

## ***China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Civil-Military Relations and Democracy in Pakistan***

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*Paper presented at the 24th European Conference on South Asian Studies (ECSAS),*

*University of Warsaw (Poland) from 27 to 30 July 2016*

### ***Short abstract:***

CPEC is heralded as a game changer for Pakistan's economy, but such a project raises numerous questions, especially with regards to security challenges. In order to guarantee a safe environment for the CPEC, the army is grasping more and more power. This development has a negative impact on civilian checks and balances and increasingly challenges the country's democratic transition.

### ***Long abstract:***

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a multi-billion dollar infrastructure investment project, is heralded as a game changer for Pakistan's economy. As a part of the major development initiative led by China, known as 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR), connecting Asia with Europe, the Middle East and Africa, the CPEC has evoked hopes, interests, and spurred a geopolitical shift (Ze 2015; 2014, October 2014). However, such a megaproject raises numerous questions, especially with regards to the feasibility of its implementation in view of tremendous security challenges. In order to guarantee a secure environment for the CPEC development, the military is expanding its power. This phenomenon significantly affects the country's civil-military relations and civilian control, while challenging the process of democratic transition. To assess the correlation between CPEC development and quality of democracy, the paper applies the 'Heidelberg Model of Civilian Control' (Croissant et al. 2013, 2011 April, 2011, 2010, 2009); it analyses the influence of the military on the decision-making and implementation process vis-à-vis the civilian government, understood as the elected representatives of the people. It will be argued that: First, the way in which the CPEC is being implemented limits the decision-making powers of the civilian government and hampers civilian control over the military. Second, since civilian control of the military is interpreted as a prerequisite for democracy, the CPEC development is undermining the process of democratic transition initiated by the 2013 general elections. Third, to ensure the CPEC development, the military has built-up a parallel governance structure, exercising tremendous executive and judicial powers and side-lining the civilian government.

### ***Keywords:***

Pakistan, Civil-Military Relations, Civilian Control, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

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## 1. Introduction

Pakistan has spent several decades under military rule, subsequently it is considered to be a classic example of a praetorian state (Kukreja 1991; Perlmutter 1977; Rizvi 2004; Shah 2003). The military perceives itself as the sole guardian of national sovereignty and moral integrity, the chief initiator of the national agenda and the arbiter of conflict between social and political forces (Ahmed 2009; Cloughley 2008; Rizvi 2003; Waseem 2007). Furthermore, civilian rule was always characterised by unrestricted and persistent power struggles between government and opposition, between different political institutions (branches of government) and tensions between the central government and the provinces, fuelled by autocratic rule, mismanagement and corruption. This created a situation in which civilians' lost public support and the army was able to build its reputation and 'moral legitimacy' and eventually intervene directly in politics (Wolf 2013, April 1). Subsequently, the military (deliberately or unconsciously) was able to foster the perception that civilians were neither able to form a sustainable, functioning government, nor capable of running the affairs of the state. With this in mind and observing the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and respective projects, one cannot help but feel that it seems history is repeating itself. More concretely, much of the criticism on CPEC focuses on where the concrete routes of the corridor will be built and whether Chinese investments and economic zones (SEZs, industrial and manufacturing hubs) favour Punjab at the expense of the provinces of Baluchistan and KPK (Raza 2015, November 24). Given the level of secrecy surrounding the project, there is no doubt that some of this criticism is justified. However, these debates also miss one significant point: the increasing institutionalization of a formal role for the military in the country's political system.

In order to assess the correlation between CPEC development and quality of democracy, the paper applies the 'Heidelberg Model of Civilian Control'.<sup>2</sup> This model helps to analyse the influence of the military on the decision-making and implementation process vis-à-vis the civilian government, understood as the elected representatives of the people. As such, the paper is based on the hypothesis that civilian control of the armed forces is a *sine qua non* for democratic consolidation. Having said this, the article puts forth the following arguments: Firstly, the way in which the CPEC gets implemented does not only limit the decision-making power of the civilian government but also hampers civilian control of the armed forces. Secondly, since civilian control of the armed forces is interpreted as a *sine qua non* for democratic consolidation, the operationalization of the CPEC is undermining the democratic

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<sup>2</sup> See for 'Heidelberg Model of Civilian Control': Croissant et al. (2013, 2011 April, 2011, 2010, 2009).

transition process initiated by the 2013 general elections. This was the very first time in the history of Pakistan that a transfer of power from one civilian government to another took place following an election (Wolf 2013, July 5). Thirdly, to ensure the implementation of the CPEC, the military was able to set up a parallel governance structure, exercising tremendous executive and judicial powers.

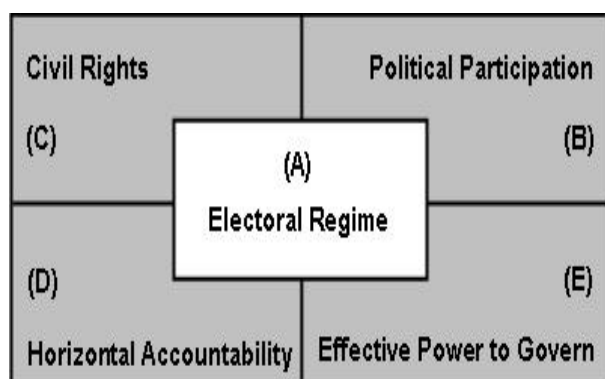
## **2. Analytical framework**

### **2.1 Concept of Embedded Democracy**

To discuss democracy, one must start with the premise that there is a widespread agreement on the notion of ‘people’s sovereignty’. However, there is endless theoretical debate about what might be the best and most suitable realization of that abstract concept. Subsequently, there are numerous definitions of democracy which are derived from different streams of political thinking, ideological convictions and worldviews. Despite this variety, mainstream definitions of democracy understand ‘modern democracy’ as a set of institutional arrangements (form of government), that guarantee that the polity is “governed by the freely expressed will of the people whereby all individuals are to be treated as equals” (Hadenius 1992). Here, it is most important to point out, that the conception of democracy must derive from three democratic core principles (or values), namely the peoples’ sovereignty, equality, and liberty (Brettschneider 2006). The realization of these three principles is sine qua non for democratic rule. There is much disagreement in the literature, not only on how it realizes peoples’ sovereignty, but also on how equality and liberty should be implemented in practice. Having said this, one can identify a wide range of different concepts and definitions of democracy: from minimalist-procedural ‘electoral’ “version that equate democracy with the mechanisms to choose political elites (representatives) (Dahl 1971), to more expansive concepts of liberal, participatory, strong, or deliberative democracy (Diamond 2008). The former one reduces democracy to the notion of the existence of a functioning electoral system and a representative form of government (Dahl 1971; Schumpeter 1942). This has raised criticism among many scholars working on the conceptualisation of ‘modern, liberal democracy’. The basic argument is that ‘electoral minimalism’ is only focusing on one aspect of democracy and is not sufficiently addressing all three essential democratic core values. Therefore, in order to fill this gap the notion of ‘liberal democracy’ adds to the minimum of an electoral system the recognition of universal fundamental civil rights, individual liberties, the rule of law,

accountability and more specific requirements such as civilian supremacy in decision making and civilian control over the armed forces.

