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RESEARCH PAPER

Role of Media in Political Polarization: Impacts on Democracy in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the researcher recognized the underlying causes of polarization & extremism in Pakistan and their impact on Democratic Institutions and role of Media in this regard. This article explores the relationship of polarization with religious extremism and gives an insight on a variety of issues like intolerance and exceeding religious violence in Pakistan society. This is the mixed method approach by using content analysis and surveys. Polarization has a direct relationship with the negative development of religious extremism & also direct impact on democratic values, norms and institutions. This article argues that without tackling the issues of polarization & extremism, it is very difficult to become advance & modern nation. It ends with some suggestions to address the increasing polarization & extremism in the society.

| **KEYWORDS** | Medeia, Political Polarization, Politics, Media Framing, Democracy |

Introduction

Polarization explains the phenomenon in which the human population is divided into different groups within society. This phenomenon is generally rising in every part of the world, in developed states like US & Europe as well. World governments show special concern & largely focus on this issue to curb its roots in society. High polarization may lead to high disintegration of the society. The polarization in Pakistan has a long history that is entrenched in its roots since birth. Initially, Pakistani society remained divided over the ethnicity & linguistic issues between the east & west wings. Then, after the fall of Dhaka, sectarianism began to flourish within society. The Afghan war has had serious consequences for us till now. The process of Islamisation by Zia's regime added another fuel to the fire (Muzaffar, Khan, & Karamat, 2017). The rise of militants like the Taliban, TTP, etc. in contemporary society, are the main agents through which society is divided (Yaseen, & Muzaffar, M. 2018). Political leaders also used public sentiments as a tool for their interests. Hate & bizarre language are new norms for addressing the opponents. Deleterious polarization has divided our society into mutually mistrustful "us & them" groups, which is harming social cohesion, social identity & our social bond. Terrorism, societal division on ideological beliefs & religious intolerance directly affected democracy, which promotes cohesion, cooperation & safety of society. Power outages, unemployment, poverty, injustice, nepotism, sectarianism, and corruption are all factors that make people frustrated and push them to a hateful lifestyle. All of these factors affected the democratic institutions & processes directly or indirectly.

Political Polarization

Political polarization is the divergence of political parties & democratic systems towards the ideological extremes. There are many different causes or reasons quoted by political scientists for polarization. Some political scientists argue that divergence on a broad range of issues & the crises in government policies is putting society into pernicious polarization. However, other political scientists think that polarization occurs when there is an ideological division or clash on issues related to religion, ideological & politics. Traditionally, society has remained divided along religious, ethnic, linguistic, cultural & provincial lines. However, political developments of the last decade have added a new dimension, which divided society into political lines. Political party affiliations are now determining social identity & national integration. Non-stop smearing of political rivals may be the new normal but it has serious consequences on society, blaming each other on every issue & disrepute by associating with scandals are new tactics used by politicians to get popularity (Lodhi 2022)

Public sentiments have been exploited by every party for winning the popular mandate while doing nothing to alleviate their problems & sufferings when assuming power. Ironically, Politicians use popular mandate only when they have to show popular power to power players in Pakistan's politics (establishment). When they're in power they did nothing for the welfare of society or the population. They only used the population as an instrument for mere dominance in the establishment. The culture nurtured by political elites in society, especially in the young population cannot be termed democratic in any way, rather is more autocratic, intolerant, uncompromising & non-democratic. The egoistic interpretation of the constitution to satisfy self-fulfilling prophecy & derogatory attitude towards the state institutions, propagating anarchy & bloody revolution has reached unbearable limits. Defaming state institutions to get only their political ends causes weakening in national integration & peril to civil war.

Media and Political Polarization

The media plays a critical role in shaping public opinion and influencing political discourse in Pakistan. However, in recent years, there has been growing concern about the impact of media on political polarization, extremism, and its impact on democracy in the country. One of the key ways in which the media has contributed to political polarization and extremism is by providing a platform for extremist and divisive voices. This includes both traditional media outlets, such as newspapers and television channels, as well as social media platforms, where extremist voices can spread their message to a wider audience.

