

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS TOOL OF  
POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN ENHANCING  
POLITICAL MESSAGE: A COMPARATIVE  
STUDY OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN PAKISTAN**

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**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
ISLAMABAD**

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**MBA (HR), Virtual University Lahore, 2010**

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## THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read the following thesis, examined the defense, are satisfied with the overall exam performance, and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of Management Sciences for acceptance.

**Thesis Title:** The Role of Social Media as Tool of Political Communication in Enhancing Political Message: A comparative Study of Political Parties in Pakistan

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **The Role of Social Media as Tool of Political Communication in Enhancing Political Message: A Comparative Study of Political Parties in Pakistan** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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## ABSTRACT

**Title: The Role of Social Media as Tool of Political Communication in Enhancing Political Message: A Comparative Study of Political Parties in Pakistan.**

*Social media platforms are increasingly used for political news and information by adults in the United States, especially when it comes to election time. Over the last decade, extensive literature has been published regarding social media effects on real-life political participation. Many argue that social media stimulates online and offline political participation. With the development of new media technologies, Twitter and Facebook have become increasingly popular social media tools employed in today's political process for connecting, communicating, and disseminating information in the public realm. It is a channel of two-way communication facilitating increased political participation, allowing political Message to go through without any boundaries and editorial policy filters unlike traditional media. Through a comparative analysis of selected political parties in Pakistan (PML (N), PPP & PTI), the primary objective of this research is to explore the role of social media based political communication in boosting political Message. New media allows political players, media actors, and individuals to actively participate and interact directly on Facebook pages or through Twitter accounts by passing media as gatekeepers. Therefore, it is aimed to carefully ascertain the critical role of social media in political communication. This thesis also tends to explore how and why social media has earned power regarding political communication and how it is strengthening the democratic process in Pakistan. The conceptual framework developed in this thesis is based on emerging theories of social media logic and gratification theory which allow us to conduct an analysis how political communication occur on social media. A mixed method study with both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques was carefully chosen. The data is compiled, presented and analyzed for interpretation of results on the basis of which conclusions have drawn how political parties in Pakistan are using social media and then recommendations how this new media can be used for meaningful and effective political communication in future.*

**Keywords:** Political Communication, social media, Media Technologies, Election Campaign.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM</b> .....	ii
<b>AUTHOR’S DECLARATION</b> .....	iii
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	iv
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	v
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	viii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b> .....	ix
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	x
<b>Chapter 1</b> .....	1
<b>Introduction to Study</b> .....	1
<b>1.1 Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>1.1 Background</b> .....	3
<b>1.2 Statement of the problem</b> .....	5
<b>1.3 Research Gap</b> .....	5
<b>1.4 Research Questions</b> .....	6
<b>1.5 Research Objectives</b> .....	6
<b>1.6 Significance of study</b> .....	6
<b>1.7 Rationale for selected political parties</b> .....	7
<b>1.8 Scope of study</b> .....	8
<b>1.9 Organization of this study</b> .....	9
<b>Chapter 2</b> .....	10
<b>Literature Review</b> .....	10
<b>2.1 Introduction</b> .....	10
<b>2.2 The meaning of political communication</b> .....	10
<b>2.3 History of political communication</b> .....	11
<b>2.4 Elements of political communication</b> .....	13
<b>2.4.1 Ideology</b> .....	13
<b>2.4.2 Propaganda</b> .....	14
<b>2.4.3 Persuasion</b> .....	15
<b>2.5 Key political actors</b> .....	15
<b>2.5.1 Political leaders as support seekers</b> .....	16
<b>2.5.2 Political activists as first-degree support</b> .....	18
<b>2.5.3 Grassroots citizens as key players</b> .....	19

<b>2.6</b>	<b>Political communication in regional context.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Emergence of social media’s Tools .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.8</b>	<b>Social media tools for political communication.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>2.8.1</b>	<b>Social Network Sites.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>2.8.2</b>	<b>Micro blogging.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2.8.3</b>	<b>Weblogs.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2.8.4</b>	<b>Other social media platforms.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2.9</b>	<b>Social media Pakistan’s perspective.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>2.9.1</b>	<b>Usage of social media in Pakistan .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>2.9.2</b>	<b>Parties Standpoint regarding use of social media as political communication tools.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>2.10</b>	<b>The political Message.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>2.11</b>	<b>The role of political parties in political communication .....</b>	<b>34</b>
	<b>Chapter 3 .....</b>	<b>36</b>
	<b>Conceptual Framework.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>The Public Sphere Model .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Public Sphere Model in Pakistan’s Context .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Gratification Theory .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Social Media Logic.....</b>	<b>39</b>
	<b>Chapter 4 .....</b>	<b>42</b>
	<b>Research Design and Methodology .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Research Design .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Framework and Methodology.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Qualitative Approach .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>4.3.1</b>	<b>Data Collection .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>4.3.2</b>	<b>Sampling Technique and Sample .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>4.3.3</b>	<b>Data Analysis .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Quantitative Approach.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>4.4.1</b>	<b>Survey.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>4.4.2</b>	<b>Data collection .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>4.4.3</b>	<b>Sampling Technique and sample.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>4.4.4</b>	<b>Data Analysis .....</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b>Chapter 5 .....</b>	<b>49</b>
	<b>Result and Analysis.....</b>	<b>49</b>

<b>5.1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Phase one: Qualitative Interpretation.....</b>	<b>49</b>
5.2.1	Demographic Characteristics.....	51
5.2.2	Thematic analysis.....	52
a)	Step 1: Familiarizing with data.....	53
b)	Step 2: Generating initial codes.....	54
	<i>b-1) Coding process.....</i>	<i>54</i>
	<i>b-2) Codes.....</i>	<i>55</i>
c)	Step 3: Searching themes.....	56
d)	Step 4: Review of themes.....	57
e)	Step 5 & 6: Defining themes and write up (results).....	57
5.2.3	Theme 1: Dialogue and Feedback.....	57
5.2.4	Theme 2: Social media for election campaign.....	60
5.2.5	Theme 3: Social media as view of reality.....	62
5.2.6	Theme 4: Political actor’s visibility.....	65
5.2.7	Theme 5: Media actor’s visibility.....	66
5.2.8	Theme 6: Citizen’s visibility.....	67
5.2.9	Theme 7: Auditorial media’s role in transition.....	68
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Phase two: Quantitative Interpretation.....</b>	<b>69</b>
5.3.1	Descriptive statistics.....	69
5.3.2	Reliability Test.....	76
5.3.3	Normality of Data.....	77
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>80</b>
	<b>Chapter 6.....</b>	<b>84</b>
	<b>Discussion and Conclusion.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Discussion and conclusion.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Recommendations.....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Ethical considerations.....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Future Research.....</b>	<b>96</b>
	<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>97</b>
	<b>Appendices-I.....</b>	<b>110</b>
	<b>Appendices-II.....</b>	<b>111</b>
	<b>Appendices-III.....</b>	<b>113</b>



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PML (N)	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
PPP	Pakistan People Party
USA	United States of America
UK	United Kingdom
NGO's	Non-Governmental Organizations
ISPR	Inter Services Public Relations
ICT	Information Communication Technology
SNS	Social Network Sites
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
FB	Facebook
API	Application Program Interface
PC	Political Communication
SMS	Short Message Service

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated with pride and affection to my deceased Parents for their unconditional love, endless support and unforgettable sacrifices for children to make their dreams possible.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction to Study**

### **1.1 Introduction**

In this contemporary world, information communication technologies (ICTs) have revolutionized and transformed the landscape of democracy as well as the methods by which people engage in politics (Oparaugo, 2021). Changes have permeated practically every level of society, impacting political institutions, political players, citizen groups, and mass media, from the configuration of media systems to the decision-making of the voting public (Wei and Xu, 2019). While traditional media remains primary source for political communication, new media platforms have become prominent in triggering change in campaign strategies of candidates, political parties and political organizations (Owen, 2017).

Political communication has been regarded as critical component of power politics since the time of immemorial. The matter of communication and power has gained greater attention after Donald Trump's Election in America as well as the tensions between Russian Federation and Western countries. According to Bennett Livingston (2018), the Trump's administration is accused of misuse of power through false and shrewd communication. The Russian government is also implicated for destabilization of democratic process in Western countries through information warfare strategies. This aspect of political communication has always been an important ingredient of democratic politics (Bakir et al., 2019). Running through these debates, the sharp rise of alternate and independent information providing social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, the internet-based communication has posed serious threat to traditional information providers i.e., mainstream media and corporate media.

Obama's campaign using new media technologies was significantly stronger at responding in real time to emerging political dialogue, which certainly benefitted his victory in 2012 election. It was widely recognized, even before Donald Trump's election to the presidency, that he had utilized Twitter extensively to communicate his message to the world as a powerful rhetoric. According to Jungherr (2016), ever growing importance and popularity of social media as tool of political communication forced Mark Zuckerberg (the founder of Facebook) to issue a disclaimer that Facebook had any influence on Trump's Election as US President in 2016. The use of social media has become nearly mandatory in all the countries around the world because of its success to win trust and engage more people in politics as compared to traditional mainstream media (Bimber, 2014).

New media technologies have led the people of Pakistan to becoming more aware of and accepting vital political and economic concerns that directly affect their lives. Previously, this level of political understanding was not common among the general public, and only those who genuinely desired to learn about political matters were able to do so. The political landscape has transformed as a result of social media, and political factions are increasingly striving to propagate their narratives on social media platforms in order to gain political victories such as electoral triumph (Bui, 2016).

Major examples of this political success can be attributed to the winning of 2016 and 2018 General Elections in United States and Pakistan by Republican Party and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf respectively. Both of these parties used social media to communicate their political messages. As a result, we can argue that social media has significantly altered the political scene and accelerated the process of information democratization, even faster than traditional mainstream media.

## 1.1 Background

Political players, media actors, and citizens are usually regarded as crucial actors in the political communication process (Stromback, 2009). Individual politicians, employees of political parties, candidates and even political parties, they all are recognized as political players. Other important political actors in the political communication process include NGOs, activists, and public relations firms, but because the scope of my research is limited to elections and election campaigns, I will rely on traditional definitions of political actors in my study. Political actors are the most important of the three core categories because of their crucial role in drawing media attention and influencing individual voters during election campaigns. Media actors refer to organizations and workers relating to media including journalists, editors, photographers, freelancers as well as bloggers both from the mass media and social media. Finally, in this study citizens are the individuals and group of people taking part in political communication process. In a democratic system, they (if they are members of political parties) play vital role in nomination of candidates for their elevation to parliament. Political communication, according to Negrine & Stanyer (2007), is defined as interpersonal and mediated communication between social actors on political issues.

The obvious goal of political actors is to win election, they effectively use political communication channels to motivate their supporters and persuade undecided voters. The individuals who are part of the process must be knowing the art of attracting attention, particularly across diverse media contexts, which is vital to setting up agenda and shaping opinions of general public (Skogerb, 2014). Politicians must be able to make this happen through capturing the attention of the media, as well as, increasingly, social media users. One of the basic function of media, according to Bucher (2012), is to increase something or someone's visibility. Over the

years, media coverage is used as primary method for reaching big audiences in the Western Countries (Stromback,2009; Esser, 2013). Perhaps, presence on media is the first step of influence and ultimately gaining power (Altheide, 2013). Actors who wish to deeply reach the public must master the social media environment in addition to drawing attention on mass media.

Networked Publics can be defined as the public spaces emerged through hybrid media system including mass and social media using networked media technologies (Benkler, 2006, Boyd, 2014). Communication circles are defined both intrinsically and extrinsically by shared interest in particular issues and networked media technologies respectively (Kelsness, 2016). In this scenario, the interaction of actors, as well as the interplay of actors and technology, is crucial. Of fact, the concept of networked publics is laid on broad and ill-defined concept of the ‘public sphere’ which is a space meant for public gathering to listen and share point of view and recommendations for alternate solutions (Bankler, 2006). The term ‘public sphere’ was coined by German Philosopher Jurgen Habermas who describes it as a “network of information communication and sharing each other’s’ perspective”. In this process, steams of communication are filtered and synthesize, resulting in a bunch of thematically defined public opinions (Habermas, 1997). According to Rasmussen (2014), the communication process is typically carried out as performances or presentations on forums, stages, and arenas, either face-to-face or in front of bigger crowds (2014).

New participatory politics is boosted by the use of Websites, Internet, blogs and social networks by lowering the participation restrictions and altering the scope and speed of communication (Castells, 2011; Auserhof & Mairaider, 2013; Skogerb, 2013; Jungherr, 2014). While broadcasting structure of mass media inhibits debate and discussions, scholars claim that the Internet allows all important component of the society, citizens, press, social movements,

interest groups, candidates, political parties and government entities to interact (Jankowski et al., 2007). However, the evidence that follows will cast doubt on this assumption.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Political parties have been experimenting with political communication as a means of accomplishing their political and socio-cultural goals. However, in the contemporary times, this pattern has shifted significantly online, specifically on social network platforms like Facebook and Twitter (Jungherr, 2016). This research takes an analytical approach to the magnitude of the problem at hand, uncovering and projecting future political strategies in Pakistan. This study proposed that most of Pakistan's existing political communication has transitioned away from traditional methods and toward unconventional ones such as the internet and, more especially, social media. In this study, we tend to analyze Pakistan's three largest political parties—PTI, PML (N) and PPP—to see how they interact with their supporters and voters to communicate message using social media platforms Facebook and Twitter.

## **1.3 Research Gap**

A large magnitude of literature is available which has analyzed the election campaigns of different countries around the world through comparative analysis. However, there exists no literature analyzing the role of political communication using social network platforms such as Facebook and Twitter for enhancing political message in elections (Stier et al., 2018). Our study will fill this void with a thorough analysis of political communication carried out by Pakistani political parties, PTI PML(N) and PPP for the purpose of enhancing the reach of their political message.



