

**Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan:
An Analysis of Sino-Pakistani Ties
2001-2016**

Filippo Boni

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Abstract

This thesis assesses the extent of military prerogatives in Pakistan's domestic politics, by focusing on Sino-Pakistani relations in the post 9/11 period. The study departs from the coup-centric approach largely adopted in the literature on civil-military relations and develops a continuum of civil-military relations which identifies four different intensities of civilian control over the military. Such a scale is deployed to gauge empirically the military's sway in four decision-making areas: internal security, foreign policy, economic policy and elite recruitment. This structure is used to analyse the three case studies presented in the thesis: 1) the development of the port of Gwadar; 2) the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor; and 3) Sino-Pakistani relations in the Afghan scenario. The empirical chapters are organised around elite interviews conducted during fieldwork in Pakistan and triangulated with primary and secondary sources. From the analysis conducted in the thesis emerges a new pattern of civil-military relations in Pakistan, a situation in which the civilians and the military are sharing power to the benefit of both parties. The military have found it in their interest to exercise power less overtly and to retain control of internal security and foreign policy behind the curtain of a democratic dispensation. The civilians, on their side, have managed to erode military influence in the areas of elite recruitment and economic policy, in their attempts to tackle the energy crisis and to win the 2018 general elections. Such a pattern starts taking shape in the 2008-2013 period, but it becomes more crystallised in the post-2013 time frame. The thesis assesses specifically military prerogatives in the context of Pakistan's relations with China, but also extends the picture in the final chapter to the wider developments in civil-military relations in Pakistan, in order to provide a comprehensive and solid analysis of the issue under examination.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Table of Contents	ii
List of Tables	v
List of Figures	v
Cast of Characters	vi
Acronyms and Abbreviations	vii
Map of Pakistan	ix
Acknowledgements	x

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

§ 1.1 – Introduction	1
§ 1.2 - Partition and the origins of praetorianism in Pakistan	5
§ 1.3 - An introduction to Sino-Pakistani relations	11
§ 1.4 - Contributions and relevance of the study	14
§ 1.5 - Organisation of the thesis	16

CHAPTER 2

Analytical framework: civil-military relations and the question of military influence in politics

§ 2.1 – Introduction	19
§ 2.2 - Civil-military relations and the question of coups	22
§ 2.3 - A different focus: military influence and military prerogatives	25
§ 2.4 - Civil-military continuum: degrees of military prerogatives and decision-making areas	29
§ 2.5 – Conclusions	34

CHAPTER 3

Research Design and Methods

§ 3.1 – Introduction	36
§ 3.2 – Case study research design: insights and cases’ selection	39
§ 3.3 – Capturing the decision-making process: process tracing method	41
§ 3.4 – Data collection: Semi-structured elite interviewing	45
§ 3.5 – Data validity and reliability: triangulation of the interview material	46
§ 3.6 – Interview coding	47
§ 3.7 – Conclusions	48

CHAPTER 4

The origins of Pakistan’s relations with China: 1950-2001

§ 4.1 – Introduction	49
§ 4.2 - A momentary lapse of unity: the formative phase 1951-1963	52
§ 4.3 - Phase 2. 1964-1970: ‘my enemy’s enemy’ and the outset of the ‘all-weather’ partnership.	56
§ 4.4 - Phase 3. 1971 -1976: The third Indo-Pakistani war and Pakistan’s nuclear programme	58
§ 4.5 - Phase 4. 1977-2000: Zia-ul-Haq, the Indo-Pakistani nuclear tests and the Kargil war	65
§ 4.6 – Conclusions	69

CHAPTER 5

The Port of Gwadar

§ 5.1 – Introduction	71
§ 5.2 - Balochistan and Gwadar under Musharraf	73
§ 5.3 - Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) government: the 18 th Amendment and Sino-Pakistani relations	77
§ 5.4 - Civil-military relations and Gwadar since 2013	83
§ 5.5 – Conclusions	90

CHAPTER 6

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

§ 6.1 – Introduction	93
§ 6.2 – Musharraf, China and the energy corridor's dawn	95
§ 6.3 – CPEC under the PPP government: 2008-2013	100
§ 6.4 – The CPEC comes to light: politico-military dynamics of the energy corridor since 2013	106
§ 6.5 – Conclusions	116

CHAPTER 7

Brothers in Arms: Sino-Pakistani relations in Afghanistan

§ 7.1 – Introduction	121
§ 7.2 - In the wake of the British Raj: unsolved border disputes and interference	123
§ 7.3 - Domestic determinants of Pakistan's Afghan policy: security and access to Central Asia	127
§ 7.4 - Pakistan's Afghan policy in the Musharraf era	129
§ 7.5 - Pakistan's Afghan policy under the PPP government	130
§ 7.6 - A new beginning in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations?	137
§ 7.7 - Pakistan, China and Afghanistan in the post 2013 period	139
§ 7.8 – Conclusions	148

CHAPTER 8

Conclusions

§ 8.1 – Introduction	150
§ 8.2 - Beyond China: elite recruitment, internal security, foreign policy and economic policy in a wider perspective	154
§ 8.3 - Future research agenda	165

Bibliography	168
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Appendix	204
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List of Tables

Table 1.1	Periodization of Pakistan's political history	5
Table 2.1	Continuum of civilian control	32
Table 3.1	Case studies analysed in the thesis	38
Table 3.2	Process tracing of the operation Zarb-e-Azb	41
Table 3.3	Interview Coding	47
Table 4.1	Tabulation of Pakistan-China Relations 1951-2001	50
Table 5.1	Continuum of civil-military relations in the context of Gwadar	91
Table 6.1	Number of attacks on Chinese nationals in Pakistan, 2001-2007	98
Table 6.2	Number of attacks on Chinese nationals in Pakistan, 2008-2013	101
Table 6.3	List of Chairmen of the National Highway Authority 2001-2012	105
Table 6.4	List of Chairmen of the National Highway Authority 2013-2016	110
Table 6.5	Continuum of civil-military relations in the context of the CPEC	117
Table 7.1	Continuum of civil-military relations - Afghan policy	148
Table 8.1	Tabulation of the results presented in the empirical chapters	152

List of Figures

Figure 4.1	Pakistan's Bilateral Trade with China 1962-1970	59
Figure 4.2	Pakistan's Bilateral trade with China 1971- 1976	64
Figure 4.3	Pakistan's Bilateral Trade with China 1977-1999	66
Figure 6.1	Pakistan-China trade balance, 2006-2015	97
Figure 7.1	Arms Exports to Pakistan from China and the United States: 1979-1990	124
Figure 8.1	A comparison between the increases in the Public Sector Development Programme and the Defence Budget	159

Cast of Characters

Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan	President of Pakistan (1969-1971)
Ashraf Pervez Kayani	Chief of Army Staff (2007-2013)
Asif Ali Zardari	President of Pakistan (2008-2013)
Asim Saleem Bajwa	Chief of Army Staff (2016-present)
Benazir Bhutto	Prime Minister of Pakistan (1988-1990; 1993-1996)
Hu Jintao	President of the People's Republic of China (2003-2013)
Iskander Ali Mirza	President of Pakistan (1956-1958)
Imran Khan	Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (1998-present)
Indira Gandhi	Prime Minister of India (1966-1977; 1980-1984)
Lal Bahadur Shastri	Prime Minister of India (1964-1966)
Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif	Prime Minister of Pakistan (1990-1993; 1997-1999; 2013-present)
Mohammad Ali Bogra	Prime Minister of Pakistan (1953-1955)
Mohammad Ali Jinnah	Governor-General of Pakistan (1947-1948)
Mohammed Ayub Khan	President of Pakistan (1958-1969)
Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq	President of Pakistan (1978-1988)
Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan	Prime Minister of Pakistan (1947-1951)
Pervez Musharraf	Chief Executive of Pakistan (1999-2002) President of Pakistan (2001-2008)
Raheel Sharif	Chief of Army Staff (2013-2016)
Raza Pervez Ashraf	Prime Minister of Pakistan (2012-2013)
Wen Jiabao	Premier of the People's Republic of China (2003-2013)
Xi Jinping	President of the People's Republic of China (2013-present)
Yousaf Raza Gillani	Prime Minister of Pakistan (2008-2012)
Zhou Enlai	Premier of the People's Republic of China (1949-1976)
Zulfikar Ali Bhutto	President of Pakistan (1971-1973) Prime Minister of Pakistan (1973-1977)

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AKD	Aqeel Karim Dhedhi
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Awami National Party
APC	All Party Conference
APTTA	Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BLA	Balochistan Liberation Army
CARs	Central Asian Republics
CENTO	Central Treaty Organisation
CHEC	China Harbours Engineering Company
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COAS	Chief of Army Staff
COPHC	China Overseas Port Holding Company
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CRRA	Committee for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Afghanistan
ETIM	East Turkestan Islamic Movement
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FWO	Frontier Works Organisation
GPA	Gwadar Port Authority
GHQ	General Headquarter
KKH	Karakoram Highway
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
IB	Intelligence Bureau
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISPR	Inter-Services Public Relations
JEC	Joint Economic Commission
JCC	Joint Cooperation Committee
LFO	Legal Framework Order
LoC	Line of Control
MI	Military Intelligence
MNA	Member of the National Assembly
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NEFA	North-East Frontier Area
NLC	National Logistics Cell
NHA	National Highway Authority
NSA	National Security Adviser

NSC	National Security Council
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PCNS	Parliamentary Committee on National Security
PIDE	Pakistan Institute of Development Economics
PILDAT	Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PM	Prime Minister
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PML-Q	Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PSA	Port of Singapore Authority
PSDP	Power Sector Development Program
PTI	Pakistan-Tehrik-e-Insaaf
QCG	Quadrilateral Coordination Group
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SSD	Special Security Division
TAPI	Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India
TTP	Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
USGS	United States Geological Survey
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WAPDA	Water and Power Development Authority

Map of Pakistan



Source: CIA Factbook

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It is difficult to synthesise in little more than a page the kaleidoscope of people and experiences encountered throughout the PhD journey. I have often been advised to avoid using ‘emotive’ language. I hope I will be forgiven if, in the next few lines, I momentarily leave this suggestion aside.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

‘Don’t forget that you in the armed forces are the servants of the people. You do not make national policy. It’s we, the civilians, who decide these issues and it is your duty to carry out those tasks [with] which you are entrusted’

(Mohammad Ali Jinnah’s speech to the Armed Forces, 14th August 1947)

§ 1.1 - Introduction

The above statement made by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founding father of the Pakistani state, emphasises Jinnah’s idea of Pakistan. The Quaid-e-Azam (‘Great Leader’ in Urdu) envisaged that the principle of civilian control over the military was going to be a pillar of the institutional architecture of the newly born state, emerging in 1947 from the partition of the Indian sub-continent. In fact, the country’s political history took a different direction from the one that Jinnah had foreseen. The military seized power four times (1958, 1969, 1977, 1999) and the Pakistani Army has governed directly the country for nearly half of its history. After the end of the last military rule in 2008 under General Pervez Musharraf, two civilian governments have been nominally in charge of Pakistan’s political processes. Notably, the elections held on 11 May 2013 marked a first in the country’s political history as a civilian government, led by the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), was voted out of office and handed over power to another civilian government. Nawaz Sharif and his party, the Pakistan-Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), were elected to serve a five year term after winning, along with their allies, 189 seats out of 342 in the National Assembly. These important developments, complemented by the emergence of a thriving media, a growing young population¹ and a soaring middle class²,

¹ Nearly 50 per cent of Pakistan’s total registered voters were between 18 and 30 years old. See: Shackle, S. (2013) ‘Pakistan’s youth bulge’, *The Express Tribune*, 24/03/2013, available at: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/525778/pakistans-youth-bulge/>, accessed: 26/09/2016.

² See: Shah, S. (2017) ‘Pakistan’s Middle Class Soars as Stability Returns’, *The Wall Street Journal*, 1 February 2017, available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/pakistans-middle-class-soars-as-stability-returns-1485945001?mg=id-wsj>, accessed: 06/02/2017.

along with key constitutional reforms like the 18th Amendment passed in April 2010, have spurred debates about the state of affairs in Pakistan's democracy. At its core, this thesis is therefore a study of the role of the military in politics, concerned with assessing the extent of military influence in Pakistan's domestic political dynamics in the post-9/11 period.

Since 2009, Freedom House has consistently classified Pakistan as 'partly free' with a score of 4.5 out of 7. The abovementioned 2013 elections were deemed relatively free and fair by most international observers.³ Some shortcomings in the electoral process notwithstanding, significant improvements were made with regard to competitiveness, legal framework, citizens' participation and campaigning (EU Electoral Observation Mission, 2013).⁴ More importantly, no attempt to topple the government was made in the immediate aftermath of the elections. In light of these developments, *Newsweek Pakistan* defined Nawaz Sharif as 'A man to refound Pakistan' (Ahmed, 2013) and some scholars argued that a challenging context notwithstanding, Pakistan's democratic processes were developing and that 'lasting change may be at hand' (Tudor, 2014: 106, Malik, 2016). When asked about the state of civil-military relations in Pakistan, Tariq Fatemi, the Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Foreign Policy, observed that 'civil-military relations are now better than any time in the past' as 'the armed forces are implementing the decisions from the civilians' (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015).

Other scholars, analysts and Pakistani politicians have a radically different view. They argue that very little has changed since 2008 as far as civil-military relations are concerned (Siddiqa, 2007 and 2013; Wolf, 2016; Jaffrelot, 2016a; Shah A., 2014a; Fair, 2014). Those who share such a viewpoint allege that in Pakistan's domestic politics there is a less open display of power from the military, since they are able to retain control of key decision-making areas,

³ According to the EU Electoral Observation Mission, the 2013 elections led to an alternation of power between two freely democratically elected governments; the formation of alternatives was relatively free; the voters could form and express independently their preferences and universal suffrage was recognized.

⁴ It is also important mentioning the cycle of violence perpetrated by the Pakistani Taliban in the run up to the elections which targeted primarily secular parties. Nevertheless, the turnout in 2013 reached 60 per cent, a significant increase from 44 per cent in 2008.

either by pressuring the civilian government, or through the military's allies among the political parties (e.g. Pakistan-Teerik-e-Insaaf). In Ayesha Siddiqi's view, the military in Pakistan evolved 'into a parent-guardian type which keeps the option to either jump in directly, depending on the mood, or bring about change from the top' (2013). Nafisa Hoodboy, Pakistan's first female reporter for *Dawn* in the 1980s, concurs: 'everybody knows that the army makes all the decisions. It is not just foreign affairs; the army is now making decisions in every, every aspect of life' (Notezai, 2016). In the words of Pakistan People's Party Senator, Faratullah Babar: '[the] imbalance in civil-military relations has deteriorated further in the last three years' (Shah S., 2016a).

The debate just outlined about the role of the military in Pakistan's political dynamics is central to the political life of the 'Land of Pure' and lies at the very heart of this thesis. The analysis seeks to address this issue through a focus on military prerogatives in the context of the relationship with China. As a result, the primary research question addressed here is: to what extent has the military of Pakistan retained its prerogatives in the relationship with China in the post-9/11 period?

The central argument presented in this thesis is that since Pakistan's democratic transition in 2008, civil-military relations have entered a new phase, which has been characterised by a power-sharing agreement between the military and the civilian components of the Pakistani ruling class. As the analysis demonstrates through the three empirical chapters, namely the evolution of the port of Gwadar in Chapter 5, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Chapter 6 and the trilateral interaction among Pakistan, China and Afghanistan in Chapter 7, while the military has managed to retain its prerogatives in the foreign affairs and internal security decision-making areas, two areas that represent the very *raison d'être* of the Pakistani army, by extending the analysis to other aspects of Pakistan's political development, such as economic policy and elite recruitment, civilian control increases. The first traces of such an evolution are visible during the 2008-2013 period, but the emergence of this new shape in civil-military interaction is more marked in the post-2013 period.

Confining the analysis of Pakistan-China relations to the foreign policy realm would be reductive. While until the early 2000s the relationship could have been interpreted primarily through a regional security prism – a collateral topic in the wider Indo-Pakistani and Sino-Indian confrontations – now there are ‘a host of factors that transcend it’ (Small, 2015a: 4). Since the beginning of the construction works on the port of Gwadar in 2001, analysed in Chapter 5, the relationship encompasses a wide array of domestic political issues. The scant literature which looks at Sino-Pakistani relations almost unanimously agrees that the major challenges to China’s ambitious ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative on its western front are posed by Pakistan’s complex domestic environment. These include Pakistan’s ability to control terrorist activity within its borders to secure Chinese investments, its foreign policy orientation vis-à-vis Afghanistan and India, as well as Pakistan’s economic policy given the amount of Chinese investments in the country. As such, the dynamics underpinning the evolution of Pakistan’s domestic politics have important implications that transcend the country itself and that have broader regional and international ramifications. In light of their increasingly multidimensional nature and trans-boundary impact, Sino-Pakistani relations represent the perfect springboard to assess the extent of the military’s institutional prerogatives in Pakistan’s domestic politics.

Before moving on to explain the roots of praetorianism in Pakistan, a couple of terminological clarifications are required. First, as the concept of military prerogatives lies at the core of the analysis, it is important to clarify from the outset how this term is used in this thesis. To be clear, military prerogatives are those areas where the military feel they have a right to intervene in politics in order to preserve, or advance, their interests. The analysis uses the terms ‘military prerogatives’, ‘military autonomy’ and ‘reserved domains’ interchangeably as they represent different formulations of the same concept. Similarly, the concepts of *military influence* and *civilian control* are essentially two sides of the same coin and, as a result, the study refers to both terms equivalently. The analysis addresses in greater depth such a taxonomy in Chapter 3. Second, for a greater readability of the text, the terms ‘military’ and ‘Army’ are used equivalently to refer to the Pakistani Army. When the analysis

refers to the Pakistani Armed Forces, including also the Navy and the Air Force, this is clearly spelled out.

§ 1.2 – Partition and the origins of praetorianism in Pakistan

As mentioned above, this thesis adopts a relatively recent time frame which spans the last fifteen years. However, it is difficult to understand the current political dynamics without a thorough analysis of Pakistan's political history since independence.

Table 1.1 – Periodization of Pakistan's Political History

14 August 1947 – 7 October 1958	<i>Civilian Government</i>	14 August 1947 – 17 April 1953 Civilian Rule
		17 April 1953 – 7 October 1958 Parliamentary facade, strong executive
7 October 1958 – 20 December 1971	<i>Military rule</i>	7 October 1958 – 8 June 1962 Martial Law under Gen. Ayub Khan
		8 June 1962 – 25 March 1969 Military Dictatorship
		25 March 1969 – 20 December 1971 Martial Law under Gen. Yahya Khan
20 December 1971 – 5 July 1977	<i>Civilian Government</i>	20 December 1971 – 14 August 1973 Martial law under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
		14 August 1973 – 5 July 1977 Civilian rule
5 July 1977 – 17 August 1988	<i>Military rule</i>	5 July 1977 - 20 March 1985 Martial Law under Gen. Zia-ul-Haq
		20 March 1985 – 17 August 1988 Military Dictatorship
17 August 1988 – 12 October 1999	<i>Civilian Government</i>	Alternation in power of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif as Prime Ministers. Decade characterised by caretaker governments appointed by the Presidents and backed by the army.
12 October 1999 - 18 February 2008	<i>Military rule</i>	12 October 1999 – 10 October 2002 Gen. Pervez Musharraf as the sole ruler of Pakistan under the PCO
		10 October 2002 – 3 December 2007 Parliamentary facade under military rule
		3 December 2007 – 18 February 2008 State of Emergency
18 February 2008 – Present	<i>Civilian Government</i>	PPP government 2008-2013 PML-N government 2013-present

As Table 1.1 above shows, Pakistan has been ruled by the army for 33 years, hence understanding the reasons behind the army's rise to power in the country's politics is key. Why has the army become so central in the country's domestic politics? What are the external and internal conditions that enabled and facilitated the ascendancy of the army? To provide a clear picture of the historical roots of Pakistan's military prerogatives, this part of the chapter is organised into three sub-sections: historical heritage; institutional and political conditions; and socio-economic factors. Such a division outlines the main strands in the literature related to the developments in Pakistan's domestic politics and the main factors which led the military to become a pillar of Pakistan's institutional architecture. It is important to include this background section as some of the historical features, namely the sense of insecurity vis-à-vis India's foe as well as the tendency to centralise power, are some of the features that are some of the themes discussed in greater detail in the empirical chapters. Linking the historical conditions to more recent developments will enable a clearer and comprehensive answer to the central question addressed in the thesis, namely the extent of military prerogatives in Sino-Pakistani relations.

Historical Heritage

Pakistan's situation as a strategically exposed state is the result of the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947. As Owen Bennett Jones aptly remarked, 'the peculiar circumstances of Pakistan's creation have meant that from the very outset the army has had a large degree of influence' (2002: 284). Since the colonial inheritance continues to exert a great influence, no understanding of Pakistan's peculiarity in domestic politics is possible without taking into account the process that led to, as well as the conditions before, the creation of two states from the former British India territory.

From a socio-economic viewpoint, the areas constituting Pakistan nowadays, 'had neither the industrial nor the military installations necessary for their defence' at the time of partition (Jalal, 1991: 50). As Ian Talbot has pointed out, the industrial clusters in the Raj were all located in what became the Indian Territory (1998: 97). As far as the security situation is concerned, the colonial priorities in northwest India were to maintain law and order and to

ensure a 'buffer zone of tribal states and tribal areas' against the threat of a Russian invasion, rather than economically or democratically developing the northern areas (Talbot, 2010: 30). In addition to this, the region's strategic significance increased when, in 1880, Punjab became the most important recruiting zone for the army (Talbot, 2010: 30).

If economically the country was established in the most backward areas of the British Raj, the withholding of assets represented another major issue. As Talbot aptly remarked, Pakistan 'was entitled to 17.5 per cent of the assets of undivided India, but the growing mistrust between the two governments prevented a smooth division of the spoils' (1998: 98). It is against this backdrop that, immediately after independence, Pakistan faced serious security challenges to its territorial integrity, due to the country's geographic position within the Indian Sub-continent. On one hand, India was the biggest concern for Pakistani leaders because of its greater military power and its territorial claims over Kashmir, a former princely state whose status is still disputed. On the other hand, Afghanistan had irredentist claims on Pakistani territories along the porous border between the two countries, the so-called Durand Line.⁵ When Pakistan became independent it inherited this agreement and no negotiations were put in place to revise it. Existing in such a threatening international environment, Pakistan (during the 1950s) decided to join two Western-sponsored pacts, namely the South East Asia Treaty Organization - SEATO and the Central Treaty Organization – CENTO in order to seek protection against the Indian threat.

Institutional and Political Conditions

In addition to the reasons revolving around the Partition of the Indian sub-continent that were addressed in the previous section, there are some institutional and political factors that are crucial to understand military prerogatives in Pakistan. The first one is an agency-oriented explanation which points to the lack of a strong leader able to unify the nation, as happened in India with Jawaharlal Nehru. Within a couple of years after its establishment as

⁵ This border was named after Mortimer Durand who was the Foreign Secretary for British India when the Durand Line Agreement was signed in 1893 between British India and Afghanistan.

an independent country, Pakistan faced a serious and deep crisis of political leadership due to the unexpected death of its founding father, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. He was the man who led the Muslims who were living within British India towards an independent nation, grounding his claims on the ‘two nation theory’.⁶ Quaid-e-Azam was a lawyer and the head of the All-India Muslim League, the political party which supported the creation of Pakistan, and firmly acted towards Muslim independence from Hindus, that was finally achieved on the 14th of August 1947. He died after only 13 months in power, in September 1948, leaving the country in a political and institutional vacuum that was initially filled by Liaquat Ali Khan, Jinnah’s right hand man and one of the most important actors in the Pakistani independence process. However, Liaquat was assassinated in October 1951 during a political rally in Rawalpindi and the country was thus left without a political leader that had a charismatic appeal for the masses and without stable and legitimate democratic institutions and processes. In addition, the political leaders in the post Jinnah-Liaquat period did not possess national stature and lacked the imagination to address difficult political and economic problems. They were unable to evolve a broad-based consensus on the fundamental features of the political system (Rizvi, 1991: 32). As far as the decision-making process is concerned, it is in these very early days that the army started to have a stake in the country’s foreign policy and defence mechanism, as the analysis presented in Chapter 4 explains in greater detail.

Another important factor to consider is the role of the Muslim League. Because of the predominant role played by migrated elites within the Muslim League, the party was not able to transform itself into a truly institutional pillar of Pakistan as, for instance, happened in India with the Congress Party. Ian Talbot argues that the state’s pressing financial problems and strategic insecurities were portrayed as working against the decentralization of resources and authority which would have enabled the Pakistan Muslim League to secure popular bases of support (1998). Moreover, when Muslim League leaders migrated to Pakistan ‘the party lost the limited organizational support and social links that it had possessed since it was grounded where the Muslims were a

⁶ According to this idea, the Muslims/Hindus divide was not only related to religious issues but it involved even cultural and social habits that made impossible the creation of a single State which embraced both Muslims and Hindus.

minority' (Adeney and Wyatt, 2004: 12). This is also echoed by Haqqani who argues that 'the Muslim League did not retain mass support in the areas that became Pakistan within a few years of independence especially after universal adult franchise was recognized' (2005: 10). As Mohammad Waseem has pointed out, the anomaly of Pakistan is represented by the fact that the Muslim League was led by people who were all from northern and western India, therefore the new government of Pakistan was dominated by the elite which had migrated to the new country after partition. Both the first governor general Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan were migrants from India (Waseem, 2009). This is also echoed by Jalal, who argues that the Muslim League's 'organizational machinery was weakest precisely in the areas which became part of Pakistan' (Jalal, 1995: 49).⁷ Sumit Ganguly and Christine Fair (2013) also point to the organisation (primarily elitist)⁸, ideology (the fear of marginalisation by Hindus and the view of Muslims in the sub-continent as a monolithic entity) and mobilisation strategy (based primarily on communal rhetoric) of the Muslim League to explain Pakistan's persistent tendency to authoritarianism. Finally, Philip Oldenburg puts forward an explanation which focuses specifically on the inability of the Pakistani political class to exert control over the military as well as to the handling of the inherited Indian Civil Service (2010).

From the accounts presented in this section emerges that, at the time of partition, Pakistan's Muslim League was not rooted in the country and did not possess the leadership and authority to establish democratic practices and procedures, being more concerned in holding the country together and maintaining its own power rather than establishing solid and functioning institutions. In such a political landscape, the only institution that emerged as competent and able to deliver was the military. In more recent times, this pattern was again visible. Since the 2008 elections, Pakistan has witnessed a constant erosion of civilian control in foreign policy and internal security,

⁷ Also former President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf migrated with his family from Delhi to Karachi in 1947.

⁸ A similar argument is made by Maya Tudor (2013), who delves into the different social classes forming the Muslim League in Pakistan and the Congress Party in India. In Tudor's view, the Muslim League originated from the land-owning aristocratic elites, whereas the Congress Party was primarily formed, at least at its origin, by representatives of the middle class.

where the army had increasingly taken over the state's responsibilities both formally (e.g. with the high number of COAS' visits abroad) and substantially, with the military in control of the operation Zarb-e-Azb in Waziristan and Karachi. However, there have also been elements of discontinuity. While in internal security and foreign policy the military has retained control, economic decision-making and elite recruitment have come under greater civilian control, as the analysis in the empirical chapters demonstrates.

Socio-economic factors

The third set of factors that is addressed here pertains to the socio-economic dimension, primarily looking at defence budget allocations as well as at the army's ethnic composition. Along with the elements considered in the previous sections related to the history and to political, as well as economic, conditions, the socio-economic dimension played a crucial role in shaping Pakistan's features as an independent state. Vis-à-vis the economy, all Pakistani governments gave primary importance to the needs of the country's defence in order to ensure the country's safety and survival. As Ayesha Jalal argues, the war with India soon after independence led the central government to 'extract financial resources from the provinces and diverting them into the defence procurement effort, before political processes in Pakistan had become more clearly defined' (1995: 49). The military greatly benefited from these budget allocations as they enabled the acquisition of modern technology and the development of organizational skills that could also be applied to the civilian sectors, as well as better training and equipment. All these aspects accentuated the already existing institutional imbalance between the professional, task oriented and confident military and the weak political institutions (Rizvi, 2000: 7). In addition to budget provisions, ethnicity also played a central role in the army's rise in politics. Like most national armies, the Pakistan army generally aspires to be, and indeed considers itself to be, representative of the country's polity (Fair and Nawaz, 2011). Nevertheless, the army has always been composed mainly of personnel whose regional origin is from Punjab and from the former North West Frontier Province (NWFP), now renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As Katharine Adeney writes, 'these recruitment patterns are a

direct legacy of the British Raj's belief in martial races' (2009: 98).⁹ The traditional Punjabi-Pakhtun composition of the Army has been a major source of grievance for Sindhis and Balochis, who are under-represented in the army and virtually absent from the higher echelons (Rizvi, 1991: 34). This is also echoed by Siddiq, who notes that 'the predominance of Punjabis also gives the army a sense of ethnic homogeneity which is considered detrimental to democracy in Pakistan and one of the causes of ethnic strife' (2011: 12). Furthermore, the issue of inequitable representation in the army has been controversial throughout Pakistan's history and was a factor in the secession of East Pakistan. As Adeney argued, 'the lack of representation in the important organs of the state, such as the military and the bureaucracy as well as economic disparities between the two wings, provided fertile ground for discontent' (2007: 157). As Fair and Nawaz reported in their data analysis of the army's yearly officers intake, the ethnic composition did not change from 1970 until 2004, but there has been a significant improvement in widening the geographical, if not ethnic, recruitment base in the last few years (2011: 90).

As this section demonstrated, the Pakistani military emerged as the predominant institution following the Pakistan-India partition. In particular, the sense of encirclement that the Pakistani elites felt at the time of independence, stemming from the territorial disputes with Afghanistan and India, has led Pakistan's ruling circles to look for an external patron. This role has been played rather intermittently by the US and, from 1963 onwards, by China.

§ 1.3 – An introduction to Sino-Pakistani relations

To understand the parameters in which Sino-Pakistani relations evolved, the most obvious starting point is to contextualise the relationship within the regional scenario. During the early 1960s a series of events and circumstances, including the emergence of Sino-Indian hostility (culminating in the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962), Nehru's rejection of the Pakistani idea of a joint defence pact in the subcontinent and US support for India against China, led China and Pakistan to reconsider their bilateral relations. In the 1970s, China

⁹ For more on 'Martial Races' see: Ray, S. (2012) 'The Nonmartial Origins of the "Martial Races": Ethnicity and Military Service in Ex-British Colonies', *Armed Forces and Society*, 39/3: 560-575.

provided Pakistan with nuclear capabilities which enabled Islamabad to build its nuclear arsenal to counter Indian military superiority in the subcontinent. However, according to Jabin Jacob, ‘the India-factor in the Sino-Pakistani relationship while not completely eliminated is now only one among many factors motivating the “all-weather friendship”’ (2010: 220). As will be discussed, especially in the post-2001 period, Sino-Pakistani ties shifted from a relationship which was primarily driven by a ‘metus hostilis’, namely the enmity of both countries towards India, towards a bilateral relationship in which Pakistan plays an increasingly important role, particularly in China’s economic outreach, launched with the ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative. While India’s role remains important in the broader Sino-Pakistani relationship, what Andrew Small defines as ‘the glue that binds the two sides together’ (2015: 4), the ties between Islamabad and Beijing have now transcended the initial India-centric focus.

As part of the expansion of the relationship into a wide array of areas of cooperation, the economic dimension is the aspect which has attracted most attention. The \$46 billion CPEC investment package, coupled with a significant increase in the overall volume of trade from USD 2 billion in 2002 to USD 18.9 billion in 2016, have transformed economic relations between the two countries. As the analysis assesses in Chapter 4, trade exchanges between Pakistan and China were, historically, the weakest aspect of a relationship which was primarily dictated by security imperatives, namely counter-balancing India’s rise in South Asia through the development of Pakistan’s nuclear programme and the supply of weapons to the Pakistani military. The import/export balance has always favoured China, and continues to represent a true concern in the Pakistani business community. Therefore, as a seasoned observer of Sino-Pakistani relations told me, ‘the Chinese have been sending to Pakistan some special purchasing missions to import goods and commodities in China in order to try and rebalance this a little bit’ (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015). Reports about the state of economic ties between the two countries emphasises that in the Pakistani business community there is the perception that Chinese are not interested in investing in areas ‘that could enable Pakistan to create an export surplus’ (Rhaman, 2011: 4). These concerns have been also raised with regards to the economic feasibility of the CPEC

investment, as discussed in chapter 6. While the imbalance in trade relations represents an issue that the Pakistani government needs to address, China has been the only country willing to inject billions of dollars into Pakistan through the CPEC, aimed at modernising the country's infrastructure (including roads and railways) and energy grids. In other words, China is the only country which has decided to bet on Pakistan's future.

A number of authors, both from academia and the policy-making community, who have focused their attention on Sino-Pakistani ties in the post-2001 period have predicted, at different points in time, that the partnership was going to face tough circumstances, and that the conditions within Pakistan seriously hindered any significant development of the relationship (Beckely, 2012; Curtis and Scissors, 2012; Hagerty, 2002; Kardon, 2011; Feigenbaum, 2011; Rakisits, 2012). The security of Chinese workers in Pakistan and, by and large, the feasibility of investing in the country, have indeed represented a major point of concern in Sino-Pakistani ties, especially during the 2007-2013 period. The Chinese workforce operating in Pakistan has come under attack by insurgents in both Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as the analysis will assess in Chapters 5 and 6. On a related note, the terrorist threat emanating from Pakistan's tribal areas has also caused strains in the relationship between Islamabad and Beijing. As Siddiqi observed, 'China's major domestic source of concern is to ensure that Islamists do not penetrate the western autonomous regions of Xinjiang' (Siddiqi, 2012: 5). This is also echoed by Marco Mezzera who argued that 'Beijing has been particularly wary of the risk that Islamic terrorism could spread from Pakistan into Xinjiang and establish transnational ideological and operational linkages with militants there' (Mezzera, 2011: 5).¹⁰ Xinjiang, China's westernmost region, is important for Beijing because of its abundant natural resources and its strategic location vis-à-vis Central and South Asia (Haider, 2005: 523).

The abovementioned dynamics, ranging from the economic dimension in Sino-Pakistani relations to the more sensitive aspects such as counterterrorism, will be dissected in the empirical chapters of the thesis. What is worth noting

¹⁰ See also: Duchatel, M. (2011) 'The Terrorist Risk and China's policy toward Pakistan: strategic reassurance and the United Front', *Journal of Contemporary China*, 20/71: 543-561.

here is that, regardless of the strains contingent upon sporadic episodes of disagreement or incidents, relations between Pakistan and China have proved to be remarkably solid and resilient throughout. Pakistan is indeed a great beneficiary of military, diplomatic and, in more recent years, economic support that China has constantly provided. But China has had some important gains from the relationship with its South Asian neighbour. As Andrew Small remarked ‘whenever Beijing evaluates whom it can consistently find in its camp, there is one single name that recurs’ (2015: 181) and that is Pakistan.

§ 1.4 – Contributions and relevance of the study

Analysing the civil-military interplay in Pakistan through the relationship between Islamabad and Beijing serves two purposes that are also the substantive theoretical and empirical contributions of this study. First, the conceptual discussion presented in the thesis contributes analytically to our understanding of the role of the military in politics, especially in emerging democracies. In this context, the analysis presented in the thesis speaks to two different, yet fundamentally intertwined, bodies of literature, namely the studies looking at the so called ‘hybrid regimes’ (by identifying the contours and characteristics of Pakistan’s political setup) and those that focus on civil-military relations. To this end, the analysis of civil-military interactions in Pakistan is placed on a continuous scale which accounts for the different intensities of civilian control in four decision-making areas, namely internal security, economic policy, foreign policy and elite recruitment. Moving from the coup-centric approach that a large part of the literature on civil-military relations has adopted, this study integrates the work previously done by Croissant et al. (2010) and Fitch (1998) into a revised framework applied to Pakistan in the context of the study conducted here, but which can also be deployed to assess the role of the military in politics in other countries worldwide. While the material on Latin American and Southern European countries proliferates, less research has been conducted to date on this particular aspect of civil-military relations in Pakistan. By assessing the role of the military in Pakistan during the last fifteen years, scholars of democratic transition can find in this thesis novel material to evaluate Pakistan’s democratic trajectory. In-depth case studies of a single country represent the

key building blocks for students of comparative politics interested in assessing democratisation on a wider scale. As such, there is the potential to assess the findings presented in the thesis in a broader comparative perspective, looking at other emerging democracies in Asia and beyond.

Second, the analysis draws on semi-structured elite interviews conducted during fieldwork in Pakistan, triangulated with primary and secondary sources, to shed light on one of Pakistan's most significant, though understudied, bilateral interactions, namely the 'all-weather' friendship with China. Apart from Andrew Small's *The Pakistan China Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics* (2015a), and Anwar Syed's *China and Pakistan: Diplomacy of an Entente Cordiale* (1974), this is a topic which has so far been neglected in the literature on Pakistan, and on Asia more generally, a gap that this thesis fills. In the post 9/11 period the war on terror de facto jeopardized the understanding of both domestic and foreign policy of Pakistan, whose internal and external dynamics were primarily read in light of its effort in combating the terrorist threat, and in supporting the United States led military efforts in Afghanistan, thereby overlooking other significant as well as crucial aspects of Pakistan's international relations, such as the Sino-Pakistani strategic partnership. On the other hand, China has been mainly scrutinized using a macro geopolitical lens, in terms of political military dynamics with respect to Russia, the United States, the Pacific region, as well as of economic/commercial expansion worldwide, with little interest in the details of the interplay with the country in the Indian sub-continent.

The relevance of this research also pertains to the more ample regional geopolitical scenario. Pakistan is a strategically important state for the economic and political architecture envisaged by China through the ambitious OBOR initiative. Pakistan's geographical location, with access to the Indian Ocean and shared borders with Iran, Afghanistan, China and India, and its nuclear arsenal make the country a key element in understanding the regional balance of power. In this context, understanding who is in charge of specific policies between the civilians and the military is important not only for the country's governance and democratic transition, but also for the wide-ranging implications this has on the regional scenario. As Aqil Shah aptly remarked 'what happens in Pakistan does not usually stay in Pakistan' (2014a: 2).

§ 1.5 – Organisation of the thesis

The thesis consists of eight chapters in total, through which the analysis is articulated. After the Introduction, Chapter 2 focuses on the conceptual framework of the thesis. As mentioned above, the thesis assesses the extent of military influence in Pakistan's relations with China on a continuum of civil-military relations, which accounts for different intensities of civilian control in four decision-making areas, namely internal security, foreign policy, economic policy and elite recruitment. The reasons behind the choice of these four areas are explained in detail in the discussion presented in this chapter. In order to provide a solid background to the framework deployed in the thesis, Chapter 2 also serves as a review of the literature on civil-military relations. In this context, the analysis advocates shifting the focus from coup d'états to military prerogatives, in order to better understand the process of democratic transition in Pakistan, and in emerging democracies more broadly. The continuum of civil-military relations introduced in this section is included in the conclusions to each of the empirical chapters, as a way of systematically assessing the extent of military influence in the case studies analysed.

Chapter 3 discusses the research design and methodology adopted in the thesis. The analysis conducted in the empirical chapters is based on semi-structured elite interviews conducted in Pakistan and on a wealth of primary and secondary sources. In this context, the main purpose of Chapter 3 is to explain how the empirical material was collected, reflecting on the challenges and benefits of conducting interviews in Pakistan. Similarly, the analysis presented in this chapter details the reasons behind the choice of the case studies, namely to ensure representativeness of the phenomena analysed.