In Pakistan, there is a history of media outlets promoting a particular political agenda, and this has only intensified in recent years. Many media outlets are owned by powerful individuals or groups with their own political interests, which can lead to biased reporting and the promotion of a particular agenda.

This has led to a situation where people are increasingly polarized and divided along political and religious lines. Extremist groups have also used the media to spread their message of hate and intolerance, which has contributed to the rise of violent extremism in the country. The impact of media polarization and extremism on democracy in Pakistan has been significant. It has led to a situation where people are less willing to engage in constructive political dialogue and are more likely to resort to violence and extremism to achieve their political goals.

Furthermore, the media's role in shaping public opinion has also impacted the country's democratic institutions. When the media promotes a particular political agenda, it can lead to a situation where the government is less accountable to the people and is more likely to engage in corrupt practices.

In conclusion, the media has played a significant role in political polarization and extremism in Pakistan. The impact of this trend on democracy in the country has been significant, and it is crucial to address this issue if Pakistan is to strengthen its democratic institutions and promote greater social cohesion

Historical background and Causes

Pakistan came into being as an independent & sovereign state on 14th August 1947. To say that there was a diversion of Objective resolution as compared to Quaid's view of Pakistan is wrong. It is mainly due to unawareness & illiteracy about the history & constitution. After careful analysis between Objective resolution & Mithaq-e-Madinah, the researcher finds that there is no distinction between these two constitutions, as there is no difference between the two of them. It is sufficiently clarified that the speech of Muhammad Ali Jinnah delivered before the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11th August 1947 was not against Islamic principles and did not propagate secularism, it was the same as prescribed under Mithaq al-Madinah; the first Constitution of the first Islamic State created under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Mukhtar 2018). The ideology of Pakistan plays an important role in creating a society that is vibrant and emotional for ethnic Islam, deliberately due to reasons. Middle-class society embraces all the absurd & irrational concepts of Ideology that were interpreted by religious elites. The Objectives Resolution was the first success of the religious elite to divide the citizens on a religious basis. The ideology of Pakistan was interpreted by a religious elite to establish a religious-oriented society. Every political leader used religion for their political quest.

In the 1950s, Jamaat-e-Islami, the most prominent religious party, start using Islam to promote exclusionary state policies. It was evident from history that famous liberal leaders end up taking refuge in Islamic slogans. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto also uses emotive religious phrases like Musawat-e-Muhammadi or Islamic Musawat as a part of their political rhetoric to win mass support for the socialist policies of his government. After Bhutto, Military dictator Zia-ul-Haq also use the same tactics to use religion in politics for their interests. He was considered the grandfather of the Islamization policy in Pakistan. He changed the tolerant Islamic society to the hi-jacked one by Sunni & Wahhabi commanded by the Taliban, the Mujahideen who fought a war against the communist regime. The impact of the Iranian revolution of 1979 on Pakistani society was obvious as it motivated the Shias to design an organization called Tehrik-e-Nifaz-Fiqah-e-Jaffria, the movement for the imposition of Shia law, they lambasted the president's policy. Participation in War against Terror has serious consequences as terrorism & polarization have reached an unprecedented level.

Current State of the issue

In the contemporary sense, notably from the last decade, polarization rises in society due to political affiliations. In a polarized society, there is no space for accepting another's opinion. Now society reached that level where they want to cut the throat of their antagonists or opponents. Politicians criticized each other without any evidence of being corrupt, crooks & dishonest. They used vulgar & bizarre language at rallies & seminars against opponents, which affected the youth as they follow their leaders blindly without any facts or figures. In a polarized society, there is no need for facts & figures as blind

followers understand & illustrated the only things which are said by leaders without any evidence. Another reason for political extremism is the existence of populism in politics. Some leaders are charismatic or have Teflon qualities as nothing negative sticks to them. Their supporters are willing to discard facts & provide every possible explanation to cover their leader's moves. The impact of this type of politics is even on children directly. Children in schools don't make friends from parties their parents are not baking. Under one roof, families diverged due to the political affiliations of their specific leaders. Discussing politics in homes is a typical habit, but now people avoid doing this because they know they emotionally pertain to it, which will create chaos & divergence. Intolerance & cultic culture is being nourished by political leaders in society. They deliver speeches based on hatred, intolerance, and immoral language which is perceived by their followers without knowing their validity, blindly trusting them. As a result, many opponents call Imran Khan's narratives mainly based on false rhetoric and cock-and-bull stories. Imran Khan promotes intolerance and cultism in society, which increases polarization enormously. Power outages, unemployment, poverty, injustice, nepotism, sectarianism, and corruption are all factors that make people frustrated and push them to a hateful lifestyle.

