Media and Political Socialization in Pakistan: A Study of Rural and Urban Areas

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to describe the media interference scenario in the political socialization process of Pakistan. The role of media is not limited to stipulate new skills but also reinforces the social and cultural change and at the same time contributes in political socialization process. The study is conducted in the provinces of Pakistan including Balochistan, KPK, Punjab, Sindh and the capital city of the state (Islamabad). The multi-stage random sampling method is adopted and the total of 2000 respondents was chosen. 1000 of the respondents are male and 1000 are female and the proportion from each equality is equal like 1000 respondents from urban areas and 1000 respondents from rural areas. The minimum age limit for the respondents was chosen based on the minimum vote casting age limit. The analysis of gathered data is conducted through SPSS and the findings are described in tabular form. The two theories 'Agenda Setting and Knowledge Gap Hypothesis' are combined for evaluating study. Survey method is adopted for the study to collect quantitative data via questionnaire that included 49 questions. For testing hypothesis of the study, Chi-Square tool of statistics is used. The findings revealed that media is among the most influential and effective agents of political socialization and the consumption of different media tools encourage people to participate in political activities. Further, the urban area people are found to be more politically socialized as compare to the people of rural areas. Therefore, easy and equal accessibility of media can make political socialization process more powerful.

Key Words:	**Mass Media, Political Communication, Political Socialization, Political Participation & Political Awareness.**

Introduction

Studies have found that politics and media have significant relationship which is widely studied by researchers over the past few decades and the researchers of both fields including media and political science have equal interest in the topic. While media and communication studies scholars has portrayed media as 'connective tissue' that has an integral role in democratic political process (Gunther & Mughan, 2000). Moreover, political science scholars consider media is context of its dependence on related social systems most importantly on political system, media presents the political and social structure of a community or society (Engesser & Franzetti, 2011). Most of the researchers support the idea of studying

media system in context of its dependence on political and other social systems. This idea is further supported by Hallin and Mancini (2004) as they stated that news media cannot be understood without consideration of understanding political structure of state.

Media has primary function in society in order to provide information and news to the masses. Media educates people about their social, religious, moral rights and obligations as in current times of globalization, more information is provided to the public through mass media and the information includes the healthcare, socialization, entertainment, work, travelling and education (Castells, 2011). The influence of media on societies has increased with the technology advancements over the last five decades. Initially, the post and telegraph were available to facilitate communication, and in current times, magazines, television, radio and internet has changed the communication among individuals and masses (Vickery, 2004). In literature political communication is 'referred to the information process (including opinions, facts, beliefs etc.), exchange, transmission engaged in the course of participation with the activities of institutional politics' (McQuail, 1992). The process in which people learn the values and beliefs of politics is the definition of political socialization (Bardes, Shelly, & Schmidt, 2014).

Political knowledge and participation are interdependent that means the decrease or increase in political knowledge or political participation will relatively impact the other one (Carpini & Keeter 1996). The feeling for possibility of social and political changes is political efficacy and citizens can play a role in bringing change (Kenski & Stroud, 2006). Cox et al. (1998) defined the term in context of political communication as a process of collection of individuals in passive manners in a society so they could be transformed into a group that actively participates to pursue common goals for contribution in politics by a government authoritarian. Moreover, political mobilization is also stated as the inspiring public to express an individual as political actor who can take political actions (Bealy, 1999).

In past, studies have been conducted to identify the influencing agents of political socialization. These agents can include family, political parties, peer groups, educational system and mass media and there are other agents like non-governmental institutions, church and sometimes government itself (Iyengar, 1979). Family has an integral role in providing knowledge about politics and especially parents enhance the political and civic participation of an individual (Cicognani, Zani, Fournier, Gavray, & Born, 2012). One of the first educational environment of an individual is school in which people develop contacts with other individuals other than family members and siblings. There is claim of a researcher that deviant behavior of young people is adopted from their peer groups, like their choice to vote an extremist party, disposition to violence use in politics (Kuhn, 2004). Graber (2006) said that media has crucial role in the process of political socialization. In Pakistani context, most of the public rely on news from TV and the best example of political news influence from TV is the general

elections of 2008 and 2013 (Javaid & Elahi, 2014). There is considerable impact of media on the political development of state and lives of people as at current times on average a teenager spends almost eight hours of a day on different mediums of media (Strasburger, Wilson, & Jordan, 2009).

