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## "An island of excellence"? How the Pakistan military reflects on its presence in the development sector

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# Working Paper 185

RABIA CHAUDHRY

“An island of excellence”?  
How the Pakistan military reflects on its presence in the  
development sector



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# **“An island of excellence”?**

## **How the Pakistan military reflects on its presence in the development sector**

Rabia Chaudhry



## Abstract

In addition to defending their countries, modern day militaries assist the state in labour intensive non-defence related activities. These range from disaster relief to providing administrative assistance. In countries where the military already exercises hegemonic control, possession of such auxiliary capabilities can potentially provide an avenue to extend the military's jurisdiction and further strengthen its hegemony.

This paper is based on a chapter of doctoral dissertation titled *An Army with a Country: How the Pakistan military imposes hegemony via the infrastructure and welfare sectors*. The thesis discusses how the Pakistan military reproduces and reinforces its hegemony through its presence in the development sector. This paper concentrates on one particular aspect thereof – that is, the elements within the military mind-set that inform its *modus operandi*.

How the Pakistan military operationalises its presence in the development sector to further consolidate its hegemony needs scrutiny. This paper concentrates on the considerations and the surrounding thought processes that compel the military to play an active developmental role – to which it refers to as nation building. Using primary data in the form of semi structured interviews of serving and retired senior military officers, this paper shows how the military defines its self-interests, reflects upon its own developmental role and, which avenues it selects to pursue.

### *Keywords:*

Hegemony, military, shared mental models, development, nation building

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# 1. Introduction

Pakistan has been under direct martial rule<sup>1</sup> for a total of thirty three years (1958 – 1971, 1977 – 1988, 1999 – 2008 – almost half the time since its independence in 1947. For the remainder, even though not directly in power, the military has been and continues to be an active player in the administration of the country albeit with varying degrees and levels of intrusion (Fair, 2011:571). Key issues like national security and foreign security *inter alia* have become strictly military domains even in times when a civil government resides in Islamabad (Fair, 2011:572).

Pakistan, its military, its political system and especially the challenges that confront its polity have been meticulously scrutinised in the past from various angles, albeit with the military's intervention in politics as the central theme. Some of the prominent research motifs thus far have been post-colonial institutional structure (Alavi, 1972:63-65) (Jalal, 1995); bureaucratic overreach; defence spending (Jalal, 1991); lack of political parties (Shafqat, 1997); military businesses (Siddiqa, 2007) etc.

Although these studies have their merits, there is a common tendency to a) rely on a historical chronology of events to explain the civil military imbalance in the country; and b) operationalise this timeline to rationalise the state. The *status quo* is therefore invariably understood in terms of factors like military authoritarianism, over-developed state, military professionalism, bureaucratic authoritarianism, military mind set, and corporate interests of the military. Scholarly accounts (Talbot, 1998) of civil military imbalance in Pakistan ultimately converge at placing the blame at the military's door. These allegations are not necessarily entirely untrue. However, while conventional wisdom is not wrong, it does not present the complete picture either.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper the terms martial rule, military takeovers and military coups have been used interchangeably. They collectively stand to represent a time in Pakistan's political history when an elected civil government was ousted by the military acting upon the orders of the then Commander in Chief / Chief of Army Staff (COAS). This includes the periods of time when a government was installed in the National Assembly through electioneering but the head of the state was military – be it President or Chief Executive and be it in uniform or otherwise.

Similarly, 'military' in this paper refers to the collective armed forces of Pakistan. The three branches act in consort and collectively make up the 'military' component of the civil-military equation in the country. While it is true that successive takeovers were instigated by the army that is merely because it is larger in size – the strategic requirements of the country are such that more ground forces are necessarily required.

For instance, while establishing the fact of its preponderance, the military's own perception of its role remains unaccounted for thus far. This study attempts to bridge that gap. Strategies employed by a hegemon, be it military or otherwise, to expand its power base are not isolated acts carried out without an incumbent rationale. They are ordered around, and informed by, a cogent thought process. These perceptions and thought processes are inimical to the resulting decision making (Buzan, 1983:226-31).

Data collected for this study shows that the military defines its own responsibilities as the defence of the country. Logic being that is what it is trained to do, that is what it understands best and that is what it is capable of. Yet while 'development' is consigned to the civil / political realm, the understanding of defence seems to be a seamless web; 'defence' is perceived to include all socio-economic aspects pertaining to the running of the country - not precluding much from the umbrella term. Data also shows that while discussing its role, the military refers to its activities as 'nation building' as opposed to 'development'.

One thing that is clear from an analysis of the collected data is that despite its presence in the 'development' sector, the military's *modus operandi* is not informed by a concrete, institutionally prescribed, vision thereof. The military does not have an identifiable master plan against which it measures the civil government's performance – which in turn either forces a coup or justifies its presence in non-military sectors. As shall be demonstrated in this paper, both written evidence and the interviews show a broad sentiment 'to see the country being run according to the dictates of law and constitution and to see Pakistan as a leading nation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.' However, this is no more than a general representation of the hopes and aspirations of just about any Pakistani.

This study departs from the current academic discourse in that it puts military front and centre of analysis. This is not to be confused with providing the military an avenue to defend or propagate itself. The intention is to understand how the military reflects upon its presence in the 'development' sector.

Here it must be pointed out that it is not uncommon for militaries to undertake non-defence responsibilities. Military presence in civilian domain is however typically limited to disaster relief activities or when the civil government calls upon it for assistance in maintaining law and order. These are exigent circumstances at best though and are

proscribed by legal and constitutional limitations. It is also not unusual to observe military participation in service delivery activities like education, health etc. They are traditionally undertaken for the benefit of ex-servicemen and their families. Legitimate (legal) exceptions include extending public services to remote parts of the country in question where civil state's access is difficult. Also such activity is undertaken for and on behalf of the civil state in order to assist with its outreach.

This is usually understood to involve activities like earthquake and flood relief and assisting the state maintain law and order should the need arise etc. Pakistan too, like all modern militaries has a constitutional<sup>2</sup> obligation to assist the state in labour intensive, non-defence related activities.

In Pakistan, the military's involvement in public sector gradually and systematically exceeded constitutional limitations. Over the years its ubiquity in the 'development' sector has not only become to be accepted writ large as 'business as usual', but bestows a veneer of legitimacy to its extension of legal powers.

Over the years however, Pakistan military's involvement in projects archetypically linked to 'development' has taken a more mainstream turn in that they are available for the mutual benefit of civilians, ex-servicemen, and serving soldiers and officers alike. Moreover, these services are openly undertaken under the banner of the military and its nation building / 'developmental' role. We not only see the military extending its presence beyond its prescribed charter, but to an extent that it is arguably replacing the civil government. Furthermore, instead of attracting criticism for intruding upon state sovereignty, the military's new role is not only accepted as legitimate, but public sympathy also favoured the military more than the state itself.

The question then is how the military operationalises this presence in the 'development' sector to consolidate its hegemony. The specific questions that this paper addresses are:  
a) how does the military understand its developmental role; b) what considerations

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<sup>2</sup> Article 245 of the Constitution of Pakistan. 1973 defines military's as:

**Functions of Armed forces \_ Articles 245 (1)** – Armed Forces shall, under the direction of the Federal Government defend Pakistan against external aggression or threat of war, and, subject to law, act in aid of civil power when called upon to do so.

compel the military to play an active role in the 'development' sector; and c) how it simultaneously protects its own self-interests and ingratiates itself to the people of Pakistan?

## 2. Methodology

This research follows an inductive approach. A mixture of data analysis methods were used in this thesis. Qualitative data collection methods were used to address the questions identified above. These included a) semi structured interviews with military personnel, civil bureaucrats and other relevant technocrats important to the research; b) document review which included military and governmental publications – this was in addition to literature on the subject and other grey literature; and c) personal observations which have been mentioned throughout the study wherever relevant.

A major proportion of primary data set are semi-structured interviews with military personnel, civil servants and other relevant technocrats. As this research is about the self-perception of the military, interviews with military respondents are awarded centrality. As these were semi-structured interviews, they did not allow for an adherence to a strict pattern, as would be the case with questionnaires. But the discussions still by and large followed a structure. Most of the respondents were serving as junior officers during General Zia's regime and were at senior positions during General Musharraf's. They were therefore ideally situated to explain elements within the military mind set.

In order to understand how the military rationalises its presence in civil arena and how it perceives its own role in civil-military domains the respondents were questioned about how they perceived successive military takeovers. In the discussion that followed I was able to discern the factors that compel it [the military] to play an active role in the development domains – takeovers being the ultimate manifestation thereof.

As this research is about 'development', the interviews also focused on how they approached military presence in the 'development' sector. In the process naturally questions about the existence of an institutionalised vision, if any, that they are working towards arose. Within this context it was the military that introduced the term nation building. Hence a differentiation between the two terms was created by the respondents themselves. These positions were then triangulated with the interviews with the bureaucrats. The military works alongside, if not through the civil administrative structures during coup periods.

### 3. Development or Nation Building

#### 3.1 Defining 'development'

Broadly speaking this study understands development as a set of deliberate efforts of improvements aimed at agents of change which include, but are not limited to, governments, states and non-state organisations and, social movements and practices (Thomas, 2000). This includes a deliberately induced increase in economic growth so as to ensure a material betterment of the human condition (Myrdal, 1971). In effect, *“a deepening of the human potential, increasing access to many goods and services, and bringing about higher literacy rates, better health care systems, and freedom from poverty, famine, and social injustice”* (Weiss & Khattak, 2013:2).

As shall be demonstrated below, Pakistan military does not have an institutional agenda or definition of 'development' *per se*. The data does however show that its officers have a clear and somewhat unanimous understanding of the term, albeit an informal one. It would be safe to state that their perspective of 'development' aligns with Myrdal's definition above – an improvement of socio-economic condition through provision of goods and services. For the purposes of this study, the term development therefore adheres to the following definition:

*It is an “attempt to improve conditions of life, through material and social means. In this development implies change, affecting most, if not all, areas of life. The idea of development is a multi-dimensional and, by definition, interdisciplinary field in which economic, political, technological, social and cultural factors interact.”* Development in this is sense is *“synonymous with ‘modernization’ ”* and therefore includes *“the ideas of industrialization, economic and organizational efficiency, delineated formal political institutions and functions, the pursuit of rational decision making and the fundamental alteration of social and cultural patterns”* (Damien Kingsbury, Joe Remenyi, 2004:12).

