Stasiology of Pakistan:
A Critique on the Response of Social Scientists

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Abstract:
This study has been attempted to mark a place for the social scientists of Pakistan in a field of stasiology which emerged in the first half of the twentieth century to know the emerging role of the political party in the power set-up of the political system. It will also be tried to evaluate the sources to capture the theoretical understanding of the social scientists of Pakistan to chart out their intellectual depth in presenting this particular study. This study confined itself to a few sources for their critical analysis to present a point of view that how far the authors like K. K. Aziz, Rafique Afzal, Safdar Mahmood and Philip E. Jones took a lead in describing the role of parties in Pakistan's politics more than their general exposition by many on the histories of the parties, accounts of their electoral fortunes and discussion of their program and ideologies.

Key Words: Stasiology, political development, patronage politics, iron rule of oligarch etc.

I. Introduction:
The emergence of Pakistan has been caused by the effects of modern political developments, introduced by the British government in India in the nineteenth century. The colonial masters had indeed their own perception to run the affairs of the subcontinent which was seemingly more administrative. Islam was projected as raison deter for the mobilization of masses both by the progressive and conservative forces to achieve the homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. Later after the creation of Pakistan this cause was the challenge for the political forces that how to reconcile it with the value of modern democracy. Pakistan as a state had to face many challenges to steer its way in the presence of disillusioned forces which were reluctant to accept the demands of democracy with its attendant political system. So far the change of role of the political institutions was inevitable, and political entities like those of political parties were considered as a mainstay of the system by articulating and aggregating the interests of the people of Pakistan. In this context, it is part of the reason to evaluate the role of the social scientists of Pakistan who had taken interest in the field of political development of Pakistan, particularly with reference to the role of political parties.

The field of historiography will better provide the opportunity to know the sources critically which had been written on this particular field of politics—stasiology—and will
help to determine the general tendency of the social scientists of Pakistan and as well their academic strength in that particular field. This study will provide the opportunity to make the opinion about the present discourse on politics of Pakistan. The comparative analysis of the sources on this field of ‘stasiology’ will generate the insight to evaluate the present status of social sciences in Pakistan.

II. Discourse on Concepts
Before peeping into the sources critically, it is necessary to throw light on the importance of the political party in the operative mechanism of democracy. It is generally believed that political party is a creature of modern and modernizing political systems, and in each kind of society whether democratic or authoritarian/totalitarian, political party in one form or another is omnipresent. Joseph La Palombara and Myron Weiner argumentatively projected that emergence of a political party is caused whenever the activities of a political system reach a certain degree of complexity, or whenever the notion of political power comes to include the idea that the mass public must participate or be controlled(Palombara & Weiner,1972). In this regard the science of political parties was advanced in second half of the 20th century that was called as ‘stasiology’. The term ‘stasiology’ derived from the Greek ‘stasis’, meaning faction that had been suggested by Maurice Duverger in his book *Les Partis Politiques*, published in 1951, translated by Barbara and Robert North in 1954(Engelmann,1957). This specialized field has two features which had been focused by the social and political scientists. The one important theme of discussion was the internal organizational structure of the political party by which it was labeled as democratic or the centralized body. The formation of the party with its constituent units like that of caucus, branch or cell, gained considerable attention of the political and social scientists to define the systemic arrangements, in which it was to align and recruit the members and supporters. The other aspect which remained under discussion was the ideological orientation of the party, and under that influence it had to expose its structure. By such divide, parties created their sphere of influence. These were the central theme of studies which had been grasped by the term stasiology. The present study will attempt to answer the following, more modest, questions: What has been studied by stasiologists (if the social scientists in Pakistan ever acquainted with this special study)? What approaches were taken up by them to extend our systematic and analytical knowledge about the political parties?

III. Exposition of the Investigated Phenomenon
Wherever the political party has emerged it appears to perform some common functions in a wide variety of political systems at various stages of social, political, and economic development. Whether in a free society or under a totalitarian regime, the organization, called the party, is expected to organize public opinion and to communicate demands to the center of governmental power and decision. This is a field of interest in the academia to know the historical circumstances and institutional traditions of modern democracies of the world and as well the state-society relationship which had been under the impact of parties’ role. In this sense political party tried to articulate to its followers the concept and meaning of the broader community even if the aim of the party leadership is to modify profoundly or even to destroy the broader community and replace it with something else.
If we have a review of the contribution of some early scholars in this field, it could be helpful to poise the judgment over the early sketched questions. The work done in the field of ‘stasiology’ before the 1950, is considered to be of a primary significance in which the names of Ostrogorski, Robert Michel and Neumann are highly esteemed (Engelmann, 1957). The evaluation of their work certainly re-orient the reader to the importance of this field of politics, and helped in turn to understand the worth of different scholars who have later taken interest in this particular field. Ostrogorski does not claim to present us with any law that governs political parties but he generalizes that parties are vehicle to draw the public into political process and assign to the party a role as a vehicle of rapid democratization (Engelmann, 1957). Michel described the ‘iron law of oligarch’ which is applied to all democratic political parties: parties everywhere run by a small group in their own interests, and parties are doomed as instrument of democratic government (Engelmann, 1957).

