

Reimagining the Populism and Leadership of Miss Fatima Jinnah

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Abstract *This article explores dynamics of Miss Fatima Jinnah's leadership qualities by applying the Ideational approach.*

The article aims to re-think the scenario of Pakistan at the eve of presidential elections 1965 with regarding populism. It underscores causes, events and consequences of the 1965's Elections by re-contextualizing the views and actions of Miss Jinnah. She won the elections, but a large-scale rigging deprived her of becoming the first lady President of Pakistan and in Islamic World. She did not play an active part in the political arena until the Presidential elections challenging the military dictator. This study attempts to answer why the Mother of the land opted for the politics of resistance; how she took an active part in the election campaign, and what were the implications of her participation in the elections by situating her role in national politics through the theoretical lens of populism.

Key Words: Populism, Ideational Approach, Leadership, Miss Fatima Jinnah, Presidential Elections

Introduction

Populism is essentially a contested concept and quite a modern phenomenon that emerged in the late 19th century in Russia and the United States and in modern days this concept affected almost all continents and political regimes. This term is now making headlines for the last two decades. All policymakers and scholars are gripped by this growing phenomenon. Although this phenomenon is becoming popular, it is essentially a contested concept diverse and distinct and vary region to region. For example, in Europe populism was applied on right-wing parties, in Latin America on left-wing presidents and in the USA, on right-wing and left-wing presidential candidates (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 21). Moreover, there are several divergent approaches to define populism. These divergent commonly used in certain academic disciplines and geographical regions and make this concept differential. Beside all diverse approaches, an emerging group of social scientists, describe populism on the bases of Ideational Approach that is a consented approach of populism. There are three fundamental concepts of the Ideational Approach of populism; the people, the elite and general will.

It is important to note that leaders are central to most political phenomena and populism is certainly no exception. The concept of populism can be implemented on major political actors which help to run political process i.e. political leadership, parties and movements. Among all these elements, a political leader or leadership is a core concept of the political process. Many scholars argue that, above its diverse manifestation, a determining component of populism is its strong leadership who can mobilize their masses. Political leadership supposes to control those policies which are related to public welfare, and political leaders can extract their power from the office they hold in any government. However, political leaders

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don't have to hold a public office (Kellerman, 1986, p. xiii). Same is the case of Miss Fatima Jinnah. She emerged as a populist leader of a thousand people without holding a public office. She influenced people's hearts without practicing any power. The purpose of this article is to address the two political concepts, populism and leadership and their mutual relationship. Under the combination of these two political phenomena, the leadership of Miss Jinnah during the first presidential elections of 1964-65 is the main focus of this article. The article is divided into two parts; the first part will focus on the scenario of first presidential elections in Pakistan and its important characters; General Ayub Khan and Miss Jinnah with the reference of core concepts of populism. The second part will highlight the main traits of Miss Jinnah's leadership with the lens of populism.

Populism: An Ideational Approach

It is common wisdom that populism is a contested concept among scholars. There are several approaches to define populism. Some definitions of populism emphasize its organizational features such as competent leadership and mobilization while others stress on economic aspects such as unsustainable policies in favor of wealth redistribution (Hawkin, Carlin & Littvay 2019, p.3). These approaches are differing from each other in academic disciplines as well as in different regions.

The *Popular Agency Approach* describes populism as a source of a democratic lifestyle build through active involvement in politics. This approach is popular among historians of the USA. Argentinian political theorist Ernesto Laclau presented his approach to populism known as *Laclauan Approach*. This approach refers to liberal democracy as a problem and radical democracy as its solution. This is used in political studies of Western Europe and Latin America (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p.3). *The Socioeconomic Approach* was significant in Latin American Populism during the period of 1980s and 1990s. Populist economics refers to a political outline of government that is considered reckless because it involves the massive government spending by foreign loans. According to *Recent approach*, populism is a political tact followed by populist leaders to seek support from their followers. This approach is followed in Latin-American and non-Western societies. The final approach defines populism as the *Folkloric Style Approach* of politics, which used by parties and their leaders for active mobilization. This approach commonly used in communication and media studies. (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 4). In all above-mentioned approaches concept of populism appears as variational concept. Although these approaches are not agreed on one definition of populism, these entire have some merits and demerits and one cannot negate the importance of these approaches. As there is lack of consensus about the definition of populism but beyond the lack of scholarly agreement, it is common consideration that in all type of populism, there is some kind of appeal for 'people' and condemnation for 'elite'. So, in modern times, social scientists define populism based on the Ideational Approach. This approach determines populism as 'thin-centred ideology' that considers that society is divided into two homologous and opponent groups; one is 'the pure people' and the second is 'the corrupt elite', which asserts that politics is an illustration of the general will of the people (Hawkins & Carlin, 2019, p. 4). So ideational approach of populism has three main concepts; the people, the elite and a general will.