The participation of citizens is being facilitated by social media in various countries for various democratic processes (Bertot, 2010). New networks of social relations are being increased and created with the help of penetration of social media and internet (Webster, 2014). The voting is being ensured in most of the countries of the world as most effective and common way of political participation (Sides, Shaw, Grossmann, & Lipsitz, 2011). There are number of factors which contribute in the behavior formation of electorates but media is the most important and common mode only in case of availability otherwise party loyalty, personal affiliations and significantly of *'Biradari'* plays important role (Shawar, Durre & Asim, 2012).

Statement of problem

Many researchers have conducted to examine the media effects in specific to the political socialization and in result of past researches findings it is concluded that media has an influence on its audiences but the study is yet to be explored in context of Pakistan in specific to the comparison of rural and urban areas. The design of study is to analyze the media effects on political socialization of people living in urban and rural areas of Pakistan that how people are being politically socialized through media.

Literature review

Political socialization process is considerably important because it helps in understanding political system and its operations and this understanding helps in shaping citizens' attitude and behavior which stimulates the underpinning stability and changes (Marsh, 1971: 453). Furthermore, the concept is considered as the continuous process that occurs in political life of an individual (Hepburn, 1995). Aparaschivei, (2011) has examined the relationship between media usage for election winning and altering the behavior of people for voting. Findings of his study revealed that the role of effective media usage is witnessed for political socialization and winning of political candidate in Romanian presidential elections. Media and political process at international and national levels are connected through political communication and in democracy, people who cannot share their opinion by participating as political leader, can give his opinion by casting vote (Anwar & Jan, 2010). Media also play an integral role in provoking a critical approach among voters to judge the performance of political parties and their leaders (Druckman, 2005).

The direct link of newspaper reading with voting and contacts with political and government officials has been found by McLeod, (1999). Further studies have also concluded that newspaper reading is correlated with different kinds of political participation like voting, displaying the sign of political party, attending rallies of the candidate whom they support and money donation for their political campaigns (Eveland & Sheufele, 2000). In addition to these proves, Wilkinson, (2006) studied that there is similarity in use of newspaper and TV for political campaigns as there is positive correlation of using these media elements and the political participation of citizens. A study concluded that a person gains political knowledge from the consistent and strong media (Hendriks et al., 2004). Soule, (2001) stated that there was decrease of political interest among youth before emergence of social media and this phenomenon has been of high concern for political parties and their candidates. studies have discussed that the advancement in technology has also powered the media to influence the globalization and democratization (Kaul, 2012).

Kim, (2008) pointed out that investigation of elements importance in terms of media for political socialization is important as it enables to access less or more choices or exposes true information. The author further argued that other communication mediums like electronic, print and social media have also impact but in different manners on the audience because of their presentation nature differences. Chaffee, Ward, and Tipton, (1970) concluded that single most significant base for political knowledge in children is the mass media and it's all outlets. Sultan, Jan and Khan, (2012) used research method of cross-sectional survey in order to find the impact of TV channels on voting attitude and behavior of people and the study concluded that there is great influence of TV in altering and shaping the attitude of people as well as motivates them to play their part in politics by casting their vote. Newspaper is the best sources of political news and information for young adults and children and the source is also the least sought out from the categories of media (Chaffee et al., 1970; Graber, 2002) as with the emergence of internet and technological advancements print media has also converted into electronic forms like e-newspapers, e-magazines, e-journals and e-periodicals.

