

Through the Lens of Bolshevism: A comparative Examination of Constitutions of Pakistan, Afghanistan & RSFSR

Muhammad Asim, Ahmad Farhan Saeed, Mohammad Shafi

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: April ,25 2021 Accepted: November 29, 2021	<i>The dispute concerning adoption of neo bolshevism (aversion of Bolshevism) instead of Bolshevism in the former USSR, following the October revolution in 1917, is as critical as the political culture of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Although Bolshevism does not exist currently in any part of the world, there are still several socio-political segments both in Afghanistan and Pakistan that wish to implement neo-Bolshevism, an indigenous version of Bolshevism, in their countries. This study traces provisions, regarding neo-Bolshevism (both explicit and implicit), in the current constitutions of Afghanistan (the 2004 constitution) and Pakistan (the 1973 constitution) and compare it with the 1918 Constitution of the former RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic). The Constitution of RSFSR which is considered as the empirical reflection of Bolshevism, shares certain provisions and traits with constitutions of Afghanistan and Pakistan, a subject worth understanding, in an age of capitalist globalization.</i>
Keywords : Bolshevism, constitution, Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, Loya Jirga, Abdul Rashid Dostum, Afghan Taliban, Yakov Sverdlov, Protectionist State	
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Introduction

This study is neither intended to provoke sentiments of any nation or sociopolitical class, nor is it intended to offend any researcher belonging to Russia, Afghanistan or Pakistan who believes in their respective ideologies. This research is merely a way of advancing the author's previous research, which was based on PhD dissertation and facilitates the author to conduct a comparative study of constitutions functioning in the respective three states.

Introduction

Constitutions are a means of fixing the organization of government and protecting individuals' rights and privileges. It also reflects the political approach of a state that how a country is going to be governed.

The terms "Bolshevism", "Communism", "Sovietism" and "Marxism-Leninism" did not get much popularity among the masses of Pakistan and Afghanistan (Hilali, 2017, pp. 103-138). However, in these States, numerous segments, political, social and religious, continue to support the socialist perspective in varied versions (Bradsher & Bradsher, 1999, p. 18 & 183). This study, first, looks at the meanings and interpretations of the terms, "Bolshevism", "Communism", "Sovietism" and "Marxism-Leninism". It further investigates and compares Bolshevik traits in the three constitutions of, Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The concept of Bolshevism, popularly "National Bolshevism", was considered as an anti-capitalist political movement and had combined features of radical nationalism (especially Russian nationalism) and Bolshevism (Asim, 2020). While, numerous scholars like Ephraim Nimni (1991), A. Brown (2004), Max Eastman (2017) and N. de Basily (2017) equated Bolshevism with Marxism-Leninism. Waldemar Gurian (1952), Ronald I. Kowalski (1991) and Kevin Morgan (2006) consider Bolshevism as the Soviet-led Communism (Asim, 2020). Bolshevism also generally denotes the approach and vision of the Bolsheviks during the period, 1903-1917, for the purpose of grabbing State's power and introduction of dictatorship of the proletariat. According to Klemens Von Klemperer (1951), Bolshevism had two evolving phases. First phase covers the era from 1903 to 1917 while the second phase covers the Soviet ideology from 1917 to 1991 (Asim, 2020). Bolsheviks were actually a group of Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP) under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin who came into power during the second phase, after the Great October Revolution, in 1917. They found the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) while, during the Russian Civil War from 1917-1922, the RSFSR became the chief constituent of the USSR (Davis, 2020, pp. 58-61). The ideology of Bolsheviks first became the

policy of RSFSR and later of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). People, inspired by Marxism, welcomed the Bolshevik revolution and accepted its implementation by Vladimir Lenin. But soon after the death of Lenin, Bolshevism was debated between Revisionists and Anti-Revisionists (Fitzpatrick, 2007)(Asim, 2020). Bolshevism, the first precedent of sociopolitical implementation of Marxism, everyone interpreted, according to his or her perspective. During this period of interpretation, various versions of Marxist political ideology emerged, generally called Neo-Bolshevism (Asim, 2020). Neo-Bolshevism draws upon the sources of Bolshevik traits, the amalgamation of regional socio-political norms, political-geographical needs, specific faiths, religious teachings as necessitated by time and space. Trotskyism (Leon Trotsky ideas), Stalinism (by Joseph Stalin), Hoxhaism (by Enver Hoxha), Titoism (by Josip Broz Tito), Castroism (by Fidel Castro), Maoism (by Mao Tze Dong), Dengism (Deng Xiao Ping) and Ho Chi Minh, were various forms of neo-Bolshevism. (Asim, 2020).