In an attempt to translate the theoretical notion of “liberal democracy” into a systematic and integrated framework the multidimensional concept of “embedded democracy” was developed (Merkel 2004; Merkel et al., 2003; Merkel). At the core lies the assumption, that in order to fulfil all three democratic principles in a given political system, a set of institutions must be established and can analytically be disaggregated into five ‘partial regimes’: (A) the electoral regime, (B) the system of political liberties and political participation, (C) the regime of civil rights, (D) the system of horizontal accountability, (E) and institutions that guarantee the effective power for the democratically elected representatives.



Source: Merkel et al., 2003; Merkel, 2004

*Partial regime A* institutionalizes the democratic principle of peoples’ sovereignty and responsive and accountable rule through universal, free, fair and meaningful elections.

*Partial regime B* complements the electoral regime by providing for the necessary political rights of participation and articulation, both are necessary to make elections meaningful instruments of vertical accountability: the rights of free political association and unhindered information.

*Partial regime C* limits the exercise of political power, prevents the abuse of political authority and guarantees individual freedom through a set of civil liberties.

*Partial regime D* prevents the abuse of state power and ensures inter-agency supervision through institutional checks-and-balances between the legislative, executive and judicative branches.

Finally, *partial regime E* includes those institutions that guarantee only democratically elected politicians exercise decision-making powers in all relevant political issues. They prevent extra-constitutional actors from infringing on the legitimate political authorities' power to govern.

When linked together, these partial regimes ensure the healthy functioning of the democratic structures. In this context, each of these partial regimes and its respective institutional arrangements provide the basis of the democratic system as a whole. In other words, in a mature democracy, each of the partial regimes has an analytical set of distinct norms, rules and practices that interact with the other. More concretely, the different regimes are mutually influencing and balancing the functions and influences of the other partial regimes. Only if this "mutual embeddedness" is guaranteed, there can be a functioning and resilient democracy. If any of these parts is left out or limited (infringing upon the norms, rules, or practices like press freedom, violation of human rights, restrictions on freedom of association), this results in the erosion of the liberal character of democracy.

Croissant et al. (2010: 953) argue that if any of the five partial regimes is undermined, 'liberal democracy' deteriorates into 'defective democracy' or – if the damage to the overall system is sufficiently large – leads to democratic collapse<sup>3</sup>. They identify the problem of civilian control of the military in partial regime E (Effective Power to Govern). Against this backdrop, one must point out that in many states the military is threatening democratically elected representatives' effective power to govern (Croissant et al. 2010: 953).

The very features that enable militaries to fulfil their duties, i.e. protecting communities by projecting coercive force towards enemies, also provide them the ability to enforce their will upon the societies (and their respective governments) that created them (Feaver 1999, 1996, Croissant et al. 2010). Therefore, all societies and political regimes must ensure that the country's armed forces are subordinate to legitimate (elected) political decision-makers. As such, civilian control means that the civilian government carries final responsibility for political and military decision-making (Croissant et al. 2010).

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<sup>3</sup> See also Merkel et al. (2003); Merkel and Croissant (2000).

## 2.2 Concept of Civilian Control

This paper refers to “a consensus in democratization literature that civilian control of the military is a sine-qua-none condition for democratic consolidation” (Croissant et al. 2010: 950). “Only if democratically elected political leaders and their appointed officials control the armed forces can democratic rules and processes persist”<sup>4</sup> (Croissant et al. 2010: 950). In line with this argument (without civilian control democracy is impossible) civil-military relations are understood as the distribution of decision-making power between civilians (defined as democratically elected representatives of the people as supreme power) and the armed forces (Croissant et al. 2010: 950).

In this scheme, civilian control marks one pole of a decision-making power continuum, the situation in which ‘civilians make all the rules and can change them at any time’<sup>5</sup>. Croissant et al. (2011 April, 2011, 2010) define civilian control as that the continuous distribution of decision-making power in which civilians alone have the authority to decide on national political issues, politics as well as their implementation. Under civilian control, civilians can freely choose to delegate decision-making power and the implementation of certain policies to the military while the military has no autonomous decision-making power outside the areas specifically defined by civilians. In this context, only civilians determine which respective policies, or certain policy dimensions, the military implements, and they alone define the boundaries between policy-making and policy-implementation. In addition, civilian authorities control sanctioning power vis-à-vis the military, and they can—in principle—revise their delegations at any time<sup>6</sup> (Croissant et Al. 2011, 2010: 955).

On the other pole of the continuum is the military regime, in which the military controls all decisions concerning political structures, processes, and policies and the civilians do not possess any autonomous political decision-making power. In this sense, civilian control is a relative condition, i.e., it is possible to distinguish different degrees of civilian control (e.g., strong or weak, encompassing or limited).

Challenges to civilian decision-making power can take two analytically distinct shapes: formally institutionalized prerogatives and informal contestation. Institutionalized prerogatives describe formal rights by which the military is able ‘to exercise effective control over its internal governance, to play a role within extra-military areas within the state-apparatus, or even to

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<sup>4</sup> See also Dahl (1989).

<sup>5</sup> See also Kohn (1997, 142).

<sup>6</sup> See also Kemp und Hudlin (1992); Pion-Berlin (1992); Kohn (1997); Bland (2001); Feaver (1999; 1996); Welch (1976).

structure relationships between the state and political or social society’<sup>7</sup>” (Croissant et al. 2011: 140, 2010: 956). The dominance of civilian or military leadership in decision-making authority depends on five elements: elite recruitment, public policy, internal security, national defence, and military organization.

The area of *Elite Recruitment* refers to the core defining aspects of the political regime, namely the rules, criteria and processes of recruiting, selecting and legitimizing the holders of political office. Any actor who controls this area thus is able to define “who rules and who decides who rules”<sup>8</sup>. Civilian control over elite recruitment means that the military is proscribed from establishing an alternative channel for access to political office, and, simultaneously, the processes of elite selection in terms of the formation, working, and transfer of political leadership are not subject to the explicit consent or implicit acquiescence of the military (Chambers 2010). “Civilian control over rules of competition is undermined when public offices are excluded from open competition and if the military influences electoral procedures. Civilian control over the rules of participation is constrained if active military personnel are eligible for public office and soldiers influence the formation and dissolution of government” (Croissant et al. 2011: 139-140, 2010: 957).

