

# Pakistan Affairs

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Q5 Evolution of Political System and Democracy dependent on many factors in Pakistan.

## Introduction:

"Democracy is the blood of the Muslims who look upon complete equality of manhood and believe in fraternity, equality and liberty."  
(Quaid-e-Azam)

Muhammad Ali Jinnah always envisioned a democratic society for Pakistan and many of successors have struggled towards this goal, but no more than maintaining their own platforms of powers. Pakistan has tried both civilian and military leadership but still political instability plagues the country. The answer will explore the factors which prevent democracy from flourishing in Pakistan and the costs attached with such a situation of abyss.

II. Tracing the evolution of political system and democracy globally.

The history of politics dates back to the earliest humans organised in foraging bands. Though in nascent stage, each member tried to influence the collective affairs of the political band in the best possible manner. With the social evolution,

through political bands, tribes, chiefdoms and modern nation-states, the concept, practices and policies, <sup>of politics</sup> have undergone revolutionary changes. Throughout this political journey, modern humans have hammered out many deductive

"In order to ensure political stability these interpretations have been institutionalized and codified in the modern political units although with varying degrees, definitions and determinants."

and interpretative tools for playing politics rather productively.

### III. Decoding the term political stability

#### A. What is political stability?

"<sup>66</sup> Political stability is the sum of the activities of the government, legislative bodies and people authorized to influence the country's affairs in a manner that sustainability conforms the established political principles and practices."

"It is the governing of a country's affairs within the dynamic bounds of the law of the land enshrined in the Constitution."

A stable political culture prompts stability

prosperity and prevents destabilisation of a country by navigating the testing times in an effective manner.

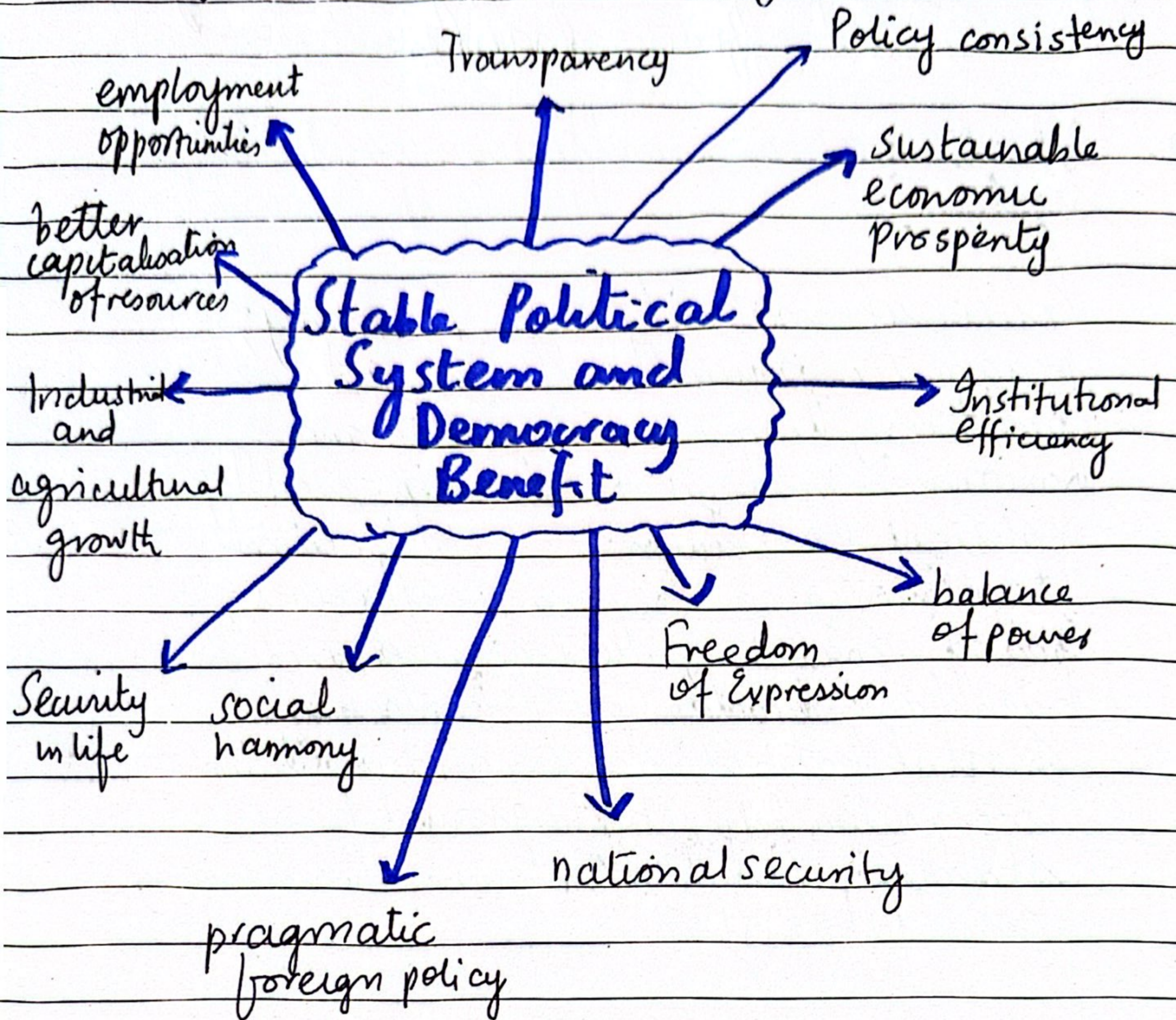
## B. What makes an effective political system?

