

Circulation of Elites in Bhutto's Regime (1971-77)

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to provide the evidential bases for testing the theories about 'circulation of elites' in Pakistani politics during 1971-1977. It is based on the western and eastern theories of old and new models. To study elite is not a new phenomena in international politics but in Pakistan very few attempts have been made to discuss this concept.

Who rules whom, has been a constant political problem since man developed his earliest forms of societal organization. The oldest attempts to understand human behavior concerned this subject.¹ The subject of elites has been treated in a variety of ways and has given rise to theoretical, ideological, and methodological controversy.² Elitism is generally a view concerning how society should be ruled or governed, and the term is, therefore, primarily political in its import.³ Elite studies offer a way of understanding the structure of modern day politics, in particular the relationship between leaders and the masses.⁴ It has proved difficult for sociologists and political scientists to find a use-ful operational definition for distinguishing 'leaders'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* define elite as 'the choice part, the best'.⁵ A good first

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¹ Robert LaPorte, Jr., *Power and Privilege: Influence and Decision-Making in Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p.1.

² George Lenczowski, *Political Elite in the Middle East* (Washington, D. C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1979), Third Printing, p.1.

³ Harry K. Girvetz, *Democracy and Elitism: Two Essays with Selected Readings* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p.x.

⁴ Geraint Parry, *Political Elite* (London: George Allens & Unwin Publishers Ltd., 1977), Fifth Impression, p.20.

⁵ H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler (eds.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), Fourth Edition, p.386.

approximation is to say, as Robert Dahl said, 'that if individuals in a group were ranked according to their extent of control over one another, the leaders would be those with 'significantly' greater control.'⁶

According to Paul B. Horton: 'Every complex society has a quite small number of persons who are believed to have great power. Such a controlling group is called, elite'.⁷ Anthony Giddens called elite those individuals, who occupy positions of formal authority at the head of a social organization or institutions.⁸ Jessica Kuper discussed the term elite as part of a tradition, which makes modern social scientists uneasy. At the same time, its use facilitates historical and contemporary analysis by providing an idiom of comparison that sets aside institutional details and culture-specific practices, and calls attention instead to intuitively understood equivalencies.⁹ According to this context two quite different tradition of inquiry persist. In the older tradition, elites are treated as exemplars; fulfilling some historical mission a crucial need, possessing superior talent, or otherwise demonstration qualities, which set them apart. Whether they stabilize the old order or transform it into a new one, they are seen as pattern setters.¹⁰ According to the new approach elite are routinely understood to be incumbents, those who are collectively the influential figures in the governance of any sector of society, any institutional structure, any geographic locality or trans-local community. Idiomatically, elites are thus roughly the same as leader, decision maker or influential, and not too different from spokesmen, dignitaries, or central figures. This second usage is more matter-of-fact, less normative in tone. Whether to preserve old patterns of life or to exemplify new ones elites are those who set the styles.¹¹

It is characteristic of the elite that its superiority imposes a task upon it. This task, either as a right or as a duty, includes that of determining the destiny of others. By accepting this task, elite takes upon itself a certain burden of responsibility. Hence the selection of the ruling authority on which this responsibility is to be laid determines its

⁶ Robert A. Dahl, Lindblom E. Charles, *Politics, Economic and Welfare: Planning and Politico-Economic Systems Resolved into Basic Social Processes* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1953), p.228.

⁷ Paul B. Horton & Hunt L. Chester, *Sociology* (Tokyo: McGraw-Hill Kogakusha, LTD., 1976), Fourth Edition, p.328.

⁸ Anthony Giddens, *The Class Structure of Advanced Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), reprint, p.120.

⁹ Jessica Kuper (ed.), *Political Science and Political Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), pp.60-1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

character.¹² There are no general agreement among political scientists about the factual accuracy of elite theories or the desirability of the situation they describe. The various elite theorists share no common ground when attempting to explain the inevitability of elites. What all the theories have in common is the conviction that every political system, whatever its official ideology, is in fact ruled by an elite.¹³

Theoretical framework

The present study 'circulation of elites' is being conducted within the framework of Pareto and Mosca's theory of 'circulation of elite'. Plato, Aristotle and Machiavelli—the early philosophers touched a little bit of this subject, but the study of elites was established as part of political science in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries largely as a result of the works of two Italian sociologists, Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), and Gaetano Mosca (1818-1941).¹⁴ Other prominent elite theorists are Lasswell, Mills, Marx, Waber, Michel, Bottomore, etc.