The People

The key concept of populism is definitely 'the people'. Even two other main notions 'the elite' and 'the general will' depend on it. Many scholars argued that the notion of people is merely an imaginary concept of populist and there is no such concept is existing (Kaltwasser, Taggart & Espejo, 2017, p. 48). Some other scholars consider it a flexible concept with three notions of people; sovereign people, common people and the nation (Kaltwasser, Taggart & Espejo, 2017, p. 49). The notion of 'sovereign people' explains the class of people who feel that their role in power is not being well constituted by elites and then they criticized and even revolt against them (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p.10).

The best example of this notion is those politicians who were suppressed by Martial Law authorities in 1958. General Muhammad Ayub Khan, who disfavored the parliamentary democracy, had taken such

measures to defuse the power of politicians. Several important politicians i.e. Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani and Mujeeb-ur-Rehman were arrested under Pakistan Safety Act (Nawa-i-Waqt, 13 October, 1958). To restrain the politicians and political activities for a long time, he introduced two acts PODO (Public Office Disqualification Order) and EBDO (Elective Body Disqualification Order). Thousands of politicians from both wings were disqualified under EBDO. Those politicians who were disqualified under EBDO restrained to take part in political activity till 31 December 1966 (Afzal, 2007, p. 226). In this situation, according to the notion of 'sovereign people' the politicians who deprived to take part in the political process, stand against Ayub Khan in support of Miss Jinnah's presidential candidature. Leaders of five major parties came under one banner of electoral alliance Combined Opposition Parties (COP) and chose Miss Fatima Jinnah as its leader.

The second meaning of people is 'common people'. 'In contrast to elitist view', common people are the group who are being kept out from power due to their socio-cultural and economic status' or we can say 'marginalized' group (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 10). This kind of group is largely consisting of ordinary people of a country belong to every walk of life. A populist leader can easily attain the support of common people by addressing their demands. Usually, through any institution i.e. political parties or some kind of political alliance like electoral alliance, a populist leader can connect to common people. In the case of Miss Fatima Jinnah's leadership and people's support COP was platform through which she mobilized people against Ayub Khan. Moreover, when Fatima Jinnah was nominated by COP as a presidential candidate, she received hundreds of letters from throughout the country in her support. Although some of them were not in favor of the decision of Miss Jinnah's to contest elections but they were not in favor of Ayub Khan too. It is worth noting that people from all walks of life wrote supporting letters. One of them was from a labor who was contended on Miss Fatima Jinnah's candidature and wrote 'now even the labor will come in an open field and eat bread to his heart's content and everyone is well aware of the existing government' (Mohtarama Fatima Jinnah Papers, File, 520, pp. 9-10). Even the circle of support was as wide as overseas Pakistanis also wrote letters to morally support to Miss Fatima Jinnah. One of them was from a group of Pakistanis lived in Saudi Arabia, in which 'appreciated the decision to stand for the Presidential elections' (Mohtarama Fatima Jinnah Papers, File, 520, p. 40).