Though, it is a long and somewhat controversial debate regarding acceptance or rejection of Bolshevism, including its varied versions in Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, investigations of the current Pakistani and Afghan constitutions through comparing similarities with the Constitution of the RSFSR (1918) reflect certain principles of Bolshevism adopted initially or later through certain amendments.

Historical Background of the RSFSR Constitution of 1918 and the Current Constitutions of Pakistan and Afghanistan

The Constitution of RSFSR, in 1918, was also called “Basic Law” of governance within Russia, after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. As the revolution was led by the far-left, the radical revolutionary Marxists, therefore, the Basic Law was assumed as the founding feature of Marxism-Leninism and Soviet-led Communism (Permiak, 1981, pp. 88-89). Although, one segment of historians argue that Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) initially formed government with the support of Left Socialist Revolutionaries, therefore, Constitution of RSFSR of 1918 cannot be considered as actual draft of Bolshevism or Marxism-Leninism rather a reconciliatory version” of either Bolshevism or Marxism-Leninism.

However, a group of historians reject this argument of the reconciliatory version and claim that Vladimir Lenin (hereafter Lenin) needed only a multiparty constituent assembly at the time of forming government. However, after “Declaration of the Rights of the People of Russia” (signed by Lenin and Joseph Stalin in November 1917), and “Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People” (on January 03, 1918), Lenin renamed the party as “Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)”. He centralized entire political system in his favor by declaring Russia as the Socialist State in the first constitution (Lenin, 1918). Therefore, the Constitution of RSFSR 1918 is not only considered as the actual interpretation of Bolshevism, Marxism-Leninism and Soviet-led Communism but a model for following respective ideology (as it is, or with certain amendments as per the needs) in other parts of the world (Daniels, 1993, pp. 66-67).

The current amended Constitution of Pakistan, adopted in 1973, during controversial and crucial stage of the country’s history, the years 1970 and 1971, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as Prime Minister (1973-1977) and his party, Pakistan People’s Party, emerged as the major socialist and leftist party both in Punjab and Sindh (Jones & Jones, 2003, pp. 01-02). Later, as a civilian martial law administrator, when Bhutto called a constitutional convention on April 17, 1972, he invited not only the socialist, Marxist-Communist and leftist segments but also the leaders of conservative religious Islamic parties. Bhutto appointed Abdul Hafeez Pirzada as the chairman of the Constitution Committee that had the responsibility to draft the new constitution with the consent of all the sociopolitical segments in Pakistan. The pro-socialist, pro-Bolshevik and pro-Maoist orientations of both; Bhutto and Pirzada, coerced them to shape a draft of new constitution that was apparently satisfying to all the rightist (including religio-capitalist), center-rightist and center-leftist and leftists political parties. However, it had a vast conformity with the authoritarian nature of the Indian Act of 1935 and Bolshevik Constitution of RSFSR 1918 (Sahoutara & Tunio, 2015)(Burki, 1980, pp. 96-97).

The current Constitution of Afghanistan, the 2004 constitution, framed in the post-9/11 political situation, led to onset of process of democratization after five years of Taliban totalitarian regime (1996-2001). In the Bonn Agreement, signed on December 05, 2001, it was decided to establish the Afghan Constitutional Commission to draft a future constitution for Afghanistan. The Commission comprised 35 members (appointed by interim president Hamid Karzai) was announced on October 05, 2002, to consult Afghan people, and for the purpose set up offices in Bamyan, Mazar Sharif, Kandahar, Gardez, Kabul, Kunduz, Herat and Jalalabad in Afghanistan. In addition, those afghans who lived outside the country, such as in Quetta and Peshawar (in Pakistan), and Mashhad and Tehran (in Iran), were also consulted. Entire work of this commission regarding consultations and drafting the new constitution was observed by the United Nations Development Program and United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (Katzman, 2009, pp. 01-03).

