

Deconstruction of Current Politics in Pakistan

Syed Azeem

Current Left politics in Pakistan

Themes:

Imperialism v Taliban

Democracy v Dictatorship

Secularism v Clergyism (Mullah)

Deconstruction- not poststructuralist-
not without reconstruction

I want to work within a triangle of
description of life- interpretation of life-
construction of life

Cautions :

I am not pro-military or pro-mullah

In Pakistan the critique of modernity is made from within tradition (religion) and critique of religion (tradition) is made from within modernity (Western discourse).

I want a critique of modernity from within modernity.

But not a postmodern critique of modernity!

My biases

(for today's presentation)

- Totality as opposed to fragmentation
- Dialectics
- Generality as opposed to specificity
- Class focus
- Oversimplification

Imperialism v Taliban

Democracy v Dictatorship

Secularism v Clergyism (Mullah)

For the new US strategy see Caroline Wadhams, Brian Katulis, Lawrence Korb, and Colin Cookman, (Nov. 2008), *Partnership for Progress: Advancing a New Strategy for Prosperity and Stability in Pakistan and the Region*, p23, available at WWW.AMERICANPROGRESS.ORG

The new US strategy (maybe old now) is Obama stressing support for Pakistani leadership's objectives of creating a professional non-political army and ISI operating under civilian control with clearly delineated lines of authority and the need of good governance, transparency and accountability, judicial reforms, rule of law, independent judiciary, law and order, and human rights. All this is connected with hopes for the civil society and media

