



RESEARCH PAPER**Populism in Foreign Policy: Unpacking the Foreign Policy Approaches of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan**

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to identify the patterns of populists' tactics in foreign policy and to propose actionable recommendations to minimize the impacts of populism in Pakistan's foreign policy. International politics witnessed a surge in the rise of populist leaders all across the globe. The rise of populism is a new phenomenon with profound implications for state relations, and Pakistan is not an exception. This is non-experimental exploratory research employing qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. In line with Michael Zurn's analysis, this article assesses Pakistan's Foreign Policy in populist leaders' tenures. This paper delves into exploring the populism of Bhutto and Khan, and its impacts on Pakistan's foreign policy. The paper finds that Bhutto and Khan follow centralized foreign policy decision-making, employ populist Islamic and anti-west rhetoric, and poised foreign policy with their notorious political agendas. The paper recommends increasing public awareness and strengthening foreign policy-making institutions to minimize populist elements in foreign policy.

KEYWORDS Discourse, Foreign Policy, Islam/Muslim, Politicization, Populism

Introduction

In the contemporary era, populist leaders are making their way into governments all across the globe (Jordan Kyle, 2018). This recent surge in populist tendencies is significant and worth exploring development in International Relations scholarship. Scholars from related fields, particularly from Comparative Politics, are delving into rhetoric, ideology and domestic repercussions of populist elements in politics (P. Taggart, 2016). Geographically, scholars are more interested (and intended) in exploring various dimensions of populism in Europe and the United States. Scant literature is available, to our knowledge, regarding the repercussions of populism for foreign policies of states. Particularly in case of Pakistan, the literature is altogether missing. An international affair is a vital domain altered in many ways by populist leaders' foreign policies and needs to be explored. This research paper aims to fill this gap by assessing the foreign policies of two populist leaders of Pakistan – Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Late) and Imran Khan are the two Ex-Prime Ministers of Pakistan. They were known for their renowned personalities, cherished charisma, and remarkable [public] appealing skills at their respective times (Noor, 2022). Both leaders come to power on populist platforms. The Son of an influential and wealthy feudal lord, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, stepped into politics in the late 1950s as a cabinet member of Iskandar Mirza, the then-president of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Later, General Ayub gives him place in his cabinet first as a commerce and later as a foreign minister. (Muzaffar, et. al. 2016) There he was trained and groomed by the military establishment of that time. After working as Commerce and Foreign Minister in Ayub Khan's Regime, He parted ways with the military general, ostensibly due to [presumed] humiliation of

Pakistan in 1965 War and some other differences, and form a new political party – Pakistan People's Party – in 1967 (Shah, 2018). Later, in 1970, due to his populist rhetoric of promoting Islamic Socialism, his party gained an overwhelming majority in Western Province(s) of Pakistan in general elections, and eventually he became the first elected Prime Minister of Pakistan in 1973 (Zahoor, 2017). Parallel with this, in other (and more recent) times, a Cricketer turned politician, Imran Khan, unlike Bhutto, entered politics by forming a new political party – Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf – in 1996 (Rao, 2018). Like Bhutto, the consistent nourishment and support of the establishment, the powerful cadre of Pakistan's politics (Basit, 2023), coupled with his populist approach of ending corruption and forming "Naya (New) Pakistan – the state of pure people", Khan was able to form a coalition government in 2018. Both cases are intriguing as both turn out populists and turn against their former masters – the creators of their political careers.

Intrinsically, the above-mentioned leaders were [reformist] populists and experts in appealing laypeople through their rhetoric, and they share some stark common traits. To begin with, both were backed and brought to politics by the security establishment, and both turned against them in their later respective political careers. Additionally, both leaders were genuinely charismatic and adopted people-centred and anti-elitist rhetoric – "roti, kappaa aur Makan" (food, clothes and shelter) in the case of Bhutto and "Naya Pakistan" (New Pakistan) in the case of Imran Khan. Likewise, both were Islamist in their approach. For instance, Bhutto advocates and executes a project of the Islamic State by unanimously passing a resolution which declares the Ahmadiya Community a religious minority in the 1973 constitution (Farooq, 2019). In a parallel manner, Mr Khan carries out a [utopian] project of Riasat-e-Madina (State of Madina) with initiatives like the formation of the Khatim-o-Nabiyeen Authority and other consecutive Islamic touches (Ihsan Yilmaz, 2021; Akhter, 2020). Finally, both were ousted from power by the establishment disguised in the political struggle of opposition parties' coalitions – Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) in the case of Bhutto (d., 2014) and the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) in the case of Khan.

