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**THE POLITICAL TRIAD OF PAKISTAN: PTI, JAMAAT E
ISLAMI AND MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT - POWER
DYNAMICS**

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Introduction:

The political landscape of Pakistan in 2025 is a complex
interplay of institutional power, narrative control, and
organizational capacity, epitomized by the interactions among
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), and the
military-dominated establishment. This analysis employs
institutional theory and soft power frameworks to dissect these
dynamics, leveraging empirical evidence from electoral data,
social media metrics, and legal proceedings to illuminate the
structural forces shaping Pakistan's hybrid regime. The interplay
of these actors reveals a sophisticated power equilibrium, where
adaptability, ideological rigidity, and institutional authority
define influence and constraint.

PTI's Digital Hegemony and Strategic Adaptability:

Founded in 1996 by Imran Khan in Lahore, PTI has emerged as
a dominant force in Pakistan's digital sphere, leveraging
platforms like X to propagate its anti-establishment narrative.
Khan, a former cricketer imprisoned since August 2023 on
charges he alleges are politically motivated, has maintained

influence through strategic digital campaigns, including AI-generated speeches disseminated by party operatives. Data from 2025 indicates PTI's social media accounts consistently achieve engagement rates exceeding 5 million views per major post, particularly during rallies in Islamabad and Lahore, underscoring its narrative resonance among youth and urban demographics. This digital dominance, however, invites institutional countermeasures. In September 2025, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) intensified investigations into PTI's online activities, citing alleged "anti-state" content that criticized military influence. These actions reflect a principal-agent conflict, where the establishment employs regulatory tools to curb PTI's discursive power. PTI's narrative flexibility—shifting between populist anti-establishment rhetoric and pragmatic alignment with state objectives—enhances its resilience. For instance, during its 2018-2022 governance, PTI collaborated with the military on security policies, demonstrating a strategic malleability that contrasts with its public posturing.

JI's Organizational Resilience and Ideological Consistency:

Established in 1941 by Maulana Maududi, JI, under the leadership of Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman since April 2024, exemplifies organizational depth through its hierarchical structure and grassroots mobilization. Rehman, a Karachi-based engineer, has fortified JI's outreach via its humanitarian arm, Al-Khidmat Foundation, which operates extensively in urban centers like Karachi and Peshawar. JI's digital content, characterized by high production quality and ideological consistency, promotes Islamic governance and anti-corruption agendas, yet its electoral impact remains limited by institutional barriers.

Electoral data from the January 15, 2023, Karachi local government elections highlights JI's challenges. Despite a tactical alliance with PTI to counter alleged rigging by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), as documented by the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN), JI forfeited several seats due to disputed results. Similarly, the February 8, 2024, general elections saw JI's performance undermined by widespread rigging allegations, including a confession by a Rawalpindi election official of vote manipulation. These irregularities triggered protests in February 2025, with JI demanding electoral reforms and the release of political prisoners, reflecting its commitment to principle over pragmatism. JI's ideological steadfastness, rooted in conservative Islamic tenets, alienates liberal constituencies in urban centers, limiting its coalition-building potential and reinforcing its exclusion from power-sharing arrangements, such as the PML-N-led government formed in 2024.

The Establishment's Strategic Differentiation:

The establishment, comprising the military and allied bureaucracies, employs a differentiated strategy toward PTI and JI, akin to a game-theoretic model prioritizing alliances with adaptable actors. PTI's pragmatic flexibility, evidenced by its 2018-2022 governance and partial reintegration post-2024 elections (securing 92 National Assembly seats despite rigging claims), contrasts with JI's rigid ideological stance, which resists institutional co-optation. JI's historical

legacy and consistent advocacy for Islamic governance render it less amenable to integration, as seen in its exclusion from coalition governments and electoral marginalization.

Public perception further complicates JI's position. Surveys from 2025 indicate that liberal voters in Karachi and Lahore view JI's conservative policies skeptically, particularly on issues like gender equality and secular governance, constraining its appeal despite robust organizational capacity. PTI, conversely, benefits from Khan's populist charisma and youth-oriented messaging, maintaining broader resonance across diverse demographics.

Conclusion: A Dynamic Equilibrium:

Pakistan's political landscape in 2025 operates as a dynamic triad, where PTI's digital soft power, JI's grassroots resilience, and the establishment's institutional dominance intersect. Empirical evidence from electoral irregularities, social media analytics, and legal actions underscores a hybrid regime where narrative agility and institutional alignment often outweigh ideological consistency. PTI's adaptability enables it to navigate establishment pressures, while JI's rigidity, though organizationally robust, limits its influence. Addressing systemic issues like electoral rigging and digital regulation could foster a more equitable political arena, enhancing stability in Pakistan's volatile democratic framework. This analysis highlights the need for reforms to balance narrative influence, organizational strength, and institutional power, ensuring a more inclusive political future.

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