In short this is a localised form of change which is voluntarily instigated by external institutions or actors who do not necessarily belong to the *“milieu”* they aim at

transforming. Innovative methods are used to initiate such development (Olivier Sardan, 2005:25). It includes “*any grafting of technique, knowledge or hitherto unused mode of organization (usually in the form of adaption, borrowing or importation onto previously existing techniques, knowledge and modes of organization*” (Oliver de Sardan, 2005:90).

### **3.2 Development or Nation building**

Two aspects of any military which are by and large shared across societies are a) the role of military as an organised force; and b) its ability to absorb and mobilise resources. The military’s capacity to use force – be it explicitly in the event of war or indirectly through political intervention – relies to a large extent on its organisational skills. Once in possession of coercive powers, the military has the potential to “*determine the balance of power, the complexion of government and the prevailing social and economic conditions*” (Kaldor, 1976:459). The second, allocation of resources, underscores the military’s ability to mobilise resources through a “*concentration of skills infrastructure etc.*” (Kaldor, 1976:459). These resources include, but are not limited to, equipment, people and money.

Attempts to analyse these two aspects of the armed forces from multiple angles, invariably lead to discussions regarding the military’s role in development. The rationale is quite simple – the concept [of development] tends to be ahistorical. The term development is “*often treated as movement from one static situation to another*” (Kaldor, 1976:460). Institutions moreover can be approached independently from their social settings and entertained as “*free-floating entities*”. The key advantage thereof being that room is created for an analysis of the military’s developmental role as a function of the internal characteristics of the institution.

The Pakistan military however, uses the terms ‘development’ and nation building interchangeably. The reasons thereof are discussed below in section 4.3. It does however make sense to unpack the two terms at this stage.

Nation building is more of a reconstructive exercise. It involves a broader effort on the part of the armed forces to initiate political and economic reforms “*with the objective of*

*transforming a society emerging from conflict into one of peace with itself and its neighbours” (Dobbins, Jones, Crane, & DeGrasse, 2007:xvii).*

Key actors in nation building are national and international forces acting together (Fukuyama, 2004). Moreover, a nation building project is usually preceded by a conflict. It is therefore that Dobbins et al. argue that *“international military intervention”* (Dobbins et al., 2007:xxii) is the most reliable means of ensuring that societies emerging from war do not revert back to a state of conflict.

The prime objective of any nation building exercise is in short *“to make violent societies peaceful, not to make poor ones prosperous, or authoritarian ones more democratic”* (Dobbins et al., 2007:xxiii). While economic and political reforms are essential tools for effecting such transformations, they are not a condition precedent.

It is not difficult to understand why the data set for this paper shows the military resorting to the terminology of nation building to refer to its developmental experiments. Nation building *is* by definition a military responsibility. The problem is that, in this case the term ‘development’ offers a more precise and apt description.

The question then is why not call a spade a spade? Just because nation building is a natural fit, it does not necessarily follow that the military is entirely unaware or averse to the concept of development as such. Arguably, it is even in its favour to openly embrace the term. Development after all is a good thing; it means progress; it evokes a positive emotion.

The answer could be that development is a politically charged term. The military is not the state but merely an organ thereof – a non-political, undemocratic, unelected organ of the state. Academia meanwhile considers inclusive political institutions the bedrock of economic development (Sen, 2001) (North, 1998). Acemoglu and Robinson argue that pluralistic systems that protect individual rights need to be established so as to ensure higher incomes and human welfare in the long term (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Only then can inclusive economic institutions be created which not only secure private property but also encourage entrepreneurship (Sachs, 2012:142).



Moreover, the trusteeship of development lies with the state. In fact it is *“embedded in the predicate of social and political order”* (Cowen & Shenton, 1996:8). The state therefore, acting through its institutions and legal regime, becomes the appropriate tool for instigating change.

The very notion of development hence is fundamentally interwoven with that of the state’s sovereignty.<sup>3</sup> So much so that Kay argued that national sovereignty is rendered meaningless unless enjoined with the idea of development as progress towards a *“social and economic equality. National sovereignty and development defined in this way adhere to each other as closely as the principle of equal rights adheres to that of the freedom of the individual”* (Kay, 1975:1-2).

An argument can therefore be made that it is in the interest of a military seeking to concretise its hegemony via the development sector to avoid the term, despite its professed potential to capture the public imagination.

Moreover post-development theorists draw a direct link from ‘development’ and ‘development strategies’ to the establishment of hegemonies. For Escobar, Sachs etc. development as we understand it today, was created by the United States in the 1950s as a tool to help it establish its hegemony on the global stage. Our understanding of the term is merely an extension of the earlier colonial discourse in that the world is divided in the ‘advanced’ North and the ‘backward’ South. Whereas the North is progressive, the South is degenerative and primitive. *“It has created extremely efficient apparatus for producing knowledge about, and the exercise of power over, the Third World. ...It has successfully deployed a regime of government over the Third World, a “space for ‘subject peoples” that ensures certain control over it”* (Escobar, 1952:09)

Literature on hydro-hegemony offers a more concrete discussion on installation of hegemony with the help of development strategies. The World Bank in the 1980-90s defined water scarcity as the main problem for the world’s poor. Public sector failure to deliver in this regard was identified as the main culprit in preventing development and modernisation of the economies. The argument was a simple one. If the state cannot fulfil

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<sup>3</sup> Since the promulgation of the notion of intentional ‘development’, the civil state / government has claimed both the right as well as the might to ‘develop’; it meets the criteria of legitimacy, has access to ample resources and possesses the requisite institutional history as well as the know-how.

a basic need like clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, it is indicative of arrested development – often due to ineptitude, corruption and politicisation of the government at hand (World Bank, 2003). *“Water scarcity therefore became [sic] simultaneously indicative of a problem of poverty, of modernization, and of governance”* (Goldman, 2007:797).

The solution was a concerted and dedicated privatisation scheme. However, as post development theory argues, rarely does sale or lease of a public good go unpunished. It brings in its wake neoliberal capitalist forces that superimpose state-citizen relations and North-South dynamics under the garb of ‘development’ (Bayliss & Hall, 2002) (Grusky, 2002) (Barlow & Clarke, 2002).

*“It has marked the entrance of new transnational codes of conduct and procedures of arbitration, accounting, banking, and billing; a new ethics of compensation; new expectations of the role of the public sphere; and the normalization of transnational corporations as the local provider of public services and goods”* (Goldman, 2007:797).

Hence Wolfgang Sachs contends that *“development is much more than just a socio-economic endeavour; it is a perception which models reality, a myth which comforts societies, and a fantasy which unleashes passions”* (Sachs, 1992:01). It evokes a promise of delivery and therefore invites automatic approval. Referring to ‘development’ as a buzzword, Andrea Cornwall argues that there is a vagueness to the exact meaning of the term. Policies are dependent on endorsement from diverse potential actors and audiences. Buzzwords like ‘development’ aid this process by casting a thin veneer of linguistic ambiguity which can be filled by the recipients depending on how they relate to it. *“In the struggles for interpretive power that characterise the negotiation of the language of policy, buzzwords shelter multiple agendas, providing room for manoeuvre and space for contestation”* (Andrea Cornwall, 2007:474).

In conclusion on the one hand we have the post-development theorist’s line of reasoning that development is arguably no more than a myth or perception that moulds the reality. On the other, we have an actor [a hegemonic military in this case] which has captured the symbols of development. It is convinced of its good faith as well as its indispensability in meeting development needs of a people.

Instead of measuring the developmental acts themselves, this study uses shared Mental Models to operationalise the research. This allows for a discussion on the perception of the decision makers [or the hegemon, as the case may be].

The rationale being, if 'development' is no more than a play on perceptions, it is all the more important to understand the perception of the development actor in question. Shared Mental Models theory creates the theoretical space conducive for such a discussion on the perception of the decision maker in question. It allows actions to be accounted for as a function of past activities. Perceptions therefore can be seen as holding an impact value in the decision making process (Buzan, 1983:226-31).

On a local setting Pakistan military's reluctance to steer well clear of employing the language of 'development' – and finding a substitute in nation building – becomes clearer. On a broader academic scale, the uneasy relationship of military and development is set on a surer footing.

### **3.3 Shared Mental Models**

Strategies employed by a hegemon, be it military or otherwise, to expand its power base are not isolated acts carried out without an incumbent rationale. They are ordered around, and informed by, a cogent thought process. These perceptions and thought processes are inimical to the resulting decision making (Buzan, 1983:226-31).

This paper makes a case that the hegemon, need not necessarily be consciously aware of how it came to adopt such practises and the considerations informing them in the first place. With the passage of time they become a part of the hegemon's DNA. They are so deeply ensconced in its consciousness, that all subsequent action is subconsciously structured around it. To that end this paper uses the theory of Shared Mental Models (Denzau & North, 1994) in order to explain how the hegemon reflects on and interprets its environment and subsequently adopts relevant practices to extend its hegemony.

Denzau and North make a case for decision making as a function of ideas that individuals or, groups of individuals develop based on how they interpret their surrounding

environment.<sup>4</sup> As opposed to an *a priori* self-awareness and rationalised understanding of their interests which dictate choices, Denzau and North focus on the role of cognition and reasoning. They argue that individuals with common cultural backgrounds and experiences form similar explanations and thought processes about their surrounding world. They therefore construct reasonably convergent mental models, ideologies and institutions (Denzau & North, 1994:03).

*“In order to understand decision making ... we must understand the relationships of the mental models that individuals construct to make sense out of the world around them, the ideologies that evolve from such constructions, and the institutions that develop in a society to order interpersonal relationships”* (Denzau & North, 1994:04).

