistan imposed harsh restrictions on many international and national NGOs. There were police raids and NGOs' offices in Islamabad were clamped down. A few of the research participants were working from home as their offices were closed. A government bill had recently been introduced in the parliament entitled 'The Foreign Contributions Regulation Act, 2015.' The bill aimed at putting in check 'the constant unchecked flow of foreign funding taking place without the consent of the government.'⁸ The justification given by the government was that the Bill would regulate and monitor foreign funding, including funding for *madrassas*. However, many research participants speculated that the proposed Bill was actually about putting stringent restrictions on NGOs and their partner international NGOs (INGOs) as well as to introduce cumbersome reporting procedures. "In this hostile situation", an NGO personnel stated, "the interaction (between government and civil society) is greatly reduced, which has become worst in the last 20 years."⁹ Another NGO participant asserted:

NGOs are going through very rough times right now. In fact, we have always been under threat. Government in the name of national security, is imposing all sorts of restrictions. They can come to our offices and look at everything. Nobody can stop them from doing that..... And let me tell you, government is not doing it for national security; they want to harass us. Under this new Bill, we will only be able to work on their 'approved list of areas' and with their 'approved international NGOs'. Who funds national NGOs? It's not our government. It is our partner International NGOs who fund us. They are being harassed.¹⁰

⁷ Interview 2, 4 March 2015.

⁸ Bill's reference <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/pakistan.html>.

⁹ Interview 12, 22 April 2015.

¹⁰ Interview 15, 30 April 2015.

Consequent to the hostility of the state towards NGOs, a prolonged and intense *mutual distrust* has developed between NGOs and the political society. In the previous Chapter, NGOs' negative perceptions for politicians were considered. Similarly, politicians' distrust on NGOs' approaches to capacity building of parliamentarians and political parties was also illuminated. It is useful to reiterate the perceptions of the research participants – representing both NGOs and politicians – to distil the elements of the mutual distrust.

As discussed above, most participants from NGOs were of the view that once in power, politicians perpetuate state's historic hostility towards NGOs. NGOs are also deeply apprehensive about politicians' abilities to represent and govern. Referring to politicians' intentions and ability to make laws as well as the role of the parliament as the supreme legislature, a CEO of an established democracy promotion NGO stated:

What kind of representation? As a matter of fact, they [politicians] are not representing anyone. They do not come to the assembly and say this is the opinion of people in my area. Even if they did it would not make a difference..... We have a rubber-stamp parliament..... Decisions are made between parliamentary leaders. It is not as if the law comes into the parliament, it is debated and then it is passed..... Nothing can be presented, debated or passed in the assembly until the top man [heads of political parties] does not decide it to be so. Look at the 18th Amendment? How long was the debate for it in the assembly?..... I think hardly 45 minutes or an hour. The 19th, 20th and 21st amendment have been passed in a few minutes. Prior to being passed, they were decided upon. There was an APC (All Parties Conference) prior to it being presented in the parliament where party leaders decided upon it. Then to complete the formalities because the constitution says that to be so, they brought the bill and passed it in a few minutes. Each party leader told their members that you have to vote on this. The members do not even question the vote. They have no idea what this law states. They do not even have the aptitude to read the law much less form an opinion and analyse it..... Opposition does them (APCs) and government does them, too. Decisions are made in APCs.[E]veryone knows the people in the parliament are good for nothing.¹¹

This statement illuminates the perceptions about politicians, shared by most NGOs' personnel. In NGOs' experiences of engaging with politicians on daily basis, politicians are seen as not only lacking the will and skills for making laws, but also as disregarding

¹¹ Interview 16, 2 May 2015.

the parliament as the supreme law-making institution. As the statement suggests, law-making takes place outside the parliament as negotiated compromises; getting these laws vetted through the parliament appears to be a formality. Many NGO research participants blame politicians for disrespecting and misusing the parliament, thereby weakening the democratic practice.

On the other hand, a significant aspect of politicians' distrust for NGOs relates to NGOs' support for Musharraf's government and their newly found appetite for competing in the mainstream politics. During Musharraf's government, many NGOs' activists and civil society representatives put themselves forward as advisors to the government and were nominated to serve in the government. An NGO personnel himself was critical about this "out-of-place" political interest in the NGO sector.¹² He asserted that in their support for Musharraf, NGOs claimed a direct political role to an extent that a group of NGOs activists and professionals set up a political party to stand for the elections.¹³ A senator disdained that in the past, NGOs were involved in advising governments and parliaments but only at the level of appearing or sitting in government committees or advisory bodies; "never did four organisations get together and decided to form a political party."¹⁴ NGOs were giving a direct competition to the political society. Furthermore, NGOs are accused of using foreign funds and infrastructural resources for their political ambitions.¹⁵ The distrust followed, and NGOs' foreign connections were vehemently criticised by the political society. Though the NGOs-led political party never came to fruition, the distrust continues to exist and is "unlikely to end in the near future."¹⁶

The profound mutual distrust between the political and civil society and the historic hostility of state towards civil society, are reflective of the political culture in Pakistan, which is engrained in *patronage politics* of the social elite and the bureaucracy-army establishment.¹⁷ Many research participants perceive that the political culture in Pakistan does not "value merit and qualifications. It values *biradiri* (kinship), influence

¹² Interview 7, 10 April 2015.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Interview 3, 15 March 2015.

¹⁵ Interview 27, 5 July 2015.

¹⁶ Interview 2, 4 March 2015.

¹⁷ See Chapter IV.

and money spent on elections and campaigns.”¹⁸ Furthermore, NGOs that have been working closely with politicians believe that political parties are formed and function largely as ‘family enterprises’; dynastic politics of a few powerful families is deep-rooted and is one of the key aspects in Pakistan’s political culture. These dynastic and/or family enterprise type political parties are mostly led by one person in a fairly top-down manner. As a result, political parties lack democratic structures and are controlled by the party leaders. The lack of democracy or membership based progression and decision-making structures also exist in other political parties that may not be run as family enterprises but are led by a popular leader (often also the founding member). The director of a democracy promotion NGO, who has been long engaged with developing political parties as democratic organisations observed:

Political party has no organisation or structure at a local level. The machinery doesn’t work on its own. The leader presses the button from the top and it works for as long as they are pressing the button. The political party is a very controlled instrument of the party leader. *That is not by coercion, but it is our culture*..... [Party leader’s] source of strength, the reason which makes him the dictator of his party, is usually his personal popularity. It is not party popularity.¹⁹

A senior political analyst and the CEO of an NGO shared similar concerns:

Parties are not democratic, they are *darbars*..... there is no democracy in parties. A small group of courtiers around the leader are controlling the party. Tickets are granted to people who are yes-men or who have big money and resources. This is increasingly becoming an unrepresentative system by virtue of this party system which are essentially feudal *darbars*.....²⁰

Consequently, political parties are not generally concerned about appealing to the masses or engaging in policymaking for the public benefit:

‘[T]hey [politicians] ask for votes but they don’t tell us why they want our vote. They don’t say we will change policy or do this or do that. They get their votes on family lineages or by patronising the social, business and political elite. They make promises for big benefits to their supporters..... In turn, they also get influenced by these elite. That is the context of Pakistan. The trouble is that our democracy support is meant for these politicians and

¹⁸ Interview 25, 2 July 2015.

¹⁹ Interview 13, 28 April 2015.

²⁰ Interview 4, 21 March 2015.

bureaucrats who do not need to believe or practice democracy within their own parties or the ways in which they engage in politics.²¹

The culture of dynastic and patronage politics affects parliamentary democracy in distinct ways. For example, many research participants point to the persistent failure on part of the civilian governments to establish a functioning local government system. It has been a political irony in Pakistan, that, for vested political interests, dictatorships legislate and put mechanisms in place for local governments whereas the civilian democratically elected governments delay establishing local governments as they lack the political will in instituting devolved governing structures. Consequently, the “parliament fulfils a formality.”²² This senior NGO personnel posited further:

It is a very natural thing for an MP (member parliament) to be discussing and debating policy. [But] our MPs are seldom asked to speak on policies. They are not even interested themselves. The whole trend is to do some patronage work in their constituency – try to help their people getting jobs, help them facilitated with local police office or DCO, to resolve their problems, getting help with transfers and promotions, etc.....They don't do anything in the assembly which is the text book definition of the role of an MP – to legislate, to participate in the oversight of the executive, to address public policy debates in the house. As a result they do not even come to the assembly. What impresses their constituents is that they were there to do something personally for constituents' families.

[Consequently].....traditionally, local governments have not been able to function. They are either not formed or if they are formed, they are used by military governments to legitimise their stay. By holding local government elections the military governments demonstrate to the world that they are holding elections. Local people are no challenge to their authority However, such local governments have questionable legitimacy. [On the other hand] elected governments do not let local governments establish because of power grabs. If local governments are elected, they would share powers with the provincial governments. Provincial governments do not want to part with their powers. Most of these functions which I say MPs are fulfilling should actually be fulfilled by local government, councillors or *nazims* (mayors or chairman of the union council). Most of these problems are local. They deal with local administration, local judiciary, local police station and local development issues like water supply, roads and schools. MPs of only those type get elected who are fond of becoming keepers of their area,interested only in wielding influence,

²¹ Ibid.

²² Interview 16, 2 May 2015.

throwing their weight and getting things done. They do not like that tomorrow an entity forms that takes away their authority.

Another significant dimension to the political and social context for democratisation in Pakistan is the *army's direct and indirect control* over politics and society. Research participants perceive it as the dominant political legacy in which Pakistan army's growing influence has impeded democratic culture to take roots. Many believe that military rule is by nature 'coercive': rights-based NGOs' historical struggles in Pakistan against the dictatorships of General Ayub and General Zia have resulted in Pakistan army's constant scrutiny of NGOs and human rights activists to this day.²³ Discussing the weaknesses of democracy in Pakistan, an academic in Karachi stated that the army and its Inter-Services Intelligence body (ISI)²⁴ form a significant part of the state establishment which benefits from the ills of patronage-based political culture; reprimands dissent in the name of protecting national-interest; and constantly monitors the civil society with all its military might and privilege.²⁵ The gravity of coercion is such that whilst in conversations, most NGOs discreetly referred to the army and ISI out of fear. A few, however, were unbounded. Below, I provide a couple of observations:

The right-wing factions are very strong..... in my view, religious groups and political parties have power. If you speak against their set of values, they will get to you. Behind them are their militant organisations. Behind these militant organisations, are our agencies who are fighting the US War on Terror. Behind that is our military intelligence and the so-called National Action Plan. This right-side always expands when there is war, *jihad*, India and Afghanistan politics..... Our army elite is corrupt to its core and our judiciary too. Imagine working for human rights and democracy in this context. People disappear from Balochistan and Swat on regular basis. Nobody can question the army and its agencies....It is a complete state within a state.²⁶

We are essentially ruled by the army. [On surface] we might have civilian government, but in reality the transfer of power has not taken place to the civilian leadership in certain key areas including external

²³ See Chapter IV.