## 1.4 Research Questions

RQ1. How and why political leaders, media players and citizens are adapting to social media logic in Pakistan?

- *RQ1a (Political leaders): How and why are political leaders using social media?*
- *RQ1b (Media players): How and why media players are using social media?*
- *RQ1c (Citizens): How and why are citizens using social media for political purposes?*

RQ2: How can social media be used as a political communication tool in Pakistan to mobilize movements and create agendas?

RQ3: Whether or not the social media is strengthening the democratic process in Pakistan?

## 1.5 Research Objectives

RO1: To explore characterization of social media logic and determine whether Pakistani political leaders, media actors and citizens adopting to it.

RO2: To find out the tool of political communication to mobilize movements and agenda setting in Pakistan.

RO3: To explore the tool of social media that strengthen the democratic process in Pakistan.

## 1.6 Significance of study

This study is of immense significance as majority of the world population is still unaware of the intricacies involved in relationship of social media with political communication. Through carrying out an in-depth surveys and analysis of the topic, this research would help students as

well as academicians in understanding the different aspects of this domain including the social, economic, and security aspects as well. Furthermore, as this research has endeavored to suggest a way forward for the political parties, it can be of utility for effective communication of political Message campaign strategies in the future.

The research is theoretically based on Habermas' concept of the public sphere, which he initially articulated in 1991. (Habermas, 1991). As a result, this study demonstrated that social media has aided the revival of Habermas' public sphere concept, particularly during Pakistani political elections. To prove the validity of this assumption, data has been collected by taking in-depth interviews from political players, media actors and citizens representing all communities. As a result, our research may benefit the theoretical paradigm of the public sphere as well as help to a better understanding of how the public sphere has influenced political campaigns in Pakistan using social media technologies like Facebook and Twitter (Kruse et al, 2018).

## **1.7 Rationale for selected political parties**

New media is now widely used by political parties for political communication. However, this comparative study is rigorously analyzing the three mainstream political parties PTI, PML (N) and PPP. The rationale for selection of these parties depends on following factors:

- All the three parties, Pakistan Muslim League (N), Pakistan People's Party and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf are main political rivals having significant vote bank since 2008 General Elections. The PTI was perhaps the first political party to employ social media resources in 2008 and 2013 elections. Off late, PML (N) also realized the potential of this medium and capitalized it in 2018 elections. The Pakistan People's Party and other national and regional parties also joined the race following this trend.

- Leaders of these parties have highest number of followers on social media (Facebook, Twitter). Mr. Imran Khan, Pakistan's Prime Minister and Chairman of the ruling party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), is the most popular figure on social media. On the PTI's Facebook page, he has over eight million fans. His Twitter account has 78 million followers.
- Ms. Maryam Nawaz PML (N) leader also effectively used social media platform as an alternate to mainstream media for expression of dissent. She held social media conventions across country to boost election campaign and succeeded to gain popularity among PML (N) workers.
- Mr. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is emerging leader as Co-Chairman of PPP. He is also using social media to communicate with public to promote party's agenda and criticism on opponents.

## **1.8 Scope of study**

As this research aims to conduct a comparative analysis of three mainstream political parties of Pakistan, the scope of this study extends to the political communication done by the leaders of these parties. Our focus is on the persuasiveness, call to action, or other strategies employed by these leaders to attract audiences because they play significant role in the process of political communication, especially in terms of overall efficacy (Barraciale and Martella, 2017).

The two major social media tools used for political communication included in our study are Twitter and Facebook. These two social media tools have been considered as the most effective tools for contemporary political communication (Stier et al., 2018).

## **1.9 Organization of this study**

This research is basically organized into six chapters. The study begins with an introduction and background discussion that illustrate the study's research purpose and theme. It examines the sociopolitical phenomenon known as the research problem, which may have influenced the research study's goal, as well as discussions on the study's key research objectives, questions, significance, and scope of the study. The literature on political communication is reviewed in the second chapter with a particular focus on historical background, elements of political communication, key actors, role of political parties in political communication. The third chapter offers the theoretical and conceptual approach of the study. It also offers how these theoretical and conceptual underpinnings have analytically been operationalized into variables. The chapter four highlights the research design, methodology employed by the researcher. It explains how study was carried out and analyzed. The results and data analysis are discussed in the fifth chapter with graphical solutions. Finally, chapter six presents conclusion, recommendations based on the finding in previous chapter and at the end limitations, ethical considerations and future area of research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

It is vital to have an in-depth study of existing literature to acquire a thorough understanding of the problem. The major goal of this review is to identify a knowledge gap that needs to be filled in the available literature. The studies can be split into two groups as a result of detailed examination of research work acquired by scanning the Scopus database. These organizations are interested in firstly the use of social media in political mobilization, and secondly, the role and future prospects of political communication using social media tools in Pakistan. A large number of experts have performed study on social media's significance political mobilization. According to Meti, Khandoba, & Guru, (2015), the media has a significant impact on a country's political process. The author portrays social media in a good light, arguing that it is one of the most significant tools for imparting political culture and consciousness in the general people.

#### **2.2 The meaning of political communication**

Political communication, in the broader sense, can be defined as the role that communication play in political process. It can take both formal or informal forms, take place in public or private venue, and use different medium (content that has been mediated or unmediated). It encompasses the Messages that are produced and generated by political actors, transmission and receipt of political Messages via direct or indirect means. The diffusion of information amongst political leaders, media organizations and general public is termed as political communication (Gervais, 2016). Many scholars have debated the topic of political communication, outlining its

basics and core elements. The field of political communication, according to McNair (2017), can be split into three main categories.

To begin with, political communication occurs when political players try to develop communication in order to attain their intended political goals. Second, whenever non-politicians address these political players for communication or to be a recipient of a political message. Third, when different types of media, such as electronic or print news, put to light the various political activities of these political actors.

Political communication, according to Michael Schudson (1997), is any message that is sent in order to modify the status quo of power and its general hierarchy in any society. As a result, political communication occurs when a politician or a leader delivers a speech or addresses an audience in order to persuade them to change their political paradigm. Political communication, on the other hand, isn't just for politicians. The author also believes that the political message is spread through churches, schools, and hospitals, among other places, because power is at stake in all of these places. Furthermore, political communication (like all other forms of communication) entails both verbal and nonverbal communication.

## **2.3 History of political communication**

Political communication systems, according to Blumler and Kavanagh, have advanced greatly, particularly in the postwar period. The development has been broken down into three stages.

The first phase of development begins soon after WWII and lasts for more than two decades. In terms of conveying their political message to the broader public, the last two decades are generally labelled as “golden age” of political parties. During this time span, the primary source

of initiatives and social reforms was political system; many voters were associated to politics through long-lasting membership of the party, and the party system was meticulously linked to conventional social cleavages (Hallin, 1992).

The second stage of development began in the 1960s, when television's introduction caught the political system off guard. As a result, party loyalty and political parties' grip on voters have loosened. The reduction of party loyalties and the availability of different channels to view selective arguments; recognition of non-partisan forms of communication in the form of moral ethics such as fairness, impartiality, and the removal of biasness; the introduction of television as a means of political communication with the masses; and the structuring of electronic communications were the major features of this age. People who were the subjects of political communication became more open-minded and selective in their interests as a result of these developments (Mayhew, 1997).

The third stage is still in its early stages, with a variety of complex media networks being utilized to spread political narratives. Although this phase has given people a wide range of options and freedoms in terms of how they receive news and information, the process of political communication has become significantly more complicated as a result of the complex web of networks. Political actors now have the freedom to broadcast their narratives without institutional sanction thanks to social media tools like Twitter and Facebook. The impact of such publicly available content on the internet is immense in many countries throughout the world.

Over the last few years, Pakistan has gone through the third phase of political communication. With the surge in popularity of social media tools like Facebook and Twitter, a number of political actors have switched from television to social media platforms as their major means of political communication. Furthermore, government entities have built a social media

presence, which is a relatively recent phenomenon in Pakistan (Memon et al, 2015). For example, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) is a well-organized body that tweets on a regular basis about the country's political and socioeconomic status. This speaks to a substantial shift in political communication from traditional electronic media to cutting-edge social media technology (Khan, 2012).

## **2.4 Elements of political communication**

As stated in next section, there are three primary elements of political communication which include ideology, propaganda and persuasion:

### **2.4.1 Ideology**

Destutt de Tracy, a French philosopher, created the term "ideology" in 1795. "While the term 'ideology' is frequently employed in the media and social sciences, it is infamously ambiguous. Its common meaning is mostly negative, and it usually refers to other people's dogmatic, erroneous, or partisan ideas: "We have the truth, while they have ideologies" (Van Dijk, 2005). It is believed to refer to a general science of ideas aimed at clarifying and improving the public mind. The French Revolution, Napoleon, and Marx, all gave it currency. Later, the phrase was expanded to include any systematic and all-encompassing political philosophy that promises to provide a full and universally applicable theory of man and society, as well as a program of political action derived from it (Scruton, 1996).

An ideology is a set of concepts and beliefs about human behavior that has been simplified and modified in order to gain popular support for specific acts, and that is usually emotive when it comes to social action (Watson and Hill, 1984). It also refers to major "belief systems" held by individuals, organizations, or entire societies; it is our "world view" or "mind set" about how things



are and should be. A society is a collection of people who share a set of core values and beliefs. The ideologies of that society are made up of these values and beliefs.

In Marxist and Marxian theories, the term "ideology" can be described as any system of beliefs and values that serves social function of solidifying a specific economic order and are explained solely by that fact, rather than by its intrinsic truth or rationality.

### **2.4.2 Propaganda**

Propaganda is the manipulation of the symbolic environment, which can be influenced by it in particular conditions. Propaganda communications aim to achieve a similar outcome to war, but without the use of violence. "Psychological warfare" is the term for it. Paul Linebarger (1954) defined psychological warfare as "the deployment of propaganda against an opponent, as well as any other operational actions of a military, economic, or political type that may be required to support propaganda."

According to Harold Lasswell (1951), psychological warfare is a new name for an old theory about how to fight a successful war: "The essential principle is that the best success in war is accomplished by destroying the enemy's will to resist, while destroying the enemy's fighting capacity to the bare minimum." The development of new communication technology has changed the way propaganda is disseminated. Total propaganda efforts will use all accessible communication channels. Propaganda has been transformed by communication technology, particularly the Internet.

"In modern democratic democracies, propaganda and information management are expected. Propaganda is an essential feature of 'actually existent' democracy, democracy in the

mass society” rather than being unusual, atypical, or aberrant elements in the democratic process (Robins and Webster 1999). Political propaganda is described as "the only way of mass mobilization that is less expensive than violence, bribery, or other alternative control measures" (Lasswell in Robins and Webster, 1999). Modern propaganda is a continuous, long-term attempt to generate or manipulate events in order to impact public perceptions of a company, an ideology, or a group.

### **2.4.3 Persuasion**

Persuasion, according to Victoria O'Donnell and June Kable (1982), is a communicative process in which the persuader transmits a message to another via verbal or nonverbal means in order to alter their behavior or attitude, and such acceptance of change is voluntary. It is natural for the persuader to meet the wants of the persuadee in order to meet his own. To put it another way, it's a matter of mutual gratification. A politician, for example, must meet the requirements of voters in order to gain their votes. Voters will cast their ballots in favor of politicians who can persuade them that they will meet their demands.

## **2.5 Key political actors**

According to Perloff (2014), political communication involves three main players: the political leader, the media, and the general public. To elaborate, he believes that political communication takes place through the media. McNair (2011), on the other hand, presents a model of political communication in the age of mediation by conceiving political organization, media, and citizens as three important actors in the political system. Political organizations are shown in this concept as a mix of public organizations, political parties, pressure groups and the government. On either side of this interactional model of political communication centered media are two

communicative parties: citizens as core political participants and political parties (the most important portion of political organizations) as ultimate authority. Reports, opinions, and other forms of communication are used by the media to communicate politics. Citizens participate in politics through opinion polls, blogs, and other types of citizen journalism, whereas political bodies participate in politics through advertisements, public relations campaigns, and other means. The concept, however, appears to be appropriate for the old media system. The current nature and function of digital media as a political participant mediator differs significantly from McNair's paradigm. Traditional media play a different role than digital media (by allowing competing parties to connect directly). Dahl (1970) also suggests a political stratification consisting primarily of two poles: political and apolitical. According to him, the political stratum consists of the strong and power-seekers, who he refers to as the "political man." However, unlike Dahl, I believe that, because of their distinct qualities, grassroots individuals require a distinctive category within the political strata. As a result, I classify three major political actors for the digital media system, based on Dahl's concept of Political Man: political leaders, political activists, and grassroots individuals. At the same time, each group communicates with another directly, indirectly, or through a third party. They use digital media to communicate inside their own groups as well as with other groups.

### **2.5.1 Political leaders as support seekers**

A political leader is a member of a political party who occupies the top of the communicative and authoritative power pyramid. A leader is typically a seeker of support with the goal of gaining popularity among the general public. In Bangladesh's party system, political leaders are chosen and promoted by political parties. It's worth noting that in Bangladesh, the boundary between the government and political parties is a little hazy. Bangladesh, on the other hand, has a

long history of patronage politics (Lewis, 2011). In today's Bangladesh politics, "a system of individual traditional patrimonial leadership centered on charisma, patronage, and corruption" may also be seen (Kochanek, 1993). However, political leaders' attitudes have recently shifted. Politicians are applying digital know-how to gain forecasts about public opinion, recognizing the power of digital media and following current trends (Kanungo, 2015; Shen, 2013; Talukder, 2017).