Ideologies here refer to those shared frameworks of mental models possessed by groups of individuals that they use to both interpret their surrounding environment as well prescribe how that given environment should be structured (Denzau & North, 1994:04). *“Institutions are the rules of the game of a society and consist of formal and informal constraints constructed to order interpersonal relationships”* (Denzau & North, 1994:04) (North, 1998)). Mental models are internal representations of environmental interpretations that the individual cognition creates. The institutions that the individuals create based on these mental models are an external representation or physical manifestations of how the given environment should be ordered / structured (Denzau & North, 1994:05).

*“The mental models that the mind creates and the institutions that individuals create are both essential to the way human beings structure their environment in their interactions with it”* (Denzau & North, 1994:05).

Individuals hailing from dissimilar environments and cultural backgrounds naturally have different learning experiences (both cultural and environmental). As information feedback differs, so do reactions and responses to similar events. Therefore, when confronted with the same situation, it does not necessarily imply that varying groups of individuals may interpret it in the same manner. Nor is it a given that these groups will respond to it in a similar way. Reason being, they have through past experience developed diverse understandings and constructed mental models accordingly. Moreover, once

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<sup>4</sup> As opposed to rational choice framework which assumes that individuals know their self-interests and make conscious decisions accordingly.

established, these mental models do not change easily either. Therefore, even when varying groups get feedback with respect to their choices from their counterparts, it does not mean that they would alter their position or adjust their interpretation or the subsequent decision (Denzau & North, 1994:04).

With regard to Pakistan, it is hence not surprising that when confronted with similar situations of uncertainty or crises, the civil and military components interpret and subsequently respond quite differently thereto. They each have developed their own mental models based on their respective cultural backgrounds and environments and therefore employ dissimilar interpretations in problem solving or conflict resolution.

This is particularly problematic in instances where the civil-military balance is tipped in the latter's favour to the extent that it enjoys a hegemonic status. In such polities, where the military is already engaged in strategic practices that allow it to appropriate resources and therefore extend beyond its given mandate, the manner in which it communicates or implements its ideas would only help it to further concretise its hegemony.

These strategies of expansion are, as it is, informed by ideas and interpretations of their environment. With time the interpretations of the environment and the strategies employed in response become an integral part of the military's thinking. The mental models about its own role as well as its civilian counterpart's become second nature and an essential part of the military consciousness. Therefore it brings the military understanding or way of doing things to the civil arena. As mentioned above, when confronted with opposing information, groups of individuals do not change their perspectives. Same goes for the military, and a hegemonic one at that. Once a mental model of its role has been formed, it is unlikely to alter even when confronted with the counter perspective of the civilians. The ideas thus formed inform subsequent action.

### **3.3.1 Learning and sharing mental models**

In order to understand how the mind confronts complex scenarios we need to first explore how the learning occurs to begin with. Learning, according to Denzau and North *"entails developing a structure by which to make sense out of varied signals received by the senses. The initial architecture of the structure is genetic but its subsequent development is the result of the experiences of the individual"* (Denzau & North, 1994:13).

The experiences can then be classified into those gained from a) the physical environment, and b) the socio-cultural linguistic environment (Denzau & North, 1994:13). Perceptions are organised by keeping a track of the memories and results of these two categories. Using these perceptions as a bedrock, we form mental models in order to explain and interpret the environment (Denzau & North, 1994:13). *“The capacity to generalize, to reason from the particular to the general and to use analogy are all a part of this process”* (Denzau & North, 1994:14).

In short mental models are structured on or derived from experience – these experiences in turn are specific to the *“local physical environment”* as well as the *“socio-cultural linguistic environment”* (Denzau & North, 1994:14). As humans experience a diverse range of environments, there exists a wide spectrum of *“patterns of behaviour and thought”* (Denzau & North, 1994:15). It is therefore no wonder that the military mental models or the perception on which they are constructed diverge from those of the civilians. And with the former, perception and thought processes are re-oriented via a systemised reaffirmation of an institutional belief system which is implemented through institutional hierarchies and stringently enforced through penalties (Nordlinger, 1977:61) (Shah, 2014:08). These learnings are with time internalised and become an essential part of the belief structure. They create categories and concepts around which shared experiences are organised and communicated. This not only provides *“a means of internal communication”* but also *“shared explanations for phenomena outside of the immediate experience of the members of the society in the form of religions, myths and dogmas”* (Denzau & North, 1994:15).

Such belief structures are also of inimical value as they help account for or rationalise those aspects of a given environment for which we do not already *“possess or acquire the information to arrive at something like a scientific consensus”* (Denzau & North, 1994:12). When confronted with ambiguity or uncertainty, a natural human reaction is to develop explanations so that subsequent actions can be ordered on it. In modern societies the mental models thus formed, become the basis of establishing institutions which in turn provides the necessary tools to perceive the environment and to communicate even better. *“These benefits can then improve the ability of those involved in the institution to extract the potential gains from exchange or cooperation”* (Denzau & North, 1994:12).

Denzau and North extended their explanation of how mental models are constructed in modern and pre-modern societies to present day's technologies and corporate social behaviour. Corporations or institutions tend to focus on those "*actions and valued outcomes*" which they define as being essential to "*fostering the vision embodied in the ideology*" (Denzau & North, 1994:15). It is therefore that we see large corporations operating extensive corporate social responsibility programmes. They further argue that the "*best way to be socially responsible, which we assume to be an argument in the chooser's utility, is to maximise profits*" (Denzau & North, 1994:15).

This aspect of their analysis is particularly relevant to the issue being discussed in this paper. It generates an explanation for a military not only thriving in the civil sector, but extending its power base \ further concretising its hegemony through profit making commercial organisations. While the said hegemon might legitimately be able to justify its existence beyond its mandated jurisdiction – a military fulfilling the developmental needs as is the case in Pakistan. But simultaneously the profits thus made, also allow it to feed into the strategy of expanding its base and thereby concretising its hegemony.

In fact mental models are shared through communication which in turn allows for a co-evolution of ideologies and institutions. Hence the language or terminology used to convey the mental model or discuss the ideas amongst themselves, either orally or in written form play a dual role in further developing the mental model as well as concretising it.

The institutions subsequently constructed as a result of these are simply structural embodiments of the mental models. However, "*a market economy is based on the existence of a set of shared values such that trust can exist. The morality of a business person is a crucial intangible asset of a market economy, and its nonexistence substantially raises transaction costs*" (Denzau & North, 1994:20). The point being, extending hegemony via a narrative of development is not only good business but also represents positive shared values of the hegemon.

### 3.3.2 Evolution of language of mental models

Once formed, mental models are not set or fixed. They in fact evolve with time. A crucial element of this evolution is that it brings in “*new meanings from related mental models, by analogy or metaphor*” (Denzau & North, 1994:25). Denzau and North call this a natural way of how our brains generalise and utilise concepts.

New meanings from one field of application are gradually transferred to another set of mental models. If repeated enough, they become an integral component of the mental model and actors change the use in the common parlance. With time actors not only alter the meanings we associate with terminology and but also how they use it.

These “*new concepts that have become important parts of the climate of opinion, both to the intellectuals and to the population en masse, can also get brought into the set of ideas in an ideology...*” (Denzau & North, 1994:25). Gradual evolutionary change and the incorporation of new elements does not always progress in a smooth and orderly fashion. It has the potential of generating a crisis of its own:

*“The basis for this crisis would be the discovery of a lack of logical consistency in the ideology, or the discovery of a new set of implications which are viewed as disturbing by adherents of the ideology. The communication of this sort of problem could then be used by an entrepreneur to make a punctuated change in the ideology or religion to further the entrepreneur’s own goals”* (Denzau & North, 1994:25).

Plus there are natural limits to the abundance of cognitive resources. Therefore there can be no certainty that as the mental models develop or even alter their language they would retain their coherence or their ideological logic.

This again becomes extremely relevant for the purposes of this research. As the language used to refer to the strategies employed by a hegemon to extend its power base alters with time, so does the self-perception surrounding it. It still remains a strategy to expand, but with time it develops a more positive mental model to accommodate it.



## 4. An army with a country

Military presence in civil domain under the broader rubric of ‘development’ is not an anomaly. Pakistan military too is active in the ‘developmental’ field in the country. How it operationalises this presence in the ‘development’ sector to consolidate its hegemonic control has been discussed in detail elsewhere.<sup>5</sup>

This paper concentrates on the considerations and the surrounding thought processes that compel the military to play an active role in ‘development’ – or what it defines as nation building. It attempts to ascertain the considerations that inform the military’s decision to extend its jurisdiction to include developmental activities.

A good starting point would be to see how the military rationalises its own presence in the civil arena. In Pakistan’s case this is not limited to takeovers only. The military’s hegemony means that it actively participates in civil matters even when not directly in power (Fair, 2011:572). However, as a takeover is a more tangible form of interference, a logical starting point for discussion about the military’s self-perception regarding its nation building role would be to understand how it perceives a takeover.

### 4.1 Military Takeovers

The objective of this research is not to contextualise the Pakistan military’s political ambitions or to list the factors and circumstances that compel a *coup d’état*. During the interview process however, it became clear that within the military mind-set, discussions pertaining to military presence in the civil arena – whether of ‘developmental’ nature or not – began with their own understanding and explanation of military takeovers instead. It would be poignant therefore to ask the military [interviewees] how *they* perceived military presence in the development sector.

Analysis of the data collected in the form of primary interviews with military personnel shows that takeovers in Pakistan are not a joint military effort. The coup itself is the initiative of one person – the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) – who takes a handful of senior

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<sup>5</sup> For a detailed discussion on how the military operationalises its presence in the Infrastructure construction and welfare sectors via the Frontier Works Organisation and the Fauji Foundation in order to consolidate its hegemonic control see my thesis titled, *An army with a country: How the Pakistan military imposes hegemony via the infrastructure and welfare sectors*.

generals and officers in his confidence at the time of execution. For instance one of the interviewees said that he was a brigadier in the army in 1999 at the time of Musharraf ousted the then Nawaz government *“and [he] found out about the coup like the rest of the country when they announced it on television”*.<sup>6</sup>

Of course it would be reasonable to assume that he might have heard of the coup sometime after the wheels had already been set into motion but certainly before the public broadcast was made to the country at large. The point he was trying to make here was that it – the coup that is – was not an institutional decision. Despite being a senior officer at the time, he was neither involved in not aware of what was about to happen. Had it been a joint effort on the part of the military as a whole, an officer of his level would certainly have picked up some warning signs and not be caught unawares.

