

From Confrontation to Cooperation: The Evolution of Friendly Opposition in Pakistan's National Assembly 2008-2018

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the transformation of opposition behaviour in Pakistan's National Assembly from 2008 to 2018, highlighting a shift from confrontational tactics to a more collaborative approach, often referred to as 'friendly opposition.' The analysis argues that this transition was not solely a sign of democratic maturity, but was also influenced by tactical considerations, elite consensus, and institutional weaknesses. Based on parliamentary records, legislative developments, and constitutional modifications, the analysis categorizes the decade into two specific phases of politics and evaluates how such cooperative opposition contributed

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to the consolidation of democracy. Though this cooperation facilitated more equitable politics and law-making, it also led to a lack of oversight and encouraged perceptions of elite collusion. The present paper seeks to analyse whether friendly opposition within the parliament acted as a stabilizing factor and a structural constraint in Pakistan's parliamentary system.

Introduction

The transition to democratic governance in Pakistan following the 2008 elections marked a substantial impact on the operations of political actors in a weak democratic space. Following a long history of military rule under General Pervez Musharraf, the introduction of civilian parliamentary structures was rediscovered as an opportunity and a challenge to political forces in their quest to control power.¹

Another of the few major developments between 2008 and 2018 was the tactics in which the opposition positioned its behaviour in the National Assembly; historically, boycotts, confrontation, mobilization outside Parliament had characterised the behaviour of opposition parties and slowly shifted towards a more cooperative and participatory approach. This development has been commonly known as the emergence of friendly opposition in which opposition parties continue with their ideology and electoral rivalry and at the same time collaborate with the government of the day in making legislative decisions.²

Friendly opposition does not exhibit political behaviour that harms opposition parties.³ Instead, it reflects a better way of working in parliament where opposition members participate in important debates, contribute to committee work, and

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- 1 Aqil Shah, *The Army and Democracy: Military Politics in Pakistan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 300–305
 - 2 Hamid Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*, 3rd ed. (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 603–610.
 - 3 Kaare Strøm, "Opposition in Parliamentary Democracies," *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 3, no. 1 (1997): 21–23.

work within the framework of legislation. This approach reflects good political behaviour in which opposition parties formulate proposals by working together with the government, allowing the parliamentary system to function more efficiently while still holding government accountable.⁴

Although opposition's role has evolved as a significant factor in Pakistan's political process,⁵ the aspect of friendly opposition has not been sufficiently discussed in the academic literature with reference to its emergence and its long-run impact on the status of democracy in the parliament. This is the fact that most of the existing research concerns confrontational opposition conduct, parliamentary contest, or military sway in the parliament. Consequently, the formation of cooperative opposition within the National Assembly has been rather under-researched.⁶

This research paper will address this gap by exploring the development of opposition politics in the National Assembly of Pakistan between 2008 and 2018, including the change from a confrontational pattern to collaboration. It aims to comprehend how and why the opposition parties embraced more collaborative practices in legislation during this period, and the subsequent effect on the practice of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan.

Placing the analysis within the broader political trends between 2008 and 2018, the article will seek to deliver a comprehensive and historically important insight into how opposition politics shifted in Pakistan's National Assembly. It also seeks to make its own contribution to the further development of the scholarly debate on the essence of

4 Philip Norton, *Parliaments and Governments in Western Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 90–95.

5 Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Pakistan Paradox: Instability and Resilience* (London: Hurst, 2015), 243–248; Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History*, 2nd ed. (London: Hurst, 2012), 270–275.

6 International Crisis Group, *Pakistan's Political Parties: Surviving between Dictatorship and Democracy*, Asia Report No. 102 (Brussels: ICG, 2005), 3–6.

parliamentary democracy in contexts marked by institutional frailty and elite political manoeuvring.

Political Context: Democratic Transition after 2008

A significant period of democratic transition marked the political climate in Pakistan after nearly a decade of military rule, followed by 2008 general elections, and the devolution of power to parliamentary institutions led to the re-establishment of Pakistan's political system.⁷ However, this transformation took place in a context of institutional weakness, a sense of democratic instability, and the maintenance of civil-military disproportion that has so far defined the proceedings in the National Assembly.⁸

The most notable aspect of the post-2008 political era was that the key political players recognized the importance of democratic continuity.⁹ After being subjected to multiple interventions by civilian governments in Pakistan's political history, political parties adopted a cautious approach to resolving conflicts that threatened to destabilise the parliamentary system.