The third meaning of the notion of people is 'the nation'. In this case, the term is used to referring to the 'national community, either in the ethnic or civic term' (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 11). At the eve of presidential elections, the first example of this type of notion is a collaboration of all ethnic (Awami League) religious and national levels (Muslim League Council and Jama'at-Islami. Nizam-i-Islam Party) political parties under the leadership of Miss Fatima Jinnah. These all parties graciously agreed on the nomination of Miss Fatima Jinnah to contest presidential elections (Ahmad, 2003, pp. 151-153). Even Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, leader of Awami League, whose politics was based on ethnicity, collaborated with COP for the national cause of democracy. Awami League showed great respect for Miss Fatima Jinnah and devotionally managed her campaign in East Pakistan. Mujeeb-ur-Rehman unconditionally supported and joined Miss Fatima Jinnah in her election campaign in East Pakistan (Afzal, 1998, p. 104). One-week tour of East Pakistan was extremely frantic, where whole towns came out to demonstrate their support for her. The Green Arrow, fastest train of East Pakistan, carried Miss Jinnah from Dacca to Chittagong. The train even crawled and took more than twenty-eight hours to reach on destination. Normally that distance covered in seven hours. The worth noting feature of this tour was the spontaneous support and sincerity of East Pakistanis. Same was the case with West Pakistanis, who equally support Miss Fatima Jinnah and she received teeming and tumultuous reception from Peshawar to Karachi in her eight-day tour of West Pakistan (Mujahid, 1965, p. 285). In terms of the third notion of people 'nation', Miss Jinnah equally attains nationwide support of people against the corrupt elite.

Scholars who deal with populism argued that the concept of people is not coherent but it is self-idealization of populist leaders for targeted people. In the case of Miss Jinnah's leadership, 'targeted people'

included all three above discussed notions of people. At the eve of presidential elections, sovereign people, common people and even whole nation supported Miss Fatima Jinnah with the core of their hearts.

The Elite

Another concept of populism is 'the elite'. Although this concept is anti-thesis of people, it received less attention in populist literature. Many scholars seem to imply that the elite is simply defined as *ex negativo*. The populism differentiates the people and the elite on the bases of morality. This marks the pure people against the corrupt elite or good people versus evil elites (Kaltwasser, Taggart & Espejo, 2017, p. 49). But populist literature did not determine particularly that who are elite. Most populists not only dislike the political elite but they also criticize the media elite, economic elite and cultural elite. All of these types define as homologous corrupt group that works against the general will, that is another concept of populism related to people's interests (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, pp. 11-12).

Moreover, the elite establishment was defined on the bases of power, including most of the people who held power within the politics, media and economy. In the context of populist leadership and presidential elections in Pakistan, the concept of elitism is perfectly implying on the situation. On one side, President Ayub Khan by holding the political power represented the 'elite' and on another side Miss Fatima Jinnah, who was isolated from the political sphere after the demise of her brother, Quaid-i-Azam. She emerged as a true representative of 'people' against 'elite'. The reason of Miss Fatima Jinnah's nomination by Combined Opposition Parties was obvious. They were in search of a personality of national stature whose sincerity and love for the country were above question and who had the devotion of the whole nation and courage for her persuasions. Moreover, Miss Fatima Jinnah had held no public office in past, so, could not be charged with corruption (Mujahid, 1965, p.283). Moreover, populist often argued that elite group is not just ignoring the interest of people, rather, they are even working against the will of people. Fatima Jinnah in her campaign, accused Ayub Khan of corruption and nepotism. She portrayed him as interloper and dictator. Fatima Jinnah, during her campaign, posed questions on Ayub's government (Shahid, 2004, p. 83).

The General Will

The third concept of populism is 'general will', that is closely linked with the notion of 'people'. It is based on the argument that politics should follow the general will of people. General will refer to join people together into a community for persuasion of their mutual goals (Kaltwasser, Taggart and Espejo, 2017, p.50).

What was the general will or common interest of Pakistani nation at the time of presidential elections? Ayub Khan's era was categorized into two periods; the first period was from 1958 to 1965 and the second period was from 1965 to 1969. The first phase of his regime characterized by authoritarian rule and the second phase was a democratic phase dubbed as 'controlled democracy'. In the first phase, Ayub Khan introduced several socio-political and religious changes (related to land, agriculture family law and reform some Islamic provisions of Constitution) in the country (Ansari, n.d, p. 46). These reforms and changes were not up to people's will but as the first phase of the regime was authoritarian so, there was no botheration the public opinion and general will. As the second phase was the so-called democratic phase, so in that phase people resented openly against Ayub Khan's policies. Moreover, the general will of the people at that time was to restoration of democracy. First phase that was very crucial Miss Fatima Jinnah emerged as the populist leader to support the general will of people.