Literature Review

Mukhtar, Ishaque and Tanvir (2022) analyzed the Political polarization & challenges of National integration in Pakistan. In this research study, the researcher did qualitative research by using content analysis. The researcher identifies that traditional society is remained divided along religion, creed, race & ethnicity, etc. But in contemporary politics, political affiliations are determining our national identity & cohesion. Today, society is divided along political lines. The tinge or influence of political exploitation of religion has added another fuel to the fire. The culture nurtured by political elites & parties cannot be democratic by any means, it is autocratic, non-democratic & intolerant. Defaming state institutions to gain popularity & mandate is going at an unprecedented level. Lust of power at all costs has dented or damaged our national identity & values. The researchers suggest that strong social contract between state & society is needed but it is sad to express that this social contract is largely ignored & our society feels ostracized due to multiple reasons like poor governance, rampant corruption & lack of development, etc.

Karamat , Muzaffar and Shah (2019) analyzed the Politics of Religious Extremism in Pakistan: An Analysis. In this research study, the connection between Islamic values and country policies has been carefully connected to the foundations that create political legitimating and the basic nature of a country. The researcher used content analysis & observations. Islam performs a crucial part in the social fabric of Pakistan & has been integrated as a guiding principle for constitutional procedures & governmental system of the government. But sectarian violence & extremism poses implicit stress on future improvements. All religious parties suggest an Islamic socio-political & financial order for Pakistan but they have not been able to generate a lawful & constitutional document as a substitute for the current system. All Islamic parties have poor electoral status. No, any party is able to form its own government. Quaid-e-Azam mentioned in his speech that religious values are a personal matter of the people & defined the equal rights of the religion. Islamic political parties should cooperate on federal or provincial levels with national and local political parties to eliminate religious extremism in Pakistan.

Ali, Waraich, Alam and Iqbal (2020) analyzed the Polarization and Rise of Religious Extremism in Pakistan. In this research study, the relationship of polarization with religious extremism gives an insight into a variety of issues like intolerance and exceeding religious violence in Pakistan society. Crises in government policies &

ideological division of parties are two ways that put society into polarization. There is no doubt that Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a modern liberal leader. He also believed in the coexistence and equality of all the citizens of the state. This is a qualitative research based on primary cum secondary sources. After data collection, thematic analysis has been made to make a view on polarization and religious extremism in Pakistan. Polarization has a direct relationship with the negative development of religious intolerance and religious extremism. This article argues that without tackling the issues of polarization it is very difficult to win the war against militant religious extremism and terrorism in the country. It ends with some suggestions to address the increasing polarization in society.

Basit, Hashmi, Haroon and Fatima (2021) analyzed the Religious extremism in Pakistan: A review paper. In this research study, researchers did the qualitative research by using thematic content analysis. The researchers argue that It is necessary to study front-line countries such as Pakistan in order to understand how to successfully address the problem of extremism. Researchers are aware of theological elements. Religious fundamentalist groups have always targeted and harassed ethnic minorities. Unless the state intervenes, the tendency will continue, with the state giving only Sunni living space while restricting minorities' religious ideas and freedom of expression. Pakistan's most significant national security challenge is extremism.

Material and Methods

Mixed method approach has been applied by using primary & secondary sources. The researcher conducts surveys. Additionally, the content analysis has been performed by investigating press conferences, speeches and policy statements of Pakistani political elites, government institutions and society. According to Jackson, S.L. (2011) The essence of survey method can be explained as "questioning individuals on a topic or topics and then describing their responses". Content analysis is a qualitative research tool or technique widely used to analyze content and its features. It is an approach used to quantify qualitative information by sorting data and comparing different pieces of information to summarize it into useful information. The target population for the surveys is comprised of international relations and political science experts & students. The last part of the study contains policy recommendations for relevant government institutions for enhancing national integration & bridge the gap in the polarized societies.