²⁴ The Directorate-General for Inter-Services Intelligence or Inter-Services Intelligence (abbreviated ISI) is the premier intelligence agency of Pakistan, responsible for providing critical national security intelligence assessment to the Government of Pakistan. It comprises primarily of serving military officers drawn on secondment from the three service branches of the Pakistan Armed Forces; namely the Pakistan Army, the Pakistan Air Force, and the Pakistan Navy although it also includes civilians.

²⁵ Interview 24, 30 June 2015.

²⁶ Interview 12, 22 April 2015.

and domestic security and foreign policy. Even in our economy, the army is the largest stakeholder. However civilian and popular our prime ministers arethey do not have the public support to stand up to the pressure of the army. They make plans, sometimes brave plans..., but then they receive thrashing of the army. The army destabilises these people and then the government ducks.....[with a sarcastic grunt]. *Army is only tolerating democracy because its purpose is being served.* Their interests are being met so why should they come and enter civilian business for 5 to 8 years, become unpopular and then leave.....they have nothing to lose.²⁷

Why then, did most NGOs welcome General Musharraf's dictatorship and join hands with his government in instituting 'liberal democracy'? NGOs in democratisation have conflicting responses to this fundamental question which challenges their ethos and roles. For some, it was a 'significant drift from liberal democratic ideology' and 'the biggest blunder' on their part to strengthen and legitimise authoritarianism in Pakistan.²⁸ For others, it was a 'strategic choice' between a moderately liberal dictator (whom they believed they can work with and influence) and 'an increasingly religious and right-wing democratic government of the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif.'²⁹ This complexity illuminates another dimension of the political culture which has been surged by rising religious extremism.

Religious extremism surfaces as the most substantial concern for all research participants. Rising militancy and sectarian politics led by the religious political parties with their militant wings and the local offshoots of Taliban have, overtime, gained strength in resources and social acceptance. NGOs in democratisation, especially the rights-based NGOs, are particularly vulnerable to the violence instigated by these forces. The following assertions illuminate the gravity of these concerns as NGOs referred to the killings of their activists and the feat of the violent religious extremism:

We [NGOs] try to protect a liberal space, for ourselves and for others. But this space is very limited..... there has been a gradual collapse of the left and liberals..... [S]tate is by nature coercive. So far, we were only in conflict with the state. Now we have so many non-state actors that are more dangerous. All of our people recently murdered – Sabeen, Parveen, Rashid Rehman³⁰ – they were all my

²⁷ Interview 4, 21 March 2015 (My emphasis).

²⁸ Ibid. Interview 8, 15 April 2015.

²⁹ A group discussion with NGO personnel 08 May 2015.

³⁰ Sabeen Mehmood and Parveen Rehman led NGOs in Karachi. Rashid Rehman was a prominent lawyer by profession and Co-ordinator at HRCF. They were all murdered between 2014-2016.

friends..... all killed for doing what we do. We know that they were not killed by the state. They were killed by previously kept lapdogs of the state with justifications. One of them was killed for supporting [the victim of] blasphemy. In the past, we used to fight the state. There was a way to do it. How can we fight this? They are shadows. They are terrorists. This is a mind-set which is spreading everywhere. They can kill for any reason..... they have justifications in the name of religion.³¹

Ideologically, the civil society is defeated. The religious extremist narrative has won. [Recently] with the turn of the army against some sections of terrorists, it has created an atmosphere and the need for an alternative narrative. But if you ask me, religious ideas have hegemony. There is no secular, liberal alternative at the mainstream political level. There are certain elements of it in PPP and ANP sometimes, but they are also very contradictory. Other mainstream political parties are openly religious and critical of the liberal and western values in the society.³²

The establishment in Pakistan is not the only front where NGOs and civil society in Pakistan fight for their space. We also have to fight religious extremism.....for our own survival. We have to realise that if we do not bring democratic culture, democracy will not amount to much without it.....The extremists do not forgive anyone. They killed Sabeen and they tried to kill Malala and many others. They kill Ismailis (religious minority) for no other reason except that they are soft targets.....³³

A significant element of religious extremism is felt as taking roots in society, enrolling NGOs and the wider civil society within it. This is not surprising as NGOs and the wider civil society reflect the overall character of the society. But this emerges as a huge concern for NGOs as they now have ‘adversaries within our space’:³⁴

Once I was visiting an NGO/CBO in KP (Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa province) working for human rights and democracy. All the posters on their office walls were *Jihadi*. I said what is this? They said we have to do this to survive here. But really, it means that somewhere deep down your heart is connected to these beliefs. How will your analysis be free of these influences? Unfortunately, much of our criticism and analysis gets influenced by extremist forces. They appear innocent to us. Just like the army appeared innocent to us. This is my concern. Civil society or NGO professionals are not all at the same wavelength when it comes to a coherent and collective position

³¹ Interview 11, 21 April 2015.

³² Interview 4, 21 March 2015.

³³ Interview 12, 22 April 2015

³⁴ Interview 11, 21 April 2015.

towards army or the extremist forces. There are deep divisions, beginning with NGOs' acceptance of Musharraf.³⁵

Divisions within NGOs in democratisation is another factor that unquestionably affects the environment in which they operate. That 'NGOs are not united' and do not stand in support of each other, is a concern which is shared by research participants from NGOs:

[W]hen Save the Children was shut down (in Islamabad June 2015), did anyone speak up? Did any UN or INGO speak up? No one spoke against the government from the development sector..... I heard that the US Ambassador got involved because if Save the Children gets shut down, the US government will have lawsuits in America about how the public funds are being used. To avoid that, the Ambassador pushed the government of Pakistan not to close it but just to curtail it, check and monitor it. Most NGOs are being pushed to the margins.....and not a single word is being uttered against this within the wider civil society.³⁶

Besides ideological divisions and scant mutual support, NGOs blame their sector for overlapping and duplicating projects in a bitter competition for development funds.³⁷ Furthermore, there are concerns about the undemocratic culture within NGOs. Women's organisations are particularly concerned. A senior NGO personnel who heads a democracy promotion NGO with an internationally funded programme for women's empowerment and political participation, observed:

We (women's organisations) are doing it because we believe in democracy..... Many new NGOs mushroomed only to utilise funding. You will be amazed at the kind of people doing projects that have to do with democracy. I am leading a grant-making programme. We receive funding applications in the name of women's participation in politics. We ask for CVs because we want to know if women are employed. When they [the recipient NGO] start the project, all the women disappear and men run the project. They have only men on their boards. All their employees are male. The so-called people working on democracy are so distant from it. They don't believe in democracy – they are just using it as a means to get money or to strengthen their power. When there is an NGO formed in this country, one person remains the head for all of his life or the organisation's life as the paid director. So I ask them, what kind of democracy can they deliver? If democracy is not in our culture, how

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Interview 12, 22 April 2015.

³⁷ Interview 1, 3 March 2015.

will it come to our NGOs? Our NGOs are also reflective of our culture.³⁸

Out of anguish, NGOs feel that *the right-wing* extremist thought has also penetrated the *mainstream media*, from TV channels to the newspapers – particularly the Urdu newspapers. This adds another significant tone to the contested context for NGOs. Whilst NGOs and other research participants appreciate the increasing plurality of private media enterprises – both in electronic and press media – they worry about the soaring trends in political sensationalisation, politician and NGO bashing and the lack of social accountability and responsibility of the media:

Our activists are maligned by the media and social media. Just see how Malala is maligned and how Asma is insulted on daily basis.....the right-wing forces are very strong. They have their own people in the media too. They speak on script given to them against NGOs. We were giving trainings to young people including visits to the US. They were also interns at the Senate. The media reported that we interfere with state policy as our “agents” were working in the Senate! Most of our media malign NGOs....it talks about NGOs’ salaries and foreign funding only, all because of agencies feeding them with scripts....³⁹

In this statement, reference is made to the ‘right-wing forces’ and ‘given scripts’. In common parlance, the right-wing forces include religious extremist groups, the army and ISI. ‘[G]iven scripts’ specifically refers to the latter pressurising media for the right-wing forces’ vested power interests. Another statement affirms this observation:

There was a time when GEO TV – Hamid Mir – spoke critically in favour of the Baloch. They [*Jang* media group] picked a fight with the agencies [ISI]. He was attacked and just managed to escape a violent death. GEO had to apologise. They remained shut down... *Jang* is such a large media organisation with contacts everywhere, but when the agencies put their pressure, even they could not bear it.⁴⁰

Media, as part of the civil society should (in theory) partner with NGOs and support them in their progressive causes against the state. But most NGOs perceive the mainstream electronic and print media in Pakistan as part of the establishment;

³⁸ Interview 8, 15 April 2015.

³⁹ Interview 12, 22 April 2015.

⁴⁰ Interview 11, 21 April 2015.

‘representing lies’ and promoting a ‘fake discourse’.⁴¹ Furthermore, NGOs are often presented as the only face of the civil society in the mainstream media; “which is a fact that makes us [NGOs] more vulnerable.”⁴²

If they [media] stand with us, then we will be stronger. We try to make them stand with us but they run away. In Urdu newspapers, there is often a headline which states that ‘protests were attended by political parties, media representatives, lawyers and the members of civil society’. When we ask them what do you mean by civil society, who do you count? They say NGOs. So even if one or two people from NGOs show up, they are considered as civil society.....⁴³

However, in response, media organisations argue that the diverse nature of rising privatised media should be carefully scrutinised as not all media is ignorant of the good work NGOs do.⁴⁴ On the other hand, a senior journalist in the mainstream Urdu media has his own critique on NGOs. He observes that allegations of sensationalisation and generating fake discourses do not only apply on media; these allegations could equally be placed on NGOs.⁴⁵ Whilst some media groups and journalists support NGOs in democratisation and human rights by acting as trustees on their boards, speaking at their events, and giving them coverage in their papers or programmes, there is a significant perceived distrust amongst them against NGOs:

Their [NGOs] activities remain suspicious. They have many agendas. In the Shafqat Hussain death sentence case, NGOs raised the issue that he was underage when he committed the murder..... This case went up every level in the judiciary up to the Supreme Court which ruled that this issue should have been raised during various trials at the lower judiciary..... [but] this was not done. Noise was only made after the punishment was given..... The investigations were done [on NGOs demands] and it was found that the boy was not underage. These are the issues that give people the opportunity to say that they [NGOs] have to create such issues in order to justify their funding. There are many issues in Pakistan – minorities, blasphemy law etc. But the cultural context or sensitivities are ignored when [NGOs] take up these issues..... [because] of their disconnect from society..... We have members of civil society, some NGOs, who encourage separatist movements or those movements fighting armed battles in Balochistan..... how can

⁴¹ Interview 10, 20 April 2015; Interview 11, 21 April; Interview 18, 10 May 2015.

⁴² Interview 10, 20 April.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Interview 20, 19 June 2015.

