



RESEARCH PAPER

**The Role of Higher Bureaucracy in Shaping Policy Culture in Pakistan:
A Case Study of Ayub Khan's Era (1958–1969)**

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the higher bureaucracy and its influence in constructing the culture of policy-making in Pakistan during Ayub Khan's rule from 1958 to 1969. The term bureaucracy was coined in the early 18th century in Western Europe, referring to systems of administration that pursue rationality in governance. The colonial British-Indian civil service structure was retained in newly independent Pakistan and gradually transformed into the Civil Services of Pakistan (CSP), which is reminiscent of the Indian Civil Services (ICS) cadres in terms of autonomy and orientation. This paper identified the Ayub era as a turning point wherein bureaucratic influence combined with military authority to shape the socio-political and the policy-making systems. For this reason, this research seeks to fill the theoretical and empirical voids by examining the structural dynamics, administrative culture, and effect of higher bureaucracy during this developmental phase. The Ayub era develops the discussion on Pakistan's bureaucratic institutional evolution by discussing the primary sources and the general experiences of bureaucratic practices and procedural reforms and practices in the context of primary and secondary sources.

KEYWORDS Ayub Khan, Bureaucracy, Civil Services of Pakistan, Civil-Military

Introduction

Bureaucracy has been an essential ingredient in the process of contemporary state functioning and has been the tool for an efficient governance and decision-making. The French word 'bureau,' meaning an office or place of work, derived from this and was in use in the late 18th century as the Revolution began. As a system, bureaucracy became a cornerstone structure of the state to govern state order, implement policy, and be involved in the progress of development. In newly independent states such as Pakistan, administration as handed down in colonial administrations had a marked effect on the political and administrative arena.

On the independence of Pakistan in 1947, Pakistan adopted the British Indian bureaucratic framework, the Civil Services of Pakistan (CSP), the successor to the Indian Civil Services (ICS). The founders of the new state entrusted this administrative elite, which possessed both the expertise and competence to run a new state in the face of pressing political and economic problems. But during periods of political instability, especially under Ayub Khan (1958–69), this autonomy typically progressed into an unchecked authority (Braibanti, 1966).

As a tool of the nation of isolation, Ayub's era is steeped in the governance history of Pakistan, however, it has also witnessed the unique interplay of bureaucratic and militaristic institutions, which led to the making of the state's policy culture. The expertise of the CSP was used by Ayub Khan to consolidate power at the centre, often at the cost of political processes in favour of technocratic governance (Shafqat 1997). These reforms in the reform

and efficiency age also solidified bureaucratic dominance, pushing for conflicts between the civil, military, and political actors.

This paper analyses the structural dynamics of the higher bureaucracy and its impact on policy-making in the Ayub Khan era. Seeking to understand the underlying patterns and the challenges of this period, it examines historical records, institutional reforms, and the administrative culture of the period. Its contribution is not only to the documentation of bureaucratic governance in Pakistan but also to the understanding of bureaucratic autonomy in post-colonial states (Rizvi, 1997).

Literature Review

Discussion of the administrative functions, structural evolution, and political entanglements of the higher bureaucracy in Pakistan has already been made extensively on its administrative functions, insofar as they pertain to the Ayub Khan era (1958–1969). There is a significant amount of scholarship that has been done on its colonial heritage, the relationship between it and political regimes, and what it has projected on the governance and policy-making processes. This literature review discusses these themes within the broader discussion on bureaucratic systems in postcolonial states.

The roots of the form of bureaucracy in Pakistan are soaked in the Indian Civil Services (ICS), which were vital instruments in British administrative control. When Pakistan won independence, the ICS was inherited by Pakistan and restructured as the Civil Services of Pakistan (CSP). A bureaucratic cadre remained with a colonial ethos devoted to central control and administrative efficiency (Braibanti, 1966). This colonial legacy, these scholars argue, bequeathed the bureaucracy an authoritarian character that was reinforced under the rule of Ayub Khan (1997).