Research Design

The research design for this study on the role of media in political polarization and its impact on democracy in Pakistan involves a mixed-methods approach. This approach combines qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data and provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Qualitative Data Collection: Qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The selection of participants involved purposive sampling, targeting individuals with diverse backgrounds and perspectives related to media, politics, and democracy in Pakistan. The sample may include journalists, politicians, activists, and members of the general public.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders, such as journalists and politicians, to explore their insights and experiences regarding media's role in political polarization and its impact on democratic processes. The interviews conducted for an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, attitudes, and beliefs. Probing

questions will be used to delve into specific aspects of media content, media bias, and their influence on political polarization and democracy.

Focus group discussions organized with members of the general public to gather diverse opinions and experiences. The discussions facilitated an interactive exchange of ideas and allow participants to share their viewpoints on media's role in shaping political attitudes and opinions. Group dynamics will provide an opportunity to explore differing perspectives and understand the complexities of political polarization in Pakistan.

Qualitative Data Analysis: Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data collected from interviews and focus group discussions. The data was transcribed, coded, and categorized into meaningful themes and patterns. This process involved iterative reading of the data, identification of codes, and grouping of related codes into themes. The themes interpreted and analyzed to uncover key insights, perceptions, and narratives related to media, political polarization, and democracy in Pakistan.

Quantitative Data Collection: Quantitative data was collected through surveys administered to a representative sample of the population. The survey was designed based on established scales and items relevant to media consumption, perceptions of media bias, political attitudes, and democratic processes. The sample size was determined using appropriate statistical techniques to ensure adequate power and representativeness.

The survey distributed using various methods, including online surveys, paper-based questionnaires, and face-to-face interviews. The data collection process involve reaching out to individuals from diverse demographic backgrounds, including different age groups, genders, educational levels, and geographical locations. This approach aims to capture a broad range of perspectives and ensure the generalizability of findings.

Quantitative Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations calculated to summarize the characteristics of the sample and the variables under investigation. Inferential statistical techniques, including correlation analysis and regression analysis, used to examine the relationships between independent and dependent variables. Mediation and moderation analyses may be conducted to explore the underlying mechanisms and potential moderating factors that influence the relationship between media, political polarization, and democracy.

The mixed-methods research design allows for a comprehensive exploration of the research topic, combining the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data provide rich insights and in-depth understanding, while the quantitative data allow for statistical analysis and generalizability. By triangulating findings from multiple sources, this research design strengthens the validity and reliability of the study's conclusions and contributes to a more holistic understanding of the role of media in political polarization and its impact on democracy in Pakistan.

Independent Variables

Media Content: This variable refers to the nature and content of media coverage, including news articles, television programs, and social media posts, related to political events and issues in Pakistan. It captures the various types of information and narratives presented by the media.

Media Bias: This variable examines the perceived bias of media outlets in favor of specific political parties, ideologies, or interest groups. It assesses the extent to which media

sources are perceived to be impartial or slanted in their coverage, and how this bias may influence political polarization.

Media Platforms: This variable considers the different platforms through which media is disseminated, such as television, print media, online news portals, and social media. It acknowledges that different platforms have varying degrees of influence and reach, which can impact the formation and spread of political opinions.

Dependent Variables

Political Polarization: This variable measures the degree to which individuals hold extreme and opposing political views or align themselves with specific ideological positions. It captures the level of division and polarization within society regarding political beliefs and opinions.

Public Opinion: This variable assesses the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of the general public towards political issues and parties. It reflects the collective sentiment and preferences of the population, which can be influenced by media content and media bias.

Democracy: This variable examines the functioning of democratic processes, including citizen participation, freedom of expression, and accountability. It assesses the impact of media-driven political polarization on the democratic system, considering factors such as trust in institutions, electoral behavior, and civic engagement.