⁴⁵ Interview 14, 29 April.

we support that? This creates difficulties in our response to NGOs and civil society.⁴⁶

A final significant challenge to NGOs is marked by their dependence on *international funding*. There is an infamous charge against NGOs in Pakistan that since they are foreign funded, they must work on foreign agendas. However, in research participants' observations, the nuances of international funding for NGOs are complex. In the context of Pakistan, where there is no financial support available from the state and public charity is almost always directed to the community welfare work, funding for human rights and democracy programmes is only obtained from international sources including the development agencies of the Western states and the international NGOs in their support for the global civil society. Cognizant of this fact, most research participants believe that 'the foreign tag is not a fatal thing as such.'⁴⁷ They do however strongly dispute the degree of its impact on NGOs' approaches to work – ethos and roles. As seen previously, from corporatisation to depoliticisation of NGOs, excessive salaries and fading volunteerism, NGOs' ethos to upholding the principles of independence, fairness, grass-roots connections, representation and accountability is critically questioned.⁴⁸ However, it is imperative to reiterate that though international funding is taken to contribute to such shifts in NGOs approaches, it is *itself* appreciated in the absence of domestic support and for the causes that NGOs endorse:

We have overseas funding from Norway, Netherlands, Denmark, etc. But we set and control our agenda - we do not toe anyone else's line. In a way, foreign funding is helpful to our watchdog role against the government. We are not against the government [in Pakistan] but we do want to keep a distance from it..... [so we can] make demands from it.....and we [can] reserve the right to criticise. By distance I mean that we do not take any concessions or financial help from government... neither do we take dictation. Our funding base gives us the resources and independence we need for our work.⁴⁹

NGOs in democratisation observe that whilst NGOs and civil society groups do get entrapped in funding and shift agendas, they are usually small NGOs for whom survival is a big concern. NGOs that have the resources to sustain, relevant networks and

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Interview 21, 20 June 2015.

⁴⁸ See Chapter V.

⁴⁹ Interview 2, 4 March 2015.

reputation, often set their own agendas even if it they are pushed by the donors to diverge:

We were running a large project funded by USAID. We completed it. We were one of the two Pakistani organisations.....that were to hold such a large financial portfolio. USAID requested us to work on FATA reforms. We said, yes as we needed to work on it. They also said that as part of the programme, they need profiles of prisoners in FATA. We wrote to them and said we cannot do espionage work and that they have come to the wrong place for the wrong information. The problem is that very few organisations can take this kind of stand against their donors. Most break.⁵⁰

Despite the fact that funding itself is appreciated, and besides the critique that has been already noted, international funding brings other intractable challenges for NGOs. A recent but significant trend in international funding for NGOs in Pakistan is the arrival of global companies in the development sector that work as intermediary fund and programme managers, worldwide. This presents a big challenge to even established NGOs who can otherwise resist donors' pressures. Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI), for example, is one such global company which is being contracted by international development agencies including DFID and USAID to manage national level governance and development programmes on their behalf. For most programmes, national NGOs are now having to agree contracts with DAI, instead of directly partnering with DFID or USAID. This complexity adds to the problem of corporatisation of development dynamics as the disconnect between funding agencies and grass-roots NGOs widens:

In 2000, NGOs had greater say to organise and spend their funds. Now the international business model has completely transformed this. Now a donor is not even willing to give \$ 50,000 to local NGOs. They give it to DAI. Most domestic NGOs are sub-sub-recipients of funds. Donors fund DAI, who give it to someone else and then who give to someone else. Funds are being channelised in this way..... this funding model requires you to bring the best business/corporate models. If you don't, how will you reduce costs. Anyone with a complete corporate mind-set would run this system more effectively. It won't be a social activist like me, who lacks this mind-set. All of us now have a fixed obligation price. We all must have a politically correct approach when our obligation prices are agreed upon before signing the funding contract with companies in development.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Interview 7, 10 April 2015.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Another significant aspect to international funding is donor agencies' relationship with the state. Often international donors, especially the state supported agencies in the West, fund governments in Pakistan to develop and deliver social development and good governance projects. For example, various education support programmes in Sindh and Punjab are being delivered through provincial governments who sub-contract the projects to NGOs. These multi-level partnerships bring distinct challenges as international donors act diplomatically to work with the state. A Director of an NGO based in Karachi with projects across Sindh observed:

International donors do not want to come across as the bad guy to the state. They want to build systems, give trainings and establish proper protocols. They have money and very good programmes, *but they are no use to NGOs and communities when our government demands (international donors) to make funding and programme decisions on the basis of its own interests.* For example, on girls' education programmes, they [donors and state] make decisions politically. State decides which districts to enter..... Let me give you an example. We were running a project in early 2000's. It was a primary education project. The project was already delayed for over a year because of the change in the government. New government wanted to select districts to which they [their supporters] belonged to. Okay, it was done. No issue (to international donors). Then, there was a secondary school education project. Logically, the plan was to work on secondary education where primary had already been fixed. But when the time came..... some other districts were selected on the government's intentions, because they wanted to distribute benefits to more areas without thinking about the logic of the programme..... the international donor accepted that. This reconciliation or compromise policy of donors..... to avoid stress, nobody is getting any benefits in the end. I think, they also have targets and have to respond to Congress. They want their projects implemented and outputs counted. They say, okay tell us which districts and we will go there. As sub-recipients of funds on that programme, we tried to alert the donors.....but government's acceptance is far more important than our cries. And to the intermediary development companies, the programme management and implementation is everything. They are least bothered about the small but significant changes for communities.⁵²

An important nuance related to external support and influence is the diversity in the availability of foreign funding for social and political development programmes. This nuance points to the heterogeneous nature of development dynamics in a given local

⁵² Interview 23, 21 June 2015.

setting. On one hand, political parties in the Western countries have their international chapters in Pakistan to promote their values and aims. They work with national political parties and NGOs to galvanise global political support in favour of their political visions. On the other hand, there is funding available for reforming *madrassas* that NGOs are particularly critical of:

[Supporting faith based organisations to generate progressive dialogue] This approach is completely wrong and it will backfire. Faith based in the European and British contexts is different. Alcoholics Anonymous is a faith-based organisation. That is their [funders] understanding. Our faith based organisations are armed to the teeth and their job is to kill. These guys have no idea what they are playing with when they say faith based. Most *madrassas* here are not just religious schools, they are part of a whole, horrible set up of extremism. They made this mistake before. They supported the *mujahedeen* and saw the consequences of it. They supported *Taliban*. Now they are saying let us support those who are better or moderates out of these groups. There are no moderates here anymore. It is a complete divide in Pakistan. You either have people like me who are considered Western, liberal or agnostic which is a tiny minority and everyone else is completely religious. There is no middle ground.⁵³

The above accounts of lived experiences of research participants from NGOs set out in detail the complexity and contested nature of their environment. This is imperative to comprehend prior to any in-depth exploration of their roles in democratisation. In a visual manner, I see this environment forming a web of contestations within which NGOs operate; an octagon in a reciprocal flow of influence (see Figure 1).

⁵³ Interview 1, 3 March 2015.

Figure 1: NGOs in Democratisation

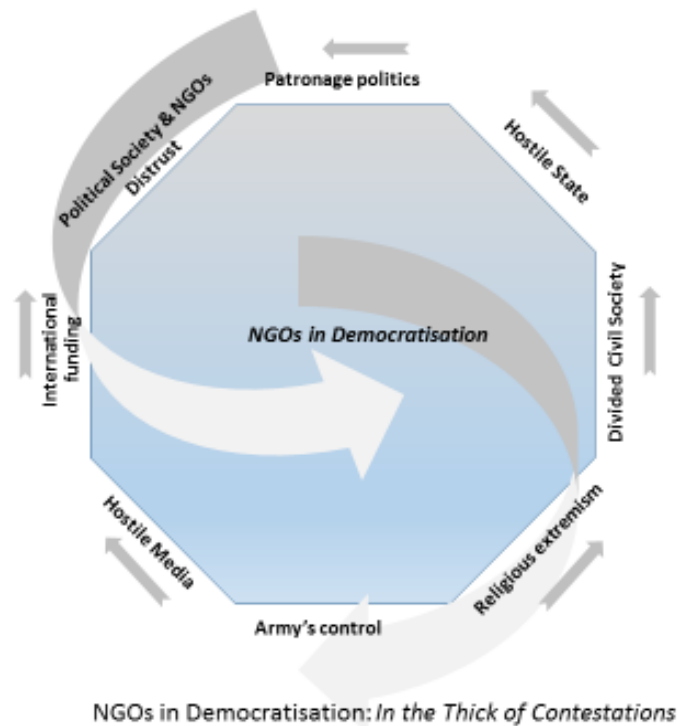


Figure 1 captures the eight dimensions of the contested environment within which NGOs in democratisation operate. The dynamic interaction between the eight aspects is shown through the small arrows. The two big arrows, in and out of the octagon, demonstrate the co-constitutive and reciprocal nature of the context and NGOs. In this flow, the political and social environments shape and constitute NGOs and in response, NGOs constitute their environment. As one whole, this becomes *the context* of democratisation in Pakistan, as experienced and understood by this research.

I now turn to describe and illuminate the roles of NGOs in the thick of contestations.

The Imperfect Necessity

Research participants' lived experiences of democratisation in Pakistan illuminate a contested environment for NGOs. This environment profoundly circumscribes NGOs' roles in democratisation – to promote democracy and establish a democratic culture. To sustain, NGOs adapt and modify their roles. In so doing, they conversely shape their environment. In this reciprocal process of engaging, responding and shaping of the environment, NGOs' are not passive agents, neither is their environment inert. They play an active role in shifting the bounds of the environment, hence generating distinct

ways of being. This mutual and dynamic relationship between NGOs in democratisation and their environment becomes *the context* of democratisation in Pakistan.

The final section completes this chapter with a discussion on the roles of NGOs in adapting to their environment. In so doing, it underscores the phenomenon of ‘projectised democratisation’ and develops the concept of *NGelites* (a portmanteau of elite-NGOs).⁵⁴ As *NGelites*, NGOs in projectised democratisation become the elite within the wider civil society. The internationally funded and supported *NGelites*, take the position of influence to discreetly join the political elite, push the democratic transition and establish a procedural democracy. Thus, in playing the following roles, *NGelites* become central to the phenomenon of democratisation in Pakistan – they become the Imperfect Necessity.

There is a large void which we [NGOs] are trying to fill. The void was in engaging and informing people or making them part of the mainstream processes. In our society, everything is controlled by the state from media to curriculum. State dictates people.....human rights and democracy do not get mentioned. To break all this and explain to people that you have rights and entitlements, water is your entitlement, once you pay taxes, school, health centres become entitlements – has been our effort. *We make people conscious of their entitlements.....* This is our contribution. *If there are elections, we work on that.* We are working on the upcoming local government elections to include the excluded i.e. minorities, women etc. Obviously, it will take time to assert itself. But there are indicators that it is [our effort] reaching somewhere. You will now see many women who are standing up as councillors and nazims.....*If the meaning of democracy is voice, then we have to give voice to the people. We have given that voice. We have made a process. We are now trying to systematise it.*⁵⁵

The contribution of NGOs in democratisation; in developing democratic institutions and embedding a democratic culture where human rights are entitlements, is being claimed in this assertion. It also emerges from this assertion that NGOs in democratisation play a dual role. Firstly, NGOs are the *educators*: they inform citizens about their entitlements including their right to political participation. In so doing, they

⁵⁴ The concept of *NGelites* is developed in this section. It is addressed in detail, in relation to the theory of democratic transition, in Chapter II.