In the history of sociological thought the concept of 'elites' has been closely associated with the theory of the 'circulation of elites', which derives from Pareto and Mosca and which, in its historical origins, stands in polar opposition to the Marxist theory of permanent struggle between fixed classes of owners and producers. Elitist analysis is concerned with how individuals are recruited into positions of personal influence as part of a political process.¹⁵ Pareto was the most important Italian political sociologists, who started the, 'Elitism' school of analysis. It is a basic axiom for Pareto that people are un-equal physically, as well as intellectually and morally. In society as a whole, and in any of its particular strata and grouping, some people are more gifted than others. Those who are most capable in any particular grouping are the elite.¹⁶ He defined elite as, 'a class of the people, who have the highest indices in their branch of activity'.¹⁷ He further explained that, in every branch of human activity each individual is given an index, which stands as a sign

¹² Piet Thoenes (ed.), *The Elite in the Welfare State* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1966), p.56.

¹³ David Robertson, *A Dictionary of Modern Politics* (London: Europa Publications Limited, 1993), Second Edition, pp.160-61.

¹⁴ Geraint Parry, *op.cit.*, p.15.

¹⁵ Edmund Leach and S.N. Mukherjee (ed.), *Elites in South Asia* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p.ix.

¹⁶ Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971), p.397.

¹⁷ Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society: A Treatise on General Sociology* (New York: Dover Publication, 1935), p.1423.

of his capacity, very much the way grades are given in the various subjects in school examinations.¹⁸ He indicated two types of circulation of elite in any society:

- Does the 'circulation of elites' refer to a process in which individuals circulate between the elite and the non-elite?
- A process in which, one elite is replaced by another.

The point was made more sharply in a study of elites in France by a pupil of Pareto, Marie Kolabinska, who discussed explicitly the movement of individuals between the different sub-groups of the governing elite, and set out to examine in some detail the history of four such groups: the rich, the nobles, the armed aristocracy and the clergy. He distinguished different types of circulation in a society:

- Circulation between different categories of the governing elite.
- Circulation between the elite and the rest of the population.

It means that individuals from the lower strata may succeed in entering the existing elite and individuals in the lower strata may also form new elite groups.¹⁹ Mosca also recognized the circulation which consists in the struggle between elites and replacement of an old elite by a new one. Another form which consists in the renewal of the existing elite by the accession of individuals from the lower classes of society, he examines, in a number of different contexts, the relative ease or difficulty of access to the elite.²⁰ He further said that in modern times, the elite is not simply raised high above the rest of society but it is intimately connected with society through a sub-elite, a much larger group which comprises, to all intents and purposes, the whole 'new middle class' of civil servants, managers and white collar workers, scientists and engineers, scholars and intellectuals.²¹ They also emerge as a new elite class.

On the other hand, Weber talked about status and party with classes and charismatic leaderships. Lanski's circulation of elite is based on 'power, privilege and prestige' and Mill's power elite is composition of power (political leaders), prestige (the military chiefs) and money (the corporation heads). Frank Tachau also indicated two types of circulation of elite:²²

¹⁸ T.B. Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1964), p.7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.10 and 49.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.55.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.11.

²² Frank Tachau, *Political Elites and Political Development in the Middle East* (New York: Schenkman Publishing Company Inc., 1975), pp.13-14.

- The socialization and recruitment of individuals to elite positions.
- The displacement of established elite by a challenging group.

The whole situation was explained in 1859 by Darwin's *Origin of Species* with the significant sub-title, 'The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Existence'. In Herbert Spencer's eyes society was an evolving organism, obeying biological laws enunciated by Darwin. This meant that it was guided by the principle of 'the survival of the fittest'.²³

The concept of circulation of elite is used in different ways both within and outside politics. The importance of this study is to apply these theoretical models of western thinkers on Pakistani politics and see the differences. It is appropriate to concentrate on Pareto and Mosca's theory for the present study but with a little difference. The researcher took this concept of circulation of elite as:

- Circulation between the elite and masses.
- Circulation between different categories of ruling elites.
- A process in which, one elite is replaced by another.