Populist Leadership and Miss Fatima Jinnah

Leadership is the main concept of populism. A populist leader often considers the representative of 'people' against 'elite' and act according to 'genera will'. Populist scholars define different traits of a populist leader.

This part of the article will focus on the characteristics of Miss Fatima Jinnah's leadership concerning populism.

Vox Populi (Voice of People)

The populist politics is essentially the struggle of pure people against corrupt elite and populist leader must present himself as a voice of people. Just as 'people' and 'elite' are constructions, *vox populi* (voice of people) is also a construction. This construction has two interrelated processes; i) separation from elite and, ii) connection with the people. Populist leaders have to convince their followers that they do not belong to the elite but are part of the pure people.

It is a bitter fact that the first phase (1958-65) of military rule in Pakistan was so much suffocating for public expression. By issuing Press & Publication Ordinance Martial Law authorities banned on promotion of public opinion through the Press and Publication Ordinance. There was no such platform for the public to express their resentment against the government. Miss Fatima Jinnah accepted the Combined Opposition Parties' nomination for president on 16 September 1964 and promised to spare no efforts in hard work and service for attainment the goals for which millions of Pakistanis have been silently waiting for the last few years' (Mujahid, 1965, p. 283).

After Miss Fatima Jinnah's nomination, the political scenario was suddenly changed. Anti-Ayub feelings became active overnight. Miss Jinnah's candidature proved a voice for democratic forces in Pakistan. Demonstrations and protest rallies broke out in the country from the one end to another. Jute workers in East Pakistan, Chittagong port workers and West Pakistan Transport workers went on for a serious strike. A new labor front, East Pakistan Workers Council was established and presented a 15-points program consisting of their demands Moreover. teachers of primary and secondary schools and students from both wings also went for strike (Mujahid, 2004, pp. 35-36).

In short, Fatima Jinnah's nomination for presidential elections against Ayub Khan provided people a confidence to express their grievances from government. Miss Jinnah utilized every opportunity to oppose the dictatorship and argue how Quaid-i-Azam's dream was exploited. Therefore, she considered it better to went directly to the masses (Ziring, 1994, p. 72). In the election campaign, Miss Jinnah's message to the government was clear she was struggling to reinstitute people's right to choose their rulers on the bases of adult franchise and in fair elections. She became a *vox populi* (voice of people) against a corrupt elite in true senses.

Charismatic Strongman and Gender Notion

The second important feature of populist leader described in academic and popular writings is a charismatic strongman. Political leaders often portray themselves as strong leaders but a strong man in populist conception, takes a step further, creating an image of the man of actions rather than a man of words (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017, p.70). When Fatima Jinnah took the charge to lead the nation toward the struggle for the democracy, her age was seventy-one. According to populist definition, she proved herself charismatic strong woman, who more focused on actions rather than words. And as she promised while accepting the nomination, Fatima Jinnah spared no effort to fulfill it. She worked tirelessly for three long months. She involved herself in addressing massive meetings in cities and towns. A huge crowd always there on her whistle-stop tours, thousands of people at railway stations during her long train journey in both wings. She travelled endlessly. Indeed, the inexhaustible energy and stamina, she exhibited during the election campaign surprised almost everyone (Mujahid, 2004, p. 36).

It is important to note that just like a populist strongman, female populist leaders draw upon gendered notion of society to construct their image of *vox poupli*. To connect themselves with pure people, many female populists construct their image as "good woman" as defined by their culture, often presenting them as mother and wives. Paulin Hanson, female populist leader of Australia, once stated; I care about this country so devotedly, I feel like a mother and Australia is my home and Australian people are my children

(Mudded & Kaltwasser, 2017, p. 70). Unlike this notion of gender in populist leadership, Miss Fatima Jinnah did not need to construct an image of 'good woman' for the sake of people's support. She was already attributed as 'Mother of the Nation' since 1947 and people's support was with her. And it was, in fact, people's choice for Mother of the Nation, Miss Fatima Jinnah shook Ayub's authoritarian state and even forced the fiercely anti-woman clerical reformer Maulana Mawdudi to break a cardinal rule of his creed to accept a woman's lead, not just as the head of government, but as head of state (Pirbhai, 2017, p.254).

