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**INSTITUTIONAL POWER SHIFTS THROUGH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS IN PAKISTAN: REFORM AGENDA VS. POLITICAL CONSOLIDATION**

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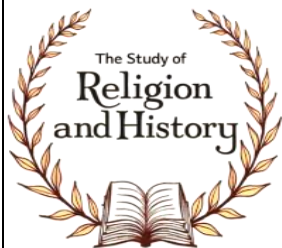
**Abstract**

*This research explores the impact of constitutional amendments on institutional power distribution in Pakistan and evaluates whether these reforms have strengthened democratic governance or facilitated political consolidation by ruling elites. Since independence, Pakistan's constitutional history has witnessed repeated amendments that significantly altered the balance of power among the executive, legislature, judiciary, and military establishment. The study particularly focuses on major constitutional changes including the 8th, 17th, and 18th Amendments and examines their political motivations, legal implications, and institutional consequences. Using a qualitative and analytical methodology, the paper investigates how constitutional engineering has influenced federalism, judicial autonomy, parliamentary sovereignty, and civil-military relations. The research argues that while some amendments promoted democratic decentralization and provincial autonomy, others were primarily designed to legitimize authoritarian control or strengthen partisan political interests. The study also analyzes the role of political parties, judicial activism, and constitutional interpretation in shaping institutional power dynamics. Findings suggest that constitutional amendments in Pakistan have often reflected broader struggles for political dominance rather than purely democratic reform agendas. Nevertheless, certain reforms have contributed positively to democratic continuity and institutional development. The paper concludes that sustainable constitutionalism in Pakistan requires political consensus, rule of law, institutional independence, and adherence to democratic norms rather than personalized or regime-oriented constitutional changes.*

**Keywords:** *Constitutional Amendments, Pakistan Politics, Institutional Power, Democratic Reform, Civil-Military Relations, Federalism, Constitutionalism*

**Section One: Constitutional Development and Political Evolution in Pakistan**

Pakistan's constitutional journey reflects a complex interaction between colonial legacies, ideological aspirations, institutional struggles, and the evolving role of political leadership. Since independence in 1947, constitutional development has not followed a smooth or linear path; rather, it has been shaped by recurring tensions between democratic ideals and power realities. Scholars of Pakistani politics widely agree that constitutionalism in Pakistan cannot be understood without examining the historical foundations, the ideological significance of the Objectives Resolution, the persistent influence of civil-military relations, the oscillation between parliamentary and presidential systems, and the decisive role of political elites in shaping constitutional outcomes.



### ***Historical Background of Constitutional Development in Pakistan***

At independence, Pakistan inherited the Government of India Act 1935 as its interim constitutional framework. The absence of an immediately agreed constitution created a prolonged phase of constitutional experimentation. Hamid Khan notes that

*“Pakistan began its life without a constitution of its own, relying instead on adapted colonial legislation that was never designed for a sovereign democratic state”<sup>1</sup>*

This reliance on colonial constitutional arrangements created structural weaknesses. Ian Talbot observes that

*“The early years of Pakistan were marked by institutional fragility and a lack of consensus among political elites about the nature of the state”<sup>2</sup>*

The delay in constitution-making (1947–1956) weakened democratic institutions and encouraged bureaucratic dominance. Scholars often argue that the early dismissal of the Constituent Assembly in 1954 set a precedent for executive interference. Lawrence Ziring writes that

*“the dissolution of the first Constituent Assembly created a pattern in which constitutional processes became subordinate to power politics”<sup>3</sup>*

This early instability laid the foundation for repeated constitutional disruptions.

### ***The Objectives Resolution and Constitutional Foundations***

The Objectives Resolution of 1949 remains the ideological cornerstone of Pakistan’s constitutional structure. It attempted to reconcile Islamic principles with democratic governance. Ayesha Jalal explains that

*“the Objectives Resolution sought to balance the sovereignty of God with the authority of elected representatives, creating a uniquely hybrid constitutional vision”<sup>4</sup>*

Hamid Khan describes the resolution as

*“The guiding spirit of all subsequent constitutions of Pakistan”<sup>5</sup>*

The resolution’s significance lies in its long-term constitutional incorporation. It later became a substantive part of the 1973 Constitution. Scholars note that it simultaneously strengthened ideological identity while also generating debates about the role of religion in lawmaking. Hasan Askari Rizvi remarks that

*“the Objectives Resolution became both a source of legitimacy and a point of political contestation”<sup>6</sup>*

Thus, the ideological foundation of Pakistan’s constitution has remained both a unifying and contested element.

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<sup>1</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 58

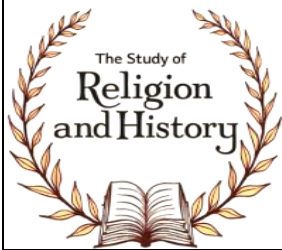
<sup>2</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 72

<sup>3</sup> Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 96

<sup>4</sup> Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 39

<sup>5</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 102

<sup>6</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 84



### ***Civil–Military Relations and Constitutional Instability***

No analysis of Pakistan’s constitutional development is complete without examining civil–military relations. Military interventions in 1958, 1969, 1977, and 1999 reshaped constitutional evolution.

*Hasan Askari Rizvi writes that “the military emerged as the most organized institution in the state and gradually assumed the role of political arbiter”*<sup>7</sup>

Ayesha Jalal similarly argues that

*“Military rule was justified through constitutional engineering that sought to legitimize extra-constitutional interventions”*<sup>8</sup>

Military regimes frequently introduced constitutional amendments to consolidate authority. For example, Ayub Khan’s 1962 Constitution introduced a presidential system, while Zia-ul-Haq’s amendments strengthened executive powers. Lawrence Ziring observes that

*“Constitutionalism in Pakistan often advanced under military supervision rather than civilian consensus”*<sup>9</sup>

These repeated interventions weakened parliamentary continuity and institutional trust.

### ***Parliamentary versus Presidential Trends in Governance***

Pakistan’s constitutional history shows a recurring shift between parliamentary and presidential systems.

*The 1956 and 1973 constitutions favored parliamentary democracy, while the 1962 Constitution introduced a presidential system. Hamid Khan explains that “Pakistan’s constitutional oscillation reflects the ongoing search for a stable balance between executive authority and representative governance”*<sup>10</sup>

Ian Talbot notes that

*“each constitutional shift was driven less by theory and more by political expediency”*<sup>11</sup>

The Eighth Amendment (1985) and Seventeenth Amendment (2003) strengthened presidential powers, while the Eighteenth Amendment (2010) restored parliamentary supremacy. Scholars interpret this as a long struggle to establish democratic continuity.

*Hasan Askari Rizvi argues that “the restoration of parliamentary authority through the Eighteenth Amendment marked a major milestone in Pakistan’s democratic evolution”*<sup>12</sup>

### ***The Role of Political Elites in Constitutional Engineering***

Political elites have played a decisive role in shaping constitutional changes. Their cooperation or rivalry often determined constitutional success or failure.

*Ayesha Jalal writes that “Pakistan’s political elite frequently prioritized power consolidation over institutional development”*<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 112

<sup>8</sup> Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 78

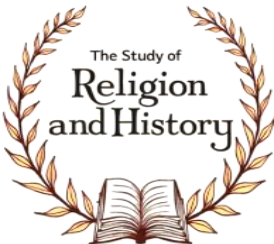
<sup>9</sup> Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 221

<sup>10</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 210

<sup>11</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 148

<sup>12</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 195

<sup>13</sup> Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 105

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Lawrence Ziring similarly notes that “constitutional amendments were often negotiated as instruments of political survival rather than long-term governance reform”<sup>14</sup>

Hamid Khan highlights the importance of consensus, stating that

“Durable constitutional progress in Pakistan has historically depended on political accommodation and compromise”<sup>15</sup>

The adoption of the 1973 Constitution through cross-party consensus remains a notable example of elite cooperation. However, subsequent amendments show how elite competition continued to reshape constitutional structures.