On November 03, 2003, the commission exhibited a proposed draft of the new constitution in a ceremony, attended by former King of Afghanistan Mohammad Zahir Shah (r. 1933-1973), Lakhdar Brahimi, UN special envoy, and interim president Hamid Karzai. Although, the proposed constitution faced a bit opposition from a Pashtun warlord Bacha Khan Zadran, in Paktia province, and Mahbuba Hoquqmal (Minister for Women Affairs

in interim government of Hamid Karzai), but 502-delegated of the Loya Jirga ratified the draft on December 14, 2003. The nationwide application of the new constitution took place after the signature of Hamid Karzai on January 26, 2004 (Katzman, 2009, pp. 03-09).

Afghanistan had experienced various political approaches. Ranging from, pro-USSR, pro-Marxism-Leninism to Islamic ideologies in between 1978 to 1992, numerous socialist characters during that period (including Abdul Rashid Dostum) was now part of post-9/11 Afghanistan. Therefore, the current constitution of Afghanistan has also somewhat direct or indirect adoption of Bolshevik traits (Arnold, 1983, pp. 01-14) (Keane, 2016, pp. 09-16).

Comparative Analysis of Current Pakistani and Afghan Constitutions with RSFSR Constitution of 1918

The Constitution of RSFSR 1918 provides baseline for making a comparative examination of Constitutions of all the states regarding assessing which traits of Bolshevism have been endorsed as it is or with certain amendments (Neo-Bolshevism). This study traces different Articles within the current Constitutions of Pakistan and Afghanistan that reflect similarity, and tendency towards Bolshevism, directly or indirectly. For example:

- 1) Article 01 of the RSFSR Constitution of 1918 declared Russia as a republic of the Soviets (elected government council) of the workers, peasants and soldiers. All the central and local powers were bestowed upon these Soviets. Further, related to above, Article 71 to 78 highlight the procedure for elections, and Article 25, 53 and 78 describe the specifications for Electoral College of each delegate. (RSFSR-Government, 1918, (Asim, 2020).

On the other hand, the preamble of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan describes relevant feature such as, it says, the representatives of the people will be democratically elected, and these representatives will use all the powers and authorities under the principles of freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice described by Islam. Articles 113 to 126 discuss the formation of election commission and the process of election (Pak-Government, 2021) (Asim, 2020).

At the same time, the preamble of the Constitution of Afghanistan 2004 also asserts terms such as, "peoples will" and "democracy" as the founding stones of Islamic Republic where all the people and tribes within this land have representation in all the sociopolitical institutions regarding strengthening the national sovereignty. Articles 61, 62 and 67 define the election process for Afghan president whereas; the process for the elections of "House of the People" and "House of the Elders" is discussed in the Article 84, 85 and 86 (Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 2) Article 03(a) of the RSFSR Constitution of 1918 abolished private property (RSFSR-Government, 1918) (Asim, 2020).

On the other hand, although, Article 23 and 24 in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 allow private property to each citizen, but Article 253 describes the maximum limit of property, owned, possessed, or controlled by any citizen (Pak-Government, 2021) (Asim, 2020).

At the same time, Article 40 in the Constitution of Afghanistan 2004 allows each citizen to have private property within the law. However, private property can be acquired by the State in the public interest but with appropriate compensation. (Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 3) Article 03 (clauses 'a' & 'b') of the RSFSR Constitution 1918, declares all the natural resources including forests, agricultural land or water reservoirs as national property (RSFSR-Government, 1918) (Asim, 2020). Same is the case with Articles 70(4) and 172 (clauses '2' and '3') in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 (Pak-Government, 2021) (Asim, 2020).

Constitution of Afghanistan 2004 follows the same patterns in Article 09 (Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 4) Article 03(e) of the RSFSR Constitution of 1918 transfers ownership of all the banks to the Government (RSFSR-Government, 1918) (Asim, 2020).

In case of Pakistan, Government of Pakistan has created checks over the conduct of banking sector through the State Bank of Pakistan as defined in the federal legislative list under the Article 70(4) (Pak-Government, 2021) (Asim, 2020).