⁵⁵ Interview 11, 21 April 2015. (My emphasis)

‘give voice to the people’ and promote civic education. Secondly, NGOs are *enablers*: they enable institutions and actors for an effective functioning of democracy. For example, in this statement, NGOs support the local government electoral system by developing prospective councillors and *nazims* (*district administrators*). Notwithstanding the prevalent critique noted in the previous chapter – including the self-critique by NGOs on their roles – most NGOs as research participants, assert that they play this dual role in democratisation. This dual role however is heavily circumscribed by the contested environment discussed above. This leads to the question of *how* do they play this dual role in midst of contestations and in what ways they navigate a space for themselves? This section illuminates responses to this question.

NGOs as educators

As *educators*, NGOs in democratisation ‘make citizens conscious of their entitlements.’ In so doing, they remain within the constitutional framework which guarantees fundamental rights and demands duties. Head of Programmes at a large democracy promotion and civil society infrastructure support NGO, observed:

Citizens should know their rights and duties enshrined in the Constitution. They should have knowledge about democracy and the democratic setup..... We sometime romanticise the public and consider them to be filled with wisdom. But the public live in our social pattern where they are simply not able to ascertain what their rights and duties are. They are set in their ways. It is not a question of illiteracy.... For long our relationship with the state has been a subservient one..... citizens are completely unaware of municipal laws (etc).....[W]e need prolonged civic education to end age old traditions. We need this for democracy.⁵⁶

NGOs’ role(s) in educating the public on constitutional entitlements must be considered in the contested environment where the state is hostile to NGOs; recurrent dictatorships and the dynastic and patronage politics have eroded meaningful political participation and religious extremism is intensifying. There is no financial support available for such projects at the local level. International funding from the West (e.g. USAID, DFID, EU, DANIDA etc) for democracy and human rights programmes is mostly directed at supporting political participation for the general elections. Limited funds are available

⁵⁶ Interview 18, 10 May 2015.

for building social and political consciousness on a long-term basis.⁵⁷ Some NGOs use funds from democracy programmes to build public consciousness on rights and entitlements alongside delivering agreed outputs for funded programmes.⁵⁸ They make use of the opportunities provided to them to expand reach and influence – as much as possible – for the activities that are needed in the context of democratisation in Pakistan. Others share their disappointment for not being able to work on this much-desired task due to lack of financial and human resources.⁵⁹ There is however a shared acknowledgment amongst NGOs, and between them and other research participants, that civic education, particularly about political engagement, rights and obligations of citizens vis-à-vis the state, is essential for sustained efforts for democracy. An established NGO's director gave an example of how they focus on building civic sense:

The primary premise should be that citizens interact with the state. They don't know that they have rights and entitlements..... To this day in Punjab, the Deputy Commissioner is considered as the final authority of the state.....the *patwari* is also very influential. We are trying to encourage people to claim their rights... (For example) we made a checklist of things that should be present in a primary healthcare centre or a primary school..... By law these things should be there. We did research, made checklists, and gave some citizens very basic training. We call them *barefoot researchers*. They go to these places and fill out the checklists. We told them use your right to know. It is very public, basic information. Every citizen has a right to know. The data came to us. We did a basic analysis of it and sent it back to them. They would then go to the relevant authorities. *We encourage them don't go to the press or the MP but use the process. The existing process should be exhausted first before we make demands for changes or new procedures.* Right now, we do not exhaust the process. If there is no teacher, people go to the MP. They must understand that it is not the role of the MP. It is okay to criticise the process but do that after you have exhausted it. It can only be changed when you know what problems it has. This is what we did with elections. We never said that elections were rigged. We said that this is the way elections should have been conducted by law....⁶⁰

There is a strong emphasis on citizens' rights to information and on operating within the system of governance to claim their entitlements. The focus on 'the existing processes' should be noted here for a subsequent discussion in this chapter. Suffice to

⁵⁷ Interview 17, 4 May 2015; Interview 13, 28 April.

⁵⁸ Ibid; Interview 9, 17 April.

⁵⁹ Interview 18, 10 May 2015.

⁶⁰ Interview 17, 4 May 2015. (My emphasis)

note here that projectised democratisation *deliberately* engages with working within the constitutional framework and utilising existing processes. I say deliberately because it looks to be a conscious choice on their part to establish approaches to democratisation based on evidence and support for the community. Projectised democratisation appears to be concerned with a sustained long-term change unlike democratisation through politically sensitive, momentary and issue-based advocacy which used to be the characteristic of democratisation as dissent.

We are talking about citizen's rights and entitlements guaranteed in the constitution and legal framework. Our role is to advocate and spread awareness. We have decided not to be an activist organisation. Our advocacy is based on technical evidence and information that we gather. We do not say that people should have blanket rights for whatever reason. We say your constitution guarantees these rights, these are the legal provisions and this is what's happening on the ground. This is our evidence.⁶¹

Evidence based advocacy through civic education is perceived as the premise for projectised democratisation. In playing this role, NGOs face serious challenges not only because of the social and political contestations, but also because of their limited reach and resources for such activities. An NGO professional whose organisation focuses on the provision of human rights education shared her concerns:

When this organisation was started in 1994, the idea was to work on education about human rights and democratic norms at a larger level. When I say education, I mean awareness and non-formal education. We designed a course with an all-inclusive human rights framework..... there were nine themes in the course including civil and political rights, right to development, economic, social and cultural rights, women's and children's rights, and so on.... We began teaching kids in 7th and 8th grades because we knew that at these grades, the state curriculum was feeding them anti-democratic agenda. The problem is that we cannot work across all institutions. Not all NGOs together can work across all institutions in Pakistan. *We can only work in selected organisations so scale is a big constraint.....but we still try to do it at small level.* In our society, many people have lost hope for any change for the better. They think much of it is engineered. They don't think vote is important so most don't vote. We try and train the kids so as future voters, they know how political parties are formed, how manifestos are made, and how to campaign and contest elections..... We do peace dialogues with children at schools.... We talk about accountability in public offices. We are trying to contribute to other NGOs' work on voter

⁶¹ Interview 7, 10 April 2015.

education. But our limited scale and lack of resources remain a big constraint.⁶²

It is a shared claim amongst NGOs that their contribution to civic education is paying off. They have been able to encourage and support an ordinary person from even the minority communities – such as *Bheel* or *Kohli* communities⁶³ – to contest elections.⁶⁴ Western support has been more than valuable in this, particularly in the context of dynastic and patronage politics. In this regard, NGOs blame political parties for ‘not doing enough’ for the inclusion of minority communities in their ranks. Promoting civic education is another area where political parties have let down the masses. “What they [political parties] were supposed to do – training of cadres, voters’ education, sensitisation, telling people that their votes and views matter – has been done by NGOs.”⁶⁵ The following quotes from senior NGO personnel suggest how NGOs have been pushing for a gradual change and must continue to build public consciousness:

The consciousness of free and fair elections – we worked on it and other NGOs did too. People have become very aware. They have also become keen to argue. But this consciousness has not fully taken roots. We have to keep pushing.⁶⁶

Before our problem was that we did not have elections – our first 25 years. Now we have decided that elections are unavoidable regardless of martial law. No dictator could say that he is anti-democracy... or anti-constitutional or against human rights..... this is one thing that we have ensured. Then the problem was that the parliament was prevented to complete its term. Now we are celebrating that we had our first democratic transition. The next issue is that the ingredients of a functioning democracy are missing. For example, the Prime Minister said that he will not go to the Senate and he did not go. *The functioning of democracy and building the consciousness of citizens through which the character of politicians is formed, must be our goal now.* Putting pressure on the government is necessary and this is part of our technique. *But our real audience is the public.*⁶⁷

NGOs as enablers

As *enablers*, NGOs in democratisation develop institutions and actors for an effective and sustainable democratic practice. They build the capacity of the parliament and

⁶² Interview 18, 10 May 2015.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Interview 9, 17 April 2015.

⁶⁶ Interview 23, 21 June 2015.

⁶⁷ Interview 17, 4 May 2015.

parliamentarians; government departments and bureaucrats; political parties and politicians; media and journalists; academics and NGOs. They work with political party-leaders and senior party members; parliamentary staff and departmental secretaries; members of provincial assemblies and provincial governments; councillors, *nazims* and others in local governments; members of parliamentary committees; the office of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the National Commission for Human Rights Pakistan (NCHR), and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

The capacity-building involves performing various functions including conducting research for evidence-based law and policymaking; publishing research and briefing papers on parliamentary procedures and on the regional-global best practices in parliamentary processes; holding briefing sessions, seminars, roundtable dialogues, and conferences on political and parliamentary issues; organising study visits to the exemplary democratic parliaments elsewhere; providing evidence on social and political issues to parliamentary committees and other platforms; and providing bespoke training sessions for all stakeholders to boost their performance according to democratic principles and the Constitution of Pakistan.

A distinct area in capacity-building of parliamentarians and government departments involves developing long-term contacts and establishing trust with politicians, parliamentarians and bureaucrats to inform and influence policymaking, law-making and law-reforms. This is also imperative to persuade them to attend training sessions for skill development. In this area, particularly, a shift in approaches to democratisation – from movement to projectised democratisation – has evidently taken place.

We are trying to develop a culture of evidence based advocacy. This is a new thing for most of us. Before (in the past) advocacy was done on the whims of an individual and research data was collected after that. Now research is conducted first and then on that basis, policy recommendations are made. This is a good change.⁶⁸

Most research participants from NGOs are reflective of what does and does not work when it comes to capacity-building institutions and actors. They try and adapt to the context in which they face distinct challenges. These challenges differ between

⁶⁸ Interview 7, 10 April 2015.

institutions and actors. I will illustrate this point through couple of examples. First, to influence law-making and policymaking, most NGOs believe that their *indirect* informative and advocacy role to enable the parliament and politicians, is the only way to establish democratic norms and practices. Some of them are aware of the trends in the West in involving the civil society by giving it a more direct and institutionalised role in informing law and policy. However, they do not see it worth pursuing in Pakistan. This is because of the multiple contestations concerning the hostility between state, political parties and NGOs; dilemmas related to international funding; NGO's own limited technical capacities; and simply because of their normative stance which considers it as the right of elected representatives to make law and policy. A senior manager at the Punjab office of an NGO working on democratisation observed:

We already have a role in this (in making laws and policies). The rules of the assembly (being amended in Punjab) state that NGOs and civil society has a status in standing committees. There is also international pressure to involve civil society and the government is bound to comply in certain areas for example in reporting on international conventions etc. When the Punjab assembly passed the domestic violence bill, they added a note saying that drafting of this bill had an input from civil society, specifically Aurat Foundation and Shirkat Gah have been part of this..... It's not a decision-making role, nor should we have it. This right must be reserved for the elected representatives. There is space for us in the system but it doesn't always get utilised.⁶⁹

Another NGO personnel had this to say about NGOs' role in law and policymaking:

An institutional improvement is that we are trying to go towards a responsible standing committee system. The public accounts committee's chairman belongs to the opposition. This is very healthy convention. Standing committees invite NGOs and other civil society organisations in their deliberations. This is becoming more usual than it used to be..... Another good change that has happened (which is beneficial for NGOs) is that the private members bills in the parliament can now be supported by the government if it wishes to do so. In the past, only the bills introduced by the government MPs received its support to make laws. Now it will be easier for NGOs to lobby and support individual MPs to present progressive private members bills.... If these things become conventions, NGOs role in law-making will be strengthened.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Interview 9, 17 April 2015.