The above-mentioned stark similarities between the two Pakistani ex-premiers led us to deduce that foreign policy approaches of these two populist leaders must have some common traits. Therefore, this paper decided to delve into this topic for a more nuanced understanding of the link between populism and foreign policy.

Literature Review

As mentioned above, literature on populism in the context of Pakistan's foreign policy is missing. Rastogi explores the genesis of populism in Pakistan. He delves into the pre-inception history of Pakistan when Jinnah propelled the struggle for Pakistan based on the Two-Nations Theory. Through this struggle, Islam was incorporated into the day-to-day political life of Muslims of the Sub-Continent. The Muslims were politicized through this instrumental use of religion. The use of religion was crucial for the creation of Pakistan. However, once Pakistan was created, religion became a tool for persuading Pakistanis to carry out Utopian projects time and again. The discourse employed by populists in 21st century is not different from the discourse employed by creators of Pakistan. Religion still dominates the populists' discourse. Therefore, the article assumes that the contemporary populism of the 21st century in Pakistan is directly linked to the incorporation of Islam to struggle for Pakistan (Rastogi, 2021). Rastogi's arguments are convincing. Populists of the contemporary era mobilize people behind the illusive dream of religion. This article further elaborates this argument by exploring the role of religion in the populist tactics of the two leaders of Pakistan.

Another significant contribution in the literature on populism in Pakistan is made by Yilmaz and Saleem. Their article explored the ways through which the religious and political leadership of Pakistan used religion to consolidate their power in Pakistan. Their article assesses the use of religion by religious parties in Pakistan during the infant stage of Pakistan. It was observed that religious parties openly pursue their agendas through the tactical use of religion. Many political parties, backed by state institutions in some cases, carry project Islamization through the repeated use of religion in Pakistan. The use of religion proved consequential in enhancing their political shares in Pakistan's politics. Further, the authors argue that weak political governance fabricated social fabric, and extractive institutions pushed the public to be exploited by religious populists (Saleem, 2021). The authors' arguments are plausible to a certain extent. They rightly assume that religious parties nurture their political support base through the instrumental use of religion. However, the authors' argument validity seems fragile because they fail to incorporate the role of the state in fuelling their religious parties time and again. These religious political parties were pushed by state institutions to pursue project Islamization. The authors failed to highlight this aspect.

The available literature on Populism in Pakistan is scarce, and in the domain of foreign policy, the literature is missing altogether. This research paper aims to fill this gap by assessing the foreign policies of two populist leaders of Pakistan – Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan.

Material and Methods

The philosophical foundation of this research is interpretivism and this paper's content is based on unobservable realities that can only be interpreted. This is non-experimental exploratory research which employs qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. The study collects primary data from Bhutto and Khan's speeches. For secondary data, books and articles from renowned journals are consulted. For certain amount of information, data is extracted from newspapers. Finally, collected data is analyzed through content analysis. Through content analysis, this research tries to identify patterns between Bhutto and Khan leadership style and foreign policy decisions.

Conceptualizing populist politicization of foreign policy

Populism is commonly debated in literature on comparative politics. So far, there is no agreed and universal definition of populism. This paper adopts Mudde (Mudde, 2004) understanding and definition of populism, which seems comprehensive. For Mudde, Populism is “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.” The definition shows that “anti-elitism” and “people-centrism” are core elements of populism. Populists always tend to divide the society into these two groups and put them against each other.

Politicization is another much-debated term in politics and international relations. This article follows that politicization is intentionally giving political tone and character to otherwise non-political matters. Consequently, the matter becomes a matter of contestation like other political matters. Like other matters of society, foreign policy is also politicized by populists. Foreign policy is a matter of experts and is debated in academia. Diplomats are foreign affairs experts who carry out state foreign policy. However, after politicization, foreign policy becomes a matter of public debate (C. Hackenesch, 2021). Commoners start discussing foreign policy matters. This is what

populists ignite in society. Through intentional well-directed discourse, populists create a linkage between foreign policy and domestic affairs.