Overall, Pakistan’s constitutional evolution represents an ongoing process shaped by ideology, institutional tensions, military influence, governance debates, and elite politics. The historical trajectory suggests that constitutional stability in Pakistan is closely linked to democratic continuity, institutional maturity, and sustained political consensus.

***Section Two: Major Constitutional Amendments and Institutional Transformation***

Pakistan’s constitutional evolution after 1973 has largely unfolded through major constitutional amendments that reshaped institutional authority, executive–legislative balance, federalism, and the role of the judiciary. These amendments were often introduced in response to political crises, regime transitions, or efforts to consolidate authority. Scholars emphasize that constitutional amendments in Pakistan are not merely legal changes; they reflect deeper struggles over power, governance, and democratic continuity.

***The Eighth Amendment and the Expansion of Presidential Powers***

The Eighth Amendment (1985) fundamentally altered the parliamentary structure of the 1973 Constitution by strengthening presidential authority during General Zia-ul-Haq’s regime. Hasan Askari Rizvi writes:

“Through the Eighth Amendment, the President acquired the power to dismiss elected governments and dissolve the National Assembly, thereby transforming the parliamentary system into a semi-presidential arrangement.”<sup>16</sup>

This amendment introduced Article 58(2)(b), which enabled repeated dismissal of elected governments in the late 1980s and 1990s. The constitutional shift weakened parliamentary supremacy and institutional stability. Hamid Khan observes:

“The Eighth Amendment institutionalized military influence within the constitutional framework and legitimized executive intervention in democratic governance.”<sup>17</sup>

Lawrence Ziring highlights the political consequences:

“The amendment created a cycle of unstable governments, undermining democratic consolidation.”<sup>18</sup>

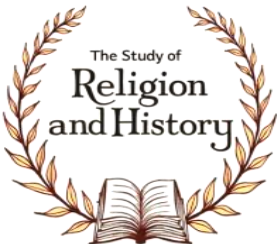
<sup>14</sup> Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 244

<sup>15</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 298

<sup>16</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 173

<sup>17</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 319

<sup>18</sup> Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 263

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***The Thirteenth Amendment and the Restoration of Parliamentary Authority***

The Thirteenth Amendment (1997) removed Article 58(2)(b) and restored parliamentary supremacy under Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s government. Hamid Khan notes:

*“The Thirteenth Amendment sought to restore the original spirit of the 1973 Constitution by eliminating the President’s discretionary power to dissolve parliament.”*<sup>19</sup>

Ian Talbot explains:

*“This amendment marked a significant attempt to end the constitutional imbalance that had plagued Pakistan since the mid-1980s.”*<sup>20</sup>

However, scholars also point out that the concentration of power in the prime minister’s office created new governance concerns. Ayesha Jalal remarks:

*“The restoration of parliamentary authority did not necessarily strengthen democratic institutions because executive dominance simply shifted from the presidency to the prime ministership.”*<sup>21</sup>

***The Seventeenth Amendment and Military Influence in Politics***

The Seventeenth Amendment (2003), introduced under General Pervez Musharraf, partially revived presidential powers and formalized military influence in governance. Hasan Askari Rizvi states:

*“The Seventeenth Amendment re-established the President’s authority to dissolve the National Assembly, reinforcing the military’s role in political decision-making.”*<sup>22</sup>

Hamid Khan observes:

*“This amendment was designed to legitimize the post-1999 military regime within a constitutional framework.”*<sup>23</sup>

Ian Talbot explains:

*“It represented a compromise between civilian political forces and military leadership.”*<sup>24</sup>

The amendment demonstrated how constitutional reforms often emerged from negotiated power-sharing rather than purely democratic processes.