During election season, politicians expressly rely on the support of ordinary folks. They have ultimate authority and lawful power after being elected. Because the two groups belonged to two separate and distant political poles, one-on-one interaction between grassroots citizens and political leaders was nearly impossible in the age of traditional media. Digital media, on the other hand, helped to close the gap. In such conditions, political leaders must be more accountable for their acts, as ordinary citizens now have the ability to question their (politicians') conduct through the internet. Another important aspect of internet engagement is responsiveness. When political leaders answer to ordinary users' questions, the level of interaction grows (Heiss, Schmuck, & Matthes, 2018).

Before the 11th Jatiya Sangsad Election in 2018, the digital public sphere in Bangladesh was crowded by political figures seeking support. Every election, in practice, activates and brings politicians closer to the public in order to seek votes from the grassroots citizens who are a democracy's primary source of power. In the digital age, the traditional image of the electoral campaign has changed, as has the nominees' political involvement. Many political leaders must use the web platform to contact their potential voters now that grassroots citizens have become netizens. Politicians have been using digital media to rebuild their self-image and party reputation not only before the election, but also throughout the years. They tend to make the public believe

that they (politicians) are sympathetic to public hardships by doing so, through "identification" (Griffin, 2011).

### **2.5.2 Political activists as first-degree support**

Political activists, who hold a place in the power pyramid between political leaders and grassroots individuals, are the second important participant in Bangladesh's political sphere. The most remarkable aspect of this group is that, as first-degree supporters, they are neither the ultimate powerholders nor the game-changers among the grassroots voters. Instead, they rise from the ranks of the grassroots and labour for the party's members in order to achieve power and privileges. In any political movement or incident, these dedicated people are the most important tool for party leaders. Dahl (1970) identified two categories of power seekers: one who desires power and the other who seeks power. It is possible that not all political activists will be able to attain and then exercise political power. However, by establishing some influence, some of them may be promoted from power seekers to leaders, while others may remain in their previous position. These political activists are distinct in their use of digital media for political purposes. They exclusively uphold and spread particular political opinions based on their sponsors' ideology and identity. AL and BNP activists, two prominent contenders in the 2018 General Election, played critical roles in distributing and developing a favorable image of the parties and their leaders.

Political activists carry out the tasks assigned to them after getting orders and guidance from the top. Individual performances determine whether individuals receive rewards or disdain. Bangladesh Chhatra League (BSL) of AL and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) of BNP are the two biggest political student wings. During the election time, they were all perceived as being hyperactive on social media and conducting aggressive campaigns in support of their parties and

leaders. Unlike the other two entities in the political stratum, political activists are the only ones who participate in political debate. Because they are fewer in number than grassroots citizens, it is simpler for them to band together through digital media and organize political campaigns in their favor. They engage in political reasoning to champion and preserve party identity and a positive image, as instructed by the political superior known as *bhai*. Bangladesh has a beautiful and effective political patron-client relationship between these two strata since political leaders are the umbrellas of these activists.

In such a dyadic political transaction and patronage relationship, a person in a higher political position (patron) utilizes his influence and possessions to protect and promote the welfare of a person of lower status (client), who provides service, support, and help to the patron (Scott, 1972). Clients, acting as political activists, follow the instructions of their clients, who are party officials, and perform effectively in the digital realm, gaining more support for the party. These political middlemen are referred to as "local strongmen." They serve as both direct clients of politicians and the principal patrons of local residents (Barcson, 2015).

### **2.5.3 Grassroots citizens as key players**

Citizens at the grassroots are at the bottom of the political food chain in terms of power and privilege. They are, nonetheless, a critical component of the democratic system, as grassroots citizens account for the majority of the overall electoral college. They usually do not have an express affiliation or engagement with any political parties. Nonetheless, many Bangladeshi people' familial links to political parties are regularly passed down through the generations. Citizens at the grassroots are at the bottom of political food chain in terms of power and privilege. Members of this group look for leaders who will be more advantageous to them in the future. As

a result, they calculate and act in accordance with their profit. In the context of Bangladesh's electoral process, voters can be divided into three groups: (a) supporters, who are committed to a candidate and/or party that they are supporting now and will support in the future; (b) opponents, who will always oppose the candidate and/or party no matter what; and (c) swing groups, who are neither supportive nor opposing, but are dwindling (Cox & McCubbins, 1986). Political leaders frequently try to please the people by becoming dramatic. They also use political activists to gain the faith of ordinary individuals.

Furthermore, in online, grassroots citizens create direct contact with both support-seekers and first-degree supporters. They tend to choose suitable leaders and parties based on extensive examination, conversation, and cause-and-effect analysis. Citizens developed political discourses on matters at random before the 2018 General Election to investigate the benefits and drawbacks of each party and political personality. However, many people feel that the recently approved Digital Security Act 2018 will limit freedom of speech in political communication (“Bangladesh: New Law,” 2018). In these types of situations, alternative critique frequently rises to the fore. Following the imposition of controls on digital media in Bangladesh, online users have resorted to troll and sarcasm as a means of expressing rejection and criticism of policy and politicians. Political debates on the internet enable to deconstruct and reconstruct public opinion, which has been a big promise in Bangladeshi political communication.

## **2.6 Political communication in regional context**

Scholars such as (David Altheide, 2004) have described political communication as a feature of mass media in the United States. This occurs most often when politicians, journalists, actors, and even singers swap places and roles in order to align with a pop culture version of

political communication. This teaches us that political communication is most effective when conducted in the context of the intended audience. This context refers to the audience's ideas, perceptions, and interests that can be altered in order to gain their attention.

Lars Willnat and Anette Aw have conducted extensive study in Asian countries such as Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Japan. The authors discovered that political communication in these Asian states is limited as a result of a number of government regulatory measures (Willnat & Aw, 2009).

These limitations are also due to a cultural factor, as many Asian societies are characterized by uncertainty-rejecting cultures that do not accept new ideas or information. As a result, in many Asian civilizations, media plays a little role in providing constant news and information (He, 2014). In the case of Pakistan, however, it is considered that political communication is hampered by political establishment biases. This indicates that some political actors have preferential access to electronic media for political communication, but others do not have the same opportunity (Qayyum, Gilani & Latif, 2018).

## **2.7 Emergence of social media's Tools**

Social media is a powerful tool for disseminating information and raising public awareness. This media is increasingly commonly utilized in political campaigns to entice voters and urge political workers to take part in demonstrations. Furthermore, in researching the significance of social media, many academics have brought up the issue of quick communication. Authors such as Trisha Dowerah Baruah credit social media for the communication revolution, which expanded communication's reach globally without regard to geography or temporal limits. Experts believe,



among other things, that using social media to reach big audiences for political purposes has become a low-cost and highly effective strategy.

Although the majority of formal political actors continue to depend mainly on campaigning tactic tailor-made for in-habitants strictly observing dutiful citizenship model, a growing number of citizens are resorting to more informal forms of political action that are more tailored to their specific goals, preferences, and interests. Citizens are routinely informed through social media while, mainstream media typically uses news reports and even commentary for promoting its positions (Raynauld & Lalancette, 2016).

Upshot, the researchers are exploring the social media's impact and its usage constraints by general public (Bui, 2016). According to scholars, while social media's platforms are transforming the way people create and meet, their ability to bridge divides on difficult themes is still limited (Hendriks, Duus, & Ercan, 2016). According to the "Miliband Loop" debate that surfaced during the 2011 UK public sector demonstrations, the internet is a very dangerous place for old mediatization ideals (Rintel, Angus, & Fitzgerald, 2016). It has also been proven that use of social media for political purposes enhances the possibility of demonstrations as well as engagement (Boulianne, 2015). Tan (2016) claims that independent films that are relatively low-budget like documentary, can give voice to voiceless, can vividly evoke alternate histories, and channel these voices digitally into the shared cinematic and social media experience. This may, in turn, offer political dissidents a voice, allowing them to present a more fundamental challenge.

Furthermore, experts also claim that social media is the fastest means of communication, which is a growing demand in the globalized world. The freedom of expression assertion has been redefined by social media. Many practitioners say that social media is actively and positively promoting citizen participation in political events. Political knowledge is the most fundamental

tool for nation-building. To become less reliant on mainstream media, activists have concentrated on establishing and exploiting their own channels for protest mobilization and communication (Poel & Dijck, 2015). As a result, social media is establishing itself as a vital channel for communication, generating new forms of political mobilization and encouraging social media users to join political groups via tweets, status updates, blogs, and YouTube videos.

## **2.8 Social media tools for political communication**

Academics have conducted hundreds of studies on social media usage, spanning a wide range of topics (Golan, Arceneaux, & Soule, 2019). The internet is becoming more and more significant in informing people about current events and pushing them to participate in political activities. At the beginning, political parties used internet as one-way communication mean to educate public through their websites. However, communication patterns have shifted, and two-way communication is now achieved through the use of new media and technology (Emruli & Baa, 2011). Over the last two-decade, several studies have been conducted by researchers on the growing significance of internet, modern information and communication technology (ICT), in relation to politics and political issues (Chadwick, 2006). The use of websites to reach voters (Foot and Schneider, 2006), Political communication in the age of internet (T vedel, 2005), and visions of digital dissent (Kilinenberg & Perrin 2000) are just a few examples (Tewksbury 2006).

In general, literature reflects a variety of perspectives on internet's role in political domain. On the other hand, both the proponents of institutional adaption thesis and normalization theory (Chadwick, 2006; Marglis & Resnic, 2000), perceive no internet-induced shift in the current system's underlying political inequities. West (2005) proposes a middle ground approach, arguing that small but consistent incremental improvements become substantial when they accrue over a

period of time. Furthermore, the role of internet is to augment traditional media rather than to replace it as argued by Bimber and Davis (2003).

Over the years, tremendous growth has been seen in the use of social media. More than 2.85 billion people are active members of Facebook (Facebook, 2020) while Twitter counts more than 206 million active accounts (Twitter, 2020). The widespread access of social media platforms has removed bottlenecks in transformation of information (Keplan and Haenlein, 2010). With the rise of this modern medium, there has been dramatic change in the process of locating, coordinating, and organizing a group of people, sharing information and expressing opinions (Agrawal et al 2011). As a consequence, fundamental change in traditional political communication which used to initiate and manage by specific actors, politicians and journalists (Chadwick, 2006).

Given the growing potential benefits, social media, particularly, Facebook and Twitter are increasingly used in political perspective both political institutions (political parties, politicians, and think tanks) and citizens. It provides ideal platform for opinion making, direct political discussions, policy formulation, party positions and build support for candidates in election campaign (Zen et al. 2010). Following section discusses the three important types of social media which includes microblogging, social network sites and weblogs with respect to their role in political communication.

### **2.8.1 Social Network Sites**

Until recently, social media is more or less associated with youngsters, however, the usage of social networking sites (SNS) among older persons is constantly increasing according to trend (CBS, 2019; Eurostat, 2019). The rate of social media use has increased from 11% to 29% in

European Union. Whereas, it grew from 15% to 45% in Netherland during last decade (Eurostat, 2019). SNSs and their application in the political setting have been the subject of previous research studies. Williams and Gulati (2007, 2009) look into how much Congressional candidates use Facebook throughout election campaigns. They discovered that the amount of Facebook supporters is a good predictor of victory in election. Utz (2009) used the 2006 Dutch election to demonstrates how SNSs may be used to reach out to those who aren't a part of active politics. A candidate's profile monitoring in this manner only serves to reinforce pre-existing biases. On the other side, politicians that reply to user comments are regarded as more positive. Kushin and Kitchener (2009) look into how people use Facebook to discuss politics on the internet. According to them, Facebook is a worthwhile forum to address political issues.

On the basis of two years of posts on Facebook's of the three leading candidates for US Presidency Election in 2008 (Barack Obama, John McCain and Hillary Clinton), Robertson et al. (2010) examines participation patterns along breadth and frequency dimensions, and interpret them in terms of "public sphere" idea. They conclude that Social Networking Sites are currently most closely facilitating sociotechnical platforms for public domain debate. However, the outcome of this dialogue leads to informed political decision making in form of votes is still to be experienced. The scholars found that use of social network sites: Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace was linked to civic participation instead of trust in government or civic participation. Interactive conversation, on the other hand, would encourage civic engagement and political activism.

### **2.8.2 Micro blogging**

Twitter is one of the microblogging sites that stands out these days because of its vital and powerful role in political and world-crisis exchanges, particularly in disseminating short-lived news around the world (Sindhani & Dhir, 2021). A slew of research has been carried out to analyze

the impact of microblogging sites like Twitter on politicians. Golbeck et al., for example, looked into how members of Congress utilize Twitter (2010). They institute that Twitter is mostly used by Congress members for transmission of information relating to their news items, blog posting and routine activities.

Twitter is more often thought of as a place for people to promote themselves. However, Congress members and citizens can communicate directly through Twitter, albeit this is a less typical practice. Members of the US Congress are more prospective to usage of Twitter, if their party leaders encourage them to do so, if they are members of the minority party and if they are young, or if they are member of the Senate, according to Lassen and Brown (2010). During 2010 midterm election season, Ammann (2010) performed another study on Senate candidates' usage of Twitter and the content of their tweets. According to the data, Twitter is used by candidates as part of their political campaigns. However, the frequency of use greatly depends financial resources of a candidate, competitiveness of the congressional campaign and obviously size of the state. Furthermore, the content of the tweets is strongly associated with candidate's personality type and, at times, political affiliation. Other research focuses on Citizens' use of Twitter in political perspective. Using social network and sentiment analysis on data from the 2009 German federal election, Tumasjan et al. (2010) found that Twitter is widely used for political debate and that the number of parties mention properly represent the election result. To put it another way, Twitter tweets accurately reflect the offline political landscape and can be used to forecast election outcomes. Conover et al. (2011) explore two networks of political communication on Twitter using over 250,000 tweets from the six weeks running up to the 2010 midterm elections in the United States. The authors show that the network of political retweets has a highly segregated partisan structure, with exceptionally minimal connectedness between left- and right-leaning individuals,

using a combination of network clustering algorithms and personally annotated data. Surprisingly, the user-to-user mention network, which is dominated by a single politically heterogeneous cluster of users who link at a far higher rate than the retweet network, defies this pattern.

