

# Democracy in Pakistan

## Dynastic politics and the political elites of Pakistan

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**Abstract**—This report is about how the Political Network of Pakistan is heavily influenced by personal family relations, tribal belongings and favoritism. And how it has shaped the political culture of Pakistan during the Democratic regiment (2008 - 2016).

**Keywords**—Politics; Pakistan; Network Analysis; National Assembly; Current Affairs

### I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of political or dynastic elites is a reality in societies which is almost undeniable. In almost every society prevalent throughout history let it be the Mughals and Nabobs (Nawabs) of India or the empires and dynasties of United Kingdom and the French; it is merely undeniable that certain tribes or families have certain dominance and execute a certain amount of power as compared to others. These dynasties become an addition to the government in states where democracy is yet to make sturdy roots. The heads or prominent individuals of those families disseminate their authority and affect the political process.

### II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- A. *How dynastic politics is a growing systematic process, How much the hierarchy in a political process related with number of direct connections in the process and is it possible that by connecting with one individual in a network, the link to a whole social network can be established?*
- B. *Which tribe has been dominating the Pakistani politics (2008-2013)?*
- C. *Who are the most influential politicians that have introduced most number of personal relations in the Political network of Pakistan?*

### III. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The data collection process of this research was perhaps the most difficult part. Since there is no platform, organization or committee in Pakistan that monitors the Family dynasty or provides any information on the elites having their

connections involved in the politics of Pakistan. We have done an extensive research on the first democratic transition from 2008-2013 and the power elite that have reemerged or have still made their way into important political offices through their strong ties and have created a network, the data has been gathered using news articles by news agencies such as Dawn and the Washington Journal, journals, columnist critiques by known journalists like Raza Rumi and case studies presented in UC Berkeley as well as prominent political blog sites such as Pakistaniat.com and Siasat.com .

#### A. Gathering Raw Data

We had to extrapolate the data manually from hundredths of online articles, political archives including newspaper, books and recordings certain TV shows in Pakistan as mentioned above.

#### B. Data refinement and modification for different analysis.

- After gathering the raw data, we created the connections manually on an excel sheet,
- The 'source' column represented the main politicians in power,
- The 'target' columns in the sheet corresponded to the politicians having any blood/family ties with the source,
- The 'Political Affiliation' mentioned about from which party do the 'source' and the 'target' belong. It is evident that all the connection shared the same affiliation.
- The 'Tribe' column mentioned the tribal connection of the 'target'. From which tribe of Pakistan does the 'target' politician belongs to?

Since, not all information was available at the disposal, there are a few records in the table that are missing the tribal or political affiliation details of the source and target.

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The most important thing that we have researched and limited our scale to is the role of family networks to gather influence and affect the political scenario and offices in the past 8 years

of continuous democracies in Pakistan.’ The data was strictly limited to a sum of 136 individuals comprising 68 connecting nodes or people (target) who occupied an important political office while their family was already in a higher legislative position (Source) or along with them.

Obviously even amongst these families and waves of nepotism, we have concluded that some individuals are rather much well connected and more ‘Central’ than others as can be seen in fig 1.1:

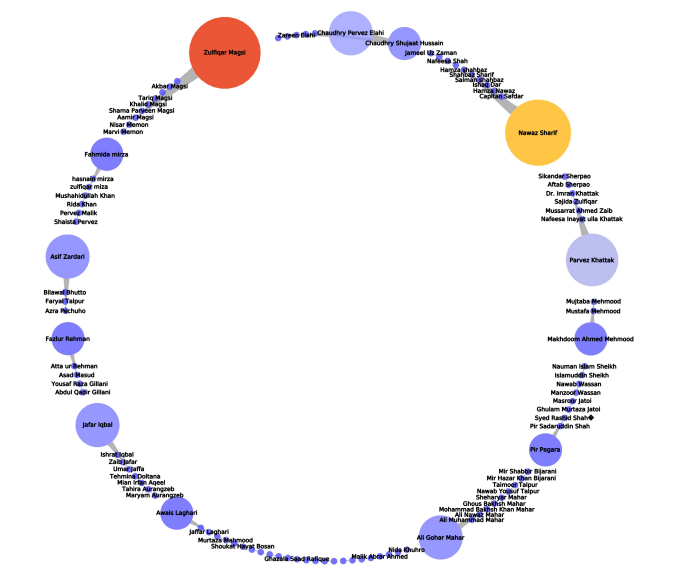


fig1.1

What we can conclude from this visual is that certain individuals have used their offices and influence to expand their power in the offices and thus their centrality has increased. The colors in the diagram show the betweenness centrality.

The most central amongst them is Zulfiqar Magsi (red node) the former governor of Baluchistan of the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) was the most central figure in terms of family network in political offices, followed by the current prime minister of Pakistan Mr. Nawaz Sharif (yellow node) whose direct family occupies many key political offices. The purple node has the lowest betweenness centrality.

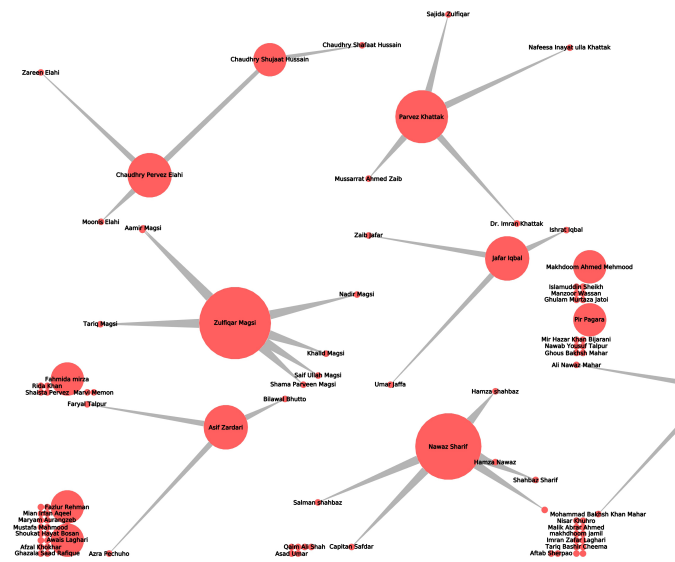


fig 1.2

The graph above shows the degree and the number of connections of certain individuals through which we can determine that Mr. Zulfiqar Magsi is the most connected individual followed by PM Nawaz. Referring to our earlier question it can also be observed that a single direct link to Mr.Nawaz established a whole social network for Mr.Safdar because of the formers connectedness. However former president Asif Zardari is not that far behind, he’s connected to 3 different influential families, and has direct relatives in the office such as his sisters Faryal Talpur and Ms. Pechuho on the back of the most famous dynastic political name of his son Bilawal Bhutto. Similarly the Chief Minister of KPK(Khyber Pakhtun Khwa) who belongs to the political party which defies dynastic rule also has a growing family network in the political offices. Moreover former Prime Minister Chaudhary Shujaat is also a well-connected political figure.