Chapter 4 dwells on the evolution of Sino-Pakistani relations in a historical perspective. The analysis presented aims at contextualising the ties between Islamabad and Beijing, thereby addressing the role that military and civilian leaders in Pakistan had in forging and nurturing relations between the two countries since 1951, when diplomatic relations were established. Besides providing an essential background to the China-Pakistan entente cordiale, the chapter also presents novel empirical data, primarily related to trade relations since the early 1960s. It is important in tracing the evolution of economic ties between the two countries, as China has now become Pakistan's largest trading

partner, and the volume of trade has witnessed an exponential growth in recent years. As previously mentioned, the economic benefits that Pakistan would derive from the relationship with China have been questioned by certain segments of the Pakistani business community, especially after the Free Trade Agreement signed in 2006 and, more recently, the large infrastructural investment under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Assessing bilateral trade ties over time is therefore vital to provide a better assessment of current dynamics.

Chapter 5, the first of the three empirical chapters of the thesis, looks at the evolution of the port of Gwadar since 9/11 against the backdrop of Pakistan's domestic politics. The relevance of Gwadar pertains to the economic, energy and geopolitical spheres. According to a report by the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB), one of the main interests for China in Pakistan is to 'maintain Gwadar port as a quasi-Chinese naval outpost to protect oil supply lines from the Middle East, and to counter both the US presence in Central Asia and India's influence in the region' (CIDOB, 2012: 13). The latter point is particularly important as Iran is working on the Chahbahar port in Sistan-Baluchistan which will be easily accessible for Indian imports and exports via road and rail links to Afghanistan and Central Asia. To this end, as much as China is doing with the Karakoram highway in Pakistan, India is helping to build a 200 km long road that will connect Chahbahar with Afghanistan (Khan, 2013: 91). The analysis presented in Chapter 5 traces the development of the port of Gwadar by looking at the decision-making areas of internal security, economic policy, foreign policy and elite recruitment. In order to ensure that the analysis is presented systematically, the structure set in this Chapter is the same for the other ensuing empirical chapters of the thesis.

Chapter 6 looks at the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The latter represents an extremely ambitious, and potentially transformative, USD46 billion investment by the Chinese government into Pakistan. Nearly two years after its announcement during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan in April 2015, the CPEC has allowed Pakistan, in dire need of resources to tackle the energy crisis affecting the country, to modernise the existing road and rail networks, as well as to build new ones to facilitate the transport of goods from the port of Gwadar to Kashgar, in China's Xinjiang. The analysis

presented in Chapter 6 demonstrates that civilian control over the military has remained constantly weak in the areas of foreign policy and internal security, whereas with regards to elite recruitment and economic policy the analysis suggests a shift towards an increased civilian control, if compared to both the Musharraf period and to the 2008-2013 PPP government alike.

Chapter 7 explores the relationship between Pakistan, Afghanistan and China. The importance of this case study in the context of this thesis is that the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan represents a potent example of the pre-eminence of Pakistan's security establishment over national security policy, including under civilian governments both in the 1990s and in the post 2008 period. Pakistan's Afghan policy has been retained as a 'reserved domain' by the Pakistani military; in this context, China's role has implicitly enabled the Pakistani army to maintain its grip on this crucial issue-area. At the same time, the areas of economic policy and elite recruitment have marked some improvements as far as civilian control is concerned. This is in line with the pattern emerging from the other two empirical chapters of the thesis.

In the concluding Chapter 8, the analysis revisits the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 3 in light of the results presented in the empirical chapters. The aim is to bring together, in a comparative fashion, the scores assigned to each decision-making area in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. In order to provide a comprehensive overview of civil-military relations in Pakistan, the conclusions also assess the areas of elite recruitment, foreign policy, economic policy, and internal security in a wider perspective. Finally, the concluding chapter includes some reflections on the comparative potential of the analytical framework adopted in the thesis and outlines a future research agenda.

CHAPTER 2

Analytical framework: civil-military relations and the question of military influence in politics

§ - 2.1 - Introduction

Before explaining the analytical framework adopted in the thesis, a clear definition of democratic ‘transition’ and ‘consolidation’ is required. This is not merely a taxonomical exercise but also reflects the dynamics behind political developments in emerging democracies. There is, in fact, a need to circumscribe what Andreas Schedler defined the ‘blurred lines’ between these two moments, ‘transition’ and ‘consolidation’, witnessed in countries emerging from authoritarian rule.

Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan define *democratic consolidation* as ‘a political regime in which democracy as a complex system of institutions, rules and patterned incentives has become, in a phrase, the only game in town’ (1996: 15). They further articulate their analysis into three dimensions, namely behavioural, attitudinal and constitutional. Behaviourally, consolidation signifies that no institutional actor adopts non-democratic tools to achieve its objective and create an undemocratic state. Attitudinally entails that the vast majority of the polity considers democratic institutions and procedures as the best way to organise politics within the state. Constitutionally refers to the fact that the ‘governmental and nongovernmental forces alike become subject to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflict within the bounds of the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process’ (1996: 16). Based on these criteria, Pakistan can hardly be considered a *consolidated* democracy as it does not meet neither the behavioural nor the constitutional criteria, as the assessment of military prerogatives in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 demonstrates.

With regards to democratic transitions, one of the widely used definitions is the one put forward by O’Donnell and Schmitter, according to which ‘the “transition” is the interval between one political regime and another. [...] Transitions are delimited, on the one side, by the launching of the process of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and, on the other, by the installation of

some form of democracy' (1986: 6). While this definition is still largely regarded as the seminal starting point of any analysis of democratic transition, identifying the end of a democratic transition when 'some form of democracy' is installed is problematic: the definition is both broad and procedural. After the fall of an authoritarian regime, democracy is usually restored through elections. The latter are an essential, but not sufficient, condition to consider a country democratic. Assessing whether a country has completed its transition to democracy through the installation of some form of democracy does not help in providing a good appreciation of contexts, like the Pakistani one, in which unelected institutions constrain the power of elected representatives. A more appropriate definition of democratic transition, which is the one adopted in the present study, is the one provided by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan. They contend that a democratic transition is completed when (a) there are free and fair elections and, more importantly for the purpose of this thesis, (b) when 'the government resulting from elections like these' has 'the *de jure* as well as *de facto* power to determine policy in many significant areas' without seeing its powers 'constrained by an interlocking set of "reserve domains", military "prerogatives", or "authoritarian enclaves"' (1996: 14-15). A democratic transition, in countries like Pakistan where the military have a larger-than-their-official-remit role in politics, thus entails not only having free and fair elections, the bolstering of institutions and the basic protection of societal freedoms, but also a rebalancing of civil-military relations so that the military remain within clearly defined constitutional boundaries, accept the quintessential democratic principle of civilian control over the military, and recognize civilian supremacy over crucial areas such as defence policy, the definition of military budgets, foreign policy, and internal security. As Zoltan Barany argued in his wide ranging study of civil-military relations in 27 countries, 'building democratic civil-military relations may be the most fundamental prerequisite of the transition to and the consolidation of democracy' (2012: 10-11).

For these reasons, civil-military relations are central to understand political trajectories in emerging democracies. The study of civil-military relations is primarily concerned with clarifying the interactions between the civilian and military spheres. The heart of the debate in the civil-military relations literature revolves around the centuries-old question 'who will guard the guardians?',

referring to the paradoxical situation that the institution created to preserve a country's political system may then become a threat to the very system it is supposed to protect. The concept of civilian control over the military thus lies at the very heart of the debates around the civil-military interplay. The most effective definition which captures the essence of civilian control over the military is the one coined by Michael Desch who maintains that 'the best indicator of strength of civilian control is who prevails when civilian and military preferences diverge' (1998: 391). The civil-military problematique thus entails that a state has a powerful military able to fulfil its security remit but, at the same time, limits its role within constitutional boundaries, without allowing the armed forces to step into governmental affairs. In the words of Peter D. Feaver, the issue surrounding the civil-military interplay can be described as the 'challenge to reconcile a military strong enough to do anything the civilians ask them to with a military subordinate enough to do only what civilian authorize them to do' (1996: 149).

The literature concerned with studying the interactions between the armed forces and their civilian counterparts has looked at the civil-military interplay from a variety of analytical angles, including the impact of civil-military relations on military effectiveness¹¹, military modernisation¹², as well as on mature democracies¹³ and nation-building in developing countries.¹⁴ Notwithstanding the importance of these topics for the study of both international relations and comparative politics, the mainstream debates in the

¹¹ See: Brooks, R. (2006) 'An Autocracy at War: Explaining Egypt's Military Effectiveness, 1967 and 1973', *Security Studies*, 15/3: 396-430; Biddle, S. (2004) 'Democracy and military effectiveness. A deeper look', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48/4: 525-546; Nielsen, S. C. (2002) 'Civil-military relations theory and military effectiveness', *Policy and Management Review*, 2/2: 1-21.

¹² Avant, D. (1994) *Political institutions and military change: lessons from peripheral wars*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

¹³ See: Burk, J. (2002) 'Theories of democratic civil-military relations', *Armed Forces and Society*, 29/1: 7-29; Bland, D. (2001) 'Patterns in liberal democratic civil-military relations', *Armed Forces and Society*, 27/4: 525-540; Feaver, D. P. (2003) *Armed servants: agency, oversight, and civil-military relations*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. For an analysis of civil-military relations in the former USSR Republics see:

Cottney, A., Edmunds, T. and Forster, A. (2002) 'The second-generation problematic: rethinking democracy and civil-military relations', *Armed Forces and Society*, 29/1: 31-56.

¹⁴ Chang, D. W. (1969) 'The military and nation building in Korea, Burma and Pakistan', *Asian Survey*, 9/11: 818-830; Danopoulos, C. P., Vajpeyi, D. and Bar-or, A. (eds) (2004) *Civil-military relations, nation building and national identity. Comparative perspectives*, Westport: Praeger; Nordlinger, E. (1970) 'Soldiers in mufti: the impact of military rule upon economic and social change in the non-Western states', *American Political Science Review*, 64/4: 1131-1148.

literature revolved primarily around two overarching themes, namely *coups d'état* and *military influence* in domestic political processes.

Situating the analysis in the scholarly tradition inaugurated by Finer (1962) and Stepan (1988) of looking at military involvement in politics through the lens of military prerogatives and varying degrees of intervention, this chapter illustrates the analytical framework utilised in assessing the three case studies of the thesis. More specifically, building on the work of Croissant et al and Fitch this chapter develops a *continuum* of civil-military relations which integrates the work of these scholars into a revised framework, assessing the extent of military influence in four decision-making areas, namely internal security, foreign policy, economic policy, and elite recruitment. In the ensuing sections of the chapter, the analysis first reviews the existing literature on civil-military relations with regards to military coups and military influence, before discussing the conceptual framework deployed in the thesis.

§ 2.2 – Civil-military relations and the question of coups

The most visible manifestation of tensions and strains between the civilian and military components of a society is the direct military intervention in politics in the form of a coup d'état. As such, a large part of the literature on civil-military relations focused its attention on the reasons behind military intervention in politics through coups (Belkin and Schofer, 2003; Desch, 1999; Finer, 1962; Fossum, 1967; Huntington, 1958; Janowitz, 1960; Leon, 2014; Luttwak, 1969; Nordlinger, 1977; Perlmutter, 1977; Piplani and Talmage, 2015; Powell and Thyne, 2011; Powell, 2012a; Powell, 2012b; Quinlivan, 1999; Schiff, 1995; Schiff, 2009; Staniland, 2008; Svolik, 2015; Thompson, 1975).¹⁵ In his seminal work, Samuel Huntington identifies 'professionalism' as the reason why the military does not intervene in politics, arguing that it is possible to define an *optimum* level of civilian control over the military that can avoid tensions between the armed forces and civilian rulers which he calls

¹⁵ For a general overview of the literature on civil-military relations see: Boone, B. (1990) 'How "unique" should the military be?: A review of representative literature & outline of a synthetic formulation', *European Journal of Sociology*, 31/1: 3-59; and Feaver, D. P. (1999) 'Civil-military relations', *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, 211-241; with regards to civil-military relations in Asia see: Croissant, A. (2016) 'Civil-Military Relations in Asia', *Oxford Bibliographies in Political Science*; and: Croissant, A., Kuehn, D, Lorenz, P., Chambers, P. W. (2013) *Democratization and civilian control in Asia*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

‘objective civilian control’. In contrast, Samuel E. Finer’s work emphasises that to avoid military intervention in politics, the military also need to have absorbed the principle of supremacy of the civilian power. If this principle is not recognized, the military start considering themselves as the servants of the state rather than of the government in power (Finer, 1962: 25). Analysing the civil-military interplay through a sociological lens, Morris Janowitz was of the view that contemporary political institutions suffer ‘from the lack of clarity regarding rules for governing the behaviour of the military as a pressure group in influencing both legislative and executive decisions about foreign affairs’ (Janowitz, 1960: 234).¹⁶

More recently, Rebecca Schiff proposed a new way to assess the reasons behind military intervention in politics through her ‘concordance theory’ (1995, 1999). In her work, Schiff puts forward the concept that to avoid military intervention in politics, cooperation among the military, the elected leaders and the citizenry is the key element which can establish solid and durable foundations for a democratic society (Schiff, 2009: 32-33). Schiff’s main argument vis-à-vis Pakistan is that the reason behind the repeated military coups is the lack of concordance among the three partners outlined above. Her theory has been criticised particularly with regards to the Pakistani case. Zulfiqar Ali has been the most vocal critic of Schiff’s concordance theory. First, he points out that Pakistan’s military coups are the result of concordance, referring to the fact that the citizenry has been largely in favour of Musharraf’s military takeover in 1999. More importantly, Ali contends that the theory analyses elected leaders, the military and citizenry as ‘equal partners’, notwithstanding the fact that ‘neither the Pakistani society nor the state is a liberal entity. Arrogance, inequality, polarization, disparity, distrust, and division are the salient features of the society and the state’ (Ali, 2016: 467).¹⁷

¹⁶ In the sociological strand see also: Segal, D. R. (1975) ‘Civil-military relations in the mass public’, *Armed Forces and Society*, 1/2: 215-229 on the role of the military within the society after the end of conscription; Moskos, C. C. Jr (1977) ‘From Institution to Occupation. Trends in military organization’, *Armed Forces and Society*, 4/1: 41-50, on the evolution of the armed forces’ institutional features after the dissolution of the draft.

¹⁷ See also Schiff’s answer to this criticism: Schiff, R. L. (2016) ‘Concordance theory in Pakistan. Response to Zulfiqar Ali’, *Armed Forces and Society*, 42/1: 226-234; and Ali’s counter-reply: Ali, Z. (2016) ‘Pakistan, military coup, and concordance theory: four objections to Schiff’, *Armed Forces and Society*, 42/2: 463-469.

These studies are primarily concerned with explaining military coups by identifying the endogenous reasons (i.e. professionalism, and the different approaches to it, concordance among key segments of the society) behind military intervention in politics. Michael Desch puts forward, instead, a structural theory which focuses on the external dimension of civil-military relations, namely how changes in external threats shape the relationship between the civilians and the military in a given country (Desch, 1999: 2). In his view, the strength of civilian control over the military 'is shaped fundamentally by structural factors, especially threats, which affect individual leaders, the military organisation, the state and the society (1999: 11). In a similar line of argument, Paul Staniland offers a multi-causal theory of military intervention in politics which looks at the interaction among three factors, namely internal legitimacy, institutionalisation and the perceived threat environment (2008: 322). As far as Pakistan is concerned he argues that 'the interaction of an intense external security threat with low levels of domestic institutionalization and legitimacy' resulted in Pakistan's rapidly becoming a praetorian country (2008: 323).

The abovementioned studies span from western democracies to developing countries and offer several differing explanations behind military intervention in politics. While coups, such as the ones that happened in Egypt (2013) and Thailand (2014), have been studied extensively in the literature on civil-military relations, the likelihood of militaries carrying out a coup d'état has significantly diminished over the last decade (Pion-Berlin and Trikunus, 2010; Clark, 2007; Friedman, 2014; Schedler, 1998). Conversely, countries such as the Philippines, Myanmar and Pakistan are witnessing a process of democratic transition with a powerful military that plays a central role in the day-to-day handling of state affairs, even under a civilian dispensation.¹⁸ As such, in many new democracies the military is able to retain key institutional prerogatives in decision-making areas, even without a fully-fledged military coup. The fact that the military's formal role in politics is small does not necessarily mean that the

¹⁸ For an analysis of civil-military relations in the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand see: Heidux, F. (2011) 'From guardians to democrats? Attempts to explain change and continuity in the civil-military relations of post-authoritarian Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines', *The Pacific Review*, 24/2: 248-271.

civil-military balance is changing in favour of the civilian chain of command, neither that the military has renounced its decision-making prerogatives. It may instead suggest that the military has found it in its interest to exercise power less overtly. According to Feaver, focusing on the *extent* of military influence in a country's political system, rather than outright on coups, 'captures the idea that the military institution may be politically powerful even (or perhaps especially) when it does not seize direct power through a forceful takeover' (1999: 218). For the reasons just outlined, the dichotomous approach of intervention/non-intervention of the military in politics that a part of the literature on civil-military relations adopts does not provide the necessary tools to understand countries in the process of democratic transition, e.g. the Pakistani context. There is a need to shift our attention from coups to a more nuanced, yet substantive approach, to assessing the role of the military in politics.

§ 2.3 – A different focus: military influence and military prerogatives

The relationship between civilians and the military is indeed larger than the question of coups (Feaver, 1999: 219). In the context of democratic transition and consolidation, military prerogatives (Stepan, 1988), military autonomy (Pion-Berlin, 1992) or reserved domains (Valenzuela, 1992)¹⁹ are not the only obstacles which constrain the emergence and strengthening of democratic practices. In Pakistan, for instance, security issues within the country (although the spiral of violence has witnessed a significant decrease in the post-2014 period), the energy crisis, and overall poor governance are some of the issues that Pakistan's democracy faces. Nevertheless, the high level of military prerogatives and the ensuing military entrenchment in the decision-making process significantly limits the prospects for democracy to become 'the only game in town' in Pakistan. It is therefore important to discuss these further. This thesis focuses on the *extent* of military influence in a country's political system. One of the first scholars who understood the importance of classifying military intervention in politics on a continuum characterised by varying intensities was Finer. He disaggregated military intervention in the following four groups, depending on their intensity: (a) influence upon the civil

¹⁹ Here I use these terms interchangeably.

authorities, a level in which the military intervention is still bounded within constitutional limits and the civil government holds the power; (b) level of pressures or blackmail, a situation at the threshold of constitutionality in which the military seek to influence the civil power by the threat of some sanctions; (c) level of displacement, which consists of the removal of a cabinet or ruler with another chosen by the military; (d) level of supplantment, that is comparable to a military coup since the civilian regime is removed and replaced by a military rule (Finer, 1962: 32-56). This was a very important contribution as it was the first attempt in the literature on civil-military relations to move beyond the coup variable, and to analyse the civil-military interplay along a continuum, the approach that will be adopted in the present thesis.

Understanding the importance of assessing military influence as a matter of degree, rather than merely through coups d'état, a new strand of analysis emerged in the wake of Al Stepan's (1971, 1988) work that focused on the armed forces as an institution with their own corporate interests and institutional prerogatives. Such focus is particularly useful for Pakistan, as the military often influenced political processes to preserve their interests from civilian interference. In his study of military prerogatives in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina and Spain, Stepan defined institutional prerogatives as

those areas where the military as an institution assumes they have an acquired right or privilege, formal or informal, to exercise effective control over its internal governance, to play a role within extra-military areas within a state apparatus, or even to structure relationships between the state and political or civil society (Stepan, 1988: 93).

Stepan identifies 11 areas where the military exercises its influence over the civilian authorities in countries undergoing the transition from authoritarian to democratic rule. In particular, he lists the following military prerogatives: 1) a constitutionally sanctioned independent role for the military in the political system; 2) the military's relations with the chief executive; 3) the coordination of defence sector; 4) an active-duty military participation in the cabinet; 5) the role of legislature; 6) the role of senior career civil servants or political appointees; 7) the role in intelligence; 8) the role in police; 9) the role in military

promotions; 10) the role in state enterprises; 11) the role in the legal system. Although useful, Stepan's prerogatives are limited as they primarily focus on institutions thereby neglecting other important decision-making areas (e.g. foreign policy); in addition, the nature of the Pakistani decision-making process is dyadic (especially in the post-2008 period), in the sense that it is not channelled through institutions, but happens informally on a one-to-one basis between the Prime Minister and the Chief of Army Staff in particular.²⁰ As such, focusing on institutions such as the National Security Council is not the best way to capture the nature of decision-making in Pakistan.

With regards to Pakistan in the post-2008 period, Aqil Shah (2014b) deploys Alfred Stepan's framework and classifies the degree of military control as 'high' in eight out of ten indicators, with only one, the military's constitutionally sanctioned role in politics (particularly with regards to the National Security Council) which scores as low. In his indicators, however, there are no decision-making areas which include public policy or economic decision-making, a gap that this thesis addresses.

Partially departing from Stepan's work, Pion Berlin adopts a different approach. He classifies military autonomy on an ordinal scale of low, medium and high. He differentiates between institutional autonomy, primarily related to the military's professional independence, and political autonomy, namely the military's 'aversion towards or defiance of civilian control' (Pion Berlin, 1992: 84-5). Put differently, autonomy can be either an offensive or a defensive tool in the hands of the military. Offensively, its purpose is political in the sense that the aim is to limit the government's prerogatives by strengthening the military's own decision-making powers. Defensively, its goal is more institutional, a means by which the military guards its core professional functions against unwanted interference by 'outsiders' (1992: 85). As the analysis in the empirical chapters will demonstrate, Pakistan's military has used its institutional autonomy in an offensive way, to strengthen its grip on areas such

²⁰ In General Sharif's tenure as the Pakistani COAS (November 2013-November 2016) he met 102 times with PM Nawaz Sharif. 31 of these meetings were one-to-one and not attended by any other member of the cabinet. This seems to be a consolidated practice, since also the first meeting between Nawaz Sharif and the new COAS, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, was a one-to-one interaction. See: PILDAT (2016a) 'State of civil-military relations in Pakistan' June 01, 2015-July 31, 2016', October 2016, p. 39.

as foreign policy and internal security, considered since the early days as the *raison d'être* of the military. This has important implications for the process of democratic transition as the military's control of decision-making areas such as internal security and foreign policy prevents civilian institutions from developing democratic mechanisms.

In a similar vein, Felipe Aguero makes a distinction between *protective* and *expansive* military entrenchment in political structures (1992: 164-166). The protective typology arises when the military feel the need to secure protection from the power-seeking elites that were excluded during the military rule. Conversely, the expansive nature of military entrenchment stems from 'a profound distrust of parties which is based not as much on the threat which party politics present for the armed forces' institutional cohesion as it is on the disruptive nature and divisive effects which party politics is seen having on the nation' (Aguero, 1992: 166). Expansive military entrenchment, as defined by Aguero, is particularly relevant for the analysis presented in this thesis as, especially with regards to the CPEC, there have been numerous controversies between the government and the opposition parties, both at central and provincial levels, in relation to the route of the corridor. These divisive political issues are not seen favourably by the army which has been seeking the creation of an army-led institutional body with the aim of overseeing the CPEC's implementation. This, along with other instances discussed in greater depth in the empirical chapters of the thesis, demonstrates the expansive nature of Pakistan's military entrenchment in the political processes and its implications for Pakistan's democratic transition.

The approaches put forward by Pion-Berlin and Aguero to the matter of military prerogatives have indeed the great merit of shedding light on different patterns of military involvement in politics. However, they are less useful to specifically identify areas where the military, as an institution, retains the right to intervene when it feels that its interests, or the nation's, are endangered by a civilian government. Bearing in mind the nature of military entrenchment in Pakistan as *expansive* (Aguero) or *offensive* (Pion-Berlin), it is important to clearly disaggregate the different decision-making areas to provide a more nuanced assessment of the extent of military prerogatives in a country.

§ 2.4 – Civil-military continuum: degrees of military prerogatives and decision-making areas

All the approaches outlined above represent seminal contributions that have shaped the debate about the extent of military influence in a country's polity. While recognising their importance, this thesis applies a different analytical framework integrating the levels of civilian control with specific decision-making areas in which the extent of military influence is assessed. In this context, a more useful framework for this thesis' purposes is the one put forward by Croissant et al. (2010). They identify five decision-making areas of civil-military relations, namely elite recruitment, public policy, internal security, national defence and military organisation (Croissant et al, 2010). Bearing in mind the main theoretical path set by Croissant et al., here the analysis focuses on four decision-making areas, namely *foreign policy* and *economic policy* (that in Croissant et al.'s framework are both under the broader domain of public policy), *internal security*, which involves the use of armed forces in a purely domestic environment, including 'public order in emergency situations (including disaster relief), preparation for counterinsurgency warfare and terrorism, domestic intelligence gathering, daily policing and border controlling', and *elite recruitment*, namely 'the rules, criteria and processes of recruiting, selecting and legitimizing the holders of political office' (Wolf, 2013: 7-9). With reference to the latter area, it is important to specify that the Musharraf period was characterised by a democratic façade, hence discussing elite recruitment, both in terms of appointments in key government positions and with regards to the role of the opposition would be redundant. Democratic space was very limited and most of the appointments were made by General Musharraf. As such, in the 2001-2007 period, this area scored as low in all the three case studies. Building on this premise, the empirical chapters analyse the area of elite recruitment in the post-2008 period in order to understand whether, and to what extent, civilian control in this area increased.

It is important to explain the reasons behind the choice of four, instead of five, decision-making areas. First, the dimensions of 'foreign policy' and 'economic policy' are two decision-making areas which are vast and deserve to be treated independently. These are two crucial benchmarks against which to assess the extent of military influence in the decision-making process. As

previously mentioned, in order to provide a nuanced understanding of the civil-military dynamics in Pakistan, there is a need to disaggregate the decision-making areas that will be assessed in the case studies. Including both foreign policy and economic policy under the broader category of public policy does not help in providing a substantive appreciation of the level of military influence.

Second, the analysis presented in the thesis does not include military organisation. Croissant et al. divided such a decision-making area in two sub-dimensions, 'hardware' – force size and structure, procurement – and 'software' – doctrine, education, appointment and retirement. Especially with regards to the doctrine and education, the works of Aqil Shah (2014a) and Christine Fair (2014) have extensively dealt with these aspects by analysing memos, biographies, army green books, nature of training and the content of the textbooks used in the Pakistani military academy. These authors conducted a vast and thorough analysis of the army as an institution and its strategic posture, and it would be difficult for the study conducted here to add substantive theoretical and empirical elements to the abovementioned works. Furthermore, access to certain segments of the Pakistani establishment proved to be difficult as Chapter 3 discusses in greater depth. The analysis presented in the thesis, however, delves into some aspects of the procurement side of the civil-military interplay (especially as far as Sino-Pakistani relations are concerned). The study also hints at the role of the Prime Minister in appointing the Chief of Army Staff and the head of the ISI (both developments are treated under the 'elite recruitment' decision-making area). However, the difficulty in gathering data pertaining to the dimension of 'military organisation' broadly conceived, led the analysis to focus more on areas that were not previously addressed by scholars and in which new, solid and reliable evidence was collected.

Croissant et al identify three different intensities of civilian control: low, medium and high, where low means that the military dominate the decision-making process; medium, that the military enjoy some prerogatives but they are not entirely in control of the decision-making process; high, when the civilians are entirely in control, and the military do not have any influence on the decision-making process (Croissant et al, 2010: 956). Adeney (2015) is the first who has applied Croissant et al.'s framework to Pakistan, integrating it into her

multi-dimensional framework to assess the nature of Pakistan's regime type. While Adeney correctly identifies Pakistan as a hybrid regime based on her classification of competitiveness, civil liberties and the extent of reserved domains, there is room to revisit the assessment she makes about military prerogatives in certain policy-making areas, e.g. in relation to internal security where Adeney argues that civilian control is between medium and low whereas the findings of the present thesis suggest that the military is in full control of the decision-making process in this area, but less so in economic decision-making.

Differently from what Croissant et al proposed in their work, but similar to Adeney, here the analysis further disaggregates the degrees of civilian control into four different levels, namely 'high', 'medium-high', 'medium-low' and 'low', in order to provide a more nuanced assessment of military encroachment in the decision-making process. In order to clearly characterise each of these levels of civilian control Fitch's (1998) indicators are deployed.²¹ The first level is what Fitch defines 'democratic control', which occurs when 'the armed forces are subordinate in political and policy terms to the appropriate civilian authorities, including in most cases a civilian minister of defence' (Fitch, 1998: 41). Under these conditions, the policy preference of civilian governments prevail over those of the military, without the risk of the military undermining the government's stability. The second dimension (medium-high) is 'conditional military subordination', a situation in which the military does not openly intervene in a country's political processes. However, 'the military reserves its right to intervene to protect national interests and guarantee national security in times of crisis. [...] Civilian governments generally defer to military preferences on issues that might provoke military discontent' (1998: 40). Furthermore, the armed forces have a high degree of institutional autonomy and a quasi-monopoly on security policy. Third, 'military tutelage' (medium-low) implies that the military actively participate in the decision-making process and oversee civilian authorities. While the military's share of power may vary, they retain an implicit veto power which is usually respected when the issues

²¹ For a similar use of this continuum of civil-military relations applied to Burma, see: Bunte, M. (2014) 'Burma's Transition to Quasi-Military Rule: From Rulers to Guardians?', *Armed Forces & Society*, 40/4: 742-764.

involves intense and widespread military pressure (1998: 39). The fourth and final level is ‘military control’ (low), which is characterized by the *de facto* political subordination of civilian governments to effective military control. In these instances, such as Pakistan in post-2002 under the regime of General Musharraf, the civilians are in positions of formal authority, but the major policy decision are made by the effective powerholder, normally the head of the army (1998: 38). In Table 2.1 below is presented a tabulation of the analytical framework adopted in the thesis

Table 2.1 – Continuum of civil-military relations

Decision Making-Area	Democratic control (High)	Conditional subordination (Medium-high)	Military tutelage (medium-low)	Military control (low)
Foreign Policy	The armed forces are subordinated to civilian authorities. The latter direct the country’s foreign relations.	Military retain the right to intervene at times of crisis. On contentious issues, civilians defer to the military’s policy preferences.	Military actively participate in decision-making process and oversee civilians. Military retain an implicit veto power over policies.	Civilian authorities subordinated to military control. Policies decided primarily by the head of the army.
Internal Security	Civilian authorities are in charge security policy. They may use the armed forces under special circumstances.	Military retain the right to intervene at times of crisis. On contentious issues, civilians defer to the military’s policy preferences.	Military actively participate in decision-making process and oversee civilians. Military retain an implicit veto power over policies.	Civilian authorities subordinated to military control. Policies decided primarily by the head of the army.
Economic Policy	The government ministries are in charge of defining the economic policy, including military budgets.	The military assert their interests but are not involved in the decision-making. Presence of military-led enterprises in nation-wide projects.	Military actively participate in decision-making process. High degree of involvement in economic activities.	Civilian authorities subordinated to military control. Policies decided primarily by the head of the army.
Elite recruitment	Office holders are selected by civilian authorities without interference from the military.	The military has some degree of influence but the rules of competition are relatively open.	Elite selection is largely controlled by the military. Retired members of the military in cabinet-positions.	Military control electoral processes and political appointments. Active military personnel in power positions.

Adapted by the author from: Croissant et al (2011), Fitch (1998).

Fitch's four definitions of the different levels of civilian control are particularly appropriate to assess the extent of military influence in the three case studies of the port of Gwadar, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the trilateral ties among Pakistan-China and Afghanistan. In the present chapter, the analysis advocated the need to provide a more nuanced and substantive understanding of the informal powers the military enjoy in a democratic transition. This four scale level of assessment is more apt at capturing the fluid nature of power dynamics within a state. Besides enabling a better assessment of the subtle variations in civil-military relations, the abovementioned framework has also wider ramifications. From a scholarly point of view, the difference between *military tutelage* and *conditional subordination* has important implications for whether a country could be classified as a democratic, hybrid or non-democratic regime. Assessing the degree of military influence on an ordinal scale therefore helps to understand the challenges to democracy in countries emerging from authoritarian rule. Military tutelage entails that the military is still largely in control of a given decision-making area, whereas conditional subordination alludes to the fact that the civilians have a higher level of control. Such an assessment would not be possible by classifying these two intermediate levels under the 'medium' intensity as Croissant et al do. Furthermore, most of the literature on Pakistan, with the only exceptions of Adeney and Shah discussed above, looks at the high degree of prerogatives the military enjoy in foreign and defence policies, without including in the assessment other important decision-making areas such as economic policy and elite recruitment, a gap that the analytical framework deployed in this thesis fills.

From a policy perspective, understanding which institution, whether civilian or military, is controlling a specific policy-area is important as a foreign government could identify its main institutional interlocutor to best preserve the country's interests. China is a case in point. The emphasis the Chinese leaders have put on maintaining a solid relationship with the Pakistani Army reflects the concerns of policy-makers in Beijing about the security of their nationals in the country, as well as the fact that the military, and not the Ministry of Interior, is in charge of the country's internal security policy.

The tabulation presented above is included at the end of each of the three empirical chapters with the relative scores assigned to the decision-making areas after having conducted the empirical analysis. This facilitates comparisons across the three case studies and the levels of civilian control in each of the instances analysed. In addition, in the concluding chapter of the thesis, the framework presented here is utilised to offer a detailed picture of the evolution of civil-military relations in Pakistan in light of the empirical findings.

§ 2.5 – Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to explain the analytical framework adopted in the thesis. The analysis of the relevant literature on civil-military relations demonstrated the need to shift the focus from the dichotomous variable of military coups to a continuous one, namely the military influence in a country's political processes. Such an approach allows a better understanding of the political dynamics occurring in countries, like Pakistan, which have undergone a transition to democracy but are not yet consolidated. Assessing the extent of military encroachment in the decision-making process is more difficult to capture than military intervention through coups. The latter is relatively straightforward to measure as well as easily identifiable every time the military intervene in politics by overthrowing the government in power. More difficult is gauging the extent of military clout over the decision-making process. However, by adopting a continuum of civil-military relations the analysis is able to capture the variations of civilian control in four key decision making areas, encompassing Pakistan's domestic and international politics alike. While the main empirical focus of the thesis is to assess civil-military relations in Pakistan, the continuum deployed here has also the potential of being applied to contexts other than the Pakistani one. The comparative potential of the framework adopted in the thesis applies to those countries such as Turkey, where the civil-military rift has led to a failed coup in July 2016 and where we are now witnessing a redefinition of the military's role in the society, or Burma, where despite the democratic elections held in November 2015 the military still hinders the prospects of democratic transition. These instances, along with the Pakistani one analysed in the thesis, make the civil-military continuum

presented in this chapter a suitable tool to assess the extent of military influence in a country's political processes. Further considerations for future research on such an important topic are discussed in the concluding chapter of the thesis, where the comparative potential of the thesis is assessed in greater detail.

CHAPTER 3

Research Design and Methods

§ 3.1 - Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explain the research design and methods deployed in the thesis. The data used was primarily of a qualitative nature although some quantitative data, namely trade figures and arms supplies, was used to triangulate findings. A total number of 28 semi-structured elite interviews were conducted during eight weeks of fieldwork in Pakistan, between January and March 2015. Some accounts about Sino-Pakistani relations were also collected in China by interacting with academics at conferences and through two interviews. However, given that this thesis is primarily focused on the Pakistani side of the relationship, the material collected in China was mainly used to triangulate the information provided by the Pakistani interviewees. All the interviews were conducted in English.

To clarify some of the terms that will be addressed more often throughout the analysis, ‘data’ are intended here as ‘systematically collected elements of information about the world’ (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994: 23). Another key term which is necessary defining at the very outset is ‘case’, which Andrew Bennett defined as ‘an instance of a class of events of interest to the investigator, such as an instance of revolution, type of governmental regime, kind of economic system, or personality type’ (2004: 21).

Addressing the design of the study before moving to the following empirical chapters is of crucial importance, as the research design provides the structure and approach before the analysis of the units chosen can take place. As Yin argues, ‘research design deals with logic not with logistic’ (Yin, 1989: 29). The logic thus revolves around how to approach the research question as unambiguously as possible, while the logistic pertains to the different methods that a researcher applies in gathering and analysing data. To this end, the analysis starts by addressing in section 3.2 the case study research design, emphasising why case studies are the best option for this research and how the selection of the cases was conducted. Secondly, section 3.3 covers ‘process

tracing’ as the main methodological approach adopted here, explaining the rationale behind the choice of this method as well as its effective application. Section 3.4 examines semi-structured interviews as the primary data gathering method during fieldwork in Pakistan and China. Sections 3.5 and 3.6 focus on the data analysis process, including a discussion of how the reliability and validity of the data was ensured.

§ 3.2 - Case study research design: insights and cases’ selection

Case studies have been defined by John Gerring as in-depth studies ‘of a single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar’s aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena’ (2004: 341). One of the major advantages in adopting such a research design is that it gives the researcher the opportunity to analyse in great depth the unit under investigation (Gerring, 2004: 345). In addition, Burnham et al. noted that ‘case studies enable researchers to focus on a single individual, group, community, event, policy area or institution, and study it in depth, perhaps over an extended period of time’ (Burnham, Gilland Lutz, Grant, & Layton-Henry, 2008: 63). This inevitably brings into the present analysis the breadth-depth trade-off entailed in every research design. Case studies lean towards greater depth, which implies knowing more about a certain phenomenon, rather than aiming at a more inclusive, but less detailed, analysis of a wider range of instances. Given the limited material that has been produced on Sino-Pakistani relations the balance between depth and breadth will necessarily propend toward the former.

The main tasks of case selection are (a) representativeness, namely cases should reproduce the relevant causal features of a large universe; and (b) variation, i.e. the cases selected should vary along the dimensions of interest for the final outcome (Gerring, 2007: 88). To ensure that these criteria are met, Gerring lists a number of selection techniques which can vary according to the research objective. The one that will be applied here is the ‘typical case’ technique since it ‘exemplifies what is considered to be a typical set of values,

given some general understanding of a phenomenon’ (2007: 91).²² Table 3.1 below outlines the case studies selected for the analysis as well as the decision-making areas that will be analysed in each of the case studies to assess the extent of military influence in Pakistan’s relations with China.

Table 3.1 – Case Studies analysed in the thesis

Case Study Selected	Decision-making areas
The development of the port of Gwadar in the post-9/11 period (Chapter 5)	• Internal security • Public policy • Economic policy • Elite recruitment
The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (Chapter 6)	• Internal security • Public policy • Economic policy • Elite recruitment
Sino-Pakistani relations and Afghanistan (Chapter 7)	• Internal security • Public policy • Economic policy • Elite recruitment

All the cases presented in Table 3.1 embrace the whole spectrum of Sino-Pakistani relations during the last fifteen years, including the most important areas of cooperation between Islamabad and Beijing, namely infrastructural development, economic ties and military-to-military interactions. By focusing on four decision-making areas in each of the case studies, the study is able to gauge, and assess, the extent of military influence in the context of the relationship with China. While the analysis is restricted to a single, yet central, aspect of Pakistani politics (i.e. Sino-Pakistani relations) the dynamics in play in the context of Pakistan’s relations with China are representative of the wider developments in Pakistani domestic politics in the post 9/11 period, as the thesis’s concluding chapter ascertains.

²² For a detailed analysis of selection techniques see Seawright and Gerring (2008), ‘Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options’, *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2), 294-308.

Another important issue related to the choice of case studies is the one that pertains to the selection bias, and in particular to the selection of cases on the basis of the outcome of the dependent variable (Collier and Mahoney, 1996; Geddes, 1990; King et al., 1994). According to Collier and Mahoney (1996) it is important to choose ‘deviant’ or ‘negative’ cases among the case-studies in which the expected outcome is different from the one foreseen by the researcher. As far as the research undertaken here is concerned, the case studies are evenly divided into those that should fall under civilian oversight, especially in the post-2008 period in which two civilian regimes were in government, namely the development of the port of Gwadar and the CPEC, and other dimensions, such as the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan, in which the decision-making process is highly influenced, if not retained as a prerogative, by the Pakistani military. As a result, the selection of the abovementioned case studies was conducted in a way to avoid confirmation bias and to include a wide range of cases to be assessed.