In this dynamic environment, the 'Charter of Democracy', which was signed in 2006 between the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), should be highlighted as an important intellectual and political development of the evolving environment through the performance of leadership. This charter emphasized principles such as parliamentary supremacy, respect for the electoral mandate, non-interference by the military in political affairs, and mutual political tolerance among major political parties. These commitments encouraged political stakeholders to avoid confrontation outside the parliament and instead operate

7 Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* 2nd edn, 284-88.

8 Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Pakistan Paradox: Instability and Resilience* (London: Hurst, 2015), 238-242.

9 Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 230-35.

within institutional frameworks. Thus, the 'Charter of Democracy' played a role in fostering a more cooperative and collaborative approach by the opposition aligning with the concept of a 'friendly opposition' within the National Assembly of Pakistan.¹⁰

Among the most significant changes of this era was the growing preference of opposition parties to adopt concerted and institutionally integrated strategies, rather than opposing disruptive or interference-based modes of protest. Although the issue of political discord was one of the fundamental elements of parliamentary politics, it was becoming more and more found in the formal legislative means but not in boycott politics or institutional stalemate.¹¹

Further systemic considerations supported the development of such a cooperative parliamentary environment. The presence of democratic weakness, the past occurrence that non-elected institutions have intervened in politics and the necessity of political stability all promoted a more amiable style towards rival parties' sanities. On this note, cooperation was not purely a political decision but rather a strategic necessity within Pakistan's broader institutional environment.

This changing climate provided the foundations for the formation of what can be termed as friendly opposition in the National Assembly. Though the opposition parties continued to be characterised by their unique political identities and, in turn, political preferences, they became increasingly collaborative in legislative practices, especially on constitutional amendments and other issues of national interest. Such a behavioural trend was indicative of a change in the rules of parliamentary behaviour, as cooperation and

10 Pakistan Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), *Charter of Democracy* (London, 2006), 2-5.

11 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Governance and Democracy in Pakistan* (Islamabad: UNDP Pakistan, 2015), 22-28; Muhammad Waseem, *Political Conflict in Pakistan* (London: Hurst, 2016), 198-202.

competition started to co-exist in the same institutional arena.¹²

Opposition Politics in Pakistan: From Confrontation to Cooperation

Historically, the defining characteristics of opposition politics in Pakistan have included institutional instability, a recurring pattern of the collapse of the democratic system, and frequent military coups. These structural factors have fostered a political environment in which opposition parties often operate outside the formal parliamentary framework, resorting to tactics such as protests, boycotts, and confrontation as alternatives to parliamentary participation.¹³

During the political process after independence, the opposition parties tended to have their behaviour influenced by the weak institutional framework of parliamentary rules. Repeated disruptions to democratic rule hindered the continuity in forming a unified parliamentary culture. Therefore, the legislature was something that opposition parties looked to as a policy-making place as well as a symbolic space to contend with politics, and in many instances, the activity on the streets was complemented by activity in the streets and agitation in the streets.¹⁴ However, the period following the 2008 general elections saw a shift in the trend towards a gradual but important change. As civilian rule returned, political leaders began to engage with institutions of parliament in a more systematic and coherent manner. This change did not eliminate political rivalry or ideological divides, but it changed how people expressed opposition and engaged it within the National Assembly.¹⁵

12 International Crisis Group, *Pakistan's Democratic Transition*, Asia Report No. 224 (Brussels: ICG, 2013), 8-12.

13 Waseem, *Political Conflict in Pakistan*, 45-52, 198-202.

14 Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History*, Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2012), 280-85. (London: Hurst & Company, 2012), 280-85.

15 Charles H. Kennedy, "The Politics of Constitutional Reform in Pakistan," *Asian Survey* 51, no. 4 (2011): 720-25.

A significant change that occurred in the period was the increased reliance on formal parliamentary procedures as the primary means of political action. Opposition parties started participating more actively in the discussion of legislation, in question hours, and standing committees. These institutional arenas provided structured opportunities to study, contribute to, and negotiate policy, thereby reducing reliance on extra-parliamentary methods of political activity.

Back then, there was still the aspect of competition in opposition politics. The parties also did not fully agree on many of the governing processes and making policies, as the parties carried on with their political agendas. These disagreements they dealt with in the system as opposed to creating disruptions. Here the concept of friendly opposition comes in. It implies that parties collaborate on matters that affect the country even when they differ. This involves campaigning to enact legislation that favours modification of the constitution and serving in committees.

This new style of opposition marked a change from the confrontational approach, previously adopted by opposition parties. Instead of perpetual political strife, opposition groups began to embrace a path of cooperation on necessary occasions (particularly regarding key legislative matters). Consequently, parliamentary politics evolved into a system where competition and cooperation both existed within the same institutional framework.¹⁶ In this sense, the National Assembly turned out to be a venue whereby the opposition parties balanced their role as government scrutineers and making laws. This transformed the opposition politics in Pakistan in the post-2008 period. It formed the basis of the concept of supportive opposition.

¹⁶ Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), *Parliamentary Democracy in Pakistan: Post-2008 Assessment* (Islamabad: PILDAT, 2015), 12–15.

Friendly Opposition during the PPP Government (2008–2013)

The 2008–2013 period is unique in the history of Pakistan's parliamentary politics, especially in the relationship between the ruling and opposition parties. Opposition behaviour at this time was marked by what is generally referred to as the friendly type of opposition, whereby, despite political competition, there existed cooperation at the parliamentary level in opposition. The main opposition party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), actively participated in constructive interaction with the PPP, despite political differences.¹⁷

Despite the lack of agreement in the National Assembly, there was a progressive shift towards discussion, negotiation, and compromise in parliament. Such a change signalled the possibility of political actors beginning to embrace a stronger concern of supporting democratic processes following a much longer time of military rule. On the one hand, the opposition parties and on the other hand the government seemed more determined to bring about continuity and stability to the parliamentary democracy. This, especially in the wake of the institutional upheaval, led the political parties to be more conservative and subdued in the parliament. Rather than resorting to boycott or other disruptive measures, the opposition parties tended to rely on the more formal system of legislative action to achieve their goals. This added to the climate in which dialogue and negotiation became increasingly familiar elements of parliamentary practice.¹⁸

One such cooperative tendency was the enactment of the 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010. The amendment came about due to an overall political consultation between the party in office and the opposition. It vastly reorganized

17 Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Pakistan Paradox: Instability and Resilience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 410–15.

18 M. Rasul Bakhsh Rais, *Pakistan in Historical Perspective* (Lahore: Oxford University Press, 2017), 275–80.

the power balance between the federal government and the provinces and is widely considered a historic step toward enhancing parliamentary democracy in Pakistan.¹⁹

The opposition parties were more engaged in the activities of the parliamentary committees and the legislative discussion in addition to the constitutional reform, than ever before. These were institutional arenas of dialogue, which offered systematic space within which the members of the various parties were able to participate in policymaking in a more participatory environment. This led to committee work as a significant pathway for consensus-developing in the National Assembly.²⁰

Although the climate of co-operation was maintained, political differences between the ruling party and the opposition did not subside completely. Practices of governance, accountability, and policy direction were still going on to create disagreements in parliamentary debates. Sometimes, these differences were points of disagreement and political tension, but they could not undermine the regular working process of the legislative process. This trend of collaboration can also be viewed as Pakistan's broader political context at this time. The prevailing power of unelected institutions and the relative weakness of democratic formations stimulated the tendency of political actors to value stability. Consequently, engagement in the parliament tended to provide opposition parties with a more effective and secure approach to direct confrontation.²¹

All in all, the renewed period from 2008-2013 was a crucial phase for the development of friendly opposition in the National Assembly. It also proved that the opposition parties

19 Government of Pakistan, *The Constitution (Eighteenth Amendment) Act, 2010* (Islamabad: Ministry of Law and Justice, 2010).

20 Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), *Parliamentary Democracy in Pakistan: Performance Review 2008–2013* (Islamabad: PILDAT, 2014), 22–30.

21 International Crisis Group, *Reforming Pakistan's Political System*, Asia Report No. 255 (Brussels: ICG, 2014), 6–11.

were able to retain their political identity and still work together with the ruling government on issues such as (18th & 19th amendments and 7th NFC award)²² that are of national concern. This stage formed a crucial basis for parliamentary collaboration in the years to come. The growing role of the National Assembly as a dialogue and negotiation and institutional area was a major stride in the strengthening of the democratic process in Pakistan.

Friendly Opposition during the PML-N Government (2013-2018)

Among the memorable events in Pakistan was the 2013 general elections. In the meantime, there had been a change of one civilian government to another. This was a milestone in the politics of the country. The government was made up of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). The Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) became the opposition party. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) became a formidable opposition leader.²³ With this alteration, the National Assembly became more complicated. Different opposition parties had various factions. The PPPP mostly worked with the government in the parliament. They participated in legislative work, committee work and debates. They expressed that they were interested in collaborating

22 The Eighteenth Amendment (2010) restored parliamentary supremacy by removing the president's power to dissolve the National Assembly and significantly enhanced provincial autonomy through the abolition of the Concurrent List. It was passed with cross-party consensus, reflecting strong cooperation between the government and opposition. The Nineteenth Amendment (2011) revised the judicial appointment process introduced in the Eighteenth Amendment by rebalancing the roles of the judiciary and parliament. It was adopted through political consensus, indicating continued parliamentary cooperation. The Seventh NFC Award (2010) introduced a multi-criteria formula for revenue distribution and increased the provincial share in federal resources. Its unanimous approval demonstrated effective negotiation and cooperative federalism among political actors.

23 Election Commission of Pakistan, *General Elections 2013: Official Report* (Islamabad: ECP, 2014).

with the government. This reflects the emerging pattern of 'friendly opposition.' The PTI on the other hand adopted a more confrontational stance, which in many ways resembled earlier patterns of opposition politics in Pakistan characterised by protests, agitation, and challenges to the legitimacy of the government, particularly on issues such as elections and governance. As a result, parliamentary functioning continued, illustrating a hybrid model in which cooperative and confrontational modes of opposition coexisted within the same institutional framework.²⁴

There were also a number of cases where in the NA, the government and the opposition parties carried out various cooperative activities. They talked about constitutional issues and reforms like electoral reforms²⁵, FATA reforms and merger²⁶, military courts & security legislation²⁷, economic and tax reforms²⁸ and CPEC and development policy²⁹. Such deliberations took place in the committees. The members from parties held discussions and agreed on

24 Aqil Shah, *The Army and Democracy: Military Politics in Pakistan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 355-60.

25 Electoral reforms were a major focus of the PML-N government, culminating in the Elections Act, 2017, which consolidated and updated previous election laws to improve transparency, administrative efficiency, and the functioning of the Election Commission.

26 A significant structural reform was the merger of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, aimed at extending constitutional rights, political representation, and administrative integration to previously marginalized regions.

27 In response to terrorism, the parliament—through consensus—passed constitutional amendments allowing the establishment and later extension of military courts for the trial of terrorism-related cases, reflecting cooperation on national security issues.

28 The government pursued fiscal reforms aimed at expanding the tax base, increasing revenue collection, and improving documentation of the economy, reflecting efforts toward economic stabilization and governance improvement.

29 The initiation and expansion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) represented a major development policy initiative focused on infrastructure, energy, and regional connectivity.

some issues. This helped keep the democratic process on track.³⁰ Meanwhile, the presence of several opposition parties contributed to a more complex political environment. Each political party had its own strategies and priorities. There were those parties who preferred to operate in the parliament and those who involved in protests. This displayed the level of political competition at that time.

Despite these challenges, the National Assembly remained operational and continued to perform its role as a legislature. The opposition parties were equally active in the debates that took place in the parliament, where they raised issues of accountability and concerns about government policies. There were also instances of collaboration on certain legislative and national issues, despite criticism and political disagreement, particularly on electoral reforms leading to the Elections Act 2017, the passage of constitutional amendments related to national security (21st and 23rd Amendments), and the FATA merger, where both government and opposition parties demonstrated cooperation within the parliamentary framework. The combination of involvement and opposition defined the nature of politics in the parliament in 2013-2018.³¹

In general, this period was another phase of development of friendly opposition in Pakistan. Compared to the previous stages, opposition politics became more diversified in its strategies and approaches. However, the institutions of parliament were still in place and the opposition parties still participated in the legislative system on issues of national concern. This signifies that the principle of positive opposition still existed, but in a more intricate and wider manifestation.

30 Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), *Parliamentary Performance Review: National Assembly 2013–2018* (Islamabad: PILDAT, 2019), 25–33.

31 Hamid Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*, 3rd ed. (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2017), 640–45.

Mechanisms of Friendly Opposition in the National Assembly

The operations of friendly opposition in the National Assembly between 2008 and 2018 were not merely because of goodwill or political will. Instead, it was influenced by the interplay between formal, institutionalised arrangements and informal practices that allowed the government and opposition parties to collaborate while retaining their competitive positions. These mechanisms aided political actors in striking an equilibrium between confrontation and collaboration such that parliament processes continue despite disagreement.³²

One of the rules is the committee system in the National Assembly. The committee system is similar to that of groups, with parties able to communicate with one another. One can freely discuss things in these groups compared to meetings in the National Assembly. Since these groups are formed to discuss things, members in groups can review the laws, present changes, suggest changes, and discuss things.³³

Question hour, adjournment motions, and regular debates are some of the procedures in the National Assembly. These processes assist the opposition members of parliament to cast doubts on policies of the government and highlight issues in the National Assembly. Nonetheless, the opposition is still able to fulfil its function of keeping a check on the government and abiding by the rules.³⁴ Party leadership can take the initiative to work for the country and democracy or keep contesting on petty issues. The members of the parties generally follow the decisions of their

32 Philip Norton, *Parliaments and Governments in Western Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 88–92.

33 National Assembly of Pakistan, *Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007* (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan), 55–70.

34 Kaare Strøm, "Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies," *European Journal of Political Research* 37, no. 3 (2000): 261–89.

respective leaders. The mature behaviour of the political leadership is the only way to sustain democracy in the country.³⁵

Following the rules of the National Assembly helps the government and the opposition work together. Respecting the rules, embracing the outcomes of votes, and being active in the assembly activities make politicians feel accountable. Despite being in sharp disagreement, their cooperation can bring positive changes in the system. The politicians are assisted to work together by the National Assembly and its rules. Though the regulations do not remove conflicts altogether but provide an opportunity to the parliamentarians to communicate and manage their issues gracefully within the rules of procedure of the parliament.³⁶ The cooperation of government and opposition proved that the rules of procedure are practical and helpful in conflict management. This era reveals that collaboration between the government and opposition is not an impossible task, but it is a source to enhance negotiations between them and make legislation more practical and comprehensive.

Impacts on Democratic Development

The norm of friendly opposition in the National Assembly between 2008 and 2018 had dramatic impacts on the democratic process of the country. Although the results were not entirely positive or negative, the net effect was a complicated blend of institutional development and the confines of political compromise. The continuity of the democratic process was extremely one of the prominent positive results. It was the first time in the history of Pakistan

35 PILDAT, *Parliamentary Leadership and Decision-Making in Pakistan* (Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, 2016), 14–22.

36 Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 155–60.

to have two consecutive civilian administrations serving their terms and handing over to the elected administration.³⁷

The comparatively smooth government-opposition relations contributed to the rise of a stable situation by reducing the risk of the deadlock in the parliament and the intrusion of the external factor. By doing so, amicable dissent helped in enhancing the democracy standards, particularly tolerance of the election outcomes and constitutional proceedings. The other key advantage was the assistance of legislative and constitutional development. The enactment of significant amendments in the period indicated that the political participants might reach a consensus when it comes to dealing with key matters concerning the country. With such developments, having an adversarial environment would have been difficult to realise the positive contributions of the opposition parties to the legislative processes and enhanced the role of the parliament as a legislative body.³⁸

