

**RESEARCH PAPER****Political Parties and Political Socialization in Pakistan: A Case study of PTI****¹Anaiza Zulfiqar, ²Syeda Sameen Gelani**

1. MS Scholar, Department of Politics and International Relations, GC Women University Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan
2. MS Scholar, Department of Politics and International Relations, GC Women University Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author** samanmehmmmod82@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

This study examines that how political parties, in general, and Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI), in particular, contribute to the political socialisation of Pakistanis. Political parties have a significant impact on residents' political engagement and values, which in turn shapes political socialisation. Founded in 1996, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has revolutionised politics by enlisting young people and using internet media to reach a wide range of people. Qualitative, historical, analyzing and exploratory method was used to examine the historical contributions of PTI in socializing the youth of Pakistan. The results of study reveals that the political parties especially PTI successfully mobilises young people and under-represented groups, its use of social media and grassroots activism, have a strong emotional connection with voters. To promote democratic practices inside parties, hold internal elections and transparent nomination procedures. Establish forums for public debates on political matters to increase citizens' knowledge and comprehension.

KEYWORDS Pakistan, Political Parties, Political Socialization, PTI**Introduction**

Political socialisation facilitates the formation of political notions and the adoption of political ideals, it is essential to an individual's growth. A person's political beliefs and ideas are also influenced by it. A person might develop opinions about a range of social issues and acquire a set of political attitudes through the process of political socialisation. (Daniel et. Al., 2014; Jathol, et. al., 2024.) Knowledge is the product in the process of socialization. A society's degree of knowledge has a significant impact on the kind of political system that develops there. In the era of rapid technological advancements and the proliferation of digital media, social media platforms have developed into powerful tools for political engagement and mobilisation. Among these parties, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is notable for being a powerful political force in Pakistan that has used social media, particularly Facebook, to disseminate pro-PTI information.

The most important component of a political system in defining the type of political socialisation is its political parties. Political parties cannot protect society's interests if they are weak. This vulnerability will inevitably lead to the dominance of other state institutions. Pakistan's political history makes it abundantly evident that state institutions have a greater influence than political parties. Pakistan has experienced three distinct periods of martial law since gaining independence in 1947: first in 1958-1971, 1977-1988, and 1999-2007. To obtain political support, military dictators fostered a small number of political parties and used them as leverage to extend their rule. However, there was opposition to authoritarian regimes from mainstream political groups such as the Awami League, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), and the Awami National Party (ANP) and

Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI). Following general elections in 2013, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) successfully replaced the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for the first time thanks to the efforts of these parties. In a democracy, political parties are vital institutions. People are exercising their fundamental democratic rights when they vote for their leaders, volunteer their time, donate money, and join political parties

This research analysis and highlight the political socialisation and the function of political parties. Political groups such as the PTI, which was founded in 1996 and was led by famous cricketer Imran Khan. The PTI was founded with the goal of combating corruption and advancing social justice. After placing as the second-largest party in the 2013 legislative elections, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) gained notoriety in the country's politics.

Literature Review

Political socialisation is the process by which people form opinions on political matters, learning their political incline and loyalty. It lasts throughout an individual's life, from early childhood to adulthood. It includes prevailing political ideals, attitudes, and beliefs that are transmitted from one generation to the next. This study aims that the Political socialisation is crucial in democracies where political parties aim to improve the welfare of their constituents and educate their supporters (Kausar, et. al., 2019; Khan et al, Bukhari & Nasir 2024)

Citizens can exercise their fundamental rights to association and expression through political parties, which act as a bridge between them and the state's institutions. By actively involving their members and supporters, political parties develop and implement policy views and initiatives (Jamil et al & Azhar, 2024). This study highlights that the political parties provide clear channels for citizens to exercise their right to question those in power by outlining alternate policy options and the possibility of a peaceful handover of power through democratic elections. Political parties are essential to function the democracy. Parties are distinct organisations that carry out a number of interconnected tasks essential to the democratic government process. A political party's main goals are to unite and promote societal interests, propose alternative policies.

Political parties convince their supporters through emotional speeches, PTI's advertisements were also replete with rhetoric promising a better future for Pakistan and encouraging more people to vote. It used emotional appeal to greatly impact women and children. Particularly in the immediate aftermath of PTI leader Imran Khan's accident, the party's election campaign relied heavily on emotive ads to win over voters. PML-N advertisements emphasise the party's achievements during its rule. (Yaseen, et. al., 2021; Saleem, Ahmed & Tariq 2020) In contrast to the two political parties previously stated, the party was able to draw attention to the topic of public concerns and eventually gained a larger advantage in terms of votes. One of the most significant concerns facing Pakistan is the production of power, which they pledged to produce and address for the electorate. Some PML-N advertisements were derogatory to its rivals.