Under the Ayub regime, the military bent a monopoly of custodial power. In fact, Ayub relied on the bureaucracy because of its presumed administrative competence and hence was drawn into both the policy and policy making. This close alignment, however, was bad for, as Kennedy (1987) put it, stifling democratic processes and side-lining political actors. The study of the literature indicates that the bureaucrats, especially CSP officers, enjoyed a lot of power in this period, and they controlled important policy domains and often overshadowed the elected representatives (Shafqat, 1997).

The bureaucratic culture in Pakistan has been studied by many scholars who appropriate this phenomenon in relation to policy making in Pakistan. The CSP's esprit de corps, the result of rigorous training and shared values, made the institution seamless and insular and did more to protect the institution's institutional interests than not. This resulted often in resistance to reforms and the efforts to democratise governance. Ilhan Niaz (2008) studies how this culture contributes to the bureaucratisation of power and its resistance to external pushes and lack of responsiveness to public needs.

A second important theme in the literature is the bureaucratic role in Ayub Khan's Basic Democracies system. Based on this system, the governance was to be decentralised by creating the local government structures; however, in practice, the system played to the hands of bureaucratisation and concentration of power. Bureaucrats served as Ayub's political intermediaries who also relied on the CSP to manage the elections (Ziring, 1971).

As a topic for scholarly debate, the tension between generalist CSP officers and specialists from other services has also been identified. Specialists during the Ayub era had criticised the key administrative positions of the CSP officers' monopoly, which, according to them, undermined sectoral expertise and innovation of policies (Siddiqui, 2001). It revealed complexities of resource allocation, organisational hierarchy, and the breakage of the institutional inefficiency in the administrative structure of Pakistan.

The relationship between bureaucracy and national integration has further been explored specifically with regard to how East Pakistan was marginalised. In addition, the bureaucratic imbalance, with too high a proportion of West Pakistani officers creating regional tensions, aggravated with the Viscount. Burki and Choudhury both point out that this institutional disparity incensed Bengalis, leading to the dissolution of the state altogether in 1971 (Burki 1969; Choudhury 1993).

During Ayub Khan's rule, the literature stresses the intricate reciprocity between bureaucracy, governance, and political processes. Although the role of bureaucracy in administrative modernisation is acknowledged, its authoritarian tendencies, as well as its strong links with military interests, are critiqued. This review serves as a foundational step towards further analysis of how the higher bureaucracy's structural dynamics, policy-making culture, and legacy are central to Pakistan's governance framework.

Material and Methods

Therefore, the methodology of this study is based on a historical and institutional approach in order to identify the involvement of higher bureaucracy in policy culture during the Ayub Khan period (1958-1969). This approach is particularly useful in uncovering the inter-organisational complexity of bureaucratic systems, their relations with political masters, and their overall role in public administration in Pakistan during this phase of transition.

The research employed both primary and secondary research data collection techniques. The primary data were obtained from documents, government reports, findings of administrative commissions and official documents such as Ayub Khan's *Friends Not Masters*. The historical context concerning the evolution of the governance system of Pakistan was contextualised based on the *Gazette of Pakistan*, Reports of the Administrative Reorganisation Committee (1960) and the Pay & Service Commission (1959-1962), wherein these institutions and the decision-making structures of the emergent Pakistan were insightful. Often, insights from literature helped make sense of the role of bureaucracy in Pakistan's affairs; therefore, secondary sources included studies on bureaucracy by academics Braibanti (1966), Kennedy (1987), and Shafqat (1997).

Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy provides a guide to the characteristics of structural and functional forms of bureaucracy in planning research. In particular, Weber's ideas of hierarchy and specialisation as technical expertise are pertinent to analysing the operational ethos of the Civil Services of Pakistan (CSP) during Ayub's regime. Through this theoretical foundation, it is explained how the bureaucracy behaves institutionally and how its behaviour affects policy-making processes.