⁷⁰ Interview 16, 2 May 2015.

Furthermore, the nuance of developing capacities of institutions also involves understanding how parliamentary system works. Often, it is not just about influencing politicians or political parties, but working with the parliamentary staff and government departments, which delivers the desired results. NGOs' capacity-building programmes are increasingly focusing on training provisions for politicians and NGOs in understanding parliamentary systems e.g. rules of procedures, prerogatives and duties of the government departments etc. However, the challenges of the contestations remain. A research participant from an NGO which specifically targets politicians to provide training and support stated:

Their (politicians and government departments) behaviour is very indifferent to the provision of technical assistance... I mean to our trainings. They say they have all the skills already and they are fine. Some might say yes, we need skills but majority will demand and focus on getting infrastructure support. They ask for laptops, cars, international tours, etc. So there is resistance which is not easy to tackle. Then there are sensitivities involved in letting outsiders in and observe the workings of the government departments or political parties..... It took us a long time to work with the Punjab Assembly to break these barriers. We worked with politicians and NGOs to help them understand how assembly works and which government departments are the key to develop contacts. We recommended them to work with four departments essentially – Finance, Law, Planning and Development and the issue-based department of their interest. These departments introduce legislation, finance it as they work with the budget. Some politicians and NGOs think that all their demands will be met through agitation or putting pressure on the government. It is not the case..... It is easy to sit outside the system and hold government or parliament accountable. But if you want them to improve, then at some stage you have to sit with them, hold dialogues and identify where you can work with them to help them establish democratic processes.⁷¹

Another example relates to the capacity-building of parliamentarians and political parties. In the early 2000s, NGOs in democratisation focused primarily on building the capacities of parliamentarians in the newly elected parliament. Since then, however, they realised that they ought to give priority to developing democratic practices and building skills at the level of political parties. This has its own challenges. Reflections below by the director of an NGO in democratisation illuminate this stance:

⁷¹ Interview 6, 4 April 2015.

[In the context of patronage politics] [P]arliamentarians have no drive of their own to debate policy whether it is within political parties or in the parliament. This is why our emphasis has shifted..... we had a realisation that some things are important before other things. Back when we had the military government (Musharraf's time) our entire focus was to bring democracy and remove dictatorship (however indirectly it was) This finer point of lack of democracy in political parties could not be raised then. That would have been a fatal attack on them. They were already being victimised.....Now since 2008, we have been focusing on democracy in political parties. Only now we have a space to initiate this debate within political parties, not before. We feel that since democracy is somewhat gaining ground, this is the time to ask questions.⁷²

Enabling the institution of political parties emerges as a substantive and shared objective amongst NGOs in democratisation. Other research participants also share this objective by assigning priority to the development of political parties. For some, despite recurrent dictatorships, political parties' survival over the years manifests their resilience and periodic returns of democracy in Pakistan against all odds.⁷³ For others, democratisation depends on the 'scope and scale' of democratic institutions to have the legitimacy and reach to sensitise the public for democracy.⁷⁴ It is unanimously understood amongst the research participants that political parties are the only institution with such scope and scale, whereas NGOs lack in this considerably. It was also accepted that the prolonged dynastic and patronage politics has had negative impact on the functioning of political parties. Nonetheless, political parties are *the institution* which need strengthening for any sustained efforts in democratisation. There is a recognition that instead of feeling 'frustrated about the undemocratic practices in political parties', NGOs should 'continue to focus' on developing democratic culture and practices in political parties and must see it as 'a gradual change' and 'a historical process through which change takes place.'⁷⁵

NGOs in democratisation also have a fundamental (rather internal) role in enabling the wider civil society to advocate, educate, and establish democratic culture in the society. This is the area known as 'capacity-building of the civil society'. A somewhat common approach is that relatively large and established NGOs provide skills training and

⁷² Interview 16, 2 May 2015.

⁷³ Interview 2, 4 March 2015; Interview 8, 15 April 2015.

⁷⁴ Interview 21, 20 June 2015; Interview 17, 4 May 2015.

⁷⁵ Interview 16, 2 May 2015.

infrastructure support, including sub-grants, to small NGOs based in local areas. Such support includes providing training sessions on developing human resources; writing funding proposals; establishing board of trustees; promoting linkages and partnership funding bids; collecting basic data in the areas of health and education provisions; and promoting civic and human rights education. One Head of Programmes at the infrastructure support and democracy promotion NGO referred to these smaller NGOs and civil society groups as ‘islands of democracy’ and therefore the role of NGOs in democratisation must include supporting partner and smaller NGOs to become “strong institutions.....that are active, aware and dynamic.”⁷⁶

Finally, enabling institutions for democratisation demands political acumen and sensitivity with regards to the institutions involved and the ‘timing’ of the issue concerned. One of the NGOs discusses this in light of their work on electoral processes and institutions. In their role of advocacy for electoral reforms, they take it very seriously to conduct rigorous research and to collect data as widely in the society as possible. The “kind of data which we have now, even the ECP [Election Commission of Pakistan] does not have it” they claimed.⁷⁷ In utilising this data, however, they keep the context of historically weak electoral politics in sight. They abstain from going to media with their research findings, which they believe is like “giving more fire to the claims of inconsistencies during elections (e.g. rigging).....to destabilise the already fragile system.”⁷⁸ They have been building good working relationships with the ECP and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Election Reforms. They present the research evidence and make recommendations for a stronger and sustainable electoral legal system, “which is not an easy or straight-forward exercise given the political fragility of democracy in Pakistan.”⁷⁹

That NGOs as *educators* and *enablers* are absolutely necessary and important in democratisation, has been claimed by most research participants. However, considering the contestations, these roles are essentially *supportive* in nature. In the context of Pakistan, there is an undisputed recognition amongst the research participants, that the

⁷⁶ Interview 18, 10 May 2015.

⁷⁷ Interview 17, 4 May 2015.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

political society has the *utmost potential* as a proactive agency for the consolidation of democracy in Pakistan.

Yes, there is fragmentation..... there are tensions between NGOs and the political society. But it will improve with political agreements. Apart from all the procedural stuff they (NGOs) do, if there are individuals in them who understand the long-term politics, they can help with that. If not, then that's not an issue. Political society will find a way. Change comes out of political negotiations. The influence they can have on legislation or lobbying is important. But they (NGOs) cannot take up an active role in law-making yet. These issues will be picked up by the political society. NGOs will legitimise liberal democratic issues and de-legitimise opposing issues. I see their role in filling the gap in liberal values. They are the ones who are free from constituency politics and are technically able.....But nobody is going to tolerate a seat for NGOs in every parliamentary committee or forum. These are legitimate limitations.⁸⁰

In their supporting role to the institutions and actors, NGOs in democratisation are illuminated as increasingly focusing to establish and strengthen processes. I now turn to this 'procedural focus' which underpins the phenomenon of projectised democratisation and reveals a significant nuance.

NGOs as processors

Through their lived experiences, I see NGOs in democratisation as essentially playing a role of *processors*; working cautiously and continuously on a series of actions to achieving a desired end. Establishing a liberal, representative and democratic parliamentary system in Pakistan is that desired end. As processors, most NGOs in this research are aware of the contested context in which they act, and in making of which they also contribute. Their supportive roles as *educators* and *enablers* of institutions and actors are heavily circumscribed in the contested context of dynastic and patronage politics; hostility of the state and the army; international funding dilemmas; and religious extremism among other factors. In such conditions, most NGOs – reflectively – act to strengthen the parliamentary processes through purposefully designed projects and programmes. I would argue that the projectised democratisation, as the consequence of NGOs' actions, is included in the actions itself. It cannot be any other

⁸⁰ Interview 21, 20 June 2015.

way. Within it, NGOs build on the existing positive assets of the democratic constitutional framework and the multiparty political system and strive for finer improvements in democratic structures of political parties, assemblies, local governments and other institutions. As processors, they also need to be discreet: they must not present themselves as competitors to the political society, nor should they stir the hostility of the state and the army to ‘disrupt the already fragile democracy’. They sensibly decide when, where and how to act; what interventions to make; and who should they approach, influence and work with. This includes a choice of their donors and negotiating agendas. Procedural gains will slowly but surely achieve the desired end, it is believed:

If procedural connectedness leads to political democracy then what could be better than supporting regular elections and calling for the transition of power, etc. In KP, local elections were held and the KP government will have to tolerate district governments composed of opposing political parties. This is a landmark. Procedurally, we are trying to do everything that needs to be done..... International pressures for these procedural shifts, is also a good thing. Yes, procedural things and political things will sometimes appear out of balance, but the theory is that eventually we will win. We must also recognise that procedures sometimes help and sometimes hinder..... *Our balancing act is different.* For instance, the previous elections had procedural flaws but the politically wise thing to do was not to disturb things. In terms of purely maintaining procedures, this may not have been a good thing. In terms of long-term fight, this was the wise thing to do. *Managing these contradictions is also a kind of politics that NGOs practice. We understand it better now than we did before.....*⁸¹

It is this ‘balancing act’, which NGOs ‘understand better than before’, that underpins their roles as processors and distinguishes them from NGOs in the past. The milieu of multiple contestations requires multiple actions. In doing so, NGOs face serious challenges in establishing their credibility as technically capable organisations, to local institutions as well as to their donors. For instance, whilst international funding is not a problem per se (for example in election monitoring), the claims made by NGOs are often ‘undeliverable’ in local settings:

To determine the credibility of elections process we refer to EU monitors and international observers. So if NGOs get DFID or USAID money, it is not a big deal. The bigger problem is for NGOs when they claim big things and promise more than they could

⁸¹ Ibid. (My emphasis).

possibly deliver. Their credibility gets placed at stake. The political economy of foreign funding is damaging from this point of view.⁸²

The utmost dimension to this balancing act is the army's direct and indirect influence in politics. NGOs believe that by focusing on strengthening the processes of democracy, they have been able to limit army's direct control over politics. For example, focused and sustained actions on the election monitoring and advocacy for regular, free and fair elections are paying off as holding elections has become a norm. An NGO personnel proudly claimed:

We have made a deterrent. If there is a martial law in Pakistan – note that there won't be a martial law, but even if there is – it will be short lived. The space for it has reduced. People will not accept it anymore..... We are developing a constituency for democracy. People who have come through local government elections, nearly 150,000 elected, they are not going anywhere. They will want a future election..... There is a constituency of elections now..... Even the worst dictatorship, cannot survive without elections. We have created a force and a demand. This is expanding.... Now military generals and their supporters will think twice..... We are producing an electoral political system. Never in the past would these buggers with their chips on their shoulders come to us asking for advice. Now they do.⁸³

Limiting the army's direct control – as the balancing act – also requires NGOs to pragmatically accept its long-term institutional influence. Pakistan's army is the only institution in Pakistan with a coherent organisational structure based on ample financial and human resources. Its influence and indirect control over politics and society is undisputed. There is thus a consciousness that in “the power equation of Pakistan's institutions, army is the most significant actor” and NGOs in democratisation must not only accept this fact but also consider its significance in the context of rising religious extremism and its threats for NGOs.⁸⁴

In the country that we live in, if you want to have a role in the power equation then you should go to the GHQ (General Head Quarters of the Army). They are an actor in the ways the state works and delivers for the people of Pakistan.⁸⁵

⁸² Interview 2, 4 March 2015.