By the study of these authors, it has been realized that every government by nature is oligarch, but the origin and training of the oligarchs may be very different and this determines their actions. It has also been described by them that political party by its definition comes to the mark of the party if it has a disciplined voting. Seemingly this kind of characteristic is less applicable on the origin and evolution of political parties of Pakistan except Jama’at-i-Islami. According to Ranney and Kendell, political parties are autonomous organized groups that make nominations and contest elections in the hope of eventually gaining and exercising control of the personnel and policies of government (Ranney & Kendell, 1956).

These theoretical descriptions are useful in identifying the role of political parties in the political process. They are helpful to judge the political sociology of the masses. Here the definition of Ostrogorski appears more appropriate in evaluating the role of political parties in the context of Pakistan’s politics, and seemingly it was more suitable when political party was in real sense worked as ‘an agent of democratization’ (Engelmann, 1957). The point of attention is that political development of different eras of Pakistan had been depicted and illustrated by the different scholars with the main caption of this particular field—stasiology—in their study. This study will evaluate their content to mark them as specialized study or not. It will also be tried to know that how far the social scientists of Pakistan have re-configured their questions of understanding the political development of Pakistan with reference to the emergence of political parties. It will be tried to find through the sources that either political scientists of Pakistan, working in this field, be said as stasiologists or not. The one of those questions is that how far the social scientists of Pakistan had been successful in managing their study with reference to this particular field of politics by keeping in view the layout of Ostrogorski, Robert Michel and Neumann. In the analysis of this field it was felt that they had overwhelmingly depicted the phases with the historical sense in which role of political movements and as well of the political personalities, who provided the impetus to these movements by their leadership role, were the considerable forces in determining the direction of the political process and which later on influenced the nature of the state structure. Sometimes social scientists tried to provide a new face of the parties by judging their role as an agency to capture power or be a part of power structure without calculating their ideological leanings over which parties were founded. Again it was the personality rather than the party which was important in the power game of politics.
Therefore such kind of development and nature of politics could be visualized as a pre-Duverger era in ‘stasiology’ that is described as “political-biography-cum-political-ideology” phase (Engelmann, 1957). All these generalizations are now put under review of this study. In the political history of Pakistan, political parties played more or less same role, and due to their linchpin character in the political system, they had been entered in the centre of our discussion and professional concerns. In the discourse of political history of Pakistan, this new science of ‘stasiology’ with its emerging significance caught the attention of Pakistan’s social scientists. Some of the names are worthy of our attention who contributed valuable in this particular field of politics. Political party as an entity of the political system was studied by K.K. Aziz, Rafiq Afzal, Safdar Mahmood and Philips E. Jones etc., to depict the stability or instability of the system by their operational roles as a government and opposition.

IV. Stasiology and the Response of the Social Scientists

In the field of politics of Pakistan, a lot of material has been contributed by many scholars but a few are named as exclusive writers in this particular study of ‘stasiology’. Here first the K.K. Aziz’s book ‘Party Politics in Pakistan 1947-58’ is taken for evaluation which had been published by the National Commission on Historical and Cultural Research in 1976. In this book writer provided the detail description of the political contours of Pakistan which were emerged by the struggle of the power seekers. It was the study of political acumen of the politicians and the sensitization of the bureaucratic institutions about their superiority in handling the state institutions. Writer tried to evaluate the role of political parties in determining the course of politics but it gave the impression of personality politics which was revolving around the idea of power seeking and seemingly denigrated the role of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan. Writer described about this state of parties in this way that ‘…existing party organizations have been called nothing more than “coteries of co-operating office-seeking politicians” (Aziz, 1976).