Meanwhile, the area of *Public Policy* focuses upon all policy fields except the narrowly understood aspects of security and defence policy. This includes (1) all phases of the political decision-making processes, including the identification of political problems to be addressed and their transfer into the political system (agenda-setting); the definition of policy goals and the elaboration of alternative policies to address these problems (policy formulation), and the selection of a concrete policy out of these alternatives (policy adoption’); (2) the implementation of these decisions by the administration. “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). However, “while all policy issues are important to gauge the degree of civilian control over this area, it is particularly relevant if the military has any influence, formal or informal, on the national budget” (Croissant 2011: 140).

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<sup>7</sup> See also Stepan (1988: 93).

<sup>8</sup> See also Taylor (2003: 7).

*Internal security* constitutes a third area of civil-military relations and can be defined in terms of two elements. First, it has a geographic element, focusing on the threats originating within the realm of the states' own territory; the second element stems from the role and the duties of various state agencies. (Chambers 2010). It involves the use of armed forces in a purely domestic environment, which includes public order in emergency situations (including disaster relief), preparation for counterinsurgency warfare and terrorism, domestic intelligence gathering, daily policing and border controlling.<sup>9</sup> "These activities are compatible with civilian control only if civilians have the right to make the decisions on the range, duration and frequency of all internal military operations as well as the civilian institutions, and are able to monitor their implementation" (Chambers 2010, Croissant et. al. 2013, 2011: 140, 2010: 958).

*National Defence* remains the core function of any military and includes all aspects of defence policy, ranging from the development of security doctrines to the deployment of troops abroad and conduct of war (Alagappa, 2001; Trinkunas, 2005). Soldiers, as experts in security matters, are often involved in the formulation and implementation of national defence policies, even in established democracies. Since such policies, especially their implementation, can determine the security of the nation, it is crucial that they remain under civilian jurisdiction and oversight. As such, national defence activities can only be compatible with civilian supremacy when civilians control the range, duration and frequency of these missions and related activities. Additionally, the civilian institutions must be able to effectively oversee the armed forces' implementation of national defence and security policies and to monitor the military's external security missions (Chamber 2010, Croissant et. al. 2011: 140, 2010: 958-959).

Finally, the area of *Military Organization* comprises decisions on all organizational aspects of the military as an institution, which can be organized into two dimensions<sup>10</sup>. The first dimension refers to the material aspects or "hardware" of military organization: force, size and structure, procurement and production of military equipment, as well as other institutional, financial and technological resources of the military. The second dimension ("software"), includes the ideational aspects of military organization (e.g. doctrine and education); and decisions on personnel selection such as recruitment, appointment and retirement (Chambers 2010, Croissant et. al. 2011: 140; 2010: 958-959). One may be able to measure the level of civilian control in this area by the extent to which civilians are able to decide on the 'hardware' and

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<sup>9</sup> See also Collier (1999); Trinkunas (2005).

<sup>10</sup> See also Alagappa (2001); Bland (1999; 2001); Cottey, Edmunds, and Forster (2002a, 2002b); Lambert (2009, 279-296); Pion-Berlin (1992); Stepan (1988).



‘software’ of armed forces’ organisation and the extent to which civilians can set the boundaries of military autonomy in deciding on these armed forces-internal affairs” (Croissant et al. 2011: 140, 2010: 959-960).

### **3. A Pretorian State: The role of the military in Pakistan politics**

Pakistan has been ruled by its military forces for 36 of years between 1947 and 2008, more than the halve time of its existence; unsurprisingly, most analysts agree that Pakistan's political system is largely dysfunctional. Since its independence in 1947, the country oscillated various types of military rulers, political authoritarianism and some democratic intermezzos. However, one must state that despite the rise of electoral politics under Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto (1988-1990, 1993-1996) and Nawaz Sharif (1990-1993, 1994, 1997-1999, 2013-present), this did not result in the comprehensive and sustainable civilianization of the political system (Croissant et al. 2013: 175). The main reason for this is that the “colonial notion of civilian supremacy over the military and the military’s aloofness from politics” (Rizvi 2009; 2007) soon dispersed after the new state of Pakistan came into existence. Since the end of British colonial rule in 1971, Pakistan has seen the emergence of a strong military allied with the country’s bureaucracy. As a result of numerous perceived internal and external threats and challenges<sup>11</sup>, the bureaucrats have become side-lined over time in a power-sharing model and decision-making process by the military. Under the popular elected Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-1977), civilian power was somewhat restored, but this was just another form of power-sharing between civilians (this time elected ones) and the armed forces (Rais 1988). As the army grew in strength and size, the development of the political system became characterized by a lack of institutionalization and chronic instability (Nawaz 2008: xxviii). This trend contributed to an imbalance of power and favoured the armed forces. Simultaneously, this weakened civilian power in the political decision-making process. The succeeding regime of General Zia ul-Haq (1977-1988)<sup>12</sup> seemed to embody the ultimate and institutionalized dominance<sup>13</sup> of the military in politics (Burki and Baxter 1991). This is evident from the unconventional transition to

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<sup>11</sup> For example, territorial dispute over Kashmir with India and a contested border with Afghanistan claiming parts of Pakistan’s territory, socio-economic problems, an under-institutionalized political society (There was no constitution until 1956 and general elections did not occur until 1970), over-bureaucratization of state and politics and unstable civilian governments.

<sup>12</sup> General Zia usurped power through a military coup on July 5, 1977 by unconstitutionally overthrowing the civilian government of Bhutto.

<sup>13</sup> There has been a tendency for the military to institutionalize its political role (especially under Zia ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf) featured by three criteria: (1) the abandonment of former personalized forms of exercising political influence (Ayub Khan 1958-1962 and partly Yahya Khan 1962-1971); (2) the (informal) induction of broader sections of the armed forces into the political system to run the affairs of state; and (3) the constitutional entrenchment of a political role for the armed forces, e.g. the introduction of the 8th Amendment.

civilian rule between 1988 and 1999, which led to a situation in which civilian officials only barely seemed to survive in office amidst immense military power (Shafqat 1997). While at the end of this period, it seemed that civilian officials under Nawaz Sharif (1997 – 1999) were able to change the rules of the game; ultimately the military carried out a putsch and remained in power from 1999 until 2008 under the dictatorship of General (later president) Pervez Musharraf. After the successful 2013 general elections that marked the first transfer of power between two elected civilian governments, Pakistan appeared to be witnessing the rise of civilian rule. But despite the transition to elected government under a civilian president (traditionally the military used the position of president to exercise formal influence over the government, civilian proxy), the country's political process remains under military tutelage, and civilians have failed to achieve any fundamental changes in civil-military relations (Croissant 2013: 176). Subsequently, up until today the military top brass maintain crucial influence in all political decision-making areas, especially those perceived as essential for the country's internal and external security. In this context, terrorism, foreign policy regarding India and Afghanistan, the Kashmir issue, nuclear policy, and issues which relate to their corporate interests like defence budget, procurements, and business activities (Siddiq 2009; 2003) are primarily controlled by the military.