Conceptually, this paper follows Michael Zürn (Zurn, 2019) in arguing that '[politicization], in the most general terms, means the demand for, or the act of, transporting an issue or an institution into the sphere of politics – making previously unpolitical matters political'. More specifically, about national foreign policy discourse, politicization creates or makes visible a link between foreign policy and domestic politics. This can be observed by looking at three components of politicization vis-à-vis a given foreign policy issue: (a) if awareness of it is high or on the rise, (b) if it is used for the mobilization of political support, and (c) if political actors use it in the contestation of the policies of political opponents, rather than merely those of technocratic actors within the bureaucracy

Results and Discussion

Populists Foreign Policy

The rise of populist leaders across the globe led scholars to produce literature on this newly emerged tendency. Among many other dimensions, scholars also work on assessing the impacts of populism on the foreign policy of the state. Nonetheless, the literature on populism and foreign policy is still in its infant stage. Scholars like Sandra Destradi and David Cadier argue that populist leaders prefer centralizing foreign policy decision-making (Sandra Destradi, 2021). This feature can be easily observed in the autocratic tendencies embedded in the personalities of Bhutto and Khan. Likewise, a common trend among populist leaders is that they usually adopt a less compromising posture in foreign policy matters. The amenability to compromise usually led them to a less compromising posture on an international level. The phrases like "We will eat grass ..." and "Absolutely Not" respectively from Bhutto and Khan vividly depict this characteristic. Besides, populists view the world in moralistic terms – the way it should be, not the way it is – and employ international posture accordingly. Bhutto's and Khan's [utopian] project of 'Grand Muslim Ummah' are the best examples of this feature of populists.

Populists are uneasy with the conventional manner of foreign policy making. They are not satisfied with working with long-standing foreign policy experts, think tanks, academic scholars, bureaucrats, etc. They claim (and believe) that they can only be the possible representative of true people as they solely embody the popular will. This is termed as personalization of foreign policy, and populists usually personalize foreign policy against the traditional way of pluralistic manner of decision-making (Destradi). Bhutto's reluctance to appoint a foreign minister and Khan's over-emphasized behavior towards his foreign minister depict foreign policy personalization. A renowned Pakistani journalist, Musharraf Zaidi, argued, "Imran Khan does not have a foreign policy. He only has one policy, and that is Imran Khan. He just expects everyone to fit around it" (Irfan, 2023). Likewise, both occasionally breach diplomatic protocols, which we will turn in later in this paper.

Apart from the aforementioned norms of populist leaders, Bhutto and Khan depict several other similarities in their foreign policy approach. For instance, both leaders heavily rely on employing populist rhetoric in foreign policy matters to mobilize a domestic support base, pursuing [utopian] project of promoting the Islamic Brotherhood, adopting an anti-West stance, and blaming the United States for their

ouster from power. This research paper will dwell on the similar characteristics of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan's populist foreign policies.

The Populist Rhetoric in Foreign Policy

Communication and/or discourse employed by populists is the most critical weapon they withhold. Populists, through their discourse, have to prove that they are with the people against the established elite nexus. (Nonetheless, the reality turns opposite in many, if not all, cases). For that, they have to use the right words – not only simple words but harsh and well-equipped words (Jaffrelot, 2018). The rhetoric of [two] populists of Pakistan, Imran Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, is full of such examples where they deliberately utter undiplomatic words on different (national and) international platforms. These leaders deceive their followers through hollow promises disguised in populist rhetoric. Their populist tactics were not limited to domestic affairs; they pursued these tactics on international platforms to strengthen their domestic support base. Their populist rhetoric was primarily dipped in Islamic slogans as Islam was (and is) the most appealing factor for most Pakistanis.