The data collection comprised a painstaking review of historical texts, archival reports, and secondary literature to find recurring themes of bureaucratic culture and decision-making. Using content analysis, four main areas of interest were examined: the evolution of the CSP, the role of bureaucracy in the Basic Democracies system, interactions between military and civilian bureaucracies, and the effect of bureaucratic practices on regional integration, particularly in East Pakistan. By taking this thematic approach, data could be structured and analysed and the subject matter could be better understood.

This study, however, acknowledges certain limitations. Findings may be limited to contemporary contexts and there still can be an overdependence on the use of historical and archival data. In addition, first-hand insights were limited by restricted access to classified documents and by lack of access to surviving bureaucrats of the Ayub era. These limitations emphasise the necessity of cautious interpretation of the results.

The study followed all ethical guidelines and it prepared proper citation of all sources and academic integrity was observed. With due diligence, intellectual property rights and scholarly standards, archival and secondary data were used. The ultimate lens through which this methodology analyses the higher bureaucracy's key role in influencing policy and governance in an important juncture of Pakistan's history.

Results and Discussions

This study contributes to the existing literature on the impact of the higher bureaucracy on policy-making culture during Ayub Khan's era by further exploring its structural, social, and political dimensions. Civil Services of Pakistan (CSP) remained a cornerstone of governance to remain on top. Because they possessed an autonomous and hierarchical structure, deeply founded as a pillar of colonial heritage, they were able to monopolise the making of decisions on the two levels of province and nation (Braibanti, 1966). By the mid-1960s, most key administrative positions were filled by CSP officers, consolidating control of governance, policy-making, and reforms (Kennedy, 1987).

In Ayub Khan's collaboration with the bureaucracy, the bureaucracy was displayed as having an operational alignment with the practice of aiming to administer efficiency over the democratic participation. The integration of the military into civilian bureaucratic roles under martial law made governance lines unclear and centralised governance into a highly centralised policy apparatus (Rizvi, 1997). This relationship was reinforced by the likes of the Basic Democracies Scheme (BDS), which squarely showed the role of bureaucrats in crafting governance frameworks to suit authoritarian purposes (Ziring, 1971). Yet at the same time, this alignment made systemically wide corruption and inefficiency more entrenched as Ayub's government increasingly relied upon bureaucratic compliance to maintain political stability (Feldman, 1972).

Nevertheless, the findings also serve to draw attention to how the bureaucracy has been practicing exclusion, in particular with regard to regional representation. The institutional imbalance that facilitated discontent in East Pakistan was reflected in Bengali under-representation in the CSP cadre. In 1967, while Bengalis accounted for 54 percent of the population, CSP roles were occupied by Bengalis to the tune of 34 percent (Choudhury, 1993). Regional inequalities intensified and differences became a key driver of political alienation: the bureaucracy was regarded as a tool of West Pakistani dominance (Niaz, 2008). Thus scholars allege that such exclusionary practices did not allow meaningful integration and increased East Pakistan's long arm bullying, which in turn triggered secession (Burki, 1969).

During Ayub's regime, governance was complicated by the bureaucratic culture of resistance to reform. Resistance to attempts to restructure administrative hierarchies, for example, in its recommendations, were made by the Administrative Reorganisation Committee (Kennedy, 1991). The implementation of policies designed to democratise governance or increase administrative efficiency (Shafqat, 1997) was hampered by these failures. And the 'Economic Pool' system, emblematic of institutionalised monopolised power leading to the exclusion of technical and specialised governance (Braibanti, 1966), also included the privileging of CSP officers in economic policy-making roles.

During Ayub's later years, corruption within the bureaucracy assumed systemic seeds. Often formed under martial law to address inefficiency and corruption, the screening committees did not operate in accordance with due process and tended to focus inordinate attention upon rank-and-file officials and did not spare higher-echelon bureaucrats (Feldman, 1972). This partly served to introduce wider impunity in top levels of administration while simultaneously deepening public mistrust and strengthening existing systemic flaws (Rizvi, 1997).