Methodology

This study is basically descriptive. The principal research is depended on the analysis of the 1970s West Pakistan election results. The researcher prepared a list of the total candidates (elites) from the election and categorized into six elites groups, (landowning, military, bureaucracy, religious, industrialist and professional elites). The results or findings are presented through 'frequency tables' as well as 'graphical representations'.

Occupation is one of the central characteristics of individuals in modern society. It is the primary factor in identifying the social status in many social research projects. The problem with measuring occupation is that it is a 'nominal variable' (simple) with numerous categories. The researcher has subdivided occupations into six groups — landowning, religious, military, bureaucratic, industrialist and professionals.

The study is based on categorical variables — a set of attributes that form a category. Many of the most significant variables defining our social existence can be described only as sets of attributes belonging to a category. The categorization of elites is based on 'Socio-Economic Index Scale' (SEI). These are based on the following measures:

- Income level.
- Level of education.
- In some cases, prestige.

²³ Piet Thoenes (ed.), *The Elite in the Welfare State* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1966), p.60.

The research is based on primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected by an interview with Dr. Mubashir Hasan and newspapers, secondary data is based on 1970's election results. A number of tables through frequency distribution were draw for this study. Mentioned sources are both qualitative and quantitative for the analysis of the overall problem.

Elite representations in the National Assembly

The principal research is depended on the study of the 1970's West Pakistan election results. This study is based on the preparation of a list of the total candidates (elites) from the election and categorized into six elites groups—landowning, military, bureaucracy, religious, industrialists and professional elites. The results or findings are presented through frequency tables as well as graphical representations. The 'West Pakistan 1970's National Assembly Election Results' were as follows:

National Assembly Election Results

Total Seats—300

East Pakistan—162

West Pakistan—138

Party Position in East Pakistan

Total Seats—162

Awami League —160

Others—2

Party Position in West Pakistan

Total Seats—138

PPP—81

Others—57

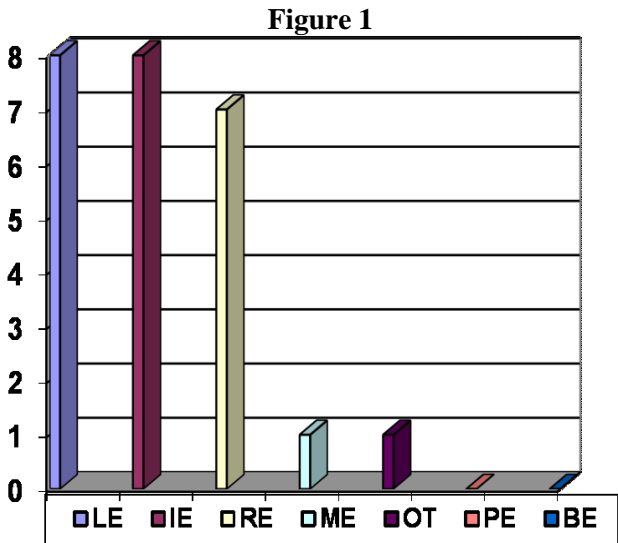
The study is based on the party position and elite representations are presented in the following two tables:

Table 1
Party Position for NWFP in the National Assembly

Parties	No. of Members
PPP	1
PML (Q)	7
JI	1
JUI	6
NAB (W)	3
Independents	7
Total	25

Table 2
Elite Representation for NWFP in the National Assembly

Types of elites	Numbers
Landowning & tribal leaders	8
Economic (businessman & industrialist)	8
Military	1
Religious	7
Professionals	0
Others	1
Total	25



In NWFP, landowning, religious and economic elites were equally significant in the National Assembly. The middle class and professionals cannot be observed in the province.