On the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) floor, as a Head of the Government of Pakistan, Prime Minister Imran Khan addressed the United Nations for the first time in 2019. As a representative of Pakistan, Mr Khan was supposed to advocate the miseries and needs of Pakistan's people. Contrary, He gave a quarter of his address time to Islamophobia in which He stresses the need to combat the rising Islamophobic tendencies across the globe. Indubitably, Islamophobic tendencies rise exponentially after the 9/11 incident. It is a genuine issue and must be tackled timely. However, this is not an issue of Pakistan. Likewise, He consigns about half of his address time to the Kashmir Issue, where He talks about the RSS agenda of his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi and the atrocities committed by Indian Forces in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and upon Indian Muslims. Kashmir has been part of Pakistan's strategic culture since its inception, and every leader talks about this issue on international platforms including UNGA sessions. The rhetoric used by Imran Khan to highlight the Kashmir Issue was unmatched. At one instance, He [even] crosses the diplomatic limits when he utters that "I would have also pick up guns (against Indian Forces) if I was in the place of Kashmiris." Now, the question might arise why did he give 3/4th of his address time to matters which are/were not problems of Pakistan in their fullest? Though Kashmir is a part of Pakistan's strategic culture and must be addressed to a limited extent. Pakistan has many other problems like poverty, socio-economic disparities, lack of quality education, water issues, population explosion, economic turmoil and many more, which need to be addressed. Nevertheless, Imran Khan did not talk about these [genuine] problems. Why? The answer lies in the populist priorities and leading style. The above-mentioned two aspects – related to Islam and Kashmir – appeal to most of Pakistanis. Imran Khan intentionally discusses such matters because this rhetoric favors his domestic interests. Thus, politicizing foreign policy is an art employed by the populists like Khan to strengthen their domestic support.

Imran Khan is not the first Pakistani leader who uses [Islamic-] emotional rhetoric on international platforms. Instead, a renowned ex-Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, also employs the same strategy long before Imran Khan. Thanks to the populist rhetoric of Z. A. Bhutto, He is still remembered (as a hero) by a significant mass of Pakistan. Nonetheless, Bhutto is credited for many incredible achievements of Pakistan, including the successful initiation of the Nuclear Program. However, intrinsically, He was a populist who repeatedly used religion for his vested [political] interests. For instance, In an Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) Conference in Lahore, Z. A. Bhutto delivers

an emotional speech in which he calls Pakistanis "soldiers of Islam" and the Pakistan Army an "army of Islam." Further, he crosses the diplomatic limits by equivocally arguing that "we shall enter Bait-ul-Muqadas as Brothers in Arms." This was something astonishing (and shocking). Such speeches depict that, like Imran Khan, Bhutto also politicizes foreign policy to enhance domestic political support.

Apart from the above-mentioned cases, we can trace many other instances where these leaders adopt populist rhetoric and politicize foreign policy. For instance, "Absolutely Not" and "We will fight" are famous phrases where Imran Khan adopts populist stance(s) in foreign policy-related matters. Likewise, the famous instance of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) when Z. A. Bhutto ripped the pages and left the UNSC Hall, and his famous statement regarding Nukes that "We will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry, but we will have our own (Nuclear Bomb)" are typical populists' statements.

Muslim Brotherhood(Utopia) - the Arabization and Turkification of Pakistan

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Imran Khan are well known for their public appealing skills. They were known for their remarkable charismas at their respective times. The most propelling force behind their charismas was their quasi-theocratic narratives. At home, they get indulged in many Islamist moves. In case of Bhutto, the unanimous resolution in the 1973 constitutions, which declares the Ahmadi Community a religious minority, is the most prominent example. In case of Khan, the formation of the Rehmat-ul-Lilalaameen Authority and an attempt to impose a Single National Curriculum are worth mentioning. Such measures extend beyond the horizons of domestic matters, leading to the politicization of foreign policy. The first strategic move in this regard was a quest for achieving the Muslim Brotherhood.

Since the inception of Pakistan, Pakistani government officials have preferred the West over the rest. The roots of this pro-western policy can be traced back to Liaqat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, preference (and visit) of the United States in 1949. Successive governments carry on this policy in the 1950s and 60s. The pro-western posture was a rational approach to foreign policy because the Western states, particularly the United States, were the drivers of global affairs. The West owes and controls almost everything in the international system. However, this policy witnessed a significant turn in the 1970s when Z. A. Bhutto held the reins of power. Z. A. Bhutto hampered the existing course of Pakistan's Foreign Policy and began sailing it in a different direction – the quest for Muslim Unity – which I call a utopian struggle. During his tenure as president and as a PM, Z. A. Bhutto sought cordial relations with Muslim states based on a common religion.