In sum, the civilians showed their inability to deal with major economic development and security challenges. In consequence, the military perceives itself as the sole saviour of the nation against threats to Pakistan's integrity, sovereignty and statehood. Throughout the years, the military became so deeply entrenched in all levels of the Pakistani state, that they do not depend on any formal prerogatives to exercise influence over the political decision-making process or to secure their interests. Until this day, Pakistan has not experienced "civilian supremacy", meaning that elected civilians exercised control over the countries security forces<sup>14</sup> (Wolf 2013, April 1). This observation is important, as this paper argues this type of control is a sine qua non for democracy (Croissant et al. 2010). The lack of civilian control does not only limit the powers of elected administrations, but also creates anomalies regarding the electoral regime, political liberties, political participation and horizontal accountability. Therefore, Pakistan must be classified as a 'defective democracy' - which is only partly free (Freedom House, 2016) – taking into account the excessive powers of military and intelligence services and influence over the civilian government. This in fact allows them to manoeuvre, develop and implement its own strategies to gain control over the CPEC project.

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<sup>14</sup> Understood as regular and paramilitary forces as well as intelligence agencies.

#### **4. The CPEC in the context of civil-military relations and civilian control**

Praised as Pakistan's new economic lifeline, CPEC is supposed to provide the essential link between the 'land based belt and the sea road'. In order to achieve this, the CPEC will connect Kashgar in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region with Gwadar Port on the Baluchistan coast in Pakistan's south-west (Aamir 2015, February 7; Wolf 2013, March 24). According to the plans, the CPEC will be implemented through a '1+4' cooperation structure (Rizvi 2015): the Economic Corridor at the centre, Gwadar Port, energy, infrastructure and industrial collaboration as the four key areas. In order to operationalise this endeavour, the corridor combines cross-sectional components of infrastructure, trade, connectivity, transport, energy and services, among others. It is expected that the CPEC will boost the country's economic growth (Wolf 2016, March 16), attract much needed foreign investments, and improve the social and economic conditions in the poorer provinces. In brief, the CPEC is portrayed as a unique opportunity to change the country's economic outlook and push Pakistan's political and geostrategic standing in the region. However, besides several political, administrative, and environmental hurdles, the biggest challenge for Pakistan is to guarantee a secure and stable environment for the development of the corridor. Due to the disappointing record of the federal government in Islamabad fighting terrorism and militancy, the military increasingly took over respective decision-making and implementation processes, weakening the power of the civilian government (Rizvi 2015, September 6).

At the moment, in the context of CPEC development, it is argued here that Pakistan is witnessing a total absence of civilian control. For the purposed of this article, civilian control is "defined as civilians having exclusive authority to decide on national politics and their implementation. Under civilian control, civilians can freely choose to delegate decision-making power and the implementation of certain policies to the military while the military has no autonomous decision-making power outside those areas specifically defined by civilians" (Croissant et al. 2013, 2011 April, 2011, 2010, 2009). As such, full-fledged civilian control requires that civilian authorities enjoy uncontested decision-making power in all significant policy areas, namely Elite Recruitment, Public Policy, Internal Security, External Defence, and Military Organisation. If the military gain dominance in any of these areas, civilian decision making powers are challenged.

Based on this concept of civilian control, one can identify several indications for the further weakening of civilian decision-making power and democratic governance on the central and provincial level.

#### 4.1 Elite Recruitment

Basically, one can observe that Pakistan has a long and unfortunate record of military influence in the area of elite recruitment; analyzing the military's influence on the electoral process, there are various "electoral projects" on the national and regional levels. The military's role in the parliamentary sphere gained particular momentum as political parties and their representatives (*inside-* as well as *outside* the parliamentary sphere) failed to develop a constructive relationship between government and opposition (Wolf and Kane 2010: 174-176). Furthermore, key political players are often driven by personal rivalries and bitter conflicts. With the help of the intelligence services, politicians manipulated elections prior to 2008 to produce a specific outcome that ensures a subsequent role for the armed forces (Wolf 2013, April 1: 26). With the help of the state machinery, the military successfully played political parties and leaders off against each other (Croissant et al. 2013: 291). In order to prevail in the polls, political parties were hampered by the influence of the military establishment, manipulating party rifts, creating new parties, pressuring individual candidates to withdraw in elections, restricting electoral campaigns or acting in favour of certain political parties (Wolf 2013, April 1: 26). Even elected governments found their authority undermined in several ways, e.g. through facilitating votes of confidence by vote buying (horse trading) and were consequently ousted. All these complications inhibited the development of a functioning party system. The policy of creating tension ('divide and rule') between the different political leaders and their respective parties did not only lead to increased factionalism, it also paralysed the parliamentary process and frustrated the progression of a constructive relationship between opposition and government (Wolf 2013, April 1: 26).

Finally, the 2008 and 2013 general elections appeared to be a critical juncture in the election process, as the military did not try to influence the electoral process and limited itself to the its role as defined by the civilian government. As such, the military appeared to have given up – at least temporarily – control over government formation (Croissant et. al. 2013: 191). At the moment, there are no indicators that the military's activities regarding CPEC impact the elections; however, considering civil-military relations it would be important to monitor upcoming elections, especially during the electoral campaigns and with regard to those who are critical of CPEC in general and the military's role in particular.

## 4.2 Public Policy

Public Policy, as far as it is not related to the corporate interests of the military, is the second area in which the of civilian government exercises some level of control (Wolf 2013, April 1; 2010), at least until the CPEC launch. However, it is crucial here to mention that key sections of Pakistan's public policies, especially foreign policy (e.g. India-Pakistan relations, Kashmir conflict) have been perceived as both inseparable from and subordinate to national defence policy by the top echelons of the armed forces (Wolf and Kane 2010: 180). Indeed, there is a similar logic within the military that links all policy fields: foreign and defence policies are a matter of survival and as such it seriously affects domestic policy (Pattanaik 2000). This view is also found in the civilian sphere: Pakistan's security and territorial integrity is more important than its economic development.

Although such development and self-reliance contribute to strengthening the nation's defence capabilities, the defence requirements of this sovereignty have to be met first (Bhutto 2009: 117). While the dominance of the military in this area is a product of both external and internal factors, the internal are the most significant ones. Indeed, the civilian government supported the emerging role of the armed forces as an actor in decision-making in all fields of public policy, especially in foreign, economic and financial (budgetary) policies. Here, the military was first a mentor as well as an arbitrator and then the monopolist. It was able to manipulate and control not only the institutions of decision-making but also the political behavior of civilian actors. In addition, the armed forces were able to extend and consolidate their influence over the appointment of military officers (both active and retired) in managing and controlling positions of civilian authorities and ministries (Rizvi 2003; Shafqat 1997: 35).