⁸³ Interview 11, 21 April 2015.

⁸⁴ Interview 7, 10 April 2015.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

This assertion illuminates another significant dimension to the ‘balancing act’ which underpins the phenomenon of projectised democratisation: a desire to have ‘a role in the power equation.’ In conversing with the research participants, through understanding and interpretation, I believe that a shift in democratisation from movement and resistance to projectised democratisation is a manifestation of the balancing act of NGOs in a contested context. NGOs’ actions in projectised democratisation are process oriented, elite, urban, professional, and depoliticised because this is the only way through which they can narrow the gap that exists between them and the power elite consisting the army, the bureaucracy and the political elite. This is how NGOs in democratisation develop as *NGelites* of projectised democratisation. Without having a somewhat equal role and recognition in the elite workings of politics, NGOs cannot possibly achieve their desired end. Projects oriented democratisation is the answer to the contested context of democratisation in Pakistan. In this sense, if democratic consolidation is a necessity, it is *imperfectly* contingent to NGOs’ navigating a space in the power equation and operating as *NGelites* – one of the power elites. This balancing act is *the imperfect necessity*. Lived experiences of the research participants illuminate that there is enough evidence – in the contested context of Pakistan’s politics and society – which justifies the imperfect necessity of projectised democratisation. Consequently, *NGelites* themselves become the imperfect necessity: as NGOs, they might have lost their ideal appeal of employing radical approaches to democratisation, but as *NGelites*, they feel that there is enough evidence to justify that they are necessary for the consolidation of democracy in Pakistan.

I understand further that in projectised democratisation, there exists a reciprocal link between the agency of NGOs and the structure of their environment. They influence and constitute each other. As discussed above, the octagon of contestations – as the dynamic and reciprocal link between NGOs and their environment – becomes the context of democratisation. In this way, the charge on *NGelites* for being ‘oblivious to the local context’ seems to be assumed. The ‘local’ context of Pakistan cannot be understood in the binaries of local vs Western. It is much more complex and involves myriad of factors. It reveals that the potential for democratisation as resistance and movement is no more a possibility in the context of Pakistan where politics is an elite practice amongst the elitist social and political groups. NGOs in democratisation are navigating a space to join in this group, constructing a compromise which not only

benefits the political system by establishing a basic democratic political set up, but also entitles – however limited – the citizens with fundamental rights. A CEO of a democracy promotion NGO stated:

The system (of democracy) has to continue. There should not be military interventions.... Democracy as a process takes time to refine. People who get elected might remain the same in the short-term, but they will be refined. State and religion should be kept separate. NGOs will now continue to strengthen this process. Our work is not restricted to civic education for the citizens. We also need to work with elite politicians, religious party leaders, academics and journalists.⁸⁶

Concluding reflections

[A]nd that those that pretend to lead may at least be imbued with a modicum of common sense.⁸⁷

Departing from chapter five in which a shift in NGOs' approaches to democratisation – from resistance to projectised democratisation – was revealed, in this chapter I have observed the nuances of the phenomenon of projectised democratisation. In so doing, through the lived experiences of NGOs' personnel, I have shown the complexity of social and political context in Pakistan, which circumscribes the roles of NGOs in democratisation. In such context, NGOs ascribe a dual role for themselves in furthering democracy – i.e. as educators and enablers. I additionally understand that in projectised democratisation, NGOs, in fact, are processors; working cautiously and continuously on a series of actions to support the consolidation of democracy in Pakistan. Through purposefully designed projects and programmes, most NGOs act to strengthen the parliamentary processes. They also perform a balancing act vis-à-vis the army and the political elite of Pakistan. In so doing, NGOs become elite themselves. I have called them *NGelites*. They perceive to have contributed to limiting the direct control of the army over politics. At the same time, they pragmatically accept the organisational strength and influence of the army, and desire to navigate a space in the power equation of the traditional political actors including the army, bureaucracy and the political elite. Being elite, urban, professional, depoliticised and process oriented *is the only way* through which NGOs can narrow the gap that exists between them and the power elite.

⁸⁶ Interview 18, 10 May 2015.

⁸⁷ Ardeshir Cowasjee, 'Winding Down' *DAWN*, December 25, 2011, available at <https://www.dawn.com/news/683117>.

In this sense, this balancing act is *the imperfect necessity*, perhaps infused with ‘a modicum of common sense’ which Cowasjee – a famous political and social commentator in Pakistan – hoped for, albeit in a much wider political context.

However, I still feel the need for a deeper, somewhat personalised look, into the phenomenon of democratisation. This will allow me to acquire a profound and thicker interpretation of the conceptual structures – informed by their experiences – of the research participants. To illuminate such conceptual structures and cohere the two themes, in chapter VII, I present a final vignette. Written as an autobiographical account of my meeting with an NGO personnel, this vignette is adapted from a number of interviews transcriptions. As “symbolic expressions of lived experiences”, the vignette brings me, as a researcher, into the lived experience of democratisation. The main character is developed as a ‘composite character’ to combine the views expressed by a number of NGOs’ personnel. Thus, the character and setting of the vignette is fictionalised to imaginatively capture ‘thoughts’ and ‘feelings’ (theories) of the research participants. More importantly, the vignette, provides ‘a gaze’ into the nature of democratisation as it is lived by its actors.

Chapter VII: Reflective Summary

In which the uncertainty of democratisation in multiple contexts is conceded.

By way of reflecting on the key insights into the nature of democratisation and the roles of NGOs in it, in this chapter I conclude this research. For this purpose, I bring the theoretical discussions and empirical insights together to emphasise the theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions that this research makes in the academic literatures on democratisation. I revisit the main arguments, presented earlier, to first summarise them reflectively and then draw a conclusion. This revisiting does not follow the sequence in which the arguments are presented in the previous chapters. Rather, it narrates the analysis in a manner by which the essence of democratisation is illuminated.

Having observed NGOs in democratisation and the challenges they face in the context of Pakistan, I situated this research into the procedural and minimalist conceptions of democracy, constitutionalism and democratisation as advanced by O'Donnell and Schmitter within the transition theory paradigm. By using this standpoint, I argued that the understanding of the nature or agency of NGOs, one should observe in its context – such a context is shaped by internal and external influences including the constraints of structures of power inherent in the practice of international aid and associated conditionality. I have argued that this contextual approach contests the liberal benchmark of a 'good' civil society and its critiques because the 'normative framing' of NGOs does not help with examining the ways NGOs do things in the global South. For example, in Pakistan, as I have mentioned, NGOs, as organisations are promoting democracy by shaping government policy and legislation, are recognised for advancing public interest and related causes including human rights, minorities and women's issues; and are engaged in election monitoring; legislative strengthening and accountability support; anti-corruption research; citizenship education, and other "good things" that contribute to promoting democracy.

These activities make more sense when we place them in the historical and socio-political context which I categorised in four distinct waves of democratisation: 'testing democracy' (1947-1958), 'idealising democracy' (1972-1977), 'personalising

democracy' (1989 – 1998) and 're-constitutionalising democracy' (2008-). I have argued that (a) despite its failure, the first wave of 'testing' democracy itself was crucial in establishing a polity in which democratic principles were debated, fought for, repeatedly ignored, altered and negotiated as compromises. Had Pakistan begun with autocracy, there would have been no such avenues; (b) the second wave of 'idealising' democracy was a lost opportunity to establish representative democracy in the broken Pakistan of post 1971. Though initially Bhutto fostered the popular support, idealised parliamentary representative democracy with an ideological preference for socialist democracy, in the end he failed to deliver a liberal state owing to his intolerance for a legitimate political opposition; (c) the third wave of democratisation was driven by 'personalised' politics in the sense that despite the opportunity for the civilian governments, the major political parties failed to establish stronger democratic institutions and continued to undermine public's trust in democracy by following personalised leadership. In this sense, though crucial constitutional gains were made, they were mainly used to exercise 'parliamentary dictatorship'; and finally given the recent political developments in Pakistan, the current state of (d) the fourth wave of democratisation is uncertain – despite the efforts into 're-constitutionalising' democracy, the future of a continued civilian rule is still an open question.

In discussing the history of democratisation in waves, I noted that Pakistan's beginnings with the British bureaucratic and administrative state structure; elite-led edifice of Pakistani movements; identity crises of the nascent state on the basis of religion and language; negation of the Bengali majority in organising national governance and the centralisation of state at the expense of provincial authority; development of the 'establishment' and its influence on politics; Islamisation of the state laws; and external influences from Cold War to the War on Terror, have all contributed to the perpetual democratic deficit in Pakistan. However, I also noted that despite these factors, democracy continued to aspire the imagination of many of its believers. Thus, I have argued that the question of the resilience of democracy despite formidable recurrent dictatorships, is significant. I explored the factors behind the resilience of democracy. I suggested that the development and survival of political parties and their resistance against the dictatorships as well as the repeated rejection of the personalised rule of the leaders at the expense of isolating other political actors have been the significant

reasons behind the resilience of democracy. I concluded that one of the main reason behind the resilience has been the role of civil society and NGOs in democratisation.

However, upon reflecting on the nature and role of civil society in Pakistan's democratisation, I have argued NGOs in Pakistan are the 'historical product', embedded in the edifice of Pakistan's politics and its democratic deficit as well as a force of resilience. In this sense, the civil society and NGOs mirror Pakistan's political development in its making. They are neither good nor bad. They are constituted by the socio-political culture in which they operate and they also constitute it. They shift their approach to democratisation in response to the changes in the social and political environment. Until 1980s, NGOs approach to democratisation involved resistance, fight and movement. Despite limited funds and structured organisational setups, NGOs were able to gather global support for their issue based advocacy for human rights and democracy. They were defiant even against the dictatorships. However, in the late 1990s, NGOs developed a strong focus on projects and programmes. With the help of international funding, large projects on parliamentarians training and capacity-building were focused on neatly defined outputs and outcomes. Corporate style organisational structures were introduced with urban centred offices for NGOs. Volunteerism and commitment for the cause were replaced with highly paid professionals with technical skills. In other words, approaches to democratisation diverged from movement and resistance to projectised democratisation.

I have argued that the nuances of projectised democratisation cannot be understood without carefully considering the context in which NGOs in democratisation operate in Pakistan. NGOs in Pakistan have ascribed a dual role for themselves in furthering democracy – as educators and enablers. In projectised democratisation, NGOs, in fact, are processors; working cautiously and continuously on a series of actions to push the transitional democracy in Pakistan towards consolidation. Through purposefully designed projects and programmes, most NGOs act to strengthen the parliamentary processes. They also perform a balancing act vis-à-vis the army and the political elite of Pakistan. In so doing, NGOs become elite themselves. I have called them NGelites. They perceive to have contributed to limiting the direct control of the army over politics. At the same time, they pragmatically accept the organisational strength and influence of the army, and desire to navigate a space in the power equation of the

traditional political actors including the army, bureaucracy and the political elite. Being elite, urban, professional, depoliticised and process oriented is the only way through which NGOs narrow the gap that existed between them and the power elite. In this sense, this balancing act is the imperfect necessity.