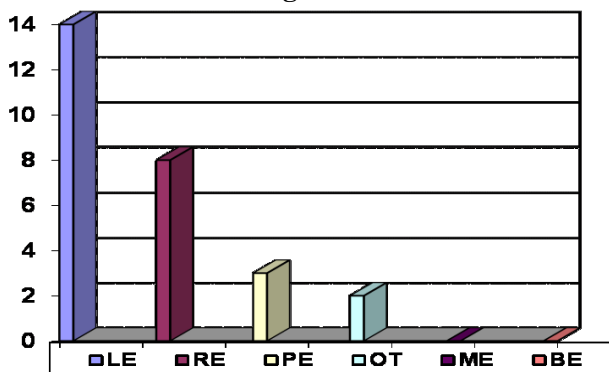
Table 3
Party Position for Sind in the National Assembly

Parties	Numbers
PPP	18
PML (Q)	1
JI	2
JUP	3
Independents	3
Total	27

Table 4
Elites Representation for Sind in the National Assembly

Types of elites	Numbers
Landowning & tribal leaders	14
Economic (businessman & industrialist)	0
Military	0
Religious	8
Bureaucratic	0
Professionals	3
Unidentified	2
Total	27

Figure II



Landowning elites were the significant and important elite group in Sind. The second important elite class was religious class. Military, bureaucracy and economic classes had no representation in the assembly but three professionals were also elected.

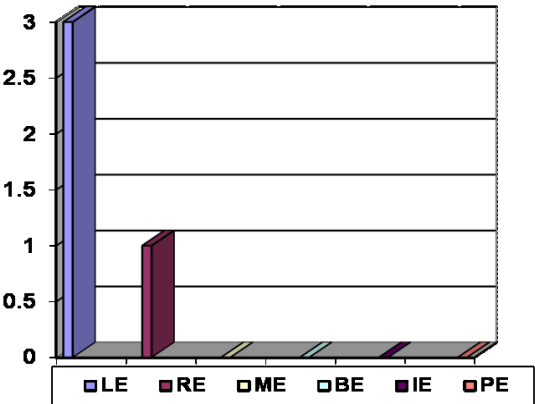
Table 5
Party Position for Baluchistan in the National Assembly

Parties	Position
JUI	1
NAB (W)	3
PML (Q)	0
PPP	0
Total	4

Table 6
Elites Representation for Baluchistan in the National Assembly

Types of elites	Numbers
Landowning & tribal leaders	3
Economic (busenessman & industrialist)	0
Religious	1
Military	0
Bureaucracy	0
Professionals	0
Total	4

Figure III



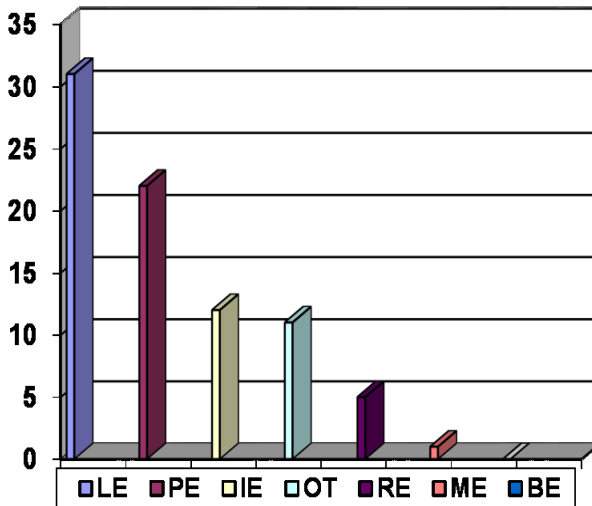
In Baluchistan Assembly, the total seats were only four in which NAB (W) got three and JUI got one seat. The three elites were landlords and tribal leaders. Land owning and religious elites were significant, others elites were totally missed.

Table 7
Party Position in Punjab for the National Assembly

Parties	Position
PPP	62
PML (Q)	1
PML (C)	2
JI	1
CML	7
JUI	4
Independent	5
Total	82

Table 8
Elites Representation for Punjab in the National Assembly

Elites	Numbers
Landowning & tribal leaders	31
Economic (buesnessman & indestrialist)	12
Religious	5
Military	1
Bureaucracy	0
Professionals or middle class	22
Others	11

Figure IV

Landowning was the leading class in the Punjab. The second leading class, which won the election for the first time, was the middle class. Third represented class was the economic class. Military, bureaucracy and religious class was less represented.