In this context, the establishment of the military Apex Committees at federal and provincial levels, combined with a lack of parliamentary oversight by the national and provincial assemblies seriously hampers decision-making power of the government. In other words, most of the important decisions related to CPEC are made by this military-bureaucratic hybrid; enhancing civil-military interaction to improve the security situation in general and to counter terrorism in particular (ISPR 2015, January 3). In this context, the initial purpose of the Apex Committees was to coordinate security and implement the National Action Plan (NAP)<sup>15</sup>, which was drafted jointly by the government, the parliament and the army (Jaffrelot 2016, April 1). While the initial (and official) function of the Apex Committees relates to institutionalizing (and legitimize) the "process of decision-making via consultation between democratically

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<sup>15</sup> Source: [http://infopak.gov.pk/InnerPage.aspx?Page\\_ID=46](http://infopak.gov.pk/InnerPage.aspx?Page_ID=46).

elected authorities and the military” (Croissant et al. 2013: 192), it is obvious that the supreme authority on most crucial issues lies with the army.

Over time, the Apex Committees have become more important decision-making bodies than the federal and provincial cabinets as well as specialist civilian institutions. This is evident from the fact that federal and provincial cabinets meet less frequently compared to federal and provincial Apex Committees (Rizvi 2015, December 27). Furthermore, Apex committees are not just dealing with security related issues, rather they function as core institutions dealing with the implementation of all kind of CPEC related projects. Against this backdrop, one should keep in mind the dominant role the Pakistani Army has played in country politics, either directly (through military coup and martial law) or indirectly (influencing the government decision makers to act in the interest of the military). What is essentially different about the Apex committees however, is that this setup essentially merges the military formally with the civilian government, it enhances their role in administrative management and strengthens their position in all decision making areas relating to CPEC and beyond (Rizvi, 2015, August 9).

Moreover, this trend dates back to the enactment of 21st constitutional amendment that led to new institutional arrangements and granted special powers for the armed forces and the establishment of military courts (Wolf 2015, May 14)<sup>16</sup> While there is no officially confirmed correlation between the 21st constitutional amendment and the establishment of military courts, both measures focus on improving the security situation; which in turn is a *sine qua-non* condition and a Chinese pre-requisite for continuing to support the CPEC project.

However, the 21st Amendment entails a significant power transfer to the military. Especially the fact that civilians can be subjected to military jurisdiction is a major cause of concern. It is not quite clear if the proposed ‘special tribunals’ will function under the supervision of the country’s highest courts or if there will be any effective parliamentary oversight. In this regard, one should mention that it is a generally accepted international principle that military courts should have no jurisdiction when it comes to civilians (Decaux 2010). In other words, the judicial system must ensure that civilians accused of a criminal offence of any nature, including terrorism, are brought to justice by civilian courts. Military courts in many countries have a

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<sup>16</sup> The 21st amendment to the Constitution also provides for entering the Pakistan Army Act 1952, the Pakistan Army Act 1953, the Pakistan Navy Act 1961 and the Protection of Pakistan Act, 2014 in the first schedule of the Constitution. The first schedule of the Constitution contains laws which are exempted from the application of Article 8 (1) and (2) of the Constitution. These articles are part of Chapter 1 of the Constitution relating to the fundamental rights (Pakistan Today, 6.1.2015). More concrete, the 21st Amendment Act provides for the creation of military speed trial courts (STCs) for offences relating to terrorism, waging war against Pakistan and prevention of acts threatening the security of the country. The Act shall remain in force for two years starting January 7, 2015 after the President signed the Act (Pakistan Today, 6.1.2015).

negative reputation or record of offering a fair trial, especially regarding procedural and fundamental rights of the defendant (Decaux 2010).

Considering the underlying causes of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism into account, it is highly doubtful that Pakistan's public safety will improve or be guaranteed with the setup of military courts. This move is yet another sign of the dysfunctional nature of political system and the incompetence or unwillingness of the civilian government 'establishment' to deal with the tremendous challenges the country faces. In contrast, it is obvious for many international counter-terrorism experts that Pakistan's security forces have continuously nurtured terrorist groups in the country, particularly in the loosely-controlled tribal areas in the north-west bordering Afghanistan. Subsequently, the civilian government was unable to reach an agreement on how to deal with the militants (Jaffrey 2015, January 6), nor did they have the sufficient decision-making power and competence to implement a comprehensible counter-terrorist strategy. As such, it would be inaccurate to say they were coerced into accepting special military courts; there is also a high level of unwillingness of the civilian leadership and political class to tackle militancy and fundamentalism and take responsibility themselves. Hence, the military is once again in charge and the civilians remain side-lined by their own inadequacy; yet another example of shifting of responsibilities at the cost of democratic institutions. However, there is still time for the civilian government to carry out necessary substantial reforms to improve the judicial criminal system. Ultimately, it is also noteworthy that the 21st Amendment, despite appearances, is not just a short-sighted knee-jerk response (Jaffrey 2015, January 6) or 'extraordinary measure for an extraordinary situation' by civilians (Dawn, 2015 January 6). Quite the contrary, it is a well-planned, gradual strategy, intended to build up a formal role of the military in the country's political landscape. Some analysts would call it a 'constitutional coup' or as describe it as "a monument to the betrayal of the civilian, democratic cause" (Dawn, 2015, January 3). Military justice without transparency and oversight is undermining the democratic process in Pakistan, which lacks the experience, willingness and tradition to consolidate political institutions under civilian control. Therefore, the 21st Amendment is not only indicative of the willingness of the military leadership to openly direct the political process, but also indicates that the country is once again under the auspices of military rule. Here, one must consider the fact that the latest constitutional manoeuvring bolsters the existing informal dominance of the armed forces through the strongest formal institutional role for the military in the history of Pakistan's political decision making process. By handing over more power to an institution that has a history of undermining and arbitrarily changing the Constitution is more than just an act

of negligence. The 21st Amendment may well be the surrender of any previous democratic achievements and further widens the path of deeply entrenched authoritarian tendencies. Also, recent history shows that Pakistan's security circles have an idiosyncratic definition of terrorism that is not necessarily in line with the understanding of this phenomenon in the international community. Subsequently, observers fear that these military trials will not be confined to terrorism charges but will also be used against political opposition, the media and separatist groups, especially in those in Balochistan province (Jaffrey 2015, January 6).

While the civilian government has some level of decision-making power in Pakistan's foreign policy, as long as their actions remain in line with the military's goals; one must point out that all major foreign policy decisions are made by the military, especially those regarding Kashmir, India and Afghanistan. In this context the definition of the Up until this day, each attempt by the civilian government to reach a rapprochement deal with India has been boycotted and undermined by the military (Rizvi 2003: 211-212). Furthermore, the military exercises also an important influence in Pakistan-Iran relations, de facto undermining Prime Minister Sharif's foreign policy with both countries. For example, while Mr. Sharif promised Riyadh that Pakistan would provide soldiers for the war in Yemen, Chief-of-Army-Staff (COAS) General Sharif soon "checked him – refusing to provide the troops because of the repercussions on domestic sectarian harmony" (Alam 2015, December 4). In addition, the military's unwillingness and/or inability to eradicate cross-border terrorism -militant groups are using Pakistani soil for recruitment, training, and equipment is a severe stumbling block in Pakistan-hampers relations with Afghanistan, obstructing constructive cooperation.