### **2.8.3 Weblogs**

The blogosphere in a political setting has been the subject of various lines of research. The first looks at the advantages and disadvantages of political blogs. Kaye (2005) identified the trend of blogs being primarily a medium for political information seeking and activity in a study of 3,747 blog followers, the majority of whom were young and well educated. McKenna and Pole (2008) claim that political blogs contain information about mainstream media news stories, links to other bloggers' posts, and criticism of mainstream media coverage of political issues. McKenna and Pole (2008) argue that political bloggers start blogs out of a sense of volunteerism rather than for monetary benefit in another article. Wattal et al. (2010) analyse the possible impact of political blogs, among other Web 2.0 technologies, on the campaign process in light of the 2008 US presidential election. According to their results, the blogosphere, in particular, has the ability to impact the electoral process and outcomes. Another area of blog research is the structural or network analysis of political blogs, particularly in the context of social network analysis (Rosen et al. 2011). According to Farrel and Drezner (2008), the blogosphere is critical for political communication. They demonstrate through case studies that major political blogs, or "focal points," influence agenda setting by attracting a significant number of journalists who act as multipliers. Adamic and Glance (2005) look at the linking patterns and conversation subjects of political bloggers in the United States and find evidence of a split blogosphere: liberals and conservatives largely link inside their own groups, with much fewer cross-links exchanged. Liberal and conservative blogs focus on various topics, causes, and political leaders when it comes to

political debates. Furthermore, conservative bloggers are more likely than liberal bloggers to connect to other blogs (mainly other conservative blogs).

#### **2.8.4 Other social media platforms**

Other video sharing platforms, such as You Tube, have been the subject of several studies. Gueorguieva (2007) investigates the influence, issues, and benefits of You Tube on mid-term elections held in United States of America in 2006. The accrued benefits include increasing candidates' visibility with no or little expense, providing a viable outlet for lesser-known contenders for raising campaign funds, searching for volunteers and communicating their political Messages on internet. On the flip side, it faces great difficulty because campaigns have little control over both image and Message of the candidate which are vital to election outcomes. A study of Finish election 2007 discovered that use of YouTube and its role were negligible. Furthermore, candidate-related movies did not elicit a lot of attention. With a few notable exceptions, the majority of the videos did not receive a significant number of views or comments.

### **2.9 Social media Pakistan's perspective**

According to Zain ul Abideen (2017), Facebook and Twitter are two popular social media platforms in Pakistan. For the majority, this has become a daily requirement, and it delivers relevant information in all areas of life. According to studies, social media is a trustworthy news source. Compared to television or traditional news broadcasting, major social media platforms have more chances to transmit news to the public. Political parties can use internet news websites and social media channels to publicize their campaigns (Zulqarnain, & Hassan, 2017). Political parties in Pakistan use new media to interact with and engage people, particularly youth, has skyrocketed. PPP, PML (N), PTI and other political parties are running social media networks on

Twitter and Facebook to connect and mobilize public to become a part of political process. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf has made considerable use of social media, including blogging, tweeting, and posting activities on Facebook. People from all parts of the world watch the activities and footage of PTI events.

Furthermore, in Pakistan, the internet has become an incredible tool for people to express themselves (Rehman, 2012). Several portals, such as local journalism portals and independent bloggers, encourage Pakistanis to express themselves. The latest technology and social media have strengthened citizen journalism, which is a must-have in today's cultures (Riaz, 2011). Citizens in Pakistan are being empowered by media influence, political opinion, and social media (Rehman, Ahmed, Zafar & Shahzad, 2013).

### **2.9.1 Usage of social media in Pakistan**

According to Kugelman (2012), social media usage in Pakistan is used in the political realm as follows:

- a. Social media has the ability to break news items that might otherwise go unnoticed by traditional media, as well as set the agenda for other outlets. The concept of the cyber domain was introduced by new media, blurring and merging the lines between global and local. Political content can be uploaded, shared, produced, circulated, and reflected on by anybody, at any time. Attention-getting techniques result in the creation of new and compelling content for use in other forms of new media. For example, a news piece on Malala Yousafzai successfully attracted the attention of social media users and resulted in the creation of other related content on blogs, YouTube, Facebook, and television channels, among other places.



- b. People are launching campaigns, encouraging, and organizing people to do desired action utilizing new media. The successful movement for restoration of judiciary can be taken as good example for this mobilization.
- c. Soldier's video on YouTube helping the needy people in emergencies, earthquake, floods etc. social media is used to coordinate and promote humanitarian aspects.
- d. People can now transcend the boundaries of distance and time, as well as ideologies and identities, thanks to new media technology. In a borderless world, people can participate in political issues through social media, resulting in the extension and coordination of political activity. Users of social media have started petitions and advocacy campaigns for many issues. The problem of blasphemy, as well as the case of Dr. Aafia Siddiqi, and incident of Zainab Ansari, a seven year's old girl, who was murdered after abduction in home town, Kasur have been promoted on social media through petitions and advocacy campaigns.

In 2016, a study was conducted to look into the interaction between social media and citizen involvement. Citizens should use social media as a tool to empower them to generate their own content, present their opinions, and use social media applications for political reasons on a regular basis, according to citizen involvement. University students engage in increased political discourse and post content on social media platforms, according to the survey's findings (Marwat, 2016).

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) held an event in Islamabad to examine the influence of technology in terms of promoting public engagement and voice. Renowned digital strategists, innovation and technology directors, and UNDP country directors took part in the discussion and presented their thoughts on how to use social media effectively (Dawn, 2014). It

has also been advised that the government and public interface be strengthened in order to include citizen feedback on a regular basis.

Dr. Jaffery and experts present a model to engage people, government officials, and political leaders to improve service delivery while keeping in mind the opportunistic behavior ingrained in Pakistani society. However, the model has a high risk of failure due to the opportunistic behavior in Pakistani society (Marwat, 2016). People were able to avoid money by constraining old media by using social media's cost-free stage, which allowed them to start up free campaigns on Facebook and other social media forums (Eijaz, 2013). According to Pankaj Mishra, social media gives voters direct access to their leaders, and the trend of social media is altering Pakistan.

The university generation, according to the literature, is quite interested in using the internet. A study of leading Universities in Islamabad/Rawalpindi, NUML University, International Islamic University, Quaid-e-Azam University and Fatima Jinnah University was conducted to examine the use of social networks and online political activism by students during de-political clashes to the Pakistani government's declaration of emergency on November 3, 2007. According to the conclusions drawn from the study, internet played critical role during political crises in Pakistan in support of democracy, freedom of expression, and a high level of awareness about civic rights. The study was a vital source of information on corruption, political wrongdoings, and the potential status of having a strong media allows a system to attain openness, which is a requirement for accountability (Shaheen, 2008).

## 2.9.2 Parties Standpoint regarding use of social media as political communication tools

The current world is quite rampant with modern technology replacing the old techniques. With advancement in every field, social media has become an important tool to provide audience with the latest information. It has stamped its importance by playing a vital role in galvanizing the people belonging to different groups, political parties are no exception. Social media's colossal role in spreading awareness among masses cannot be denied. All the selected political parties have mentioned the use of social media as political communication tools. As far as the PML (N) is concerned, they have the vision to use social media to, *'create more effective public awareness campaigns, expand the use of traditional media and explore the use of new media and social media, especially to reach young people.'* As far as PML (N) is concerned, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has always focused to use social media for positive purposes. Keeping in view the party guidelines, their social media team focuses on spreading the message of PML-N to each and every citizen of Pakistan voluntarily. They are assuring that the authenticity of information is prioritized while curbing the false news. Their moto and doctrine are as under:

- We try to show the positive image of Pakistan.
- We nullify the biased propaganda against PML-N.
- We highlight the innumerable projects laid down by PML-N.
- We work for Civilian Supremacy which is the soul of our constitution.
- We assure the authenticity of news provided by us.
- We do constructive criticism for our country's betterment.
- We avoid all sorts of personal maligning and bullying.
- We reply our political opponents with facts and figures.
- We refrain from engaging ourselves in any sort of malice.
- We focus on defying the fake news.
- We adhere to moral values.
- We work voluntarily for our party.
- We maintain a strict check and balance.
- We raise awareness among the people.
- We rely on multiple sources before publishing any information.

As far as PTI is concerned, ever since its inception in 2006, PTI Social Media Team has led the way on political activism on the Internet. From developing the first website of any political party, to the first official twitter and facebook channels, to making the first Mobile (iPhone and Android) Apps of a political party, PTI has been the leader.

The beauty of the team lies in the brotherhood and teamwork. We respect one another for our passion for Pakistan and PTI. We go the extra mile to achieve excellence in our projects and believe in turning the toughest challenges into opportunities. We never give up in our relentless fight against the Status Quo. We promise to give it all until we help PTI achieve the goal of Naya Pakistan. If there are any disagreements within the party, we never raise the issue publicly and encourage others to bring the dissent in-house.

Every last person on the team is important. We tolerate difference of opinion. We do not hurl abuses on anyone who speaks against PTI. We try to engage them and raise the facts to change their minds. We value opinions of the teammates. Every one of us employs a shared responsibility to pursue excellence and build a respectful, collaborative environment of which we can all be proud. The following under-mentioned are the vision, mission and moto of PTI social media team.

- We lead the way and innovate
- We believe in teamwork
- We propagate PTI's message on the Internet
- We respect difference of opinion
- We never hurl any abuses no matter what the circumstances
- We believe in delivering excellence
- We are inclusive
- We take upon the toughest challenges
- We never target personal lives of anyone
- We offer gratitude to all volunteers spreading PTI's message
- We never dissent publicly on internal issues of the party
- We reward on merit and believe in democracy within the team

- We respect one another and help each other
- We never give up

## **2.10 The political Message**

The official style of political discourse employed in mainstream media, newspapers and TV, differs significantly from the political Message generated on Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms. Any attempt by political player to express political messages using formal language would fail since social media uses an informal manner to do so. Political actors are clearly aided by “non-political” events that they debate in public, whether online or offline. As we all know, online users utilize social networking sites for fun rather than political debates or interests. Since the establishment of the third phase of political communication systems, the use of amusement in political communication (known as infotainment) has been underway. As a result, politicians' use of non-political events to politicize them plays a significant part in increasing online voters' adherence to their Twitter account or Facebook page (Tanase Tasente, 2020).

## **2.11 The role of political parties in political communication**

Political parties play a critical role in mobilizing the public through various forms of political communication (Heather Savigny, 2002). However, in order to assure effective political communication, the techniques utilized to exploit public opinion are equally crucial. According to the author, public opinion is critical for efficient political communication since it aids parties in acquiring credibility among the general public.

The communication function, which often refers to an arbitrator between the rulers and the ruled, is a systematic role of political parties that is commonly given to such organizations. This position has been dramatically impacted by the emergence of social media, since people have

employed mass media for this purpose. As a result, maintaining party loyalty has become far more difficult for political parties.

According to Stromback & Van Aelst (2013), the media has quickly taken over several socio-political dimensions in today's globe. As a result, political parties have attempted to create a strong presence across all platforms of media, including social media. Mediatization refers to the new media domination, and political parties are attempting to adapt to it on various levels and in various ways.

Finally, political parties' movements, observation, and shoulder, according to Jhon T. Jost (2018), have a significant beneficial or negative impact on the state's development and functional ability. In support of and opposition to protest and election actions, social media facilitates the exchange of emotive and motivating content. It is an investigation into how political parties may effectively transmit their message and generate support for election campaigns by leveraging social media platforms for political communication.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **3.1 The Public Sphere Model**

According to the public sphere model, media are more than just profit-making components of large conglomerates. Instead, they are our primary information sources and storytellers. As such, the media have become the core of a crucial democratic site that social theorists refer to as the public sphere. The concept of the public sphere is associated with the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas, whose classic study *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* described the importance of a vibrant public sphere for democratic societies.<sup>8</sup> Building on Habermas's work, a growing body of literature has argued that the principal way that mass media can contribute to democratic processes is by helping to cultivate social spaces for ongoing public dialogue.<sup>9</sup> This model posits an open media system that is widely accessible. It argues that information should circulate freely, without government intervention to restrict the flow of ideas. Ownership and control of media outlets should be broad and diversified, with many owners instead of a few large ones. Ideally, some media channels would be publicly accessible for citizens to use to communicate with each other. If a strong democracy requires citizen participation, that participation is made meaningful by continuing, wide-ranging public discourse, to which the media can contribute immeasurably. Fundamentally, the public sphere model views people as citizens rather than consumers. Furthermore, it contends that media should "serve" these citizens, rather than "target" potential consumers. Murdock, for example, suggests three important ways that communication systems are central for the constitution of citizenship. First, in order for people to exercise their full rights as citizens, they must have access to the information, advice, and analysis that will enable them to know what their personal rights are and allow them to pursue them

effectively. Second, they must have access to the broadest possible range of information, interpretation, and debate on areas that involve public political choices, and they must be able to use communications facilities in order to register criticism and propose alternative courses of action. And third, they must be able to recognize themselves and their aspirations in the range of representations on offer within the central communications sectors and be able to contribute to developing and extending these representations. Thus, for participatory democracy to function, citizens must learn how to take part, and they must have access to the resources necessary for meaningful participation. From a public sphere perspective, the potential contribution of media to such a democracy is in the work of creating and sustaining a citizenry that is prepared for participation in public life. It is a task for which markets are ill suited.