Writer forcefully presented his argument that primordial relationships had their overawed influence in determining the course of politics rather than the political parties with their issues and policy stances made any headway in developing the consensus over these issues of national importance. He said that ‘[parties] do not define the issues and policies which they own or canvass, nor can these alternative policies be easily communicated to politically inexperienced peoples. Moreover fundamental popular loyalties relate to religious and tribal associations’ (Aziz, 1976). Here it is necessary to show the contrasting course of politics which had been emerged by that time through the discourse of new ideas and realities of life. A new political force in the name of Awami League emerged as a vibrant and socialist political party, which trounced the Muslim League in the elections 1954 with the support of coalitional partners. Even a young university student defeated the Muslim League Chief Minister, Nurual Amin and over all annihilated the incumbent Muslim League, much to everybody’s surprise. About this part of the political development Stanley Maron pointed that ‘democracy has, at least for the moment triumphed over the totalitarian proclivities of the romanticists’ (Maron, 1955). In this book Writer himself described in the preface that ‘book has not been written on the political parties of Pakistan. Of course, I have covered the history and aims and objectives of the parties, but only to the extent to which it was necessary for an understanding of their conduct and behavior’ (Ibid, 1955).
Writer knew well about the nature and patterns of political development which had taken shape at that time due to the shifting alliances of the personalities, factions or the parties to gain the patronage, and therefore himself used the reference of M. Beloff who described about the Pakistan’s politics in his book The Party System that ‘Pakistani multi-party system “highly kaleidoscopic” in which it was hard to disentangle issues of principle from clashes of personality’ (Beloff, 1958). Again this point of reference could be challenged in the context of opposition of different regional groups and political parties to the formation of one unit in 1955 that endorsed their visionary stance over the issues of national interest. The feat of an autocratic Governor General Gholam Muhammad was not easily accepted by the opposition groups when he promulgated an order on March 27, 1955, calling for establishment of one-unit in West Pakistan not later than May of the same year. Widespread protests arose from both wings of the country against such arbitrariness which pressed the Governor General too hard to make the announcement that the final decision on the proposed merger would be left to the new Constituent Assembly. This kind of reflection is contrary to that which had been described by the author about the political astuteness and awareness of the political parties. K.K. Aziz seemingly failed to employ working model and hypothetical framework in order to study party institutions and their place in the state.

The second important work was of Muhammad Rafique Afzal which had been published in two volumes by the National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Islamabad in 1986 and in 1998. This is a considerable source in its secondary importance in the field of ‘stasiology’ which engulfed most of the national, Islamic and regional parties along with their role in the politics of Pakistan. It importantly bridged the gap between the eras of political development and focused more on the published sources. It was found in the analysis that author tried to attempt to define the evolution of Muslim League with the help of those sources, of which had already been used by Safdar Mahmood—*Muslim League Ka Doori Hukumat 1947-54*(published in 1976) and as well the work of A.B.Rajput—*Muslim League Today and Yesterday*(published in 1948). Rafique Afzal in one of the stated bases clearly depicted the formation of the parties’ organization and their incumbents/officer bearers in different time periods. So in that way it shed the light on the political maneuverings within the party and their consequently changing the party’s constitution to support the office bearers which reflected the iron law of oligarch, and as well the reflection of patron-client relationship between the govern and governed. This kind of observation was more inclined to the study of state institutions which had their share in the political process of Pakistan, and overtly concentrated on the role of all emerging political entities which had assertively and compromisingly supported the forces of status-quo rather than tried to bring any change—equated to reforms the society. Second study of the Rafique Afzal was not different from that of earlier one and it relied heavily upon the newspaper sources, and for which writer himself recognized his constraints to access the primary sources. In the second volume Rafique Afzal covered the period of Ayub Khan’s regime and gave the account of regime’s policies which over-emphasized the role of the state in defining the institutional character of the society. It was seemingly less in worth to define the role of political parties in weaving the fabric of politics. In-spite of having a bold description of the different chapters with the name of political parties like Ch-1—Party Politics under Martial Law 1958-62, Ch-4—Political Parties i, Ch-5— Political Parties ii, Ch-6—
Political Parties iii, he even could not categorize the role of the parties in these chapters which had seemingly forced the regime to change the policy initiatives, but the account was contrary to it, and role of one party—Convention Muslim League, denominated as regime’s party had a complete sway on the political scene in Pakistan (Afzal, 1998).

Two other studies are exclusive based on the research of two major political parties in Pakistan. One of which is related to the Muslim League and the other one is related to the Pakistan Peoples Party. The first study was produced in 1976 and its second edition with some new additions was launched in 1993. This study was the outcome of the research work of Safdar Mahmood and covered the period of turbulent politics of Pakistan from 1947 to 1954. This study focused more on the political machinations of this particular period rather than on the evolution and internal development of political party along its ideological manifestation.