This opinion was reified by almost all other interviewees. A commonly held opinion was that the COAS' hand is forced by a particular set of circumstances to initiate a coup. *“Military intervenes only when the political situation has reached an impasse. The situation that makes a takeover necessary is created, not sought”*.<sup>7</sup> The takeovers therefore might arise out of a long run of the incompetence of the politicians, but within their own understanding at least, senior military officials believe it to be a solitary act which has an identifiable triggering event that is peculiar to the time and the place and is conducted in good faith.

*“Both Zia and Musharraf took over with the best of intentions for the country; to do good for the country. Takeovers are forced down the military's throats. But there is definitely an honesty of purpose. There is never an intention at the outset to takeover. Zia was very docile compared to the shenanigans that Bhutto pulled (nationalisation etc.). Musharraf had no intention of takeover; his people did it on his behalf. He had no political aspirations of his own”*.<sup>8</sup>

On the one hand the takeover is seen as a product of peculiar circumstances which has a trajectory of political corruption and inadequacy leading up to the coup itself. On the other it is considered a personal initiative [facilitated by close confidants] and not an institutional bid for power. Therefore, as per the military:

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<sup>6</sup> Inter view dated 16 February 2016 with Lt. General (Retd.) Abbasi at his house.

<sup>7</sup> Interview dated 21 October 2015 with Major General (Retd.) Khokhar at ISSRA-National Defence University.

<sup>8</sup> Interviews dated 17 November 2015 & 17 January 2016 with Brigadier (Retd.) Khan at his house.

- a) Personal political aspirations are not the *raison d'être* of the takeover itself but a minor factor attributable to the few directly involved with the coup;
- b) The takeover is an attempt to “*fix the system or save the country*”. That is the narrative that legitimises legislative and administrative actions taken by the coup makers which would otherwise be unconstitutional;
- c) The military has public support. There is little to no resistance by the public to the takeover due to the state of affairs; and
- d) The image of military as a saviour forever becomes a part of public memory which not only does the ground work for the next coup, should the need arise but allows for the ‘protection of the country’ story-line to develop.

Shared Mental Models theory argues that decision making is a function of ideas that individuals or groups of individuals develop based on how they interpret their surrounding environment. The military is certainly aware of the illegality of the coup. What compels a takeover then?

Within its thought process, the motivation to fix the system, as it were, outbalances the constitutionality of the decision to takeover. The military therefore [as summarised by one military interviewee in Box 1] believes its hand to be forced. It is obligated to perform a role it does not want to but has no choice in this respect either.

Whether or not it is appropriate to say the coup results from considerations of the greater good of the people and country remains disputed in the minds of some. This is because the military’s omnipresence in the country is attributed to its large size which in turn is a result of the security concerns facing the country. The takeover or “*coming in power*” on the other hand is seen as a manifestation of circumstances which are not necessarily informed by a need to address the developmental needs of the country (see Box 2).<sup>9</sup>.

That said, a categorical position taken by all of the interviewees of military background – and this includes one or two serving officers as well – was that the military should not take over.<sup>10</sup> The rationale being that their job is defence of the country. That is what they

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<sup>9</sup> Interview dated [\*] with General Afzal at his house.

<sup>10</sup> The structure and nature of the organisation is an important factor here also. Whether or not they agreed with the takeover is entirely irrelevant in face of the fact that once the superiors have initiated a coup, disagreeing

are trained to do, that is what they understand best and that is what they are capable of. *“The military is fully aware of its weaknesses at the time of the takeover.”*<sup>11</sup> *“Military is not designed to, taught to or can understand running of the country. It is not an easy thing to do”*.<sup>12</sup>

### **Box 1 – It is not the job of the military to fix things**

*“It is not the job of the military to fix the country. However, when you see the country going downhill and fast, coupled with the fact that the military is very popular with the masses and has their support at the time [of the coup]. It is left with no other choice. The military takes over in order to avoid the chaos which would ensue if it didn’t. Ayyub Khan took over because Iskandar Mirza had told him that the politicians will not be able to sort out the mess. Musharraf took over because the economy of the country was in a very bad state. The nuclear explosion had resulted in sanctions which had adversely affected the economy. Nawaz Sharif had come into power with a heavy mandate but now wanted total and absolute control of the country (even the army). Therefore people were happy when military took over. And military really did not have a choice in the matter”*.<sup>13</sup>

### **Box 2 – Circumstances for a coup are created not sought**

*“It would be wrong to say that the takeover, any takeover is guided by considerations of prosperity [of the country that is]. There is always a specific – political – incident that triggers the takeover. With Musharraf it was the airplane incident. If he had been thinking about taking over, it would not have taken him five days to address the nation and lay out an agenda of what he was planning on doing next. In those five days he had interacted with all military personnel trying to figure out what to do next”*  
(Interview dated 17 February 2016 with MG.09 at his house).

The public face or premise of the coup still remains a need to fix the country or put it back on the rails as it were.<sup>14</sup> When it came to delivering on the promises so that it would

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with it is akin to disobeying an order and that is simply not in the habitus of the military. *“Military coups in Pakistan have succeeded only when they have been led from the top. The soldiers have respected the military chain of command even when they have repeatedly violated the constitutional one* (Shah, 2014:25).”

<sup>11</sup> Major Gen. Khokhar (ibid footnote 7).

<sup>12</sup> Interviews dated 18 December 2016 and 16 February 2016 with Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Khan at his house

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> The 1958 coup was more of a collaborative effort between President Iskandar Mirza and Ayyub Khan. Owing to the growing governance deficit in practically all of the provinces, the President had asked the latter to

actually fix the system, all the three coups fell short. Primarily because the militaristic organisational strategies that are pertinent in the barracks seldom deliver when applied to the civil side of affairs.<sup>15</sup> And the military is not only aware of this but sees it as a reason not to take over.

The most often cited example of how the military does not understand how the civil side is run was that of the Army Monitoring Cells set up by Musharraf.<sup>16</sup>

*“The system that Musharraf installed – especially that of the Monitoring cells – upon taking over was a bastard child. I say let the civil administration do their work. We will monitor only without interfering. What happened as a result of the system was that there was a lot of misunderstanding generated and a fractious relationship developed. I was heading the Peshawar Corps at the time and refused to have any monitoring cells. We let the civil administration work as usual and continued sending our monthly reports as we always did. In Peshawar ... [we] did not interfere in anything or stop them from doing anything. Because by interfering you are only stopping the institution from working and really not helping ‘fix the system’. The monitoring cells system was faulty to begin with. And the bureaucracy made use of it and had a field day”.*<sup>17</sup>

This sentiment was reiterated by the bureaucracy itself. I interviewed a mid-level civil servant who worked in the transport department at the time the army monitoring units were set up. These teams had been established at the district level. An army officer of the ranking of a Colonel would be assigned to a civil office and their job was to ensure smooth running and zero corruption in their designated area.

*“Because he was a military officer and hence an outsider, the Colonel neither knew nor understood the technicalities of the civil system. However, given that there was a military coup, they were all powerful. Plus there was just this general understanding that the bureaucracy and the civil system are corrupt and lazy. So one day the Colonel who had been assigned to my office said that*

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takeover. Rigging of the 1977 election by the People’s Party had become a sore point for the Pakistan National Alliance. Zia’s coup which incidentally was called ‘Operation Fair Paly’ was justified on the grounds that rising tensions could only be diffused by the military. Nawaz Sharif’s corruption and the foreign debt were presented to the public as the main reasons for the coup.

<sup>15</sup> Brig. (Retd.) Khan (ibid foot note 8).

<sup>16</sup> A peculiarity of successive military takeovers in Pakistan has been that despite being labelled as martial law with the Chief of Army in charge, the civil bureaucratic machinery and structures have not only remained intact but continued to function as before.

<sup>17</sup> Interview dated 22 February 2016 with Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Gul at his house. He was Corps Commander Peshawar during Musharraf’s regime and Director General Fauji Foundation after his retirement

*any file I go through should be passed to him for his perusal also. I said sir why don't you go through the file first. I knew he had no idea what was going on. He knew he had no idea what was going on. There was no way he could understand the system. This went on for maximum of three weeks. Then he gave up also".<sup>18</sup>*

*"In the end the monitoring cells were only doing administrative work like ensuring that the officers were punctual or were not taking unnecessary holidays or for that matter there was no overt bribery taking place".<sup>19</sup> They are an ideal representation of the military mind set in that they show that even the managerial efforts of the monitoring cells were circumscribed by a militaristic frame of reference and hence were of no real value. "The military by its very nature is organised. Take them to a forest and the very first thing they will do is they will set a perimeter, clear the area out and clean it. That is because they have to set up tents. These are useful militaristic skills. It does not mean these are valuable or even relevant in the outside world".<sup>20</sup>*

The monitoring cells are a classic example of how military does not understand running civil institutions. *"The monitoring cells were not successful because they aimed at a quick fix and not development of the concerned institutions".<sup>21</sup> "The changes made by the monitoring cells established by Musharraf were cosmetic only. They simply did not understand the nitty gritty of how civil institutions work. Plus they bring their military way of doing things. Instead of trying to change the perspective of the [school] teachers, providing them trainings etc. their solution was to discipline them. We have reports of teachers being made to do push ups because they had been absent for a few days. How does that fix the education system?"<sup>22</sup>*

Why takeover at all then? It would certainly seem from the above that the overall military is not in favour or for that matter approves of either a coup or any attempt to interfere with the civil administrative systems.<sup>23</sup> Yet the reason given for a takeover is that there

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<sup>18</sup> Interview dated 27 January 2016 with Additional Secretary Transport Department at his office.