***The Eighteenth Amendment and Democratic Decentralization***

The Eighteenth Amendment (2010) is widely regarded as one of the most transformative constitutional reforms in Pakistan’s history. It significantly reduced presidential powers and strengthened federalism. Hamid Khan writes:

<sup>19</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 358

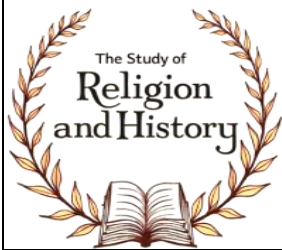
<sup>20</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 242

<sup>21</sup> Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 141

<sup>22</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 205

<sup>23</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 401

<sup>24</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 278



*“The Eighteenth Amendment restored parliamentary sovereignty and marked a decisive shift toward democratic governance.”<sup>25</sup>*

Hasan Askari Rizvi notes:

*“The amendment transferred substantial authority to the provinces, reshaping the federal structure of Pakistan.”<sup>26</sup>*

Ian Talbot adds:

*“It represented an unprecedented level of political consensus among Pakistan’s major political parties.”<sup>27</sup>*

The amendment also removed the president’s power to dissolve parliament and expanded provincial autonomy through the abolition of the Concurrent Legislative List.

### ***Judicial Reforms and Constitutional Amendments Affecting the Judiciary***

Judicial independence has been a central theme in Pakistan’s constitutional evolution, especially after the Lawyers’ Movement (2007–2009). Hamid Khan explains:

*“The post-2008 constitutional reforms strengthened the independence of the judiciary and introduced a more transparent process for judicial appointments.”<sup>28</sup>*

Ayesha Jalal observes:

*“The judiciary increasingly emerged as a key institutional actor capable of influencing political outcomes.”<sup>29</sup>*

Hasan Askari Rizvi writes:

*“The evolving role of the judiciary reflects Pakistan’s gradual transition toward constitutionalism and rule of law.”<sup>30</sup>*

These reforms strengthened judicial review, enhanced transparency in appointments, and reinforced the judiciary’s position as a guardian of the constitution.

Taken together, these amendments illustrate Pakistan’s continuing effort to balance executive authority, parliamentary democracy, federal autonomy, and judicial independence. The constitutional transformation of the post-1973 era demonstrates a gradual, though uneven, movement toward democratic consolidation and institutional maturity.

### ***Section Three: Institutional Power Shifts and Political Consolidation***

Pakistan’s constitutional and political trajectory has continuously been shaped by shifting institutional power relations. Over time, authority has moved between parliament, the executive, the judiciary, and the military establishment, often in response to political crises and regime changes. Scholars frequently describe Pakistan’s governance structure as a dynamic

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<sup>25</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 458

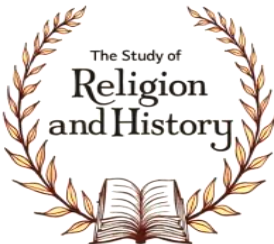
<sup>26</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 231

<sup>27</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 312

<sup>28</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 472

<sup>29</sup> Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 167

<sup>30</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 248

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arena in which constitutional reforms serve both institutional development and political consolidation.

***The Balance of Power between Parliament, Executive, and Judiciary***

The balance among the three branches of government has rarely remained stable in Pakistan’s political history. Constitutional amendments and judicial activism have repeatedly altered the distribution of power. Hamid Khan writes:

*“The constitutional framework of Pakistan has oscillated between parliamentary supremacy and executive dominance, often influenced by political instability.”*<sup>31</sup>

The judiciary has increasingly asserted itself, especially since the early 2000s. Scholars highlight the emergence of judicial activism as a defining feature of modern constitutional politics. Hasan Askari Rizvi states:

*“The judiciary has gradually transformed into a central actor in Pakistan’s political system, exercising extensive powers of judicial review.”*<sup>32</sup>

Ian Talbot notes:

*“The post-2007 era witnessed an assertive judiciary willing to challenge executive authority.”*<sup>33</sup>

This evolving balance reflects a growing, though contested, culture of constitutionalism.