According to Habermas (1991), the public sphere is a place where "private people join together as a public" with the objective of using reason to develop critical knowledge and, as a result, political revolution. The public sphere, in particular, requires open access to information, equitable and protected participation, and a lack of institutional power when it comes to the economy. The public sphere, according to Habermas (1991), does not exist in modernity because of the influence of money on the media through corporate interests.

As a result, the three elements essential for a public sphere have been restricted. Habermas (1991) believes that speech communities can recreate the public sphere in modernity. Speech communities value a type of discourse called as communicative action. Individuals, in this case political leaders, use coercive means to alter public opinion, which is the polar opposite of strategic discourse. As a result, it is possible to successfully transmit a political message regarding decision-making.



Overall, the public sphere, which is supported by these speech communities, is essential to the survival of a participatory democracy that leads to social movement action (Habermas, 1991). In our theoretical framework, however, social media is seen as a possible tool for involving people in communicative action in order to build a public realm and participatory democracy. Although such disputes frequently result in social movements, they will not be the focus of our theoretical framework.

### **3.2 Public Sphere Model in Pakistan's Context**

In the context of Pakistan, we have chosen the role of political leaders as our Independent Variable, which is thought to be extremely important in the public realm. The dependent variables will be generated whether political leaders have used Facebook and Twitter (Our Public Sphere for this study) in a favorable way. The enhancement of political messaging is the study's dependent variable.

### **3.3 Gratification Theory**

The gratification theory underpins the research. This hypothesis is linked to Udejinta's (2011) and Abubakar's (2013) research. The theory is concerned with what people do with media rather than what media do with people (Osifeso, 2008). According to idea, people have a say in how the media impacts them, according to the notion. That is, uses and pleasure theory approaches media use and effect from a more humanistic perspective. It is assumed that audience members are not passive but actively involved in understanding and integrating media into their daily life. People use media to obtain specific gratifications, according to the hypothesis. The core idea is that audience members have particular expectations that enable them to selectively expose, attend to, and recall media messages based on the perceived gratifications that such communications bring, according

to Adeyanju and Haruna (2012). As a result, because individuals select content, generate meaning, and act accordingly on it, this theory highlights the critical role of humans in the communication process (Akinwunmi, 2011). Social media users are intentionally seeking such Messages, according uses and gratification theory, as they can chose and employ technology in ways that meet their needs. As a consequence, they, the audience, are engaged rather than passive. Similarly, during electoral campaigns and other electioneering operations, political candidates can choose and employ the medium and message content of their choice.

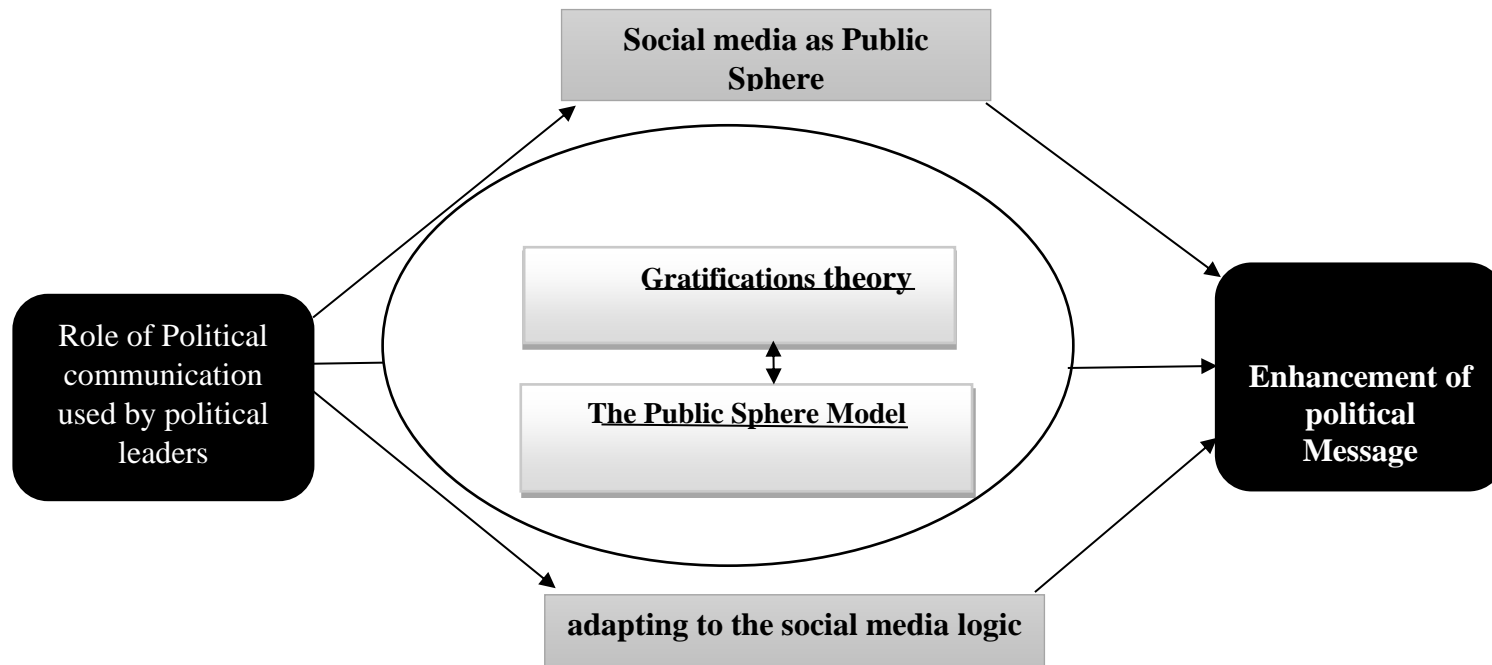
### **3.4 Social Media Logic**

Programmability, popularity, connection, and datafication are the four pillars of social media logic. Researchers claim that social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are causing new dynamics in information production, selection, dissemination, and consumption that are driven by a social media logic (Dijck & Poell, 2013). The social media logic (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013) and network media logic (Klinger & Svensson, 2014) models depict how a social media platform's operations influence user social interactions and information choices. In social media logic, the precise "norms, rules, and practices by which these platforms process information, news, and communication, and more broadly, how they channel social traffic strategies, processes, and economies—underpinning its dynamics" are discussed (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013).

Actors must generate likes, shares, and comments in order to develop popularity, attract attention, and maintain a social media presence. The criteria for what content are shown on social media platforms in this political communication scenario are determined by both codes (or algorithms) and individuals' interactions with content. Social media logic, and network media logic both theories have been developed based on previous research, however they have yet to be

empirically proven. In Pakistan's political atmosphere, I used social media logic theory to investigate the link between technology (platforms) and users (political leaders, media actors, and people), since it has an effect on the platform's algorithm and performance.

Figure 3.1: A Model of proposed Conceptual Framework



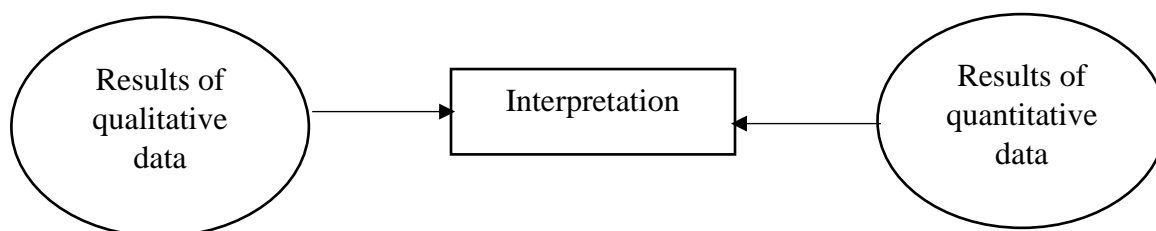
## **Chapter 4**

### **Research Design and Methodology**

#### **4.1 Research Design**

The research design establishes a methodical approach to conducting research in a proper manner (Creswell, 2014). According to researchers and academics, appropriate research methods should be selected based on the goals and type of research being conducted. Because this study focused on the role of political communication in improving political Message, a comparative study of Pakistani political parties was conducted, using the triangulation method, in which mixed methods, are used to collect, analyze, and integrate both either qualitative or quantitative data in a single study (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Denscombe, 2008). Mixed method designs are of four types: 1) triangulation, 2) explanatory, 3) exploratory and 4) embedded, according to Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009).

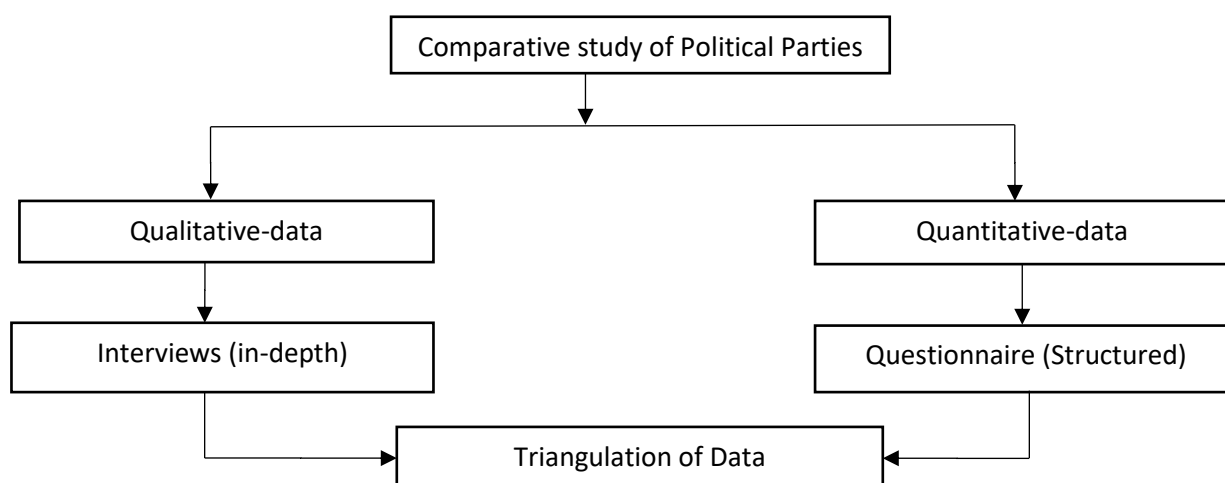
In current study, the researcher most appropriately used mixed method (triangulation method) by first conducting semi-structured interviews then administered a questionnaire to fetch both qualitative and quantitative data respectively. The study applied exploratory-descriptive approach for this study. The interview findings were coded and analyzed using Thematic Analysis, and quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to support the findings from interview. Focus of study mainly remained on qualitative data. This method was chosen because it solved the drawbacks of utilizing only one method by including varied viewpoints from stakeholders in the study and exploring broader topics in order to answer the research questions by combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies.



**Fig 1: Triangulation Design (Creswell & Clark, 2011)**

## 4.2 Framework and Methodology

The current study used a triangulation strategy that included qualitative and quantitative data. The study's framework, which is divided into two phases, is depicted in the diagram below:



**Fig 2: Diagram depicting two phases of study**

## 4.3 Qualitative Approach

The current study's first goal was to look into the function of political communication in improving political Message. To get a thorough understanding of these questions, a qualitative technique was chosen. When dealing with important issues involving socio-cultural, conventional,

or phenomenological realities, a qualitative approach is best (Yin, 2013). Qualitative research approaches are ideal for delving into complex social situations like developing a communication impairment (Wilson & Kim, 2021). As a result, the context and intricacy of these core research questions were the most important considerations in choosing a qualitative technique. Because many of the inquiry parts were subjective and naturalistic, a qualitative technique through interview was the best way to get answers to the study questions.

In qualitative research, the most rampant form of data collection is interviews (Simmons-Mackie & Lynch, 2013). Although the term "interview" has been described in a variety of ways over the years from different perspectives, for the purposes of this thesis, an interview is defined as a conversation initiated by a researcher's need for data, in which the researcher and participant "produce language data about beliefs, behavior, ways of classifying the world, or how knowledge is categorized" (Green & Thorogood, 2004, p. 87). Although, interviews are conducted in variety of ways, however, in this study, the researcher held face-to-face interview with each respondent.

### **4.3.1 Data Collection**

The study attempted to find answers to the research questions by selecting political communication actors, political leaders, media actors and citizens. Some data collection procedures are common in qualitative research and can be found in a variety of approaches of inquiry. Interviews, focus groups, observation, and other methods are among them.

The data was gathered through in-depth face-to-face interviews, which is considered as most popular data collection method while collecting qualitative data (Lynch, 2013). Interviews are the best strategy for reducing non-response and increasing the quality of data acquired (Lavrakas, 2008). To acquire vital qualitative data and information, the interview schedule is

comprised of open-ended questions. It was not any easy job to conduct research interviews. There were logistical issues, such as acquiring access and forming a rapport. This happens in political study because most researchers want to speak with elites, such as members of parliament, government ministers, and high-ranking civil officers, or other people in positions of authority. This group of persons is concerned about their reputation, keeps very busy schedules, and frequently hires others to handle their correspondence and phone calls. As a result, making contact and negotiating access takes a lot of time (Burnham et al 2004; Lilleker 2003), so this faced by the researcher.

### **4.3.2 Sampling Technique and Sample**

In terms of sample approach, the study used a purposive sampling strategy. Purposive sampling criteria were used to choose the sample, which was done based on personal judgement. Purposive sampling allows researchers to choose examples based on their own judgement that best answer the research questions and meet the objectives. When working with very small samples, this type of sample is frequently used (Neumann, 2005). Elmendorf and Luloff (2001), advised to take sample of 7-14 interviews, thus 12 in-depth interviews have been conducted, 03 from each of the major political parties PTI, PML(N), PPP, and political journalists.