§ 3.3 – Capturing the decision-making process: process tracing method

In social sciences there has been an increase, particularly in the last ten years, in the use of process tracing. George and Bennett described the method under examination here as ‘a procedure for identifying steps in a causal process leading to the outcome of a given dependent variable of a particular case in a particular historical context’ (2005: 176). In outlining process tracing methods, Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen identify three different uses of it, namely *theory-building*, *theory-testing* and *explaining outcomes*. For this research, the *explaining outcome* process tracing is the most suitable methodological approach. In fact, this variant of process tracing ‘is an iterative research strategy that aims to trace the complex conglomerate of systematic and case-specific mechanisms that produced the outcome in question’ (2013: 19). The explaining outcomes typology has several relevant characteristics that make it the most appropriate option for the research undertaken here. First, the rationale behind the use of this variant is to explain particularly puzzling historical outcomes by building a minimally sufficient explanation, ‘with sufficiency defined as an explanation that accounts for all of the important

aspects of an outcome with no redundant parts being present’ (2013: 18). Second, the study is case-centric, hence interested in highlighting certain key aspects of one case although some of the findings can be eventually applicable to other instances (2013). Third, the analysis traces case-specific composite mechanisms that explain the case. In light of these features, *explaining-outcome process* tracing can make a significant contribution to diverse research objectives including ‘identifying novel political and social phenomena and systematically describing them’ (Collier, 2011: 824).

In order to systematically and rigorously apply process tracing, there are four types of evidence that must be collected, namely ‘pattern, sequence, trace, and account’ (Beach and Pedersen, 2013: 99). *Pattern* pertains to obtaining statistical evidence of an hypothesised pattern; *sequence* deals with the chronology of events and expects to see a particular event occurring at a specific point in time; *trace* evidence pertains instead to actual traces that an event occurred while, finally, *account* evidence is related to the content of empirical material (2013: 99-100).²³ The analysis presented in the thesis uses primarily *sequence* and *account* as the main sources of evidence. An example, among others, of how process tracing is used in the thesis is Chapter 6, when the analysis traces the decision-making process leading to the Zarb-e-Azb operation. In that context, the chronology of events, integrated with the accounts collected during fieldwork and triangulated with a number of primary and secondary sources, explains the military’s preeminent role in that context, thereby corroborating the argument that internal security was retained as a reserve domain by the military leadership. In other words, observations have been collected chronologically in order to show, through the unfolding of events, the extent of military influence in that specific instance. Table 3.2 provides a tabulated summary of how process tracing was applied.

²³ For a detailed explanation of all the four forms of evidence with practical examples see Beach & Pedersen (2013), pp. 99-100. An example of the use of chronological evidence to explain an outcome is: Lee, T. (2009) ‘The Armed Forces and Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Explaining the Role of the Military in 1986 Philippines and 1998 Indonesia’, *Comparative Political Studies*, 42/5: 640-669.

Table 3.2. – Process tracing of the operation Zarb-e-Azb

Date (January-June 2014)	Event
30 January	Nawaz Sharif names a four-member commission to initiate peace talks with the Pakistani Taliban
2 February	TTP asks for four well-known politicians to represent them in talks with the government.
6 February	First round of talks held between TTP and Pakistani government delegation
17 February	TTP kills 23 FC soldiers. Negotiations suspended. Reuters reports Army waiting for a <i>casus belli</i> .
1 March	Ceasefire agreed between Government and Taleban
16 April	Ceasefire ends, mounting pressures of the Pakistani military to take actions
Mid-April	China's Intel Chief visits Pakistan and puts pressure on Rawalpindi to take action in North Waziristan
23 May	'Time for talk is over' has reportedly said the COAS to the Prime Minister in a meeting
8 June	Attack on Karachi Airport (<i>Casus Belli</i>)
15 June	Operation Zarb-e-Azb begins

Sources: Gulf News, 'Timeline of Taliban and Pakistan peace talks',

<http://gulfnnews.com/news/asia/pakistan/timeline-of-pakistan-and-taliban-peace-talks-1.1288217>, accessed:

23/05/2016; Al Jazeera, 'Pakistani government and Taliban hold talks', 6 February 2014, available at:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2014/02/pakistani-government-taliban-begin-talks-201426115523340140.html>

accessed: 23/05/2016.

One important aspect to highlight is that 'the hallmark of process tracing is that multiple types of evidence are employed for the verification of a single inference; bits and pieces of evidence that embody different units of analysis' (Gerring, 2007: 173).

§ 3.4 - Data collection: Semi-structured elite interviewing

Darren Lilleker has defined elites as 'those with close proximity to power or policymaking' (2003: 207). The case studies chosen for the analysis, are all part of a decision-making process which involves, as main actors, military policy-makers and politicians, hence elite interviewing is the most appropriate tool to shed light on important aspects of the processes under scrutiny here, accessible only by interviewing those who were involved in the process itself. In fact, as David Richards argues, there are several advantages in interviewing the aforementioned categories of people: (a) 'they can help in interpreting

documents or reports, in particular if you gain access to the authors'; (b) they can help you in identifying those who were effectively involved in the policy-making process; (c) they can provide you with new insights into a certain issue that the researcher would find difficult to get from public sources; (d) finally, interviewing elites can lead to the so called 'snowball' effect, namely the interviewee will suggest other people in that area that can be relevant for the topic of the research (Cohen and Arieli, 2011; Richards, 1996: 200). The fieldwork conducted in Pakistan reflects the three main advantages outlined above. For instance, the analysis benefitted from the interactions with officers in the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform of Pakistan who were directly involved in the planning of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, as the interview material proved to be reliable when tested against the subsequent unfolding of events. Furthermore, some of the detailed accounts about the decision-making process on some specific issues (e.g. the rationale behind giving the port of Gwadar to the Chinese in 2001, analysed in Chapter 5) illuminated aspects of Pakistan's domestic politics vis-à-vis China that could have not been highlighted by an analysis of open sources.

The high degree of flexibility during the interview is also one of the major advantages of conducting semi-structured elite interviews. In fact, as Robin Longhurst argues 'although the interviewer prepares a list of predetermined questions, semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel important' (2010: 103). Along the same lines, Bryman noticed that given the high flexibility allowed in semi-structured interviews, it is likely that the interviewer will ask questions that were not included in the initial structure as (s)he has the chance to pick up points arising from the interviewee's responses (2012). As highlighted in Chapter 1, the literature which looks at the relations between Pakistan and China is very scant and, for this reason, the data gathered during the fieldwork was of crucial importance to shed light on the most significant aspects of the strategic partnership. In this context, being able to expand the knowledge of this topic through the interviewees' direct knowledge of the facts proved to be extremely valuable for the research process.

When using semi-structured elite interviewing there are also some issues to consider. First, the balance of power is often in favour of the interviewees due

to their specific and in depth knowledge on that particular subject (Burnham et al., 2008: 231). Hence, the interviewee might be able to control the flow of the interview as well as the information the interviewer is asking for (Richards, 1996: 201). This represented an obstacle, particularly when referred to a relationship such as the one between Pakistan and China that is largely addressed as the 'all-weather' friendship. In some interviews, going beyond the 'higher than mountains, deeper than oceans' rhetoric permeating Sino-Pakistani relations proved to be challenging. This represents one of the shortcomings of semi-structured interviews which should be transparently acknowledged. To overcome this issue, the interviews were designed in a way to use statements from politicians, newspaper reports, and claims made in previous analysis by other scholars/analysts as a springboard to go beneath the surface. This was useful to grasp the real opinions of the interviewees.

Second, another issue to consider is whether to use random or non-random sampling (Hertz & Imber, 1995; Morris, 2009; Richards, 1996). The rationale behind random sampling is that the sample selected is representative of a wider population, hence eventually generalisable, while this might not happen in non-probability sampling procedures. What is important to notice here is that since this research aims to shed light on specific events and decision-making processes, it is essential to identify key actors and players according to their positions or role in that particular context rather than randomizing the sample.

In his attempt to explain the relationship between process tracing and elite interviewing, Oisín Tansey identifies two approaches to non-probability sampling which are particularly useful for this analysis, namely 'positional' and 'reputational' criteria (2007). As for the positional way of identifying interviewees 'researchers use positional criteria to identify desirable respondents; analysts specify a set of positions, or occupations, of key elites that are the focus of the study' (2007: 770). On the other hand, the reputational approach involves defining the desired set of respondents 'according to the extent to which they are deemed to be influential' (2007: 770). This study adopted primarily the 'reputational' approach in order to identify key players in the processes under examination. For instance, when looking for interviewees with direct knowledge of Pakistan's Afghan policy, the interview sample included both a high-level Foreign Office official as well as a military

officer who provided some very interesting insights vis-à-vis Pakistan's Afghan policy, particularly during the 1980s, a period which is very much in need of better scrutiny as far as Sino-Pakistani interactions are concerned. Following this approach, snowballing, i.e. relying on an interviewee professional network to get access to other people, was an important part of the fieldwork. While this represents a very useful tool for researchers in most contexts, snowballing acquires a particular relevance in regions like South Asia where personal connections have the greatest importance, both socially and professionally. Although most of the interviews were set through email exchanges with the people I wanted to interview, a significant portion of the people interviewed for this research came through snowballing.

Before moving on to the discussion of how the data was analysed, it is important to mention that access to some segments of the Pakistani establishment, particularly the military, proved to be difficult. I repeatedly tried to arrange interviews with a host of military figures, as well as to access the National Defense University (NDU) in Islamabad. While I managed to interview a number of military officers, the NDU in Islamabad was difficult to access. To overcome this shortcoming in the interview sample, the analysis has systematically assessed the publications of the Pakistani Army, namely Hilal magazine, ISPR press releases, and the 2011, 2012 and 2013 editions of the Pakistan Army Green Book. In addition, given that the military's influence extends into the media, academia and think tanks, many interviews were arranged with people close to the military establishment.

Similarly to the issue in having access to some sections of the Pakistani establishment, certain parts of the country were not accessible. In particular, to visit the port of Gwadar a 'no objection certificate' from the Ministry of Interior was required, and it was impossible to obtain. Moreover, the security situation in the area was precarious and, according to the University's ethical regulations, the researcher should not put himself, or his interviewees, in potentially harmful or dangerous positions. However, first-hand insights about developments in Gwadar were gathered from investigative journalists, officials and businessmen during a number of public events held on Gwadar during fieldwork in Pakistan.

§ 3.5 – Data validity and reliability: triangulation of the interview material

As Jeffrey M. Berry puts it, ‘the valuable flexibility of open-ended questioning exacerbates the validity and reliability issues that are part and parcel of this approach’ (2002: 679). None of the interviews were treated as ‘gospel truths’ and a rigorous analysis process was articulated and implemented in a number of ways.

First, ‘validation is a matter of triangulating evidence from different sources about the same events’ (Gomm, 2008: 242). The information collected through interviews was double checked and triangulated with primary sources, to verify the reliability of the account. Unless otherwise specified, all the interviews used in the thesis were scrutinised, and controlled, against at least two other sources. When no additional source backing the claim of the interviewees was available, the material has not been included in the thesis. Furthermore, the reliability of some of the accounts collected during fieldwork was also tested against the developments in Pakistan’s domestic politics and Sino-Pakistani relations during the months that followed the interviews. For instance, it was possible to verify some of the interview-based claims collected in the Planning and Development Commission of Pakistan related both to the decision-making process and to the completion timeline of the CPEC projects. In particular, the insights received about the coordination mechanism put in place between Pakistan and China (e.g. the linkages between the Planning Commissions of the two countries) proved to be extremely accurate, including the claim that these developments were largely under civilian oversight.

On the contrary, some of the interviewees provided contradictory points of view with regards to the concept of ‘strategic depth’ (analysed in Chapter 7). As Burnham et al. aptly remarked, it is the duty of the researcher to consider conflicting explanations and contradictory points of view (2008: 246). In those instances, the analysis accounted for the different opinions expressed with reference to a specific topic, and provided further evidence for which interpretation appeared to be closer to reality. For instance, in the context of the widely debated doctrine of ‘strategic depth’, the analysis included both the accounts of those who denied the existence of ‘strategic depth’, and those who argued that such a doctrine is still at the heart of Pakistan’s policy vis-à-vis

Afghanistan. Drawing on a wealth of primary and secondary sources, and testing the different claims against the unfolding of events, the study assessed which interpretation was more accurate.

Another measure taken to bolster the strength of the interview material was to conduct a thorough research on the interviewees' personal backgrounds, careers and, when possible, writings, in order to place the data into the wider context of the person that was providing the information. Contextualising the accounts received during the interviews is a key element in interpreting the data. In the same vein, of equal importance was the location in which the interviews took place. For instance, one interview was conducted in an office decorated with a high number of crests of the different branches of the Pakistani Armed Forces and paramilitary organisations. This was reflected in the account of the events which largely mirrored the official position of the Pakistani military.

Given the sensitivity of some of the topics this study analyses (e.g. the Balochistan issue, the decision-making process in counter-terrorism operations, etc.), the anonymity of most of the interviewees was required.

§ 3.6 – Interview coding

Coding is an integral part of analysing the interview data. As Saldana put it, 'a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data' (Saldana, 2009: 3). In this context, the 'attributes' assigned to the interview transcripts were divided thematically into *macro-categories*, used to relate the interview material to the case studies analysed in the thesis, and *micro-categories* which dealt, instead, with the themes emerging from the case studies.

While such a distinction was designed to serve the practical purpose of linking the interview material to the empirical chapters of the thesis, some of the themes emerging in the micro-categories transcend a strict classification, as they fit into more than one of the macro-areas identified.

Table 3.3 reports the main macro and micro-categories identified in the interview material.

Table 3.3 – Interview coding

Macro-Category	Micro-Category
Development of the port of Gwadar	- Security in Balochistan - Military involvement in Balochistan - Impact of 18th Amendment - Geopolitical relevance - Foreign powers involved in Gwadar - Deprivation of local communities - Chinese investments - Chinese workers
China Pakistan Economic Corridor	- Financing of the projects - Benefits for Pakistan - Political economy of the military - Geopolitical relevance - Security - Implementation issues
Afghanistan	- Geopolitical relevance - Sino-Pakistan coordination - Civ-mil relations and Afghanistan - China's role in Afghanistan - Strategic depth

The themes emerging from the coding were primarily used to structure the analysis of the empirical chapters. Most of the points identified while coding the interviews have been analysed, always bearing in mind also the pertinence of the information to the central research question of the thesis.

§ 3.7 – Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to explain the methodological approach adopted in the thesis. For this reason, the analysis has covered in section 3.2 the issues related to case study research design, identifying the case studies analysed in the empirical chapters, namely the development and management of the deep-sea port of Gwadar in Chapter 5, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Chapter 6, and Sino-Pakistani relations in the Afghan scenario in Chapter 7. Process tracing has been analysed as the main methodological tool of this

research. In outlining the characteristics of this relatively recent methodology, the analysis focused in particular on one variant, namely the *explaining-outcome* method of process tracing as it is the most appropriate way to conduct the analysis of the case studies. Section 3.4 turned to the data collection methods. Semi-structured interviews were identified as the main source of data gathering and the analysis examined the issues involved in using interviews, primarily related to non-probability sampling. Section 3.5 analysed the ways in which data reliability and validity were ensured throughout the data analysis process before addressing, in section 3.6 the coding of the interview material.

CHAPTER 4

The origins of Pakistan's relations with China: 1950-2001

*Historia vero testis temporum,
lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae
nuntia vetustatis, qua voce alia, nisi oratoris,
immortalitati commendatur?*
(Cicerone, De Oratore, II, 9, 36)

*'Please tell President Yahya Khan that if India commits aggression, we
will support Pakistan. You are also against that'*

Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai during the secret visit of Henry
Kissinger to China (Bass, 2014: 173).

§ 4.1 - Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the ties between Islamabad and Beijing in a historical perspective. The analysis addresses the roots, as well as the evolution, of the strategic partnership, in order to shed light on the historical aspects which enabled Pakistan-China relations to acquire the multidimensional shape that we see today. This chapter therefore serves three purposes: first, the political dynamics pertaining to Pakistan's domestic politics analysed in this section highlight the role that both civilian and military leaders played in the relationship with China. In this context, the analysis demonstrates how the bilateral ties between Pakistan and China rest, in Pakistan, on a broad-based consensus, which spans across the political spectrum and transcends leaders' personalities. As the chapter ascertains, the military retained throughout the country's history their defence and foreign policy prerogatives, a feature of the political system which is in line with the analysis presented in the ensuing empirical chapters. However, the boost in relations between Islamabad and Beijing came under the civilian leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, as part of his attempts to establish the nuclear programme and to reduce the linkages between the Pakistani Army and the United States. Second, departing from the 'all-weather rhetoric' permeating Pakistan's relations with China, the analysis presented here highlights that, at least initially, Sino-Pakistani bilateral ties have not been characterised by a linear and consistent path; third, to understand the post-2001 period analysed in the empirical

chapters of the thesis, there is a need to explore the past, as a number of features characterising Pakistan-China relations nowadays have evolved throughout the period under examination in this chapter; these include the construction of the Karakoram Highway, which can be considered as the first stone of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor analysed in Chapter 6, as well as geopolitical alignments with India and the United States on one side, and Pakistan-China on the other, a situation similar to the one that has evolved in recent years.

It is possible to identify five different phases in the evolution of the ‘all-weather friendship’. The first begins with the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1951, to 1963, when Pakistan and China signed a border agreement over Kashmir. The second phase is from 1964 to 1971 and this is the period in which the relationship really develops in terms of trade relations as well as political support during the 1965 Indo-Pakistani war. In this period, the driving factor behind Pakistan-China relations was the anti-Indian orientation of both countries. The third phase spans from 1971 to 1976 and we see the development of Pakistan’s nuclear programme with extensive and substantial Chinese support. The fourth phase covers the period comprised between 1978 to 2000 and is characterised by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and by the nuclear tests conducted by both India and Pakistan and by the Kargil conflict in 1999. Finally, from 2001 to 2016 (the time frame that this thesis specifically addresses) we have seen a significant increase in trade and energy cooperation between Pakistan and China.

Table 4.1 – Tabulation of Pakistan-China Relations 1951-2001

Phase/Years	Major Developments
Phase 1. 1951-1963	-Establishment of diplomatic relations -Pakistan aligned with the US, China closer to India -Sino-Indian border war in 1962
Phase 2. 1964-1970	-Chinese external support in the 1965 Indo-Pakistani conflict -Trade relations develop
Phase 3. 1971-1976	-Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto boosts relations with China -Development of Pakistan’s nuclear programme with Chinese support -Pakistan acts as a backchannel in US-China entente
Phase 4. 1978-2000	-China’s role during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan is marginal -Kargil war
Phase 5. 2001-2016	-Development of the port of Gwadar -Development of CPEC

From the ensuing analysis emerges that the multi-layered cooperation that the two countries developed throughout has been informed by, and oriented towards, a pragmatic and well calculated vision of national interests. These two factors, non-linearity and pragmatism, were primarily dictated at a micro-level by Pakistani domestic political concerns. At a macro-level, they have been dictated by the regional geopolitical dynamics during the Cold War, the US and the USSR being the most influential actors on the international behaviour of other regional players. For instance, in 1962, after the Sino-Indian border war, Pakistan and China signed the border agreement. One of the main reasons behind this agreement was the spill over of China's growing enmity towards India and Pakistan's willingness to win over China as a balancer in the region in its existential fight against New Delhi. But a nonetheless important factor was also that Chinese and Soviet interests were diverging at the exact same moment when Pakistan was disenchanted with the US policy towards South Asia. This led Islamabad and Beijing to seriously consider and explore the opportunities of their alliance. As far as the Pakistani domestic dimension is concerned, the analysis highlights the role of the Pakistani rulers, Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq, in shaping the nature of the country's foreign policy according to their own vision of Pakistan's role in international politics. In this respect, since its inception the foreign policy of Pakistan has been driven by the perception that India posed an existential threat to the Pakistani State. The Pakistani establishment thus tailored the country's foreign policy accordingly, heavily relying on external support, provided initially and intermittently by the US and, more consistently since 1963, by China, which soon became the pillar of Pakistan's external relations.

In outlining the developments in China-Pakistan relations, the present chapter focuses primarily on the first four phases outlined above, as the post-2001 period will be analysed in-depth in the ensuing chapters of the thesis through the case studies of the port of Gwadar, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the trilateral ties among Pakistan, China and Afghanistan. Hence, the analysis proceeds by providing a snapshot of each of the aforementioned phases.

§ 4.2 – A momentary lapse of unity: the formative phase 1951-1963

The strategic partnership between Islamabad and Beijing has not been always as multi-faceted as it is today. Although Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognize the newly established People's Republic of China on January 4 1950, to not interfere with the Chinese invasion of Tibet and to support Beijing's request to be the natural heir to the Chinese seat in the United Nations Security Council, relations remained rather cool and formal (Barnds, 1975). As William Barnds reports 'these [Pakistani] moves evoked little response from the Chinese, who probably had more important issues to deal with than relations with Pakistan. Beijing did not send an ambassador to Pakistan until September 1951' (Barnds, 1975: 467). One of the considerations that drove Pakistan's decision to establish relations with Communist China was that Pakistan was aware that both India and the UK were about to recognize the People's Republic of China and that it was in Islamabad's interests to follow suit as 'Communist China would occupy the Chinese seat in the United Nations before long and would partake in the discussions on Kashmir as a permanent member of the Security Council, with the right of veto' (Burke, 1973: 102).

Born as an insecure state, Pakistan sought an alliance to counterbalance India's military superiority in the sub-continent. As Rafique Afzal noticed, the main foreign policy objectives during Liaqat Ali Khan's tenure as Prime Minister (1947-1951) were 'the acquisition of arms for its ill-equipped Armed Forces, heavy machinery for industrialization, and support for its position on the Kashmir issue' (2001: 86). The US was the first country to provide Islamabad with the needed support, as part of the wider strategy to contain the USSR's presence and influence in the region. As such, Pakistan joined the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), two US-sponsored defensive pacts modelled along the same lines of NATO. Cohen reports that in the period 1954-1965 Pakistan 'was allowed to purchase weapons and received a mixture of military assistance in the form of aid and grants' (2004: 55). As part of deepening US-Pakistan ties, Pakistan commissioned the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to do a survey of its coastline (The Pakistani Nationalist, 2013). Interestingly, Worth Condrick, the deputed surveyor, identified in the fishing town of Gwadar a

suitable site for building a sea-port, which saw the light more than 50 years later, in 2006, as the analysis in Chapter 5 assesses.

While Pakistan's domestic political concerns led to strengthened relations with the US, Sino-Indian relations in the same period were relatively good. In fact, moving along the same diplomatic lines as Islamabad, the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru 'decided to sacrifice the future of Tibet in the hope of winning Chinese friendship' (Burke, 1973: 106). As a result, China and India signed an agreement on the 29th April 1954 over Tibet, which 'officially conceded that Tibet was an integral part of China' (1973: 224). These developments resulted in a high level of cordiality in Sino-Indian relations since Nehru interpreted the amity between New Delhi and Beijing as the proof that Asia was uniting against Western powers (1973).

Therefore, the relationship with China remained formally cordial but substantially distant. At the first Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955, Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra reassured his Chinese counterpart Zhou Enlai about the defensive nature of the SEATO, promising that Pakistan would have refrained from committing its troops in case of an aggression against China, *de facto* reaffirming Pakistan's pro-West leanings but leaving a door open to China in Pakistan's diplomatic relations (Afzal, 2001).

The US-Pakistan alliance is important to understand the future political trajectory of the country. Being able to draw on large US military assistance, the Pakistani military started increasing in number and strength, and its expanding role in the country's domestic politics eventually resulted in Ayub's coup in 1958. In this regard, Siddiqi sets forward the argument that 'the silence of external powers regarding military takeovers, and the foreign aid received by military governments for weapons of modernization, strengthened both the civil and military bureaucracy in contrast to political institutions' (2007: 66). This is also echoed by Nawaz who highlights the ability that then President Iskander Mirza and the COAS Ayub Khan had to exploit the Indian threat to enhance the army's strength, rightly noticing that 'the American connection gave them further legitimacy, setting off a trend that later rulers in Pakistan found easy to use to their advantage' (2008: 118). Finally, Afzal observed that after Pakistan joined SEATO in 1954 'no government could be installed or

remain in power without accepting to uphold the pro-West foreign policy' (2001: 182).

The period between 1957 and 1959 saw some strains emerge in the relationship between Islamabad and Beijing, primarily due to the domestic political situation in Pakistan, where General Muhammad Ayub Khan took power in 1958 becoming the new Pakistani President. He was utterly convinced of the need for Pakistan to rely on the West, and in particular on the US, to promote Pakistan's economic, political and security interests. Ayub's creed in a pro-West oriented Pakistan was particularly influential as he was Pakistan's first commander-in-chief, thereby responsible for the reorganization of the Army and 'his views influenced Pakistan's defence and foreign policies which in turn had great bearing on internal politics' (Afzal, 2001). In an article that Ayub himself wrote, the then Pakistani President outlines his vision and interpretation of the regional geopolitical developments that this part of the chapter is discussing. He clearly advocates a settlement of the Kashmir dispute as well as the need to develop good relations with India in order to avoid 'a recurrence of the history of the past, which was that whenever this sub-continent was divided - and often it was divided - someone or other invited an outsider to step in' (Khan, 1960: 556). As far as Pakistan's foreign policy was concerned, he clearly stated that:

in the context of present-day world politics Pakistan has openly and unequivocally cast its lot with the West, and unlike several other countries around us, we have shut ourselves off almost completely from the possibility of any major assistance from the Communist bloc. We do not believe in hunting with the hound and running with the hare. We wish to follow, and are following, a clear and unambiguous path (1960: 554).

It is essential to notice this specific passage in his article as the Pakistani President essentially dismissed any opportunity of improvement in Pakistan-China relations, while relying exclusively on the West and hoping for closer and improved relations with India. However, the events that followed proved his vision wrong. Tensions escalated between India and China in 1959 when an incident at Longju, in the North-East Frontier Area (NEFA) occurred. This eventually culminated in the Sino-Indian border war from 8 September to 21

November 1962 (Burke, 1973: 238). In the same period, a changing strategy of the US towards the sub-continent led the relationship between Pakistan and the US to a stalemate, compared to the mid- 1950s when Pakistan joined the two US-led defence pacts. As Nawaz insightfully notices, ‘the US was shifting attention to India as a potentially better partner, being a huge democracy, a counterweight to China, and a nascent market to US goods and services’ (2008: 193). Against this backdrop of rapidly mutating geopolitical circumstances, both Islamabad and Beijing looked for new friends. China’s deteriorating relationship with the Soviet Union and India thrust Beijing to seek cooperation with its third biggest neighbour, Pakistan, which was itself looking for a new protector in place of the United States (Burke, 1973). Such a combination of factors allowed Pakistan and China to start building confidence and cordial relations.

The geopolitical alignments that emerged during the early 1960s are also important to understand current developments. In fact, the convergence of interests among the major players in the region, that we have just seen during the period examined in this section, is similar to the one that we are witnessing nowadays, with Pakistan increasingly aligning with China, through the development of the port of Gwadar and the CPEC infrastructural investment, and the US moving increasingly close to India.

The concluding event of the first phase of Pakistan-China relations occurred on 2 March 1963 when the two countries signed a border agreement over Kashmir.²⁴ The motivations behind the agreement over the border demarcation were primarily geopolitical. On the one hand, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (Pakistani Foreign Minister at that time) was strongly supportive of a new foreign policy posture for Pakistan, detached and independent from the US, which would see the light under his premiership in the 1970s. In the wake of the agreement signed with China, during a speech in the Pakistani parliament in 1963, Bhutto declared that from that moment onwards, any Indian attempt to violate Pakistan’s sovereignty would involve ‘the territorial integrity and security of the largest state in Asia’ (Burke, 1973: 293). On the other hand, the Sino-Indian

²⁴ For a discussion of the Sino-Pakistani border’s history and evolution since the 19th century see: Mustafa, Z. (1972) ‘The Sino-Pakistani Border: Historical Aspects’, *Pakistan Horizon*, 25/2: 43-50.

border war led China to support Pakistan on the Kashmir issue and this aspect, coupled with the West's refusal to intervene to solve the dispute, paved the way for China and Pakistan to establish the solid roots of their amity.²⁵

As we have seen in this section, the events leading to the development of close relations between Islamabad and Beijing cannot be read in isolation from the Cold-War context. This first phase is characterized by a cautious start, with Pakistan and the United States at one end of the spectrum and India and China at the other opposite end. This was the situation at least until the end of the 1950s and during the early 60s. However, the kaleidoscope of interests of the major players, combined with regional as well as international geopolitical dynamics, eventually resulted in Pakistan and China getting increasingly closer and cooperating on a number of issues. The shift in US foreign policy priorities from Pakistan to India, coupled with the concomitant Sino-Indian border war in 1962, induced Islamabad and Beijing to look at each other as possible partners. Pakistan's search for a counterweight to India culminated in its relations with China, which also provided Pakistan with substantive economic and military support. This went against the views of Pakistan's pro-West elite, and in particular Ayub Khan, who had to reshape the country's foreign policy along a new path which had China at the centre of Pakistan's foreign policy and as the balancer of India's military superiority, thereby replacing the US.

§ 4.3 – Phase 2. 1964-1970: ‘my enemy’s enemy’ and the outset of the ‘all-weather’ partnership.

The Roman historian Sallust argues in his ‘Bellum Iugurthinum’ (40 B. C.) that the reason why the Romans, while fighting their war against Carthage, were able to overcome their internal controversies was primarily due to the *metus hostilis*, namely the fear of the enemy. A similar dynamic was in play in Pakistan-China relations during the 1960s. The key factor which led Islamabad and Beijing to develop a close and flourishing cooperation was the enmity of both countries vis-à-vis India. To understand how things rapidly evolved, it is

²⁵ In addition to the boundary agreement, the two countries also signed on 5 January a commercial treaty, an air transport agreement on 29 August and a barter trade agreement on 30 September (Afzal, 2001: 276).

important to dissect an article that Ayub Khan published in *Foreign Affairs* (1964), titled 'The Pakistan-American Alliance' as it uses very different tones from the ones cited in the previous section. By reaffirming Pakistan's fidelity to the treaties signed with the US, he was expressing concerns over the arms flows from the US and other western countries to India, particularly during the Sino-Indian border war. In his words:

Pakistan received a new cause for disillusionment with American foreign policy. Following the India-China border clash, the United States proceeded to rush arms to India on a scale which to us seemed totally unjustified by the requirements of the situation (1964: 3).

He also added that a situation in which the two major rivals in the sub-continent were both provided military support by external powers was going to further deteriorate an already precarious and fragile equilibrium. He thus argued that 'all this is going to aggravate India-Pakistan bitterness, heighten their mutual fears and suspicions and force on them an arms race that could spell disaster for both countries' (1964: 4). Shortly after this article was published, the 1965 Indo-Pakistani war commenced. In a nutshell, the second Indo-Pakistani conflict, also known as the Second Kashmir War, was fought between April and September 1965. As Ganguly and Hagerty report, 'Pakistan's politico-military elite designed a strategy, "Operation Gibraltar", which involved fomenting a rebellion in Indian-controlled Kashmir, and then sending in regular Pakistani Army units to seize the territory in a short, sharp war' (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005: 29). The war ended on 23 September 1965 when a cease-fire, sponsored by the UN Security Council, was agreed between Pakistan and India.²⁶ The Tashkent Declaration, which officially ended the hostilities, was signed by the Pakistani President Ayub Khan and the Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on 10 January 1966.

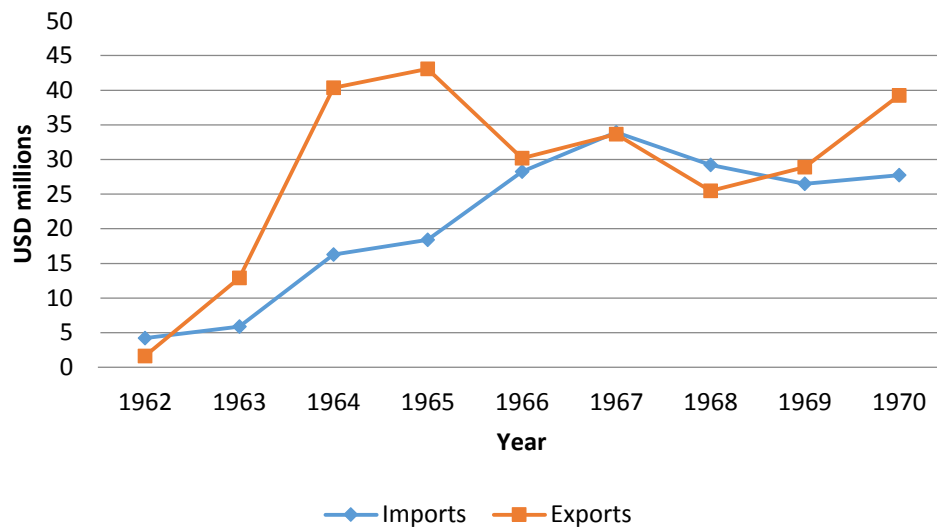
What role did China play in the Indo-Pakistani hostilities? The Chinese government 'sternly' condemned India for its aggression, renovating its 'firm

²⁶ For a detailed analysis of the second Indo-Pakistani conflict see: Afzal, M. R. (2001) *Pakistan. History and Politics 1947-1971*, Karachi: OUP; Burke, S. M. (1973) *Pakistan's Foreign Policy. An historical Analysis*, London: OUP; Ganguly, S. & Hagerty D. T (2005) *Fearful symmetry*, New Delhi: OUP; Musharraf, P (2006) *In the Line of Fire*, London: Simon & Schuster; Nawaz, S. (2008) *Crossed Swords. Pakistan, its Army and the wars within*, Oxford: OUP.

support' to Pakistan as well as holding the Indian government accountable for the spillovers of its 'criminal and extended aggression' (Peking Review (a), 1965: 6). The Chinese support towards Pakistan was further reiterated by Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, who argued that China was supporting 'Pakistan's just struggle against aggression' (Peking Review (b), 1965: 10). On 16th September of the same year, China sent an ultimatum to India to 'dismantle all its military works on the Chinese side of the border and return all captive Chinese nationals and livestock within three days' otherwise New Delhi would have had to confront the consequences of the refusal (Amin, 2000: 161). When it comes to China-Pakistan relations, those who consider the 'all-weather' friendship as a mere rhetorical exercise, which is not supported by the reality on the ground, often mention the non-intervention during the two Indo-Pakistani wars in 1965, 1971 and 1999 as a sign that China 'tilts towards Pakistan in moments of geopolitical convenience' (Beckley, 2012: 9). This is only partially true. As Choudhury aptly reminds us, 'it is doubtful if China would really have intervened, but it seemed highly probable that Chinese threats had deterred India from extending war to the defenceless East Pakistan' (Choudhury, 1968: 297). This is also echoed by Chris Tang who argued that notwithstanding the difficulties in ascertaining whether or not China would have carried out a military operation in Pakistan's support, 'their issuance of threats was not without weight' (Tang, 2012: 13). In this respect, Pakistan's quest for a strategic balancer in the region of Indian military superiority found in China a viable and effective response. Pakistan's military establishment soon realised that once the US were redefining their policy priorities, China represented the only country which could stand with Pakistan in its struggle with India. Hence, once again security concerns were paramount in bringing Islamabad and Beijing increasingly closer.

The development of political and diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, was also coupled with an increase in trade relations. Trade was slowly but steadily emerging as an additional boost to this new partnership, as Figure 4.1 shows.

**Figure 4.1: Pakistan's Bilateral Trade with China
1962-1970**



Source: UN Comtrade Database. Accessed 10/09/14.

Figure 4.1 shows the yearly imports and exports between Pakistan and China. What we see is that the increase in the amount of trade in the period under examination here also reflects the improvements in the relations between the two countries. In 1962, the year of the Sino-Indian border war, the amount of imports is USD 4.23 million while in 1970 is around USD 39 million, with almost similar data for the increase in exports from Pakistan to China. A particularly important feature which emerges when analysing these data is that the goods that Pakistan exported to China are more than the ones imported in six years out ten. This is an important note as the overall Pakistan-China bilateral trade is highly tilted in China's favour.²⁷

§ 4.4 – Phase 3. 1971 -1976: The third Indo-Pakistani war and Pakistan's nuclear programme.

Another crucial period which further forged Pakistan-China relations is Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's tenure as President (until 1973) and then Prime Minister (until 1977). As a way of introducing this section, it is possible to identify three

²⁷ For an analysis of Sino-Pakistani trade relations during these years see also: Vertzberger, Y. (1983) 'The Political Economy of Sino-Pakistani Relations: Trade and Aid 1963-82', *Asian Survey*, 23:5: 637-652.

important developments: (a) the third Indo-Pakistani war in 1971 which culminated in the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan; (b) an increasing military cooperation with China which enabled Pakistan to start developing its nuclear weapons programme; (c) the pivotal role that Pakistan played in the Nixon administration's outreach to China. The increased ties between China and Pakistan under Bhutto were the result of Pakistan's need to build its nuclear capabilities to counter India, which was also developing its nuclear arsenal, as well as to cut the links that the Pakistani Army had with the US, in order to affirm the supremacy of civilian institutions over the military establishment. As the analysis previously discussed in this chapter, the US played a crucial role in supporting Pakistan's military governments, as well as in supplying the country's defence capabilities. Eliminating the army's main source of external support was crucial, in Bhutto's view, to induce the military to relinquish its institutional prerogatives and their clout on the country's political processes.

It is important to start the analysis of this period from the secret visit of Henry Kissinger, the then National Security Adviser to President Nixon, to Beijing in July 1971. Pakistan acted as a backchannel between Washington and Beijing, thereby facilitating the first visit of an American official to China since 1949. An important item on the agenda during Kissinger's visit to China was the escalating crisis in East Pakistan. The Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai argued that the situation was entirely India's fault, adding that 'the so-called government of Bangladesh set up its headquarters in India. Isn't that subversion of the Pakistani government?' (Zhou Enlai in Bass, 2014: 173). A few months after this historical visit, the third Indo-Pakistani conflict erupted. The war stemmed from the decision of General Yahya Khan, Ayub's successor as Pakistan's President, to deny the striking result in the 1970 elections which gave the majority in the National Assembly to the Awami League.²⁸ The three months following the elections witnessed an escalation of violence in East Pakistan between Bengalis and the Pakistani army, culminated in the decision

²⁸ For a detailed analysis of the reasons which led to the dismemberment of Pakistan see: Talbot, I. (2009). *Pakistan. A Modern History*. London: Hurst & Company; Choudhury, W. G. (1973). The Last Days of United Pakistan: A Personal Account, *International Affairs*, 49/2: 229-239; LaPorte, R. Jr. (1972). Pakistan in 1971: The Disintegration of a Nation, *Asian Survey*, 12/2: 97-108; Oldenburg, P. (1985) 'A Place Insufficiently Imagined: Language, Belief, and the Pakistan Crisis of 1971', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 44/4: 711-733.

by Yahya Khan on the 25th March 1971, to deploy the military to put down the rebellion. The crackdown of the Pakistani army provoked two major consequences: first, international reactions by India and the Soviet Union (that signed a treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation in August 1971) that immediately condemned the steps taken by Pakistan; second, a dramatic flood of refugees escaping from East Pakistan who were looking for safety and help in neighbouring India, providing New Delhi with a perfect *casus belli*.²⁹ The situation dramatically collapsed into war on 3 December 1971, when pre-emptively Pakistan launched an air strike against Indian military bases. The Indian reaction was immediate and in two weeks Indian troops entered in Dacca, leading Yahya Khan to surrender. In the wake of the third Indo-Pakistani war, the Prime Ministers Gandhi and Bhutto, who became Prime Minister after the step down of General Yahya Khan caused by the huge defeat in the war, signed the 'Simla Agreement' in May 1972, on very favourable terms for India.³⁰

As far as Chinese involvement in the hostilities is concerned, Richard Sisson and Leo Rose report a letter from Zhou Enlai to Yahya Khan in which the Chinese leader stated that China 'firmly supports the Pakistan Government and people in their just struggle for safeguarding national independence and state sovereignty should the Indian expansionists dare to launch aggression against Pakistan' (Sisson and Rose, 1992: 203). China's support to Pakistan was also reiterated during Kissinger's secret visit to Beijing in 1971 when Zhou Enlai asked Kissinger to tell Yahya that 'if India commits aggression, we will support Pakistan' (Bass, 2014: 173). However, during the course of the events, China was reluctant to intervene. As Burke noted, the reasons for this caution on the matter can be referred to the fact that the Soviet Union did not have a neutral stand as they did in 1965 and therefore Chinese intervention would have meant bringing into the conflict one of the two super-powers (1973). Moreover, as the struggle in East Pakistan was a *de facto* civil war, it 'was not the kind of

²⁹ According to Ganguly and Hagerty, 'by early May 1971, the Indian political leadership under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had concluded that it was cheaper to resort to war against Pakistan than to absorb refugees [...]' (2005: 34). The Indian strategy was to weaken the Pakistani army by supporting and arming the 'Mukti Bahini', the Bengali liberation army (2005: 32).