***Constitutional Amendments and the Role of the Military Establishment***

The military establishment has remained a powerful institutional actor in Pakistan’s constitutional evolution. Amendments often reflected negotiated arrangements between civilian governments and military leadership. Ayesha Jalal observes:

*“Pakistan’s constitutional order has frequently been shaped by the need to accommodate military interests within a civilian framework.”*<sup>34</sup>

Hasan Askari Rizvi explains:

*“The military’s institutional cohesion enabled it to influence constitutional change even during civilian rule.”*<sup>35</sup>

Hamid Khan notes:

*“Military regimes often relied on constitutional amendments to legitimize their authority and restructure governance.”*<sup>36</sup>

These observations demonstrate the enduring civil–military dimension of constitutional politics.

***Centralization versus Provincial Autonomy in Pakistan***

The tension between central authority and provincial autonomy has remained a central theme in Pakistan’s constitutional discourse. Early constitutional frameworks favored centralization, largely due to security concerns and administrative challenges. Ian Talbot writes:

<sup>31</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 487

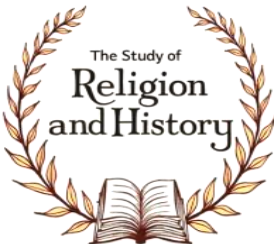
<sup>32</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 259

<sup>33</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 329

<sup>34</sup> Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 182

<sup>35</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 271

<sup>36</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 503

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*“The strong central state was initially viewed as essential for national unity and stability.”<sup>37</sup>*  
 However, demands for provincial autonomy grew over time, culminating in major reforms such as the Eighteenth Amendment. Hamid Khan observes:

*“The expansion of provincial powers represented a major shift toward federalism and democratic decentralization.”<sup>38</sup>*

Hasan Askari Rizvi notes:

*“The rebalancing of federal–provincial relations has been crucial for political stability and national integration.”<sup>39</sup>*

This evolving federal structure reflects a gradual movement toward inclusive governance.

***Political Parties and the Use of Constitutional Reforms for Power Retention***

Political parties have frequently used constitutional amendments to consolidate authority and secure political survival. Ayesha Jalal writes:

*“Constitutional reforms in Pakistan have often served as tools for political consolidation rather than purely institutional development.”<sup>40</sup>*

Lawrence Ziring notes:

*“Political competition frequently translated into constitutional engineering designed to strengthen ruling parties.”<sup>41</sup>*

Hamid Khan emphasizes:

*“The durability of constitutional reforms depends heavily on political consensus and institutional cooperation.”<sup>42</sup>*

The role of political parties demonstrates the strong link between constitutional change and political strategy.

***Accountability Institutions and Their Political Utilization***

Accountability institutions have played a prominent role in Pakistan’s political system, but their independence has often been debated. Hasan Askari Rizvi writes:

*“Accountability mechanisms have frequently been shaped by political considerations and power struggles.”<sup>43</sup>*

Hamid Khan notes:

*“The evolution of accountability institutions reflects Pakistan’s broader struggle to establish transparent and impartial governance.”<sup>44</sup>*

Ian Talbot adds:

<sup>37</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 341

<sup>38</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 512

<sup>39</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 289

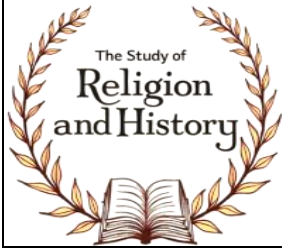
<sup>40</sup> Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 196

<sup>41</sup> Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 288

<sup>42</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 528

<sup>43</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 305

<sup>44</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 541



*“Efforts to institutionalize accountability have often coincided with periods of political transition.”<sup>45</sup>*

The development of accountability frameworks remains an ongoing process shaped by competing political interests.

Overall, institutional power shifts in Pakistan reveal a continuing struggle to balance democratic governance, military influence, judicial independence, and political competition. These dynamics demonstrate the complex relationship between constitutional reform and political consolidation in Pakistan’s evolving democratic landscape.