### **4.3.3 Data Analysis**

To identify the answers to the research questions, the acquired data was evaluated thoroughly. Transcripts of in-depth interviews were made. Following that, the transcribed material was examined using Thematic Analysis, a method suggested by (Braun & Clark, 2006). Identifying traditionally significant patterns or themes, aligning textual coding, and data classification with the themes, and interpreting the resulting thematic structure for relationships,



commonalities, predominant patterns, explanatory principles, or hypothetical constructs are all part of thematic data analysis.

## **4.4 Quantitative Approach**

By selecting sample from target population, survey research presents a numerical portrayal of attitudes, view point and patterns in quantitative mode. According to Creswell (2014), depending upon the nature of data requested, both cross-sectional or longitudinal survey research can use structured questionnaire or interviews to gather data from research participants.

### **4.4.1 Survey**

Because the study's goal was to generalize findings from a sample of the public using a questionnaire, a survey method was used. A questionnaire-based survey method provides a quantitative description of a subset of a community and allows the researcher to draw conclusions about generalizing the findings to entire population from chosen sample Creswell (1999).

The study is descriptive in nature determining the applicability of existing body of knowledge and variables are also known. The nature of problem is to test the previous knowledge and explore the role of political communication in enhancing political Message, where the researcher is independent and unbiased from that being researched. A survey method is therefore the best approach for this research. The survey was adopted and adapted from Karlsen and Enjolras (2016), Vaccari et al (2013). Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2013), Hamajoda (2016), Hamajoda (2016), Ravi and Priya (2015) and Nastiti et al (2018).

### **4.4.2 Data collection**

The quantitative data for this research study was acquired via questionnaire. A questionnaire, according to Sekaran (2000), is a pre-written set of question, inviting participants to record their answers, which is typically restricted to few options only. The guided factors derived from literature were kept in mind while designing questionnaire for current study. As mentioned in the previous section that survey questionnaire was adopted from multiple sources. It began with a brief introduction that explained the survey's aim and relevance, as well as a plea that respondents take part in this important initiative and be honest in their responses. The questionnaire's wording and phrasing were made to the possible extent. It was in closed form using 5-point Likert scales (e.g., strongly agree to strongly disagree).

#### **4.4.3 Sampling Technique and sample**

The researcher adopted simple random sampling method to collect the data from participants of target population. Academics have debated what constitutes a sufficient sample size. As a general rule, minimum size of sample should five times the total number of variables to be studied, with a size of 10:1 being the most appropriate (Hair Jr, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2010). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), ten times the number of variables utilized in the study should be drawn. Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, and King (2006) also suggested a sample size of at least 10 respondents for every parameter estimate. In this study our sample size of 388 would be an appropriate measure to generate accurate results the chosen field of research in a Pakistani situation at an individual level.

#### **4.4.4 Data Analysis**

After collection of data, each item in the questionnaire was coded. The responses were then entered manually to a computer program Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version

25). The researcher followed broad guidelines of Sekeran (2000) regarding handling blank responses and treated it in two ways. The questionnaires with 25 percent or more unanswered items by the respondents were excluded from the data for analysis. In other case of less than 25 percent unanswered items, the program was allowed to ignore blank responses. Furthermore, in order to extract an idea, feelings, perceptions of the respondents about each item in the questionnaire, descriptive statistics mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentage were used.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Result and Analysis**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

To answer the research questions, data analysis is required to finish this study. The findings from the study will be analyzed and interpreted in this chapter, which will be divided into two sections. The first phase consists of a qualitative interpretation based on interview results. The qualitative data acquired via semi-structured questionnaire is analyzed in the first portion. The primary goal of this research was to look into how political communication takes place on digital social networks, with a particular focus on Pakistan. This study intends to pinpoint new methods for interaction in a hybrid media system like Pakistan's using affordance approach to analyze the process of political communication adopted by key actors. One of its primary arguments is that social media logic has an impact on political communication since it provides new avenues for visibility and influence.

#### **5.2 Phase one: Qualitative Interpretation**

The study's primary research goal was to look into social media logic, exploring and investigating the affordances of social media platforms as well as the strategic communication and interplay of three key groups using platform of social media: political players, media actors, and citizens. In digital era, social media logic, according to this study, constitutes modern mechanism of visibility, garnering attention of audience, and potential impact. The study came to the conclusion by reaching the actor categories: political leaders, media actors and citizens in our conceptual framework of political communication using social media platforms. The investigation began with single primary question and three sub-questions:

RQ1. How and why political leaders, media players and citizens are adapting to social media logic in Pakistan?

- *RQ1a (Political leaders): How and why are political leaders using social media?*
- *RQ1b (Media players): How and why media players are using social media?*
- *RQ1c (Citizens): How and why are citizens using social media for political purposes?*

The research literature as well as mainstream media have voiced high hopes for the potential impact of social media that might have on political communication. In particular, the possibilities for enhanced or simply increased dialogue and for mobilizing voters have been pointed to as means of increasing political interest, participation and trust (Gabriel, 2017). This research has shown that social media's interaction potential has not been fully realized, correlating with prior studies (Luders, Folstand & Waldal, 2014). The study aligns with literature on history of communication technology, which indicates that short-term expectations of technological change are often unrealistic, but modern communication technology can transform society, power and politics over time (Winston & Edelbach, 2000).

Social media, in Pakistani politics, is both reinforcing and changing power connections. We've noticed that three mainstream political parties have succeeded to attract the social media audience just as they did in traditional media. For Pakistani voters, television also remains the most significant source of information. Broadcasting of information is the common communication way of Pakistan political leaders on social media than dialogue or interactive session with voters. Social media also make it convenient to ensure grassroots mobilization and political participation. The PTI waged a strong grassroots campaign in the 2018 election, securing seats in parliament as a result. The study has classified the value of affordances; visibility, networking, polishing, segmentation

and connectedness in connection with three primary categories of actors, based on the framework outlined.

Qualitative approach was used to find the answers of research question 1 and sub-questions. The technique helps to provide substance and reveal a detailed information to have a clear understanding about a problem. To achieve the objective, the researcher conducted 12 in-depth face-to-face interviews of individual respondents 03 each from politicians representing political parties PPPP, PTI, PML(N) and political journalists. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented below:

### **5.2.1 Demographic Characteristics**

It was found that most respondents (41.5%) were between the age of 36 and 40 while 24.9% were 41 years of age and elder. Likewise, 24.9% of respondents were of age between 31 and 36. Finally, only 8.3% of the respondents were in the age group of 24 and 30. It was found that almost all the respondents had the valuable experience in their respective organizations. Out of total respondents interviewed, 33.2% had the 6 to 10 years of experience. Similarly, 33.2% of the respondents also had the experience of 15 years and above. Accordingly, 11 to 15 years' experienced respondents were about 24.9% while only 8.3% had the experience of 1-5 years. Table 5.1 shows the demographic features of all respondents in a self-explanatory manner.

**Table 5.1: Demographic data of respondents**

<b>Demographic Data</b>	<b>%Age</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	77
Female	23
<b>Age</b>	
24-30	5
31-36	22
36-40	23
41-above	50
<b>Experience (in Years)</b>	
1-5	5
6-10	18
11-15	26
15 and above	51

*Source: Field work Survey,*

The interviews transcripts were then analyzed using thematic data analysis as follows:

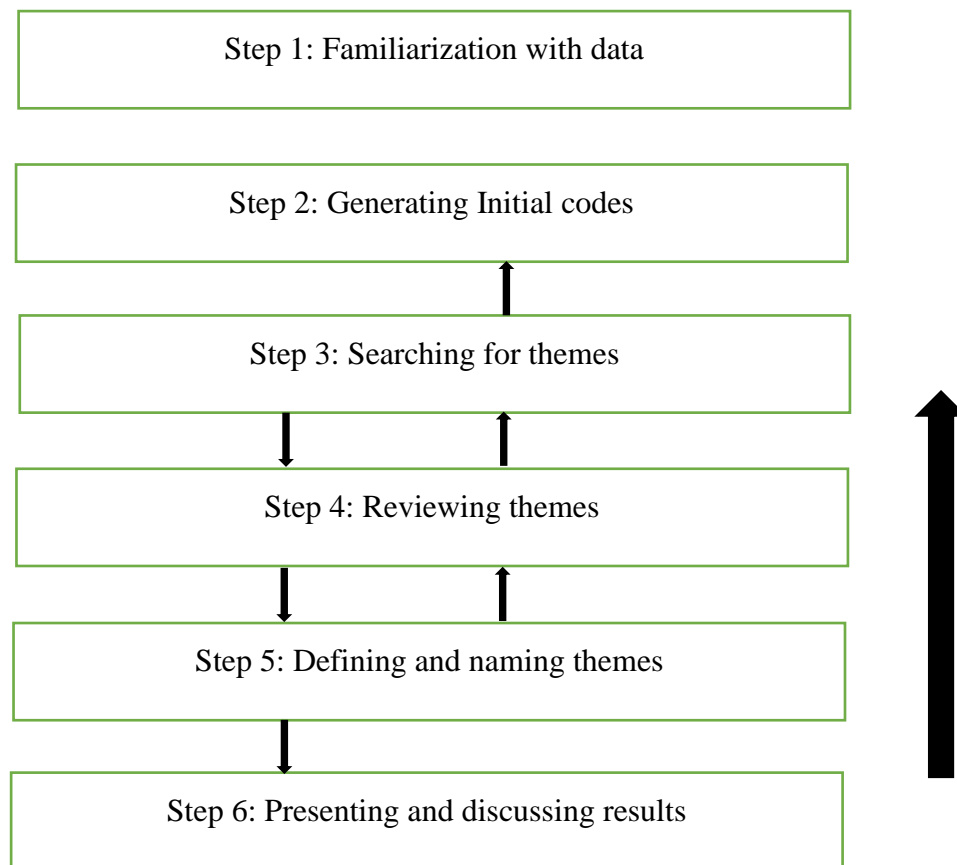
### **5.2.2 Thematic analysis**

This analysis method seeks to uncover and create patterns and themes from qualitative data acquired using various techniques. Thematic analysis, according to Novell, Norris, Moules, & White (2017) can be used across diverse epistemologies and can address a wide range of research issues. This method is quite adaptable, and it may be used to find, analyze, organize, explain, and report on a variety of themes found in a data set. Because there are no formal rules or prescriptions for conducting the analysis, it can be quickly applied to big data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Furthermore, King (2004) claims that new qualitative data researchers might take advantage of this by handling data in a systematic manner, which will aid in the production of a clear report.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), depending on the research design, a top-down or bottom-up strategy might be utilized for analysis. All the extracted data is summarized and categorized for identification of themes. Braun & Clarke (2006) suggested a very practical structured approach for thematic analysis split into six steps process:

**Figure 1: Thematic analysis process**



**a) Step 1: Familiarizing with data**



At the beginning, the researcher has to get involved with acquired data. It's critical to immerse yourself in the facts in order to grasp the content's depth and breadth. This method entails reading data repeatedly in order to look for trends. In this phase, rough notes are taken in order to begin the next phase. Informal coding is done here, and in the next steps, it is turned into meaningful themes. The data used for analysis in this study is of a primary nature. This analysis is based on each individual's interview, with each extract lasting approximately 30 minutes. A total of twelve interviews were taken, resulting in a four-hour extract. The responders were on average roughly 40 years old.

### **b) Step 2: Generating initial codes**

After the data has been sorted in a meaningful and systematic order, the initial codes are created in this phase. Codes broke down large amounts of data into smaller, more comprehensible chunks. It represents data that is both fascinating to analyze and assessable. This aids in the extraction of useful data, while irrelevant material is removed because it is not intended for coding. The data is coded using two methods depending upon theme generation, which are either data or theory driven. The former is inductive in nature, as it has no pre-set codes in mind, and themes are determined solely by the data. Whereas, in latter approach, questions are pre-defined, and codes are generated on the basis of these questions making it deductive. The ongoing research is primarily theoretical in nature.

#### ***b-1) Coding process***

At the outset, after ordering the data pre-requisite for developing a comprehensive perspective of respondents, initial codes are generated. These codes are then compared and tweaked to make them more relevant to the study topics. The entire procedure is carried out by

hand and finally entered into a word document. An experienced research proceeds quickly in this process and some cases, first two phases of thematic analysis are combined by the researchers. The initial codes are as follows:

***b-2) Codes***

Some of the codes as examples are presented below:

- FB is the most important social media platform because it is easy and inexpensive to share/exchange the views with voters and other stakeholders.
- I use this tool to communicate the party manifesto, highlight the issues, future plans, share campaign schedule and directly communicate with my voters and supporters.
- Yes, now politicians are more aware of and acknowledging the importance of social media platform. Therefore, you will see the extensive use of live Facebook coverage of candidates and party campaigns for raising the party slogans, propaganda and persuasion of public and there will be a competition among parties for exploitation of this medium.
- I frequently use both Twitter and Facebook to share pictures and videos of party and my own meetings, rallies and jalsas and other events to convince the voters.
- Obviously, this social media platform keeps me connected with my voters, supporters and party workers.
- During election campaign, the specific focus is on the convincing of voters to motivate them to participate in election campaign and earn their favour for costing of votes. While, outside election campaign, I use this medium to engage with general public by sharing posts, videos, and events.
- I use the Facebook API to track activities of followers, friends and party workers.