³⁰ The agreement led to the repatriation of 90,000 Pakistani prisoners as well as to the decision to convert the nomenclature of the Cease-Fire Line into Line of Control (LoC).

confrontation in which outside powers would normally wish to take a direct action', particularly in light of the possible implications for China's involvement in Tibet (1973: 404).

After assuming power in the wake of the Pakistani defeat in the 1971 war, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto decided to further improve the relationship with China, a move that Riaz Ahmed Shaikh defined a 'masterful geopolitical innovation to Pakistan's security dilemma' (2009: 286). The reasons that led Bhutto to strengthen Pakistan's ties with China were dictated by domestic and international concerns alike. On the domestic front, Bhutto was trying to redefine the military's role in the country's politics in the aftermath of the defeat against the Indian army. His aim was to dilute Pakistan's military dependence on the US and the army linkages to the Americans. In addition, Beijing was the primary supplier of nuclear technologies and know-how that helped Pakistan to develop its nuclear weapons program, as a response to the Indian one. Furthermore, the cooperation between Pakistan and China touched upon several other aspects of the bilateral relationship, including the construction of the strategic Karakoram Highway, which connected Pakistan's Northern Areas with Xinjiang Province through the Kunjerab Pass (Talbot, 2009: 235). Against this backdrop of increasingly close ties, Fair reports that the military assistance dimension in China-Pakistan cooperation was substantial and included '60 MiG-19 fighters, 100 tanks, and small arms that China provided Pakistan in June 1972. Between 1971 and 1974, China provided Pakistan with \$300 million worth of military equipment, in addition to helping Pakistan establish ammunitions and arms factories and later licensing the production of a light tank' (Fair, 2014: 189).

As we can see throughout Pakistan's history, its relations with India marked and influenced most of the country's domestic and international trajectories. The nuclear programme follows the same path. The need to counter Indian conventional superiority combined with the 'Buddha Smile' nuclear tests conducted by New Delhi in 1974 at Pokhran, reinforced the belief in Bhutto, and more in general among the Pakistani leadership, that the country needed to adopt nuclear capabilities, even if that would have implied 'eating grass to make the bomb'. Consequently, Shaikh argued that 'Bhutto ordered the development of nuclear weapons to overcome the military defeat of 1971 and

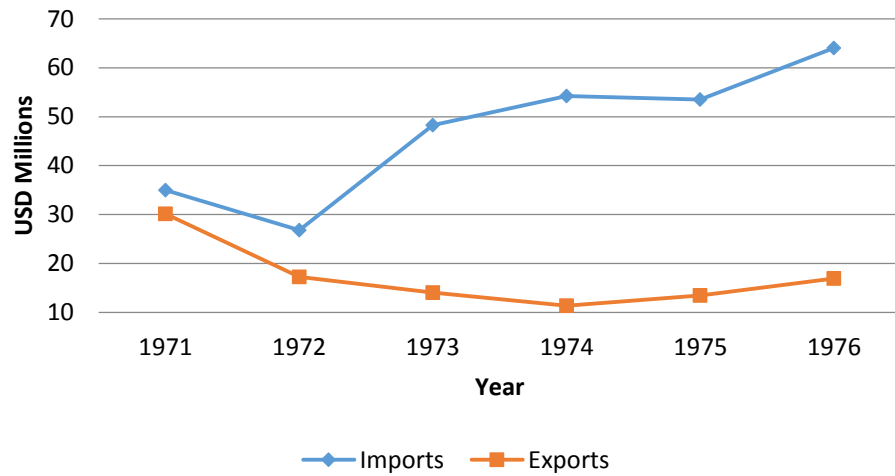
concluded secret agreements with China and Libya to finance and technically support the programme' (2002: 29). Also, Francois Heisbourg observed that 'China's inability to extend nuclear support to Pakistan in the 1965 and the 1970-71 wars may have been one of the factors prompting the Pakistani programme' (1999: 79).³¹

As far as China is concerned, Pakistan's endeavour to acquire nuclear capabilities was seen favourably by Chinese leaders since it was part of the Chinese tactic 'which involved responding directly to the Indian nuclear threat by boosting Pakistan's deterrent capabilities' (Shaikh, 2002: 43). As part of the cooperation, Chinese support implied the transfer of 'weapons-grade uranium, technical information on uranium enrichment, and help in setting up the Khauta centrifuge uranium enrichment plant, which became operational in the mid-1980s' (Ahmad, 1999: 186). The cooperation in the nuclear realm was also beneficial to China. A. Q. Khan, the Pakistani scientist behind Pakistan's nuclear programme, provided China with the designs of European centrifuges in order to help China's enrichment programme, after having acquired the projects during his stint at URENCO's facilities in the Netherlands (Small, 2015a: 34).

While in the nuclear field the cooperation was mutually beneficial, trade relations remained relatively weak. The trend that we observed in the previous period (1962-1970) was completely reversed in the period 1971-1977, as shown in Figure 4.2 below.

³¹ In its path to building its nuclear arsenal, Pakistan initially approached France as a possible supplier of nuclear capabilities and the two countries signed the Franco-Pakistan agreement in 1976 aimed at the construction of a plutonium reprocessing plant. This agreement was strongly opposed by the US and eventually 'France succumbed to the US pressure in 1979 and unilaterally backed out from the transaction' (Chakma, 2002: 892). However, this did not dissuade Pakistan from its intention to acquire nuclear capabilities. In fact, Bhutto gathered several nuclear scientists in the city of Multan in order to discuss this highly sensitive issue (Salik, 2011). The outcome of the meeting was that Munir Ahmad Khan became the new chair of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and was entitled by Bhutto to set a roadmap to build up nuclear capabilities as well as developing a procurement network of technologies and materials (2011: 11). See also: Khan, F. H. (2012) *Eating Grass. The Making of the Pakistani Bomb*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

**Figure 4.2: Pakistan's Bilateral trade with China
1971- 1976**



Source: UN Comtrade Database. Accessed 10/09/14.

Figure 4.2 demonstrates a remarkable increase in Pakistani imports from China, significantly lower than the amount of exports from Pakistan to China. This trend is the defining feature of Pakistan-China bilateral trade relations from the 1970s onwards. It is also important to acknowledge that the table and figures in this chapter do not include the amount of arms trade between the two countries, hence the disparity between imports and exports are likely to be even higher given the substantial military support that China provided to Pakistan during these years, particularly in the nuclear field.

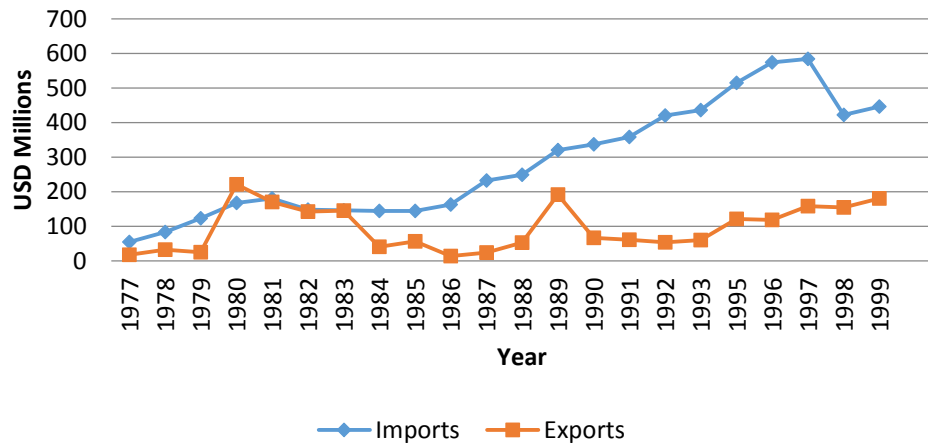
The period that this section has analysed can be characterized as the beginning of 'true' Pakistan-China cooperation. The Sino-Pakistani entente is inextricably linked to the war fought by Pakistan and India in 1971. Above all stands the hostility towards India that both countries manifested and which led China to support Pakistan's struggle with its neighbour as well as Islamabad's nuclear programme. In terms of Pakistan's domestic politics, this period witnessed the fall of Pakistan's military regime after the defeat in the third Indo-Pakistani war and the rise of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who masterminded Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, seeking Chinese support to acquire nuclear warheads aimed at balancing and countering India's military superiority.

§ 4.5 – Phase 4. 1977-2000: Zia-ul-Haq, the Indo-Pakistani nuclear tests and the Kargil war.

The first event which characterizes this period is General Zia-ul-Haq's coup d'état on 5th July 1977 which removed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto from power and brought Pakistan into Martial Law for the third time in the country's history. Bhutto's efforts to de-link the Pakistani army from the US military assistance were swept away at once by the military coup and by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of 1979. In the wake of these developments, the linkages between Pakistan and the West had a significant boost. Pakistan's geographical position as a frontline state was crucial to the US strategy to counter Soviet troops fighting in Afghanistan, and the conservative nature of Zia's rule was seen very favourably by the Reagan administration. Feroz Hassan Khan reports that it 'was agreed that Pakistan's ISI would lead the covert operations, while the CIA would provide the resources and refrain from direct contact with the *mujahideen*' (2012: 214). Also, Alan Kronstadt argues that 'such policy contributed to President General Zia-ul-Haq's support for Afghan mujahideen "freedom fighters" who were battling Soviet invaders during the 1980s and to Islamabad's later support for the Afghan Taliban regime from 1996 to 2001' (Kronstadt, 2009: 11). Despite the renewed and intense cooperation between Pakistan and the US, China played an important role, primarily as Pakistan's supplier of conventional weapons and nuclear know how (Garver, 1996). Given the importance and complexity of the dynamics pertaining to the Afghan scenario during the 1980s, the analysis dedicates a separate empirical chapter, Chapter 7, to the role that the Sino-Pakistani partnership played in this context.

As far as trade relations during these years are concerned, Figure 4.3 below shows the amount of imports and exports between Pakistan and China. As previously mentioned, the balance of trade is highly tilted in China's favour, apart from 1980 to 1983 where the import-export balance is roughly equal.

**Figure 4.3: Pakistan's Bilateral Trade with China
1978-1999**



Source: UN Comtrade Database. Accessed 10/09/2014.

The trend shown in the above figure is the one which characterises Sino-Pakistani trade relations nowadays. The emergence of this imbalance can be explained by the fact that under Deng Xiaoping's leadership China started producing surplus for export at a mass level when American, European and South East Asian companies first relocated their factories to China to take advantage of the extremely low cost of manufacturing there (Jamal, 2016).

Another set of events which is crucial to asses, in order to provide a comprehensive historical background of Sino-Pakistani relations, are the Indo-Pakistani nuclear tests in 1998 and the Kargil conflict in the following year. These events culminated in the military takeover conducted by General Pervez Musharraf on the 12th October of 1999.

After winning the 1997 elections with a landslide victory, securing for his coalition a two-third majority of seats in the Pakistani Parliament, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif made several steps in order to normalize relations with India, especially by restoring closer trade links, acknowledging that Pakistan would have great benefits from a more stable and peaceful relation with India. However, after the electoral victory in India of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a party representing the Hindu nationalists and which pledged during the electoral campaign to opt for an overt nuclear policy, the fragile peace process was interrupted. In Pakistan, the nuclear tests were conducted on the 28th and

30th May of 1998, as a response to the first Indian nuclear blasts earlier that month.³²

As far as the international realm was concerned, the international reactions to the Indian tests were very weak since the only country which imposed sanctions was the US, while other members of the UN Security Council barely condemned the tests. In this context, Pakistan faced international pressure not to respond and, to this end, the US offered economic and military incentives to avoid nuclear escalation. However, against the benefits of the non-reaction option, there were compelling reasons why Pakistan should respond. Firstly, as Synnot aptly remarked, ‘the provocative and triumphalist statements of members of the Indian leadership after the tests were taken by Islamabad, and by Pakistani public opinion, to mean that the threat from India had increased’ (1999: 25). Secondly, Pakistan’s government faced scientific, as well as political, pressure to test the country’s capabilities, and India’s actions appeared to provide the opportunity to do so (1999: 25). Besides, Pakistan made its decision assuming that its closer allies, i.e. China and Middle Eastern Islamic state, would help Pakistan withstand its diplomatic isolation and economic pressures (Ahmed, 2009: 199). In addition, as Bose argues, if the crisis was internationalised, this was certainly not on Pakistan’s terms as Russia more or less openly sided with India, while Beijing remained cautiously neutral. At the end of a visit by Nawaz Sharif to Beijing in June, the Chinese Foreign Ministry issued a statement urging both India and Pakistan to ‘earnestly respect’ the LoC and to find solutions to their differences through talks (1999: 150). Pakistani hopes notwithstanding, the international reactions to the decision taken by Islamabad to retaliate by conducting its own test, had a severe and deep impact on the country’s already fragile economy.³³ In fact, as Haqqani reported,

³² India conducted its nuclear tests on 11th and 13th May in 1998. Pakistan claimed to have reacted to the Indian threat with five tests on the 28th and one more on the 30th. For an assessment of the global situation at the time as well as an analysis of India’s motivations see: Walker, W. (2002) ‘International Nuclear Relations after the Indian and Pakistani Test Explosions’, *International Affairs*, 74/3: 505-528. Moving beyond a security-centric explanation (i.e. the threat emanating from Pakistan and China), Walker identifies in India’s desire to become an international power the reason behind India’s tests.

³³ The international response was outlined by the UN Security Council Resolution 1172, adopted on 6th June, which demanded that India and Pakistan refrain from further nuclear tests. Also, 14 countries adopted concrete measures to underscore their concern. See: Synnot, H. (1999) ‘The Causes and Consequences of South Asia’s nuclear tests’, *Adelphi Paper* 332, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Oxford University Press, pp. 27- 28.

Pakistan faced suspension of economic assistance from the IMF, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank, creating the specter of default on the country's external debt (2005: 247). Pakistani difficulties notwithstanding, China was not in the position to offer full support to Pakistan. As such, the Chinese role in this context was predominantly neutral and aligned with international reactions opposing the nuclear tests as well as the Pakistani Kargil operation (Synnot, 1999).³⁴

The latter represented another episode of great tensions between Pakistan and India which eventually led to a war between the two South Asian neighbours. The war lasted almost two months, from May until the beginning of July 1999 and, despite the resistance of the Pakistani troops belonging to the Northern Light Infantry (NLI), the Indian troops soon managed to regain their initial positions.³⁵ It is important noting the role that China played in this context. Behind closed doors, China recommended Pakistan to nuance its stance and take back its troops from the LoC, while publicly adopting an essentially neutral position, along the same lines of the US. The then Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif did try to win Chinese support to the Pakistani cause in Kargil. Sharif's visit to Beijing at the end of June 1999, aimed at seeking support from China, was not met with a warm answer by the Chinese leaders. Although Pakistani officials claimed that China's invitation was 'a signal of China's continuing friendship at a critical time', Chinese leaders conveyed the message that China would continue supporting Pakistan in the long run, but Pakistan needed to de-escalate tensions and withdraw its troops (BBC News, 1999; Rizvi, 2009: 344).³⁶ As a result, on the 4th of July Nawaz Sharif flew to Washington to meet the American President Clinton and, after

³⁴ One of the most thorough accounts of the Kargil war is the one provided by Shaukat Qadir (2002). He reports that in late November 1998, just while Nawaz Sharif was committing the country to the 'composite dialogue' process with India, three Generals of the Pakistani Army asked for a meeting with the COAS Musharraf, looking for the permission to execute the Kargil plan. The latter was aimed at occupying terrain in the Dras-Kargil sector in order to provide a boost to the Kashmiri freedom movement (2002: 25). When the incursion started, the Pakistani troops occupied an area of 'about 130 square kilometres, over a front of over 100 kilometres, and a depth ranging between seven to 15 kilometres' (2002: 26).

³⁵ For a detailed analysis of military tactics and logistics of the Kargil war see: Cloughley, B. (2006) *A History of the Pakistan Army. Wars and Insurrections*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

³⁶ See also: Singh, S. (1999) 'The Kargil Conflict: why and how of China's neutrality', *Strategic Analysis*, 23/7: 1083-1094.

that meeting, Sharif went back to Pakistan and announced the troops' withdrawal from the Indian territory and that Pakistan would respect the Line of Control. The Army was unhappy with this decision and General Pervez Musharraf went on a tour of Pakistan's garrisons, in order to explain his stance to his troops and to galvanize support for his position as their commander (Haqqani, 2005: 253). Eventually, on the 12th October 1999, after an attempt by Sharif to replace Musharraf with the Head of ISI General Ziauddin, Musharraf announced that the armed forces were in charge of the country.

§ 4.6 – Conclusions

As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, there is a need to debunk the 'all weather' rhetoric permeating Pakistan-China relations. The analysis presented here highlighted different patterns and intensities of support that China has been willing to provide to Pakistan throughout the crises faces by Islamabad. In 1965, Chinese diplomatic pressures on India played an important role in New Delhi's political considerations; the 1971 conflict represented, instead, a civil war and none of the great powers, including China, were willing to intervene. However, the Chinese government was sympathetic to the Pakistani views and provided military support to Pakistan. Finally, during the Kargil conflict in 1999, China liaised with the US and consistently recommended to Pakistan not to embark in a war with India and to withdraw its troops from the Line of Control. In that context, Pakistan's outreach to China asking for support was politely declined by the leadership in Beijing. How can we interpret the different Chinese positions in the instances briefly summarised above? Here it is important to consider the long-term view, instead of focusing on short term assessments. As Andrew Small rightfully noticed, 'the most significant backing that China provides does not come in the midst of the latest crisis, but from the steady, long-term commitment to ensure that Pakistan has the capabilities it needs, to play the role that China wants it to' (2015a: 61). The Pakistani leaders, civilians and military alike, are aware that China is the major asset in Pakistan's foreign policy now, and it has been so for a long time. The leadership in Islamabad almost invariably turned to China at times of crisis. Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif relied on, and

sought to obtain, diplomatic, procurement and financial support from Beijing. While the circumstances of the crises have led to different types of responses from Beijing, the long-term nature of the commitment on both sides of the Karakoram highway is what proved to be a remarkable source of strength.

As far as trade relations are concerned, the pre-2001 period was characterised by commercial exchanges which were only embryonic if compared to the spectacular growth witnessed during the last fifteen years. In fact, from the USD 800 million of trade exchanges in 2000s, in 2013 trade between Pakistan and China reached USD 14 billion, with estimates of achieving the USD 20 billion threshold by 2020. While overall trade remained relatively low if compared to the billions of commercial exchanges we are witnessing nowadays, there is one characteristic which persists and links history to the present: trade relations are still tilted in China's favour.

After having provided an analysis of the historical ties between Islamabad and Beijing, the thesis now moves to discuss the empirical chapters, starting from the port of Gwadar which, as we have seen in this section, firstly came onto the radar of the political leadership in Islamabad in 1956. 60 years later, Gwadar is now a deep-sea port in Chinese hands.

CHAPTER 5

The Port of Gwadar

'If there are great place-names of the past - Carthage, Thebes, Troy, Samarkand, Angkor Wat - and of the present - Dubai, Singapore, Teheran, Beijing, Washington - then Gwadar might qualify as a great place-name of the future'

Robert D. Kaplan, Monsoon (2010)

§ 5.1 - Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to assess the extent of military prerogatives in the context of the port of Gwadar. Given the central role that Gwadar has played, and will continue to play, for both Pakistan and China, analysing the evolution of the port of Gwadar represents an ideal case study to assess the extent of military influence in Pakistan's domestic politics for a number of reasons. First, its development spans across the last fifteen years of Pakistan's history, hence it is suitable to be analysed over time, against the backdrop of political developments in Pakistan. Second, the dynamics pertaining to the port of Gwadar include a wide array of civil-military issue areas, including the management of centre-periphery tensions between Balochistan³⁷ and the Federal Government in Islamabad, the adoption of the 18th Amendment in 2010, and the economic vision of the different governments in Pakistan. The decision-making areas outlined in Chapter 2 are inextricably intertwined when it comes to the development of the port of Gwadar and, by and large, Pakistan-China relations. The internal security situation in Balochistan, hence Pakistan's internal security, has represented an obstacle in the development of the port due

³⁷ With its 347,190 square kilometres of land, Balochistan is Pakistan's biggest province, yet the most troublesome, as waves of insurgency have accompanied the province's history since 1948. From a socioeconomic standpoint, Balochistan is extremely diverse both ethnically and linguistically. The Baloch constitute the biggest ethnic group, closely followed by Pukhtuns and Brahui. Politically, the picture is also very fragmented. The last time that Balochistan was united was from 1741 to 1805 under the sixth Khan of Kalat, Nasir Khan, who managed to bring under the same roof the different Baloch tribes (Harrison, 1981). Political, ethnic and linguistic fragmentation continues to divide the province. For a detailed and comprehensive analysis behind Balochistan's insurgency see: Samad, Y. (2014) 'Understanding the insurgency in Balochistan', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 52/2: 293-320.

to the low-intensity insurgency in the province since 2005. In addition, the Chinese have invested 250 million USD in the first phase of the port of Gwadar and are now managing it, therefore foreign policy dynamics and economic vision are constantly linked with regards to the Gwadar port. The analysis presented in this chapter thereby assesses the extent of military prerogatives in the context of the development of the port of Gwadar, highlighting that the decision-making areas of economic policy and elite recruitment have seen an increase in civilian control in the post-2013 period, whereas foreign policy has remained constantly as a reserved domain of the military establishment. The decision-making area of internal security had a medium-high level of civilian control only in the 2008-2013 period (coinciding with the landmark passage of the 18th Amendment) otherwise having a medium-low level of civilian control both during the Musharraf era and the post-2013 period.

The city of Gwadar (in Urdu the ‘Gate of Air’) lies at the intersection between the oil-rich Arabian peninsula, Central Asia and South Asia, representing an ideal gateway for energy supplies to Pakistan, the Central Asian Republics and, most importantly, China. As the quote above suggests, Gwadar has the potential of becoming an important regional hub due to the port’s geographical proximity to the Strait of Hormuz, which represents one of the most important chokepoints in the world by volume of oil transit (US Energy Information Administration, 2014). In addition, from a military point of view, the port of Gwadar represents a ‘useful installation’ to monitor military and commercial movements around Hormuz³⁸ (Holmes and Yoshihara, 2008). In the intention of both Islamabad and Beijing, Gwadar is going to become one of the new pillars in the economic architecture foreseen by China’s ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative.

In order to assess the extent of military influence in Pakistan’s relations with China, this chapter proceeds as follows: Section 5.2 highlights the development of the port of Gwadar during the Musharraf regime. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 look at how successive civilian governments, the Pakistan People’s Party and the

³⁸ It is still unclear whether China is willing to use Gwadar for energy transshipment. However, according to official sources quoted in media reports in June-July 2016, works on the construction of an oil pipeline linking Gwadar with Kashgar will start in 2017, for a total project length of five years; the project is going to be funded by the Chinese government and implemented by the Frontier Works Organisation (Yousafzai, 2016; Bhutta, 2016).

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, have managed the port of Gwadar and assess the extent of military influence in four decision making areas, namely internal security, foreign policy, economic policy and elite recruitment. The conclusions in Section 5.5 present a tabulation of the levels of civilian control in these four decision-making areas to facilitate a systematic comparison with the other case studies analysed in the thesis.

§ 5.2 - Balochistan and Gwadar under Musharraf

Almost all the visits of Chinese leaders to Pakistan are praised by their Pakistani counterparts and usually labelled with highly rhetorical statements about the ‘all-weather’ nature of Pakistan-China relations. The visit paid by the then Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji in May 2001 was no exception, as Pakistan and China were celebrating their 50th year of amity and General Musharraf described the Chinese Premier’s visit as a ‘landmark event in the history of Pakistan-China relations’ (Xinhua News, 2001). A posteriori, however, such a statement was justified. Zhu Rongji’s visit at the new millennium’s dawn kick-started Pakistan-China cooperation over the construction of the port of Gwadar.

In March 2002, the construction at the designated port site of Gwadar began. Pakistan received a number of expressions of interest from companies around the world for the construction of the port, and the choice was finally made in favour of the China Harbours Engineering Company (CHEC). Pakistan’s choice in China’s favour can be explained by financial, diplomatic and strategic reasons. Firstly, China agreed to provide financial support of USD 198 million out of a total projected phase-one of USD 250 million, de facto contributing about 80 per cent of the funding (Garver, 2006). Of the USD 198 million coming from China, 50 million were an outright grant, 50 million a commercial credit, and 98 million a state credit (Burdman, 2001: 17).³⁹ Second, from a diplomatic standpoint, the US had imposed sanctions on Pakistan in the wake of the 1998 nuclear test and, as a result, China was the only way-out from the

³⁹ In June 2006 Phase 1 of the Gwadar project was completed and consisted of: 3 berths of total length 602m; 4.5Km long approach channel dredged to 11.5 – 12.5m; turning basin 450m; one 100m service berth; related port infrastructure and port handling equipment (pilot boats, tugs, survey vessels etc.) (Zaheer, 2008).

diplomatic and economic isolation that Pakistan was facing. Finally, another crucial element which led to the development of the port of Gwadar was the fact that this port would have been more difficult to put under naval blockade by the Indian Navy than the one in Karachi, which was blocked during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani conflict.

Internal Security and Economic Policy

As far as the extent of military prerogatives in the decision-making process is concerned, during the Musharraf years the military implemented several measures to institutionalise its role in key areas of political decision-making. Musharraf introduced several constitutional amendments to invest in the president the supreme decision-making authority; the power of the prime minister was reduced and presidential powers to remove the Prime Minister and dissolve the National Assembly were restored (Talbot, 2002). Moreover, the federal cabinet became subordinate to a newly established National Security Council (NSC) which was chaired by the President and not by the Prime Minister (Pattanaik, 2000). Musharraf's grip over the country's decision-making structures was also guaranteed by the induction of both active and retired military personnel on civilian posts in several ministries and government divisions. According to news reports, by 2003 1,027 military officers were in positions normally reserved to civilian officials (Iqbal, 2003). The military's control over the decision-making processes was therefore institutionalised. This latter point is of particular importance. As the analysis ascertains in the next sections of this chapter, there was a clear departure from Musharraf's practices during the PPP government, especially regarding the role of the parliament in Pakistan's domestic politics. In addition, the analysis also highlights the progressive extrication of the military from civilian administration posts during the two consecutive civilian regimes that followed Musharraf's era.

With regards to Gwadar and Balochistan, the centrality acquired by the province in the developmental vision of the Musharraf regime was seen by the Baloch nationalists as a chance to bring back on the central stage of the political scene their grievances against the Federal Government. As a result, the region witnessed a low intensity insurgency since 2002 which created security concerns in China about the feasibility of investing in Gwadar, and Pakistan

more generally. Chinese workers essentially represented a target which was very sensitive to the Pakistani state. An attack on the Chinese working in Gwadar meant an attack on the very interests of the central government in Islamabad.

At the same time, Musharraf had invested much of his political credibility in reviving the economy of the country. As the former President stated: ‘the item at the top of my agenda in 1999 was the revival of Pakistan’s sick economy’ (Musharraf, 2006: 181). To this end, Musharraf’s approach focused on mega-projects and infrastructural development, as reported in the press conference of the Pakistan Development Forum in 2006: ‘economic growth through massive infrastructure projects had been one of the pillars of the Government’s economic strategy’, an economic plan which had in Gwadar one of its pillars (Pakistan Development Forum, 2006).

The policy responses of the Musharraf government to provide a safe environment for Chinese investments were twofold: first, a parliamentary committee was established in order to try to accommodate and channel the grievances through institutional structures. Second, the military undertook an operation in Balochistan in 2005, following the first ever killing of Chinese nationals in Pakistan in 2004.

With reference to the institutional response, in September 2004, four months after the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) attacked Chinese workers operating in Gwadar, killing three and wounding nine, the Pakistan Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan was established. The Baloch Nationalists Alliance presented their draft demands to the Committee, and these included, among others, halting work on Gwadar port until a detailed feasibility report on the socio-economic and administrative implications was done and an end to the construction of new garrisons (Baloch, 2007). Contrary to their demands, the military government approved the construction of three new army cantonments in some of the most sensitive districts in the region, namely Sui, Gwadar and Kohlu since ‘Sui has the primary gas reserves, Gwadar is a strategic seaport, and Kohlu is the home of the diehard nationalist Marri Tribe’ (Shah A, 2014a: 209). This provides evidence for the increased control that the government was willing to exercise in the troubled Baloch lands to provide security to the Chinese nationals working in the area.

The lack of implementation of these measures was followed in 2005 by a military operation in the province. In December 2005 there was a series of rocket attacks in Balochistan and General Musharraf was targeted while visiting the province. This provided the military regime with the perfect *casus belli* to intervene. As Yunas Samad argues, ‘taking the attack personally, Musharraf rejected any political compromise and turned to Military Intelligence who advised him to crush the opposition’ (2014: 294). After the attacks on Chinese workers in Gwadar, President Musharraf and the Prime Minister Jamali immediately reached out to their Chinese counterparts, Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao respectively, to reassure the Chinese leadership that Pakistan was fully committed to ensuring the safety of the Chinese workers involved in the construction of Gwadar. In 2005, less than one year after the attacks in Gwadar, the Pakistan Army started an operation in Balochistan aimed at suppressing the unrests which were endangering the very heart of Musharraf’s developmental vision as well as the relationship between Pakistan and China. In the same year, the Pakistan Army reported that they captured ‘215 fighters, of whom at least seventy-three were foreigners from Chechnya, China’s predominantly Muslim Xinjiang province, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and various Arab countries’ (Human Rights Watch, 2005: 319). Given the very sensitive nature of this kind of information on both the Pakistani and Chinese sides, the detailed number, as well as the geographical origin, of those captured by the army provides evidence of two major aspects: first, the control that the military was exercising over internal security which had also important effects on the country’s foreign policy; second, the fact that among those captured there were militants from Xinjiang was a direct message to China that Pakistan was fully committed both to ensure the security of the Chinese investments in Pakistan and to tackle the terrorist threat to China’s mainland coming from the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM).

Before the end of the Musharraf era with the elections held on the 18th February 2008, one last significant development in the Sino-Pakistani relationship is noteworthy. The Chinese completed Gwadar in 2007 and the port was inaugurated by Musharraf and the Chinese Minister of Communications Li Shenglin in March 2007 (Shahid, 2007). The management of the port was handed over in 2007 to the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA)

through an open international bidding process. Senator Mushahid Hussain contends that

Given that there were issues politically, they gave it to a wrong organization, the Singapore Port Authority; they were not able to deliver, they were not able to run it, they were not able to keep their commitment, so it was like a still unborn child (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015).

A different view, shared by the PSA and others in the Pakistani establishment, is that the main issues behind the almost null progresses around the operation of the port were primarily related to the reluctance of the Pakistan Navy to concede 584 acres of land, essential for a further development of the port's operations (Fazl-e-Haider, 2012). Either way, since the first ship docked in March 2008, the port has been operational on an extremely modest scale. According to the data provided by Pakistan's Economic Survey between 2008 and 2015 the port, which has been designated by the government as the importing hub for urea, wheat and coal, has handled only 175 cargo ships, an extremely limited number compared to that of Port Qasim or Karachi (Pakistan Economic Survey 2014-15).

Despite a democratic façade, the Musharraf period was characterized by a total military control of economic policy, internal security, elite recruitment and foreign policy through the institutionalisation of military prerogatives. With reference to the intensity of civilian control over the four decision-making areas under examination, we can therefore classify all the four as low.

§ 5.3 - Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government: the 18th Amendment and Sino-Pakistani relations

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the dynamics related to the development of Gwadar encompass a wide range of issues pertaining civil-military relations in Pakistan, spanning from the handling of centre-periphery tensions between Balochistan and the Federal Government in Islamabad as well as the adoption of the 18th Amendment in 2010. The latter represented a major concession to the long-standing demands of Balochistan of greater provincial autonomy and, importantly for the central question of the thesis, was a clear

departure by the elected PPP government from the coercive tactics adopted towards Balochistan by the Musharraf regime. The discussion of the 18th Amendment is treated under the decision-making area of 'internal security' as the constitutional reform was also aimed at easing tensions in the province witnessing an insurgency.

After nine years of military rule, there were renewed hopes about Pakistan's democratic trajectory. The elections held on 18th February 2008 saw the PPP emerge as the largest party. The new democratic government was immediately confronted with a number of issues, including the energy shortage and a balance of payments crisis after the booming years of the economy under Musharraf. As far as Pakistan-China relations were concerned, some strains emerged during these years.

After being elected President in September 2008, Asif Ali Zardari made his first official visit to China in October 2008, in order to seek an inflow of cash from the Chinese ally, seen as the last hope before asking for the intervention of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Perlez, 2008). The Chinese leadership, in the person of Hu Jintao, refused to commit to provide aid to Pakistan. As Andrew Small reports, 'the Chinese Government was already suspicious of him (Zardari) [...] as they tended to see Benazir Bhutto [...] as inclined in a more pro-American direction' (2015a: 112). Second, security considerations were increasingly damaging Pakistan's image in the eyes of China. Two engineers were kidnapped in the Swat region of Pakistan on 29th August 2008 and the reaction of the Pakistani government was not deemed by the Chinese to be as prompt as the one provided by Musharraf during the Lal Masjid siege in July 2007. The Chinese did not express their concerns publicly but, in private, they repeatedly took up the issue with their Pakistani counterparts. For instance, the Chinese and Pakistani foreign ministers discussed the issue on the side-lines of the UN General Assembly in September 2008, the deputy foreign minister of China 'raised the issue with Adviser on Interior Rehman Malik while the Chinese embassy in Islamabad also made efforts for the safe release of the two kidnapped engineers' (Delawar, 2008). Under pressure by the Chinese, the Pakistani leadership tried to free the kidnapped engineers during the visit of Zardari to China as an attempt to ease

tensions, but only one was freed while the other one was wounded and later recaptured (Reuters, 2008).

Against such a backdrop, the Chinese concerns over the effective ability of the Pakistani leadership to deliver, both on the economic and security dimensions, were given priority in the Pakistani domestic political agenda. The adoption by the Pakistani Parliament in 2010 of the 18th Amendment should not then come as a surprise.

Internal security

To attempt to mend the rift with China, the PPP leadership adopted a two-fold approach: first, both Zardari and Gilani visited China almost every six months, holding meetings with the Chinese leadership and with businesses in the attempt to reassure investors in Beijing about the feasibility of doing business in Pakistan. Second, the PPP tried to ease tensions within the country through the adoption of the 18th Amendment to the constitution, in the hope that political stability would have trans-boundary effects, therefore re attracting Chinese investors. The 18th Amendment, combined with the 7th National Financial Commission Award, represented an attempt to address the uneven distribution of resources and the disparity between different provinces of Pakistan. The elements of novelty introduced were the abolition of the concurrent list; Baluchistan renamed into Balochistan; greater control over the revenues generating from natural resources in Balochistan; and provisions for backwardness and back payments.⁴⁰ In addition, this fundamental constitutional change removed the powers of the president to dissolve the parliament.

With reference to civil-military relations, the military in Pakistan did not contest the adoption of the 18th Amendment. Several explanations have been provided for the leeway left by the Army to this important reform, ranging from a renewed civilian unity and broad consensus among the country's democratic forces (PPP and PMN-L above all), to an attempt to restore parliamentarianism

⁴⁰ For a comprehensive analysis of the 18th amendment see: Adeney, K (2012) 'A step towards inclusive federalism in Pakistan? The politics of the 18th amendment, *Publius: Journal of Federalism*, 42/4: 539-565; Hamid, S. (2010) Impact of the 18th Constitutional Amendment on Federation-Provinces Relations, *PILDAT Briefing Paper* 39, July 2010.

(Adeney, 2012; Jaffrelot, 2016a). On a related note, Aqil Shah emphasised that the military's studied silence over these reforms masked a cold cost-benefit calculation, namely making concessions on the governance side in order to retain its institutional prerogatives in national security decision-making (2014b: 1017). What the analysis presented here adds to these compelling explanations is the fact that the 18th Amendment, in addition to the abovementioned aspects, was fundamentally addressing the roots and causes of Baloch grievances and it therefore represented an attempt to ease tensions in Balochistan, where Gwadar, along with other Chinese projects, is situated. It is also important to note the different approaches adopted to resolve the Balochistan issue between civilians and military governments. As the analysis explained in section 5.2, the military regime of General Musharraf ignored the recommendations made by the parliamentary committees, de facto reaffirming the unwillingness of the military leadership to listen to Baloch demands as well as the marginal role of the parliament during the Musharraf era. On the contrary, through the passage of the 18th Amendment, the PPP government invested the parliament of a central role in Pakistan's otherwise fragile democratic practices. As the then Prime Minister Gilani stated at the end of 2009 'the use of the National Assembly in order to build consensus is unprecedented and is indicative of the government's dedication to ensuring supremacy of the parliament above all other institutions' (The Nation, 2009). This marks an important element of discontinuity with the decision-making process under the Musharraf regime. The PPP-led civilian government handled centre-states relations in Pakistan's federal setup through parliament, also overturning undemocratic practices that enabled the army to intervene in Pakistan's domestic politics. In addition, given Musharraf's attitude of centralising power as well as the unwillingness to listen to the recommendations made by the Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan discussed above, it seems highly unlikely that the military regime would have passed such a wide-ranging and important reform. In light of the attempts to restore the centrality of the parliament through the adoption of the 18th Amendment, we should therefore classify this decision-making area with a 'medium-high' level of civilian control.

Economic Policy

The importance of the 18th Amendment notwithstanding, the military was still controlling important decision-making areas. For instance, if we look at the management of the port of Gwadar during the 2008-2013 period, the Port of Singapore Authority retained 60% of the shares, the Aqeel Karim Dhedhi (AKD) 20% and the National Logistics Cell (NLC) the remaining 20%. As a senior Pakistani analyst argued in an interview, ‘Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) and the NLC are military-linked organisations which are working on a number of projects; it appears clear that the military is getting the economic dividends too. The military would have never let the civilians be alone in this project’ (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015). The fact that the NLC had 20% of the shares in the port represents an important indicator of the military willingness to be involved in one of Pakistan’s potential strategic assets, both in commercial and military terms.

If we extend this picture to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, analysed in Chapter 6, there is further evidence for the military’s role in this area. For instance, speaking at a public event in October 2015, the Director General of the FWO Maj. Gen. Muhammad Afzal said that his organisation had already completed 556 kilometres of the 870-kilometer road works to be carried out in Balochistan, as part of the CPEC Western Route, aimed at linking the port of Gwadar with the country’s main road networks (Pakistan Observer, 2015).

Foreign Policy

The adoption of the 18th Amendment was an important card that Pakistan played with China during the three remaining years of the PPP government. On the sidelines of the 16th SAARC meeting in Bhutan in April 2010, Gilani met with Wang Guangya, the Chinese Executive Vice Foreign Minister, and the latter expressed his appreciation for the passage of the 18th Amendment and said that it would help in promoting the progress and prosperity in the country (The Nation, 2010). In addition, on May 23, 2010 State Councillor and Minister for National Defence of China, General Liang Guanglie, led a 17 member delegation to Pakistan and three agreements were signed to enhance strategic communication between the armed forces of both countries, in addition to the 60 million Yuan provided by the Chinese to Pakistani defence forces

(Defence.pk, 2010). During the same month, while on official visit to Beijing, the then Pakistani Minister of Interior, Rehman Malik, declared that China had made a loan to Pakistan of around \$180m to buy police equipment (Pantucci, 2010: 24).