"Political maturity and harmony; pragmatic political culture and practices, sincere; meritocratic and visionary political leadership; healthy political competition; smooth political transition; clear separation of power; policy consistency; ideological political agendas; broader political consensus on vital national interests; and institutional co-operation help set the ground for a stable political landscape where democracy can flourish."

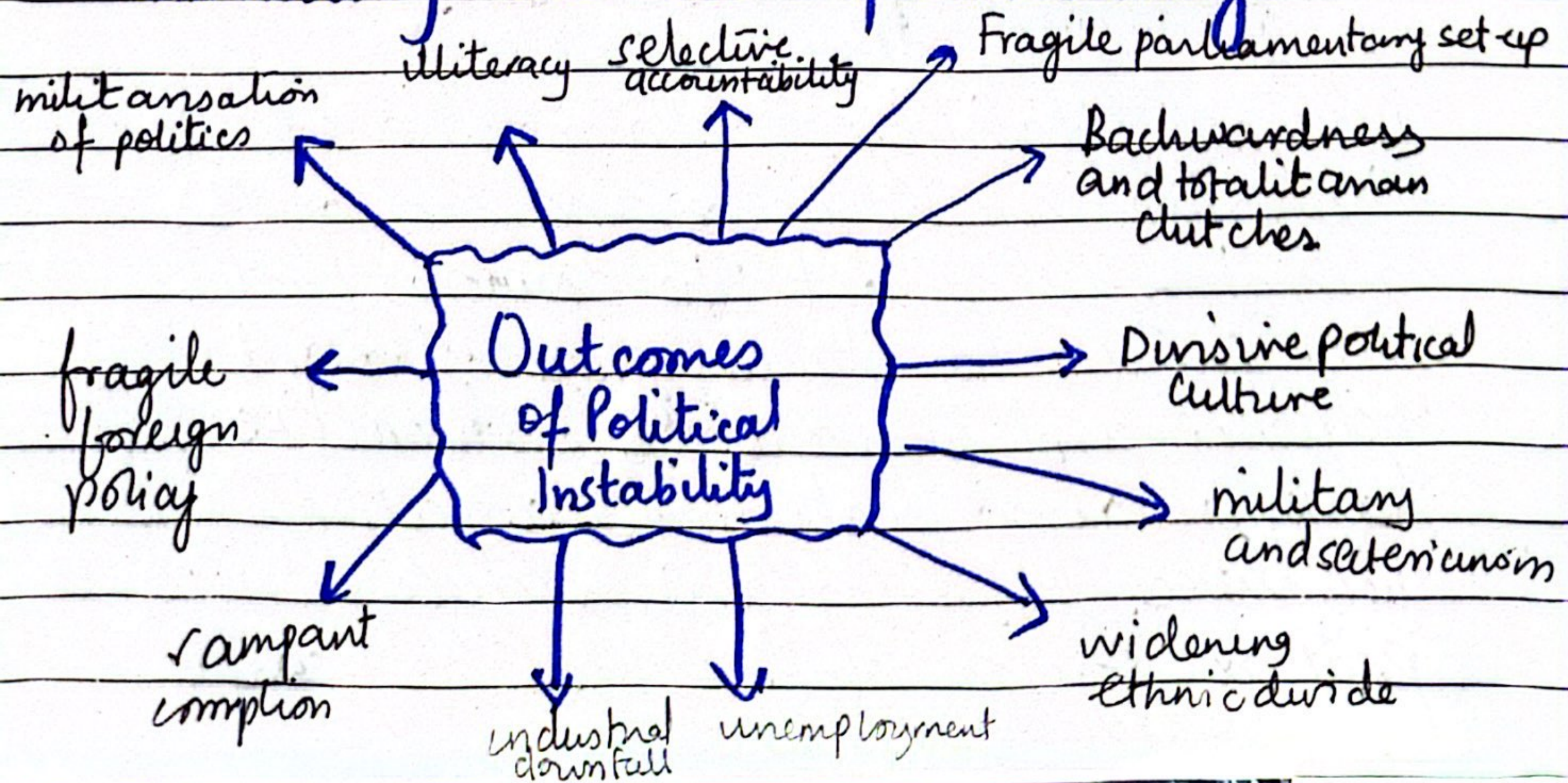
## C. Why is a stable political system imperative for Pakistan?

Political stability and harmony are imperative for inclusive and sustainable national development. The countries that have evolved a stable, progressive and inclusive and tolerant political culture have attained feats in all aspects of their lives. The benefits a stable political system and democracy can

bring in Pakistan are given below.



D. What are the impacts of political instability and lack of democracy.



## IV. How has Pakistan's political system evolved?

### Fig: Timeline of Pakistan's Political History

1947

Lack of political parties meant that civil military bureaucratic oligarchy had to play a more active role in running the nascent state.

Characterized by various changes in government Pakistan had a weak model of democracy without elections in its early years.

1958

Ayub Khan brought together an alliance of a military and civil bureaucracy. Policies were stable. Economic growth seen.

President Ayub Khan although an autocratic ruler was able to centralize the government. Was succeeded by Yahya Khan.

1971

The Constitution of 1973 was the biggest feat.

A brief stint with democracy under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

1977

Rampant campaign of Islamization. Pakistan became a major frontline state in Cold War.

General Zia-ul-Haq derailed political system banned all political parties. Zia sought to create a base for legitimizing role of military in politics.

1988

The Pakistani people lost faith in democratic system felt it was corrupt haphazard and inefficient.

The new democratic era was as turbulent as Pakistan's previous political history with frequent changes of government.

1999

"enlightened moderation freedom of media"

General Musharraf lead a coup

2008

Some strengthening of democratic process seen as successful transitions from democratic setups

PPP replaced by PMLN by PTI then by coalition of PDM. Hybrid regime of PTI had military involvement

2013

2023

A. How do analysts view the political system evolution and democracy in Pakistan?

i. Ayesha Jalal's analysis.

"Political developments in Pakistan continue to be marred by provincial jealousies and, in particular by the deep resentments in the smaller provinces of Sindh, Baluchistan, and the North West Frontier against what is seen to be a monopoly by the Punjabi majority of the benefits of power, profit and patronage. Pakistan's political instability over time has been matched by a fierce ideological debate about the form of government it should adopt: Islamic or secular. It has long had to rely on civil or military."