Bergstorm, (2011) stated about the general election campaign in Swedish. Almost all political parties and the registered candidates for election used social media to present the political manifesto to the general public in order to shape their voting behavior in their support. In that elections, political party of prime minister got 30.6% more votes than the general election of 2006 where they got 20% votes and this increase in votes is because of using social media for general election campaign. Richey, (2008) concluded that a great impact of social networking sites has been seen on the behavior of voters in 2000 national presidential elections in America. Shaheen, (2008) revealed that the sites of social networking have an influence on students' political behavior as social media promotes freedom of expression and democracy.

Tremendous amount of research has been conducted in the field of political communication and media role in it but the area which is yet to be explored is analyzing media effects on political socialization with comparison of rural and urban areas. The possible best has been tried by researcher according to the nature and need of current study to investigate and analyze different aspects and areas to cover in this research which have not already been examined.

Theoretical framework

In this study media effects on political socialization are aimed to explore and it is meant to answer questions like how agenda are set by media and to find out the knowledge gap between people living in rural and urban areas of Pakistan. Knowledge gap hypothesis and agenda setting are developed which would help in analyzing the media impact on process of political socialization in Pakistan. Further, normally socio-economic status is blamed in the knowledge gap hypothesis for knowledge difference among different groups of society and this is visible in society of Pakistan. The countries, where media is private and free, the key aim of media is to earn higher profit through promoting those who are in authority. Further, there is dependency of media on businesses which provide data, funded experts and government which are known as the authority agents. So the wealth and power, both are essential in elections and in result of this media filters the stories and broadcasts only impartial news stories.

Hypotheses

H1: It is more likely that political socialization process of urban area voters is more influenced by media than rural area voters.

H2: It is more likely that all tools of media are easily available in urban areas as compared to rural areas.

Research methodology

As the study was survey-based, so, the quantitative research design was used to collect the data. All participants from Pakistan were treated as the population of the study, whereas 2000 (1000 urban area residence and 1000 rural area residence) (1000 male and 1000 female) participants aged from 18 were selected as the sample of the study from the provinces and capital city of the state as per population ratio through a multi-stage random sampling technique. A self-made questionnaire by researcher comprised of different factors was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was comprised of 49 statements with the categorization of different variables. Respondents were asked to rate the priority of their area on a different point scale ranging from least to highest priority. Collected data were analyzed through SPSS.

Data analysis

On the basis of data analyses following findings were drawn:

Table 1. Distribution of sample according to demographic variables of respondents

Gender		Urban Residence		Rural Residence	
	Gender	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	500	50.0	500	50.0
	Female	500	50.0	500	50.0
Age	From 18 to 24 years	583	58.3	608	60.8
	From 25 to 31 years	227	22.7	242	24.2
	From 32 to 38 years	162	16.2	130	13.0
	From 39 to 45 years	18	1.8	10	1.0
	Upper than 45 years	10	1.0	10	1.0
Province	Baluchistan	60	6.0	60	6.0
	Punjab	530	53.0	530	53.0
	KPK	170	17.0	170	17.0
	Sindh	230	23.0	230	23.0
	Islamabad	10	1.0	10	1.0
Status	Employed	388	38.8	244	24.4
	Un-Employed	612	61.2	756	75.6

The above table showing the distribution of overall sample from rural and urban localities separately according to their gender (male or female), age (18 to upper than 45), province (Baluchistan, Punjab, KPK, Sindh and capital of state Islamabad) and the employment status (Employed and Un-Employed).

Table 2. Crosstabs for the awareness of respondents about politics and source of learning new trends about politics.