The port of Gwadar operated at low capacity under the Zardari regime. As previously mentioned, the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) did not deliver in expanding the port and in laying the foundations for Gwadar to become a regional trade and energy hub. The second phase, which was scheduled to start in 2008, never materialised and the project remained off the radar of the political leadership in Pakistan. Moreover, the PSA, after only 5 years, decided to withdraw from the 40-year concession agreement it had signed in 2007, with the management handed over to the China's Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC). In May 2011, after the visit of PM Gilani to Beijing, Chaudhary Ahmed Mukhtar, the then Pakistani Defence Minister, told the media that 'we have asked our Chinese brothers to please build a naval base at Gwadar' (Bokhari and Hille, 2011). When Zardari visited China in 2012 the port issue was on the agenda of the President and Pakistan already intended to hand it over to the Chinese (Khan Z., 2012). This was yet another attempt by the Pakistani civilian leadership to increase a strong Chinese role in Pakistan.

Elite recruitment

General Ishfaq Pervez Kayani, Musharraf's successor as Pakistan Army chief of staff since 2007, announced that the Pakistani army would remain politically neutral both during the 2008 elections and after the electoral contest (Shah A., 2008: 16). On 7 March 2008, while addressing a gathering of military commanders, General Kayani stated that 'the army fully stands behind the democratic process and is committed to playing its constitutional role' (Butt, 2010). While in the areas of economic policy and foreign policy there is little substantiation to Kayani's claim to relinquish military prerogatives, the decision-making area of elite recruitment showed some improvements regarding civilian control. In this context, one of the first measures adopted by General Kayani was to depart from Musharraf's policy of appointing military officers in civil administration's positions. In fact, Kayani ordered the withdrawal of military officers from the government's civil departments, a

move aiming at disentangling the military from the civilian sphere (Masood, 2008). In addition, General Kayani issued a directive, which instructed army officers not to maintain contacts with the politicians telling them not to summon any politician to the General Headquarters (Ahmed, 2009). The Gwadar Development Authority (GPA) provides evidence of the military's extrication from civil administration posts. The GPA is an organisation established in 2002 with the aim of managing and overseeing the construction, operations and maintenance of the port. The GPA had three different chairmen in the 2007-2013 period: Rear Admiral M Ehsan Saeed from 2007 to 2009, Muhammad Aslam Hayat from 2009 to 2011⁴¹, and Dr Pervaiz Abbas from 2011 to 2013 (Dawn, 2008; Pakistan Today, 2011). As an independent authority, the GPA has its own governing board composed exclusively of civilian officials.⁴² Apart from the 2007-2009 period, the chairman of the GPA has been a civilian official. In order to assign a score to this decision-making area, it is important bearing in mind that the fact that the GPA chairman in the post-2008 period was a civilian official does not necessarily mean an increase in civilian control. In fact, as the analysis in this section demonstrated, the decision to withdraw army officers from civil administration posts came unilaterally from the army, and it was not an attempt by the civilian leadership to assert civilian control. In light of these considerations, although it is important that civilian officials were in charge of the GPA, we should still score this area under a 'medium-low' level of civilian control.

§ 5.4 – Civil-military relations and Gwadar since 2013

As we have seen in Chapter 1, in the chequered history of Pakistan's democratic trajectory, 2013 represented an important moment, as for the first time in the country's history the electorate was able to vote a government out of office. Nawaz Sharif was elected for his third stint as Prime Minister, primarily because of the pledge to revive the Pakistani economy and the energy

⁴¹ The appointment of Aslam Hayat as GPA's Chairman has caused resentment in the Baloch leadership since Hayat was not a Baloch. See: 'Gwadar Port Authority', *The News*, 23 November 2009, available at: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/207996-gwadar-port-authority>, accessed: 21/11/2016.

⁴² For the organisational chart of the GPA see: <http://www.gwadarport.gov.pk/b.member.html>.

sector, as outlined in the very first section of the manifesto presented by Nawaz Sharif's party ahead of the 2013 elections (PML-N Manifesto, 2013). The victory of Sharif, a business-oriented leader with his base in the industrialised Punjab, was indeed good news for Beijing. While during the Zardari years there was a lack of trust on the Chinese side towards the Pakistani leadership, with the election of Sharif there was the belief that he was more resolute and able to deliver (Small, 2015a: 173). In order to ensure economic revival and a prompt tackling of the energy shortages affecting the country, there was no other option for Pakistan than turning to the Chinese 'all-weather' friends. On the Chinese side, Xi Jinping announced in his speeches in Kazakhstan and Indonesia in September and October 2013 respectively, the creation of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, also known as the 'One Belt, One Road' initiative, aimed at revitalising the ancient trade routes from China to Europe and to South-East Asia. The combination of political will on both sides was fortunate for the new Pakistani leadership, which immediately decided to make its inaugural visit abroad to China, in July 2013. As Senator Mushahid Hussain maintained:

the government of Nawaz Sharif has an economic agenda, and that agenda is driven by economic development, so he was keen to push it and the timing was right because the Chinese leadership gave a new vision for the region so the political will on both sides was there which pushed it forward. (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015)

In order to show to the Chinese that the wind was changing in Pakistan, some important signals were required. First, Abdul Malik Baloch, a moderate, middle class nationalist, was appointed as the Chief Minister of Balochistan. This aspect is particularly significant for the argument presented here, as during Nawaz Sharif's first visit to China in July 2013, Abdul Malik accompanied him, a goodwill gesture from the Pakistani government to ease tension in the province where the Chinese interests were threatened by the insurgents (Small, 2015a). The Baloch chief minister was part of the delegation comprising Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, National Reforms and Development, and Tariq Fatemi, the Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Policy. The

message that they tried to convey was that Pakistan's political leadership was taking an integrated and resolute approach to the crucial bilateral ties with China. Second, from an institutional point of view, Nawaz Sharif during his China trip announced the establishment of a 'China Cell' in the Prime Minister's Office, with the task of supervising the implementation of all the projects agreed in partnership with the Chinese (Dawn, 2013a). An official working in the China Cell maintained that 'the problem was related to the implementation of the projects and of the MoUs. While at an official level these agreements were given a lot of relevance, on the ground some of them had a very little impact', as we have seen with the port of Gwadar in the 2008-2013 period (Interview with the author, Islamabad, January 2015). Moreover, the Gwadar working group has been established in the Planning Commission of Pakistan which serves as a forum of consultation between Pakistan and the Chinese investors.

On the civil-military relations front, the post 2013 period signified the emergence of what the seasoned Pakistani analyst Hasan Rizvi defined as a civil-military hybrid (Rizvi, 2015a). He maintains that

since the performance of civilian governments has been poor in terms of their obligations to the citizenry, Nawaz Sharif has found it convenient to give space to the military in policymaking and policy enforcement in security, foreign affairs and internal security and administration (Rizvi, 2015b).

The developments pertaining to the port of Gwadar, and by and large the relationship with China, provide evidence of the large room for manoeuvre that the military had despite the country's formal democratic transition, starting from Pakistan's external relations.

Foreign Policy

As far as Pakistan's foreign policy is concerned, from interviews in Pakistan the feeling repeatedly emerged that General Raheel Sharif was acting as the de facto Foreign Minister. Gwadar and, more generally, the security situation in Balochistan, were high on the agenda during the then COAS's visit to the United Kingdom in early January 2015. According to senior security officials

quoted in *The Express Tribune*, during the visit General Sharif asked British authorities to take actions against Baloch separatists operating from the UK and who were working against the interest of Pakistan (Yousaf, 2015a). In this context, it is important highlighting two main aspects: first, the COAS met with the then UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, an interaction usually reserved to Prime Ministers or Foreign Ministers. Second, no civilian official accompanied the visit. These developments corroborate the argument that foreign policy was retained by the military as a reserved domain during the period under examination.

On a more general note related to Sino-Pakistani relations, when the US President Barack Obama visited India at the end of January 2015, the immediate reaction from Pakistan was to arrange an official visit of the Chief of Army Staff to China during the same days of Obama's presence in India (Tiezzi, 2015). A senior commentator on Pakistani politics, who was interviewed under the condition of anonymity, mentioned that the visit was arranged as a response to the closer Indo-US ties, and that it was important to notice the international visibility that the COAS was getting (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015). The symbolism behind General Sharif's visit to China has been also remarked on by several analysts as non-coincidental and representing the crystallisation of the system of alliances characterising South Asia in the last year, with the China-Pakistan partnership on one side, and US-India cooperation on the other (Riedel, 2015a).

Internal Security

If we turn to internal security, the military have tightened their control in this area with the pledge to protect the Chinese investments in both the CPEC and Gwadar, which is an integral, crucial part of it. The operation Zarb-e-Azb, started by the Pakistani army in June 2014 after the attack on the Karachi airport and after negotiations previously undertaken by the civilian government with the Pakistani Taleban leadership failed, has been under the control of the military since the very beginning, and will be analysed in greater depth in the following chapter. With reference to the port of Gwadar, the then COAS Raheel Sharif has repeatedly expressed Pakistan's will to complete and create an

operating hub ‘at all cost’ (The News International, 2015). Most of the media reports from Gwadar in the last year observed that port and its surrounding areas are being turned into a ‘fortress’ to protect the Chinese workers based in the fishing town (Hassan, 2016). According to some reports, ‘a single Chinese national being driven in Gwadar is given a multivehicle security detail that includes police, paramilitary and army personnel, with the road used closed to all other traffic, officials said’ (Shah S, 2016b). With the development of the port of Gwadar, internal security has also acquired a maritime dimension. In November 2016, a Pakistan Navy official was quoted in news report saying that China was willing to deploy its naval ships to safeguard the port of Gwadar (News of Pakistan, 2016). Besides raising concerns in India where all the main newspapers reported the claim,⁴³ the latter came in the wake of reports in the Pakistani media that an Indian submarine was detected and prevented from entering Pakistani waters, with some headlines mentioning that the submarine was ‘Gwadar bound’ (The Express Tribune, 2016a; The Nation, 2016). In this context, along the same lines of what we will see in the next chapter with the Special Security Division (SSD) of the army established to protect the CPEC, the Pakistani Navy has established the ‘Task Force-88’⁴⁴ in order to ensure protection to the port of Gwadar and to the sea lanes of communication (Dawn, 2016). In terms of internal security and foreign policy, we can therefore classify civilian control as ‘medium-low’.

Economic Policy

With regards to economic policy, it is important to note that the establishment of the China Cell in the Prime Minister’s office and of the Gwadar working group in the Planning and Development Commission has

⁴³ The news was reported by The Hindu (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/Chinese-naval-ships-to-be-deployed-at-Gwadar-Pak-official/article16705411.ece>), The Hindustan Times (<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/china-pakistan-to-deploy-warships-to-safeguard-balochistan-port/story-CvVthH3ZKLvKYUxiMdHiM.html>), The Times of India (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/Chinese-navy-ships-to-be-deployed-at-Gwadar-Pak-navy-official/articleshow/55622674.cms>), and The Financial Express (<http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/india-not-surprised-by-chinese-submarine-deployment-in-gwadar-port-says-defence-expert/463151/>).

⁴⁴ The TF-88 is to comprise ships, Fast Attack Craft, aircraft, drones (unmanned aerial vehicles), and surveillance assets. Additionally, marines would be deployed at sea and around Gwadar for security operations.

brought under greater civilian control the decisions regarding the contents and scope of the projects in Gwadar. While the Frontier Works Organisation is carrying out some important infrastructural works in Balochistan, particularly on the Makran Coastal Highway, and therefore the military is getting the economic benefits of cooperation with China, the very establishment of these fora of consultation has given the civilians some leverage on economic decision-making. In addition, during Xi Jinping's visit in April 2015, the Pakistani government announced the creation of a 'delivery unit' to oversee the implementation phase of the projects agreed under the CPEC umbrella and Nawaz Sharif himself has been overseeing the different phases of the projects which are under development in partnership with the Chinese (Zaafir, 2015). Such a pattern of increased civilian control in the decision-making area of economic policy will also emerge from the analysis of the other two empirical chapters, especially in the post-2013 period.

The port of Gwadar finally started operations for commercial exports in May 2015. When asked whether Balochistan is in a position to allow Gwadar to become fully operational, Senator Mushahid Hussain said:

yes, I think it is. Now Gwadar has been built [...] I think now it's more a management issue in my view. The government has put a team for the management of the port, because the Chinese are going to run the port but the management of the port means ensuring special industrial zones, getting speedy permissions, ensuring that projects are on track, and ensuring peace and security for the people that are working there (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015).

However, there are differing views about the feasibility of Gwadar's development. In some of the interviews conducted during fieldwork, my interlocutors highlighted that Gwadar is not economically viable for Pakistan as the main industrial clusters in the country are primarily based in Gujranwala, Lahore and Faisalabad and for these areas the closest port is Karachi, not Gwadar. In addition, throughout the last year there have been several alarms about water shortages affecting Gwadar and the entire Makran Coastal Belt. The most recent one was in December 2016, when district authorities reported

that in the Ankara Kaur Dam there was water left for only two weeks (Shahid, 2016).

The development of the port has also led to an increased defence cooperation between Pakistan and China. On 2 July 2015, news reports from China suggested that the two armed forces were pledging to strengthen military cooperation and Fan Changlong, Vice Chairman of China's Central Military Commission, said that 'the Chinese military is willing to work with the Pakistan counterpart to maintain the growth momentum of military-to-military exchanges' (Ministry of National Defence, 2015). These exchanges became clearer a few weeks later when on 25 July it was announced that China had sold 8 submarines and 6 patrol vessels to Pakistan (PK on web, 2015).

Elite recruitment

Despite the PML-N winning the majority of seats in the 2013 Balochistan Provincial Assembly, Nawaz Sharif nominated Abdul Malik Baloch, leader of the National Party, as the Chief Minister of Balochistan (The News, 2013). The appointment of Baloch represented a move to address some of the grievances that the people in the province had against the federal government. The appointment was part of a compromise reached between Abdul Malik Baloch and the PML-N provincial leader, Sanaullah Zehri. The deal involved that Mr Zehri would become Chief Minister after two and a half years. Besides the passing of the torch, what is important noting here is that the military establishment had expressed the preference for Abdul Malik to remain in power, and as report in *Dawn* noted 'it is a political triumph of a kind, for Mr Zehri at least, for the army leadership to have accepted the change' (Dawn, 2015a).

As far as the GPA is concerned, Dostain Khan Jamaldini was elected as the chairman at the end of November 2013, a move which was welcomed in Balochistan since Jamaldini is a Baloch himself. As of December 2016, he is still in charge of the GPA. If compared to the 2008-2013 period in which there have been three different officials in charge of Gwadar's governing body, this represents an important signal of continuity.

In light of the assessment provided above, we can therefore classify ‘elite recruitment’ in the post-2013 period as under ‘medium-high’ civilian control. In fact, although the military expressed its preference for Abdul Malik Baloch to stay as Chief Minister, the civilian leadership decided to follow a different path and to appoint Sanaullah Zehri. In this context, the preference of the elected government prevailed over that of the military.

§ 5.5 – Conclusions

The development of the Port of Gwadar analysed in this section highlighted some important points. First, we have noticed a significant difference in the approach between military and civilians in dealing with tensions in Balochistan. While the military relied on coercive measures to tackle the insurgency in the province, the elected government channelled the decision-making process through the parliament, thereby reaffirming the centrality of elected, democratic institution. Such an approach marked an important element of discontinuity not only with the policies of the Musharraf regime, but also of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the founding father of the PPP. In fact, when confronted with a growing Baloch resentment and insurgency during the 1970s, Bhutto asked the Army to intervene in the province to restore order.

Second, from the analysis conducted in this chapter emerged that civil-military relations in Pakistan have moved from a condition of overt military control under Musharraf to a more subtle, yet substantive, presence of the military on the political scene from the side-lines. With the election of Nawaz Sharif in 2013, we have noticed that the PML-N government devised a series of new frameworks for cooperation with China: the China Cell in the Prime Minister’s office, the Gwadar working group in the Planning and Development Commission of Pakistan as well as the Monitoring Unit for the projects agreed under the CPEC umbrella. While these are important steps towards greater civilian control, internal security and foreign policy remain in the realm of military prerogatives, as Table 5.1 below shows.

Table 5.1 – Continuum of civil-military relations in the context of the port of Gwadar

	2001-2008	2008-2013	2013-2016
Foreign Policy	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low
Internal Security	Low	Medium-High	Medium-Low
Economic Policy	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-High
Elite recruitment	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-High

As the analysis in this chapter demonstrated, civilian control in foreign policy has remained weak throughout the period under examination. With regards to internal security, while the adoption of the 18th Amendment represents an important development in terms of centre-periphery relations in Pakistan's federal setup (hence why the 'medium-high' score in the 2008-2013 period), this area was generally retained as an institutional prerogative by the military.

Nawaz Sharif might have learned the lessons from the past (he was ousted by Musharraf, a COAS that Sharif himself had appointed) in dealing with the military. Temporarily renouncing to the institutional prerogatives dear to the army can represent an attempt to ensure the continuity of democratic processes in Pakistan. However, by taking into account also economic policy and elite recruitment we have seen an increase in civilian control, especially in the post-2013 period. Economic policy has progressively moved from 'low' civilian control under Musharraf to a medium-high level under the current PML-N government. In the area of elite recruitment, civilian control should be classified as 'medium-high' in the 2008-2013 period and 'high' from 2013 until the end of 2016. With regards to the port of Gwadar, on 12 November 2015 the Government of Balochistan has handed over 2,281 acres of land to the Chinese Overseas Ports Holding Company Ltd under a 43-year lease for the establishment of a free trade zone in Gwadar (Muhammad, 2015; Shah S,

2016b). COPHC's Chairman, Zhang Baozhong, said in April 2016 that 'the port cranes are almost ready, and we are thinking that the port will be (at) full operation by the end of this year [2016]', however identifying also the challenges faced in order to develop the port of Gwadar as a regional hub, namely that 'even if you have a very good port, (if) you do not have an inland transporting system and the economy in the near area is not very positive, the port will not be fully utilised' (Johnson, 2016). To overcome these difficulties, the projects agreed under the CPEC will link Gwadar to the rest of the country through a Eastern, Central and Western routes by upgrading, or building from scratch, an interconnected system of highways and railways (Dawn, 2015b). From the successful implementation of the CPEC will depend much of Pakistan's economic growth as well as its political stability. The completion of the 'early harvest' projects by 2018 is high on the government's agenda as it would put the PML-N in a stronger position ahead of the elections due to be held in the same year. The civil-military dynamics behind the planning and implementation of the CPEC are the focus of the next empirical chapter. The findings of the analysis presented in Chapter 6 are in line with the ones emerging from the assessment of military prerogatives in the context of the port of Gwadar. The progressive increase of civilian control in the areas of elite recruitment and economic policy is coupled with a constant level of military influence as far as internal security and foreign policy are concerned, a pattern which the analysis of the development of the CPEC further corroborates.

CHAPTER 6

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

§ 6.1 - Introduction

The analysis presented in this chapter evaluates the extent of civilian control over the design, planning and implementation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. To this end, this chapter traces the evolution of the CPEC from the Musharraf days throughout the last 15 years, assessing the level of civilian control on the four decision-making areas outlined in Chapter 3, namely internal security, economic policy, foreign policy and elite recruitment. Following the same structure adopted in all the three case studies, the first section of the chapter is devoted to the Musharraf era, when the idea of the corridor was conceived. Section 6.3 focuses on the PPP years before moving to section 6.4, which looks at the post-2013 efforts by the Pakistani government to implement the projects agreed under the CPEC umbrella. The conclusions in Section 6.5 present a tabulation of the scoring of each decision-making area.

As the empirical analysis in this chapter demonstrates through the analysis of the operation Zarb-e-Azb and of the CPEC-related foreign policy interactions, the extent of military prerogatives remained constantly high in the decision-making areas of internal security and foreign policy. However, in the areas of economic policy and elite recruitment civilian control has increased, especially in the post-2013 period, as a result of the establishment of civilian-led decision-making bodies such as the Joint Cooperation Committee, and the rejection on the civilian side of the attempts by the military to institutionalise its role through the creation of a CPEC authority.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is inextricably linked to the development of the port of Gwadar that was discussed in the previous chapter. The first stone for this corridor was laid in the mid-1960s when both countries agreed on the construction of the ‘Sino-Pakistani Friendship Highway’, better known as the ‘Karakoram Highway’. However, it was only when the Chinese decided to invest in Gwadar that discussions to transform Pakistan into China’s bridge to the Gulf concretely started. Initially conceived in 2001, the CPEC

gained momentum more than a decade later, under Xi Jinping's westward looking 'One Belt, One Road' initiative, which has in Pakistan one of the main streams of the increased regional connectivity envisaged by Beijing.⁴⁵ The CPEC is of great relevance to China given the latter's energy dependency on the Persian Gulf. In the narrative of the Pakistan government, instead, the flow of Chinese investments into the country has the potential to be the turning point in many respects. First, the development works carried out under the CPEC umbrella will improve Pakistan's infrastructure, as well as its road and rail networks. According to Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister:

the cooperation under the CPEC scheme is going to include infrastructural development, communication networks, in the form of the upgrade of the existing road links, and in the energy sector, where China has agreed to support Pakistan in building power plants (Interview with the Author, Islamabad, February 2015).

Second, the corridor is an opportunity to increase trade relations between the two countries. The economic component of the Sino-Pakistani relationship has always been the weakest element of the relationship and commercial ties between the two countries are expanding but 'continue to fall well short of expectations' (Small, 2015a: 96). Third, the development of the CPEC represents a unique opportunity to tackle some long-standing, deep rooted issues in Pakistan's volatile security environment. Although the initial alignment of the corridor is going to take the Eastern Route, namely the one going through the Makran Coastal Highway in Balochistan and then up north through Punjab, the shortest route is supposed to cross the province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and a part of North Waziristan which falls in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Both KPK and North Waziristan are some of the strongholds of the Pakistani Taleban and the Pakistani army has been conducting a counter-terrorism operation in North Waziristan since 2014.

⁴⁵ China's strategy encompasses a broader regional outreach, including the Irrawaddy Corridor from China's Yunnan Province through Burma, which will eventually provide access to the Bay of Bengal to the Chinese (Garver, 2006) as well as the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) corridor.

§ 6.2 - Musharraf, China and the energy corridor's dawn

The idea of creating a corridor was the brainchild of Pakistan's former President General Musharraf. In his attempt to revive Pakistan's economy, and to boost the country's economic growth, he was firmly convinced that Pakistan should benefit from the country's geographical position as a potential gateway to the Indian Ocean. During a speech that Musharraf delivered at the Pakistan-China business forum in 2006 he said:

Look at China's access to South Asia and to the Indian markets, to the Gulf, to Africa, to Europe and see where Pakistan stands and see the access which Pakistan gives to China to all these regions (Musharraf, 2006).

Economic Policy

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Gwadar was one of the first megaprojects initiated with Chinese support under the Musharraf regime. The then fishing town of Gwadar came to represent the flagship project of China-Pakistan cooperation and of Musharraf's economic policy as well. When the works on the phase one of the port of Gwadar were close to completion, the idea of an energy corridor through Pakistan started gaining momentum. At the end of the then Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to Pakistan in April 2005, the Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukhat Aziz told the press that

Pakistan has already granted 'transit trade' corridor to China for imports and exports. We will also cooperate closely in the field of energy. Pakistan will be happy to provide an 'energy corridor' to China (Aziz, 2005).

Economic cooperation was, however, not the only topic discussed between the Chinese and Pakistani sides. Just before the Chinese Premier's visit there was also the launching ceremony of the JF 17 thunder, a multi role combat aircraft jointly produced by China and Pakistan, which 'demonstrates [the] long tested, very time tested and deep relationship that Pakistan has always had with China and which is growing from strength to strength' (Musharraf, 2005). As the analysis has previously noted, the willingness of the Pakistani leadership to provide a fertile and safe environment for Chinese investments in the country has always come in exchange for something highly valued in Pakistan's military circles: military support. Economic agreements were often

accompanied by a reward in terms of arms transfers or diplomatic support in the international arena. The early stages of the development of the CPEC are no exception to this trend. If we look at the supply of major weapons to Pakistan in the 2006-2010 period, China was the major supplier along with the US, and the Chinese provided Pakistan with a first batch of 42 JF 17 combat aircraft (SIPRI, 2015). As the analysis discussed in greater depth in Chapter 4, military to military cooperation has always represented the backbone of the Sino-Pakistani partnership, a trend which is also present during the Musharraf years. Against this backdrop, it should not then come as a surprise that, in 2006, Musharraf reiterated Pakistan's willingness to allow China to exploit the shortest available route to the Arabian Sea that Pakistan was offering: 'Pakistan wants to act as a trade corridor for Chinese exports to the rest of the world and is also interested in setting up an energy corridor for China, if it is technically feasible' (Daily Times, 2006).

As far as the decision-making process is concerned, according to the former Vice-Chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Rashid Amjad, the economic policy decision-making during the Musharraf era was characterised by a lack of coordination between the Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission, in their attempts to contain the country's growing energy crisis which started in 2006 and progressively escalated over the coming years (2013). As the analysis discusses in the ensuing sections of the chapter, there has been a reversal of such lack of coordination, particularly in the post-2013 period. The civilian leadership started making coordinated efforts at both central and provincial levels in order to ensure a timely completion of the early-harvest projects agreed under the CPEC umbrella, aimed primarily at tackling the energy crisis.

In 2006, Pakistan and China also agreed to start a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries. In a number of interviews conducted during fieldwork in Pakistan, the feeling emerged that the FTA has hurt Pakistani industries. According to some of the interviewees, instead of increasing Pakistan's exports to the vast and growing Chinese market the Pakistani market was flooded with cheap Chinese goods (Interviews with the author, Islamabad, January-February 2015). It is important to mention that the FTA has significantly boosted the total volume of trade between Pakistan and China,

from \$4.1 billion in 2006 to \$15 billion in 2015. However, trade relations are still tilted in China's favour (Ghumman, 2015), as Figure 6.1 below shows.⁴⁶

Figure 6.1 – Pakistan-China trade balance, 2006-2015.



Source: UN Comtrade Database, accessed: 22/11/2016.

The Figure above shows the amount of imports in Pakistan of Chinese goods as well as Pakistan's exports into the Chinese market. While it is worth noting the increase in Pakistan's exports from USD 561 million in 2006, to USD 1.9 billion in 2013 (with a peak of USD 2.7 billion in 2013), China's exports to Pakistan reached USD 11 billion in 2015, five times higher than Pakistan's exports. The data presented here is in line with the one presented in Chapter 4, with regards to the Sino-Pakistani bilateral trade in the pre-9/11 period. The figure presented above also corroborates the accounts collected during fieldwork in Pakistan regarding the concerns over the effective advantages of the FTA for Pakistan.

Internal Security

The build up towards greater economic and trade integration was not without obstacles. As explained in greater detail in Chapter 5, the situation in Balochistan, and in other parts of the country, started becoming increasingly unsafe for the Chinese workers. A total number of 7 attacks on Chinese working

⁴⁶ Negotiations are underway between the two countries to renegotiate new terms, under increasing pressures on the Ministry of Commerce in Islamabad coming from industrial stakeholders in Pakistan. See: Ghumman, M. 'Second phase of FTA with China: MoC urged to cut 'fair' trade deal', *Business Recorder* [online], October 9 2015, <http://www.brecorder.com/top-stories/0/1234879/>, accessed 10/12/2015.

in Pakistan took place during the Musharraf regime, as outlined in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 - Number of attacks on Chinese nationals in Pakistan, 2001-2007⁴⁷

Date	Location	Dynamics of the attacks	Dead/Wounded	Group claiming the attack
3 May 2004	Gwadar	Unknown	3 dead 9 wounded	Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA)
22 Sept 2004	FATA	Engineer wounded	0 dead 1 wounded	
9 Oct 2004	Jandala, South Waziristan	The two engineers were kidnapped by a group of five abductors	1 dead 1 wounded	Al-Qaeda
15 Feb 2006	Hub, Baluchistan		2 dead	BLA
24 June 2007	Red Mosque, Islamabad	7 Chinese kidnapped and released after negotiations	0 dead 0 wounded	Radical Islamic Students
July 2007	Khazna, near Peshawar	Chinese workers assassinated	3 dead	Assassination related to the Red Mosque episode
19 July 2007	Hub, Baluchistan	Chinese convoy blown up		BLA

Sources: Associated Press International, BBC News, CNN.com, International Crisis Group, the Daily Pak Banker, Xinhua News.

Of all the attacks, the following analysis focuses on the one in Islamabad in 2007, better known as the Lal Masjid (or Red Mosque) siege. The latter event came to represent the apex of the escalation of violence on Chinese workers in Pakistan, and caused a stall in the development of the economic corridor. The Lal Masjid siege encapsulates many features of Sino-Pakistani relations in the

⁴⁷ It is important to highlight that the total number of Chinese nationals who have lost their lives in Pakistan is 13 over the last 14 years. If we compare this number to the number of Pakistanis who have been killed, nearly 61,554 according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, in the 2003-2017 (until 31st January) period, the number of Chinese killed in Pakistan is small.

post 9/11 period: militant groups creating tensions in the relationship between Islamabad and Beijing; the latter's pressure on the Pakistani government to act promptly in order to rescue the Chinese nationals involved in the siege; the Pakistani government's reaction to the Chinese pressures. The mosque was under the spotlight for a long time for its links with Al-Qaeda and the Pakistani Taleban in the tribal areas of Pakistan. For instance, in July 2005, Pakistani security forces tried to raid the mosque following the suicide bombings earlier that month in London, but the security personnel were met by baton-wielding women, who refused to let them enter the mosque (Hasan, 2007). While the confrontation with the Lal Masjid's seminarians and clerics have been ongoing for a long time, it was only when China was directly involved that Musharraf decided to forcibly intervene in an unprecedented way.

The Lal Masjid siege started when a group of seminarians studying in the mosque entered a Chinese health centre (most probably a sex parlour) situated in an area close to the religious site and kidnapped seven Chinese workers. Given the close ties between Islamabad and Beijing, the reaction from the Musharraf government was to put the mosque under siege. In this respect, pressures from China were one key element in the decision of Musharraf to intervene so vehemently. As reported by the New York Times, 'Chinese leaders [...] have put strong pressure on Musharraf to take action. And China being an increasingly important ally, militarily and economically, for Pakistan that is exactly what Musharraf did' (French, 2007). As a result, on July 10 Pakistani troops belonging to the Army's Special Services Groups stormed the Red Mosque in what was known as 'Operation Silent'. When in November Musharraf addressed the nation to explain the events of the Lal Masjid, he clearly stated that the episode 'caused great embarrassment and I had to personally apologize to the Chinese leadership that we are ashamed that despite you being our great friends this has happened to you' (Musharraf, 2007).

On the civil-military relations front, the Lal Masjid raid provides evidence of the fact that the decision-making area of internal security was retained as a reserved domain by the military establishment, with no inputs from the either the parliament or the political parties. According to news reports, the decision to intervene

was taken after consensus by the then military top brass, including the army chief General Musharraf, chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Ehsanul Haq, corps commander Rawalpindi Lt Gen Tariq Majeed, director general Military Intelligence (MI) Major General Nadeem Ijaz and last but not the least the then Director General Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani (The News International, 2012).

Another important development which corroborates the analysis presented above is represented by the fact that in the immediate aftermath of the operation to free the Red Mosque, Pakistan and China agreed to the creation of a joint committee to ensure the security of Chinese workers in Pakistan (Small, 2015a). What it is important to note for the central question of the thesis, is that the joint committee was composed of officials from the Chinese Embassy and from the National Crisis Management Cell. The latter, while officially operating under the Ministry of Interior, was headed by Brigadier Javed Iqbal Cheema, an appointee of General Musharraf. As such, the decision-making area of internal security was retained by the military as an exclusive prerogative during the Musharraf era.

As previously mentioned, the Red Mosque episode signified a significant setback in the development of the energy corridor and, more generally, sounded an alarm to the Chinese leadership about the feasibility of investing in Pakistan. It would take almost five years for Pakistan to regain the ground lost during the eventful summer of 2007.

§ 6.3 – CPEC under the PPP government: 2008-2013

As we have seen in the previous section, Pakistan's internal security (or lack thereof) was a critical aspect in Sino-Pakistani relations during the years analysed and this decision-making area was retained as an institutional prerogative by the Pakistani military. The situation under the PPP civilian regime remained critical, with the military establishment largely retaining its grip on this important area. There were five attacks on Chinese nationals throughout the period analysed in this section, as Table 6.2 shows.

Table 6.2 - Number of attacks on Chinese nationals in Pakistan, 2008-2013

Date	Location	Dynamics of the attacks	Dead/Wounded	Group claiming the attack
29 Aug 2008	Swat Valley	2 Chinese engineers kidnapped and released after negotiations	0/0	Pakistani Taleban
22 Dec 2008	Peshawar	Unknown	0/1	Unknown
22 Nov 2011	Dera Bugti district	Attack on a convoy with Chinese engineers	0/0	BLA
28 Feb 2012	Peshawar	Chinese woman shot dead	1 dead	TTP
22 June 2013	Gilgit-Baltistan	Gunmen dressed as a paramilitary killed nine tourists	2 dead, 1 rescued in unknown conditions	TTP

Sources: Associated Press International, BBC News, CNN.com, International Crisis Group, the Daily Pak Banker, Xinhua News.

In order to address Chinese concerns about the security of their workers in the country, and to try to assert civilian control, one of the first moves of the PPP government in 2008 was the attempt to bring the ISI and the Intelligence Bureau (IB) under direct control of the Ministry of Interior. According to news reports, the decision was reverted after only 24 hours under ‘immense pressure from defence circles’ on the civilian set-up (Raza, 2008). This demonstrates that the military preference prevailed in this context and the elected government was forced to modify its decision. As seasoned observer of Pakistani politics Najam Sethi argued, during the PPP tenure ‘the ISI became larger than life, at home and abroad’ (2012). To corroborate this view, news reports in July 2011 mentioned a secret visit made by the then Chief of the ISI, Lt. General Ahmed Shuja Pasha, to Beijing (Rediff, 2011). The official version which appeared in the news, was that Pakistan’s spy chief visited China to build a broad-based strategic dialogue.

However, the same sources reported that the chief of the ISI was ‘summoned’ to China for two main reasons: first, China was increasingly worried that tensions in Xinjiang were escalating, as demonstrated by the attack carried out in Kashgar at the end of July 2011 for which China blamed the ETIM, allegedly having some of its hideouts in Pakistan’s tribal areas; secondly, Pakistan needed to reassure China that the security of the Chinese nationals was paramount to the Pakistani security establishment (Tharoor, 2011). Immediately after the visit, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) issued an unequivocal statement saying that Pakistan was already fighting the ETIM and that would continue to do so, adding that two of the most prominent figures of the ETIM were killed in Pakistan in 2004 and 2011 (Daily Times, 2011). This demonstrates two important aspects: first, China’s interests in Pakistan’s security policy was becoming increasingly crucial and the military establishment was doing its best to keep the Chinese ‘all weather’ ally happy. Second, internal security was entirely under the military’s and the ISI’s control, even under a civilian government.⁴⁸

Economic policy

The progressive development of the CPEC during these years continued, particularly through the attempts of the Pakistani government to regain the confidence of their Chinese counterparts after the events of summer 2007, and the other attacks on Chinese nationals in Pakistan. During these years, the PPP government essentially followed the same economic policy of General Musharraf. In addition, the state’s finances were in dire need of resources and some of the projects could not be completed. For instance, the road linking Gwadar with Quetta, now part of the Western route of the CPEC, was initiated

⁴⁸ Although not directly related to China, additional evidence for military control over internal security in the 2008-2013 period can be found in the Operation Rah-e-Rast in 2009 (Swat), Operation Rah-e-Nijat in 2009 and 2010 (South Waziristan). The military was effectively in control of these operations. As the former DG ISPR Maj Gen (retd) Athar Abbas reported years later in the news, whether an operation could be launched or not depended primarily on the decision of the Army Chief.

See: ‘Kayani was reluctant to launch North Waziristan Operation’, *Dawn*, 30 June 2014, available at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1116115>, accessed: 22/11/2016; for Pakistan’s approach to counterinsurgency in these years see: Jones, S. G., Fair, C. C. (2010) ‘Counterinsurgency in Pakistan’, *RAND*, available at: http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG982.pdf.

in 2007 but was abandoned in 2008 due to fiscal problems and to the volatile security situation in the province.⁴⁹

In 2008 Pakistan and China agreed to enhance cooperation to further develop and boost Pakistan's mineral and energy sectors as well as broaden financial and banking sector cooperation. They also agreed to 'further enhance connectivity by developing new communication links including fiber optic links' (Joint Statement, 2008). This was further remarked on by the then Pakistani Ambassador to China, Masood Khan, who in a speech delivered at Tsinghua University in May 2009 said that 'China requires natural resources from abroad to support its fast developing economy. Pakistan can provide three viable corridors of energy, fiber optic and transportation which can benefit China directly' (Khan, 2009). In December 2010, the two countries signed a MoU for the establishment of the 'China-Pakistan working group', between National Energy Administration of China and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources of Pakistan (Joint Statement, 2010). On the procurement side of Sino-Pakistani ties, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, China was the major exporter of arms to Pakistan in the 2010-2014 period, accounting for 51% of Pakistan's supplies of major weapons (SIPRI, 2015).⁵⁰

Foreign Policy

To exemplify the nature of Sino-Pakistani ties and to assess the extent of military prerogatives in Pakistan's foreign policy during the 2008-2013 period, it is important to briefly discuss a development in Pakistan's tumultuous relationship with the US. These were the years in which the US, under the new President Barack Obama, was devising the so called Af-Pak strategy, which had at the very heart the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act (also known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill), adopted by the US Congress in 2009.

⁴⁹ Works resumed in 2014 and were carried out by the Frontier Works Organisation. The road is now complete and is reportedly 'impeccable' with a 'vastly improved' security situation. See: Husain, K. (2016) 'Footprints: Road trip to Balochistan', *Dawn*, 18 November 2016, available at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1297068/footprints-road-trip-balochistan>, accessed: 23/11/2016.

⁵⁰ The data mentioned in SIPRI's report does not include, however, the weapons that Pakistan produced under license from China that also includes, among many others, the production of roughly 50 Al-Khalid tanks (SIPRI, 2015) at the Heavy Industries Taxila, Pakistan's biggest arms manufacturing factory, established in 1971 with Chinese support.

According to the bill, the US offered Pakistan 1.5 billion USD annually in non-military, developmental aid for five years. As Samad noticed, this was unique in Pakistan's history 'as it was the first time a civilian government has received substantial assistance from Washington, for democratisation, good governance and economic development' (2011: 207). However, what the military leadership found problematic with the bill was that it required a certification of Pakistan's support of US counterterrorism efforts, civilian control over the armed forces and non-proliferation efforts. As a result, the Pakistani army chose to undermine and embarrass the civilian government by openly rejecting the aid bill and branding it as a threat to Pakistan's sovereignty (Shah, 2014a: 228). News reports over that period confirm the view that the military protested against what they interpreted as 'humiliating conditions attached to a US bill that tripled civilian assistance' (Waraich, 2011). In addition, according to a WikiLeaks document, the then COAS fuelled the opposition against the Kerry-Lugar Bill as it was going to increase civilian control over the military (Dawn, 2010). Pakistan eventually accepted the tranche of aid but the Kerry-Lugar bill provides evidence of the military's sway in this area, which also extends to important sections of the Pakistani media, and of the different approaches that the US and China had towards Pakistan, and helps explaining why the Pakistani army considers China as an invaluable ally. Aid and investments from the US had always some conditionality attached, namely a greater level of civilian control over the military or a stronger commitment in fighting the war on terror; an approach that China has never adopted with Pakistan.