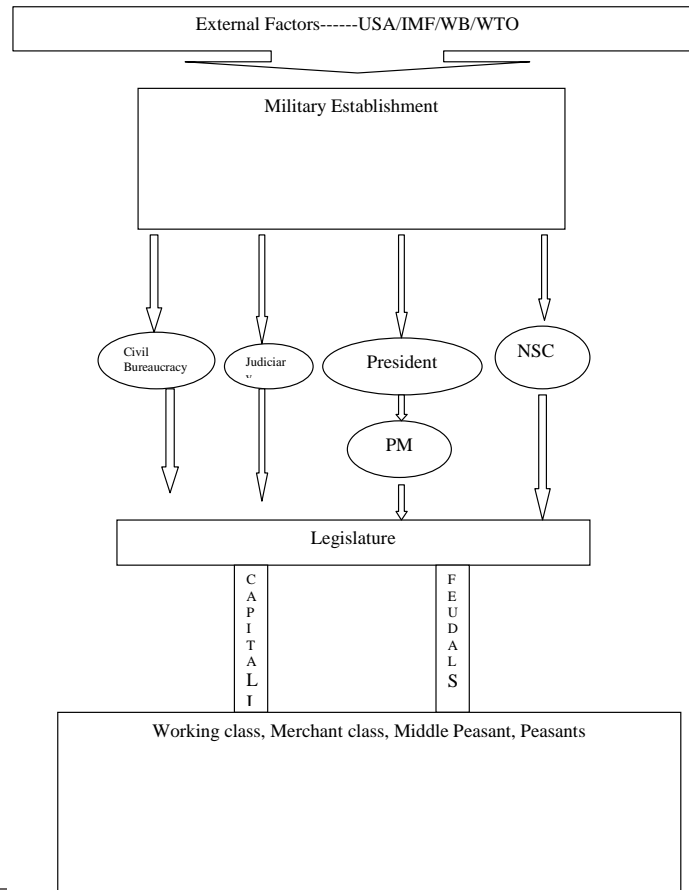
Old Progressive politics=

anti- imperialism+ democracy+ secularism

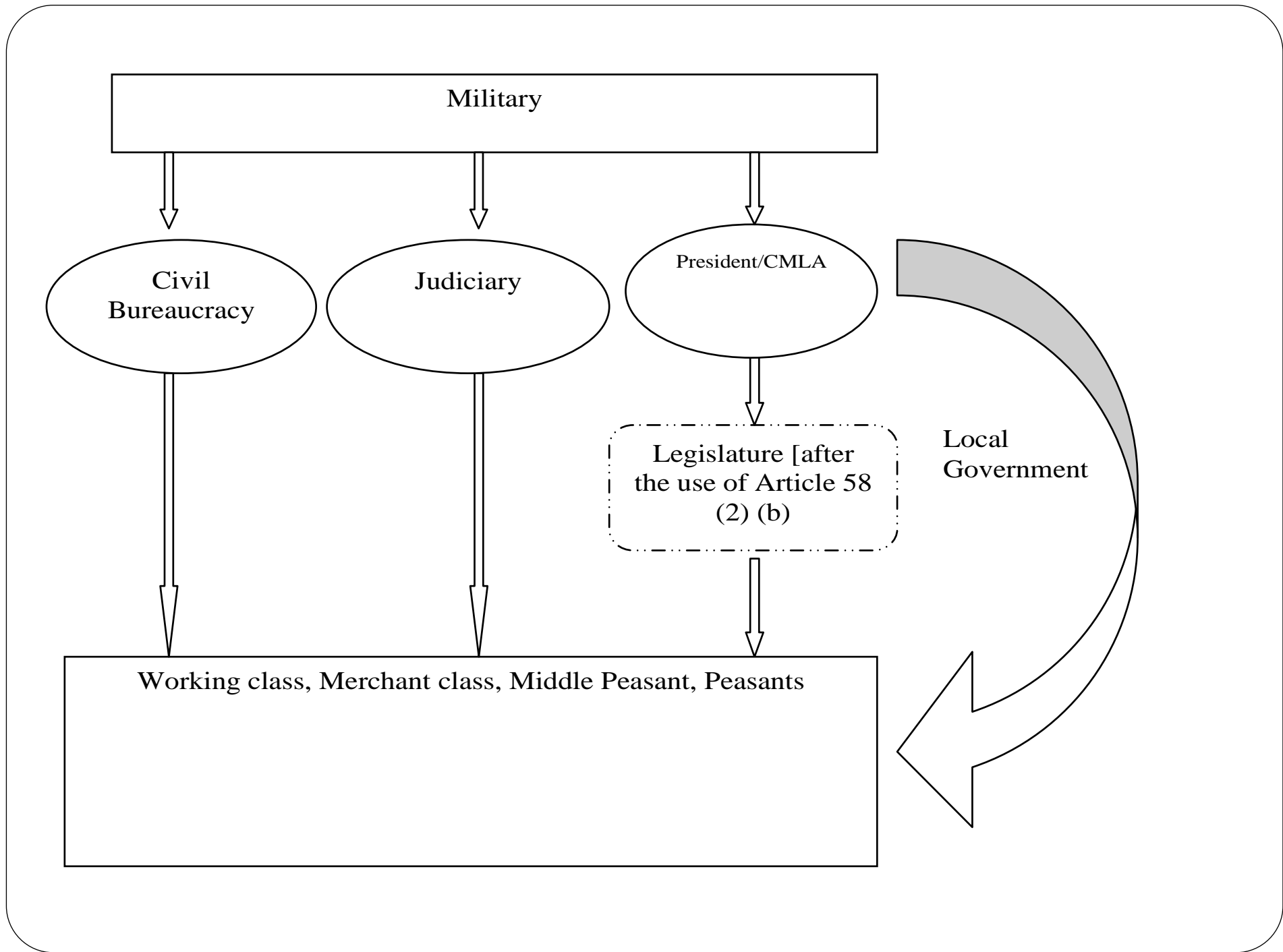
New “Progressive” Politics=

imperialism+ democracy+ secularism

Figure 2



FORMAL (legal theory) POLITICS



Military

Civil
Bureaucracy

Judiciary

President/CMLA

Legislature [after
the use of Article 58
(2) (b)]

Working class, Merchant class, Middle Peasant, Peasants

Local
Government

What the law and state is : *“Bourgeois science confuses the question of the essence of law no less than the question of the state.....the bourgeois theory of the state is 90% the legal theory of the state.”* Pashukanis, (1980), p28

Summary

State is a separation of sphere of production (creating substantive inequality) from the sphere of politics (creating a formal equality) like equality before law. A peasant is a citizen like a feudal landlord, both can vote, and be president of Pakistan in 'democracy'

Substantive inequality is continuously generated in the economic sphere of production and there is a need of continuous reproduction of formal equality in the sphere of political sphere.

This separation of the political from the economic is both real and illusory.

-It is *real* that it has a material foundation because there is a need to separate coercion from means of production (Hiesch and Poulantzas)

It is *illusory* due to its ideological character, commodity fetishization, to conceal and hide the class character . For this it gives a fantastic political equality among citizens (Holloway and Picciotto, 1977, 80)

Evident versus hidden

- *evident* - Pakistani state (dominated by military) as totally autonomous

hidden - structural constraints on it (economic and political as well as internal and external).

State is under pressure from the IFIs/NATO-US led externally and internally from newly created sphere of powers like religious, ethnic, linguistic, NGOs. State is going through restructuring under these demands.

• *evident* - crisis of/created by one institute (military)

hidden - that it is the crisis of the whole ruling nexus.

Logic is the continuity of the crisis

• *evident* - half of the truth that legislature is weak because of strong military

hidden - half of the truth that legislature is not the true representative of the masses.