Charisma

Charisma is another important characteristic of leadership. It is also a common concept in populism and conceived from Max Weber's idea of charismatic rule. He presented this concept in his essay "*The Three Types of Legitimate Rule*" that is translated by Hans Gerth. According to Max Weber, three types of legitimate authorities contribute to the state system stability; legal authority, traditional authority and lastly charismatic authority. Charismatic authority refers to the personal devotion of the follower to his lord and his charisma. They have magical abilities and power of mind and speech (Weber, 1958, 11). In Weberian understanding of charisma, leadership is about the bond between leader and followers, which is defined at least as much by the expectations and perceptions of the followers as by the individual characteristics of the leader. However, some other explanations are also considerable. Some other scholars defined features of charismatic leader i.e. 'dominance, a need to influence other and strong conviction of his/her belief'. Furthermore, a charismatic leader should be a 'strong role model' who can influence followers by his/her personality. The last feature defined on two conditions; firstly, the existence of situation for the emergence of charismatic leadership and secondly an opportunity to articulate an ideological goal (Winkler, 2010, pp-32-33).

Miss Jinnah attributed all these characteristics of charismatic leadership. She had a strong bond with her followers that was not developed at the time of elections, but it was from the beginning, when she started social work for masses. As a 'strong role model, she influenced not only her followers but also surprised her foes with her leadership qualities. After the demise of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Miss Jinnah isolated herself from the political sphere and never hold public office. According to 'situational factor', Miss Fatima Jinnah emerged charismatic leader and as a seasoned politician at the eve of presidential elections in Pakistan and articulated the 'the ideological goal' to restore democracy.

Conclusion

'Populism' is a growing phenomenon of modern times to understand the persons, movements and parties because of their unusual popularity with voters and supporters. it is rooted particularly in Latin America, The United States of America and Europe. At present, it has gained the attention of political scientists, historians and cultural theorists around the globe to understand the complexity of modern existence. They are using this concept to understand various leaders and movements. Moreover, Populism can also be applied to understand various political organizations and movements. Furthermore, this concept is popularly used and debated regarding political leadership. A populist leader often emerges from people's side as their representative against the elite establishment. In the history of Pakistan, many historians have studied Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, (Sikandar: 2014) Zulifqar Ali Bhutto (Wolpert: 1984) as a populist leader. But in the modern scenario, some others consider Imran Khan and Mian Nawaz Sharif as a populist leader. No doubt they are, but Miss Fatima is overlooked by the historians who could be regarded as a populist leader in a conservative society of Pakistan. She had played a significant role in the Pakistan movement but turned inactive after the death of her brother. As a charismatic leader, when political circumstances required her to take an active part in politics. Consequently, she emerged as a female populist leader in the 1965 presidential elections. To ensure her support for victory and mobilize the interest groups, common people, and particularly the elected members of the electoral college of Pakistan, she toured both the wings of

Pakistan-East Pakistan and West Pakistan. It created massive awareness among the people about their fundamental rights and she promised to translate the ideas of Quaid-i-Azam into actions. People believed that Miss Fatima Jinnah can make Pakistan an Islamic, democratic and welfare state. Her charisma made her defy a dictator on behalf of subaltern class and common people. She contested the election with the hope she will win it but lost the election, due to blatant rigging. Subsequently, she was sidelined by the powerful Establishment. During her election campaign, she had badly exposed external and internal policies of the Ayub government (Chawla: 2005). He exposed the bad governance and mismanagement of the dictatorship and emphasized the restoration of democracy. However, in this process, Ms. Fatima Jinnah became *voxpopuli* (voice of people) a true sense of the word She proved a catalyst for the revival of democracy, political freedom and women emancipation in Pakistan. The legacy of Miss Jinnah's populism was followed by Benazir Bhutto, another example of a populist female political leader in a predominantly male-dominated society.

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