Elite Recruitment

Similarly to what we have seen in Chapter 5 with the Gwadar Port Authority, there is also evidence of the progressive extrication of military personnel from civilian posts during the PPP government. The National Highway Authority (NHA) provides evidence of the increased grip civilian authorities established in this area. The NHA is an important example to assess the extent of military prerogatives in the context of the CPEC as the NHA is the main federal agency tasked with the implementation of the road networks part of the CPEC infrastructural investment.

Table 6.3 – List of Chairmen of the National Highway Authority 2001-2012

NHA Chairman	Civilian/military
Major General Tariq Javed (2000-2001)	Military
Major General Farrukh Javed (2001-2007)	Military
Major General Imtiaz Ahmed (March 2007-2008)	Military
Altaf Ahmed Chaudhry (Sept 2008-2011)	Civilian
Syed Muhammad Ali Gardezi (2011-2012)	Civilian

As Table 6.3 above shows, until 2008 the NHA Chairman was a Major General of the Pakistani Army. As discussed in the previous chapter, Musharraf inducted in civilian posts a large number of military officers in order to retain its grip on the state's machinery. With the advent of the PPP government, the post was given to Altaf Ahmed Chaudhry who, according to news reports, 'was favoured because of his close association with President Asif Ai Zardari' (Dawn, 2011). Tracing the appointments of the NHA's chairmen since 2001 corroborates the findings presented in Chapter 5. Although civilian personnel was now heading the NHA, this was the result of the military's unilateral decision to recall military personnel working in the civilian administration. As such, we should classify this area as having a 'medium-low' degree of civilian control.

From the analysis of the four decision-making areas in the 2008-2013 period emerged that the level of civilian control can be classified as 'medium-low' throughout the PPP government. With reference to internal security, the role that the army and the ISI played in brokering the negotiations to free the Chinese workers kidnapped in Pakistan, as well as the visit of the ISI chief to Beijing in 2011 to reassure the Chinese authorities about Pakistan's commitment to fighting the ETIM, represent good indicators of military control in this area. As Christine Fair aptly remarked, since 2008 'it has become clear that the civilians do not control key national security policies. They continue to make decisions geared more toward ensuring regime survival' (2012: 113). If we turn to foreign and economic policies, the picture is similar as the PPP

civilian government had a relatively weak economic agenda, additionally constrained by the fiscal crisis, and followed the path traced by Musharraf in the previous years, trying to restore China's faith into investing in Pakistan.

6.4 – The CPEC comes to light: politico-military dynamics of the energy corridor since 2013

As mentioned in the introduction, the state-to-state narrative which accompanied the unveiling of the CPEC has heralded the project as a 'game changer' for Pakistan, given the amount (USD 46 billion) of Chinese money poured into Pakistan after Xi Jinping's visit in 2015. As far as civil-military relations are concerned in this area, Siegfried Wolf has argued that in the context of the CPEC 'Pakistan is witnessing the total absence of civilian control' (2016), a view also shared by Christophe Jaffrelot (2016b). However, both authors appear to overlook some important institutional mechanisms where the civilians are in greater control. While the following discussion corroborates the widely shared view that foreign policy and internal security are in the military's hands, the empirical analysis of economic policy and elite recruitment shows a greater level of civilian control.

Foreign Policy

The dynamics around the CPEC are in line with the general pattern of Pakistan's foreign policy, in which the armed forces have always played a central role and have therefore retained this decision-making area as an institutional prerogative. On 13th November 2016, the first CPEC cargo reached Gwadar after travelling from Xinjiang through the Karakoram Highway (The Express Tribune, 2016b). In this context, the Pakistani Navy issued a press release mentioning that they safely escorted the CPEC cargo into the waters of the Arabian Sea. Five days later, as we have seen in Chapter 5, the Pakistan Navy reported that they prevented a 'Gwadar bound' Indian submarine from entering Pakistani waters, highlighting how the success of CPEC depended on the safety of Sea Lanes of Communication (The Nation,

2016).⁵¹ This episode came at a time when Pakistan and China were about to conduct a joint exercise between Pakistan Navy and the Peoples Liberation Army-Navy. At the end of the exercise, both Pakistani and Chinese armed forces reiterated that ‘the deep rooted naval collaboration between Pakistan Navy and PLA (Navy) has become even more important in the backdrop of CPEC, in order to effectively handle complex challenges in the maritime domain’ (Dawn, 2016). Although Sino-Pakistani ties have now evolved into a fully-fledged partnership expanded into the economic realm, the geopolitical significance of Sino-Pakistani relations is always present, especially as far as India is concerned. The foreign policy narrative which accompanies the development of the economic corridor has been highly securitised, especially with regards to protecting Pakistan’s interests against foreign hands that are against CPEC. As such, we should classify this area as ‘medium-low’.

Economic Policy

The civilian side of the civil-military equation is increasingly attempting to institutionalise the decision-making process in this area, to ensure it has a stronger grip aloof of military influences. According to an official in the Planning and Development Commission of Pakistan:

The CPEC is a priority of Nawaz Sharif’s Government, but is also a priority on the Chinese side. In 2013 was established a Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) which includes Pakistani representatives and Chinese representatives (Interview with the author, Islamabad, 2015).

The JCC is the main coordination body of the CPEC’s institutional framework and is co-chaired by the Minister of Planning, Development and Reform of Pakistan and by the Vice-Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission on the Chinese side.⁵² At the end of 2016, 6 meetings of the JCC were held between the two parts. In particular, in the meeting held

⁵¹ While the ISPR press release also included pictures of the submarine, India has termed the news as ‘blatant lie’. See: Ahmad, I. (2016) ‘Pak navy claims it ‘blocked’ Indian submarine, New Delhi says it’s a lie’, *Hindustan Times*, 19 November 2016, available at: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pakistan-navy-claims-it-pushed-indian-submarine-clear-of-its-waters/story-3Ha1qnPQC3mpXgxjE0wujL.html>, accessed: 23/11/16.

⁵² As part of the JCC have been formed six different working groups on planning, energy, transport, Gwadar, industrial parks/special economic zones and long term plan.

in Beijing in December 2016, the chief ministers of Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) also participated in the meeting on the invitation of the federal government (Dunya News, 2016; Iqbal, 2017). Pakistan Army personnel attended none of the JCC meetings. This corroborates the fact that the elected government has increased its grip in this decision-making area.

In addition to the Joint Cooperation Committee, there are several other institutional bodies which have been established in the last two years and which indicate a higher level of civilian control in this important decision-making area. These include the China Cell (discussed in Chapter 5), established in the Prime Minister's office immediately after Nawaz Sharif was elected in 2013, and the CPEC 'delivery unit', aimed at overseeing the implementation of the projects agreed under the CPEC umbrella. A number of other ministries are also involved in different aspects related to the CPEC, including the Ministry for Power Water and Resources, as well as the Ministry of Finance. The latter, particularly through the Economic Coordination Committee, has been trying to facilitate the tranche of Chinese investments in the country provided under the umbrella of the CPEC. At the provincial level, as a further proof of a coordinated effort on the civilian leadership's side, Shahbaz Sharif, Punjab's Chief Minister since 2008, has been very proactive in seeking Chinese investments in his province. Among other initiatives, the province of Punjab established in 2009 the 'Punjab China Bureau', a platform dedicated at promoting investments from Chinese firms in Punjab. Moreover, according to a media report, during the Chief Minister's most recent 5 days visit to China, the EXIM bank chairperson Hu Xiaolian, said that 'earlier in China they used the term "Shenzhen speed" as a symbol of development and progress, but instead "Punjab speed" was currently in use in China for the rapid execution of projects' (Rehman, 2016). Channelling the decision-making process into civilian-led institutions sets an important precedent for the actual functioning of Pakistan's democratic processes. Although there have been attempts by the Pakistani military to increase their presence in this area by suggesting the creation of a 'CPEC authority' with greater military involvement (Ghumman, 2016), the proposal has been rejected and resisted so far by Ahsan Iqbal, the Minister for Planning, Development and Reform, on the grounds that such an

authority would only increase the bureaucracy around the CPEC and slow down significantly the implementation of the tranche of Chinese investments (Rana, 2016a). In this context, the preference of the civilian leadership prevailed and this is an important indicator of a ‘medium-high’ level of civilian control.

In light of the empirical evidence presented so far regarding economic policy, the contents, scope and duration of policy decisions rest in the hands of civilian officials. However, it is also important to assess the effective implementation⁵³ of these decisions in order to provide a comprehensive assessment of the extent of military prerogatives in this area. According to the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 2, civilian control over economic policy implies that civilians alone possess effective means to control and supervise the administrative implementation of these decisions (2010: 957). As previously mentioned, the National Highway Authority is one of the main federal agencies tasked with the implementation of the CPEC projects. Of the CPEC-related projects awarded by the NHA in 2016 for which data is available through official NHA document meetings, the contracts were awarded to private firms and both the military-linked NLC and FWO. In particular, on the Western route of the CPEC the different portions of the works on the infrastructure connecting Hakla and Dera Ismail Khan were awarded to the following companies: (a) joint venture between a Turkish Company, Limak, and Pakistan’s ZBV (package 4 of the project); (b) the National Logistics Cell (motorway package I); and (c) the Frontier Works Organisation (package 4 of the project) (National Highway Authority, 2016a, b, c). Another CPEC-related project, the M4 Shorkot to Khanewal (between KM 119,200 and KM 184,487) financed by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) was awarded to two Sino-Pakistani joint ventures, China Ghezouba group and Ghulam Rasool & Co (pvt) limited and to the Xinjiang Beixin Road and Bridge group CO ltd (National Highway Authority, 2016d). The presence of military linked enterprises is an element that we have also noticed in Chapter 5 in the management of the port of Gwadar in the 2008-2013 period, with the NLC

⁵³ As emerged during most of the interviews conducted in Pakistan, one of the main issues has been the slow bureaucratic system in Pakistan. According to a Senior Pakistani political analyst ‘the major issue from within Pakistan is the very deficient preparation and the lack of capacity by politicians and bureaucrats to come up with solid planning for implementation. This represents one big hurdle’ (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015).

having 20% of the shares. The difference between the 2008-2013 period and the post 2013 one is that in the context of the CPEC the duration, scope and supervision of the implementation are managed by a civilian-led decision-making institutional framework, the JCC, which has the Minister for Planning, Development and Reform at its apex. Although the evidence presented in this section demonstrates that the military is an important stakeholder in the implementation of the projects, the role of the JCC as well as the centrality of the NHA (under civilian control) demonstrate the increased civilian grip over this decision-making area. As such, we should classify civilian control in economic policy as ‘medium high’.

Elite Recruitment

As we have seen in the previous section, the elected government resisted the attempts made by the army to institutionalise its role in the decision-making process. However, a former two star general of the Pakistani Army, Major General (Retd) Dr. Zahir Shah, was appointed in July 2014 as the CPEC project director in the CPEC Secretariat in the Planning Commission. According to news reports ‘he has been engaged with CPEC since the project’s beginning’ (Rana, 2016b). While this represents an indicator of the military’s sway in the CPEC Secretariat, unlike the JCC analysed in the previous section, *de facto* ‘has no powers but correspondence between various ministries’ (Abrar, 2016). Furthermore, in December 2016, Zahir Shah was replaced by a civilian official appointed by the Prime Minister (Rana, 2016c).

Another important indicator to be considered when assessing the extent of military prerogatives in the area of elite recruitment is the NHA. As we have seen in the 2008-2013 there has been a progressive increase in civilian officers holding this post, a trend which is also confirmed in the post- 2013 period.

Table 6.4 – List of Chairmen of the National Highway Authority 2013-2016

NHA Chairman	Civilian/military
Maroof Afzal (2013)	Civilian
Hamid Ali Khan (2013)	Civilian
Sajjad Baloch (2013)	Civilian
Shahid Ashraf Tarar (2014-present)	Civilian

As Table 6.4 above demonstrates, the officials in charge of this important agency tasked with the implementation of the CPEC are civilians. As previously noted, the fact that the head of the NHA is a civilian officer does not necessarily mean an increased civilian control. However, while under the PPP-government civilians were in charge because of the unilateral withdrawal of military personnel from key positions, it is important noting that the appointment of the NHA chairman is now ‘a routine matter’ under ‘the discretionary power of the cabinet secretariat/establishment division’, headed by the Prime Minister (Dawn, 2013b).

Another development which is important assessing in the decision-making area of elite recruitment is the establishment of the Parliamentary Committee on CPEC. After the Xi Jinping’s visit in April 2015, the Pakistani government decided to convene an ‘All-Party Conference’ (APC) on 28th May 2015, aimed at dissipating the concerns of the provinces regarding the alignment of the CPEC (Ghumman, 2015). This is an important development as the civilian leadership at both central and provincial levels, including the opposition, was involved in the decisions surrounding the CPEC, with no member of the military present. As a result of the APC, the participants agreed to the establishment of the ‘Parliamentary Committee on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor’, with the aim of speeding up and monitoring the works carried out on the CPEC (Xinhua News, 2015).⁵⁴ The appointment of Senator Mushahid Hussain as the chairman of the CPEC parliamentary committee means having in the driving seat one of the few Pakistani politicians who has extensively dealt with the Chinese in the past 40 years, and who is aware of the problems and issues that the projects agreed under the CPEC might encounter. Senator Hussain was Information Minister in the Nawaz Sharif government between 1997 and 1999, before joining the PML-Q, the ‘King’s Party’ during the Musharraf era. He was also Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Defence and Defence production in the 2008-2013 period. While through his association with the PML-Q he could be considered as having a pro-military stance, he has constantly advocated for resolving frictions between the military

⁵⁴ 20 meetings of the CPEC parliamentary committee were held until January 2017.

and the elected governments and for a ‘balanced approach in civil-military relations’ (Nangiana and Zaman, 2012).

The establishment of the Parliamentary Committee is in line with the trend that we have seen in Chapter 5 with regards to the port of Gwadar and, in particular, the 18th Amendment. Differently from the coercive measures utilised by the Musharraf regime vis-à-vis Balochistan, the PML-N government has channelled through the parliament the centre-periphery tensions arising with regards to the alignment of the CPEC. In light of the abovementioned developments, we should classify this decision-making area with a ‘medium-high’ level of civilian control.

Internal Security

If the level of civilian control can be classified as ‘medium-high’ in economic matters and elite recruitment, when it comes to internal security there a number of indicators that suggest that the military is still in control of this decision-making area. In this section, the analysis focuses primarily on the operation Zarb-e-Azb, as it exemplifies the nature of civil-military relations in Pakistan vis-à-vis internal security. The operation is directly linked to the development of the CPEC as Zarb-e-Azb was initiated when the talks about the development of the corridor were coming to a florid conclusion. In this context, the Chinese leadership played a central role in pressuring the Pakistani military to embark in the operation.

Here it is important to refer back to the theoretical framework of the thesis. As Croissant et al argue, to measure the extent of military influence in this decision making area, the analysis must assess the degree to which ‘civilians formulate the goals and decide on the measures meant to uphold internal security, and if the civilian agencies charged with upholding domestic security and law-enforcement are independent from the military’ (2010: 958). To be clear, deploying a state’s military to quell an insurgency, or to guard sensitive sites is something which happens in most countries, including mature democracies (e.g. France, Italy). However, for civilian control to be present, it is crucial that ‘(1) civilians have the right and actual capacity to decide on the range, duration, and frequency of all such operations, and (2) they must be able

to direct their implementation by the military' (Croissant et al, 2010: 958). By tracing the decision-making process of the operation Zarb-e-Azb, it emerges that the abovementioned criteria are not met, hence the military is in control of this area.

The main trigger of the operation was the attack carried out on Karachi Airport on the 8th June 2014 which saw the death of 36 people, including all the terrorists, and which was claimed by the Pakistani Taleban and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (BBC News, 2014). The attack signalled the end of the peace talks with the Pakistani Taleban that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had initiated when he was sworn into office in May 2013. There are different explanations as to why the operation was launched at that particular point in time.

According to a number of analysts and media reports, the launch of the operation Zarb-e-Azb was intended to appease the US pressures on Pakistan in the fight against terrorism. In this view, Washington has repeatedly conveyed the message to Pakistan that an operation in North Waziristan was crucial in order to disrupt the Haqqani network and the Pakistani Taleban, who were carrying out attacks both against the Pakistani government and the ISAF mission in Afghanistan (Singh, 2014; Boone, 2014a; Crilly, 2014). Since 2001, Washington has tried to push Pakistan under the 'do more' mantra, pouring some 28 USD billion in aid to Pakistan (Rohde, 2014). This argument primarily suggests that as the drawdown in Afghanistan was getting closer, 'US pressure has mounted manifold' (Singh, 2014). However, as mentioned above, the US has been pressuring Pakistan to launch an offensive in North Waziristan for a decade and Pakistan never seemed to be particularly receptive to the US pressures in this respect. In fact, James Dobbins, the special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan in the 2013-2014 period, argued 'I think they [the Chinese] are pressing Pakistan to take this threat more seriously' (Rohde, 2014). As such, the Pakistani leadership has been ready to respond promptly to the concerns that were coming from China. Evidence from multiple sources suggests that the Karachi airport episode provided the perfect *casus belli* for an operation which was in the making well before the attack took place. According to a well-informed source close to the military, who was interviewed under the

condition of anonymity, Zarb-e-Azb started after intense Chinese pressures on Pakistan. In his words:

The operation was decided immediately after the Chinese intelligence Chief visited Pakistan for one week in April 2014. He went to Pakistan with Satellite images showing the Punjabi Taliban protecting some ETIM militants. Given the patronage attitude that the Pakistan Army has always had with these groups, the Chinese raised concerns about the involvement of Pakistani military in protecting them. Against this backdrop, the civilian government of Nawaz Sharif was having talks with the Taliban. In a meeting with the COAS, Nawaz Sharif was told that he should have convinced the Chinese that Pakistan was not protecting the ETIM (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015).⁵⁵

Against this backdrop, Small reports that ‘as the drumbeat of Chinese pressure intensified, the Pakistani Army finally obliged, Raheel Sharif embarking on a campaign that his predecessor had resisted for long’ (Small, 2015a: 178). A Reuters’ report about a meeting held at the Prime Minister’s office in mid-May 2014, provides further evidence. According to the news agency, the COAS went into the meeting with the intent of imposing the military’s approach on the question of talks with the Taliban. As such, ‘General Raheel Sharif wanted to convey [a message] at the gathering, [and] he added: ‘the time for talk is over’ (Zahra-Malik, 2014). The developments discussed above provide evidence that the operation was in the making well before the attack on the Karachi airport and that the policy preference of the military ultimately prevailed.

In June 2014, according to a press release issued by the ISPR, ‘many ETIM terrorists and their affiliates have also been killed in the strikes. It was a massive blow to the terrorists and one of their main communication centres has been dismantled’ (ISPR, 2014). As a seasoned Pakistani analyst who follows very closely the Sino-Pakistani dynamics argued:

⁵⁵ The claim made in this interview was triangulated with all the available sources, including news reports and opinion pieces in national and international media. The information was also independently mentioned in another interview conducted with a well-informed source, this time not close to military circles. As such, the fact that two different interviewees, coming from two different perspectives and viewpoints, offered the same account on the reasons behind the operation provides additional strength to the claim presented here.

Chinese do not tolerate that their citizens are killed while working abroad, but at the same time they do understand that Pakistan needs capacity building. In this light, there were pressures on the Pakistani government to tackle militancy. This is something that the Chinese bring up during their conversations (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015).

The emphasis that the Chinese have put on the security of their workers provides further evidence that China played a central, if not determinant, role in pushing towards the operation in North Waziristan. In December 2014, the Chinese Minister for Public Security, Guo Shengkun, visited Islamabad and the Pakistani military leadership briefed him about the operation Zarb-e-Azb (Haider, 2014). In addition, in the wake of the attack on the Army School in Peshawar on 16th December 2014, which claimed the lives of 148 people, Wang Guanzhong, deputy chief of the General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, visited the Pakistani embassy in Beijing, saying that China wanted to have more cooperation with the Pakistani armed forces to combat terrorism (Economic Times, 2014).

The implications of the operation were two-fold: on the domestic front, Zarb-e-Azb signalled that despite the attempts of the civilian government to hold talks with the Pakistani Taliban, the military was still in the driving seat when it came to internal security decision-making. On the external front, the message was clearly intended to reach the Chinese who have repeatedly expressed their concerns vis-à-vis the security situation in Pakistan. At stake here there was not only Pakistan's internal security, but also the tranche of Chinese investments to Pakistan that were in the finalising stage and which eventually materialised in April 2015 with Xi Jinping's visit to Pakistan. As such, Pakistan needed to convey a strong message to their Chinese 'all-weather' friends that Chinese security concerns were a top priority for the Pakistani leadership. Two months before the Chinese President's visit, the Foreign Minister of China met with General Raheel Sharif at the Pakistan's Army headquarters and, according to the statement issued after the meeting, 'Mr Wang Yi appreciated [the] significant and noticeable successes and progress of operation Zarb-e-Azb' (The News International, 2015).

Another important element which must be taken into consideration when analysing the extent of military prerogatives in internal security vis-à-vis the

CPEC is the fact that during the Chinese President's visit was announced the establishment of a Special Security Division (SSD) to protect Chinese nationals working on the projects falling under the umbrella of the CPEC (Haider, 2015).⁵⁶ In addition, as the Express Tribune reported, the Ministry of Interior, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, did not feature in the agenda of the Chinese President, which can be interpreted as a signal that the army is the main interlocutor on internal security issues and that the GHQ is not willing to abdicate on this important decision-making area. In the months following the announcement of the SSD, civil-military frictions emerged with regards to the Terms of Reference of the SSD. According to news reports, the military's vision of the SSD is 'to guide and "indirectly" control the civilian law enforcement agencies in issues related to the security of CPEC projects', while the government appeared more sceptical since such a broad remit 'could expand military's influence on law enforcement agencies at the cost of civilian administration's authority' (Syed, 2016a). As a result of the empirical analysis conducted on the decision-making area of internal security, we can classify it as 'medium-low' civilian control.

§ 6.5 - Conclusions

The decision-making areas of foreign policy and internal security have remained constantly under military control in the case study examined in this chapter. However, with regards to economic policy and elite recruitment from the empirical analysis emerged an increased level of civilian control, especially in the post-2013 period. This is the result of the creation of civilian-led institutional mechanisms to oversee the planning and implementation of the CPEC, coupled with the rejection, on the civilian side, of the pressures from the military establishment to institutionalise the latter's role in the CPEC-related decision-making process. In addition, the fact that the controversies related to the development of the CPEC have been managed through an All-Party Committee initially, and then channelled in the newly formed Parliamentary Committee on the CPEC, are important indicators of an

⁵⁶ The SSD consists of 9,000 soldier of the Pakistani army and 4,000 paramilitary forces and has at its helm a Major General of the Pakistani Army (Khan, 2016).

increased level of civilian control. The dynamics underpinning the development of the CPEC analysed in this Chapter are therefore in line with what we have previously seen in the discussion of the port of Gwadar, as Table 6.5 below shows.

Table 6.5 – Continuum of civil-military relations in the context of the CPEC

	2001-2008	2008-2013	2013-2016
Foreign Policy	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low
Internal Security	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low
Economic Policy	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-High
Elite recruitment	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-High

The road to a successful implementation of the corridor is still long, and not without obstacles. In the Pakistani public debate have emerged three main contentious points regarding the economic aspects involved in the CPEC.

First, the investment from China is largely in the form of concessional loans, which means that money is being lent to Pakistan at a favourable rate, but it has to be returned to Chinese banks in the next 20 years. Chinese companies are investing ‘\$22.5 billion in coal-fired, hydro, wind and solar energy projects in Pakistan, with China’s government providing concessional loans for infrastructure projects’ (Haider, 2015).⁵⁷ A number of Pakistani analysts and commentators have expressed concerns about the effective benefits of the CPEC for Pakistan. An op-ed published in *Dawn* mentions that the Chinese loans will impose ‘significant and long-lasting costs on the state’ (Dawn, 2015c). This is echoed by another report in the *Express Tribune*, which

⁵⁷ Some projects like the new ‘Gwadar International Airport’ will be financed in the form of grants from China to Pakistan (hence no paying back is involved), but the majority of the energy and infrastructure projects will be in the form of loans.

confirms that ‘Pakistan will be ultimately paying back this loan at varying interest rates over a course of the next few years’ (Salman, 2015). In December 2015, the Bank State of Pakistan’s governor, Ashraf Mahmood Wathra, called for greater transparency and told the press: ‘I don’t know out of the \$46 billion how much is debt, how much is equity and how much is in kind’ (Express Tribune, 2015a).

Second, local communities in Balochistan, KPK and Gilgit Baltistan have repeatedly raised concerns about employment opportunities provided to the people in the areas where the CPEC projects are going to be developed. The main concerns revolve around the idea that the Chinese are primarily willing to bring their own workforce and that the Pakistani government is moving toward a ‘Punjabisation’ of the other provinces of Pakistan. We have already seen in the previous chapter about the issues in Gwadar related to the influx of workers from China. According to Ayesha Siddiqi ‘It [China] does not even bother about creating employment in Pakistan as Islamabad dare not pressure China about doing so’ (2015). This points to the fact that China is not effectively contributing to the socio-economic development of the areas in which is investing and it is an element which was also raised during a number of interviews conducted during fieldwork in Pakistan.

Third, the controversy over the CPEC route is indicative of the fact that the benefits of the corridor are going to be seen in the short-medium terms in the parts of Pakistan (primarily in Punjab) which are already more developed, hence contradicting the ‘all-Pakistan’ approach hyped by civilian and military authorities in their public statements. There are differing views in the Pakistani government regarding corridor’s alignment. According to an official in the Planning Commission:

Security was not a reason to choose the current alignment. The selection of the route was made primarily according to the existing rail and road links as well as to the potential for development of the areas through which the corridor is going to pass through. Industrial development, population were also important factors. The discussion with the Chinese about the alignment of the corridor has been extensive and detailed. The Chinese have expressed their desire to work on the existing road networks, without building new ones from scratch (Interview with the Author, Islamabad, February 2015).

However, according to Senator Hussain one of the main impediments in the development of the corridor is security:

because the corridor is supposed to run through different parts of Pakistan, whether it is the Balochistan province, and there are security issues, there are forces who do not want this cooperation to move forward, they try to sabotage it. [...] There are 12.000 Chinese living in Pakistan, experts, engineers, working on 120 different projects in Pakistan in all parts of Pakistan, so their security has to be paramount and therefore the government is forming a special security force for that purpose (Interview with the Author, Islamabad, February 2015).

Either way, the shortest available route to link Gwadar with Kashgar would be the western route, namely the one passing through Balochistan and KPK. While the task of building from scratch roads and rail networks in these areas is indeed challenging, the development benefits of the CPEC would be more visible in the two most backward provinces of Pakistan. As reported in an editorial in the Express Tribune, ‘more investment on the Western route is needed to couple the counter-terrorism efforts with a sound and comprehensive development plan’ (Tahir, 2015). The controversy around the route raised the army’s scepticism regarding the ability of the civilian government to handle the CPEC investment package effectively. As previously discussed in this chapter, the military tried to institutionalise its role in the CPEC also as a result of the political bickering between the Federal government and the provinces. The then COAS General Raheel Sharif issued a statement in November 2015 calling for ‘governance initiatives’ to complement the Army efforts in combating terrorism (Yousaf, 2015b). While this was primarily related to the government’s handling of the National Action Plan, this was also aimed at perorating the cause of the military’s greater involvement in the CPEC-related decision-making process.

The high emphasis on their investments’ security that the Chinese have repeatedly manifested has placed the Army at the centre stage vis-à-vis the CPEC’s internal security (e.g. through the Special Security Division) and there appear to be limited prospects for the elected government to make significant gains in civilian control in this decision-making area. This is not surprising if we place the CPEC into the broader framework of Sino-Pakistani relations, in

which the military have constantly represented the backbone of the partnership. On a more general note, however, it is important noting that the empirical analysis in this chapter highlighted how the institutional framework established for the CPEC is largely in the hands of civilian officials. Such a trend was also visible in the analysis of the port of Gwadar presented in Chapter 5. As such, from the empirical analysis conducted so far is emerging that the extent of military prerogatives has remained consistently high in internal security and foreign policy, but less so in economic policy and elite recruitment. China's engagement with Pakistan has therefore allowed the crystallisation of Pakistan's domestic power structure with the military in control of the decision-making process in internal security and foreign policy, and the civilians with an increased grip in economic policy and elite recruitment. As Andrew Small aptly remarked, 'if the flagship project of Xi Jinping's "Belt and Road" initiative was directly tied to a weakening of civilian rule in Pakistan, there would be serious questions for many other governments around the world about their own involvement, and all the more so if China was seen to have provided even tacit encouragement' (2016).

In order to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the extent of military prerogatives in Pakistan's relations with China, the next chapter focuses on the trilateral relations between Islamabad, Kabul and Beijing. In recent years, we have seen an increased cooperation between Pakistan and China in shaping the future of Afghanistan after the US troops' withdrawal at the end of 2014, and it therefore represents an important case study in the context of the analysis conducted in the thesis.

CHAPTER 7

Brothers in Arms: Sino-Pakistani relations in Afghanistan

‘Our strategic depth is not Afghanistan; our strategic depth is China as in the case of an arms embargo, China will always support Pakistan’

Pakistani Military Analyst – Interview with the author, Islamabad, January 2015.

‘For peace in Afghanistan, we need a handle on the Taliban, for which we need a handle on Pakistan, for which we need China’

Senior Minister in President Ghani’s cabinet, cited in Haidar (2015).

§ 7.1 - Introduction

After having analysed the port of Gwadar and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in the previous two empirical chapters, the analysis here focuses on the trilateral relationship among Pakistan, China and Afghanistan. The importance of this case study in the context of this thesis is that the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan represents a potent example of the pre-eminence of Pakistan’s security establishment over national security policy, including under civilian governments both in the 1990s and in the post 2008 period. Pakistan’s Afghan policy has been retained as a ‘reserved domain’ by the Pakistani military; in this context, China’s role has implicitly enabled the Pakistani army to maintain its grip on this crucial issue-area. In light of China’s security concerns over Xinjiang, Beijing has used, and still uses, its political weight on the Pakistani army to ensure that its interests are looked after. At the same time, the areas of economic policy and elite recruitment have marked some improvements as far as civilian control is concerned. This is in line with the pattern that we have seen in the previous two empirical chapters of the thesis.

China’s interests in Afghanistan revolve primarily around three main aspects: first, the fear that instability in Afghanistan could enhance the jihadi groups operating in the area and spread to Xinjiang, further destabilising a region that, since 1990, has witnessed attacks by Uighur separatist movements (Siddique & Zadran, 2015). Second, Beijing is also interested in exploiting Afghanistan’s natural resources (e.g. by investing in the Mes Aynak copper

mine, the second largest in the world). Third, after the announcement of the 'Belt and Road' initiative in September 2013, Chinese leaders have grown wary of the potential repercussions that a volatile western border, particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan, would have on the project.

Pakistan's role in Afghanistan has been extremely controversial with ties between the two countries characterised by mutual distrust and suspicion. From providing safe havens, as well as financial and military support to the Mujahedin, in liaison with the United States' intelligence during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, to the endorsement and funding of the Taliban regime in the aftermath of the Afghan civil war in the mid-90s, the relationship between Islamabad and Kabul has lacked trust on both sides of the Durand Line. Pakistan has always considered Afghanistan an important element of its 'strategic-depth' in the event of a war with India, a concept that will be addressed in the next part of the chapter. Most of the Pakistani officials interviewed during fieldwork in 2015 strongly rejected the doctrine of strategic depth, as the quote at the top of the chapter demonstrates. However, as the ensuing analysis explains, this is patently not the case. Afghanistan has always been of paramount importance to Pakistan, particularly in the post 9/11 period, and the security prism has been the main lens through which the ruling elites in Islamabad have looked at Kabul.

Pakistan-Afghanistan relations cannot be read in isolation from Pakistan's arch-rival India. The latter's role in Afghanistan has been a major concern for the Pakistani military establishment. New Delhi has tried to gain influence in Afghanistan for many reasons, including a broader regional expansion strategy which has in the port of Chabahar in Iranian Balochistan its main symbol. In India's calculus Chabahar would serve as a competitor of the port of Gwadar, becoming a bridge to Afghanistan and Central Asia, allowing Indian goods to bypass Pakistan in their route to Central Asian markets (Ahmad, 2016). Following the same structure adopted in the previous two empirical chapters, the analysis here proceeds by providing a historical background of Pakistan-Afghanistan ties (which complements the analysis presented in Chapter 4) before looking at the evolution of the relations between the two countries and China in the post 9/11 period against the backdrop of Pakistan's domestic politics.

§ 7.2 – In the wake of the British Raj: unsolved border disputes and interference

Afghanistan and the northern areas of Pakistan, as already discussed in Chapter 1, were considered by the British as a buffer zone between the Indian sub-continent and a potential expansion of Russia towards the warm waters of the Arabian Sea. The British policy consisted primarily of keeping Afghanistan under direct influence through interfering in the country's internal affairs, including influencing government formation to install a friendly ruler (Rais, 1997: 71). This is an approach that the Pakistani establishment has repeatedly used to ensure that Pakistan could maintain a certain extent of influence in the neighbouring country.

Another legacy of the British Empire was the unsettled border agreement over the Durand Line.⁵⁸ Pakistan inherited the agreement after independence but Afghanistan refused to accept the Durand line as the internationally recognised border between the two countries. The demarcation of this 2,250 kilometres border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, along with the Kashmir issue and the imminent threat of India, was key in the emergence of Pakistan's military as a crucial institution of the newly independent state. As such, the Pakistan Army has constantly considered Islamabad's Afghan policy as one of its key policy prerogatives. This has been enhanced since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, for a number of reasons.

First, General Zia-ul-Haq's aim in following an active policy in Afghanistan was to secure international aid for its military regime (Amin, 2000: 88). If we look at the aid that Pakistan received from the US in the post 1979 period, Pakistan was the fourth largest recipient of US military assistance in 1985, and became the second largest recipient in 1987 (Ali, 2009: 33). While the role of the US in providing military aid to Zia-ul-Haq's regime during these years has been extensively scrutinised, China's role has never been fully understood. This is particularly important for the argument presented in this thesis, as the relations with China, even during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, served

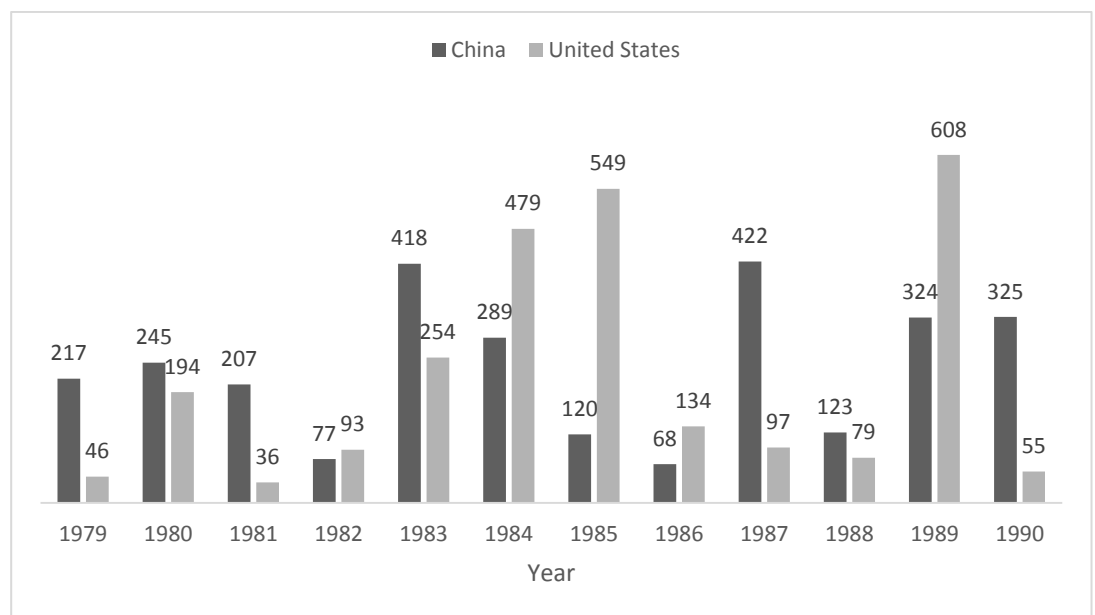
⁵⁸ The agreement between Sir Mortimer Durand and the Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman Khan was signed in 1893 and later slightly modified by the Anglo-Afghan Treaty, signed in Rawalpindi in 1919.

the interests of the Pakistani military establishment. According to a Pakistan Army official, who was interviewed under the condition of anonymity:

during the Red Army's invasion of Afghanistan the Chinese were providing Pakistan with [...] Type 56 rifles in a large quantity and transportation mules, camping facilities to host the Afghan refugees, some money (Interview with the author, Islamabad, January 2015).

As Yunas Samad noticed 'China flew in its supplies and its support was significant' (2011: 116). A closer scrutiny of the total amount of military assistance that Pakistan received in the 1979-1990 period, reveals that China was the major supplier of arms to Pakistan with a total of USD2.8 billion, with the US providing USD2.6 billion, as Figure 6.1 below demonstrates.

Figure 7.1 - Arms Exports to Pakistan from China and the United States: 1979-1990



Source: data adapted by the author from the SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. Values are expressed in US\$ m. at constant 1990 prices.

The second reason why the Pakistani military retained the Afghan policy portfolio was because General Zia-ul-Haq was convinced that by having a crucial role in fighting the Soviets, 'Pakistan had won its right to a regime of its choice in Kabul' (Weinbaum, 1991: 499). When General Zia-ul-Haq died in an air crash in 1988, the duo of Generals composed by Aslam Beg (the then

COAS) and Hamid Gul (ISI Chief between 1987 and 1989) followed suit on the policies previously implemented by Zia and ‘fathered the idea that Afghanistan could be manipulated for power maximisation in the larger South and Central Asian regions’ as Siddiqi puts it (2015). As a result, Pakistan started favouring the ascendancy of the Taleban regime in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. A Taleban regime in Kabul had advantages for Pakistan: a stable and peaceful Afghanistan would enable Pakistan to promote beneficial cooperation in the region and obtain a natural transit route via Afghanistan. (Amin, 2000: 106). As discussed below, the idea of keeping Afghanistan as Pakistan’s strategic backyard was never abandoned by the Pakistani military establishment, under the leadership of General Pervez Musharraf, General Ashraf Kayani and General Raheel Sharif.

Were the civilians able to exert any influence over this decision-making area during the 1990s? Both Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto tried to assert themselves over the Afghan policy portfolio; both paid the consequences, in terms of their survival in power, of confronting the army on this issue. With regards to Benazir Bhutto’s first government (1988-1990), among some of the steps that she took towards the military was to retain Lt. Gen. Taqub Ali Khan (former Foreign Minister under Zia) in the cabinet to assure continuity in the Afghanistan policy (Rizvi, 1991: 39). Nevertheless, a divergence on this crucial decision-making area progressively emerged. The military wanted an Islamist government in Kabul, seen by many in the army and the ISI as the recognition of their central role during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Haqqani, 2005: 214). Benazir Bhutto, on the other hand, wanted a settlement of the Afghan issue which did not involve using the Mujahedin, an approach which was clearly antithetical to that of the army. As reported by Shuja Nawaz in his insightful account of the events at that time, “[...] she [Benazir] was told by Gul ‘you cannot deny us the drive into Kabul in victory to pray at the Kabul mosque’” (Nawaz, 2008: 424). In Benazir Bhutto’s words:

I tried to take control of the ISI by removing General Gul and replacing him with General Shamsur Rahman Kallu. But General Gul got the President Ishaq Khan and General Mirza Aslam Beg, the army Chief of Staff, to authorize the transfer of the ISI’s duties to Military Intelligence (MI). [...] While the ISI’s

ability to destabilize the government was neutralized, the military security campaign continued under the aegis of the MI (Bhutto, 2007: 202).