Table 9
Parties Position in the West Pakistan National Assembly

Parties	Seats obtained
PPP	81
PML (Q)	9
PML (C)	2
CML	7
JUI	12
JI	4
NAP (W)	6
JUP	3
Independents	14
Total	138

Figure V

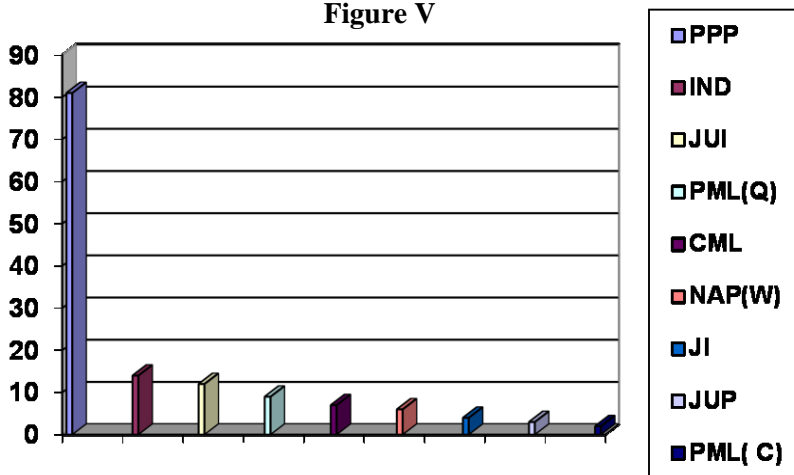


Table 10

Elites Representation in the Pakistan National Assembly

Types of elites	Numbers
Landowning & tribal leaders	56
Economic (busenessman and industrialist)	20
Military	2
Bureaucracy	0
Religious	21
Professionals (middle class)	25
Unidentified	14
Total	138

Figure VI

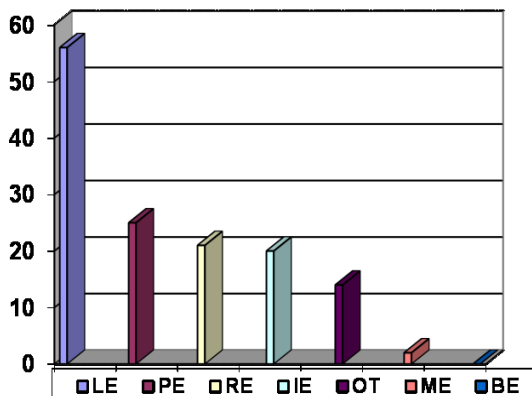


Table 11
PPP's Positions in the National Assembly

NWFP	Sind	Baluchistan	Punjab
1	18	0	62

Table 12
Elite Representation in Parties

	PPP	PML (Q)	PML ©	CML	JUI	JUP	JI	NAB (W)
LE	36	1		4		1		3
IE	11	5		1				3
ME	1							
RE	4	1			7	5	4	
BE								
PE	22	1				1	1	
UN	7	1	2	2				

- The leading representative elite class was the landowning class in the National Assembly.
- This class was also the leading class of the four provinces of West Pakistan.
- The second important leading classes were the economic and religious classes.
- Military was least important in the assemblies.
- Bureaucracy got no seat in 1970.
- The third significant class was the new middle class, which was emerging in the Punjab.

The population of Pakistan can be divided into four broad categories of people at that time. First group is the modern, 'ruling elite', identified as top-level military officers, the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) officers, and leading businessmen and industrialists (including the 'twenty families').²⁴ These ruling elites are western-oriented, they favor a 'controlled democracy', one with severe limitations on popular participation. Second class is 'educated middle class', who are sophisticated enough to realize the possibilities of societal change/or reform but economically restricted in their ability to influence change or

²⁴ Saeed Shafqat, 'Democracy In Pakistan: Value Change and Challenges of Institution Building', *The Pakistan Development Review*, 1998, p.291.