Safdar Mahmood was not exception in his effort of evaluating the role of Pakistan Muslim League—working as a mother party in the early days of Pakistan’s independence—as an aspect of political history of Pakistan. In his work chapt 4-7 were specifically organized to write down the political machination of the period with reference to the personalities who were more interested to protect their personal interest rather than establishing the democratic norms and values. One of his concluding remarks diligently depicts the impression of above cited statement that party was mere tool to reach the echelons of power. He stated that ‘with the passage of time the Muslim League became the arena of magicians whose loyalties were utterly uncertain. But the loyalty was based on give and take and Muslim League’s leadership made the fun of the party by their acts, (Mahmood, 1993).

The other source book which has been evaluated to mark its place in the field of stasiology was the ‘Pakistan Ki Siyasi Jama’atain’, published in 2004. This book mainly discussed the all major and smaller parties of Pakistan with their manifestos. It was found that book let the space to the reader to decide about the effectiveness of the program of the political parties and as well about their electoral strategies without any theoretical and empirical model. So book provided the access to the readers and the researchers to get information, based on the election manifestos of the different political parties to make their own opinion about the political discourse of Pakistan’s politics, but, authors have failed to provide the election manifestoes of all regional and national and religious parties based on those elections which were part of the political schema after 1988 and onwards. Author even failed to draw any comparative analysis between the political parties on the bases of their political programs and their gains in the elections on behalf of these election manifestoes. One of the Author of the book, Masood Ashar seemingly admitted that book is based on collated work without any tinge of interpretation, but he stressed that later of the activity will have to be done by the reader himself or herself(Usman&Ashar,2004). Authors discussed the structures of the parties but not provided the evolution of the parties. Political parties’ structural development could be presented only if the authors have an understanding of the context in which the parties were originated. It was also felt that authors seemingly lacked insight to define the situational emergence of the parties and their hierarchical development. It was the part of their understanding which could not grasp the philosophical underpinnings of the phenomenon.
The last part of my evaluation is spared for the work of Philip E. Jones who wrote and researched on the structural evolution of the Pakistan Peoples Party, published in 2003. This book is a voluminous contribution in the field of stasiology which demands the ideological leanings and tendencies of the party and its internal evolution with the passage of time by adjusting the office bearers and as well to incorporate the new changes in their electoral program to compete with the emerging challenges of the time. Writer had moved beyond doctrinal or formal party program analysis into the area of party behavior to analyze the worth of political values and institutions of all stakeholders. Here Philip E. Jones is not exception in describing the oligarchical role of different institutions with their colonial attendance in the patronage politics of Pakistan. His description about the prevailing state of politics shows that he used the political party as a center of discussion to unravel the role of other partners in the game of power politics. He described that ‘politics was still a face to face business, marked by traditional patron-clientism and factional infighting over pelf and patronage. Given these circumstances, the political parties had no chance of acquiring real political power against the determined effort to deny this by the civil service and military leaders’ (Jones, 2003). Writer analyzed very well the election results of 1970, particularly of Lahore region which had been influence by the charisma of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and as well by the program of the party. He is seemingly impressive in the statistical array of the data and providing empirical evidence to his stated generalizations.

V. Conclusion:

The study of political party led us to believe that whatever has been written and produced in this realm of social science was the outcome of the exposure of the authors about the working of the political parties as instruments of democratic or autocratic control of the government. It was also found in the analysis that most of the authors tried to find the compatibility of the political parties with democracy to judge the nature of the political process of Pakistan and its effectiveness in terms of its delivery to the masses. It has been found that these authors had used good sense of their judgment by dipping into the field of comparative study. They draw their conclusions which made the past intelligible and also revealed causation of the events under investigation by a process of synthesis. The other thing which might have produced constraints over the intellectual extension of the social scientists of Pakistan in the field of ‘stasiology’ was their belief that anatomy of parties is no substitute for a deeper analysis of the living body politic. This impression had been simmered out by the analysis of their produced work over this particular field of study. This field of research will further broaden the avenues of exploration, and will enhance the constructive thinking in the field of politics by re-examining the past in the contemporaneous challenges. The comments of Maurice Duverger seem very appropriate which he made during his analysis and systematic treatment of work on parties. He stated that

…a general theory of parties will eventually be constructed only upon the preliminary work of many profound studies; but these studies cannot be truly profound so long as there exists no general theory of parties …(Engelmann, 1957)
References:


