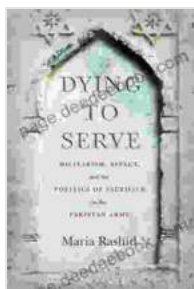


Militarism, Sacrifice, and the Politics of the Pakistan Army in South Asia

Militarism, the glorification and use of military power as a means of resolving political and social issues, has been a significant force in South Asia, particularly in Pakistan. The Pakistan Army has played a central role in shaping the country's political, economic, and social landscape since its independence in 1947.

This article examines the impact of militarism on Pakistan and the complex politics of sacrifice that surround the role of the Pakistan Army. We will explore the historical roots of militarism in Pakistan, the army's involvement in politics, and the social and psychological consequences of military service on Pakistani society.



Dying to Serve: Militarism, Affect, and the Politics of Sacrifice in the Pakistan Army (South Asia in Motion)

by Maria Rashid

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Historical Roots of Militarism in Pakistan

The origins of militarism in Pakistan can be traced back to the country's violent partition from India in 1947. The war and subsequent displacement of millions of people created a sense of insecurity and a belief that military strength was essential for survival.

The army also played a prominent role in the early years of Pakistan's independence, suppressing internal dissent and securing the country's borders. This experience further solidified the military's self-perception as the guarantor of national security and stability.

The Ayub Khan Era

In 1958, General Ayub Khan seized power in a military coup, ushering in a period of martial law that lasted for over a decade. Ayub Khan's regime emphasized economic development and modernization, but it also cracked down on political dissent and opposition.

During Ayub Khan's rule, the army became increasingly involved in economic and political affairs. The military established numerous industrial and commercial enterprises, and officers were appointed to key positions in government. This further blurred the lines between the military and civilian spheres and entrenched militarism in Pakistan's political culture.

The Zia-ul-Haq Era

General Zia-ul-Haq came to power in a military coup in 1977. Zia's regime introduced a conservative and authoritarian Islamic ideology into Pakistani society, further strengthening the army's role in both domestic and foreign affairs.

Under Zia's rule, the army became even more deeply involved in politics and economic affairs. The military's budget was increased significantly, and officers were given control of key industries and businesses.

Zia's regime also saw a significant increase in military spending and the expansion of the armed forces. The army's involvement in the Afghan War against the Soviet Union further enhanced its status and influence within Pakistani society.

The Politics of Sacrifice

The Pakistan Army has consistently projected itself as the defender of the nation and the ultimate guarantor of its security. This image has been reinforced through a powerful narrative of sacrifice and martyrdom that glorifies military service.

The army's propaganda machine has played a crucial role in constructing this narrative. Soldiers are portrayed as selfless heroes who willingly sacrifice their lives for the nation. This rhetoric has been effective in creating a sense of national unity and loyalty to the military.

The politics of sacrifice has also been used to justify the army's involvement in politics. The military's self-appointed role as the protector of the nation has provided it with a pretext to intervene in civilian affairs whenever it deems necessary.

This narrative has had a profound impact on Pakistani society. The constant exposure to images of military sacrifice and heroism has created a culture of militarism that pervades all levels of society.

Social and Psychological Consequences

The glorification of military service has had significant social and psychological consequences for Pakistani society. The emphasis on sacrifice and martyrdom has created a sense of moral superiority among military personnel and their families.

This sense of superiority can lead to a lack of empathy for civilians and a disregard for human rights. The military's involvement in politics has also contributed to a culture of authoritarianism and a lack of accountability.

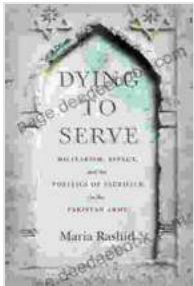
Additionally, the constant threat of war and the glorification of military service have created a sense of insecurity and anxiety within Pakistani society. This anxiety can manifest itself in various forms, including violence, aggression, and distrust.

Militarism has had a profound impact on Pakistan's political, social, and economic landscape. The Pakistan Army's involvement in politics and its self-appointed role as the guarantor of national security have created a culture of militarism that pervades all levels of society.

The politics of sacrifice, which glorifies military service and portrays soldiers as selfless heroes, has contributed to the army's high status within Pakistani society. However, this narrative has also had negative consequences, creating a sense of moral superiority among military personnel, fostering authoritarianism, and perpetuating a culture of violence and insecurity.

Addressing the legacy of militarism in Pakistan requires a comprehensive approach that includes demilitarizing politics, promoting civilian control over the military, and challenging the glorification of military service. It also

requires addressing the social and psychological consequences of militarism and fostering a culture of peace and respect for human rights.



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