This military's behaviour an important factor relating to cross-border connectivity of the CPEC; necessary in order to achieve maximum use of the economic corridor. Basically the CPEC has the potential to function as a critical juncture in Pakistan's struggle to achieve economic growth and can be a 'game changer' in regional cooperation and integration. Insofar as CPEC may have positive impacts on regionalization depends on its ability to increase regional connectivity as much as possible. Therefore, it is most important that the CPEC will be integrated in transport, energy and trade infrastructure networks beyond the Pakistan-China nexus (Wolf 2016, June 28). As CPEC is linked with Kashgar and its growing special economic zone-, a successful entrenchment into the northern networks is ensured, connecting the CPEC with Central Asian States, Russia and Europe. However, it will be most important that Pakistan includes its neighbors as they would greatly benefit from this project if it succeeds. Subsequently, Pakistan should



open up the CPEC to the West (Iran and Afghanistan) and to the East (India); only then can it make a significant impact on regional connectivity and may become a game changer for regional cooperation in South Asia.

For any real change to occur, a normalization of Pakistan-India relations and a constructive Pakistan-Iran relationship are essential preconditions. In the wake of the new US-Iran nuclear deal and subsequent removal of sanctions, Iran's newly re-established position in international relations will open up new opportunities for cooperation with Pakistan. A successful eastward orientation would not only help deepen regional cooperation but offers tremendous opportunities for the CPEC in general and the Western alignment of the economic corridor in particular. The cooperation in energy and trade would benefit much from a rapprochement between Islamabad and Tehran (Wolf 2016, June 28).

But most important is the normalisation of Pakistan-India relations, free from any ideological and security oriented parameters; instead there must be a greater emphasis on trade and economic cooperation. Therefore, a fundamental change in the mindset of Pakistan's military is a prerequisite, including a substantial reassessment of foreign relations, a subsequent reduction of threat perceptions, and most importantly the transfer of decision-making power to the civilian government. However, at the moment it seems that the army's involvement in the CPEC project further entrenches the military's central role in foreign affairs. Not only did this lead to an increase of diplomatic activities beyond military-to-military contacts, but also the army's involvement in entities such as the International Forum on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Despite the fact that the International Forum is hailed as the first platform on which top civil and military organisations with the common goal meet to promote the common objective of building the CPEC, the composition of the Pakistani delegation during its first meeting clearly emphasises the strong influence of the military in this bilateral entity (The Nation 2015, August 17). In sum, the engagement of the military in all aspects of the CPEC project shows they are solidifying their influence on public policy but also expand their decision-making power. In contrast – other than superficial influence on foreign policy and areas of economic interests of the military – the civilian government has little room to manoeuvre.

### 4.3 Internal Security

Since its independence, Pakistan has been in a state of a political instability and the military has been highly involved in state building activities (e.g. infrastructure development, water and energy schemes) as well as internal security operations. Initially the military tried not to be drawn into the “handling of law and order situations”;<sup>17</sup> however, every Pakistani government requested this involvement from the military, a phenomenon which has been authorised in Pakistan’s various constitutions. While this influence was one of the main sources for the military’s self-confidence and legitimacy to intervene in Pakistani politics (Wolf and Kane 2010:187-188); it then dictated its own function to include the management of external security challenges as well as internal security threats. Regarding the latter, it promotes an image of itself as the “ultimate guarantor of the country’s internal stability and territorial integrity” (Talbot 2002: 322). Indeed, the military was perceived by its leadership as the most sophisticated and functional instrument to tackle the many socio-economic and political challenges of the country. This also explains the military’s air of superiority in state-building vis-à-vis elected politicians (Wolf 2013, April 1; Wolf 2012; Wolf and Kane 2010). This attitude evident in their approach regarding the CPEC project, they find neither implementation nor decision-making should rest completely in civilian hands (Pattanaik 2000).

One can state that the challenge of ensuring security for the CPEC development has had the most significant impact on civil-military relations and civilian control in Pakistan in decades. The increasing autonomy of the army in the area of internal security -especially since the country joined officially the US-led “Global War against Terror”- shows in the army’s ability to define, formulates and implements its own policy agenda separately from the civilian decision-making process. For example, they have full control over the size, scope and duration of domestic missions, as seen during the unilateral decision to launch the Zarb-e-Azb Operation<sup>18</sup> in the summer of 2014 (Zahid, 2015, July 10). The decisions to extent the duration (Haider 2015, July 3), as well as geographical scope of this anti-terrorist campaign has also been decided by the armed forces themselves. Zarb-e-Azb (Wolf, June 2015) initially focused

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<sup>17</sup> This is understood as aid-to-civilian-power missions, the objective of which has been to restore civilian authority in law and order crises or to cope with natural calamities (e.g. in East Pakistan there occurred the Bengali-Urdu language crisis; various food crises; and the Dhaka police riots; while West Pakistan was confronted with the Karachi riots and the Ahmedia crisis, all of which transpired in the 1950s). (Cheema 2002: 122).

<sup>18</sup> Operation *Rast-e-Rath* (27 April-30 June 2009) is another interesting example for Pakistan’s autonomy in internal security decision making. Operation *Rast-e-Rath* or *Rah-e-Nijat* refers to a full-fledged military action in the Swat district of the Malakand Division of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) in Pakistan, aiming to crush the followers of the militant organization *Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi* (TNSM) as well as Taliban elements, operating in this area. Subsequently to counter similar extremist elements in the South Waziristan Agency, Operation *Rah-e-Nijat* was carried out. See for more details: Noor 2009.

on the border areas of Afghanistan, but soon the army declared the whole territory of Pakistan would be included in the area of operation. In this context, the main (official) goal of the country's security circles is to link CPEC with the aim of achieving a 'terror free Pakistan'.<sup>19</sup> In the words of Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Raheel Sharif: "We [Pakistan's security forces] will not stop unless we achieve our end objective of a terror-free Pakistan" irrespective of the costs (Haider 2015, July 3). These costs took the form of remarkable human and material resources but also the willingness of the soldiers to side-line civilians and to scrutinize the latest achievements in democratic transitions for the sake of CPEC's implementation. Another example of autonomous decision-making by the army is the Karachi security operations, the military guided actions against terrorists and to root out violent groups, including extortionists, criminal mafias and armed wings of political and religious parties<sup>20</sup> (Rizvi 2015, August 7). The situation is very similar situation to Zarb-e-Azb: the decision to carry out decisive measures against terrorists was made by the military and the rangers (a paramilitary force headed by the army) themselves (Rizvi 2015, August 7) and the civilian and the civilian government were informed after the decision were made.