Elections are on the basis of money, rigging, influence, clan, etc. - bloodless coups.

• *evident* - the contradiction between military and the ruling landed and capitalist elite

hidden - the strong coalition between them, against the masses

This is partial, superficial, unimportant description of contradictions in our society.

• *evident* - disagreement on the form of regime (the sphere of formal equality)

hidden - the agreement of the elite on the sphere of production (substantive inequality)

The disagreement seems on the forms of hidden-
may be, the level of sophistication of hidden.

• *evident* - very limited understanding of labour politics

hidden - class struggles like peasant struggles (Hashat Nagar peasant struggle, Anjaman Mazareen Punjab), workers struggles (Faisalabad power looms worker struggle) etc

evident - demerits of dictatorship

hidden - the ills of elitist democracy

This way it hides the link between the two and a large space occupied between the two.

evident – the link between democracy and secularism

hidden - the link of the two with imperialism today

Liberal democracy and secularism ignore the importance of level of political and economic development of these postcolonial states. It has nothing to do with peoples' democratic struggles and struggles for new democracy in developing countries even in its ultimate achievements

evident - this struggle as for all people

hidden - the non existence of any
constituency of working classes in middle
class politics

evident - a high level of class in it

hidden - very little class in it

Sometime struggles are not judged on the basis of pro-worker on anti-worker only, but on the level of their class quality. How does class enter these dichotomies?

evident - the functioning of the governance of the political system

hidden - the distributive aspects of the political system

Distribution is to divide the pie of appropriation of the surplus locally, and to keep a mouth on the nozzle of pump of the foreign fund by military, landed elite and NGOs.

Problems with the dominant approach

- Vulnerable to be co-opted with all manifestations of neo-liberalism, from liberal democracy to market economy
- Limited emancipatory value
- Avoids bold alternatives for political and economic development of Pakistan.
- Overlooks land reforms and other structural changes.
- Over-emphasis on middle class social movements for change
- Neglect of sequencing and pacing of the development of democracy, judicial system, and economic development.
- Neglect of fundamental contradictions in society and their relation.
- Does not engage working people in a new politics for change.

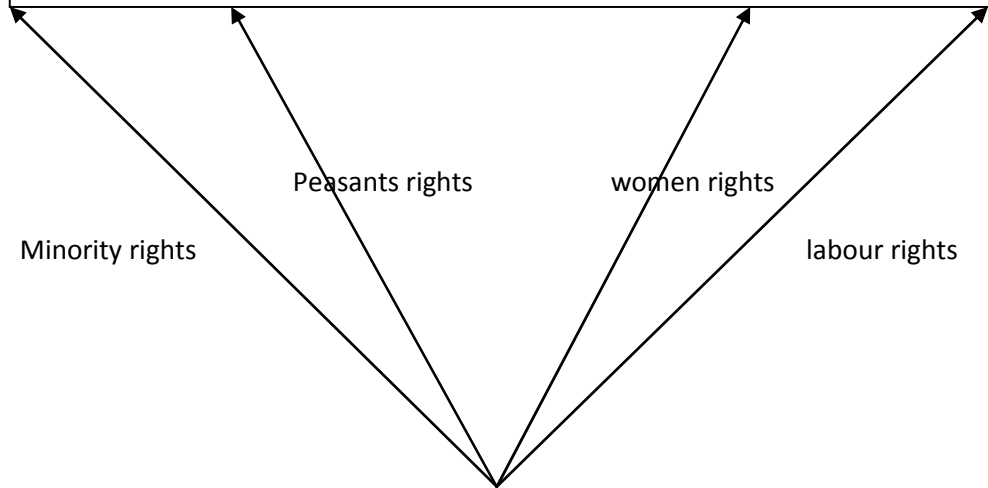
Conclusion

- 1-The task is not to please the confused, vacillating, and divided middle classes. This is to avoid ideological struggles dividing the society
- 2- The task is to unite the most deprived sections of the society (workers-peasants-women-national minorities) in a political movement
- 3- Struggles should expose and explore solutions to substantive inequality, such as attacks on labour rights, rather engaging in struggles for formal equality.

Imperialism

Ruling Elite [civil and Military bureaucracy,
landed elite, comprador capitalist class]

Democracy v Dictatorship and Secularism v Clergyism (mullahism)



Minority rights

Peasants rights

women rights

labour rights

Current deformed left and progressive politics

Imperialism

Ruling Elite [civil and Military bureaucracy,
landed elite, comprador capitalist class]

Democracy v dictatorship, secularism v clergyism (mullahism)

Minority rights

peasant rights

women right

labour right