Going back to O'Donnell and Schmitter's transition theory I have argued that contrary to how the roles of NGOs are conceptualised as generating norms for liberalisation; condemning and exposing regime's corruption; and creating a general climate of rejecting the authoritarian regime, NGOs with international, financial and ideological support in democratic transitions might in fact emerge as the elite of civil society. Yet, similar to the ways in which bourgeoisie political and economic elite act in democratic transitions, NGOs may also – for vested interests – support the political elite and push the processes of transition by advocating for a less radical and more procedural transition to democracy.

In interpreting the nature of democratisation as 'projectised' and the role of NGOs as 'NGelites', I have offered the main contributions of this research. However, I still feel the need for a deeper, somewhat personalised look, into the phenomenon of democratisation. I realise that in researching through exploring the lived experiences of others, I have also been living the experience of researching democratisation. The act of researching and writing has fundamentally transformed my orientation to understanding NGOs in democratisation as my assumptions have been exposed and challenged. Thus, narrating my own experience of meeting and discussing democratisation with the people in NGOs, may help with revealing a little more about democratisation. It may also cohere the lived experiences of the people in NGOs with my experience of researching. With this in mind, I now present the final vignette which captures the experience of my research. In this sense, the act of writing creatively will help me transcend from being a researcher into the domain of the people experiencing democratisation in NGOs in Pakistan.

The vignette is set as an event in which I meet with a known human rights and democracy activist at an NGO. This setting is fictionalised to present one of the 'many' sites of democratisation in Pakistan. Similarly, the lead character in this vignette presents one of the multiple facets of experiencing democratisation. This character is

also a composite character; this means that in making this character, I have used multiple interview transcriptions. Therefore, the identity of this person that I meet in this vignette reflects a composite identity of a few people who have informed this research. By way of narrating my experience of researching democratisation, in a manner similar to other vignettes, I focus on presenting the ‘symbolic expressions of lived experiences’. Finally, though the vignette is based on interviews, I have adapted the text of transcriptions creatively.

The Dissenter

[Jahan leads an NGO in Lahore, focused on providing legal aid to the destitute people. She has for long fought for instituting the culture of democracy, human rights and equality. She believes that though dissent is dead, the dissenter spirit must be kept alive for the sustenance of democracy in Pakistan. Jahan’s tale represents those research participants whose perception of NGOs in democratisation is that of ‘a fight’. They stay true to liberal ideology, local(ness), values and morality. Jahan, as a character, manifests a crucial aspect of the phenomenon of NGOs in democratisation, and of democratisation itself.]

It was the midst of June. Nearly four in the afternoon but the heat and humidity of Lahore was still intensifying. Standing outside a modest commercial building in Lahore, I felt smothered, not because of the heat, but because I was finally going to meet Jahan.

It took me over a month to set up a meeting with her. Her office assistant kept apologising for making and then cancelling the appointments mainly for the unexpected turn of events and commitments that Jahan had to attend. At last, there I was, hot and nervous as I entered the building. Having no idea which floor of the building the office was situated, I kept going up the stairs. Besides, no lifts were in sight in that narrow and old fashioned concrete structure. Upon noticing the board with Jahan’s name, I pressed the buzzer. The door was opened by a middle-aged, modest looking tallish man, wearing worn grey trousers and a blue-grey lined shirt. Like his clothes, he also looked worn. His face was made prominent by his thick glassed black framed specs. Looking exhausted (perhaps after working all day or because of the airless office), he politely

welcomed me with a busy and quick smile. He went behind the counter labelled 'Reception'. Before I said anything, he asked, "are you Arjumand?" I nodded as he busily affirmed my appointment in a ledger. "I am Mushtaq, Jahan's assistant" he said. "You have been conversing with me for this appointment. I am sorry about all the cancellations. Can I get you a glass of water?" It was an unexpected offer. In the month of Ramzan, when most people in Pakistan were fasting, the offer was unusually fresh. I wasn't fasting but politely refused the offer as it is commonly expected in response. He then set off to guide me to Jahan's office.

Following him through a small hall, I felt a sense of urgency in the averagely furnished office. There were three smaller rooms and a big common room, all visible through cheap glass doors. There were people in all rooms, some conversing with each other in a more client-officer look, whilst others busy taking phone calls. There were some destitute looking people – men but mostly women – sitting on a few seats in the hall. They looked like they were waiting to be seen. As we approached the end of the hall, I saw Jahan, behind the glass door of one of the smaller rooms. Mushtaq opened the door, softly announcing "Arjumand is here".

"I am Jahan" a petit woman promptly stood up behind a busy and messy looking work-desk, warmly offering a handshake. Dressed in an inexpensive shalwar-qameez with a dupatta casually held across her neck, Jahan could be described as any other Pakistani urban woman in her late 50s. With her short hair loosely tied at the back, she was wearing a small chain with a single pendant. Her small and feeble looking hands had a few rings, with a wristwatch visible at the end of her left hand. What made her unusual however, was her pensive eyes behind her thinly framed glasses.

While greeting her with a handshake, I seated myself on the chair across her. The busy and messy looking work-desk separated us. The room felt even smaller with a tall bookcase filled with books and files. Next to a small window, covered with blinds, was a table with a desktop. There was also a carry-along suitcase (as if she was or will be travelling) and large handbag filled with papers. "Arjumand, your research looks interesting" she remarked in Urdu in a direct and swift manner. "I read through the description you sent through email. How can I help?" I was a bit astonished. I was not expecting such a candid, welcoming and direct response from one of the most known

human rights activists, for whom I always held high respect and considered as a role model. Not being able to confirm my appointment with her, I disappointingly assumed that she must be difficult to approach, perhaps even a little arrogant. But her presence felt contrary to my assumptions. Feeling a bit relaxed, I began with thanking her for her time to which she reacted quickly and said “no need”. I explained that my research was about exploring the roles of internationally funded NGOs in democratisation. Since she was leading an NGO with an aim to promote democracy and human rights, and had long been involved in pro-democracy resistance movements, I wanted her to share her observations and concerns as she experienced them over the years.

“The role of NGOs in the context of Pakistan has been extremely positive and important” she began, only this time conversing in English. “Civil society has always been here in Pakistan before the conventional kind of NGOs that have come in now. These were introduced in the 80s. One of the reasons that in a Muslim country, dogmatic Islamic discourse has been resisted, is because of this civil society. What I call civil society, are poets, writers, union of journalists, trade unions, legal community, people who are liberal in their thought, who may or may not get together to form certain organisations. Even political parties are part of civil society in Pakistan. Pakistan has survived because it has political parties. But our state has never recognised this civil society. Nor do they recognise us now. They tolerate us because of international pressures. For example, they are compelled to involve us in developing the progress reports to the CEDAW Committee at the UN. But by and large, since the Ayub era, there has been a regulated effort to hegemonise this civil society including curbing the development of political parties. So to this day, state does not communicate with us. It makes laws and introduce policies without any consultation, so we have been essentially kept at a distance. In a democracy, it is important that everything done in terms of the law and law-making, should not just be thoroughly discussed in the parliament, but also outside the parliament. In the colonial times, people were asked to give their opinion and the same should happen now. But, except for the businessmen who are consulted discreetly before the budget is announced or a finance bill is introduced, nothing else is done. Laws are made without consultation of lawyers; education policy is made without consulting with educationists and so on. So, we are kept at the margins.” Suddenly the door opened with a knock and Mushtaq entered with a serving trolley carrying covered food trays. Jahan slightly nodded and began to clear

her desk making space for food. “You will have to excuse me. I have not had any lunch. And I am advised that I must not miss my meals. Are you fasting?” I shook my head and said “please have your lunch”.

Jahan resumed talking as Mushtaq laid the table. “So, I was saying that despite this discouraging, in fact hostile attitude of the state, we kept demanding to be heard. We kept scrutinising them, even the dictators, for failing to deliver basic needs and security for our people. Women’s rights organisations have, in particular, played a laudable role. Thank you Mushtaq” Jahan broke the conversation as Mushtaq left the room. “I remember that back in 80s, the *chaddar* and *chardiwari* was an ascending slogan in Pakistan under the rule of Zia-ul-Haq. But we broke down the framework that they were creating for women. We were few of us as a network, but we managed to jolt people not just in Pakistan but even the international community started asking questions in their capitals against Zia’s Islamisation laws. Much credit should be given to the feminists of the West. They came to our rescue defying their own governments who were supporting Zia’s *jihad* in Afghanistan. A global pressure was generated and a public outcry compelled the dictator to back off. In this way, the Western civil society played a significant role. We have had people like Habib Jalib and Faiz among others who are institutions in themselves. They have given life, thought and progressive mind-set to many of us. They too were sheltered by the West and its civil society, when placed in exile by our state. So, for me, civil society in Pakistan has been organised, dynamic and daring. It has been guided by the values of democracy, participation, fundamental freedoms for citizens, protection and advocacy for the rights of minorities.” While speaking, Jahan began to unimposingly share food, serving me everything that was there at the table. I gestured to politely refuse, which she swiftly ignored and kept serving. I noticed, it was home-cooked simple lunch in small portions. Only much later in time I came to know that at the time of our meeting, Jahan was undergoing medical treatment for a serious illness. I still wonder how she did it, taking time for activism and fulltime work despite being seriously ill. But that was Jahan. A usual looking, but an unusually strong woman.

“What do you think of these new NGOs that are internationally funded for defined projects and programmes? Do you think they are doing what you as an activist used to do or still do?” I asked as I nibbled on the mixed seasonal fruits. “I consider them non-

conventional NGOs as they are different from NGOs in the past” Jahan continued. “I am not against international support. Western civil society has always supported our civil society for pursuing democratic aims. They also pressurise their governments so their governments are compelled to support us and pressure our state to have a democratic set up. I am also not denying that the West is often guided by its own vested strategic interests. True that the West had supported the most formidable dictatorships in Pakistan. Nonetheless, their financial and issue based support is extremely valuable for our civil society to make even little stitches in the torn fabric of our socio-political experience. It has to be our own judgement with which we should balance our priorities. Our organisation is funded by the Western partners – both by the state and civil society institutions. But we set our own agendas. I would not say that all NGOs set their own agendas. Some may have their funding agencies’ agendas, I cannot deny that. But that doesn’t just happen in the civil society. Our state – including government and the army – follows foreign agendas when compelled to in exchange of financial rewards, so how can they blame us? Just because they have been given legitimacy by their institutions doesn’t mean they are beyond the bounds of scrutiny. It is all because of this historical hostility against the civil society that we face the charge of following foreign agendas. I simply laugh at these charges. As if our society and state is completely innocent of not taking any external influence. But I do think that present day NGOs should have a common sense and not poor-judgements. They must understand that in Pakistan, the work they do is political to its core. And they should openly accept that. They should work alongside political parties to develop a critical mass but keep their distance from them by not directly engaging and playing a political role. They must work collectively and develop what I call ‘collective wisdom’ for liberal values. There must be deep knowledge: I think that an NGO that does not have deep knowledge of its own society is not helpful to democracy. I’ll give you an example. When General Musharraf came to power, if you look at the newspapers of those days, and I wish you would, apart from the HRCP, not a single NGO opposed the military dictatorship. The reason being that they thought liberalism can spring out of the barrel of a gun. There is the contradiction. The people at HRCP have for years stood up against dictatorships. They have spent years in jail. They had taken the beating on streets and their members were killed by the establishment. They know what the barrel of a gun is like. So, we must learn from them. NGOs should be able to differentiate myths from reality. I would say that what is most important for an NGO is to gain respect of the public that they are addressing.