Likewise, Article 12 of the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan allows 'Central Bank of Afghanistan to check the banking sector in the State (Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 5) Articles 03(f) and 09 of the RSFSR Constitution 1918, criticized parasitic strata of society and ensured organization of economic life in the country (RSFSR-Government, 1918) (Asim, 2020).

Same is the case with Articles 03, 11 and 12, in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 (Pak-Government, 2021) (Asim, 2020).

Similarly, Articles 24 to 29, in the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan, discourage all types of exploitations, including punishments that are above the law, and imprisonment, without the decision of the court (Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 6) Article 07 of the RSFSR Constitution of 1918, provides no share in the government to the exploiters of the working class (RSFSR-Government, 1918) (Asim, 2020).

Similarly, Article 62 (clauses 'd', 'e' and 'f') and Article 63 (clauses 'g', 'h', 'i' and 'j'), in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, describe the qualification for getting membership for both the houses of

the parliament. Similarly, the criteria for disqualification of any member from parliament is also presented in the respective Articles (Pak-Government, 2021)(Asim, 2020).

Likewise, Article 62 in the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan, provides eligibility criteria for Afghan president, Article 72 describes eligibility standards for cabinet ministers, and Article 73 gives the eligibility conditions for all the members for even *Ulas Jirga* (House of People) or *Mushrano Jirga* (House of Elders). At the same time, Article 92 presents criteria for disqualification if any Minister or Member of Parliament involved in corruption or any sort of malpractice (Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 7) Article 13 of the 1918 RSFSR Constitution ensures freedom of religion, and declares separation of Church from the State. (RSFSR-Government, 1918)(Asim, 2020).

Similarly, Articles 20, 21 and 22, in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, allow freedom of professing any religion, safeguard religious community against taxation or collection of tax from them and provision of security to religious educational institutions. However, Article 02 declares Islam as the State religion (Pak-Government, 2021)(Asim, 2020).

In case of, the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan, not only preamble but Articles 02, 03, 35(1), 45, 54, 63, 74, 119 and 149 exhibit deep roots of Islam in the political system of the State. However, Article 02 also authorizes all the followers of other faiths to perform their religious rituals independently within the limits defined in the law (Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 8) Article 14 of the 1918 RSFSR Constitution discusses the freedom of expression (RSFSR-Government, 1918)(Asim, 2020).

At the same time, Article 19 in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 and Article 34 in the Constitution of Afghanistan 2004 deal with same principle. However, criteria defined for ensuring freedom of expression in respective constitutions is different in light of history, culture, norms and ideology (Pak-Government, 2021)(Asim, 2020)(Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 9) Article 16 of the 1918 RSFSR Constitution, provides the freedom of organizations and actions in favor of the working class and peasants regarding assisting, uniting or organizing them (RSFSR-Government, 1918)(Asim, 2020).

Article 17(1) in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan and Articles 35, 41 in the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan, deal with the same principle. However, criteria defined for guaranteeing freedom of organizations and actions in respective constitutions is different due to issues of national security (Pak-Government, 2021)(Asim, 2020)(Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 10) Article 17 of the 1918 RSFSR Constitution provides free education to the working class and peasants (RSFSR-Government, 1918)(Asim, 2020).

On the other hand, under Article 25(A), in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, deals with the same principle with specifying the age limit of five to sixteen year of all children (Pak-Government, 2021)(Asim, 2020).

Similarly, Article 43 in the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan allows each citizen to get free education up to graduation. However, the student is to be enrolled only in state-owned educational institutions (Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 11) Article 19 of the 1918 RSFSR Constitution recognizes the duty of all citizens to come for the defense of their socialist fatherland. Therefore, the State introduced universal military training (RSFSR-Government, 1918)(Asim, 2020).

On the other hand, Article 5(1) and Article 39 in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 assigns duty to all citizens regarding defending their homeland and enable them from all the parts of Pakistan to participate in Armed Forces respectively. However, universal military training to all citizens is not obligatory now (Pak-Government, 2021)(Asim, 2020).