<sup>19</sup> Lt. General (Retd.) Afzal (ibid footnote 9).

<sup>20</sup> Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Gul (ibid footnote 17).

<sup>21</sup> Lt. General (Retd.) Abbasi (ibid footnote 6).

<sup>22</sup> Mashallah sahib February 2016 his office Sahe.

<sup>23</sup> *"Taught identical curricula at each stage of their careers, officers tend to hold fairly predictable views about the army's proper institutional role in domestic politics, national security, and nation building"*(Shah, 2014b:20). While views might vary according to the officer's "...ethnic origins, social ties, political affiliations, or even personal ambition..." historically the officers have taken a uniform position with respect to the issues above. According to Shah by presenting a unanimous front the "...officers show that the sense of institutional unity, loyalty, and purpose instilled by professional indoctrination, especially against the threat from India, and the

was no other option and that the military is here to fix the system as it were. There is an obvious cognitive dissonance at the very heart of this argument. Where does the root of this thought process lie then?

## 4.2 What compels military action?

*“A word for the disruptionists, political opportunists, smugglers, black marketers, and other such social vermin, sharks and leeches. The soldier and the people are sick of the sight of you. So it will be good for yourself to turn a new leaf and begin to behave, otherwise retribution will be swift and sure.”*

From General Ayub Khan’s Broadcast to the Nation  
8 October 1958

It would seem then that the only way the military can play a decision making role is by directly seizing power. *“The army can interfere – tangibly that is – only when it is directly in power. When it is not in power there is no legal mechanism for getting in touch with civilian institutions. Unless the military has been handed over a certain area of responsibility directly, for example the Rangers<sup>24</sup> in Karachi or when the Punjab Government asked them to look for ghost schools<sup>25</sup> etc. there is absolutely no avenue for consultation between the military and the civil government”*.<sup>26</sup>

However, even when in control, *“during the military government the Corps Commanders do not participate in the decision making process at the country level. For example during Musharraf’s time, he would convey to them what was happening and that was it. There was no direct interaction between the military and the politicians”*.<sup>27</sup> Plus the military

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*guardian role in which it casts its army can often be a more powerful indicator of officers’ political preferences and behavior than other factors”* (Shah, 2014b:20).

<sup>24</sup> “Pakistan Rangers is responsible for the protection of Pakistan’s Eastern Borders, however, at times it also assists the Government for Internal Security Duty. The Rangers are also very active in securing important monuments and guarding national assets in various cities of Pakistan. The Rangers have notably contributed towards maintaining law and order in the country” Pakistan Rangers website <http://pakistanrangerspunjab.com/intro.html> (accessed on 29 August 2017). “). The organisation / force is governed by Rangers Ordinance, 1959.

<sup>25</sup> Ghost schools are those schools which exist on paper but not on the ground. As a part of an education reform scheme in the late 1990s, the Punjab government decided to find and shut these ghost schools down. The Pakistan Rangers were called upon to assist the provincial government in tracing these ghost schools and closing them.

<sup>26</sup> Lt. General (Retd.) Abbasi (ibid footnote 6).

<sup>27</sup> Brig. (Retd.) Khan (ibid foot note 8).

demonstrably is not in favour of tipping the balance of the civil and military relations. If then not driven by self-serving interests, what is in the mind-set of the military that compels a takeover. Answer to that question lies in understanding how it perceives and interacts with variables of the civil political system.

#### **4.2.1 Military believes that “politicians are corrupt”**

Individuals or groups of individuals hailing from different backgrounds have different mental models. This is so because mental models are structured around experiences which are gained from a) the physical environment, and b) the socio-cultural linguistic environment. Needless to say, the military as a group has developed its own mental models based on its own cultural and physical environment. Moreover, by virtue of being military, these mental models form the basis of a broader institutional assimilation process. It is no wonder then that the military has very set perceptions not only about itself and its role, but also its civilian counterparts. These perceptions have been formed not only on its own environment and the interpretation thereof, but also on how it interprets the background and environment of civilians. This in turn forms the bedrock of subsequent action.

Corruption and nepotism are an undeniable reality of the Pakistani political and administrative system – the civil servants enjoy “*perks and privileges*” that would essentially be tantamount to corruption. Politicians have “*insecure tenures*” and are in and out of power. Therefore they avail all opportunity to line their pockets as it were (Haqqani, 2005:220).

*“It must be said however that as part of its justification for its own intervention in politics, Pakistan military has made a concerted effort since the 1950s to paint politicians and political activists as corrupt. In the period of partial civil rule beginning in 1988, corruption charges were frequently bandied about, making it easier to get rid of politicians who did not otherwise see eye to eye with the security establishment”* (Haqqani, 2005:220).

With the passage of time, the military has abandoned memory of its own role. Instead, the corruption of politicians has become an important element of its thought process. A common view held by the military interviewees was that politicians, albeit with a handful



of exceptions, were corrupt and driven by self-serving interests.<sup>28</sup> There is merit to the argument too. *“The military is convinced that the political leadership in Pakistan is not mature as such. It considers most politicians corrupt. Hence it takes upon itself that if the country is to be run properly then the military has to keep an eye on it”*.<sup>29</sup>

Mental models are formed on the basis of past experience as well as interpretations of the crisis in question and interaction with other groups. As discussed earlier, there are no legal avenues for civil and military interaction. The military’s views about the politicians’ corruption are therefore substantiated when:<sup>30</sup>

- a) The military is called upon in aid of civil powers. These are not instances when military is required to assist with natural calamities. These are situations where when confronted by a crisis of governance the civil government requests the military’s help - for instance the Rangers - for handling law and order in Karachi<sup>31</sup>,

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<sup>28</sup> Interestingly this view was reiterated by the bureaucrats as well as the technocrats that I interviewed. In fact the bureaucrats were far more candid about their views regarding the politicians than they were about the military. So much so that with the exception of four to five interviews, all of them were entirely off the record. Even those which were on the record were obviously careful of being critical of the military. Anything even vaguely critical was shared off the record. That said the bureaucrats’ frustration was that the original system had over the years, through repeated amendments, been brought to appoint where all administrative decision making pivots on the will of the local politician or else their – the bureaucrats’ – careers hang in balance. The military personnel on the other hand were steadfast in the view that all politicians with the exception of a handful were corrupt and this was the root of lack of ‘development’ in the country.

<sup>29</sup> Lt. General (Retd.) Abbasi (ibid footnote 6).

<sup>30</sup> There is an element of institutional history at play here as well. Literature on the subject proposes that the military has an inherent and inherited distrust of the politicians. The military evolved at a much faster pace than its civil counter parts. *“... military’s success in overcoming acute organizational problems sharpened the difference between its self-image as a cohesive professional institution and its pessimistic view of the politics as divisive and parochial* (Shah, 2014:5).”

<sup>31</sup> *“The Rangers were created under Pakistan Rangers Ordinance, 1959 for the “protection of and maintenance of order in the border areas. They were requisitioned in Sindh for the first time under Article 147 of the Constitution in 1989 by none other than the present chief minister, Qaim Ali Shah, under Benazir Bhutto’s first government. Again, it was his present government which vested the Rangers with police powers for the first time in 2009. The Anti-Terrorism Act [ATA], 1997 was amended in 2014 allowing, inter alia, the Rangers employed under Section 4 of the said Act to detain a suspect for 90 days. An all-embracing Protection of Pakistan Act was passed that also gave additional powers to the Rangers and other law enforcers to use force against a suspect on a ‘reasonable ground of suspicion’. Meanwhile, the 21st Constitutional Amendment was passed creating military courts, which apparently are beyond even the pale of the Supreme Court’s appellate jurisdiction”* (Usto, 2015).

search for ghost schools in Punjab<sup>32</sup>, electricity meter reading in Khyber Pakhtun-Khawa etc.<sup>33</sup>;

- b) Through the various projects that the military undertakes in the civil realm – larger infrastructure projects for example; and
- c) When the military is directly in power during a takeover and has access to the financial / budgetary and administrative details.

One of the military interviewees elaborated the last point above as follows: *“Let us take the example of the Coastal Highway. The military was at the helm of affairs when the project started in 2002. The provincial and the national budgets were the same as the civil government earlier. However it is a perfect case of how the military concludes that the civil government is corrupt. The project was completed within time and within the estimated budget. There was no evidence of any corruption or kickbacks. And the highway itself is physical evidence that some progress has been made; something has been done for the development and betterment of the country”*.<sup>34</sup>

There is a fine distinction at play here. The fact that the military is called in aid of civil powers is accepted as its constitutional duty.<sup>35</sup> In fact the military interviewees even considered this to be its peacetime role. *“The policy makers are aware that they have able bodied, disciplined, healthy, full of energy young men at their disposal who are able to undertake tough tasks and have nothing else to do during peacetime. Why not put them to work. It is efficient use of resources”*.<sup>36</sup> Moreover they are paid for it - see box 3 below.

Bureaucrats (who wished to remain anonymous) had a curious take on events. They claimed that keeping the military involved in such activities *“keeps them busy and we remain in their good books”* (senior retired civil servant who wanted to remain

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<sup>32</sup> The Supreme Court of Pakistan defined a ghost school as a *“building or infrastructure built for education but no longer used for that purpose*. In 2013 the Supreme Court took *suo moto* notice of these schools and tasked the provinces to use all available resources to locate these ghost schools and take appropriate action. Punjab deployed the help of Rangers and it was discovered that out of 58,000 schools on the record, *“more than 266 were occupied for purposes other than education”* (A. Khan, 2013).

<sup>33</sup> Pakistan Rangers Ordinance, 1959 \_ Article 7(b): The Force shall re-inforce the Police for the maintenance of Law and Order whenever it is necessary.

Article 10: Government may, by a general or special order confer or impose upon any member of the Force, any of the powers or duties conferred or imposed on a Police officer of any class or grade by any enactment for the time being in Force.

<sup>34</sup> Lt. General (Retd.) Abbasi (ibid footnote 6).

<sup>35</sup> See footnote 2 above.

<sup>36</sup> Interview dated 29 December 2015 with Col. (Retd.) Mazhar at Gymkhana, Lahore.

anonymous): A counter point made by a few military interviewees was that the government employs them because they are politically neutral. Additionally people trust them. It is therefore naturally easier for the military to conduct a lot of sensitive tasks like meter reading. In fact allegedly people help them out of free will and point out discrepancies in their area. Here it must be pointed out that this was not the view held by all military respondents. Some maintained that the military gets paid for carrying out these labour intensive tasks. The military in such instances is no more than a contractor. Therefore the point of discussion should not be the reason why the government hired it for the task at hand but why the need to do so arose in the first place. They argue that the focus should be the fact that the government is obliged to call upon the military from time to time because it is not governing properly – and that in their opinion is entirely attributable to the politicians’ corruption and lack of competence.

### **Box 3 – Military makes efficient use of resources**

*“The military is involved in tasks such as meter reading purely because it is a matter of trust. The Chief Minister will ask the Corps Commander if he can lend some men. Soldiers will be deputed. Water and Power Development Authority will provide them the concerned training and pay them. They are not paid like contractors. A daily allowance is fixed on the basis of the rank. The bill goes to the government, the concerned Deputy Commissioner counter signs it and it is paid into the army accounts”.<sup>37</sup>*

So it is not the mere fact of being asked to help the government out that shapes their actions then. Over the years the [Pakistan] military’s hegemony has been discussed from various angles and attributed – by varying degrees – to a number of factors. Some of the more prominent candidates for military’s preponderance have been weak political institutions (Jalal, 1985:01); colonial legacy (Talbot, 1998:125); military elitism (Hashmi, 1972:03); conflict with India (Ganguly, 2001:01); US-Pakistan relations (Kux, 2001:18); path dependency (Aziz, 2008:09); Punjabisation (Talbot, 1998:03) – to name a few.

This research tries to represent the military’s own perspective with respect to factors that influence its thoughts and subsequent action. An analysis of the data collected from the field shows that it [the military that is] attributes its conduct to the *“The Army’s training;*

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<sup>37</sup> Brig. (Retd.) Khan (ibid foot note 8).

*discipline and accountability helps the civil governments achieve their purpose*".<sup>38</sup> Their perception of the politicians' inability to run the country is informed by the corruption and the money pilferage that they witness on the civil side.

*"Today ... the word politician itself has become synonymous with graft, loan default, nepotism, misuse of authority and all other abuses, which so far have eaten the vitals of the country. ... The army [conversely] has a first class infrastructure, higher leadership, which is not interested in politics and a chain of command, which is schooled in the best traditions of the Army and therefore immune to the corrosion of graft and corruption" (Tahir, 2000:11-12).*

In short the military has not only developed an explanation of the civilian behaviour, but also ordered its own responses based on these interpretations.

#### **4.2.2 Whereas there is "No corruption within the military"<sup>39</sup>**

Every single military interviewee described the politicians as corrupt. They conversely saw the military as a well-oiled machine, the one true institution in the country. Its success is the result of a strict adherence to a complex set of self-governing rules and regulations. *"The military is an institution steeped in tradition and accountability which are national assets"*.<sup>40</sup>

When confronted with feedback from their counterparts, individuals or groups of individuals do not alter their mental models. This in part has to do with the fact that they have not shared the socio-physical background or cultural environment. It is not surprising that the military constantly compares itself and its way of operating with the civil elements. Even though the comparison is unfair given the scale and size on which the two

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<sup>38</sup> Interview dated 28 February 2016 with Major General (Retd.) Saleem at his house. He was Director General Rangers during Musharraf's regime.

<sup>39</sup> In an article published in the Green Book one senior military officer expressing an opinion about how the then newly installed Musharraf martial law regime could contribute to nation building wrote: *"Amongst a host of social problems, rampant corruption stands out to be one of the major challenges that the country faces at present. Pakistan, a few years ago, was adjudged as the land of second most corrupt nation in the world. Corruption is one thread which runs through the entire structure and spectrum of our economic and political power. ... it has permeated all sections of our social life notably government departments which are afflicted to the core. To avert total collapse, all forms of corruption need to be eliminated without any favours or exemptions. In other words, it requires a major surgery in which casualties of innocent people should be accepted in a bid to bring the guilty to the dock. In this process, armed forces need to be involved in a big way to cleanse the society of this evil. This should constitute one of the major commitments of armed forces insofar as nation building is concerned as just and clean society remains one of the lofty ideals of any nation building exercise"* (Muhammad, 2000:44).

<sup>40</sup> Major General (Retd.) Saleem (ibid footnote 38).

operate, the most oft-quoted frustration is that if it can do [something], so can the rest of the country. And the ground that this claim was repeatedly verified on was that there was no corruption within the military:

*“Despite using the same of kitty resources available to its political antecedents, the volume of developmental activity increases during military regimes” (Junior serving military officer who wished to remain anonymous).*

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*“Civil institutions suffer from endemic and institutional inadequacies which the military does not have. There is macro level corruption happening. Politicians take the money out of the country. This is extremely frustrating for the military because it sticks to its targets. Eventually these things add to reasons for taking over. ...It is because of this complete transparency and zero corruption that military has the complete trust of the people. Whenever it has been entrusted with a task, it has done a proper job. Far flung areas of the country which were unreachable earlier now have cities [because of the military]”<sup>41</sup>*

It would be pertinent to point out that there is no possible avenue whereby the claims of military honesty and lack of corruption can be verified. Inscrutability is inherent to militaries in general the world over. They deal with matters of national security after all and hence it makes sense that the aspects of the institution would be beyond public scrutiny. In the case of Pakistan military however, it is not just the administrative functions / aspects of organisation that are beyond public domain. Even the military budget is not available to inspection. That is, elements thereof which do not pertain to national security are also beyond reproach. The military budget is not open to discussion even in the parliament (Mason, 2016:07). The point being, with complete lack of transparency with respect of military handling of funds, charges of corruption against the political leadership and the civil bureaucracy lose some strength. That said, this section is about the perceptions and the mental models formed thereupon after all; and as has been established, it is a highly interpretive exercise.

*“The reason why the military has an inbuilt system of accountability is that you should be able to follow your officer in war. A soldier has to be an example of honesty, discipline and patriotism. That is why we call them gentlemen cadets. When the political government meets difficulties, they ask the military for help. But it is only so that they can meet their own ends and not*

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<sup>41</sup> Major Gen. Khokhar (ibid footnote 7).

*because they are trying to use the military as an example to build their own institutions".<sup>42</sup>*

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*"Politicians do not have the kind of day to day accountability that the military has. The institutions that are supposed to hold them to task are weak – National Accountability Bureau is weak; the judiciary is weak".<sup>43</sup>*

There is no doubt that on an individual level there is exponentially less corruption in the military than its civil counter parts. However, the reality is more nuanced than it seems at a glance and the military interpretation thereof seems to have excluded a lot of vital factors. For instance, operational makeup of the organisation has a very important role to play in internal corruption levels. Command structure within the military incorporates judicial powers as well. *"Anyone can be fired on the spot and sent packing if the senior orders"* (General Naeem Ahmed). Additionally, *"the promotion system is such that it factors in academic performance as well as personal reputation of an officer. There is an internal intelligence and they will observe any excesses. Everything is documented and goes on your file"<sup>44</sup>*. Plus the sheer difference in size of the military and the civil political/bureaucratic elements makes any comparison of this sort redundant.

Another extremely important factor is that the military self-professedly 'takes care of its own'. *"You start as a Major at 17/18 years of age and retire at 43/44. Conversely a bureaucrat retires at 60. Military therefore has to cater for all these people it has invested in. Especially given that [at the time of retirement] half their life is still ahead of them and the responsibilities are just starting. This is when the military-run organisations like FWO and the Fauji Foundation etc. come in handy".<sup>45</sup>*

The military ensures that the individual incentives of corruption do not exist from the get go. In addition to the pension, upon retirement officers get a residential plot for constructing a house – which it must be pointed out they have paid through their salary during service – the children get admission in the military-run schools and universities

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<sup>42</sup> Major General (Retd.) Saleem (ibid footnote 38).

<sup>43</sup> Major Gen. Khokhar (ibid footnote 7).

<sup>44</sup> Interview dated 24 August 2015 with Major General (Retd.) Iqbal at the Center for Public Policy and Governance

<sup>45</sup> Brig. (Retd.) Khan (ibid foot note 8).

automatically at minimal fee etc. The officer as aforementioned will be accommodated in one of the military-run business should he wish to. The Combined Military Hospitals provide free, state of the art medical and health facilities. The point being, the military takes care to eliminate the obvious inducements of corruption.

During an informal discussion with a senior retired bureaucrat, he explained that when he retired, all he had was his pension. It took him ten years before he could build a house of his own and that too after getting a loan from a bank. Conversely his brother who retired from the military around the same time was well taken care of by the military. It is not that at the end of the day one was more honest than the other. Both of them had performed their jobs equally honestly. The point being that 'lack of corruption' is certainly a crucial element of the military's habitus. However, while the claim might undoubtedly be by and large true also, it has a context within which it is to be understood.

#### **4.2.3 “The public [therefore] supports the military”**

The military is confident of the fact that it does not only enjoy the public support but it represents the ideals that the society aspires for. Here again we see traces of its self-perception, but via its interpretation of the public sentiment.

*“When public compares the military and civil set up, military comes out on the top.”<sup>46</sup>* This then becomes the basis of the military belief that it is the true guardian of the public sentiment and hence a vanguard for nation building or 'development'. This can be corroborated by the Gallup poll below.

It is indeed true that the military is popular at the time of the takeover. Military popularity however does not translate into an omnipotence. Military power is circumscribed by its own performance once in power. One commonality amongst all military regimes thus far is that they have ended as a result of protest and popular uprising. This is mostly due to an inability to deliver upon the promises. There are multiple reasons for below par performance, the chief amongst many being that despite the rhetoric of development of fixing things, measures taken while in power are informed with a self-serving purpose.

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<sup>46</sup> Interview dated 17 September 2015 with Col. Kirmani at ISPR HQ Lahore.

Moreover the military way of doing things cannot be sustained in the civil sphere. As shown above, the military does not understand civil administrative functions of a country. Additionally, the unconstitutionality of a coup probably also weighs in with the military because despite its authoritarian status we do not see it exerting the level of blanket authority expected from a coup maker. Once in power the military consistently fails to deliver on its promises. The triggering point of its ouster however is invariably an act in particular, the constitutionality or legality whereof becomes difficult to justify. In Musharraf's case for instance, dissatisfaction with the regime had been building for years. However, when he dismissed the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court over charges of alleged misuse of office, it unravelled the military tenure. This led to mass protests against Musharraf and his military regime across the country and he was forced to leave office.

That said, once the military retreats back to the barracks it does not take very long to recover sympathy. One of the reasons, as listed earlier, is that the coup is not operated from the General Head Quarters and hence the military is able to distance itself from the regime in power as soon as public dissatisfaction begins to play. The second and the most important is that by maintaining a strong rhetoric of nation building and development it is able to ensure a public friendly omnipresence in the country.

When confronted with an ambiguous situation or uncertain environment, a natural human reaction as per the shared mental models theory is to develop explanations so that subsequent actions can be ordered on it. These mental models in turn become the basis for establishing institutions. These in turn equips the group or individuals in question with the necessary tools to perceive the environment and to open further channels of communication.

Therefore, even though during a takeover the military's insurance policy lies in maintaining a *prima facie* distance from the regime; in the immediate aftermath of the toppling of regime its saving grace are its non-military activities which it operationalises as its nation building or developmental contributions to the country.



### 4.3 Development or nation building?

Irrespective of personal opinion,<sup>47</sup> the general understanding amongst the interviewees – and this includes both the military as well as non-military respondents – was that *“the Pakistan military has a mind-set that it has a role to play in nation building. It is convinced of that. And you have to accept that as a given. That cannot be changed now”*.<sup>48</sup> Additionally they did not make a distinction between ‘development’ and nation building. The two terms are often used in tandem and invariably, interchangeably.<sup>49</sup> They not only instinctively referred to the duties performed in aid of civil powers as examples of military’s nation building or developmental role but any military activity in the civil field which involved interaction with the civilian population fell under the rubric.

#### 4.3.1 Nation building

The military considers itself not only responsible but ideally suited for nation building. That said there isn’t an identifiable institutional agenda that can be labelled as such. *“The military does not have an organised nation building plan or even thought process. There is no discussion on the institutional level that says for example that the education system of the country is in a bad way, lets fix it.”*<sup>50</sup> Nation building therefore is an all-encompassing term which includes under its rubric *“political, economic as well as social”* elements. Military feels better disposed to undertake these tasks because nation building requires money and the politicians and other civil elements due to their ineptitude and inherent corruptness fail to deliver;

*“One of the biggest frustrations of the military is that it feels that the national and provincial budget is not spent properly. Additionally the military is also convinced that it can do something about this by either directly accessing the person in charge or by doing the required task themselves through FWO, NLC etc. Hence bulk of the work on CPEC has been given to the FWO”*.<sup>51</sup>

Yet the nation building role is a key element of the organisation’s DNA. Therefore even though there is not a set definition, a rough picture of what counts as nation building

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<sup>47</sup> Personal opinion of the military interviewees did not always support the military’s nation building / development activities, the broader sentiment being that anything that is not strictly security oriented distracts from the main purpose. Also, increased interaction with the civil side is considered a corrupting influence.

<sup>48</sup> Major General (Retd.) Iqbal (ibid footnote 43).

<sup>49</sup> Here it must be pointed out that the term ‘development’ was not used in the sense it is understood in development discourse. ‘Development’ here refers to any activities that result in economic growth and overall progress. This is why the word ‘development’ had been used in parenthesis throughout.

<sup>50</sup> Brig. (Retd.) Khan (ibid footnote 8).

<sup>51</sup> General (Retd.) Abbassi (ibid footnote 6).

emerges. The net result is that military's self-appointed role of nation building, as opposed to political aspirations, is seen as a bed rock of takeovers. As one military respondent explained:

*“The military is really not interested in the political affairs of the country and yet there are interventions. These interventions really start as an effort at nation building which the civilians can benefit from if they want to. Benazir Bhutto could have utilised the experience of the military leadership at the time which could have led to political accommodation and nation building but she chose not to”.<sup>52</sup>*

At various stages of their careers the officers are given papers to write, presentations and projects on a number of issues. These are a part of their academic as well as professional training and deal with a vast number of issues pertinent to the military. Subjects like nation building, developmental needs of the country, etc. can be a part thereof. *“Within the military there is a systematic procedure of achieving consensus on all major issues. Nuances of military thinking might change with time. However, there are a number of avenues and forums where the thought process is nurtured and developed”.*<sup>53</sup> These ‘thinking forums’ would be the Seminars at the army field level,<sup>54</sup> study periods, all the schools of instruction (including for example the War course at the National Defence University for example), Army Formation Command Conference, etc.

These studies are good tools for ascertaining the mood of the troops and soldiers. Very rarely decision making within the military, on strictly military matters can be loosely

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<sup>52</sup> Major General (Retd.) Saleem (ibid footnote 38).

<sup>53</sup> Interview dated 11 March 2016 with Lt. General (Retd.) Jehangir Karamat former Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan at his office.

<sup>54</sup> With respect to the civil domain there is no legally prescribed avenue / domain to contact the civil government. Nor does the Military feel any sense of responsibility with respect to the matter either – juxtaposed with the assertion that defence includes socio-economic factors as well. If however an issue pertaining to the civil domain does crop up which the Chief feels that it absolutely must be brought to the attention to the ‘government’ he might bring it up in the regular meeting with the PM. For example the monthly reports of a brigade stationed in Kashmir might conceivably include some issue that Chief feels must be brought to the attention of the civil government if it hasn’t so far. But this is just theoretical conjecturing and has never happened to any ones knowledge. The bottom line though is that there is absolutely no way to contact the civil government for conceiving or initiating any development project.

guided by the suggestions made therein.<sup>55</sup> At best they add to the institutional history.<sup>56</sup> They are not to be confused with an official institutional goals or agenda. For our purposes though they are an excellent window into the habitus of the organisation. As these documents are a part of the institutional history and thinking process there were limitations to accessing them. However, I did manage to get hold of some of the essays written as part of their academic careers and official military publications like the Green Book and the ISPR monthly magazine *Hilal*. As mentioned in chapter III discussions of nation building in such documents are not to be taken as a policy stance of the military. Following a few examples of how the military rationalises its nation building role. Using these a picture of military's habitus emerges.

A general sentiment that comes to the fore from published material is that the military feels it can help in sharing the nation's economic burdens by increasing the levels of involvement in nation building projects.<sup>57</sup> As expected there is no set definition of nation building. However it is quite easy to discern how the term is understood / what is the habitus regarding the concept. *"There is no set vision of development of nation building formally. But broadly speaking there is a desire for economic and social prosperity. And this includes everything"*.<sup>58</sup>

Broadly speaking *"nation building ... means establishing a common citizenry, common political and social structures, a common [S]tate, and an additional sense of identity, or belonging together"*<sup>59</sup> That said, it is not to be understood as an intangible concept; one

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<sup>55</sup> Decision making within the organisation, as is the case with militaries in general, extremely hierarchical. Very rarely though the governing body while contemplating a particular decision might want to ascertain in advance how it will be received or what is the common opinion regarding an issue. In those cases there is a possibility that the GHQ would recommend a topic for discussion or a written essay. This does not alter the decision making process in any way whatsoever though.

<sup>56</sup> Institutional history is a source of pride and an important element of the mindset. It is yet another example of governance capabilities of the military which the civil institutions lack entirely because of the latter's ineptitude.

<sup>57</sup> Military publications are not to be confused with official military policy. These are essays and articles have been included in here as secondary data – to corroborate the claims of military respondents. They however are a good source into the mind-set as they are written by officers in service and published by the GHQ and other military institutions alike the National Defence University and ISSRA. They are not official military policy but they certainly allow a glimpse into the military thought process. And that is important because in absence of official policy documents – which are impossible to obtain because it is the military after all – such secondary sources, which are published and circulated under the aegis of the military show us how the military understands issues like nation building and development etc.

<sup>58</sup> Interview dated 17 February 2016 General (Retd.) Amjad at his house.

<sup>59</sup> Visualised Role of the Armed Forces in Nation Building, Individual research paper obtained from the National Defence College Library. *"As such Armed Forces of Pakistan owe it to the country to make maximum possible*

where there are deliverable socio-economic results. *“It is a direct involvement of armed forces in national development to undertake dedicated activities in certain exclusive fields that are essentially economic and social in nature (Baz, 2000:04).”*<sup>60</sup> These ‘fields’ or the main problem areas identified are as wide ranging as diverse. They include, but are not limited to, low literacy rate, inadequate basic health facilities, high rate of population growth, low production in agriculture sector, scarcity of forests and environmental degradation, lack of communication infrastructure, inadequate human resource development, lack of information technology, breakdown of social order, lack of political stability and geo-economic and geo-strategic deficiencies.

On the one hand in its mind it is a vanguard of national development<sup>61</sup> on the other absence of a set definition evidently does not sit very well with the officers. There are a number of instances where it is recommended to find constitutional or legal cover for the ‘developmental activities’ undertaken by the military. *“To lend legal validity and to avoid criticism, the constitutional role of the Army may have to be redefined to undertake nation building projects. At the least, appropriate legal cover through legislation should be obtained (Baz, 2000:08).”*

### **4.3.2 Development**

The question then is whether or not the military holds itself responsible for ‘development’ of or in Pakistan. Almost all the military respondents were of the opinion that the military does not hold itself responsible for development of or in Pakistan. Developmental activity in this instance means any measures conducted in the civil arena for the benefit of non-military personnel.