In particular, I argue that tremendous costs were paid for the administrative stability ensured by the dominance of the higher bureaucracy in Ayub's era, at the expense of democratic governance, regional integration and institutional integrity. The underlying need for holistic reforms conducive to inclusion, accountability and specialisation are still very much alive.

Conclusion

In addition to that, this study placed the influence of higher bureaucracy on the culture of policy-making in Pakistan under Ayub Khan (1958–1969) in perspective. The relationship between CSP and the military under the Ayub authoritarian framework brought about a centralised governance model revolving around administrative efficiency against democracy. Its colonial legacy and monopoly over major policy-determining roles ensured that it ruled while marginalising regional representation and technical expertise.

The Basic Democracies Scheme reflects the bureaucratic-military relationship but explains why such a system was structurally problematic for governance, as it relied on an elite bureaucratic personnel. The under-representation, especially in the upper bureaucracy, resulted in regional imbalances, which in turn fuelled political disillusionment in East Pakistan, ultimately leading to secession.

In this paper, it will be argued that Ayub Khan attempted to modernise the structure of governance in Pakistan; however, the reform process was slowed and distorted by bureaucracies and their narrow interests. The culture of impunity prevailing within the bureaucracy, alongside continued corruption and inefficiency, made the institutional situation worse. While authorising its technical competence and administrative stability as a big strength, the CSP has been completely out of sync with the new social-political realities of a pluralistic dynamic state.

Thus Ayub Khan's era should be seen as a manifestation of an excessively centralised bureaucratic system devoid of democratic increase of power sharing, thus excessively top-heavy and elitist. The lessons learnt from this period point out that the model of government should be a combination of democracy, regionality, and professionalism to fit the needs of a contemporary state. In the future, the development of equality and the elimination of major institutional hegemony are directly related to the governance of Pakistan and the process of forming the nation.

Recommendations

However, we must address the historical disparity in representation both in the bureaucracy if we are to dial in an inclusive governance structure. The transparent quota systems in which those who belong to the marginalised groups would be stressed over with the merit-based recruitment can mitigate the alienation of these groups among themselves and at the national level. More emphasis should be given to the redressal of the historical omission of regions from historical exclusion in the wake of Ayub Khan's years.

As much as years of experience, accountability stands out as one of the critical foundations of governance. Audit, other regulatory authorities, and judiciary power should deploy strong frames of ethical controls that would prevent corrupt practices and continually monitor ethics compliance. As important as this is, the improvement of civil servants training programs. By introducing various changes to programs of institutions such as the Civil Services Academy, one will be able to transform the future civil servants in order to fit into modern challenges that are associated with the performance of this noble duty.

Another key measure that was taken to improve an opportunity for citizens' participation is empowerment. Delegation of decision-making from large bureaucratic

organisations to local authorities could help improve service delivery and create people-orientated institutions. Another organisational requirement critical for shifts in sharing power fairly is a reform of institutions like local councils and district administrations. Also, differentiation between the civil servants' tasks and responsibilities and the elected officials' tasks and responsibilities is important to eliminate over proactivity of the bureaucracy in political decisions. The use of multiple stakeholders in the process of designing frameworks will promote more democracy in governance.

Account has also to be taken of the long-standing conflict between generalist and specialist cadres. For these areas, therefore, there is a need to adopt measures that encourage the recognition of the technical know-how in leadership, especially in the financial and planning capabilities. Again, a proper and fair land redistribution is vital for breaking the link between the bureaucracy and the agrarian aristocracy. Open policies in this area provide for the rural development and decrease of the socio-economic differentiation.

Finally, measures have to be taken to ensure that avoiding the bureaucracy is not militarised. Strengthening civil institutions' independence and protecting the bureaucracy from military influence is the key to the continued functioning of a democratic governance system. In the application of these standards, Pakistan will be able to change its bureaucratic structure into a proficient and responsive organisation to the population's needs.

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