	Options	Did you think that you are well-informed about politics?					Total	Chi-Square	P-Value
		Very Much	Much	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all			
	Very Much	56	62	50	87	55	310		
Urban	Much	94	72	40	130	14	350		
area	Sometimes	28	74	12	53	26	193	173.39.000**	
Residents	Rarely	2	8	29	43	13	95		
	Not at all	10	32	1	9	0	52		
	Total	190	248	132	322	108	1000		
	Very Much	22	50	11	70	10	163		
Rural	Much	0	58	40	160	49	307		
area	Sometimes	11	39	62	100	48	260	163.14.000**	
Residents	Rarely	30	11	40	110	40	231		
	Not at all	0	19	10	10	0	39		
	Total	63	177	163	450	147	1000		

The above table showing cross tabulation for the awareness of respondents about politics and president of Pakistan. From the overall sample of urban people 190 said very much aware, 248 respondents said much, 132 said sometimes, 322 said rarely and 108 persons said not at all. On the other 310 people said that media is very much reliable source of learning new trends about politics, 350 said much, 193 said sometimes, 95 said rarely and the remaining 52 persons said not at all. The Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 5% level of significant and the researcher concluded that there is significant association among the attributes i.e. awareness of respondents about politics and source of learning new trends about politics.

Table 3. Crosstabs for the awareness of respondents about politics and role of media in increasing turn-out.

Options		Did you think that you are well-informed about politics?					Total	Chi-Square	P-Value
		Very Much	Much	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all			
Urban area Residents	Very Much	94	125	32	131	62	444		
	Much	36	71	20	87	12	226		
	Sometimes	37	23	51	42	20	173	105.37	0.000**
	Rarely	22	17	20	44	7	110		
	Not at all	1	12	9	18	7	47		
	Total	190	248	132	322	108	1000		
Rural area Residents	Very Much	11	49	61	120	29	270		
	Much	18	39	18	104	24	203		
	Sometimes	1	29	43	74	49	196	109.45	0.000**
	Rarely	11	42	32	54	12	151		
	Not at all	22	18	9	98	33	180		
	Total	63	177	163	450	147	1000		

The above table showing cross tabulation for the awareness of respondents about politics and president of Pakistan. From the overall sample of urban people 190 said very much aware, 248 respondents said much, 132 said sometimes, 322 said rarely and 108 persons said not at all. On the other 444 people said that there is an important role of media in increasing turnout to very much level, 226 said much, 173 said sometimes, 110 said rarely and the remaining 47 persons said not at all. The Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 5% level of significant and the researcher concluded that there is significant association among the attributes i.e. awareness of respondents about politics and role of media in increasing turn-out.

Table 4. Crosstabs for the awareness of respondents about politics and media's election campaign was more effective in urban rather than rural areas.

	Options	Did you think that you are well-informed about politics?					Total	Chi-Square	P-Value
		Very Much	Much	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all			
Urban area Residents	Very Much	80	82	22	105	34	323		
	Much	70	92	60	94	32	348		
	Sometimes	26	30	20	63	28	167	90.65	.000**
	Rarely	0	37	20	33	0	90		
	Not at all	14	7	10	27	14	72		
	Total	190	248	132	322	108	1000		
Rural area Residents	Very Much	31	29	44	122	21	247		
	Much	11	57	49	136	50	303		
	Sometimes	10	50	49	78	56	243	101.01	.000**
	Rarely	11	29	10	60	0	110		
	Not at all	0	12	11	54	20	97		
	Total	63	177	163	450	147	1000		

The above table showing cross tabulation for the awareness of respondents about politics and president of Pakistan. From the overall sample of urban people 190 said very much aware, 248 respondents said much, 132 said sometimes, 322 said rarely and 108 persons said not at all. On the other 323 people said that media's election campaign was more effective in urban than rural areas to very much level, 348 said much, 167 said sometimes, 90 said rarely and the remaining 72 persons said not at all. The Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 5% level of significant and the researcher concluded that there is significant association among the attributes i.e. awareness of respondents about politics and media's election campaign was more effective in urban rather than rural areas.