Last but not least, due to mismanagement of the project (lack of political will, capacities, transparency and communication) and the halve-hearted attempts of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's administration to deal with Jihadist terrorists and militants in the National Action Plan (NAP), created another opportunity for the army another opportunity to call on the 'doctrine of necessity' and take over. In other words, by describing the civilian government as incompetent to ensure security and stability –a crucial pre-requisite for the corridor- serves as a justification to act autonomously and to take over the implementation of the NAP and the CPEC development. In sum, until now the civilians showed their inability to deal with major economic development and security challenges. Instead it seems that the politicians chose to identify the military as the sole saviour of the nation against threats to Pakistan's internal security. Consequently, civilian lost control over the CPEC decision-making process in internal security.

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<sup>19</sup> The operation Zarb-e-Azb was launched in North Waziristan (NWA) on June 15, 2014, following a major terrorist attacks (especially attacks on Karachi's international airport & Peshawar school attack) and the failure of peace negotiation between the government/army and Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan/TTP. The campaign has been bolstered by a surge of 170,000 troops, almost a third of Pakistan's entire military. Besides the TTP, the major targets were the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Al Qaeda, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement. (Sial, December 2014; Wolf, June 2015; Zahid, 10.7.2015).

<sup>20</sup> The security forces have arrested over 58,000 criminals. Of them, 9,570 were absconders while 630 were proclaimed offenders. Others apprehended during the operation included 1,731 murderers, 713 terrorists, 517 extortionists and 118 kidnappers. Security forces also recovered 15,612 illegal weapons during the operation. Source: [http://infopak.gov.pk/InnerPage.aspx?Page\\_ID=46](http://infopak.gov.pk/InnerPage.aspx?Page_ID=46)

#### 4.4 External Defence

Since the country's independence, especially after the first Indo-Pakistan war over Kashmir, the military controlled defence and military policy and particularly Pakistan's relations with India and Afghanistan (Wolf and Kane 2010: 185). Also, the country's nuclear weapons programme is the sole domain of the armed forces and civilians are excluded from having any meaningful influence over the planning and implementation in this area<sup>21</sup> (Bhimaya 1994; Waseem 1994: 43; 2013, April 1). In other words, a political practice developed in which matters of national security (external defence) became the sole responsibility of the higher defence administration and the military echelons. Even after the latest transition to more civilian rule in 2008, elected leaders remained effectively side-lined in External Defence decision-making.

Against this backdrop, there are indications that the CPEC project is further entrenching the dominant role of the army of beyond matters of national security. The increase of the country's security cooperation with China alongside the common economic corridor project serves as an example since it appears to be organised by the military, at least on the Pakistani side.

To deepen the security-military cooperation, Islamabad and Beijing agreed to intensify collaboration in defence, counter-terrorism, and space and maritime technology (Daily Times 2015, April 21; Syed 2015, April 21). To give life to this additional military arrangement, alongside the pledged funds for CPEC, China promised to deliver eight submarines, worth between \$4 billion and \$5 billion (Detsch 2015, April 21; Shams 2015, April 20). This is likely to heighten Indian and US concerns that Gwadar will not only be used for economic purposes but will also serve as a major naval base for Chinese and Pakistani Navy. The fact that China helped to build-up Pakistan's nuclear weapon capabilities and that the new deal will also include cooperation in civil nuclear energy (Daily Times 2015, April 21)<sup>22</sup> creates an even bigger fear in New Delhi. Furthermore, to enhance ideological and intellectual cooperation, a new joint Pakistan-China think tank will be launched, focused solely on research and development of the CPEC, called "Research and Development International (RANDI)" (Daily Times 2015, April 19). As such, RANDI should serve as a 'Information Corridor' to promote perspectives, data and information for policymakers, students, specialists, scholars and companies of both countries" (Daily Times 2015, April 19). It is assumed that this think tank will have a lot

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<sup>21</sup> For example, the decision to go for a further enrichment of the nuclear weapon program was clearly made by the military top echelon. In contrast, civilians were made responsible only to find a diplomatic solution for the consequences (international sanctions) (Kukreja 2003: 237).

<sup>22</sup> "Given how important nuclear weapons are to the South Asian nation's military capabilities and even identity, the significance attached to China's essential role in the nuclear program can hardly be overstated." (Andrew Small quoted in Domínguez, 2015, January 15).

influence, far beyond CPEC matters, and is a step towards enhancing strategic communication and coordination to safeguard common Sino-Pakistani interests (Daily Times 2015, April 21). The fact that Beijing offers to act as a mediator in Pakistan talks with the Taliban in Afghanistan indicates the direction RANDI research could take (Detsch 2015, April 21). In this context, one should mention that there is a departure from China's official policy of non-interference in the domestic politics of other countries and it is most likely a shift away from its classic non-aligned foreign policy. Consequently, the extraordinary support for Pakistan, as old friend and 'quasi-ally', can be seen as a critical juncture in the way in which China's handles bilateral relations. However, there are indicators that the Pakistani army uses security cooperation with China not only to play a role in security matters, but also to get a stake in administrative and management affairs of the CPEC project (Panda 2016, April 20; Rana 2016, April 16). In this context it is crucial to mention that the military submitted an informal proposal to the civilian government to set up a new institution: the CPEC Authority. This government body should function as a "consultative forum on the pattern of Apex Committees"<sup>23</sup> to ensure a trouble-free implementation of the economic corridor with China (Ghumman 2016, February 10). Furthermore, COAS General Sharif had the vision to integrate CPEC as "part of the NAP against terrorism". In other words, the army seeks to interpret a major development project as an instrument to eradicate terrorism under its own guidance (Daud 2016, June 8). While, until now Prime Minister Sharif and his administration rejected this idea to introduce this additional bureaucratic layer with strong military influence (February 10; Panda 2016, April 20; Rana 2016, April 16). COAS Sharif did not accept this decision and proposed the matter to the Chinese Prime Minister during his visit in May 2016. During his stay, Pakistan's top general emphasized the significance of military-to-military relations for China-Pakistan ties and actively attempted to convince the Chinese leadership to see economic cooperation and security collaboration as two sides of the same coin, or in COAS Sharif's words they should be pushed forward "like two wheels" (Daud 2016, June 8). If this trend continues, the military can be expected to be more adamant and assertive in its attempts to control the CPEC in general and in the area of public policy in particular (Kaura 2016, May 2).