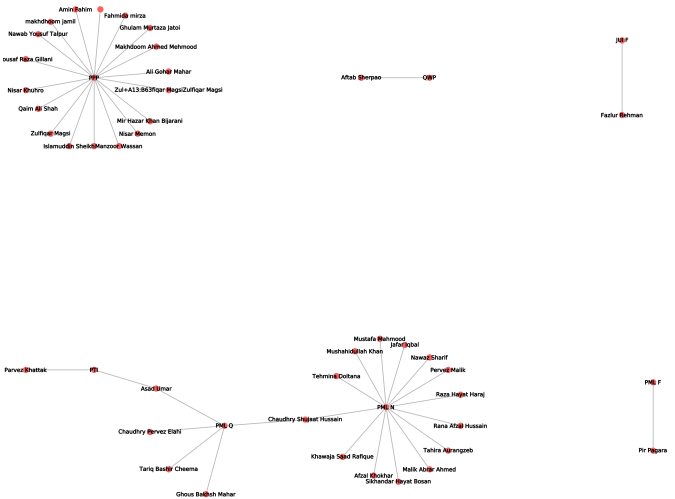


fig 1.3: Political Affiliations

What can also be observed that there are certain political parties which favor people with family connections (ref: fig 1.3) and dynastic based politics therefore their influence in one particular area, like the PPP in Sindh is not that strongly contested because of the influence that these people have gathered through expanding their family social network in the political network. Similar is the case with PML N in Punjab and PML F in interior Sindh.

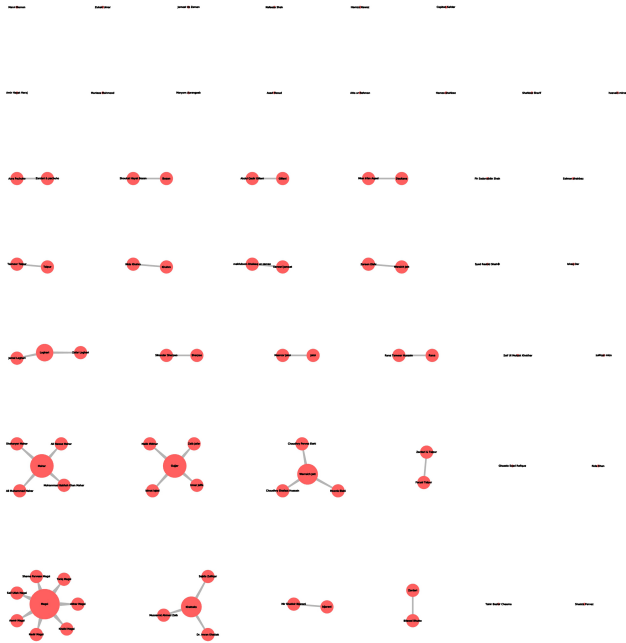


fig 1.4: Tribal Affiliations

Same is the case with the tribal connections. It is our hypothesis that it is safe to connect the source with the target on the basis of a common tribe. Since the tribal concept is very intense in Pakistan, that it represents a sense of unity, favoritism and brotherhood within the tribe, it definitely creates a dynastic sort of political network. From the Analysis, it is certain that the Magsi tribe is the most dominant one in the political network.

## V. DISCUSSION

In numerous observations, the dynastic elite convert themselves in the governance and political processes, they use their names and identities to manipulate the process and use it advantageously during electoral campaigns to build their reputation and create a false sense of historical ownership while competing in the democratic process.

A book written by a Pakistani writer(Aqeel Jaffary) named 'Pakistan ke Siyasi Waderay' (Pakistan's Political Feudal Lords) which was first published in the 1970's claimed that

since its inception Pakistan's social order has been dominated and dictated by a handful of families or tribes which occupy more than 50% of the legislative offices in the country. Since then 10 editions of the book have been published and that number has increased; thus suggesting that although the political sphere of Pakistan may be changing, the family social network still continues to dominate the affairs and lifestyles of the country.

## VI. CONCLUSION

### A. How much the democracy in Pakistan is effected by Dynastic Politics?

From the data gathered and the analysis, we can see that all the major parties, with members serving in the assembly are heavily a result of a family or tribal relation with a very dominant, central politician. There are a lot of clusters within the Political Network. The amazing thing that we have discovered is that we were able to create so many family trees out of the politicians serving in the government, which is not possible in any government of an established, developed, democratic country.

### B. The most dominant tribes in the political network?

The data shows us clearly that the Magsi tribe has a lead when it comes to tribal influence in the politics of Pakistan.

### C. The most influential politicians?

We conclude that the most influential politician that turn out from our data analysis is Mr. Nawaz Sharif and Mr. Zulfikar Magsi.

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