Table 5. Crosstabs among accessibility of media tools and their residence.

Accessibility	Residence		Total	Chi-Square	P-Value
	Urban	Rural			
Very Much	396	180	576		
Much	280	204	484		
Sometimes	184	210	394	230.04	.000**
Rarely	103	246	349		
Not at all	37	160	197		
Total	1000	1000	2000		

The above table showing cross tabulation among the accessibility of media tools and the residence of respondents. From the overall sample of 2000 respondent's half of sample taken from rural areas and other half from urban areas. In response of urban area residential people 396 said that media tools are very much easily accessible, 280 said much, 184 said sometimes, 103 said rarely and other 37 said not at all. In case of rural area residential people 180 said that media tools are very much easily accessible, 204 said much, 210 said sometimes, 246 said rarely and other 160 said not at all. The Pearson Chi-Square test is significant at 5% level of significant and the researcher concluded that there is significant association among the attributes i.e. accessibility of media tools and their residence.

Discussion and conclusion

There is common concern of society about the media role in political socialization that makes this study essential in order to contribute in literature of the field and exploring the topic in context of a developing country, in specific to Pakistan. Previously, some studies have been conducted on effects of media on political communication and political socialization but those were mainly focused to study media impacts on population living in cities and the area of studying the media effects on political socialization in comparison to rural and urban areas is yet to be explored and researcher has availed the opportunity to work on by choosing to study. The first hypothesis was "It is more likely that political socialization process of urban area voters is more influenced by media than rural area voters" and results revealed that most of population in Pakistan live in rural areas and their literacy rate is also low than people live in urban areas therefore their key source of political information are political and opinion leaders of area like 'Nambardar'. The presence of media in rural areas is less than its availability in urban areas and in Pakistani rural areas PTV is the only TV channel and most effective media source that provides political and social issues knowledge to people. On contrary, people live in urban areas have access to more media options like newspaper, TV, social media, radio and magazines. Moreover, they have different options on each media tool like different TV channels, different social media applications, different newspapers publishers etc. Additionally, the hypothesis is examined by asking relevant questions and it found that people of urban areas are more politically informed than people of rural areas because of their excessive access to more media tools. In answer to a question about the name of president of Pakistan, mostly respondents who identified the name are from urban areas. Most of the respondents from urban areas consider media as a learning source for knowing political trends. In terms of media strength for enhancing voting turnout, perspective is different among the people of urban and rural areas. Additionally, people from both areas, the urban and rural believe that media is an effective tool for providing political information. When asked to the respondents that what you think that media's election campaign is more effective in urban areas as compared to rural areas and the answer is from both side of mostly respondents are very much. Overall findings of the answers have proven the hypothesis developed by research true.

The second hypothesis was "It is more likely that all tools of media are easily available in urban areas as compared to rural areas." and the results revealed that like most of other developing countries, Pakistan is also facing various issues and economic condition is one of them and the weak economic situation of country limits its ability to facilitate all people across the country in specific to provide them equal access of media regardless of their geographical regions. Therefore, most of the people in rural areas do not have access to all available media tools as in most of rural localities people are still using 2G internet facility at time of 4G. In terms of media tools in rural areas, radio has the highest public reach with 97% of geographical regions of the state and second is PTV, the government owned TV channel. The economic condition of country does not allow government to make possible the access of media across the country. In answer to a question most of the people from urban areas said they have access to almost all media tools and on the other hand people from rural areas responded to same question as rarely and not at all access of media tools. Overall findings of the answers have proven the hypotheses developed by research are true.

Recommendations for future research

The future researchers have an area to explore and that is effects of emerging media tools in process of political socialization. There are other related areas like advertisement which also has an impact on political socialization but has not been examined in context of Pakistan. Media is not supposed to support and promote some specific personalities and political parties and for this purpose yellow journalism approach must be stopped and for this purpose, there is a need for training the professionals of journalism and media organizations.

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