Soon after assuming power as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Bhutto began frequent visits to Muslim States, which were [rightly] termed as Marathon of Diplomatic Visits. During this shuttle diplomatic campaign, Bhutto visited almost all Muslim States. Notably, He met the Shah of Iran fifteen (15) times, the Turkey leadership five (05) times, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Monarch four (04) times, and the leaders of the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait two (02) two (02) times, respectively (Akbarzadeh, 2023). The primary aim of these visits was to enhance Pakistan's image globally and achieve Muslims Unity. The first notable success was achieved in 1974 when Bhutto, with the support of KSA, managed to organize the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) meeting in Lahore, which was attended by Heads of about 32 Muslim States (Ali, 1974). During this session, Z. A. Bhutto delivers a long emotional speech full of Islamic rhetoric. During his speech, overridden by emotions, Bhutto also utters a few undiplomatic

phrases, like Brothers in Arms, while emphasizing on Palestine Issue. During this session, Bhutto sounds like an Arab Leader and fantasizes the Arabian culture and values. He also identifies Pakistan as a Middle Eastern State by marking it as an anchor of Muslim States in the Indian Ocean. Shreds of evidence suggest that the objective of Z. A. Bhutto during this campaign was to advocate the Muslim Brotherhood and address the Palestine issue. Therefore, He diverts the whole course of Pakistan's Foreign Policy in his [utopian] quest for Muslims Unity.

About four (04) decades after the demise of Z. A. Bhutto, another populist Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, while following the footprints of Z. A. Bhutto, began pursuing the [utopian] project of the Muslim Brotherhood. Blessed with exceptional appealing skills, Imran Khan sounds like an Ideal leader of the Muslim Ummah. While addressing global platforms like the UN and OIC, Imran Khan perfectly shaped his narrative and deliberately urged Muslim unity based on a common religion.

Unlike Z. A. Bhutto, who was pursuing project Arabization of Pakistan, Imran Khan was more intended for the Turkification of Pakistan. The forerunners, like advising Pakistanis to watch the glamorized history of the Ottoman Empire in the form of dramas like *Dirilis Ertugrul* time and again, and calling populists like Erdoğan, the ideal leader, vividly depict the ambitions of project Turkification (Naqvi, 2020). Imran Khan's quasi-theocratic narrative surfaced on the floor of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) when he dedicated about three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of his address time to matters related to Muslims and Islam (Nations, 2019). Shockingly, Imran Khan vocally advocates religious fundamentalists - the Afghan Taliban - on many occasions. From the UN floor to the OIC platform, He never spoils an opportunity to echo his voice for the Taliban (Mohyidin, 2023). At one instance, while breaching diplomatic protocols, Imran Khan calls the Taliban "worriers who break all chains of slavery (d., 2021)." Due to religious affinity, presumably personal too, Imran Khan repeatedly urged the world community to engage the Taliban on diplomatic fronts. This approach was liked and supported by many Pakistanis.

Anti-West Rhetoric

A common trend of employing [real or illusionary] anti-Western, particularly anti-American, rhetoric can be observed among populists of the global south. One among many other reasons for the emergence of populist leaders in the global south is resentment against Westernization. It is believed that the emergence of populist leaders is a backlash against [real or perceived] increasing influence of international bureaucracies in global southern states. The point here under discussion is not that particular aspect. Instead, here the worth-mentioning aspect is the rhetoric employed by populists against the West, particularly the United States of America, in the case of Pakistan. Traditionally, instead of learning from mistakes, Pakistani leadership usually blames the United States for everything, and populists like Bhutto and Khan take it to the next level. In this regard, a renowned Pakistani journalist, Nadeem Farooq Paracha (Paracha, 2014), noted, "In fact, the present-day phenomenon in this context has become an obligatory part of populist rhetoric in which American involvement is blamed for everything - from terrorist attacks to the energy crisis, to perhaps even the outbreak of dengue fever!" Populist leaders take these assertions to the next level, and this trend can be commonly witnessed in the policies of both Bhutto and Khan.