- I personally reply to the people who comment on my posts to show them that how much they are given importance. I go live on Facebook, share latest developments on political issues and hold Q&A sessions with fans and followers just to keep them updated about anything happening around as well as highlighting their specific concerns.
- I do maintain any account on Twitter. So, I use Facebook to run/promote my campaign in election and even after election.
- There is no significant difference in my use of Twitter during and outside election campaign. I use this platform to update daily life events of communities, my constituents; share information, opinions and activities to maintain a close connection with voters and supports.
- Twitter is a valuable political communication tool. As a result, I employ this medium to reach out to the broader population by emphasizing their difficulties and worries. Sharing news, disseminating information, accommodating public goals, and interacting with the larger community has become a vital part of my daily routine.

### **c) Step 3: Searching themes**

In qualitative study, theme is a sequence of words, serve as synoptic and precise representation that respondents attribute to an object or situation. In this phase, a list is constructed by highlighting the key codes. Visual representations are used to illustrate all of the available topics as well as all of the codes that are linked to each other. The goal is to use a variety of codes to find an overall theme. Tables or mind maps can be used to organize the codes and identify themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe theme as a pattern in the data set that addresses the research question and has some noteworthy properties. There are no limitations or specific guidelines dictating the number of themes or sub-themes to be identified from coded data. It entirely depends

how these themes accurately represent and comprehend the complexity of collected data from respondents. The preliminary themes identified by researcher include; dialogue and feedback; social media for election campaign; social media as view of reality; political actors' visibility; media actors' visibility; citizens' visibility; and editorial media's role in transition.

#### **d) Step 4: Review of themes**

In this phase, patterns are reviewed and refined before being transformed into themes. Each code is analyzed to see if there are any similarities between them before being grouped into a single theme and subthemes. All of the codes are organized into themes and subthemes using this method. Themes and subthemes are then arranged according to the study questions. To determine the significance of topics, the context of every data is taken into account. The themes and their relationships with one another are clearly indicated at the end of this step. The following section discusses all the themes and findings linked to them.

#### **e) Step 5 & 6: Defining themes and write up (results)**

This stage entails identifying the identified themes, as all themes and sub topics were assessed in step 4. The purpose of this stage is to extract the essence of each theme based on its significance. This step establishes themes by addressing the key themes as well as the relationships between sub themes and the main subject. For each study question, a map is created that depicts the primary themes and subthemes. Thematic maps for each study question are shown in the section below.

### **5.2.3 Theme 1: Dialogue and Feedback**

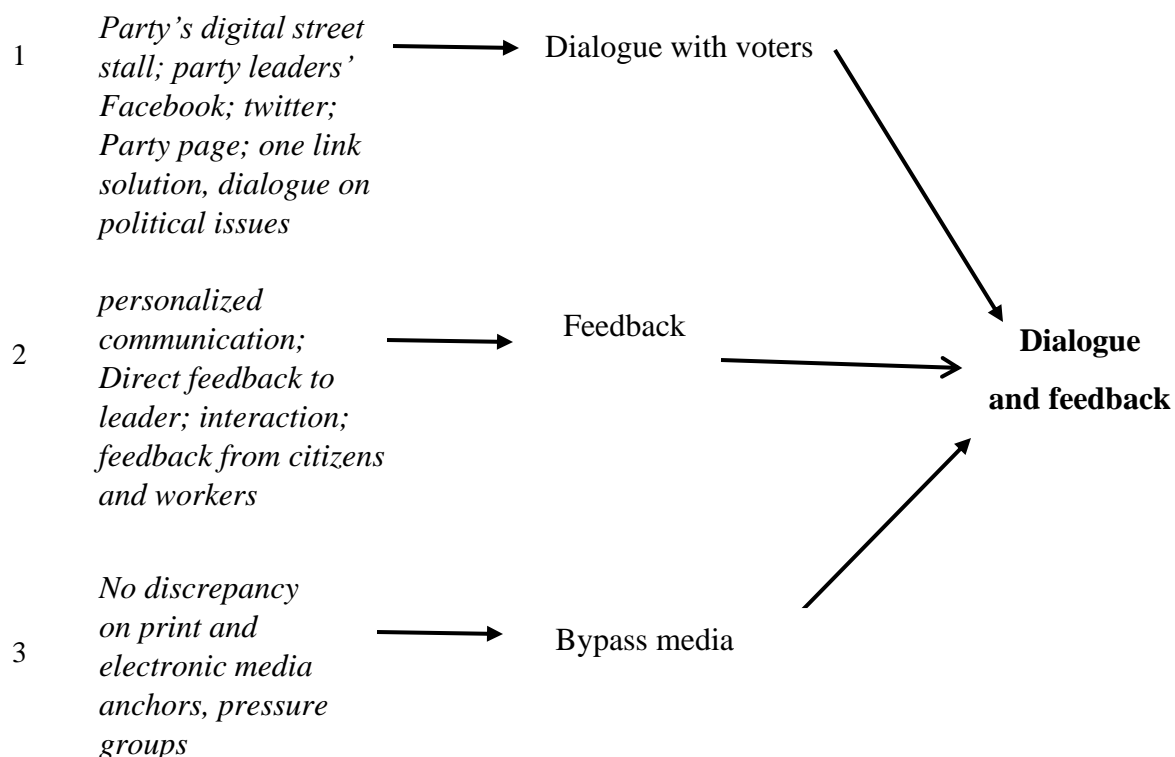
According to interviews, political players prefer online communication on Facebook and Twitter to interact with voters due to three strategic purposes:

- 1) Dialogue with voters,
- 2) Feedback,
- 3) Bypass media

According to the informants, the most promising part of using social media during an election is contact and debate with potential voters because of its ability to change political dynamics by linking politicians and citizens through modern means. The findings of discovered themes, patterns, and nodes are presented in the table given below:

**Table 5.2: Codes, Pattern and Theme (dialogue and feedback)**

Sr. No	Identified Codes	Patterns	Theme
--------	------------------	----------	-------



*Source:* Extracted themes from data

The findings of pattern 1 collected through theme analysis are presented in the next section. The dialogue on Facebook is similar to conversation with public on political street. It is regarded wrong to turn your back to public on the street, similarly, it is also regarded inappropriate not to respond online:

*We have recruited people to handle anything that comes up on social media which is regarded as the Party's digital street stall corner". Many people, I believe, are careless on social media. Voters are inquiring, but they are not receiving response. As a result, we should emphasize that everybody raising a question should receive a response from the party.*

The very concept of turning your back and not responding voters on Facebook or Twitter seems to resonate particularly strongly among political parties believe on the idea of “digital street stall”. However, Facebook pose challenge to parties, because respondents feel that tailored communication has a greater beneficial impact on number of comments as well as interactions with users. As a result, parties usually place a higher priority on the activity of their leaders' Facebook and Twitter pages than on the website of the party. Mostly, the party leaders chose to post their own updates on social media, but they are faced with time constrains to respond to individuals. To address this problem, parties usually employ communication advisors who instantly respond on party's leader behalf. Facebook sites of party's leader and website of the party, the following sorts of content are posted: Party pages are dedicated for major political issues and activities of the party while, party leaders' pages concentrate on day-to-day business and sharing of personal experiences. During the election campaign, the parties had people dedicated to social media operations. The respondents viewed:

*We're figuring out how to get more two-way communication going. We've gotten quite good at it lately, and we answer a lot of questions on Facebook and talk to people about it. However, we must do more to engage people and spark conversations.*

### 5.2.4 Theme 2: Social media for election campaign

According to political parties, their social media profiles and websites have to deal with heavy traffic throughout the election campaign, especially during last few weeks. The parties well versed with the type of material can attract Facebook activity and engagement. Infographics (images, animated text or slogans), photographs, videos and relevant materials are posted on Facebook in order to encourage sharing and participation. Following table presents the findings of identified themes, patterns and nodes.

**Table 5.3: Codes, Pattern and Theme (social media for Election campaign)**

Sr. No	Identified Codes	Patterns	Theme
1	A significant amount of Traffic to their social media Pages. Election campaign; Social media networks created a space for progressive politics	Content creation to motivate voters	<b>Social media for Election campaign</b>
2	Interaction and Engagement with Voters; party leaders Interaction on media; Highlight issues easily	Interaction and Engagement with voters	

*Source:* Extracted themes from data

The findings of pattern 1 collected through theme analysis are presented in the next section. Consumers respond better to visual content on Facebook because photographs receive more space in the newsfeed—and thus more attention—than text:

*Consumers get more engaged when we can provide “behind the scenes” access, such as images, films, and infographics—all of which are easy to understand and share. We want to do it as much as possible since it boosts engagement.*

Party leaders asking for advice, publishing personal photos, and criticizing political opponents are all examples of activities that might promote Facebook participation. Political parties may now communicate and dialogue with members and supporters, as well as friends of friends who aren't necessarily committed to the party's ideas, thanks to Facebook. Several people believe that a political message shared by a friend on Facebook is regarded differently from a political ad on Facebook or another website. As a result, the parties hold Facebook "shares" in high regard. Second, internet debate can provide useful information to political parties and may have policy repercussions. PTI describes social media as "very useful instruments."

Social media is frequently used by political parties to track feedback and reactions to public appearances by politicians. As a result, the parties are employing the data to conduct quick real-time polls. Whether it's a radio interview, a talk show appearance, or a newly launched campaign, the parties are continuously monitoring and evaluating the feedback, particularly on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Despite the fact that social media users may not represent the total population, the rapid response on social media is valuable. Third, political parties can use social media to bypass the mainstream media and define issues in their own terms. Social media is challenging the media's role as gatekeepers, choosing and deciding which information and stories should be given prominence (Chadwick, 2013; Stromback, 2009). Parties try to “define” narrative by utilizing social media, and if the viewpoint is strong enough, the media will pay



attention to the blog post, Facebook update, or tweet. The politicians with the most Facebook fans can reach a greater audience than a news story in a major online newspaper when a political party post something on its Facebook page. The parties believe that combining traditional and social media to generate interest and influence the news agenda is the most effective strategy for generating interest and influencing the news agenda. Journalists pay attention to information on social media that is inflammatory or conflict-oriented, which leads to invites to debates on television or radio.

### **5.2.5 Theme 3: Social media as view of reality**

Social media is utilized to instill our perception of reality both before and after the story has run in the media. (Socialist Left) The term "rub in" refers to the Socialist Left's use of social media to generate or influence the way a topic is presented. Nonetheless, throughout the election campaign, social media presents political parties with a number of evident and pressing challenges.

The responders raised three points in particular:

- 1) Offensive behaviour online
- 2) Negative media attention, and
- 3) Limited resources

**Table 5.4. Codes, Pattern and Theme (dialogue and feedback)**

Sr. No	Identified Codes	Patterns	Theme
1	<i>potential threats to parties'; politicians' reputation; abuse Hurrell; responsible behavior, adding &amp; deleting comments</i>	Offensive online behavior	Social media as view of reality
2	<i>Negative comments highlighted; deleting negative comments; demonstrate uncivilized online behavior;</i>	Negative media attention	
3	<i>No dependency on print &amp; Electronic media; dedicated employees only for social media; following up of comments; limited online capacity</i>	limited resources	

First, irresponsible online activity on Facebook sites may jeopardize political parties' and leaders' reputations. As the use of social media in online politics expands, politicians and political parties are faced with responsibilities comparable to those of news editors: user comment moderation. As a result, all of the parties interviewed monitored comments on their Facebook pages, eliminating them and banning members. Most parties emphasize that those who engage in uncivilized online behavior (i.e., racist, inflammatory, and so on) are the ones who are removed, not those who disagree with the party or policy:

*We delete comments and block users on a regular basis. According to a post on SV's Facebook page, harassment and discriminating remarks will be removed. Views that are sexist, racist, or nasty are eliminated, not those that disagree with us. It does not demolish the dialogue for others because we are incapable of withstanding it.*

Misunderstandings in comment threads happen all the time. Furthermore, the tone of the comments has an impact on how the thread progresses. One of the parties has noticed the following trends:

*We receive a lot of comments straight soon when we publish something on Facebook. We've observed that those who are positive are more likely to enjoy things, while those who are negative are more likely to criticize. beginning. If the first few of comments are unfavorable, the rest of the thread is likely to be negative as well. We make an effort to be present at the start (of the discussion), to monitor the comments, to engage in the dialogue, and to clarify any misconceptions. It performs admirably, but it takes time.*

Another disadvantage stated by the parties is negative media attention relating to comments. Users' obscene Facebook remarks have the potential to become news items. Individual politicians, on the other hand, are more likely to publish anything embarrassing on social media that a journalist picks up. A popular news story is "someone says something stupid on Facebook or Twitter." As a result, the party's loss of control over social media is linked not only to citizens' increasing access to politicians' digital platforms, but also to politicians' expanded publishing capabilities, which are unregulated. Third, due to a lack of personnel and financial resources, the parties' ability to engage with citizens on social media is limited. While it is free to create a Facebook page or profile, there are fees involved with social networking. Because some parties did not have a specialized social media employee, updating and responding to people had to be included into the usual work routines of the three communication personnel. The person who was in contact with the media on a given subject was also responsible for publicizing the piece on the webpage and on social media, in addition to following up in the comment section:

*If we hadn't shared this (the response task) with everyone, one person would be stuck answering. It should be written within the job description. If you don't, you won't be able to answer to others.*

Furthermore, many parties' "authenticity standards," which demand party leaders to update and reply to constituents on social media, limit engagement dependent on the party leader's online capacity. One of the respondents stated, "One of the respondents made the following observation:

*We never tweet for her; we do it on Facebook once in a while, but she has to approve everything. She does a lot of her own writing. She can kill an afternoon by answering questions on Facebook. It's great to hear you're getting a reaction from Erna Solberg rather than an advisor. It implies that we are unable to respond to everyone, which is not the case.*

Every political party has a Facebook page for themselves and their leaders. In order to appear in users' newsfeeds, Facebook's algorithms incentivize page owners to pay for advertisements or sponsored content (Bechmann & Lomborg, 2013; Bucher, 2012). Because Facebook algorithms bury much of a political page's content in users' newsfeeds, political parties must encourage their supporters to be very active in addition to paying for newsfeed visibility. Sponsored content has also influenced how companies invest in advertising. Rather than advertising in newspapers, the majority of political parties prefer to do so on Facebook. All of Pakistan's major political parties use Facebook promoted content:

*We occasionally pay to promote content in order to raise its visibility, and we've noticed that it works because the graphs are rising. However, we haven't gone into any further depth about it.*

## **5.2.6 Theme 4: Political actor's visibility**

Political actors have the ability to directly publish and create visibility, according to the findings. For political parties, using social media to bypass the editorial media and transmit political content to large networks of followers is becoming a popular marketing and mobilization technique. This visibility is achieved by activities like likes, shares, and regular updates, and

distribution in the form of shares and retweets is especially tempting to political and media players (as well as individuals on occasion) who both wish to generate viral effects. Although it's tough to forecast which political content will garner the most likes, shares, and comments, passionate thoughts are usually a good place to start.