(Ayesha Jalal  
Encyclopaedia of Asia)

ii. Hamid Khan's analysis in "Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan."

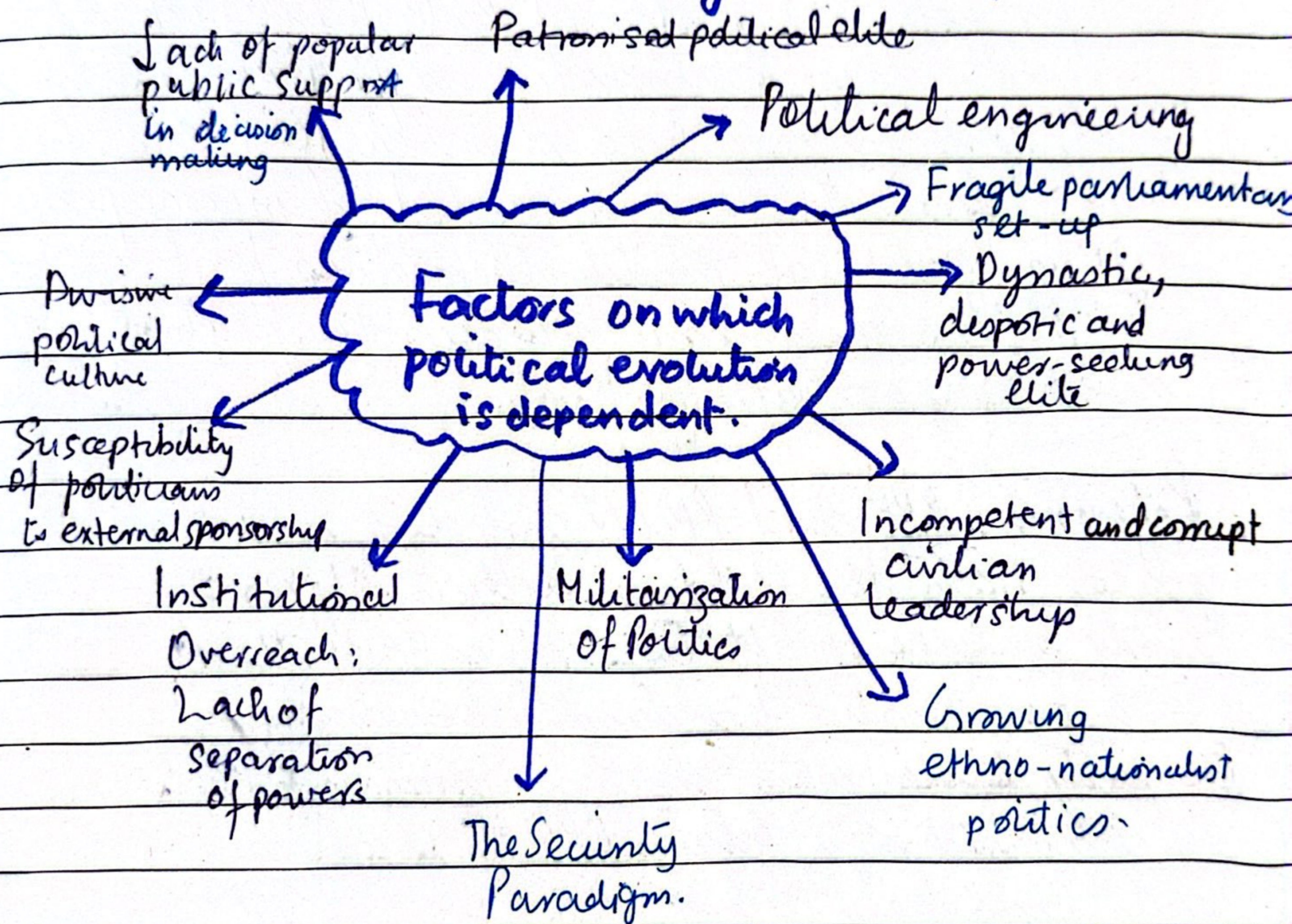
"Political parties have played a very terrible role for the failure of democracy in Pakistan. The political parties became king parties which led to derailing of political norms"

(Hamid Khan)

Various other analyses of political commentaries following the trajectory of politics in Pakistan have one

opinion that is Pakistan's democratic and political history has been turbulent with frequent breaks as the military would take-over.