To find such respect in a society in which NGOs are under attack is not easy. But who said our work was supposed to be easy! A few welfare organisations in Pakistan managed to achieve this status such as Edhi. HRCP is also respected to a certain extent. But the rest of NGOs, I don't see them taking positions as openly as they should." Jahan's voice was evenly paced, with clear sentences in sequence. So far, her expression kept a sustained tone.

"Where do you get your funding from?" I asked having been given a chance to speak. "We have overseas funding from Norway, Netherlands, Denmark, EU and other European countries. But we set the agenda. We do not take funding from the US – directly or indirectly. We don't even take funding from the private citizens of America. We have a distinct worldview. Many NGOs in our community do not subscribe to our secular liberal worldview and keep their distance from us. That is all fine. We have nothing against them. But I do believe that civil society is only civil if it does not have criminal aims. Our society is fast becoming a violent place. Dissent is not accepted here. The right wing is soaring. We all have to fight religious extremism together for our survival. I have to say that in a culture where tolerance, equality, and freedom of expression are heavily restrained, NGOs have taken up important issues to advocate. If they were not there, there would be no freedom of expression and no talk of taboos in this country. I believe, in fact I know, that there is no option for this country's survival but democracy. There has never been a moment in time when even 200 people got together to bring in military. If military has ever been called in, it was done by our weak civilian governments, not by the citizens of Pakistan. This is where NGOs should direct their efforts to. To keep in check the governments that they do not resort to calling for the military rule."

"What makes your or your NGO's approach different from other NGOs in democratisation?" I probed further.

"We make demands from the government and if the government asks us to come anywhere to speak or inform their approach, we never refuse. We reserve our right to criticise, as we should do. Our work is primarily awareness and advocacy for the people who cannot speak for themselves. We also do not 'train' parliamentarians or do leg-work for them. We consider this service delivery, and we don't have resources for it.

For example, in the making of the 18th, 19th and 20th Constitutional Amendments, we advised when consulted upon. Most of our demands were not addressed. For example, on judicial appointments, we pushed for the parliamentary oversight. The CJP refused to accept this and now the Chief Justice is the sole authority for the appointment of judges. This is why, historically our justice system has been influenced by the establishment.”

By now, I have gathered that Jahan was a reflective soul with a fire burning in her heart to bring about social change for democracy and human rights. She was rooted in local culture and history of resistance against anti-democratic forces – including the establishment (the army and bureaucracy) and the extremists. She was not apologetic for her secular liberal beliefs. Neither did she mock international funding but recognised its positive support. She was also critical of NGOs that stay at margins and only engage when they have projects relevant to the issue.

In response to my question on NGOs’ role in law-making, Jahan sneered “I don’t think NGOs can be given a formalised role in law-making. There should always be input from them and there are ways for doing that. You have to lobby and ensure that your input is considered. When there was the draft going around of the 18 Constitutional Amendment Act for consultation, to my utter surprise, only a handful of NGOs responded. The idea that you should be given a formal role is absurd. Why should you be given a formal role if people have not elected you? Whom do you represent? If you represent an idea then give that idea and let the parliament decide. With all my respect to those NGOs who do the leg-work for politicians in drafting laws, I would say please have those laws vetted by lawyers. You simply cannot be experts in everything that you manage to get funding for. Just because you can speak English, you cannot understand the legal system of this country. This naivety or opportunism – whatever you want to call it – takes its toll as laws get drafted which contradict the previously made progressive laws. Who suffers – it is the public and those progressives who struggled to lobby for those laws. This is why I say that NGOs’ poor judgement is dangerous.”

“What do you say about volunteerism that’s disappearing fast and is a big concern for our NGOs? This would be my last question. I have already taken plenty of your

time.” We were now being served fresh tea and it was nearly time for me to leave. I thought I must try to add just a few more questions before my 1 hour was up.

“Don’t worry about time. You are always welcome to contact me again should you need to. I am happy to help.” Jahan smiled and then mocked herself to adding, “Certainly you had quite the opposite experience of approaching to me. But in my defence, I can only say that my days are often frantically and randomly organised. That’s another thing about NGOs that I do not understand. Since when have we turned into these bureaucratic bubbles which are required to have three to five years strategic plans? If you have too much bureaucracy you cannot work in a country like Pakistan where there is crisis every day. I will not be able to tell you today what I am going to do tomorrow because I am not a master of things. Plus NGOs should stop thinking that they know everything. That they can train the police without reading the police laws! And finally on volunteerism, I strongly believe that NGOs should nurture it and the conventional tutorship from senior NGOs’ experts to young volunteers and staff members must continue. There has to be some commitment to what we do and stand for. The amount of money NGOs’ personnel are paid these days, breeds corruption and opportunism in my opinion.”

With the close of her sentence, I took my leave and thanked her. I left Jahan, a petit, humble but an incredibly strong woman in that very standard small third floor office with cheap glass doors. But Jahan did not leave me. Her reflective rebelliousness had stayed with me, which I carry to this day.

Epilogue

I began this research by asking how do NGOs constitute democratisation in countries where democracy and constitutionalism have for years struggled to take root? In their struggles for democratisation, what becomes of NGOs? Investigating this dynamic and mutually constitutive relationship between NGOs and democratisation has been my intellectual preoccupation for the last four years. That I have finally come closer to understanding the nature of democratisation, is because I engaged closely with how it is lived. In doing so, I met some extraordinary individuals who have spent their entire lives, ‘living’ democratisation in a politically dangerous environment.

Simone Beauvoir was of the view that one can only have a relationship with life.¹ It is, indeed, only through reflecting on the lived experiences of a phenomenon, that we find its essence. However, such a reflection must first expose and contest our assumptions or else we do not see, as we must. Before I began my research, I believed that international funding to few NGOs in Pakistan has significantly undermined their radical edge and dampened the revolutionary spirit of the wider civil society. I assumed that NGOs in democratisation compete against each other to win maximum funds, mainly to keep their urban elite presence and protect their financial interests. I assumed that the ‘NGOisation’ of social movements had taken place and reduced the possibilities for strengthening democratisation in Pakistan. My assumptions were challenged as I gradually immersed myself in the field. I began to listen and reflect upon the variety of experiences of the people involved in NGOs.

I realised that one only makes choices in one’s context, and that shaping and advancing democratisation as ‘projectised’, elitist and procedural, has partly been a reflective and deliberate choice of the people in NGOs. In Pakistan’s elite-led politics – in which the militant right-wing forces have increasingly risen and become part of the mainstream politics – NGOs perceive that they must also navigate a political space to continue to realise democracy. The ways to do it might not be normatively ‘perfect’, but they are

¹ Bakewell, S. (2016) *At the Existentialist Café: Freedom, Being, and Apricot Cocktails with Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Others*. New York: Other Press. p. 299

necessary. Strengthening the parliament and other institutions for democracy by conducting rigorous research about social and political determinants of democracy; educating school children in human rights; organising seminars and conferences to convene the political elite on platforms where they interact with the wider civil society including academics and journalists; organising foreign tours of parliamentarians so that they learn how democracy works in other countries; lobbying politicians for bringing about constitutional and law reforms; and making in-roads into Pakistan's mainstream politics without openly challenging and criticising the political elite, might not be the 'ideal radical' ways to demand democracy and human rights. But, by establishing processes, projectised democratisation works to develop the foundations for a system of democratic governance. It may be valid that such choices also create opportunities for these individuals to lead mega development and democratisation programmes and enable them to protect liberal spaces, for themselves and wider society. However, choices made in this manner, open crucial avenues for political engagement. The way I see it, projectised democratisation does not depoliticise NGOs. Rather, NGOs in democratisation remain inherently political without being openly radical. It is just so, that, their roles have changed from radically realising democracy in the authoritarian rule to procedurally and gradually transforming the system of governance as a democratic system. That international funding (mostly) enables them to play these roles, is a fact that they have no qualms about.

Thus, the strength of this research lies in its methodological approach to understanding democratisation, as lived and experienced from the perspectives of the people involved in it. In narrowing our gaze into the phenomenon, crucial insights can emerge as the assumptions get exposed. With its focus on the 'situated-ness' of research in its context, for some, it invites readers to decide whether the description is authentic, and in so doing, the reader extends its generalisability. This brings us to the significance of the reader. I have written parts of this thesis creatively with vignettes, autobiographical tales and dialogues with composite characters 'to bring the reader into the situation'. I have tried to bring to life, the lived experience of the people in NGOs. Following Gadamer, I have also come to understand that language reveals being and the meaning of a text, which goes beyond its author. Thus, throughout this thesis, I have written 'to make contact with the things of our world' and to present observations in a language that communicates to its readers. In this act of reflection, the text transcends from my

observations into the domain of the reader who may find new meanings. Thus, this research offers new interpretations while inviting the reader to arrive at theirs.

The nuances developed in this thesis do not just offer empirical insights and contribute to the theories of democratisation, they also provide lessons for the international democracy promotion agencies. As I see it, the international financial and ideological support provide the necessary resources for NGOs to continue to push democratisation towards democratic consolidation and that this fact is acknowledged and appreciated by most people in NGOs. Elite politicians and academics criticise and doubt the effectiveness of such support. However, as pointed out by many people in NGOs, in Pakistan, the state itself is internationally funded but the questions about its political independence and partiality hardly get raised. Besides, state or other philanthropic institutions do not provide funds for instituting democracy. This dependence on funds, however, should not mean that NGOs stop reflecting on their core purpose. They should, as they do, continue to assess the pros and cons of international funding in the wider context of the necessity of their contribution and negotiate the parameters of the projects and programmes. In the present right-wing political context of Pakistan, international funding for advancing human rights and supporting democratic systems is not considered a 'bad' thing. To their part, the international funding providers must also trust in NGOs' approaches to democratisation and enable them to play multiple roles at multiple levels in democratisation – as educators, enablers and processors.

If the strength of this thesis is its methodological approach to understanding democratisation, it is also its limitation. Whether the central thesis of 'projectised democratisation' is generalisable is an open question with no definitive answers. Without undermining the specific qualitative contextual insights into the role of NGOs in democratisation in Pakistan, a way forward can be to undertake more research in this manner and to then compare and draw lessons that expand the theoretical landscape of democratisation and begin to inform policy and action. Even if the lessons learned are dissimilar – which is plausible – the role of NGOs in democratisation in varied political contexts will be qualified. Such comparative research will tease out the antecedent conditions and strategies that facilitate or stifle democratisation. There has been increasing demands for inter-subjective qualitative research studies to know more about

the ethnographic dimension of democratisation,² to which I have responded by presenting this thesis. However, the debate must continue if democracy promotion in the global South continues to be desired by its people as well as by the global civil society.

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