Pakistan's foreign policy in the 1970s witnessed a unique transition when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto held the reins of power. Directed away from the West, Pakistan abandoned its traditional foreign policy stance and moved towards the camp of communist states.

Anti-American sentiment in the Muslim community worldwide, particularly in Pakistan, motivated this historic and significant move. The anti-American sentiment reacted to the American support of Israel in the Arab-Israel War. American neutrality in the 1971 Pakistan-India War further stoked the fire. Like a Machiavellian Prince, Bhutto did not spoil this opportunity to strengthen his domestic political support. Accordingly, Bhutto visited Moscow for the first time in her quest to normalize ties with the USSR (Hussain, 2012). Also, Bhutto adopted an anti-American posture and delivered a few fierce speeches against America during his reign. He calls the US 'a white elephant', which does not know how to forgive and forget. This further moved away the already sanctioned and economically vulnerable Pakistan from the Western bloc. Bhutto did not stop there. He tried to politicize Pakistan's foreign policy to its extreme. He rivets the final nail in the coffin by waving a diplomatic letter in a public gathering at Raja Bazar Rawalpindi. According to Bhutto, the letter was received from the United States in which America threatened Pakistan due to Pakistan's nuclear program. Finally, He also blames the United States for his ouster from power by backing the opposition alliance - Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) (Zahoor, 2017). According to Bhutto, the United States was unhappy with him due to his policies towards Vietnam and the Islamic world. Therefore, He vehemently criticized the US and claimed that He would counter every conspiracy of the superpower. This constructed anti-West rhetoric was primarily aimed at mobilizing the domestic support base.

About forty (40) years later, another populist leader of Pakistan, Imran Khan, adopted the same anti-American rhetoric to strengthen his domestic support base. Seemingly, Imran Khan was anti-America in his public discourse and was a long critic of US policies in Afghanistan and He publicly condemned the US drone attacks on Pakistani soil. Before 2018, His stance was not significant as He was a mere member of the National Assembly. However, after 2018, when he assumed power as Pakistan's premier, his every word started counting. Like Bhutto, rhetorically, Khan was also up for breaking the begging bowl and dependency on the West. Nonetheless, like his predecessor, Bhutto, he pursued this project only with hollow claims. His anti-American narrative gained momentum when he responded "Absolutely Not" to a question from a journalist when he was asked whether Pakistan would grant the US to establish military bases on Pakistani soil in post-US withdrawal from Afghanistan. This populist move resonates with the general public with optimum frequency, and the populist aim has been achieved. Nonetheless, such rigid and hard lines never aided Pakistan's international standing. Likewise, Mr Khan also visits Russia, questing for better relations with the great power. He prefers the Eastern Bloc over the Western one. As a sovereign state, Pakistan can pursue relations with any state which favors its interests. However, nurturing relations with one state over the cost of a long-standing ally and superpower does not sound rational.

Khan went beyond that and breached diplomatic protocols by waving a diplomatic letter at a Parade Ground Islamabad in a public gathering. Allegedly, he blames America for his ouster - the stance which he jumbled through his contrasting claims. Mr Khan blames the United States for punishing him, and the US backed the opposition alliance - Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) - for pursuing an independent foreign policy (Iwanek, 2022). Like Bhutto, Khan's tactics were also aimed at strengthening the domestic support base and he rightly did so. Nonetheless, this domestic support comes at a cost of hampered international image and moving Pakistan away from the US. A prominent example was the rumours that American President was unwilling to meet Imran Khan. This resentment among US stakeholders shows the drift in the relations between the two states.

Implications for Pakistan

Credibility and confidentiality are two of the most critical diplomatic norms. The occasional breach of these diplomatic norms by populist leaders like Bhutto and Khan comes with considerable cost to Pakistan's international standing. As a nuclear-armed fifth largest (by population) state, Pakistan's high officeholders should be cautious about their acts. Regrettably, populists only care about themselves and they do not care about established norms and traditions. Therefore, populist tendencies hampered Pakistan's foreign policy in many ways out of which a few important are the following:

To begin with, populist leaders like Bhutto and Khan relied exorbitantly on thick ideologies (Schroeder, 2020) like political Islam, which eventually led to a quest for utopian projects like the Muslim Brotherhood. Such projects do not favor the needs of Pakistan, like economic stagflation. Secondly, in populist governments, only a small circle of advisors/makers of foreign policy, usually ideological hardliners, made their way into the government. Therefore, the foreign policy was driven by a particular set of beliefs embedded by members of the small circle who were close to the populists. The abandonment of long-standing norms of foreign policy-making cost Pakistan smooth relations with many allies. Thirdly, Bhutto and Khan allegedly asserted people's will in foreign policy. According to diplomatic norms, citizens must be beneficiaries of foreign policy decision-making. However, populist leaders in Pakistan disrupt this tradition and call [the pure] people true representatives of Pakistan and call for their inclusion in foreign policy. Eventually, this cost us effective decision-making. Fourthly, populist leaders always cost Pakistan its relations with its traditional allies like the United States. Both Bhutto and Khan fuel anti-American sentiments in the masses to strengthen their domestic support base. Expectedly, this was received negatively in the US. Thus, the populist attitude moves Pakistan from a superpower state. Finally, moralistic terms rather than practical objectives typically guide Pakistan's foreign policy during populist regimes. Whether it was Bhutto or Khan, both put their support behind a [utopian] project of Islamic unity, even though religion is no longer a driving factor of state interaction. National interest overrides religion long ago, and states behave Machiavellian to maximize their interests. Unlike world realities, Bhutto and Khan naively advanced their respective utopias. Nevertheless, Pakistan suffers economically and politically due to this attitude.

Conclusion

Populist tendencies are growing across the globe. Consequently, populists are making their way into high cadres of government. Pakistan is not an exception to this trend. In Pakistan, populist leaders hold premier office time and again. The first notable populist was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the other one was Imran Khan. Both of these leaders employ various populist tactics to reach premier office. These leaders show some common similarities. For instance, both emphasize the role of people in foreign policy making and politicize foreign policy, pursue utopian projects fuelled by Islamic tendencies, and employ anti-West rhetoric in their public speeches. Such populist tactics were aimed at strengthening the domestic support base by mobilizing common people behind illusionary cause. Most Pakistanis are emotional beings and easily deceived by religious slogans. Bhutto and Khan exploit this emotional weakness of Pakistanis by employing rhetoric full of religious slogans and sentiments. Thus, they skilfully gain their desired objectives employing populist means.

Populists' politicization of foreign policy never benefits a state. Foreign policy is a critical matter and must be pursued cautiously for a country's national interest. It is

valued across the globe by all states. Nation states are extremely cautious while making diplomatic move. However, populists are only concerned with their interests. Therefore, they usually politicize foreign policy for personal gains. They are not interested in examining the associated costs for state national interest. Bhutto and Khan politicize Pakistan's foreign policy which helps them to strengthen their domestic support base. Undeniably, both leaders rule a major segment of Pakistani society. Their popularity cannot be denied. Notwithstanding, it comes at a cost of Pakistan's national interest. Due to their populist moves, Pakistan moved away from its traditional allies like the US. Also, due to populist tendencies Pakistan's internal problems remain unfocused and unresolved. To conclude, it can be argued that Bhutto and Khan's populist rhetoric and moves harm Pakistan's national interests, damage its international standing, strengthen their domestic support base, and helps them in winning national elections.

Recommendations

In this post-modern and post-truth era, it is very challenging to minimize populist tendencies' impacts on social and political structures. With time, truth is fading and multiple realities are taking the place of the genuine truth. Therefore, populists and their campaigns will increase. However, certain measures may likely prove vital in minimizing the effects of populism on foreign policy. First, it is imperative to increase public awareness, education, and sensitivity regarding foreign policy decisions. Enhanced foreign policy decision awareness can prove significant in neutralizing populists' tactics of using foreign policy as a political tool. Second, foreign policy-related institutions like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be strengthened. Such institutions' employees should be inducted only through competitive exams. Political interference in such offices should be abolished. Finally, foreign policy decision-making should be made a subject of bipartisan dialogue and consultation. When both government and opposition political parties are involved in foreign policy decisions, they will stop one another from using foreign policy as a political tool. Through these measures, the impacts of populism in the foreign policy domain can be reduced and foreign policy decisions can be enhanced.

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