As the head of the recently established Pakistan Movement for Justice or PTI Khan made his political debut in the middle of the 1990s. The nation's attention was swiftly drawn to the youthful, well-liked former cricket player with anti-establishment views. (Omer & Ellis, 2023) Ironically, he offered an alternative to the political elite, which was beset by accusations of corruption. At the time, both parties were beset by accusations that Pakistan had firmly established dynasty politics and that they had turned into personal fiefs.

A third party has lately emerged in Pakistani politics and has grown to be a major force in the nation's election system. It has changed to a two-party rotation that is structured since 2008. Since the PTI's triumph in the 2018 general elections, the party has significantly increased its power at the federal and provincial levels, changing Pakistan's political landscape. To avoid any unconstitutional involvement PPP, ANP, JL, and others joined forces with the government during the 2014 PTI protest. The PPP also made a positive contribution to Pakistan's political development against the backdrop of major constitutional amendments that took place between 2013 and 2018. (Jamil et al & Azhar 2024) This study aims that the PPP and the PML-N were the two main political parties in charge of Pakistan's politics from 1988 until about 2013. The PTI, which received the most votes in 2018, has proven to be a viable third-party option in recent years.

The general elections of 2013 are significant for a number of reasons: The PML-N, PTI, and PPP rise as the largest political parties; the election results regionalised the parties, and none of them could claim national representation. (Shafqat, 2018) The voter participation was approximately 55.02%, the highest since 1980, with 46.3 million people casting ballots. The largest party, the PML-N, with 14.8 million votes, while the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI), with 7.6 million votes, came in second.

The ideology of the PTI is largely a continuation of Imran Khan's personal political philosophy. According to one interpretation, Imran Khan "founded the PTI as a middle-class movement against elite politicians," but as the party has held power, its definition of the elite has evolved. (Curtis, 2024) More recently, it has prioritised enhancing social welfare and "the rights of the poor." The party made allusions to Islamic history and philosophy in its 2024 manifesto. The PTI's performance in Khyber Pakh has been impressive.

PTI didn't do well at first. Khan was elected for one seat in Pakistan in the general elections of 2002. Despite not participating in the 2008 election, his party garnered about 7.5 million votes in 2013, placing it second in terms of votes and third in terms of seats won. The party received 16.9 million votes in 2018. Imran Khan was chosen as prime minister after this successful election, and the party currently controls the national assembly in addition to the provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It also serves as the largest opposition party in Sindh and is a part of the alliance government in Balochistan. (Hassan, Fazal & Khalid, 2020) after 2018 elections PTI became the most powerful party in the country by gaining the support of youth

PTI took use of traditional political advantages. The previous coalition's leaders, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP), infuriated the populace by not reducing the escalating economic strain that has resulted in high inflation. (Kugelman, 2024) PTI also relied heavily on Khan, its charismatic leader, who encouraged people to cast ballots from his jail cell.

Khan was detained on May 9 while attending a bail hearing for a corruption case by almost 100 paramilitary officers. Tens of thousands of Khan supporters demonstrated violently in the streets when his party, the PTI, referred to it as a "illegal abduction." After Khan was granted bail and the Supreme Court ruled that his arrest on court property was "illegal and invalid," the police were forced to release him on May 12. (Omen & Ellis 2023) Khan has subsequently returned to Lahore and claimed that his imprisonment was orchestrated by the nation's influential military establishment. Khan will be arrested again as soon as the law permits, according to the authorities.

The response to the dragging of former Prime Minister Imran Khan from a courtroom by police on suspicion of corruption on May 9, 2023, was unprecedented in Pakistan. In towns all around the nation, angry supporters flocked to the streets, targeting facilities owned by Pakistan's strong military, shocking the establishment, as it is known locally. (Sohail & ng 2024) Four years after being elected prime minister in July 2018, he was removed by a parliamentary vote of no-confidence. He was convicted of multiple crimes shortly before the February general elections, which prevented him from running. Despite facing numerous legal trials, including accusations of terrorism and corruption, he remains a potent figure that divides Pakistan.