**B. Factors that led to derailing the process of political evolution and democracy.** Evolution of democracy has been on the mercy of these factors.



**1. Dynastic, despotic and power-seeking elite has failed to evolve democratic culture.**

"Dynastic politics is a deep-seated phenomenon in Pakistan. Unfortunately, electoral politics is a family business, with few families ruling the Pakistani legislature, turning

them into oligarchies. It is the dynastic blood that leads the party and follows the party succession."

(Professor Dr. Amanullah  
Pakistan Study Centre:  
Study on Impact of  
Dynastic Politics on Democracy)

Dynastic politics is prevalent in all major political parties of Pakistan which prevents true democracy as power continues to circulate in a few hands has defeated the purpose of democracy. When political parties themselves fail to observe democracy how can they replicate democracy at national level.

Reference: PPP and PMIN two major political parties have the children of their supremes ready to take on after them. When ZABhutto was assassinated his daughter Benazir became the party leader when she was assassinated her 19 year old son Bilawal Bhutto became the party chairman.

## 2. Incompetent civil leadership eroded trust in democracy.

Pakistanian civilian leadership has been frequently criticized for its inefficiency to deliver for public welfare. It has failed to court



The abyss Pakistan finds itself embroiled in. The Pakistani civilian leadership is also touted to be corrupt.

Reference:

"Civilian governments one after the other have failed to control the unprecedented rise in inflation, the depreciation of Pakistani currency, heavy foreign debt, internal political polarisation and rise in corruption."

(Senator Rehman Malik)

### 3. Frequent military takeovers are a reality of the political system in Pakistan.

The military has time and again acted to derail the political process in Pakistan. No government can function without the support of the military.

"Even when the military has not directly ruled it has been controlling civilian governments."

(Anatol Lieven:  
Pakistan a Hard  
Country)

Fig: Timeline of Military Rule

Time	Military Dictator
1958-69	General Ayub Khan
1977-88	General Zia ul Haq
1999-2008	General Pervez Musharraf

#### 4. Lack of separation of powers and overreaching role of judiciary in politics.

Pakistan's judiciary has time and again overstepped its bounds to derail political governments and justify military leadership.

Reference:

"From Maulvi Jameezuddin case to the Panama judgment the political process has been derailed by the judiciary which has acted as a weapon in the hands of non-partied forces."

(Hamid Khan).  
"History of Judiciary  
in Pakistan")

#### 5. Parliamentary system is fragile and fails to straighten political system in Pakistan

Parliamentary system is fragile as they do not engage in constructive debates and rather spend

"No government can fully assert itself unless it has a clear majority in the Parliament. Political parties forget their roles of legislation

and use the floor of the Parliament for their own point-scoring.

(Dr. Faruk P. Taji)

## 6. Divisive politics, culture of confrontation and using account

Instead of strengthening opposition, crucial for democracy, Pakistani governments stifle political opposition through misuse of accountability laws.

"NAB started by Pervez Musharraf has time and again been unleashed on political opponents to settle political scores."

Political polarization is at an all time high in Pakistan and the space being created will be misused by non-political actors

## VI. Conclusion

A plethora of factors have prevented Pakistan from becoming a truly democratic country. If these challenges are overcome, the path to political stability can be achieved and Pakistan can set on a journey of economic rejuvenation, however, as the situation stands today Pakistani politics is at the mercy of so many factors.