The independent variables (media content, media bias, and media platforms) are hypothesized to influence the dependent variables (political polarization, public opinion, and democracy). Through the research design, the study aims to explore how media-related factors contribute to or mitigate political polarization and examine the subsequent effects on public opinion and the democratic system in Pakistan.

Results and Discussion

The researcher does content analysis of several articles, investigate press conferences, newspapers & policy statements of political elites. The present time's polarization in Pakistan has made very difficult to differentiate between manipulation & guidance. Gradual absence of reason & evidence from debates has widened the gap between society. Illiteracy of facts & realities about leaders causing major conflicting lines in contemporary society. The researcher analyzed the study of Imran Khan & Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) after ouster of Imran Khan in April, 2022. Khan is convinced that the military establishment is the key actor in orchestrating the prevailing political conflict between his party and coalition of political groups that make up the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). Imran Khan had been struggling to stay in power as its allies betrayed to join the opposition parties that had joined forces against the government. After ouster of Khan, Pakistan People party (PPP)'s chairperson Bilawal Bhutto had congratulated the whole nation & said "as for the first time in the history of the country, a no-confidence motion has succeeded and we have made history", claiming that the "selected" who had proved himself to be an "undemocratic burden" on the country saw the end of his rule. The conflict between supporters of different political parties continued after Khan's ouster. Imran Khan's anti-American narrative acts as catalyst for resurging popularity of Khan. The main takeaway from Mr. Khan's speech in Islamabad Parade ground Jalsa was that there was an international conspiracy against his government by internal actors. He waved a letter in front of the hundreds of thousands present and said

that he would show this evidence to anyone off the record. This acts as shocking event in Pakistan's politics.

Dissident members from PTI has been mocked in public being mocked by PTI supporters & sometimes they retaliate & there starts a conflict between them. The use of religion is also very evident in this case as Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) is major party in PDM. They used seminary institution's students as protestors against any government or institution. Illiteracy, lack of political knowledge & wrong interpretation by Religious elites are the factors which causes more diversion in society in context of religious extremism. Crackdown by government on opposing protestors also evident in recent years. Who want to challenge the State's writ, then he or she will face consequences because in democratic society, there is no space for radicals or extremists. They will be tackled by law enforcement agencies for providing peace. Protestors attack on infrastructure & specific institutions also evident during recent years. Some journalists called Imran Khan as Charismatic leader or person with teflon quality as nothing negative stuck to them. Ongoing political struggle is basically between Khan & system. There are now no secrets of Military role in politics as all nation now aware of their interference in political governments. Recent derogatory attacks against Army martyrs had been simply reckless and disgusting with no such precedence elsewhere in the world. The ongoing conflict between Khan & PDM, divided the society into either support PTI (us) or PDM (them). Believe in leader's rhetoric without evidence, Intolerance & negating others point of view is the main factor behind today polarization in society. The lust for power at the expense of the social structure of the society targets the likelihood of national cohesiveness. The most prominent ramification comes in the face of political instability. This makes it hard for state institutions to function in their best capacity. The efficiency of the already paralyzed institutions declines further. Provided different political parties rule different provinces, a center ground on policy matters is impossible to achieve even among the coalition member parties.

The researcher employed survey method technique to collect data or information from population. The researcher conduct surveys from International relations' experts & students of KFUEIT university. The goal of this sampling is to obtain result from those who understands the dynamics of the Polarization & extremism. Survey questionnaires sent to respondents through email. The survey is filled out by approximately 50 respondents.to whom the researcher asked closed ended questions in order to gain their opinions, attitudes & perceptions about topic. The researcher carefully crafted these questions to determine the causes of polarization and extremism and their impact on democratic institutions. The survey also provides recommendations on how to curtail the gap between societies.

What do you think are the main factors contributing to the increase in political polarization in Pakistan?

Legend:
- Conflicting Ideologies
- Political Party Affiliation
- Ethnic, linguistic & culture
- All of these

53.5%
16.3%
30.2%

This pie chart demonstrates that 54% of respondents think that main cause for increase in political polarization in Pakistan are the conflicting ideologies of people as they all follow different beliefs or ideas. Negating other point of views & intolerance causes main divergence within society. Political party affiliations, ethnicity, linguistic & culture also causes dividend in society. While 30% of respondents believe that political party affiliation is the sole cause of a polarized society, it is important to note that in the contemporary sense, politics plays a central role in dividing societies.