The PTI's candidates would have to run as independents and would not be allowed to use their party symbol, a cricket bat, on ballots after the courts declared in January 2024 that the party had not conducted legitimate internal elections and could not allow to run as a party. (Curtis, 2024) Party symbol are very crucial for illiterate voters to know which party to support.

The media is essential for influencing public opinion and advancing democratic values. It changes people's beliefs and increases awareness of political viewpoints. (Haider & Shabbir, 2023) Social media platforms are being used by political parties all around the world to communicate with their leaders, employees, and supporters. This study examines how Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) and the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz used social media to interact with followers and encourage the next generation to get involved in politics. This strategy was employed to influence public opinion during the general elections in Pakistan in 2018.

Various political parties and world leaders have long used social media as a tool for political affairs. Pakistan is not an exception. During the non-confidence movement, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) used Twitter as a propaganda tool to sway public opinion and rally support. Twitter is the main source of information about PTI propaganda. Imran Khan's tweets have been examined to address the main issues. In order to control discourses and build narratives, PTI's Twitter campaign used nationalistic language, emotive appeals, and disparaging political rivals. (Lashari et al, Bhand & katohar 2024) PTI's message was strengthened in large part by the use of hashtags, multimedia, and well-planned tweet storms. Twitter was an essential tool for PTI to maintain its political narrative and thwart opposition initiatives. The study analyse that the social media platforms are the primary tools used by political parties to sway their followers.

In order to enroll 23 million children who were not enrolled in school, the PTI government sought to almost double the number of schools that already exist. However, further action was required to accomplish this objective. By guaranteeing that everyone had access to healthcare services via the Sehat Insaf Card, the PTI government significantly improved the health sector. This program is thought to be among PTI's boldest health initiatives. (Haleem et al & shah et al 2024) This study promoted collaborations between the public and commercial sectors. Nevertheless, the government has not fulfilled its pledges to remove political influence from hospitals and to boost the number of female healthcare professionals. It is important to analyse that PTI actively works to sway their fans.

Material and Methods

This study uses a qualitative methodology. There is a significant amount of secondary data available on this study . Numerous books, journals, and national and international newspapers were evaluated by the researcher. This study examines the

success of the well-known political party, PTI, in terms of their contributions to political socialization of Pakistan; it also examines the role political parties in political socialization

Results and Discussion

People learn political ideals and develop their political conceptions through the ongoing process of political socialisation. Political socialization in Pakistan occurs through various agents, Peer groups, the media, the school system, religion, and the family are some of the factors that influence this process. While social groups and the media have a greater influence on adults, education, family, and religion play a significant part in childhood learning.

“The process by which political conventions, values, and beliefs are acquired and internalised in any society.”

"People develop their political beliefs and political values through a lifelong process known as political socialisation.(kataria et al & Javaid 2017)

The family has a significant influence on political participation for a number of reasons. The primary advantage is that it exposes young people to political and social conventions and values, which motivates them to get involved. Furthermore, it changes political identities and structures, which aids young people in comprehending the political landscape. For example if their parents consistently vote for the same party they ultimately vote for that party . The former is supported by the numerous studies that show a high degree of consistency between parents and their children in terms of political preferences, party affiliation, attitudes, and behaviours. Political socialisation is largely influenced by the family conversation environment.(Momen, Ishaq et al & Hamid 2017) The process of political socialisation is crucial because it aids in the comprehension of the political system and how it functions, which in turn shapes people's attitudes and behaviours and promotes the fundamental stability and changes.(Masood & Adnan 2021)

classroom activities are defined as those related to politics and democracy that motivate young people to participate in political activities, such as debates, inside the school setting and to follow news on the media. Classroom activities in particular help students develop their civic and political knowledge, which in turn improves their capacity to engage in politics. Norms among peers the degree to which young people believe that their peers value political activism and current events awareness is known as peer norms. (Memon , 2018)

Political parties are organisations that gather people behind a common set of beliefs, concerns, and goals. In many nations, parties play a crucial role in the political process. They set political and policy agendas, select candidates, manage election campaigns, and monitor the behaviour of their elected representatives. By acting as a bridge between the people and the government, political parties allow citizens to have a say in how their nation is managed. Political parties can play a significant role in supporting democratic norms in transitional countries.