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*contribution in nation building as well as socio-economic fields without compromising on their combat readiness, military ethos/ culture traditional values and morale.”*

<sup>60</sup> General Musharraf took over in October 1999. In 2000 a special edition of the Pakistan Army green book was published titled Role of Pakistan Army in Nation Building in which there were around 40 articles on the subject, broadly divided in three categories: Nation Building – A Conceptual Framework; Pakistan Army’s Contribution to National Development; and Areas in which Pakistan Army can Contribute. This publication could be a way to ascertain the mood of the military and see how they understand the coup, or get the organisation in describing a way forward retrospectively.

<sup>61</sup> *“Although primary orientation of the army remains towards safeguarding national integrity against external aggression; nowadays, threat to national integrity from within is becoming more pronounced. ... apart from maintenance of law and order which is absolutely essential for political stability and economic growth, Army, by virtue of its inherent organizational ability to operate efficiently in the times of crises, has the capacity to expand its conventional role to contributing towards overall improvement in the country, by remarkable managerial skills and technical expertise which are time tested and cost effective” (Akhtar, 2000:01).*

*“There is no institutional agenda of development. The military certainly contributes to nation building in many small ways. Any arena dominated by the armed forces has the potential of having strategic implications. So the decision to undertake small projects which can very likely improve the life of locals can be labelled as nation building. However, it is not a responsibility of the military as an institution. Additionally, on a practical front there is no budgetary provision for a large scale nation building undertaking. If the military were responsible for nation building, where is the money? How is it going to do it?”<sup>62</sup>*

Development therefore is believed to be a civilian responsibility for a number of reasons. For starters there is no budgetary provision for developmental activity. Second, development is a civilian function because military does not possess the requisite expertise. The most common cited example was that even when in power, all the three military regimes relied on the bureaucracy for the procedural and administrative purposes. Reason being the bureaucracy understands what measures need to be taken and how. Third, development is not the military’s job because it “*does not need votes*” and hence does not stand to benefit in any way.

Does that mean that ‘development’ as per the military is a politically charged term? When juxtaposed with the claim that takeovers are guided by a need to fix things, it would seem that either political aspirations of the military play a far greater role in coup-making, or they are so deeply buried in the mental models that they themselves cannot identify it. Moreover, it is an all-encompassing term which does not exclude much from its rubric. For further quotations from military respondents:

*“In my opinion development is very much a part of nation building. However I would distinguish between positive and negative nation building. The military is not interested in the political affairs of the country. Yet there are interventions. ..These interventions really do start as an effort at nation building. However, this is where I would distinguish between negative and positive nation building. And a takeover is a negative form of nation building. In my opinion positive nation building is when the civilian government takes the initiative and ownership of improving its institutions and uses the help of the military within legal bounds. Civilian governments have real handicaps in the form of security and spatial difficulties that the military can help overcome. Anything beyond that is a waste of military and in the long term a negative use of the military and its nation building capabilities” .<sup>63</sup>*

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<sup>62</sup> Brig. (Retd.) Khan (ibid foot note 8). He gave the example that a military run school in Lahore Cantonment needed a water tank. Ordnance Depot which is next door offered to help out with the white washing for free. However, for the water tank they asked for help in personal capacity.

<sup>63</sup> Major General (Retd.) Saleem (ibid footnote 38).

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*“As I understand that when it comes to nation building, development is very much a part of it. Not only economic but supporting the right kind of political structure. For example the primary task of the National Security Council is nation building”.*<sup>64</sup>

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*“When it comes to development the military is definitely invested. Whether it is capable of it or not is a completely different matter. But it is the biggest institution in the country and consequently has a lot of influence. There is no set vision for development or nation building formally. But broadly speaking there is a desire for the economic and social prosperity. And this includes everything. Which sphere can you possibly exclude from ‘Social Prosperity’?”*<sup>65</sup>

A common perception was that there is more ‘development’ during military regimes. The most cited example being that of the local governments that various military regimes has attempted to install. The argument was that the politicians want to retain power and hence do not let the local governments thrive. Military on the other hand tries to fix the governance infrastructure to the lowest level and hence tries to install the local governments.

Another commonly held view was that the military is filling in for the state as it were.

*“Due to the inefficiency and corruption of the civil government space for military intervention is created in the development sector. As a result military is delivering services that the state is not providing. However, this is being done on a very small scale and it cannot be said that the military is hampering institutional building in any way”.*<sup>66</sup>

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*“For example people prefer going to the Combined Military Hospital as opposed to the government hospitals. It is not that there are not any doctors and state of the equipment on the civil side. Things are just badly done”.*<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Major General (Retd.) Saleemullah (ibid footnote 38).

<sup>65</sup> General (Retd.) Amjad at his house (ibid footnote 59).

<sup>66</sup> Lt. General (Retd.) Anis Abbasi (ibid footnote 6).

<sup>67</sup> Lt. General (Retd.) Jehangir Karamat (ibid footnote 54).

*“Until the country is economically, politically and strategically stable the military needs to remain involved [in the developmental activities]. But it needs to make sure that the development it undertakes is financially viable; it stays within the parameters of the legal system; and that it is civilian development for the country and not for the benefit of the military only”.*<sup>68</sup>

While nation building is a part of the military consciousness, ‘development’ is not. *“Development’ priorities of the country are described by the civilian government. Military can only give opinions. The government may choose to act on some of these recommendations at the end of the day but that does not mean that the military can or does force it [the civil government]. But when in power, social sector services are naturally the military’s responsibility”.*<sup>69</sup>

### **4.3.3 A matter of cognitive dissonance**

It has already been discussed above that mental models are in a constant state of flux. Not only do the ideologies on which mental models are based evolve, so does the language informing them. Moreover, there are natural limits to the abundance of cognitive resources as well as the vocabulary through which they are expressed. Therefore new meanings are [gradually] transferred from one field of application to another to fill in the cognitive as well as linguistic gaps. If repeated enough, they become an integral component of the mental model and we change the use in the common parlance. With time we not only alter the meanings we associate with terminology and but also how we use it.

There seems to be, for lack of a better term, a cognitive dissonance around the military’s nation building or ‘developmental’ role. On the one hand it is only responsible for the security of the country. As aforementioned that is what they are capable of. Yet when pressed about military presence in certain civil developmental areas the response was by and large that security is not limited to strictly military matters and has socio-economic dimensions as well. Therefore, if the military undertakes any ‘developmental’ or nation building activity, it is acting on its charter to secure the country.

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<sup>68</sup> Major General (Retd.) Javed Iqbal (ibid footnote 43).

<sup>69</sup> General (Retd.) Amjad at his house (ibid footnote 59).

Pakistan is a big country. Strategically relevant border areas are sparsely populated and cut off from the federal as well as provincial centres. As a result it is not only physically complicated for the civil governments to reach them and provide certain basic social sector services like electricity and gas but economically not viable either. *“One must realise that the civilian governments have real handicaps in the form of security and spatial difficulties that the military can help overcome”*.<sup>70</sup>

Military for strategic reasons is already present in these areas. That means that there would be an electric and gas system also which they can easily share with locals. Electric and telephone lines would be laid out. There would be a hospital providing basic health care. Schools for the children of both the officers as well as troops would be set up. The civil government in such localities relies on the military to provide the basic amenities. Medical care in a vast majority of areas in Kashmir is provided by the military. The civil government pays them for it. Same goes for a sizeable number of schools in the Northern Areas. Point being there is interdependence between defence and ‘development’ in certain parts of the country which makes it difficult to treat the two separately and as distinct concepts. As a result there is what the interviewees called a “spill-over of defence into development” which the civil population is an unwitting beneficiary of. Whether such activity qualifies as military’s ‘developmental’ and nation building strategy is unclear. However, it is certainly a part of its habitus. Despite the fact that the military does not hold itself responsible for ‘development’ as such, examples of such spill-over activities are definitely cited as its achievements. Here it must be clarified that the term ‘spill-over’ was suggested by the interviewees themselves.

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<sup>70</sup> Major General (Retd.) Saleemullah (ibid footnote 38).



## 5. Conclusion

After three takeovers the Pakistan military seems to have developed some distinct mental models on which it organises its activities and institutions. These stints into power have come to be accommodated within the military thought process as outcomes of peculiar circumstances enforced upon it. Evidence shows that as things stand, within the military perception, takeovers are not considered bids for power informed by political aspirations but [necessary] measures of the last resort to save the country. With the passage of time, especially given that ten years have passed since the last takeover ended, the military thinking has evolved to accommodate / accept these takeovers as a necessity of the hour. The most prominent advantage of this particular line of reasoning being that it allows for the military as a saviour narrative to develop.

Admittedly, the geo-political realities of the country are such that the civil government relies more on the military than it should. Moreover its own inability to deliver public sector services due to what can only be described as incompetence only supports the saviour narrative. The net result is that the military is popular amongst the citizenry and has an indelible belief in its own indispensability.

Mental models are formed by a group through an interpretation of its environment especially in situations of crisis or uncertainty ideologies. These ideologies prescribe how the given environment should be structured (Denzau & North, 1994:04). Moreover, the language used in the process is not limited to a particular field of application. Words and concepts can be borrowed without necessarily importing the full wealth of knowledge informing these concepts.

As things stand with the Pakistan military, boundaries between defence and 'development' have become precariously intertwined. While 'development' is accepted as a civilian domain, the military holds itself responsible for nation building. As seen above there is no tangible difference between the two terms and are often used interchangeably. In fact at times, they are even conflated with those activities that it performs in aid of civil powers.

While mental models are internal representations of the environmental representations that the individual cognition creates, the institutions that the individuals create based on

these mental models are a physical manifestations of how the given environment should be ordered / structured (Denzau & North, 1994:05). Secure in its hegemonic status, the Pakistan military has found ways to simultaneously navigate both the civil and the military spheres while remaining within legally and theoretically prescribed boundaries.

This conflation of 'development' and defence provides the military an avenue to perceive its hegemony not through overt displays of power, but through provision of social sector amenities. This in turn physically manifests in the form of organisations it has created in the development and commercial sector.

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