Likewise, Article 55 of the 2004 Afghan Constitution illustrates that each citizen has compulsory duty to defend the country. However, this Article indicates the need for compulsory military training under the regulations (Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 12) Article 22 of the 1918 RSFSR Constitution provides equal rights to all citizens including minorities without any discrimination or irrespective of their racial and ethnic identity (RSFSR-Government, 1918) (Asim, 2020). At the same time, Article 25 in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 and Article 22 in the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan also deal with the same principle (Pak-Government, 2021)(Asim, 2020)(Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 13) Although, Articles 12, 26 to 36, and Articles 39 to 48 in the RSFSR Constitution of 1918 exhibit strict control of All-Russian Central Executive Committee over the entire political system of Russia, but Articles 49 to 52 clearly indicate the nature of Constitution as centralized and authoritarian (RSFSR-Government, 1918).

Similarly, Articles 41 to 49 (deals with the authorities and responsibilities of President as head of state) and Articles 90 to 95 (about prime minister as head of government) in the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan

have been amended during different times; especially in 1985 (by 8th amendment), 1997 (by 13th amendment), 2002 (by 17th amendment) and 2010 (by 18th amendment).

In 1985 and 2001, the political system of Pakistan had also been converted into almost centralized and somewhat authoritarian in nature due to parliamentary-cum-presidential system under military patronage. However, amendments in 1997 and 2010 restored the pure parliamentary nature of the political system in Pakistan (Pak-Government, 2021)(Asim, 2020)(Hussain, 2019).

Similarly, provisions defined in the Article 64, 66 and Articles 143 to 148 in the Constitution of Afghanistan 2004 makes the post of President more powerful, and centralized in nature(Afghan-Government, 2004).

- 14) Article 02, Article 08 and Article 11 in the RSFSR Constitution of 1918 defines Russia as the Socialist State having a 'tight federation' (RSFSR-Government, 1918).

On the other hand, 8th and 17th amendments in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 also converted the state structure from loose to tight and somewhat centralized federation. However, 18th amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan, introduced in 2010, has once again restored the original federation with more provincial autonomy according to the true spirit of the original constitution of 1973. (Pak-Government, 2021)(Asim, 2020).

At the same time, Afghanistan is a unitary state under the Article 01 of the Constitution. The nominal authorities of provincial administrations, under Articles 136 to 139, makes 'central government in Kabul' in position to look after all the sociopolitical and economic affairs within the provinces. Therefore, state structure in Afghanistan is also considers as tight and centralized(Afghan-Government, 2004).

Conclusion

International financial institutions, such as, IMF, World Bank and Asian Development Bank have been involved both in Pakistan and Afghanistan to restructure political and economic institutions along with supporting democratization. However, these institutions could not alter the Neo-Bolshevik traits within the sociopolitical and economic structure of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The policy of privatization, as suggested by IMF, to various governments in Pakistan and even at times coerced the government to privatize public sector hospitals and educational institutions. However, no substantial success has been gained by any government in this regard. Social and political opposition (even belong to rightists, leftists or Marxists) is not only the biggest hurdle in protecting respective public sector institutes, but it desires to see continuation of public sector institutes under strict centralized and disciplined control of the state. Same is the case with Afghanistan. Neither the post-9/11 governments of Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani, nor the Afghan Taliban are able to follow in letter and spirit the policy of privatization and close public sector institutions. Therefore, study evaluates that whether western scholars criticize Bolshevism or Neo-Bolshevism but they cannot neglect the beneficial features of this ideology. Not only now it is Pakistan and Afghanistan but all countries that once clearly opposed Bolshevism and Soviet-led Communism, are now following complete or somewhat similar traits by rephrasing their love for Bolshevism, as "welfare state", "utilitarian state" and/or "protectionist state".

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Author Information

Dr. Muhammad Asim

Assistant Professor of Political Science, Government
Associate College (Boys) Dhoke Syedan,
Rawalpindi Cantonment, Vice-President Pak-Iran
Intellectuals Forum

Dr. Ahmad Farhan Saeed

Assistant Professor, Area Study Centre (Russia,
China and Central Asia), University of Peshawar.

Dr. Mohammad Shafi

Assistant Professor, Area Study Centre (Russia,
China Central Asia), University of Peshawar