The only way to get the opinions of common people into the assemblies is through political parties. People are impacted by the sense of political impasse this produces. Parties are unquestionably a crucial component of the modern democratic system. There is more to a political party than a loose association of people. In order to differentiate a political party from any oligarchic party, its members must be arranged according to particular values or interests. All of the members of a political party need to be close and acquainted with one another. A party's leaders must work to increase the number of

individuals who support them and give legitimacy to the group of people who make decisions. Ultimately, To implement its plans and objectives or to protect and further its specific interests, a party must employ constitutional means to take control of the government. Although various organisations may have several objectives, the main objective of a political party is to The primary objective is to take part in politics by electing representatives to any public or legislative body. (Fareed, Raiz & Muzaffar 2019)

To spread or influence political thought and to run for any elected public office or membership in a legislative body, a group of citizens, or a mixture of these affiliations, is called a party. Political parties run for office with the goal of winning in order to manage government institutions. In elections, which are held in every democratic system and in which the candidates represent the party, the electorate uses its voting power to select the candidate of their choice. The political party with the most seats forms a unified government by resolving the collective action problem and seizing control of the administration.

A government constituted by multiple parties is known as a coalition government. In a democratic society, political parties create a balance between their support and demands, including the expression and aggregation of interests. In today's complex culture, parties play a crucial role in the connection between a nation's government and its people. (Akhtar, 2011). With the motto "justice, humanity, and self-reliance," Imran Khan established the PTI as a socio-political organisation in April 1996. PTI was viewed as a new third force in the country's two-party system when it entered the 1997 election. The party failed to obtain even one seat because of its inexperience, lack of a base in the local power system, and inadequate party organisation. Instead of advancing the party's political agenda, Imran Khan, the leader, frequently appeared in the media and denounced government policies in an effort to increase the party's support. Consequently, Imran Khan was only able to secure one seat for the PTI in the 2002 elections.

PTI initially earned some political clout in 2011 when it spoke out against the nation's unchecked corruption culture and the deterioration of ties between Pakistan and the US. The Pakistani youth's reaction to the PTI during its 2011 rally in Lahore demonstrated both the party's potential as a new political force in the nation and their desperation from the country's established political parties.⁶ With the help of the youth, Imran Khan was voted the nation's most popular leader by 68% of the populace.

PTI created the idea of "new Pakistan," or "Naya Pakistan." It will be modelled after the Islamic State of Madina of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and is founded on equality. Imran Khan's reputation as a cricket star who won the 1992 World Cup was already recognised by the Pakistani population, which is another important factor.

The Pakistani political party, PTI, has effectively utilized electronic and social media to disseminate its ideology and appeal to a diverse support base. The party's transparent records and transparent charity hospital, Sahukat Khanum Cancer Hospital, have given Imran Khan an advantage over established political leadership. PTI's social media campaign, which included 30 volunteers and a 500,000-member Facebook page, generated 100,000 daily hits and 500,000 daily hits.

PMLN's Facebook page continued to earn 1200 views every day, despite PTI's successful usage of social media forcing its opponents PPP and PMLN to improve their social media tactics. Furthermore, PTI candidates were communicating directly with their followers on Twitter for the first time in the country's electoral history. This direct contact greatly reduced the influence of print and electronic media journalists in setting the party

agenda, since the candidates were in charge of their own campaigns using their more than 3 million Pakistani Twitter followers. Social engagement between like-minded individuals who were staunch PTI supporters was made easier by this aggressive use of social media.

The first public test of PTI following such aggressive use of social media and anticorruption themes was the 2013 general elections, however the party did not achieve the landslide victory they claimed. It could win 7 reserved seats and 28 general seats in the national assembly while 65% seats in provincial assembly in KPK.

PTI surpassed the PPP to become the second-largest party in the National Assembly, behind the PMLN, despite the fact that the outcome did not reach the "Tsunami" that the party had hoped for. The average margin of victory was as low as 27% in the 76 National Assembly seats where PTI came in second.²² Because the PTI's victory margin in several constituencies was so slim – roughly 1.4% – the party accused the PMLN of falsifying the results.²³ The PMLN's powerful mandate, which allowed it to establish a one-party government, added to the PTI's worries.

Instead of being in the parliament to monitor the policies and operations of the one-party government, PTI took part in lengthy marches, protests, sit-ins, strikes, and street agitations. PTI launched a massive campaign in response to electoral interference in the general elections held in May 2013. They asserted that the PMLN government had stolen the mandate of their party. As a result, the protest began in four phases in four different locations around the country.