#### ***Section Four: Constitutional Reforms, Democracy, and Governance***

Pakistan’s experience with constitutional reform demonstrates a continuous effort to strengthen democracy while navigating institutional tensions and governance challenges. Amendments to the Constitution have often been introduced to stabilize democratic institutions, yet they have also emerged during periods of crisis and political contestation. Scholars emphasize that constitutional reform in Pakistan must be understood as both a legal and political process that shapes governance, rule of law, and public trust.

#### ***Democratic Strengthening through Constitutional Amendments***

Constitutional amendments have played an important role in restoring democratic governance, particularly after periods of authoritarian rule. Hamid Khan writes:

*“Constitutional reforms have repeatedly served as instruments for restoring parliamentary supremacy and democratic continuity in Pakistan.”<sup>46</sup>*

The Eighteenth Amendment is widely viewed as a milestone in democratic strengthening because it reduced presidential powers and enhanced parliamentary authority. Hasan Askari Rizvi observes:

*“The amendment marked a transition from a centralized executive model toward a more representative democratic system.”<sup>47</sup>*

Ian Talbot explains:

*“Political consensus surrounding constitutional reform has been a key factor in democratic consolidation.”<sup>48</sup>*

These developments demonstrate how constitutional amendments have functioned as mechanisms for democratic recovery.

#### ***Constitutional Crises and Institutional Conflicts***

Pakistan’s constitutional history has frequently been marked by institutional conflict between the executive, judiciary, and legislature. Ayesha Jalal writes:

*“Constitutional crises in Pakistan often arise from power struggles between competing institutions rather than purely legal disagreements.”<sup>49</sup>*

Lawrence Ziring notes:

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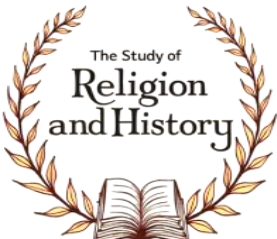
<sup>45</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 355

<sup>46</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 566

<sup>47</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 323

<sup>48</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 371

<sup>49</sup> Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 214

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*“The recurring dissolution of elected governments reflects the fragility of constitutional norms.”<sup>50</sup>*

Hamid Khan adds:

*“Political instability has repeatedly triggered constitutional reinterpretation and institutional confrontation.”<sup>51</sup>*

These crises have shaped Pakistan’s evolving constitutional culture and institutional relationships.

***The Impact of Amendments on Rule of Law and Judicial Independence***

The relationship between constitutional amendments and judicial independence has been a central theme in Pakistan’s legal evolution. Hamid Khan explains:

*“Recent constitutional reforms have strengthened the judiciary’s autonomy and expanded the scope of judicial review.”<sup>52</sup>*

Hasan Askari Rizvi states:

*“The judiciary has increasingly positioned itself as a guardian of constitutionalism and rule of law.”<sup>53</sup>*

Ian Talbot observes:

*“Judicial activism has become a defining feature of Pakistan’s contemporary political landscape.”<sup>54</sup>*

These developments reflect the growing importance of judicial independence in democratic governance.

***Governance Challenges and Administrative Effectiveness***

Despite constitutional reforms, governance challenges continue to affect administrative performance and policy implementation. Ian Talbot writes:

*“Pakistan’s governance challenges are rooted in institutional weakness and political instability.”<sup>55</sup>*

Hasan Askari Rizvi notes:

*“Effective governance requires institutional coordination and political stability.”<sup>56</sup>*

Hamid Khan explains:

*“Administrative effectiveness depends on the consistent application of constitutional principles.”<sup>57</sup>*

These insights highlight the ongoing link between constitutional reform and governance capacity.