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<sup>23</sup> The basic concept behind the proposal is to create a body exclusively for the CPEC which can be used by the major stakeholders (namely provincial governments and the security actors) to present their ideas regarding project planning and implementation to the executing authority, the federal government (Ghumman 2016, February 10). The new authority is proposed to be headed by a chairman, who is to be assisted by director generals, responsible for implementation of the CPEC projects (Rana 2016, April 16)

#### **4.5 Military Organisation**

During the first years of independence, there was little military organization to speak of and the military faced serious administrative and management challenges (Khan 1967). These were not only caused by the partition process but also by the unstable civilian governments who lacked the capacity to manage Pakistan's state affairs. With regard to organisational structures, the armed forces had to build "from scratch" and were overwhelmed with constant "aid-to-civilian-power" missions (Cohen 1984: 33; Cohen 1983). Furthermore, the military underwent an extensive process of "Nationalization and Re-organization" (Rizvi 1987: 30-34). However, over time the military leadership amassed influence and took over organization up to a point that the officers' corps rejected any civilian influence in its internal affairs. They argued it is something that "is against the institutional norms of the armed forces and will translate into risks and threats for organisational coherency", it not only upsets the command hierarchy but also to politicizes and destabilises the military (Khakwani 2003: 11). To sum up, civilian decision-making in the area of military organisation is perceived by most soldiers as efforts create dissension within the ranks, especially among the corps commanders (Khakwani 2003). Generally speaking, the military reject any attempts by the civilian government to establish supremacy (Wolf and Kane 2010: 191); it is no surprise that the Prime Minister and the government became totally sidelined in all its internal affairs (Nawaz, 2008, 481-482). For example, the fact that the civilian government never amended the defence budget and service conditions (Rizvi, 2003, 205) of military business activities (Siddiq, 2009) is a strong indicator of total military dominance in that area (Wolf 2012, May 2018; 2012). Actually, beside the symbolic appointments of top senior officers, civilians abandoned attempts to interfere in matters of military organization (Wolf 2013, April 1). That civilian decision-making power in the area of military organization remained minimal can be also seen in the CPEC development. Here one can state that the military made the fully autonomous decision to provide security forces (The Indian Express 2016, May 17) to protect Chinese workers and investments and to set up special forces in Baluchistan (Reuters 2016, February 8) and Sindh (Tunio 2016, January 20), dedicated solely to the protection of the CPEC and respective projects. In sum, one can state that the CPEC helped to further entrench the pattern that decision-making power in the area of military organization is completely out of the hands of civilians.

#### **5. Final thoughts**

Since Pakistan became an independent state, the country experienced several changes in the role of the military in politics (Croissant et. Al. 2013:191) while undermining any attempts of

institutional civilian control and ultimately, the consolidation of democracy. Consequently, the entire process of democratization in the country highly irregular (Khakwani, 2003, 23); there is no clear-cut transition from a definite end of an authoritarian area towards the beginning of an uninterrupted, linear process of stabilization and consolidation of democracy. Instead, the political development is characterised by a persistent sequence of transitions between democratic and military or semi-military regime types. After the initial phase of bureaucracy-military domination (1947-1972), the country witnessed three attempts towards democratization; however, all three attempts can be explained as a response to military rule, producing national elected leaders (Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif) and political parties (e.g. Pakistan People Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), or the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founded and lead by Imran Khan) (cf. Shafqat, 1997, 256). The paradox is that on one side, democratic transitions were caused and facilitated by political interventions of the armed forces, but on the other side, the democratization phases were conditioned and truncated by the military. The main reason for this is that the civilians were unable to institutionalize civilian control over the armed forces. Against this backdrop, the implementation of the CPEC project and the need to ensure its overall security, as well as to reach the goal of a 'terror free' Pakistan, the military sees a tremendous rise in activities and influence. Their current engagement created the opportunity for the armed forces to continue and extend its informal influence in decision-making but also established the strongest institutional role of the army in the country's politics. As such, the military's engagement with the CPEC framework affects at least four out of the five areas of civilian control ('elite recruitment' remains the only unaffected area).

Despite the fact that the decision-making takes place through mutual consultation in institutional mechanism (Apex Committees, International Forum on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor), indicating some degree of power-sharing between military and civilians, the supreme authority for policy formulation of internal security and national defence is the military. Furthermore, the armed forces remain fully autonomous in military organisation. Public policy -as far as it is not related with the corporate interests of the military- is the second area (besides Elite Recruitment) that entails some kind of civilian control. However, due to the fact that the CPEC is both a corporate mega project but also a development initiative, the military has ample opportunity to intervene in the remaining 'civilian policy resorts'. In other words, since the military looks to control as much of the CPEC project as possible, and as it is extending its role in it, civilian decision-making power in public policy is in severe decline. Additionally, the Prime Minister's involvement in the 'Panama Papers' (BBC 2016, April 21)

scandal weakens his position and that of the government, creating additional momentum for the military to extend its leverage within the area of public policy (Notezai 2016, May 11).

Against this backdrop, the way in which the civilian government handles the CPEC project, especially in light of the accusations of endemic corruption in the Sharif administration, enhances the perception that the civilian government is not capable of governing effectively. This is further strengthening the military's 'doctrine of necessity' to intervene in politics, not only regarding internal and external security related affairs but also regarding the country's social and economic progress in general and the implementation of the CPEC in particular. So, in order to carry out the essential tasks related to the economic corridor project, the military resorts to their traditional 'help-yourself' attitude. It then created 'reserved domains' in public policy, like its own business activities (MILBUS, see Siddiqi 2009) or a foreign policy independent and separate from the rest of the government; for example, it has an autonomous relationship with the US government. Based on these domains, especially the military large business enterprises like the semi-military Frontier Works Organisation (FWO)<sup>24</sup> or the increasing military own diplomacy with China, the military has some extraordinarily effective instruments at its disposal to engage in the CPEC project and in all other related decision-making areas. In sum, one must state that the CPEC is another lost opportunity to improve civilian governance and control.

Despite the traditionally dominant role of the military in Pakistani politics, over time, and due to extraordinary circumstances – for example after Pakistan's armed forces lost wars (and its reputation) against India in 1965 and 1971 or the unexpected death of military dictator Zia-ul-Haq in 1988 – the government has several opportunities to regain control over 'their' military and its decision-making (Wolf 2014, November 13). As such, a successful implementation of the CPEC could have created another exceptional moment to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the military. In contrast, the 'hype surrounding the CPEC' created an atmosphere in which the armed forces effectively took on their strongest formally institutionalized role in the country's political system yet. The military was not only able to extend its institutionalized role in decision-making process at the expense of all three branches of governance (executive, legislative and judiciary), but essentially build a 'quasi-parallel structure of governance'. The fact that Prime Minister Sharif was able to block the military proposal of the establishment of a CPEC Authority (featured by a remarkable military signature/leverage) is a 'pyrrhic victory';

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<sup>24</sup> For more information, see <http://www.fwo.com.pk/>.



the military will either enforce the establishment of such an authority by seeking Chinese support for the proposal or will rely on informal ways of increasing their power within CPEC project. However, it is clear that both strategies will further side-line the government role in CPEC related decision-making. In consequence, it might continue to be the public façade, but it is obvious that the military leadership is calling the shots (Jaffrelot 2016, April 1). In other words, there is no need for the military to direct take over (coup d'état) of the governance to rule the country. As such, the civilian government failed once again to improve upon the unhealthy civil-military relations, to establish any noteworthy elements of civilian control over the armed forces, and subsequently to consolidate democratic rule in Pakistan.

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