What are the main factors for Religious extremism in Pakistan:
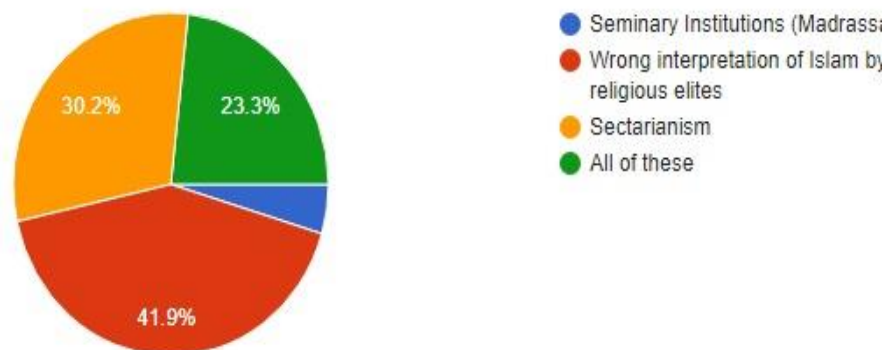
This figure shows that 42% respondents think extremism is only due to wrong interpretation of Islam by religious elites. Religious political leaders & scholars used Islam as merely tool to attain their own personal interests. While 30% respondents believe Sectarianism is the only cause of extremism. Radical & fundamentalist approach toward others sects & believes is the main concern for extremism.

Why Democracy not thrive in Pakistani Society?
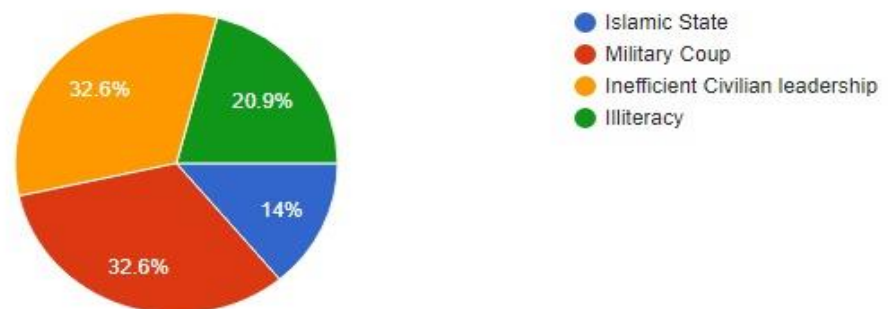
According to constitution of Pakistan, Pakistan is a democratic state. But in Pakistan, democracy not thrive or flourish in Pakistan. 32.6% respondents think Military coups & inefficient civilian leadership are the reasons for not thriving democracy. While 21% thinks illiteracy is the reason for not prospering democracy in Pakistan. 72% of respondents think that political parties are exacerbating political polarization and extremism for their own gains or interests.

Do you think that blasphemy laws are good for a democratic society?
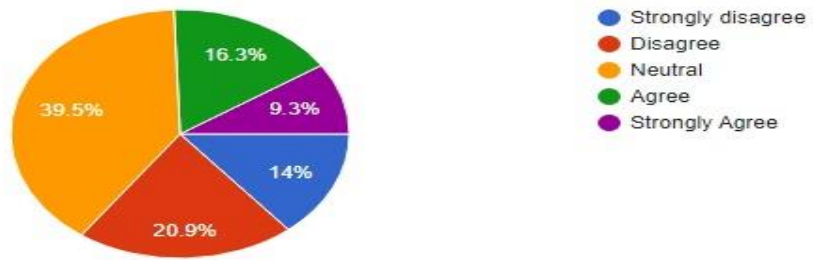
39.5% respondents remain neutral on the question of Blasphemy law in democratic society while 20.9% said, Blasphemy laws are not good for democratic society. Because freedom of expression is in clash with blasphemy law.

According to some Human Rights Activists, Blasphemy laws are misuse against minorities?
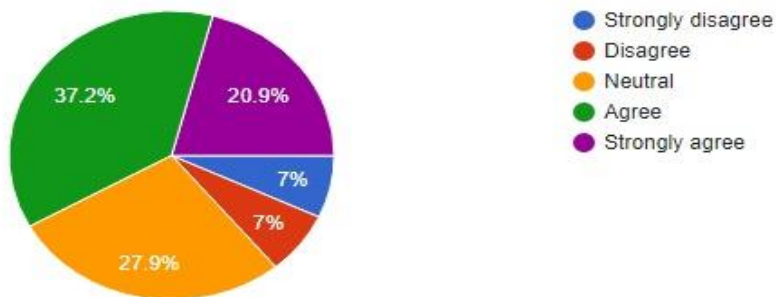

In this pie chart, 37% respondents agree on the misuse of blasphemy laws by majority against minority while 27.9% remain neutral, because due to Islamic society many respondents not want to convey their point of view due to societal pressure.

In your opinion, what are the underlying causes that promote unethical & misbehavior in Pakistani Youth?
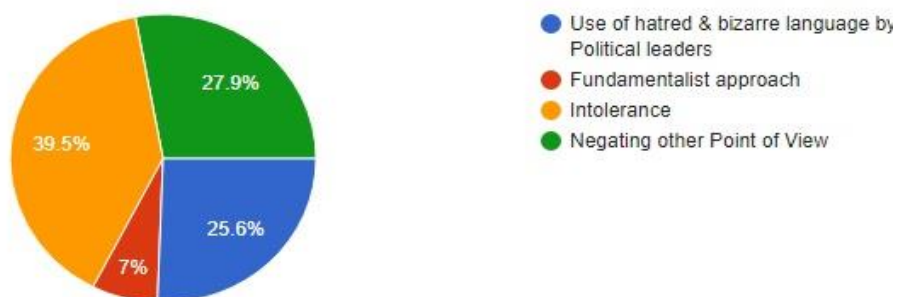
In above figure, 39.5% thinks intolerance are the underlying causes that promote unethical & misbehavior in Pakistani Youth while 25.6% thinks, youth follow their leaders who use bizarre & hatred language during public gathering. According to 34% respondents, Politics & intolerance are causes most division in contemporary society of Pakistan.

In your opinion, Do political leaders work for the benefit of people, or do they just use them as a means to gain power?
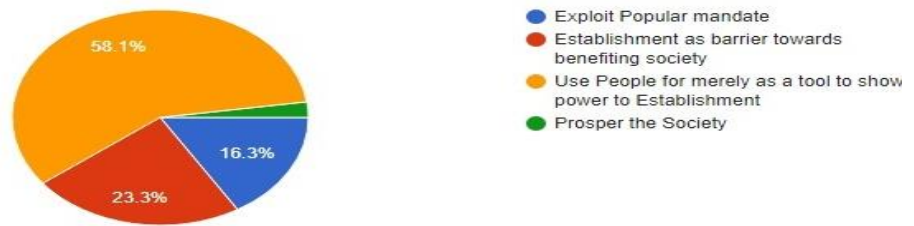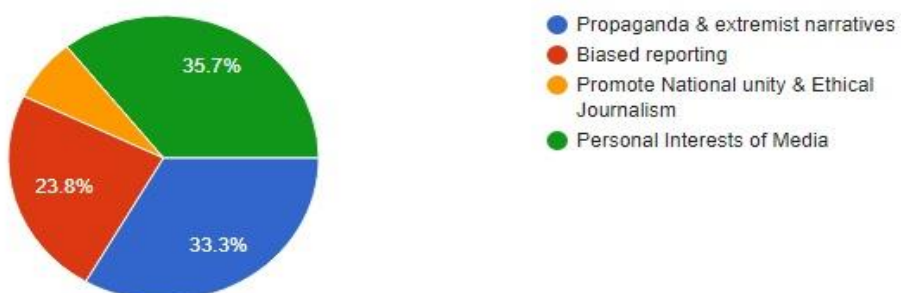