Her government was eventually dismissed by the President in August 1990 on charges of corruption, inefficiency and misconduct of power.⁵⁹ Nawaz Sharif's government had a similar fate. In 1992 Sharif sacked the pro-Hekmatyar (one of the Mujahedin groups involved in the Afghan civil war following the fall of the communist Najibullah government) Pashtun director of the ISI General Asad Durrani after diverging views over Pakistan's Afghan policy emerged. Sharif and the foreign ministry continued to engage with the leaders of the mujahideen factions that had fought the Soviets. In the field, however, ISI operatives continued to support Hekmatyar and other fundamentalist groups (Haqqani, 2005: 228).

The unfolding of events in the early 1990s is important for two reasons: first, it demonstrates that the drifts in the antagonistic relationship between elected leaders and the military were often resolved by a direct intervention by the military and the ISI, dismissing the Prime Ministers and dissolving the parliament. In a comparative perspective, this differs significantly from the post-2008 period where despite serious disagreements over policy orientation between the civilians and the military there has not been a military coup. Second, it demonstrates that despite the efforts of the civilian leaders to bring the Afghan policy under their control, the military resisted these attempts and retained this important foreign policy portfolio throughout. Against the backdrop of Pakistan's military-dominated domestic politics, China has backed Pakistan's approach to Afghanistan, since it was serving Beijing's own security interests of securing its westernmost region, Xinjiang. China's fear of the spread of Islamic ideology among the Uighur minority in Xinjiang dates back to the 1980s, when many Uighurs studied in Islamic schools in Pakistan and Beijing feared an 'Islamist revival'. In particular, the 1990s were a period characterised by a cycle of violence in Xinjiang and most of the ETIM militants were finding their safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁶⁰ In this context,

⁵⁹ For a detailed analysis of Benazir Bhutto's relationship with the military and of her years in power see: Shafqat, S. (1996) 'Pakistan under Benazir Bhutto', *Asian Survey*, 36/7: 655-672.

⁶⁰ For an in-depth analysis of the Uighur-Han tensions and the impact of the Uighur issue on Sino-Pakistani relations, see: Haider, Z. (2005) 'Sino-Pakistani relations and Xinjiang's

China has used ‘its channels in the Pakistani military and Islamist parties to reach out to the groups over which they have influence and dissuade them from targeting China’ (2010: 86).

§ 7.3 – The determinants of Pakistan’s Afghan policy: security and access to Central Asia

As the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister noted in 2015, ‘we welcome the role of foreign countries in Afghanistan but no country should try, through Afghanistan, to harm the interests of other countries’ (Mr Tariq Fatemi, interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015). The message arising from this quote is clearly one directed at New Delhi’s engagement in Afghanistan. The competition over influence in Afghanistan, coupled with the fear of the Pakistani establishment of a pro-India government installed in Kabul has been one of the main drivers of Pakistan’s Afghan policy. Pakistan’s allegations about India’s involvement in Afghanistan focus on the idea that India has established during the course of the last 12 years a series of ‘terrorist training camps’ located inside Afghanistan (Baldauf, 2003). In Pakistan’s narrative, India is not only using its presence to expand its influence in Afghanistan, but also to fuel tensions in Pakistan’s Balochistan, where the port of Gwadar is located. This narrative was expressed in a large number of interviews conducted during fieldwork, including by Ms Maria Sultan, Director General of the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute and close to the military establishment. She argued that ‘the BLA is being funded by India and CIA and MI6, because of the oil, of the interests of British companies in the Gulf’ (Interview with the author, Islamabad, January 2015). It is indeed very difficult to prove or verify these claims but India has constantly managed to have friendly relations with most of the governments in Kabul, including the Karzai one, and armed the Baloch insurgents at the end of the 1970s (Grare, 2006). On 25 March 2016, Pakistani security forces arrested Kul Yadav Bhoshan, an Indian naval intelligence officer working for the Indian spy agency, RAW, in

Uighurs’, *Asian Survey*, 45/4: 522-545; Small, A. (2015a) *The China-Pakistan Axis*, London: Hurst & Co.

Balochistan (Zafar, 2016). This demonstrates that Pakistani fears of India's involvement in the region are, at least partially, justified.

Besides the India factor, another element of concern of the Pakistani leadership has been the so-called Pashtun question. The latter dates back to the time of partition in 1947 when a referendum was held in the NWFP offering the Pashtuns to join India or Pakistan. The vote was overwhelmingly in favour of Pakistan (Jaffrelot, 2016: 153). Afghanistan, on its side, has always claimed that the referendum was a unilateral step which was taken without Afghan consultation or consent (Grare, 2006). According to the Afghans, Pakistan fears a stable Afghanistan because it would revitalize the Pashtun issue (Grare, 2006: 10).⁶¹ The Pashtun question should be therefore read in light of Pakistan's broader security paradigm primarily dictated by the army's security perspective.

The third element which must be taken into account when analysing the motives of Pakistan's policies towards Afghanistan is the fact that the leadership in Islamabad, both civilian and military, has seen, and still considers, Afghanistan as the bridge to the commercial and energy markets represented by the Central Asian Republics (CARs) (Fair, 2008: 215). After the announcement of the CPEC, Pakistan has tried to revitalise its relations with CARs, in particular with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The latter represents an important player in Pakistan's economic outreach to the region since it would be starting point of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline. On 18 March 2016, the Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov visited Pakistan and the two countries signed a number of MoUs and highlighted the need to implement the TAPI pipeline project as well as to coordinate in the field of anti-terrorism (Shahid, 2016).

As this section highlighted, relations with Afghanistan have been primarily read by the leadership in Islamabad through a narrow security prism which largely conforms to the strategic vision of the Pakistani military.

⁶¹ For an analysis of the Pashtun question and, more generally, of the Pakistan-Afghanistan borderlands see: Johnson, T. H. and Mason, M. C. (2008) 'No Sign until the Burst of Fire. Understanding the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier', *International Security*, 32/4: 41-77.

§ 7.4 - Pakistan's Afghan policy in the Musharraf era

After the 9/11 attacks, history seemed to be repeating itself for Pakistan as the country became again a frontline state in the US' war on terror. Similarly to what happened during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, the US sought to have Pakistan on their side given Pakistan's crucial geographical position for the transit of supplies for the US and NATO troops deployed in Afghanistan. General Musharraf's government, isolated after the nuclear tests conducted in 1998 and the Kargil war in 1999, was confronted with a 'with or against us' ultimatum coming from Washington. Pakistan thereby faced a strategic dilemma. The US and the Afghan Taleban, two major strategic assets in Pakistan's foreign policy, were now turning against each other. The solution adopted by the government in Islamabad was to stand with the US in its war on terror but, simultaneously, nurture and shelter the Afghan Taleban leadership inside Pakistan through Pakistan's intelligence service ISI (an allegation denied by Pakistan). Only in February 2015, in an interview for *The Guardian*, General Musharraf himself admitted that:

obviously we were looking for some groups to counter this Indian action against Pakistan. That is where the intelligence work comes in. Intelligence being in contact with Taliban groups. Definitely they were in contact, and they should be (Boone, 2015a).

In such an already complex situation, the appointment of Hamid Karzai as the new Afghan President in December 2002 was not good news for Pakistan. Karzai had strong ties with the Tajik dominated Northern Alliance (the group opposing the Taleban regime in Kabul) and was closer to India and Iran than he was to Pakistan (Sheikh and Price, 2012: 13).⁶² Musharraf admitted that 'he [Karzai] was damaging Pakistan and therefore we were working against his interest. Obviously we had to protect our own interest' (Boone, 2015a). Against this backdrop, Pakistan pursued a strategy which aimed at signalling to the international community that Islamabad's role was vital for any long-term political settlement in Afghanistan (Grare, 2006).

⁶² Other ministers included Younus Qanooni, Abdullah Abdullah, Marshal Fahim, all renowned military commanders of the Northern Alliance (Shahzad, 2007: 4).

On the civil-military relations front, the ability of the civilian leadership to have an impact on Pakistan's Afghan policy during these years was extremely limited. As the analysis discussed in Chapter 5, with the introduction of the Legal Framework Order (LFO) Musharraf was fundamentally undermining the principle of parliamentary supremacy which underpins the 1973 Pakistani constitution (International Crisis Group, 2002: 27). In order to weaken the opposition parties, Musharraf issued the Political Party Order 2002 which barred anyone convicted of a crime from running for office. This was aimed at disqualifying Benazir Bhutto, the PPP leader, in light of her corruption charges. In addition, by issuing the Qualification to Hold Public Office Order 2002, which imposed a two-term limit on Prime Ministers, Musharraf further weakened the ability of his major opponents to run for office (International Crisis Group, 2003: 6). As a result of these measures, the autonomy of the parliament and of the opposition was severely constrained. According to Rizvi, 'the autonomy of the Foreign Office and the Defence Ministry was completely neutralised' (2012: 23). This pattern of side-lining the civilian leadership and the parliament in both domestic and foreign policies is in line with what we have seen in the previous two empirical chapters and demonstrates the high level of military control in Pakistan's domestic and foreign policy alike during the Musharraf era.

§ 7.5 – Pakistan's Afghan policy under the PPP government

Under General Kayani, Musharraf's successor as Pakistan's COAS, Pakistan maintained the same strategic posture vis-à-vis Afghanistan. Kayani was not only the head of the Pakistan army between 2008 and 2013, but also led the ISI in the 2004-2008 period. Kayani outlined his strategic thinking on Afghanistan in 2009:

Strategically, we cannot have an Afghan army on my western border which has an Indian mind set. If we have an army trained by Pakistan, there will be better interaction on the western border. Our objective is that at the end of all this, we should not be standing in the wrong corner of the room and should remain relevant in the region. This is our greatest challenge. (Kayani quoted in Baabar, 2010).

This quote shows a high degree of continuity in Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan given the aim expressed by General Kayani to have a relevant role in Afghanistan. However, there are differing views about the policies that he pursued while in charge of the Pakistani army. Shuja Nawaz, a prominent Pakistani scholar and expert on the Pakistani Army, argued that Kayani detached itself from the old concept of strategic depth undergoing what he describes as 'a major strategic shift' (2010: 16). He grounds this claim on the remarks made by General Kayani at a meeting with foreign journalists in Rawalpindi in February 2010. During the meeting, the then COAS claimed that:

We want to have strategic depth in Afghanistan, but that does not imply controlling it. If we have a peaceful, stable and friendly Afghanistan, automatically we will have our strategic depth because our western border will be secure, and we will not be looking at two fronts (Constable, 2010).

Christine Fair advocates a different view. She argues that Kayani's speech only suggests 'that he endorses different tactics for pursuing strategic depth rather than wishing to abandon that goal' (2014: 134). Raza Rumi, a prominent political analyst, concurs: 'it was expected that after Musharraf, the army would rethink some of its worn-out security paradigms, chiefly, the containment of India at all costs in Afghanistan [...]. Nothing changed' (2013). It is indeed difficult to assess the extent to which Kayani was genuinely committed to a paradigm shift in Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan. Either way, both approaches concur that civilian control over this issue-area was weak. In this context, the PPP-led civilian government was constrained by the Army preference vis-à-vis Afghanistan. According to Cyril Almeida, in the 2008-2013 period 'the civilian preference was straightforward: [...] bolster the precarious Afghan state and open up to India' (2017). In the words of the then American Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne Woods Patterson:

Zardari and Gilani agree that Pakistan's biggest threat comes from a growing militant insurgency on the Pak-Afghan border. The military and ISI have not yet made that leap; they still view India as their principle threat and Afghanistan as strategic depth in a possible conflict with India. They continue to provide overt or tacit support for proxy forces [...] as a foreign policy tool (Wikileaks Cable, 2009)

This provides evidence of the civil-military disconnect vis-à-vis Afghanistan and that the civilian government was not able to assert its policy preference over the military establishment. The next sections will further highlight that in internal security and foreign policy the civilian leadership had limited leverage on the decision-making process.

Internal security

The concept of strategic depth is also inextricably linked to Pakistan's internal security. Support for the Afghan Taliban in the post-2001 period has been a constant source of tension between Pakistan and the US. As Wanda Felbab-Brown observed 'Pakistan's willingness to accommodate Afghanistan-oriented militant groups is also motivated by a fear of provoking these groups to incite violence in Punjab and threaten the core of the Pakistani state instead of focusing externally' (2015: 133). For this reason, as we have also seen in Chapter 6, the Pakistani military have always been reluctant to start an operation in North Waziristan. General Kayani, for instance, resisted US pressures in this sense and never embarked in such an operation. Similarly to the abovementioned discussion about strategic depth, here also it is very difficult to ascertain clearly who was in charge of this aspect of internal security. Although there has been a failed attempt by the civilian government to bring the ISI under civilian oversight in 2008 (discussed in Chapter 6), hence one might be tempted to decouple the actions of the ISI and those of the Pakistani government, some analysts argue that there are instead elements of convergence between the two sides of the civil-military relations as far as sheltering the Afghan Taliban in Pakistan is concerned. In particular, Matt Waldman reports that in 2010

President Zardari and a senior ISI official visited some 50 high ranking Talibs who were held in a prison in a secret location in Pakistan. Some 30-35 had been arrested in recent months, and 10-15 were longer-term prisoners. Reportedly, he told them they were arrested because he was under a lot of pressure from the

Americans and that, ‘you are our people, we are friends, and after your release we will of course support you to do your operations’ (Waldman, 2010: 8-9).

It is difficult here to assess whether the policy initiative came from the military or the civilian government. However, if we extend the picture to the history of Pakistan’s relations with Afghanistan, these actions are in line with the policy of the military establishment. It therefore seems that the civilians ceded to the ISI’s priorities, not the other way around. As a result, this section can be classified as ‘medium-low’.

Foreign Policy

The civilian side of the civil-military equation has made some attempts to rebalance the decision-making process vis-à-vis foreign policy, including on Afghanistan. Particularly in the 2008-2013 period, the PPP government invested the 13th Pakistani parliament with an unprecedented role in discussing national security related issues. Three committees had an active role in discussing Afghanistan-related issues in Pakistan’s foreign policy, namely the Parliamentary Committee on National Security (PCNS) established in 2008, the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Senate Committee on Defence and Defence Production. Amongst these, the PCNS, was the most active, meeting for a total number of 84 times in 5 years. One of the most significant achievements was the drafting of a document called ‘Guidelines for revised terms of engagement with USA/NATO/ISAF and general foreign policy’. On April 12, 2012 the Parliament passed unanimously the 14-point recommendations of the PCNS, including that ‘there is no military solution to the Afghan conflict and efforts must be undertaken to promote a genuine national reconciliation in an Afghan led, Afghan owned peace process’ (PILDAT, 2012: 16; PILDAT, 2013). The very establishment of this Parliamentary Committee represented a new positive trend in the formulation of Pakistan’s national security policy. However, according to sources cited by the International Crisis Group, although the Army Chief Kayani and ISI DG Shuja Pasha were among those called to testify ‘no MNA [member of the National Assembly] dared ask them any questions. There was a feeling that they were there at the army’s pleasure, so they should not abuse it’ (2013: 22).

The ICG's report concludes that the PCNS 'could be important if it refrains from simply doing the military's bidding' (2013: 20).

While the discussion of Pakistan's foreign policy in a parliamentary committee represented a step forward in trying to assert civilian oversight over national security, there has been little evidence of any significant impact of these discussions over Pakistan's posture towards Afghanistan. A number of reports and commentaries from well-informed Pakistani political analysts suggest that the military was 'calling all the shots' in Afghanistan and 'have kept a tight grip on two crucial areas: security policy and the sensitive bits of foreign policy', including the fact that 'Pakistan's Afghanistan policy is determined by the Army' (Waraich, 2010; The Economist, 2011, Tellis, 2012).⁶³

In the 2008-2013 period China's role in Afghanistan remained marginal, with Beijing following the situation from the side-lines, willing to outsource its Afghan policy to Pakistan. In this context, the Chinese have been constantly reiterating their diplomatic support to Pakistan. In 2011, the former head of the ISI, General (retd) Hamid Gul, argued that 'short of physical intervention, they (Chinese) are willing to stand by Pakistan by all means' after returning from a week-long visit to China (The Express Tribune, 2011). In the same year, during the visit of the then Vice Prime Minister of China Meng Jianzhou, Pakistani officials said that China had offered Pakistan diplomatic and economic support if the US were to mount pressure on Islamabad for the alleged support to the Haqqani network (The Express Tribune, 2011).⁶⁴

The military leadership has always attached great importance to China's backing vis-à-vis Afghanistan. According to an article published in Hilal:

⁶³ Shuja Nawaz also argues that in the Pakistani Ministry of Defence there were a lot of retired military officers and that the elected politicians lacked the necessary expertise to make the most out of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, the decision-making body which replaced the National Security Council established in 2004 by the then President General Musharraf.

⁶⁴ This aspect is particularly significant as it exemplifies the nature of China's engagement with Pakistan. China has never asked Pakistan to take actions that differed significantly from what Islamabad would have done anyway. In addition, China's support on such a sensitive issue, in direct confrontation with the US, can be interpreted as one of the first signs of the emergence of the system of alliance which now characterises the region's geopolitics, with India-US cooperation on one side and the Sino-Pakistani axis on the other. This final aspect was also analysed in greater depth in Chapter 5.

It is quite obvious that Pakistan and India both have reservations regarding each other. India being Pakistan's traditional rival, is not only increasing its influence in Afghanistan but is believed to be supported by the U.S. in its motive. On the other hand, U.S. has been enhancing its relations with India and using it as its 'face' in South Asia, primarily to counter the peaceful rise of China. Pakistan enjoys cordial relations with the Chinese and is likely to facilitate this rise (Sultan, 2012).

Beijing has often been the first port of call for the Pakistani leadership, civilian and military alike, when tensions with the US over Afghanistan-related issues were arising. For instance, Prime Minister Gilani visited China only two weeks after the US raid in the Abbottabad compound which killed Osama Bin Laden, a moment in which Pakistan was under US pressure for allegedly hiding Al-Qaeda's leader. In this context, the then Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao had expressed full support to Pakistan and the Chinese government had reportedly asked to the US to refrain from publicly humiliating Pakistan (Qaiser, 2011). As for the military leadership, General Kayani visited China at the beginning of January 2012, at a time when the rift in civil-military relations within Pakistan was at a very high level following the 'memogate' scandal.⁶⁵ Amid tensions with the PPP government and with the US following the NATO coalition troops' attack on a Pakistani check post in Mohmand Agency on 26 November 2011, Kayani made his third trip to China to buttress defence ties (Shaheen, 2012) a message clearly directed at Washington. In light of the evidence provided in this section with regards to foreign policy, we should classify this area under 'medium-low' civilian control

Economic policy

After years of negotiations, on 18 July 2010 Pakistan and Afghanistan signed the US brokered Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) aimed at facilitating exports of Afghan products (primarily agricultural) vital to the country's economy. While this represents an important

⁶⁵ The scandal involved President Zardari and Husain Haqqani, the then Ambassador of Pakistan to the US. The two have allegedly asked a US intervention (through a memorandum directed at Admiral Mike Mullen) to prevent the Pakistani military to topple the civilian government in the wake of the killing of Osama Bin Laden in May 2011.

step in terms of economic relations between the two countries, under the agreement Afghan trucks are not allowed to take back cargo from India after dropping off goods there (Katzman, 2016: 44). Instead, the goods under the APTTA can be transported to China through the dry-port in Sost, in Gilgit Baltistan, which is also going to be one of the major hubs under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Interestingly, the APTTA ‘removed the monopoly of Pakistan railways and the NLC on Afghan transit trade’ (2016: 12). As we have seen in Chapter 5 with reference to the port of Gwadar, the NLC is the logistic wing of the Pakistani army and, according to estimates, the transit agreement between Islamabad and Kabul implied a loss by the NLC of around Rs 18billion per year (Shakil, 2011). In this context, it is important to notice that notwithstanding that the NLC was *de facto* marginalised in the context of the APTTA, the military did not oppose such an agreement. According to a wikileaks cable, during a conversation between the then US Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne W. Patterson, and General Kayani, the latter ‘had assured her that the military would not object to the APTTA’ (Wikileaks Cable, 2009). As a result, although the military was an important stakeholder consulted in the decision-making process, the civilian side was able to erode some of the long-standing commercial privileges acquired by the military over the years. As such, we should classify economic policy vis-à-vis Afghanistan in this period as ‘medium-high’.

Elite Recruitment

In the area of elite recruitment, Afghanistan-related appointments were made by the civilian leadership. This marks a clear departure from the policy adopted in the Musharraf era of inducting active or retired military officers in civilian administration positions. A total of 15 active and retired officers of the Pakistani Army were appointed as ambassadors under the Musharraf regime (Pakistan Defence, 2007). In this context, it is important to note two main developments. First, the PPP government appointed Sherry Rehman as Ambassador to the US in November 2011, after tensions between the civilian government and the military over the memogate scandal involving Hussain Haqqani, Rehman’s predecessor in Washington. During those years, Afghanistan was a hot topic in the relationship between Pakistan and the United

States, especially following the US' raid in Abbottabad which killed Osama Bin Laden. According to news reports, Rehman was labelled 'champion of civilian rule' and her appointment 'was a surprise' with many analysts expecting 'someone closer to the military establishment' or at least 'the army to have a visible say in Mr Haqqani's successor' (Reuters, 2011; BBC News, 2011). At the same time, it was reported that Rehman 'broadly shared' the military's 'views on the country's biggest foreign policy and national security challenges', including Afghanistan (Masood and Rosenberg, 2011). While the latter points provides evidence of the military's sway on Pakistan's strategic posture (a development treated in the section dealing with foreign policy), for the scoring of the decision-making area of elite recruitment it is important that the civilian government was able to assert its preference over the appointment of one of the most important foreign postings in Pakistan's diplomatic service.

Similarly, the Pakistani Ambassador to Afghanistan in the 2008-2013 period, Mohammad Sadiq, a career diplomat who had extensive knowledge of Afghanistan and its dynamics, was appointed by the government. Ambassador Sadiq was not a retired member of the armed forces who was then included in the Foreign Office cadres, a practice widely used by Musharraf as the analysis has previously discussed.

In the post 2013 period, the PML-N government has increasingly asserted itself in this decision-making area. In this context, Ambassador Sadiq's successor, Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain, is another career diplomat, appointed by the PML-N government in late 2013 (The Nation, 2013). As such, this area should be classified as having a 'medium-high' level of civilian control.

§ 7.5 - A new beginning in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations?

In the wake of the contested and turbulent 2014 elections in Afghanistan, one of the first visits made by the newly elected Afghan President, Ashraf Ghani, was to neighbouring Pakistan.⁶⁶ After the difficult years of the Karzai presidency, as documented above, there were renewed hopes that the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan could normalise. A flurry of

⁶⁶ For a detailed analysis of the 2014 elections in Afghanistan see: International Crisis Group (2014) 'Afghanistan's Political Transition', *Asia Report* N° 260, 16th October 2014.

editorials in Pakistani newspapers, as well as in the international press, described the visit of President Ghani to Pakistan in November 2014 as the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship between Islamabad and Kabul (Boone, 2014b; Masood, 2014). While the ice might have thawed on the surface and in the official political exchanges, as far as the decision-making process within Pakistan is concerned, very little seems to have changed. As reported by the International Crisis Group ‘because of the military’s insistence on retaining control and the government’s inability, or unwillingness, to push back, Afghan policy is still shaped by the ‘baggage of the past’ namely the propensity to interfere’ (2014: 9). Interestingly, one of the main Afghan news agencies, Tolo News, while commenting on the visit of President Ghani to Pakistan in November 2014 reported that ‘learning from the past experiences of his predecessor, Hamid Karzai, instead of focusing on meetings with senior civilian officials, President Ghani emphasized talks with military and intelligence officials’ (Zeyaratjah, 2014). In addition, during his visit to Pakistan, the Afghan leader’s first point of call was the general headquarter of the Pakistani army in Rawalpindi (Shah and Entous, 2015), where Pakistan’s COAS Raheel Sharif and the Afghan President discussed ‘bolstering security and defence ties, including cooperation in training and border management’ (Syed, 2014a).⁶⁷

The Pakistani political and military elites strive to signal to the international community the pivotal role that the country plays in any serious and comprehensive reconciliation effort in the Afghan scenario. Pakistan wants to assert itself as the indispensable actor in any decision regarding neighbouring Afghanistan, a policy which started under Zia and has not changed since. Against such a backdrop, China has leveraged Pakistan’s ambition and interests by supporting a central role for Islamabad in Afghanistan. According to several

⁶⁷ As a result of these talks, at the beginning of 2015 Afghanistan agreed to send 6 cadets to the Pakistani military academy in Abbottabad for an 18 month training period. Besides the sheer number, this was regarded as an important opening by the Afghan leader as the same offer had been repeatedly turned down by Ghani’s predecessor. See also: Boone, J. (2015b) ‘Afghan cadets arrive for first training in Pakistan’, *The Guardian*, 6 February 2015, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/06/afghan-cadets-pakistan-training>, accessed: 22/03/16; and Boone, J., Rasmussen, S. E. (2015) ‘Afghan backlash over security deal with Pakistan’, *The Guardian*, 19 May 2015, available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/19/afghan-backlash-over-governments-security-deal-with-pakistan>, accessed: 22/03/16.

analysts, Beijing has extensively relied on Pakistan's lead and views when interacting with Afghanistan (Pantucci, 2010; Small, 2010). As we have seen in the previous sections, until 2013, China was largely willing to almost completely outsource its policy to Pakistan, and Beijing was relatively comfortable with Pakistan looking out for Chinese interests in Afghanistan, without necessarily being directly involved. The high level of military prerogatives in Pakistan's Afghan policy that emerged from the empirical analysis conducted so far was met positively in Beijing, given the latter's long-lasting, deep partnership with the Pakistani military. As previously mentioned, China's main interests in Afghanistan revolved primarily around security concerns about its westernmost province, Xinjiang. In this context, the Pakistani Army represented the main interlocutor to deliver on China's security concerns, as the analysis of the operation Zarb-e-Azb presented in Chapter 6 demonstrates.

§ 7.6 – Pakistan, China and Afghanistan in the post 2013 period

Since 2013, China has asserted itself independently regarding Afghan policy. An editorial published in the Chinese 'People's Daily' mentioned that China's role was central to accommodate different interests in the region, claiming that there was a 'great deal of hope in Kabul that Beijing can bring change to the bitter ties between Kabul and Islamabad' (People's Daily, China, 2014). According to a number of accounts collected during fieldwork, Pakistan has advocated a greater Chinese role in Afghanistan. In the words of a high-ranking Foreign Office official, who was interviewed under the condition of anonymity, 'for the last seven years Pakistan has been willing to involve China in Afghanistan, as whatever space China occupies is a friendly one if compared to the role that other countries might play in this scenario' (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015). This view is also shared by Senator Mushahid Hussain, who argued that 'China is now coming into Afghanistan and this is good for us. It is better than China comes in rather than India. We see that a plus for Pakistan' (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015). In another interview, an academic very close to the Pakistani military mentioned that 'when it comes to Afghanistan, Pakistan and China have a symbiotic approach. China firmly believes in a Pakistan-brokered, Afghan-led

transition in Afghanistan’ (Interview with the author, Islamabad, February 2015).

The substantiation of the Pakistan-China entente in the Afghan scenario is clearly visible in the talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Against this backdrop, Pakistan and China played a pivotal role. In July 2015 a first round of talks was hosted by Pakistan at Murree, near Islamabad. According to a Reuters report, the top brass of the army and the ISI were ‘personally involved in bringing about talks’ between the Afghan Taleban and Kabul (Zahra-Malik, 2015a). A Defence Ministry official quoted in the same report, admitted that the Pakistani COAS has made the peace process in Afghanistan a ‘top foreign policy goal’ (Zahra-Malik, 2015a). A number of analysis and media commentaries mentioned that Pakistan was coming under increasing pressure from Beijing to intensify its role in the Afghan peace process. In the words of Raoof Hasan, a seasoned Pakistani political commentator and executive director of the Regional Peace Institute in Islamabad, ‘in China’s view, Afghanistan represents the conduit to Central Asia, and the Chinese have repeatedly expressed the idea that as far as the Afghan Taleban are concerned, is better to have them on your side, rather than against you’ (Interview with the author, Islamabad, January 2015). This is further corroborated by analyses coming from both Afghan and Pakistani sources mentioning that ‘the roadmap which is intended to guide the efforts of starting a peace dialogue between the Afghan government and militants was China’s idea’ (Haider, 2016) and that, according to a senior Afghan official, ‘in order to please China, Pakistan is pushing to facilitate peace talks’ (Azamy, 2015). By putting Pakistan’s efforts in Afghanistan’s peace process in a wider picture, it is worth noting two aspects in particular: first, these reconciliation efforts occurred at a time when Beijing had just agreed to pour into Pakistan the 46 billion USD to fund CPEC. As previously mentioned, China’s security concerns were not only focused on Pakistan but also on the broader region. Trying to secure Afghanistan would imply also securing the investment in Pakistan. When the Chinese Vice President, Li Yuanchao, visited Afghanistan on 3 November 2015, he said that ‘China is willing to help Afghanistan formulate infrastructure plans to strengthen interconnectedness and intercommunication with surrounding countries’ (Martina and Harooni, 2015).

In addition, at the end of February 2016, the chief of the Joint Staff Department of the People's Liberation Army, General Fang Fenghui, visited Kabul to offer the Afghan National Army (ANA) expanded military aid of around \$70 million; the Chinese Ministry of Defence released a statement mentioning that 'both sides are willing to further deepen military exchanges in various fields and strengthen pragmatic cooperation in counterterrorism, training and training of personnel in order to contribute to safeguarding regional security' (Donati and Amiri, 2016).

Additional proof of the coordination between Pakistan and China over Afghan-related matters can be seen in the proposal advanced by China to establish an anti-terrorism mechanism, in addition to the one already created within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which would include Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and China itself. Interestingly, the former Pakistan Army COAS, General Raheel Sharif, and his Chinese counterpart visited Tajikistan on the 29 February and 1 March respectively, before General Fang Fenghui flew to Kabul to discuss with the Afghan President Ghani about the new initiative envisaged by China, and endorsed by Pakistan (The News, 2016a; Xinhua, 2016; Voa News, 2016).

China has therefore made clear that it wants Pakistan to consider Beijing's strong interest in seeing a stable political settlement in Afghanistan, 'while providing the reassurance that an enlarged Chinese role in the arrangements over Afghanistan's future is one of the ways to guarantee that Pakistan's interests there will be fully accommodated' (Small, 2015b: 3). Evidence of this regional approach endorsed by China are reflected in General Sharif's comments during the South Asia Security Conference in Munich in 2015, where the COAS said that the benefits of the CPEC can be shared with Afghanistan (Express Tribune, 2015b). This largely mirrors the central role that the Pakistan Army is playing in liaison with its Chinese counterparts in trying to stabilise Afghanistan as the first step to create a secure and interconnected regional environment.

Foreign Policy

Islamabad's policy vis-à-vis Kabul has been characterised by continuity rather than change. Civilian leverage over Afghan policy has been extremely

limited in this period. After Nawaz Sharif was elected, his decision to concentrate the foreign and defence ministries in his hands was regarded as an important step to increase civilian oversight in Pakistan's Afghan policy (Ahmad, 2013). However, during the military-backed 2014 dharna initiated by Imran Khan, negotiations between the military and the civilian government took place to resolve the situation without escalating to a fully-fledged military coup.⁶⁸ In particular, according to a *Reuters* report citing a 'government insider', Nawaz Sharif

had been assured by the military he would not be asked to step down and that there would be no coup. But in return his government would have to 'share space' with the army. Under the agreement, Sharif would be subservient to generals on issues he had wanted to handle himself - the fight against Taliban militants, relations with arch-foe India and Pakistan's role in neighbouring Afghanistan after NATO combat troops withdraw at the end of 2014 (Reuters, 2014).

The idea that the civilian government should 'share' some decision-making areas with the Army, corroborates the argument that the military is not willing to relinquish the foreign policy prerogative even under a civilian regime. As Aqil Shah pointed out, 'by reasserting its power vis-a-vis the Sharif government, which had sought to exercise control over foreign policy [...] the military has also signalled that it will not countenance any change in its reserve domains without its consent' (Shah A, 2015: 57).

The top brass of the military establishment has continued seeking a friendly government in Kabul, hence the attempts to involve the Afghan Taleban leadership in the peace process. At the Heart of Asia conference in Islamabad on 9th December 2015 was agreed to form the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) meeting of Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and the US with the aim to find a negotiated agreement among the major stakeholders in the Afghan transition. Pakistan hosted the first meeting in Islamabad on 11th January 2016 where the four countries concurred about the need for 'direct talks between

⁶⁸ For an analysis of the dharna see: Adeney, K. (2014) 'Shadow of the military looms large over Pakistan street protest', *The Conversation*, 02/09/2014, available at: <https://theconversation.com/shadow-of-military-looms-large-over-pakistan-street-protests-31132>, accessed: 19/05/2016.

representatives of the Government of Afghanistan and representatives from Taliban groups in a peace process that aims to preserve Afghanistan's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity' (Joint Press Release QCG, 2016). Three other meetings were held in Kabul on 18th January, in Islamabad on 6th February and again in Kabul on 23rd February. A significant blowback to these efforts was represented by a Taliban suicide attack in Kabul on 19th April 2016 which left 62 dead and 300 injured (Rasmussen, 2016). Afghan President Ghani accused Pakistan of not delivering on the promises made as part of the QCG talks and, as a result, the Afghan delegation did not participate at the fifth QCG meeting in Islamabad on 18th May (Haider, 2016b).

Another example of the limited sway that the civilian chain of command has over foreign policy is provided by a meeting held in the Pakistani Senate on December 29 2015, in which two key government ministers were not updated about COAS's visit to Kabul on 26-27 December 2015. Interestingly, the two ministers were the Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Sartaj Aziz, and the Minister of Defence Khawaja Asif. Neither of them was able to report in the Senate about the content of General Raheel Sharif's visit to Afghanistan. As mentioned in Dawn, 'two key government ministers expressed ignorance in the Senate on Tuesday over the outcome of the army chief's weekend visit to Afghanistan' (Wasim, 2015). As previously noted, the international visibility that the Pakistani COAS has had since he started his tenure in November 2013 represents a potent example of the limited room for manoeuvre that the civilian government had in foreign policy matters, an institutional prerogative the military has retained. Commenting on these issues, Aqil Shah noticed that 'army chief Sharif acts as Pakistan's de facto diplomat-in-chief, with cabinet ministers caught in the embarrassing position of having to explain the government's Afghan policy to the parliament, over which the cabinet has virtually no sway' (Shah A, 2016: 219).

Despite a number of commentaries and op-eds in the Pakistani newspapers opining that Pakistan's policy towards the neighbouring Afghanistan was changing, there is little evidence that this has happened. By having a look at the official publications of the Army a picture emerges that is very much in line with what we have seen throughout Pakistan's history, namely the perception

that Pakistan needs a strategic backyard in Afghanistan, thereby justifying a constant element of intrusiveness in Afghanistan's domestic affairs.

Pakistan's persistent demand of having a significant role in the political and security sectors in Afghanistan might not be rhetoric, as certain quarters in the West believe. But, a legitimate demand based on concrete strategic ground realities (Hashmi, 2013).

In another piece titled 'Pakistan – Marginalised in Afghanistan or Still Centre-Stage?' the author criticises the US' role in the Afghan scenario and concludes that 'Pakistan's role resumes its critical importance' (Qadir, 2012). In light of these accounts and opinions expressed in Hilal Magazine, one of the Army's most-read media outlets, it seems unlikely that the military are going to drop their support to the Afghan Taleban in the near future given the GHQ's reiterated policy preference of having a friendly government in Kabul. What seems to have changed is that Pakistan has now come out of the shadows as far as its support for the Afghan Taleban is concerned. As a result, Islamabad, under Chinese reassurances, has opted to leverage its influence over the Taleban leadership in order to include the latter in the Afghan reconciliation process. According to Barnett Rubin, 'China's most important role is creating confidence in Pakistan to facilitate [talks with the Afghan Taliban]'; Ahmed Rashid concurs that it is 'really up to the Chinese pressure on Pakistan to allow such a thing to happen' (Siddique, 2015). In this context, Pakistan is playing its bargaining cards vis-à-vis the Taleban leadership to have them included in the negotiations for Afghan stability. The statement of Sartaj Aziz in early 2016, who claimed that Pakistan has been hosting for years the Afghan leadership, should be interpreted in this light. In his words:

We have some influence over them [Taleban] because their leadership is in Pakistan and they get some medical facilities. Their families are here. We can use those levers to pressurise them to say, "Come to the table". But we can't negotiate on behalf of the Afghan government because we cannot offer them what the Afghan government can offer them (Siddique, 2016b).

Casting the shadow that Islamabad is going to withdraw its long-term support to the Taleban leadership and their families, can be interpreted as a

political move to bring the Taleban as major stakeholders around the negotiation table with the Afghan government. At the same time, Sartaj Aziz, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Policy, has also argued that ‘vested interests have often tried to create a perception that Pakistan actually controls the Taliban’, adding that such an impression breeds unrealistic expectations from Pakistan (Yousaf, 2016). On the very same day that newspapers were running this news, a US drone strike killed Mullah Mansour, the leader of the Afghan Taleban after Mullah Omar’s death in the summer of 2015. According to the note issued by the Pentagon’s Press Secretary Peter Cook, ‘Mansour has been an obstacle to peace and reconciliation [...] prohibiting Taliban leaders from participating in peace talks with the Afghan government’ (Ryan and Craig, 2016). Interestingly, the drone strike hit Mullah Mansour in Ahmad Wal, a remote town in Pakistan’s Balochistan, close to the Afghan border. As reported by the *New York Times*, Mullah Mansour, who was found having a Pakistani passport under the name of Wali Muhammad, lived in a southern neighbourhood of Quetta ‘in an enclave where he and other Taliban leaders from the same Pashtun tribe, the Ishaqzai, had built homes’ (Cooper, 2016). Amir Rana argued that the actions against the Taleban are part of an agreement: if the Taliban refuse to join the negotiations, then Pakistan will cooperate with operations against them; ‘they had a commitment’ (Newsweek, 2016). This view seems to be corroborated by other reports which suggest that the ISI handed over Mullah Mansour to the US ‘in exchange for easing up on F-16s [fighter aircrafts], other aid, and relieving the overall pressure from Washington’ (Siddique, 2016a). Similarly to the reactions that we have seen in the previous parts of the chapter, Pakistan’s first indirect response to these events came from Sartaj Aziz who mentioned that China has always supported Pakistan’s ‘territorial integrity and independence’ (Radio Pakistan, 2016) hinting at the fact that the US’ drone strike in Pakistan violates Pakistan’s sovereignty. In light of the empirical evidence provided in this section, we should assign to the decision-making area of foreign policy a ‘medium-low’ level of civilian control.

Internal Security

Pakistan's porous border with Afghanistan has been at the centre of political tensions between the two countries ever since independence. The escalation of events in the last year demonstrates that the dispute over how to manage the border is far from settled and, importantly, that the Pakistani army is in control of this decision-making area. In April 2016, a meeting of the KPK Apex Committee 'stressed the need for improving border management at all crossing points with Afghanistan, particularly at Torkham in the Khyber Agency' (The News International, 2016b). Interestingly, the press release of the meeting was issued by the ISPR, the Army media wing and quoted senior officials of the KPK government praising the 'wholehearted support' of the Pakistani Army in trying to rid the province from terrorism. One of the ways in which the Pakistani military have tried to ensure a safer environment in the borderlands with Afghanistan has been through the construction of a fence and a gate at Torkham, one of the major crossing points along the Durand Line. The Frontier Corps, nominally under the Ministry of Interior but *de facto* managed by Rawalpindi, have been tasked with installing the barbed wire fencing (Pirzada, 2016).⁶⁹ While Afghanistan initially opposed this move, it then agreed to the construction of the gate at the crossing point and the border. Interestingly for the analysis presented here, the go ahead came 'after Afghan envoy, Ambassador Omar Zakhilwal, visited the GHQ, [not the Ministry of Interior or the Provincial Government] where according to military sources, he had given a tacit approval to the fencing and gate project' (Rubab, 2016). In light of these developments, internal security should be scored as having a 'medium-low' level of civilian control.