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<sup>50</sup> Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 302

<sup>51</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 579

<sup>52</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 593

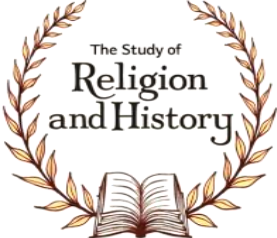
<sup>53</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 338

<sup>54</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 388

<sup>55</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 401

<sup>56</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 349

<sup>57</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 608

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### ***Public Perception of Constitutional Reforms in Pakistan***

Public trust and political legitimacy are deeply influenced by perceptions of constitutional reform. Ayesha Jalal observes:

*“Public confidence in constitutional governance grows when reforms are seen as inclusive and democratic.”*<sup>58</sup>

Lawrence Ziring notes:

*“Repeated constitutional disruptions have contributed to public skepticism toward political institutions.”*<sup>59</sup>

Hamid Khan writes:

*“The long-term success of constitutional reform depends on public trust and political consensus.”*<sup>60</sup>

Public perception remains a decisive factor in the sustainability of constitutional governance. In summary, constitutional reforms in Pakistan have played a crucial role in democratic strengthening while simultaneously reflecting institutional conflicts, governance challenges, and evolving public expectations. The relationship between constitutional change and democratic governance continues to shape Pakistan’s political and legal development.

### ***Section Five: Reform or Political Consolidation? Critical Analysis and Future Directions***

Pakistan’s constitutional history invites a critical reflection on whether constitutional reform has primarily advanced democratic consolidation or served as a mechanism for political survival and power restructuring. While amendments have undeniably contributed to restoring parliamentary supremacy, strengthening federalism, and enhancing judicial independence, scholars continue to debate whether these reforms have produced deep-rooted democratic institutionalization or merely episodic political stabilization. This Section evaluates the democratic impact of constitutional amendments, situates Pakistan’s experience within the broader context of developing democracies, and explores future prospects and policy directions for sustainable constitutional governance.

### ***Evaluating the Democratic Impact of Constitutional Amendments***

The democratic impact of constitutional amendments in Pakistan remains a subject of nuanced scholarly debate. Many analysts argue that constitutional reforms have contributed to the restoration of democratic norms after repeated authoritarian interruptions, yet the depth of democratic consolidation remains uneven.

Hamid Khan writes:

*“Constitutional amendments in Pakistan have repeatedly functioned as instruments for democratic restoration following periods of authoritarian rule.”*<sup>61</sup>

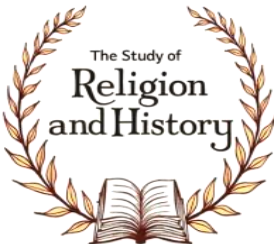
This observation highlights the cyclical nature of Pakistan’s constitutional evolution, where reforms often emerge after crises. While the Eighteenth Amendment restored parliamentary

<sup>58</sup> Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 229

<sup>59</sup> Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 318

<sup>60</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 623

<sup>61</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 641

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supremacy and strengthened provincial autonomy, scholars caution that democratic consolidation requires more than formal constitutional change.

Hasan Askari Rizvi notes:

*“Democratic development depends not only on constitutional frameworks but also on political culture and institutional maturity.”*<sup>62</sup>

Ian Talbot similarly emphasizes the limits of legal reform:

*“Constitutional change can create opportunities for democracy, but its success ultimately depends on the behavior of political actors.”*<sup>63</sup>

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that constitutional amendments have provided essential democratic foundations, yet their transformative impact depends on sustained political commitment and institutional strengthening.

### ***Constitutional Engineering and the Politics of Power Consolidation***

A central critique of Pakistan’s constitutional history is that amendments have frequently been used as tools of political engineering. Rather than purely strengthening democratic institutions, reforms have often been shaped by the immediate interests of ruling elites and regime survival.

Ayesha Jalal writes:

*“Constitutional reform in Pakistan has frequently been driven by the need to secure political authority rather than to strengthen institutional accountability.”*<sup>64</sup>

This perspective reflects the broader view that constitutional change has often been reactive rather than visionary. Amendments introduced during military regimes, such as the Eighth and Seventeenth Amendments, illustrate how constitutional frameworks were reshaped to legitimize executive authority. Lawrence Ziring explains:

*“Pakistan’s constitutional amendments often reflect the balance of power at a given moment rather than a consistent democratic trajectory.”*<sup>65</sup>

Hamid Khan adds a more balanced assessment:

*“While some amendments strengthened executive authority, later reforms sought to reverse these changes and restore democratic governance.”*<sup>66</sup>

This dual character of constitutional engineering reveals the tension between reform as institutional development and reform as political strategy.