reform.²⁵ Occupational examples of these 'transitional-dependents' include lawyers, academics, and journalists.²⁶ Third group is 'transitional-independents', they are the thousands of students in Pakistani universities and colleges. They are 'transitional-independents' because they lack the economic concerns of their older brothers, uncles, or fathers in the 'transitional-dependents' category. Fourth group 'traditional' are the parochial, provincial rural, and urban dwellers.²⁷ This last category lumps together an especially broad mass of people (perhaps 90 per cent of the population of undivided Pakistan—some 108 million), undifferentiated by location (urban or rural), occupation (industrial workers, unskilled urban laborers, village craftsman, peasants, agrarian proletariat, mini-farmers); regional affinities (Punjab, Northwest Frontier, Baluchistan, Sind, East Pakistan); language, religion, caste, tribal identity, or other distinctions.²⁸ The main criticism of this categorization (and others like it) and the imputed behavior modes, values, and attitudes is that it is too broad and general and does not sufficiently differentiate between groups within each category.²⁹

Top level military include Colonel on to General ranks, with emphasis on seniority in rank. Besides the Army, it also includes Air Force. The Navy has not traditionally attracted the most ambitious sons of the landowning class and, therefore, has not exercised a great deal of power relative to the other armed forces.³⁰ The other important professions are Central Civil Services and the Foreign Services of Pakistan. The members of the large landowning families of the Punjab and Sindh, who chose other occupations outside the civil service and the military (this category would include, for example, such individuals as Z.A. Bhutto, who came from a large landowning family in the Sindh). This category has been a source of ministerial talent for all regimes in Pakistan.³¹ The main political power has been concentrated in the bureaucratic-military elites outside the assembly who were the successors of the British Raj. They have ruled without having any representation in the assembly.³² The main beneficiaries of independence have been (a) the bureaucracy and military themselves who have enjoyed

²⁵ Robert LaPorte, Jr., *op.cit.*, pp.3, 12, 13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.4.

³² *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.

lavish perquisites and have grown in number; (b) the new class of industrial capitalists; (c) professional people whose numbers have grown rapidly and (d) landlords.³³ This land owning class have majority in assembly but the power is in the hands of military and bureaucracy, a complex combination.

Who were the real power holders at that time in Pakistan? When this question was asked to a former federal minister, he answered that the real power was in the hands of 'military'. He further said, that the higher civil servants (not whole bureaucracy), law machinery (judges), and tax collector were active participants and support to the military. The dismissal of Bhutto's government also indicated that the real power holder in Pakistan was the military.³⁴ He further asserted that it was the 'weak nationalist' and 'pro-imperialist' character of the Pakistani 'ruling class' that brought about the collapse of party politics in the pre-military hegemonic phase. The ruling class in Pakistan had three components—feudal class, the capitalist class and the middle class. He called all these classes fake and vassals of 'imperialism'. Thus he conclusively asserts that, these classes are always looking towards their imperialist bosses for their guidance and direction.³⁵

Findings and conclusion

The aim of the present study was to find out the impact of circulation of elites in Pakistani politics. The main focus was on the Bhutto's regime. It was assumed that all the reforms which appeared in the Bhutto era were undertaken by the new emerging elite. This class consisted of middle class professionals. These professionals were neither landlords nor they belonged to twenty-two families. These professionals made certain type of reforms at the bureaucratic, military, landowning, religious, industrial and professional levels.

In a formal, constitutional sense, Pakistan's history has been marked by political instability. The dominance of the military-bureaucratic coalition over decision-making in Pakistan has often being stressed, although some studies by political scientists and modern historians on Pakistani politics emphasize the intricacies and shifting coalitions between and among Pakistani political parties.

³³ *Ibid.* pp.91-2.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Under this reference all these views are collected through an interview from Dr. Mubashir Hassan.

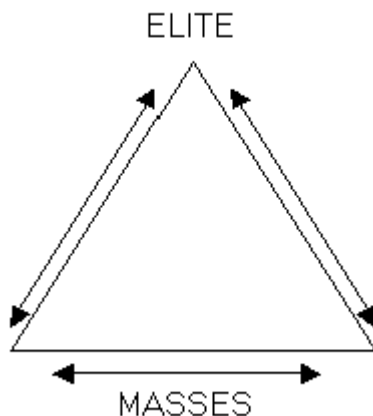
Findings: Elite in general is the concept which is related to wealth and power. Elite is ‘any influential figure in a society, who have enough capability to drive certain section of people. That person must have some capacity to set the styles, norms and values and change or alter the rules. He must be at the top of any institutions or organizations. Moreover elite is an individual, wealthy, influential, well-known and have intellectual superiority’.