- On May 11, 2014, the PTI held the first protest march in Islamabad, where they called for the reopening of the four constituencies. They threatened to demonstrate every Friday in front of the Pakistan Election Commission office until that point.
- During the second protest parade, which was held in Faisalabad on May 24, 2014, Imran Khan spoke more harshly about the government, questioned its electoral triumph, and promised the next Jalsa in Sialkot.
- At the third PTI jalsa, which took place in Sialkot on June 7, 2014, Imran Khan charged that the judiciary was complicit in election tampering. (Hassan, 2022)

In 2018 elections Imran Khan gain the support of youth and win the elections When the former cricket star of Pakistan took office in 2018, he promised a "naya Pakistan." Khan pledged to eradicate corruption, establish Pakistan as a major economic force, and bring about a period of sound administration. The middle class in Pakistan was captivated by his claims. The masses, who are tired of the old governing class, have responded well to Khan's views on nepotism, terrorism, and corruption in Pakistani politics. Despite the narrow majority, Khan emerged victorious in the 2018 general elections. Pakistan's strong military establishment, which has historically influenced the nation's politics, was credited with his triumph.

On February 9, 2024, a supporter passes a poster of Pakistan's imprisoned leader, former Prime Minister Imran Khan, at his party headquarters. But his popularity was rekindled in 2022 when he was removed from office by a legislative vote of no confidence. Khan's fans sympathised with him when he claimed that his removal was the result of a plot supported by the US. The United States rejected the claim. His populist base was also enticed by his orthodox Islamic rhetoric. Rare scenes of PTI supporters fighting with police in May 2023 after Khan's temporary arrest were seen on Pakistani streets. Even when he was imprisoned in August of last year and found guilty in a number of corruption and criminal charges, his popularity persisted.

As security forces press down on demonstrators demanding his release, imprisoned former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has urged his supporters to “fight till the end.” Supporters of Imran Khan who made it to D-Chowk in Islamabad’s Red Zone—where the majority of government buildings are situated—were subjected to live fire and tear gas by security officers. According to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, the army was sent into the Red Zone following the citation of Article 245 of the constitution. To date, about 4,000 demonstrators have been taken into custody. The Interior Ministry reports that since Monday, battles with PTI members have resulted in the deaths of several security service personnel and the injuries of dozens more. Khan is facing more than 150 criminal cases and has been incarcerated for more than a year. However, his party has characterised the charges as politically driven, and he is still well-liked. (siddiqui , 2024)

The findings of the study analysis that the populist tactics and emotive appeals, PTI has influenced political identities, especially among young people and under-represented groups. Political socialisation in Pakistan has been greatly impacted by PTI’s successful social media initiatives in rallying support and building a strong party brand. The effect of Imran Khan’s leadership style on political action and involvement among PTI’s supporters, with a focus on the emotional bond his rhetoric fosters

Conclusion

The political process has continued over the last ten years for the first time in Pakistan’s history, with encouraging trends that boost confidence in democracy. Two democratic governments have concluded their five-year terms, despite the loss of two prime ministers during this period. Even though practically every political party at every level made numerous accusations of cheating and unfairness in the 2013 and 2018 general elections, the parties also provided the PTI an opportunity to form a government and carry on the nation’s democratic process. Political leaders that support Pakistan’s democratic process are mature. Social media has played a significant influence in accelerating grassroots political socialisation. In Pakistan, social media has played a significant role in accelerating grassroots political socialisation. The print and electronic media have been crucial in raising national awareness. The most significant developments in Pakistan are the involvement of women and youth. This will fortify the nation’s institutions. Pakistan’s democratic process would only be strengthened by free and fair elections; otherwise, the public would lose faith in the institutions and democratic process.

For 34 of its 68 years, or half of its life, Pakistan has been plagued by internal political instability, including regime instability, political emergencies, and constitutional impasses. Pakistan has endured far higher levels of long-term volatility than East Asia and post-Partition India. Lack of experienced leadership, discord among the state’s main institutions, difficult relations between the federal and provincial governments, pervasive corruption, mistrust of politicians, a strong bureaucracy, and a crisis of governance are some of the urgent threats to Pakistani democracy.

Recommendations

Internal Democracy

Hold frequent intra-party elections and create clear nomination procedures. Internal matters should be solved through negotiations.

Engagement Platforms

Provide avenues for constituents and elected officials to communicate and debate political matters.

Youth Involvement

Through education and community service, actively include young people in political processes. Establish local training facilities to inform the public about political engagement and election-related skills.

Public Awareness Campaigns

Hold public gatherings and seminars to increase understanding of party beliefs and national issues.

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