### ***Comparative Analysis with Other Developing Democracies***

Pakistan’s constitutional experience shares similarities with other developing democracies that have faced political instability, military influence, and institutional fragility. Comparative political scholarship provides valuable insights into these shared challenges.

Samuel Huntington writes:

*“Political institutionalization is the key to political stability in developing societies.”*<sup>67</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 367

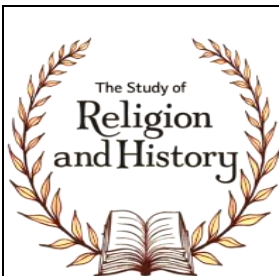
<sup>63</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 417

<sup>64</sup> Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 247

<sup>65</sup> Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 332

<sup>66</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 658

<sup>67</sup> Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 12

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This theoretical framework helps situate Pakistan's experience within a broader global context. Many developing democracies have struggled to balance strong executive leadership with democratic accountability. Francis Fukuyama observes:

*"Successful democracies depend on strong institutions, rule of law, and accountable government."*<sup>68</sup>

Comparative analysis suggests that Pakistan's constitutional challenges are not unique. Countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have similarly relied on constitutional reform to navigate political transitions. However, the long-term success of these reforms depends on institutional continuity and political consensus.

***Prospects for Institutional Stability and Constitutional Continuity***

Looking forward, the prospects for institutional stability in Pakistan depend on maintaining constitutional continuity and avoiding extra-constitutional disruptions. Scholars emphasize that the absence of military intervention since 2008 has created an opportunity for democratic consolidation. Ian Talbot writes:

*"The continuity of democratic governments since 2008 represents a significant shift in Pakistan's political trajectory."*<sup>69</sup>

Hasan Askari Rizvi notes:

*"Long-term constitutional stability requires sustained civilian supremacy and institutional cooperation."*<sup>70</sup>

Hamid Khan highlights the importance of political consensus:

*"Constitutional continuity is strengthened when reforms are based on broad political agreement."*<sup>71</sup>

These perspectives suggest cautious optimism regarding Pakistan's constitutional future.

***Policy Recommendations for Democratic and Constitutional Reform***

Scholarly discussions increasingly focus on policy directions to strengthen democratic governance and constitutionalism in Pakistan. These recommendations emphasize institutional reforms, political consensus, and governance capacity. Francis Fukuyama writes:

*"Effective governance requires a balance between state capacity, rule of law, and democratic accountability."*<sup>72</sup>

Applying this framework to Pakistan suggests several key priorities: strengthening parliamentary oversight, ensuring judicial independence, enhancing provincial governance capacity, and improving accountability institutions.

Ayesha Jalal stresses the importance of inclusive politics:

*"Durable democratic reform requires broad political participation and consensus."*<sup>73</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), 25

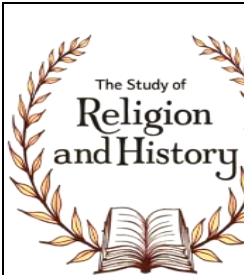
<sup>69</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 438

<sup>70</sup> Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 381

<sup>71</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 673

<sup>72</sup> Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), 512

<sup>73</sup> Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 261

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Hamid Khan concludes:

*“The future of constitutional democracy in Pakistan depends on the consistent application of constitutional principles and the commitment of political leadership.”<sup>74</sup>*

In conclusion, Pakistan’s constitutional reforms represent a complex mixture of democratic progress and political consolidation. While significant strides have been made toward strengthening parliamentary democracy and institutional autonomy, the long-term success of constitutional governance will depend on political maturity, institutional cooperation, and sustained public trust.

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<sup>74</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 689