In above figure, 58% respondents think that political parties merely use people as tool to show dominance & power to establishment and did nothing for progress of society while 23% thinks establishment act as a barrier towards the progress of society. According to many scholars, Pakistan is considered a deep or security state where the military plays a significant role. They argue that the state operates primarily through the military, using democracy as a symbolic facade to conceal their actual system. 43% respondents think Islamization policy by Zia was the main breeding ground for sectarianism & extremism in Pakistan. 48% think blind following by people of certain leaders is due to the continuous hopelessness from other party' governments as they did nothing & provide nothing except hopelessness. Politicians only use popular mandate to gain power or show their mass popularity to power players. Thus, they only act as a puppet in Pakistan.

How Polarization & Extremism impact the Democratic Institutions?

In above pie chart, 55.8% respondent think Polarization & extremism directly impact the democratic institutions, undermining democratic norms & values and also national integrity of Nation. This is because protests by masses or radicals pose a threat to institutions by acting as hindrances or barriers to their proper role.

In your opinion, what role media play in polarization & extremism in Pakistan?

In above figure, 35.7% respondents demonstrate that media only propagates their personal interests. They only want PR of their channels so that they can earn huge sum of money. While 33.3% respondents think media only convey propaganda or extremist narratives. Media only shows negative views.

55.8% respondents suggested that political & religious leaders, educational institutions & media all play role in bridging the gap between polarized society. Illiteracy & intolerance can be removed by educational reforms or propagating true spirit of religion in population. Islam is the religion of Peace. While 11.6% respondents think only media & educational institutions play role in bridging the gap within society.

In this figure, researcher ask for addressing the political polarization & extremism. 62.8% respondents demonstrate that constructive dialogue between political leaders & parties, Social cohesion & harmony, promote education and tolerance are all ways to address the issue of polarization & extremism.

Conclusion

In contemporary scenario, polarization & extremism is at on its peak due to political instability. Religion as always played role in politics but in 75 years, none of the religious party gained 2/3rd majority in elections. Their efficiency is better when they develop a regional and national political alliance or when they enjoy the benefits of an army regime. All Islamic parties suggest an Islamic socio-political and financial order for Pakistan. They have not been able to generate a distributed lawful and constitutional document as a substitute for the current constitutional and judicial system. The religious parties that have connection with mosques and madrassas seem to develop more political power. Polarization & extremism must be eradicated from society as they are harmful for democratic society. It is time to introduce reforms in the political system and institutions of Pakistan. The researcher suggested the national integration policies for social cohesion

& strong social contract between state & society. The politics of vendetta, hatred and revenge should be replaced by respect, reconciliation, and accommodation. All the political parties should immediately devise a code of conduct, whereby hate speech discrimination and use of abusive language should stop forthwith. No party should take any action which would destabilize the country and pollute the political environment as these have a direct bearing on wellbeing off masses. All the political parties for the sake of larger national interests must forget their political differences and help the country out of the current economic quagmire. The scholars should convey the true spirit of Islam, discourage hate and sectarianism and help build a tolerant society through strong messaging of love and affection. The exploitation of religion for any kind of political leverage should be discouraged. Strong and focused efforts are required for ensuring economic security, and prosperity, and inculcating national pride which would contribute to enhancing national integration.

The researcher faces limitations in Rahim Yar Khan as there is no any political leader who better understand the dynamics & sensitivity of Polarization and extremism in context to International relations. Additionally, the researcher does not have any contact with leaders from upper Punjab. Therefore, the researcher has examined and analyzed policies, speeches, and articles on polarization as an alternative approach.

The researcher recommends a multi-disciplinary approach, covering disciplines such as international relations, political science, media studies, and sociology, for future researchers seeking a deeper understanding of polarization and extremism in Pakistan. Researchers should Collaborate with policymakers, civil society organizations, and local communities working on issues related to polarization and extremism. Engaging with stakeholders can help researchers gain firsthand insights, access relevant data, and ensure that research findings are actionable and have real-world impact. Lastly, do not hesitate to explore or write the bitter truth about Pakistan's history and the role of religious leaders and the establishment in the polarization and extremism within society.

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