Economic Policy

Pakistan is Afghanistan's main trading partner, with a total volume of trade of USD 2.1 billion in 2015 (UN Comtrade Database). One of the most important initiatives taken by the PML-N government with regards to economic policy has been the pledge to devote USD500 million to the reconstruction and

⁶⁹ For a background on the Frontier Corps see: Abbas, H. (2007) 'Transforming Pakistan's Frontier Corps', *Terrorism Monitor*, 5/6, available at: <https://jamestown.org/program/transforming-pakistans-frontier-corps/>, accessed: 13/12/16.

development of Afghanistan. As the Minister for Planning, Development and Reform, Ahsan Iqbal, reported to the Pakistani National Assembly:

under this grant, various development projects in health, education and infrastructure sectors were jointly identified by the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan in the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meetings held from time to time. On the recommendations of JEC, the Committee for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Afghanistan (CRRA) headed by the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission monitors implementation of these projects. NLC, FWO and NESPAK (all public sector agencies) have been engaged for the execution of these projects (National Assembly Secretariat, 2016).

Similarly to what we have seen in the analysis of the port of Gwadar in Chapter 5, it is important to highlight that the military-linked organisations, NLC and FWO, were given the contracts for the execution of these projects, despite the DG Audit Works (Federal), after having conducted an audit of Afghan projects, raised the issue that some financial losses were due to the award of works to these two organisations instead of a private contractor (National Assembly Secretariat, 2016). In addition, according to a Planning Commission report on the projects overseen by the CRRA since its establishment in 2001, most of the projects were awarded to the NLC and the FWO (Planning Commission of Pakistan, 2013).⁷⁰ While these developments suggest that the military is getting the economic benefits of Pakistan's economic efforts in Afghanistan, it is also important to note that the decision-making process in this area is largely in the hands of civilian officials. First, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif pledged to boost ties with Afghanistan at the very beginning of his term. One of the first moves was to increase the grants to be utilised by CRRA from USD385 million to USD500 million. Second, the Joint Economic Commission represent an important civilian forum for consultation, generally at the Finance Ministers level, in which the two sides discuss matters of mutual economic interest. During the most recent meeting in November 2015, the Pakistani Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar, reported on a number of projects which were closed to completion, including a hostel for 1,000 students

⁷⁰ For a summary of the projects funded by Pakistan in Afghanistan see: 'Pakistan as partner in development of Afghanistan', Ministry for Planning, Development and Reform, Pakistan.

and the opportunity to train in Pakistan 117 doctors for the Nishtar Kidney Centre (The Nation, 2015a). Based on the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3, civilian control over this area ‘means that civilians alone decide on the contents, scope, and duration of policy decisions and possess effective means to control and supervise the administrative implementation of these decisions’ (Croissant et al, 2010: 957). Although there is evidence of the military being involved in the implementation stages, the scope of the policy, as well as its supervision, is largely under civilian control. Drawing on the evidence gathered for this decision-making area, we should classify economic policy under ‘medium-high’ civilian control.

§ 7.8 – Conclusions

The analysis presented in this chapter has shed light on the salient aspects of the Sino-Pakistani *entente cordiale* vis-à-vis Afghanistan: first, China’s role as main supplier of military and diplomatic support to Pakistan has been of long standing duration – in the 1980s China emerged as Pakistan’s main arms supplier. Second, as far as civil-military relations in Pakistan are concerned, this section highlighted a pattern about civilian control over Pakistan’s Afghan policy which is summarised in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1 – Continuum of civil-military relations in the context of Afghan policy

	2001-2008	2008-2013	2013-2016
Foreign Policy	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low
Internal Security	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low
Economic Policy	Low	Medium-High	Medium-High
Elite recruitment	Low	Medium-High	Medium-High

The tabulation above outlines the scoring of each of the areas analysed in this chapter. The results of the empirical analysis are in line with those of the previous two empirical analyses carried out in Chapters 5 and 6. Foreign policy and internal security have been retained as a reserved area by the Pakistani military. This should not come as a surprise. As we have seen in Chapter 1, the territorial disputes with Afghanistan and India, and the following sense of insecurity deriving from it, are some of the reasons which enabled the ascendancy of the Pakistani on the political scene. The Afghan portfolio has therefore represented since its very inception one of core businesses of the army. However, the democratic transition started in 2008 has created some space for the civilian leadership in the areas of elite recruitment and economic policy. The removal of the NLC from the APTTA is an important sign, as is the fact that Pakistan's economic outreach to Afghanistan in the post-2013 period is being coordinated primarily by the civilian leadership. This is not to say that the military is no longer influential. In fact, the presence of the military is still large and the implementation of most projects, as we have seen, is being awarded to military-linked companies like the FWO. In the area of elite recruitment vis-à-vis Afghanistan, the evidence provided in this chapter with regards to ambassadorial appointments should be put in context also with the other empirical chapters, where we observed a similar trend as far as the appointments to public offices are concerned. The appointment of career diplomats, instead of former members of the military, in foreign postings is a good indicator outlined in the conceptual framework that the competition for public offices is not reserved to active or retired military personnel.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusions

'Sixty years after Pakistan's creation, the case study of our nation's record with democracy is a sad chronicle of steps forward and huge steps backward. But this too will change.'

(Benazir Bhutto, 2007: 232)

§ 8.1 - Introduction

This thesis was primarily focused on assessing the extent of military prerogatives in Pakistan's relations with China. To restate, by using a continuous scale to gauge military influence in the decision-making process, this thesis contributed, conceptually, to a more nuanced understanding of the role of the military in politics, especially in countries like Pakistan undergoing a democratic transition. As the analysis demonstrated throughout the three case studies, the role of the military in politics is much larger than the question of coups and extends into many aspects of a country's politics. It is therefore only through the assessment of civilian control on an ordinal scale of values ranging from 'high' to 'low' that is possible to substantively capture the complex dynamics of civil-military relations.

Based on the empirical analysis, it is thus possible to affirm that the extent of military prerogatives in the context of Pakistan's relationship with China has elements of both continuity and change. With the exception of the 2008-2013 period in the case study of the port of Gwadar (discussed in Chapter 5), we have seen that the decision-making areas of internal security and foreign policy were, in all three case studies, in the range between 'low' level of civilian control and 'medium-low'. As such, these two areas have remained essentially untouched by Pakistan's democratic transition. As the analysis explained in the introduction, the pre-eminence of the Pakistani army in the areas of foreign policy grounds its roots in the very early days of Pakistan's independence, when the country was facing an existential threat from India and, to a minor extent,

Afghanistan. This paradigm of national security has not changed, with the military retaining its grip in defining the goals and priorities in the country's foreign policy. As far as internal security is concerned, the analysis demonstrated that the elected governments in the post Musharraf era have made some attempts to increase their grip on this decision-making area. In particular, the PPP government tried to rein in the ISI immediately after the 2008 elections, an attempt which failed as the analysis in Chapter 6 discussed. Similarly, at the beginning of its electoral mandate, the PML-N government tried to assert itself by negotiating a peace deal with Pakistani Taleban. However, as analysed in the context of the operation Zarb-e-Azb, the policy preference of the military ultimately prevailed.

With regards to the elements of change, the areas of elite recruitment and economic policy have shown a higher level of civilian control in the post 2013 period. As we have seen especially in Chapter 6 assessing the CPEC, there have been attempts by the military to formally institutionalise its role in the decision-making process. These attempts have so far been resisted by the elected government. Although the military is still getting the dividends of the projects by having the FWO and the NLC heavily involved in the implementation of the China-sponsored infrastructural investment, the agenda setting and the policy formulation remained largely under civilian oversight.

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of the scoring of each decision-making area analysed in the three case studies, Table 8.1 below summarises the results emerging from the empirical analysis.

Table 8.1 – Tabulation of the empirical results in the four decision-making areas									
Decision-making area	2001-2008				2008-2013			2013-2016	
	Gwadar	CPEC	Afghan Policy	Gwadar	CPEC	Afghan Policy	Gwadar	CPEC	Afghan Policy
Foreign Policy	Low	Low	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low
Internal Security	Low	Low	Low	Medium-High	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low
Economic Policy	Low	Low	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High	Medium-High
Elite Recruitment	Low	Low	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-High	High	Medium-High	Medium-High

With Pakistan marking in 2017 its 70th anniversary of independence, its civil-military relations have entered a new phase. The two sides of the Pakistani civil-military equation, the military and the civilians, have essentially brokered an unwritten deal, a power-sharing agreement which allocates spheres of influence in the decision-making areas to advance the institutional interests of the two power poles. The relationship with China demonstrates this. On the military's side, the partnership developed with Beijing is focused on preserving, and further advancing, the core military's interests in terms of arms supplies (China is Pakistan's main arms supplier since 2010) and the need to balance Pakistan's position vis-à-vis India and to increase Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan – the prerogatives discussed in the introduction, and analysed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. On the civilian side, the elected politicians are free to manage the country's economic affairs. For instance, most of the 'early harvest' projects agreed under the CPEC umbrella will be completed by 2018. These include primarily energy-related investments aimed at tackling the chronic energy crisis that is affecting the country's economy and every-day lives.⁷¹ By delivering on this aspect, and with the general elections due in 2018, Nawaz Sharif will have a greater chance of being re-elected, provided the projects are completed on time. According to Mumtaz Ahmad, the Pakistan Army 'has most likely come to the realization that the business of domestic political life is best managed by civilian politicians and administrators so that the military can maintain its focus on the various security threats the nation faces, both internally and externally' (2016: 23). More critical of such a new phase is Aqil Shah, who argued that we might be witnessing 'a new civil-military arrangement [...] a situation in which the military does not seize direct power but formally insinuates its non-democratic privileges into the functioning of democracy' (2014a: 286). The analysis presented in the thesis provides a partially different picture than the one portrayed by Shah. While his assessment is indeed correct with regards to foreign policy and internal security, vis-à-vis economic policy and elite recruitment the situation marked some important

⁷¹ According to a PEW Research Centre survey of Pakistan's public opinion conducted in 2014, 90% of respondents mentioned electricity shortages as a 'very big problem' in Pakistan. See: PEW Research Centre (2014) 'A less gloomy mood in Pakistan', August 2014, available at: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/08/27/a-less-gloomy-mood-in-pakistan/>, accessed: 27/03/17.

improvements in the democratization processes within Pakistan. To corroborate the argument presented in the thesis, and to assess whether this emerging pattern in civil-military relations is only applicable to the relationship with China, the ensuing section provides an assessment of the four decision-making areas analysed in the empirical chapters, by taking into account some of the most important developments in Pakistan's civil-military relations over the last decade.

§ 8.2 - Beyond China: elite recruitment, internal security, foreign policy and economic policy in a wider perspective.

Throughout the empirical chapters, the analysis has focused primarily on the extent of military prerogatives in Pakistan's relations with China. As a way of testing whether the findings presented in the empirical chapters could be generalised more broadly to civil-military relations in Pakistan, this section assesses the abovementioned four decision-making areas with regards to the developments in Pakistan's domestic politics beyond the relationship with China.

Elite recruitment

The unity of civilian leaders, especially of the two main parties, has been a major characteristic of the Pakistani political scene since 2006 (Adeney, 2015). While political bickering remained, when it came to decide the rules of the democratic game, both major parties united in a number of important instances. Starting in 2006, when the PML-N and the PPP agreed in London to the 'Charter of Democracy', a document co-signed by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif aimed at outlining their vision of a democratic Pakistan, including the removal of the 17th Amendment to the Pakistani constitution and, in particular, clause 58-2b which essentially allowed the President to dismiss an elected government (Dawn, 2006; Nelson, 2009). Although the PPP and the PML-N then diverged on two crucial aspects, the restoration of Pakistan's Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry and the close relationship with the US (Nelson, 2009; Nelson, 2010)⁷², the 18th Amendment was passed

⁷² In March 2009, General Kayani brokered a deal between Nawaz Sharif and Zardari and chief justice Chaudhry was reinstated. For a detailed analysis of these events see: Nelson, M. (2010) 'Pakistan in 2009: Tackling the Taliban?', *Asian Survey*, 50/1: 112-126. On the

unanimously by the National Assembly of Pakistan in April 2010. This is another important indicator of civilian unity, especially when facing such an important and critical reform of Pakistan's constitution, as the analysis extensively assessed in Chapter 5 regarding the port of Gwadar.

Also in the post 2013 period there have been important developments in this area. To begin with, in August 2014 the Pakistan-Tehrik-e-Insaaf's (PTI) leader, Imran Khan, along with a Canada-based cleric, Tahir-ul Qadri, started a four month long street protests to demand a freely elected Prime Minister, claiming that the 2013 elections were rigged.⁷³ While the Army officially denied any involvement in backing the protesters, the former President of the PTI, Javed Hashmi, declared that the sit-in was the brainchild of General Shuja Pasha, the chief of the ISI (Dawn, 2015d). In this context, the role of the PPP was crucial in allowing the government to remain in power, and the civilian unity was markedly different from the political dynamics characterising the 1990s. As Adeney observed, 'the support given to Nawaz Sharif in August–September 2014 by opposition parliamentarians [...] reflects the importance placed on the democratic process over and above short-term party political calculations' (2015: 13). In a later episode, support to the government was also provided in the context of the Panama Leaks investigation. In November 2016, the PPP supported the adoption of the 24th Amendment, proposing a right to appeal against an order of the Supreme Court (Hussain, 2016). The latter is investigating Sharif's assets abroad after some of the details emerged from the Panama Papers.⁷⁴

A very important development pertains to the appointment of the Pakistan Army COAS. Since 2013, Nawaz Sharif has appointed two consecutive Army Chiefs of his choice, namely General Raheel Sharif (2013-2016) and General Qamar Javed Bajwa on 26th November 2016 (Syed, 2016b). While it is worth

tensions between the executive and the judiciary in post-Musharraf Pakistan see: Waseem, M. (2012) 'Judging democracy in Pakistan:

Conflict between the executive and judiciary', *Contemporary South Asia*, 20/1: 19-31.

⁷³ For an analysis of the dharna and its implications in terms of civil-military relations see: Adeney, K. (2014) 'Shadow of military looms large over Pakistan street protests', *The Conversation*, 02/09/2014, available at: <http://theconversation.com/shadow-of-military-looms-large-over-pakistan-street-protests-31132>, accessed: 06/09/2016.

⁷⁴ On the role of the opposition in post-2008 Pakistan see: Oldenburg, P. (2017) 'Loyalty, disloyalty, and semi-loyalty in Pakistan's hybrid regime', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 55/1: 82-103.

bearing in mind that General Musharraf was also Nawaz Sharif's own pick in 1998, hence caution is required when analysing these dynamics especially in the Pakistani context, the leadership transition witnessed at the end of 2016 in the Pakistani army is nevertheless important. First, it is the first time in 20 years that the Army chief was not granted, or does not seek, an extension in his tenure as Pakistan Army COAS (Boone, 2016). In the midst of tensions between the PPP government and the Army, General Kayani was given additional three years in office. In the current context, there have been controversies between the civilian and military leadership (above all related to General Musharraf's trial, and a leaked news about Pakistan supporting militancy), but General Sharif stepped down at the end of his term. Second, it is the second consecutive COAS appointed by an elected Prime Minister, and this sets an important precedent for the executives that will rule the country in the following years. Similarly to the appointment of Raheel Sharif, Nawaz Sharif has not chosen the army's favourite candidate for the post, Lt Gen Ishfaq Nadeem Ahmed (Shah S, 2016c). This demonstrates that the government has overall increased its grip on this decision-making area.

Similarly to the appointment of the new COAS, in October 2014 the ISI chief, Lt Gen Rizwan Akhtar, was appointed by the Prime Minister and, as PILDAT reported, 'this can be termed as welcome approach in the context of the sour and unpleasant situation occasionally faced in the past' (PILDAT, 2014a: 2). Again in December 2016, the new ISI chief, Lt Gen Naveed Mukhtar was nominated by the Prime Minister a few weeks after the change in leadership in the Pakistani Army (Dawn, 2016). Against this backdrop, the appointment of the ISI Chief by the Prime Minister marks an important difference to the PPP government, which complied with the suggestion of General Kayani in 2012 to appoint Lt Gen Zaheerul Islam, 'not allowing the government any choice' (Syed, 2014b).

Another important aspect in the area of elite recruitment to assess the extent of civilian control is the openness of the competition for public offices. In this context, the military's sway is more marked. The most evident example of this is the appointment of Lt General (retd) Nasir Khan Janjua at the end of October 2015 as the new National Security Adviser (NSA) to the Prime Minister, replacing Sartaj Aziz (Haider, 2015). Janjua's appointment is in line with a

pattern that was also followed during the PPP government in the 2008-2013 period, in which Lt General (retd) Mehmood Durrani was the NSA. According to news reports, appointing a former high-profile military officer in the role of NSA was a move that the military had advocated for many months as a way to be directly in charge of talks with India and Afghanistan (The Nation, 2015b). In light of the abovementioned developments, the score of civilian control in this area should be categorised as *medium-high*, a result in line with that of the empirical chapters.

Internal security

The analysis has dealt extensively with the operation Zarb-e-Azb in Chapter 6 and with the military and civilian approaches to Balochistan in Chapter 5, concluding that this is an area in which the military controls the policy-making process. If we extend the analysis to other developments in Pakistani domestic politics, the results are in line with what was presented in the empirical chapters.

The Apex Committees were created after the terrorist attack on the Army School in Peshawar in December 2014. Nominally, the establishment of the Apex Committees in the provinces represents a coordination mechanism, an institutional body in which both the military and the civilian leadership come together to discuss security-related issues. In practice, those who call the shots are the army representatives sitting in these committees. As Jaffrelot noticed, ‘the strong men of these committees [...] are the corps commander at the provincial level and the COAS at the centre’ (2016). In fact, meetings are often held at the army regional headquarters, including the first meeting of the Punjab Apex Committee in Lahore, three days after the ISPR announced the creation of the apex committees (Jaffrelot, 2016b).

Similarly to the apex committees, military courts were also established as a parallel justice system aimed at trying civilians accused of acts of terrorism. Created through the 21st Constitutional Amendment approved by the Parliament in 2015, these courts represent a transfer of power from civilian jurisdiction to that of the military; moreover, the lack of transparency in the trials conducted under military courts represents a setback in Pakistan’s

democratic transition, as judicial independence from authoritarian tendencies is a key component of any democratic regime (Wolf, 2015). At the time of writing, the two year time frame set in January 2015 for military courts has expired. While the civil society and human rights activists have welcomed the end of such a parallel judicial system, the government has started talks for the revival of military courts (Syed, 2017).⁷⁵

Another important development in this area is the one which followed the deadly terrorist attack in Lahore, carried out by the Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (a TTP faction) on Easter day in 2016, with the aim of targeting Christians (Reuters, 2016). In the wake of the attack, the Pakistani army unilaterally decided to take action. According to the seasoned observer of Pakistani politics, Najam Sethi, ‘the corps commanders and Rangers are taking some initiatives on their own following orders from the army chief without regard to the political sensitivities of the Punjab government’ (2016). These operations were carried out by army units and paramilitary forces (hence under military control) and no joint action with the police (under civilian control) was conducted (Shaheen and Asif, 2016). The decision to embark in these operations was taken ‘during a high-level military huddle, chaired by Army chief Gen Raheel Sharif at the General Headquarters’ (Gabol, 2016). Sethi also aptly reminds us that ‘[Nawaz] Sharif did not want an operation in Punjab cause he did not want to alienate its electoral base in the province, primarily composed by the conservative religious fringes of the society’ (2016). This demonstrates that civilians and the military were not on the same page as far as the actions needed after the attack were concerned, and that the military’s policy preference ultimately prevailed. For all the reasons outlined above, we can therefore categorise this decision-making area as ‘medium-low’.

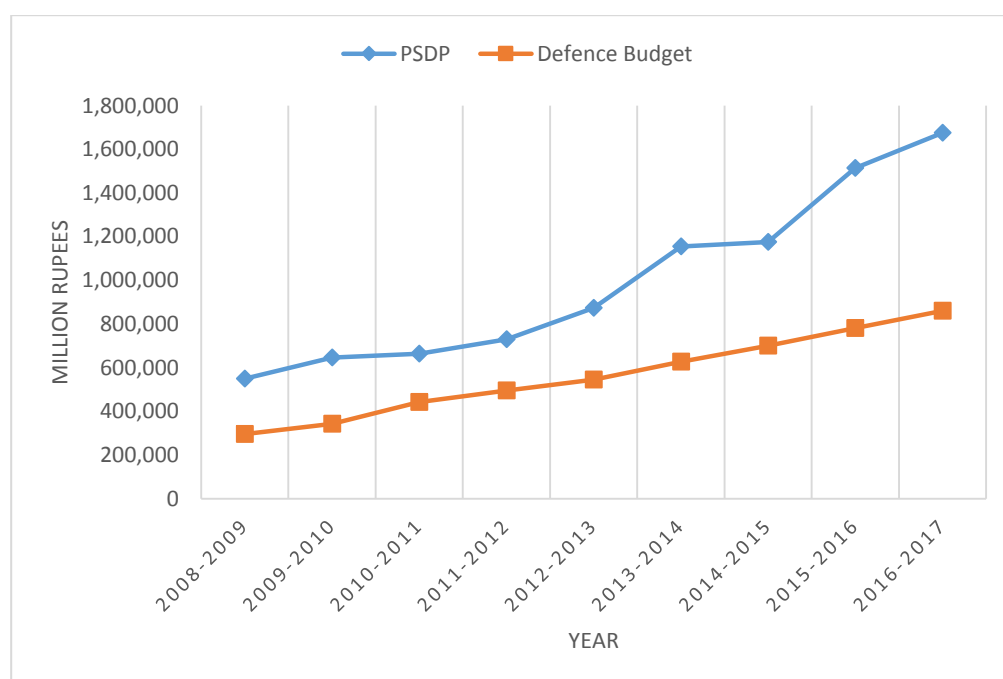
Economic Policy

According to Croissant et al. (2010) civilian control in this area ‘necessitates that the military does not play a prominent role in budgetary decision-making and that the military budgeting process must be openly arrived at in competition

⁷⁵ For an analysis of the performance of military courts between January 2015 and January 2017 see: Cheema, H. (2017) ‘The sun has set on Pakistan's military courts — here's why it should never rise again’, *Dawn*, 09 January 2017, available at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1306792/the-sun-has-set-on-pakistans-military-courts-heres-why-it-should-never-rise-again>, accessed: 10/01/17.

with other government priorities which precludes that the defence establishment cannot claim a right to be the first in line in public spending’ (2010: 957-958). As such, an analysis of the budget allocation in Pakistan is required. The Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) tops the 2016-2017 budget expenditure, and increased of 20% if compared to the previous year. A breakdown of the single entries also shows that the main areas in which the government is investing are: Water and Power division (water sector), Railways Divisions as well as in the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and the National Highway Authority (Ministry of Finance, 2016).

Figure 8.1 – A comparison between the increases in the Public Sector Development Programme and the Defence Budget



Sources: Data compiled by the author based on Pakistan Federal Budget available documents in the period comprised between 2008-2009 and 2016-2017.

While the defence budget has increased constantly, the PSDP budgetary allocations have grown likewise, with the amount of funds allocated to development and welfare programmes which almost doubles that of the defence budget.⁷⁶ At the same time, it is important to note that the defence budget

⁷⁶ If we add to this the development expenditure outside the PSDP, including the ‘Benazir Income Support Programme’ and a number of other schemes, the difference is even higher.

allocations *do not* include military pensions and the nuclear programme that are both on the civilian budget. However, an attempt to have a greater scrutiny on both the budget and the military business activities was made in March 2013 by the standing committee on defence. According to the International Crisis Group, the committee ‘held hearings on military-owned property and cantonments, including defence housing authorities (DHAs). It proposed that DHA administrators should be appointed by the defence ministry, not the army chief as at present. An Islamabad DHA bill was consequently revised to reduce the military’s discretion in appointing the DHA management’ (ICG, 2013: 25).

In the post-2008 period, the parliamentary committees have been increasingly involved in the budget process, both regarding the PSDP and the defence budget. With regards to the latter, the Senate’s Defence Committee, chaired by Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, has demonstrated ‘an unusual degree of engagement with the military on budget issues in recent years’ (Mason, 2016: 26). For instance, on 19th May 2014 the Standing Committee held a forum on the Defence budget in which the Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Defence briefed the Committee, as well as the journalist about the details of Pakistan’s Defence Budget. (PILDAT, 2014b). In his concluding remarks, Senator Hussain highlighted that everyone ‘should know the process and procedures through which it [the Defence] works’ (Senate of Pakistan, 2015). In another meeting held in 2016, Additional Secretary Ministry of Defence briefed the committee about the mid-year review of the Ministry’s budget (Senate of Pakistan, 2016).

On the PSDP front, a ‘critical reform had been passed to allow the ministries-related Standing Committees the specific power of review of budgetary proposals regarding Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP)’ (PILDAT, 2016c: 21). With regards to the 2016-2017 budget, ‘of the 32 standing committees, 25 met to review PSDP proposals’ (PILDAT, 2016c: 21). Although PILDAT reports that it is not clear whether the Committees scrutinised the budget to check whether their recommendations had been included/followed (2016: 21), the very establishment of these procedures represents an important step in the creation of a well-functioning parliamentary system. Parliamentary oversight over the final budget, including the defence budget, is one of the criteria set in the theoretical framework, presented in

Chapter 3, to assess the extent of civilian control over this area. From the analysis conducted in this section it emerges that, since 2008, the parliament had its role increased in scrutinising the defence budget. As Shane Mason observed, ‘the government made a concerted effort to improve transparency’ and these developments under the last two civilian governments represented a ‘marked improvement’ if compared to the Musharraf years (2016: 24). Therefore the empirical analysis presented in the context of Pakistan’s relations with China is not an outlier; it is instead part of a trend, which sees the civilian side of the military equation trying to assert civilian control over the military in this important decision-making area. As such, we can classify this area, especially in the post-2013 period, as ‘medium-high’.

Foreign policy

The foreign policy record in the post-2008 period was characterised by continuity, rather than change. In line with the analysis presented in both the introduction and the empirical chapters, the foreign policy decision-making area has been largely retained by the military as a reserved domain. The analysis has already extensively discussed in Chapter 5 the visits of the COAS to China when the US President Obama was in India, as well as Afghan President Ghani’s first visit to Pakistan, who had at the GHQ, and not with the PM, the first meeting (analysed in Chapter 7). To provide a more comprehensive picture of all the foreign interactions, the COAS made the following visits: Afghanistan (four times), US (twice), UK (twice), China, Italy, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Iran, Qatar, Tajikistan, Jordan (PILDAT, 2015; PILDAT, 2016b). It is important to notice how a vast majority of the visits, both in Pakistan and abroad, were held while no civilian office bearer was present, thereby showing a disconnect between the civilian government and the military leadership. In addition, the magnitude of the Army’s role in foreign policy is also demonstrated by the fact that ‘almost everywhere he [the Army Chief] was given the reception almost equivalent to that of a head of government’ (PILDAT, 2015: 16). It was not only the COAS that had an increased international visibility. Almost invariably, the GHQ has been also a port of call for all the foreign officials, Ministers and Prime Ministers alike, visiting Pakistan. Since General Sharif was appointed COAS, the foreign ministers who called at the GHQ as part of their visit to

Pakistan, included those of Afghanistan, Germany, China (twice), Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, Italy, Norway, Iran, and Australia. In addition, only in 2015-2016, five meetings were held between Richard G. Holson, Special Representative of the United States of America to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and General Sharif (PILDAT, 2015; PILDAT, 2016b). Another important indicator that the military's sway in this area remains high is represented by the security apparatus' murky role in Nawaz Sharif's attempts to improve ties with India.

In May 2014, two days after Modi invited Nawaz Sharif to attend his inauguration, Lashkar e-Taiba attacked the Indian consulate in Herat. In July 2015, two weeks after the Indian and Pakistani foreign secretaries agreed to 'discuss all outstanding issues' and condemning 'terrorism in all its forms', Pakistan-based militants attacked a police station in Gurdaspur, killing seven (Krepon, 2017). Perhaps the most striking episode is the terrorist attack on the Pathankot airbase on 2 January 2016, in which seven Indian soldiers lost their lives. According to a number of Indian analysts the attack could have not been carried out without the support of the Pakistani military and the ISI (Kumar, 2016). Interestingly, the terrorist incident came one week after the meeting in Lahore between the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, and his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, on Christmas day. This is a recurring pattern in Indo-Pakistani relations. In fact, Lahore was also the city where Nawaz Sharif and the then Indian PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee signed the Lahore Declaration in 1999, aimed at promoting bilateral ties especially to avoid a nuclear escalation. Similarly to what happened in 2016, three months after the Lahore Declaration was signed, the Pakistani military started the Kargil operation (as we have seen in Chapter 4) which de facto derailed the progresses made by Nawaz Sharif's government.

While the foreign policy domain remains essentially a military prerogative, in the post-2008 period there have been some marginal improvements as far as the role of the parliament in debating foreign policy is concerned. In November 2011, Pakistan decided to close the ground lines of communication to NATO troops deployed in Afghanistan for eight months, after an ISAF airstrike on 25-26 November 2011 mistakenly killed 24 Pakistani soldiers. In the wake of this incident, the Pakistani Parliament passed on 12 April 2012 a resolution

outlining the revised terms of engagement with the US, NATO, and ISAF. The document mentioned the need for Pakistan to review the US footprint in the country and to 'seek an unconditional apology from the US' (The National Assembly of Pakistan, 2012).

During the 2013-2017 period, an important foreign policy decision taken by the parliament was that of voting against sending troops to Yemen, following a request by Saudi Arabia. Point 8 of the resolution adopted by the joint session of the Pakistani parliament, held from 6 to 10 April 2015, stated that the legislative body desired 'that Pakistan should maintain neutrality in the Yemen conflict so as to be able to play a proactive diplomatic role to end the crisis' (Full text of Pakistan resolution on Yemen, 2016)⁷⁷ thereby refusing the request from Saudi Arabia to send Pakistani troops to quell the Houthi rebels in Yemen. This is a positive development if we consider the long-standing ties between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan as well as Nawaz Sharif's personal links with Riyadh, where he was welcomed in exile after General Musharraf ousted him with the 1999 coup. At the same time, it is important to note that the decision came at a time in which the Pakistani military was already involved in the operation Zarb-e-Azb and when tensions with India were also escalating. As such, according to some analysts, the GHQ was already 'stretched too thin' to send troops to Yemen (Riedel, 2015b).

Despite the abovementioned improvements as far as the parliament's involvement in foreign policy is concerned, these are too limited to consider this area under civilian oversight. The real barometer to assess whether the pressure from Rawalpindi on the elected leadership is reduced, is the ability of the latter to improve ties with India and to reshape Pakistan's foreign policy posture according to a different paradigm than the security-centric one adopted until now. As a result, we should classify foreign policy with a 'medium-low' level of civilian control.

As the analysis in this section demonstrated, by extending the discussion of civil-military relations in Pakistan beyond the instances involving China, the picture is roughly in line with the findings of the empirical chapters. As such, the new emerging civil-military pattern in Pakistan's hybrid regime is

⁷⁷ The full text of the resolution can be found at: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1175696>.

characterised by an informal and tacit power-sharing agreement that entails a clear allocation of decision-making areas, aloof of constitutional provisions, between the units (civilians and the military) co-habiting the dyadic power structure. Such an arrangement is the result of political bargaining but it also represents the crystallization of the intrinsic dualistic nature of power in Pakistan. While the long-term commitment of the civilian and military leadership to such a power-sharing arrangement remains to be seen, the empirical analysis demonstrated some important steps in the democratisation of the Land of Pure. To be clear, the military remains an extremely powerful actor in Pakistan and it has adopted a vigilant posture towards the political processes within the country. However, the space regained by the parliament and by the civilian leadership in economic policies are positive signals of change towards a progressive redefinition of civil-military relations in the country and, more broadly, represent some important steps in Pakistan's democratic transition. Democratic processes require time to be absorbed, especially in countries like Pakistan that have been ruled by authoritarian regimes for long spells of their history. Against this backdrop, the relationship with China epitomises the new phase in Pakistan's civil-military relations. Sino-Pakistani ties rest, in Pakistan, on a broad-based consensus among civilian and military elites. As the analysis assessed in Chapter 4, military to military cooperation have been, historically, the backbone of the Sino-Pakistani entente and still remains a crucial aspect in bilateral relations between Islamabad and Beijing. As a result, the Pakistani Armed Forces have always played a central role in defining the ties with China, as part of their anti-India security-centric foreign policy paradigm. In this respect, very little has changed over the last 70 years as it clearly emerged from the empirical analysis conducted in the previous chapters. What has instead marked an element of discontinuity with the past has been the dramatic increase in economic cooperation between the two countries during the last five years, an increase which has been largely under civilian control. Paradoxically, a relationship which has been centred on the military as the main interlocutors on both sides of the Karakoram Highway, has de facto enabled the civilian side to gain some space and leverage in important decisions, such as the ones pertaining to the CPEC or, more recently, to the port of Gwadar.

The relationship with China will continue to be a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy in the foreseeable future. As mentioned in the introduction, Beijing is the only capital in the world which has decided to bet on Islamabad's future. In geopolitical terms, we are already seeing how China's gamble is paying off for Pakistan. Contrary to all the claims coming from New Delhi, Pakistan is far from being internationally isolated. Apart from its *quasi* alliance with China, a number of countries have expressed their desire to benefit from the increased connectivity deriving from the CPEC, including Germany and Romania in early 2017. The impact of the CPEC has also been visible in the rapprochement between Pakistan and Russia, as well as in preliminary talks with Iran regarding the latter's role in the CPEC context. Similarly, Pakistan's civilian and military elites have reached out to Central Asian Republics in order to offer access to the Arabian Sea through Gwadar. While it is difficult at the moment to gauge how far these foreign policy initiatives will go, Pakistan has now the potential to become an important partner for a number of countries.

§ 8.3 - Future research agenda

As mentioned in the introduction, the overarching theme of the analysis presented in the thesis was the role of the military in a country's politics. If we broaden the horizon beyond Pakistan, this is a topic which is central to the political developments of countries across different regions of the world, including North Africa (Egypt), the Middle East (Turkey), South Asia (Myanmar), South East Asia (Thailand). As such, the analytical framework developed in this thesis assessing the extent of civilian control over the military along a continuum which accounts for different intensities, might also be adopted by scholars of comparative politics interested in conducting a large scale study of civil-military relations in emerging democracies. In particular, the framework deployed in the thesis is particularly apt at capturing the dynamics occurring in the so-called hybrid regimes, namely those political systems in which there is a combination of both democratic and authoritarian characteristics. A complex social phenomena such as civil-military relations in emerging democracy is better assessed through a continuum, rather than merely focusing on whether the military intervenes in politics through a coup. The analysis presented in the empirical chapters demonstrated the need to provide

a nuanced understanding of political trajectories, especially in those contexts where the military manages to retain some of its prerogatives from behind the scenes. Beyond Pakistan, Myanmar is a case in point. After the landslide victory in the 2015 elections of the National League for Democracy (NLD) ended 53 years of military rule in the country, civil-military relations have come under greater scrutiny to understand what role were the *Tatmadaw* (national armed forces) willing to play in the new relatively democratic setup. In this context, the current civilian dispensation could be defined as a ‘disciplined democracy’, in which ‘the military has voluntarily withdrawn from some areas of governance, yet it retains authority in all matters related to security and defence concerns’ (Lee Huang, 2016: 2). A comparative analysis of the civil-military interplay in Pakistan and Myanmar would be able to shed light on the role of the military in emerging, and often still fragile, democratic societies. Moving the geographical focus westwards, the political dynamics evolving in Turkey over the last years are also extremely important and suitable to be analysed through the thesis’ analytical framework. Pakistan and Turkey have always shared very close ties as well as similar political features with regards to civil-military relations. However, very little research has been devoted to compare the evolution of these two contexts with regards to the role of the military in the country’s governance.

As far as Sino-Pakistani relations are concerned, this is an area of research which has attracted attention only in recent years and, as such, much still needs to be dissected in the ties between Islamabad and Beijing. First and foremost, the CPEC development has the potential of being assessed from a number of different perspectives as it represents the flagship investment of China’s OBOR initiative. As we have seen in Chapter 6, the economic sustainability for Pakistan of the tranche of Chinese investment is yet to be demonstrated and, in this context, further research should be devoted to assessing the financial terms of China’s infrastructural investment in Pakistan. On a related note, additional research should contextualise, in a comparative fashion, the CPEC investment in Pakistan and that of China in other African countries. In particular, given that China’s economic outreach to Africa has long predated the one to Pakistan, an impact oriented research aimed at evaluating the political, social and economic fallout of the Chinese energy and infrastructural projects in African countries

could serve to Pakistani institutions to develop a better understanding of the medium to long-term effects of the CPEC.

The CPEC, and its end point in Pakistan, Gwadar, has also wider implications for the regional scenario, including on the Indian Ocean. The latter is at the forefront of the debates involving power dynamics in the South Asian context. The announcement of the 'One Belt, One Road' initiative by Xi Jinping in September 2013, coupled with a renewed interest from India's PM Narendra Modi in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), defined as the 'top policy priority' of the Indian government's littoral and maritime strategies, have prompted a debate over the two states competing in the region (Raja Mohan, 2015). Against this backdrop, Pakistan plays a key role in light of its geographical position vis-à-vis the Arabian Sea and the Strait of Hormuz. Competition between Pakistan and India has already reached the point of skirmishes between the two Navies – as Chapter 5 discussed - and it is deemed to increase in the near future. Policy-oriented research should follow closely the dynamics underpinning the development of CPEC and the port of Gwadar as with a fully-fledged *de facto* Chinese outpost in the Arabian Sea, we may be witnessing the emerging of a new security paradigm in the area.

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Appendix

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Ahmed, Dr Samina, Director South Asia Programme, International Crisis Group. Date: 09/02/2015.

Ali, Dr Ashraf, Director FATA Research Centre, Date: 24/02/2015.

Associate Professor, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. Date: 11/02/2015

Bin Aziz, Mr Haseeb, Assistant Director (China), Ministry of Foreign Affairs Government of Pakistan. Date: 21/01/2015.

Coordinator (China cell), Prime Minister's Office. Date: 02/02/2015.

Deputy Chief (Transport), Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, Pakistan. Date: 30/01/2015.

Fatemi, Mr Tariq, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs. Date: 20/02/2015

Former Pakistan Navy Officer. Date: 10/02/2015.

Gul, Imtiaz, Executive Director, Centre for Research and Security Studies. Date: 25/02/2015.

Hasan, Mr Raoof, Director of the Pakistan Peace Institute. Date: 07/02/2015.

Jaspal, Dr Zafar Nawaz, Director School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Date: 19/01/2015.

Khan, Mr Abdul Salik, Director General (China), Ministry of Foreign Affairs Government of Pakistan. Islamabad, 21 January 2015.

Khan, Mr Hamayoun, Faculty of Contemporary Studies, National Defense University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Date: 27/01/2015.

Khan, Prof. Adeel J., International Islamic University Islamabad, Politics and International Relations Department. Date: 25/02/2015.

Official, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Date: 22/02/2015.

Official, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Date: 23/02/2015.

Official, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Date: 23/02/2015

Official, National Security Division, Government of Pakistan. Date: 18/02/2015

Official, National Security Division, Government of Pakistan. Date: 12/02/2015

Pakistani Army Officer. Date: 27/01/2015.

Rahman, Mr Fazal-ur, Executive Director, Pakistan Council on China. Date: 03/02/2015.

Research Fellow, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. Date: 22/01/2015.

Research Fellow, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. Date: 22/01/2015.

Research Fellow, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. Date: 26/01/2015.

Samad, Prof Yunas, Emeritus Professor of South Asian Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Bradford. Date: 22/02/2015.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Senator and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on CPEC. Date: 24/02/2015.

Sultan, Ms Maria, Director General of the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan. Date: 20/01/2015.