The cooperative environment also served to normalize the behaviour of the parliament and strengthened the institutional practices. The gradual development of a more stable parliamentary culture was due to regular involvement in debates, committee meetings and activities on the legislative front. With time, this stability created the trustworthiness of the National Assembly as a distinguished decision-making body. Yet, backlash caused by the strategy of friendly opposition was not all that good. Another issue raising eyebrows was that the support role of the opposition as a resounding check to government power had been undermined. In other instances, the pressure to cooperate appeared to reduce questioning the activities of the government. This questioned the need to commit the

37 Election Commission of Pakistan, *General Elections 2008 Report* (Islamabad: ECP, 2009). Election Commission of Pakistan, *General Elections 2013 Report* (Islamabad: ECP, 2014).

38 Government of Pakistan, *The Constitution (Eighteenth Amendment) Act, 2010* (Islamabad: Ministry of Law and Justice, 2010).

government wholly liable on issues especially governance failure or corruption allegation by the opposition.

In addition, the perception of political compromise occasionally led to the mass cynicism towards the effectiveness of parliamentary politics. When there was an apparent consensus on significant matters between the major parties, others looked at them as one of the deals that the elites had made that was more conducive to stability than actual accountability. The delicate nature of cooperation and opposition in a democratic system was highlighted by this perception which was earned or not. The other shortcoming was that the benefits of friendliness of opposition were not necessarily institutionalized. The cooperation that was mainly observed depended on the attitudes and policies of the political leaders and not deep-rooted institutional norms.³⁹

As a result of this, sustainability of such practices was questionable particularly when there was a change in political dynamics. Nonetheless, these difficulties are important, and it will be vital to recognize that democratic growth is slow and imbalanced. The gains of the friendly opposition that took place in Pakistan in this decade served to instigate parliamentary continuity, legislative effectiveness, and political tolerance. Meanwhile, it also showed the challenges of striking the right balance between cooperation and responsibility in an expanding democratic context.⁴⁰

On the whole, the influence of friendly opposition might be regarded as positive and restrictive. The institutions of democracy grew, and stability and cooperation were encouraged, however, it also brought about the necessity to

39 PILDAT, *Parliamentary Democracy in Pakistan: Performance Review 2008–2018* (Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency, 2019), 30–35.

40 International Crisis Group, *Democracy in Pakistan: The 2013–2018 Parliamentary Cycle*, Asia Report No. 297 (Brussels: ICG, 2017), 10–15.

have a more aggressive and independent opposition, which will be able to be effective in terms of oversight. Such a two-sided character highlights how complicated democratic development in Pakistan is and how collaboration and competition in parliamentary politics have to be balanced in democratic development.

Conclusion

The 2008-2018 period is a significant in the evolution of parliamentary politics in Pakistan. It was a shift towards less adversarial form of opposition to a more collaborative style of politics. This transformation, commonly referred to as friendly opposition, was an indication of emerging political sentiments as well as the dynamics of democratic institutions at work. As demonstrated in the case above, opposition parties were not abandoning their critical position this decade. They instead changed their strategy by operating inside parliamentary systems to influence lawmaking, participate in policymaking, and contribute towards the making the constitution more comprehensive. This transition played a vital role in upholding democratic governance. It lowered the chances of institutional breakdown and fostered a more stable political environment.

Meanwhile, the collaborative aspect of opposition politics caused certain conflicts in the democratic process. On the one hand, it facilitated legislative development and political stability; on the other hand, there were concerns about accountability and the capacity of parliament to exercise its oversight. The dynamics between cooperation and competition remained unbalanced, with a larger issue posed by an immature democratic system.

In conclusion, even the process of friendly opposition during this period must be regarded as a long-lasting and continuous process of democratic adaptation, rather than a fixed model of political conduct. It presents the way in which political actors may adapt to the dynamic situation, and emphasises the necessity of greater institutionalization of democratic practices. The enduring significance of this stage

that it has helped ensure continuity of parliament political learning, and the gradual receptiveness to democratic practice in the National Assembly of Pakistan.