Circulation of elite is a process in which masses become elite and elite became masses. This process depends on following factors:

- Hereditary factors — a person may have wealth (or status), which make him elite due to that wealth.
- Acquired factors — any individual from the masses can become an elite through education and intelligence. Through education and intelligence a person acquires status, and this status gave him power and this power convert him into a wealthy person, or an elite.

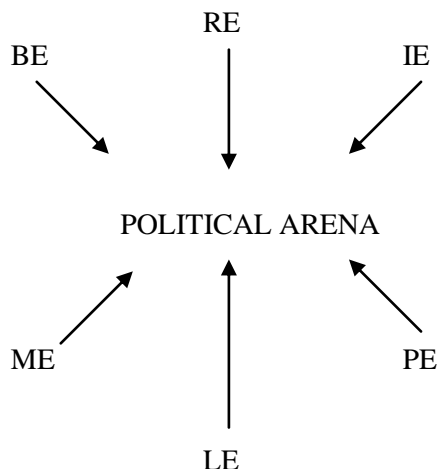
On the whole, people from amongst the masses become elite through knowledge, education or experience. This quality is necessary for the maintenance of that status. Otherwise they can loose their position. Intelligence is also important for the people who want to become a part of the elite setup. It is important for the elite to enjoy that status for a long time. Multinationals for this purpose appoint competent experts to run their affairs.

Figure V
Circulation of Elite



In Pakistani politics, there are six types of elites (landowning, military, bureaucratic, industrial, religious, and professionals) who play significant role. These elites are well represented in the following figure:

Figure VI
Circulation of Elites in Pakistan



NOTE: LE (landowning elite), ME (military elite), BE (bureaucratic elite), IE (industrial elite), RE (religious elite), and PE (professional elite).

1970's election results indicated that the leading representative elite class was still the landowning class, who got the highest seats (56), but they were less significant in the National Assembly. They looked like influential decision makers but the dismissal of Bhutto's government indicated that the real power holder was not this class who were the leading representative class in the assembly. The leading class was more powerful which was outside the assembly.

In 1970's elections, the second largest class was the middle class. These middle classes were based on professionals and intellectuals. They got 25 seats. This new class emerged for the first time from these elections. In the history of Pakistan it was a great change; they played significant role in Pakistan's politics. Their major contributions were Constitution of 1973 and a lot of other policies about different issues and institutions but they could not play this role for a long time. The reason behind this was the traditional elite which did not allow the new class to play its effective political role for a long time.

Third important leading classes were the economic and religious classes. The religious leaders influence was greater than their seats in the National Assembly suggested. They have the ability to call people on to the streets but could not acquire a significant number of seats in the elections. On the other hand industrialists also influenced or convinced the colonial elites to make policies for their own interests. Bureaucracy and military were institutional and administrative elites, so their representation in the elections was quite minimal. However, their influential role can be observed out side the assembly.

The real change was the awareness which was introduced by Bhutto. His influence appealed the middle class, lower and lower middle class, which changed the pattern of society. Now the common man had his own opinion; the lower and middle classes that were loyal to Bhutto's philosophy suffered a lot in the next martial law period.

Suggestions: The above research point to the importance of following points for the future stability, security and progress of Pakistan:

- Holding of regular free and fair elections;
- Socialization of the people through proper training and education;
- Stable political system;
- Democracy as the only way for the stability of any country because under this system people have more participation in decision making process;
- Revision of the neoliberal economic system so that it starts to work for the benefit of the people.

The objective of the study was to see the circulation of elites in Pakistani politics. After reviewing the western concept of elite and view point of different authors about Pakistani society the researcher observed six types of elites in Pakistani politics, who have been holding power directly or indirectly. Elite is considered any influential figure in a society who have enough capability to derive certain section of people. That person must have some capacity to set the styles, norms and values and change or alter the rules. Circulation of elite is a process, in which masses become elite and the elite becomes a part of the masses, and the whole process depends on intelligence or proper education. The main requirement is more circulation of elites in Pakistan. In a society like Pakistan this circulation of elite is quite clogged.