The issue, on the other side, is deciphering the social media logic's "code." Political actors are less likely to network with citizens through likes (Facebook) and favourites (Twitter), and those actors did not mention it much in interviews. Connectivity through comments, on the other hand, was considered as important, at least on a strategic level. While politicians may find it difficult to be as active on social media as they profess or as the public expects, smaller multiparty systems make this more likely. In Pakistan, as contrast to many other countries, stronger communication between political actors and citizens may be explained by a short distance between those who govern and those who govern, as well as a higher level of political trust. Reaching a huge audience on a single platform or channel is tough due to the fragmented media landscape. This participation necessitates political actors connecting to and participating in the myriad internet networks that exist. As a result, political actors perceive connecting through engagement and comments to be of medium value, whereas networking through likes is thought to be of low value. Because Facebook provides for a high degree of segmentation through analytics and measurement, political actors are using it to target certain groups with ads. Nonetheless, privacy regulations and limited resources (financial and human) make segmentation less relevant for Pakistani political actors than for political actors in other countries, according to study findings from that context.

### **5.2.7 Theme 5: Media actor's visibility**

In a hybrid media environment like Pakistan's, social media is becoming increasingly interwoven with the mass media. This is not to say that editorial mass media like television, radio,

news websites, and newspapers are no longer vital to political actors; rather, it means that social media services are now viable complements. Because media companies rely on social media for dissemination, having a presence on social media is crucial. Because media actors have their own publishing houses, publication is of medium importance to them (whether on paper, web, radio, or television). Political journalists, meanwhile, use social media to obtain information and news from both "regular" users and powerful and well-known individuals, showing that networking via acknowledging other users is of medium importance for media actors.

Connectivity through interaction and comments, on the other hand, takes a lot of time for media actors, especially political journalists, thus it's a low priority in this case. Thanks to digital publishing opportunities online, bypassing gatekeepers and getting attention through websites, blogs, social networks, and video-sharing sites has gotten easier. One of the media personnel interviewed referred to it as "secondary gatekeeping" when people help with spreading and making news content public through social networking sites. These secondary gatekeepers, which include political players and persons as well as media actors, control which material gets visibility in a media landscape heavily impacted by social sharing on Facebook and Twitter. The media industry's sinking economic model isn't helping things, which has been compounded by a drop in print circulation and the loss of advertising markets to Facebook and Google. Segmentation and analytics have always helped Facebook and Google, and media firms must increasingly segment and personalize their content as well.

### **5.2.8 Theme 6: Citizen's visibility**

Social media platforms, according to this study, undercut the news media's gatekeeping role by allowing political leaders to communicate directly with voters and vice versa. According to the survey, more Pakistanis are following or friending politicians on social media, notably

Facebook. As a result, citizens value networking based on the lowest common denominator highly (likes). This study discovers an increasing tendency of debate between voters and politicians on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, implying that these platforms allow for more multidirectional communication or "permanent exchange."

It was revealed that while citizen connectivity through comments and exchanges is growing, it is still rare. The majority of inhabitants, according to the survey respondents, use social media to communicate with friends and family, with only a small fraction using it for political objectives or to create material such as citizen journalism. Citizens regard publishing, visibility, and segmentation as trivial considerations. In Pakistan, however, social media is becoming increasingly important in terms of how news is discovered and distributed, particularly among young people. Editors and journalists have traditionally developed, selected, and published the most important news items, but we are increasingly finding that social media algorithms and people's sharing on social media are selecting and determining the most important stories.

### **5.2.9 Theme 7: Auditorial media's role in transition**

The shifting dynamics between edited mass media and social media have been discovered to be critical for how people learn about the world, which topics become relevant, how we make decisions, and, as a result, how democracy functions. As a result, social media logic has an effect on the effectiveness of digital communication. In the interaction between media and political players in Pakistan during the last few decades, Pakistani mass media have been labelled both "actor" and "director" due to their agenda-setting. Agenda-setting power, according to the respondents, is described as the ability to influence rather than decide, and this unseen influence may be more powerful than explicit decision-making authority.

The findings relating to quantitative interpretation of the results were reported in the next section.

### 5.3 Phase two: Quantitative Interpretation

The findings of following RQ2 and RQ3 are interpreted through quantitative survey. The questions are presented below:

RQ2: How can social media be used as a political communication tool in Pakistan to mobilize movements and create agendas?

RQ3: Whether or not the social media is strengthening the democratic process in Pakistan?

The questionnaire that was distributed among the respondents was used to obtain quantitative data. A basic random sample procedure was used to choose the respondents. The respondents' real and genuine responses were recorded in order to confirm that there was no breach of confidentiality. The questionnaire has two parts, the first represents the demographics and the second part with answers of research questions five-point Likert scale.

#### 5.3.1 Descriptive statistics

The data collected through questionnaire is to be analyzed using descriptive statistics in tabular form as detailed below:

Description		Number	%Age
<b>Gender</b>	Male	302	79.5
	Female	78	20.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age in Years</b>	18-25	123	32.4
	26-30	190	50.0
	31-35	56	14.7
	36 and above	11	2.9
<b>Qualification</b>	High School	45	11.8
	Undergraduate	187	49.2



<b>Current Job Title</b>	Graduate	139	36.6
	Post Graduate	9	2.4
	Student	93	24.5
	Working	110	28.9
	Entrepreneur	86	22.6
	None of the above	91	23.9
<b>Locality</b>	Urban	126	33.2
	Rural	80	21.1
	Semi Urban	174	45.8

**Table: 5.5 Descriptions of the Sample**

The survey questionnaire was completed by 380 people in total. Males accounted for 302 (79.5%) of the total, while females accounted for 78. (20.5 percent). This reflects the country's political climate and the widespread usage of new media technology by a large number of men and a small number of women. With respect to age, most of the participants are below 30 years of age. According to the table, 190 (50%) were between the ages of 26 and 30, 123 (30%) were between the ages of 18 and 25, and just 11 (2.9%) were over the age of 36. Participants' educational backgrounds revealed that (2.4%) had a postgraduate degree, (36.6%) were graduates, (49.2%) were undergraduates, and only 11.8 percent had Matric (High School) qualifications. The results show that participants from various walks of life took part in the survey: 93 (24.5%) were students, 110 (28.9%) were employed, 86 (22.6%) were running their own business (entrepreneur), and the remaining 91 were not (23.9 percent). The majority of the participants came from either urban or semi-urban settings, with 126 (33.2%) and 174 (45.8%) respectively. Only 80 (21.1%) of the respondents belong to rural areas.

<b>Do you have an account in any of these social media?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Facebook	220	57.9	57.9	57.9
Twitter	94	24.7	24.7	82.6
Blog	1	.3	.3	82.9

Others	65	17.1	17.1	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.6 Social media accounts**

As seen in the table 5.6 above, 314 (82.6%) of the samples taken were maintaining accounts on both mediums Twitter and Facebook. They were well aware of the importance of social media as political communication tool.

<b>Which of the following platforms do you use the most?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Facebook	209	55.0	55.0	55.0
Twitter	105	27.6	27.6	82.6
Others	66	13.4	13.4	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.7 Most used social media platform**

According to the above table 5.7, 219 (57.6%) respondents were active on Facebook, 95 (25%) on Twitter, and the remaining 66 (17.4%) said they were not active on these sites.

<b>What is the time spending every day on social media?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0-2	257	67.6	67.6	67.6
2-5	60	15.8	15.8	83.4
5-8	1	.3	.3	83.7
others	62	16.3	16.3	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.8 Time spending**

Almost 68 percent of respondents said they spend about two hours each day on social media, 15.8% said they spend 2-5 hours, and 16.3 percent said they don't know.

<b>What social media platforms do you mostly use for political campaigns?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Facebook	218	57.4	57.4	57.4
Twitter	92	24.2	24.2	81.6

Others	70	18.4	18.4	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.9 Political campaign**

According to the data in table 5.9, 57.4 percent of respondents use Facebook for political campaigns, 24.2 percent use Twitter, and the other 17.4 percent use other social media platforms or do not use social media at all.

<b>Are you aware of the political campaign that is taking place on social media?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	369	97.1	97.1	97.1
No	11	2.9	2.9	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.10 Awareness of political campaign on social media**

According to the foregoing findings, the vast majority of participants (97.1%) were fully aware of the political campaign on social media. Only 2.9 percent of people were unaware that political campaigns were taking place on social media.

<b>What is your main purpose for social media use?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Entertainment	98	25.8	25.8	25.8
News and Analysis	39	10.2	10.2	36.0
Exchange of views	31	8.2	8.2	44.2
Follow political developments	147	38.7	38.7	82.9
Interact with political leaders	65	17.1	17.1	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.11 Purpose of social media use**

People utilize social media for a variety of reasons, as shown in this table. The majority of them (38.7%) said they primarily use social media to keep up with political happenings, while 25% use

it for enjoyment, 17% to communicate with political leaders, 10.2% for news and analysis, and 8.2% for exchanging ideas.

<b>What social media platform do you use to keep track of political developments in Pakistan?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Facebook	204	53.7	53.7	53.7
Blog	4	1.1	1.1	54.7
Twitter	100	26.3	26.3	81.1
Online News Content	2	.5	.5	81.6
Emails	1	.3	.3	81.9
Others	69	18.2	18.2	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.12 Political developments on social media**

The majority of respondents (53.7%) said they use Facebook to stay up to date on political developments in Pakistan. Twitter is used for this purpose by 26.3 percent of participants.

<b>Are you following social media campaigns of political parties?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes, regularly	236	62.1	62.1	62.1
Sometimes	93	24.5	24.5	86.6
Not at all	51	13.4	13.4	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.13 Political party's campaign**

Data shows that 62.1 percent of respondents follow political party social media campaigns on a regular basis. 24.5 percent follow it on a sporadic basis, while 13.4 percent say they don't follow such initiatives at all.

<b>What would you like political party's social media strategy to focus on?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
National Issues	190	50.0	50.0	50.0
Local Issues	136	35.8	35.8	85.8
Candidates' quality	154	14.2	14.2	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.14 Political party's Strategy**

The social media strategy of political parties should, according to half of the participants, be centered on national issues. The importance of local issues was underlined by 35.8%, and the quality of the candidate was emphasized by 14.2%.

<b>Which party, according to you, is most visible socially?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
PTI	225	59.5	59.5	59.5
PPP	14	3.7	3.7	77.6
PML(N)	56	14.7	14.7	73.9
Others	85	22.4	22.4	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.15 Socially most visible party**

According to the above table 5.15, PTI is the most visible party socially, with 59.5 percent of respondents agreeing. With 14.7 percent of participants on social media, PML(N) is the second most visible party, followed by PPP 3.7 percent.

<b>Which social media platform do you find the easiest for political communication?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Facebook	219	57.6	57.6	57.6
Twitter	77	20.3	20.3	77.9
Blogs	14	3.7	3.7	81.6
SMS	70	18.4	18.4	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.16 Easiest social media platform for Political communication**

The vast majority of those who responded, the easiest social media site for political communication was determined to be Facebook by 57.6%, followed by Twitter by 20.3 percent.

<b>Have you ever asked political leader a question or made a comment on Twitter or Facebook page or any other social media platform?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	262	68.9	68.9	68.9
No	118	31.1	31.1	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.17 Question from political leader on social media**

Of the total sample, 68.9% said they have used social media platform to post a question or comment to political leader. The rest mentioned they did not use this opportunity.

<b>If yes, did you get a response?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	154	40.5	40.5	40.5
No	226	59.5	59.5	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.18 Response from political leader**

Only 40.5 percent of those who posted or commented on political leaders on Facebook, Twitter, or another social media platform received a response. The majority of responders (59.5%) said they did not receive a response.

<b>Do you use social media to keep up with politicians?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	284	74.7	74.7	74.7
No	96	25.3	25.3	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.19 Follow politicians on social media**

According to the table above, 74.7 percent of respondents follow political leaders on social media. On this platform, the remaining 25.3 percent answered that they did not follow any political leader.

<b>Which political leader are you following on social media?</b>				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maryam Nawaz	54	15.2	15.2	15.2
Imran Khan	247	64	64	79.2
Bilawal Bhutto Zardari	14	3.7	3.7	89.2
Others	65	17.1	17.1	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5.20 Follow politicians on social media**

According to the above table, Mr. Imran Khan (PTI) was followed on social media by the vast majority of respondents i.e., 64 percent. Another substantial number of 15.2 percent of participants said they were Ms. Maryam Nawaz PML(N) social media followers. Mr. Bilawal Bhutto (PPP) is also gaining popularity on social media.

### **5.3.2 Reliability Test**

Cronbach's Alpha test is used to determine internal consistency. The rules for Cronbach's Alpha reliability (Griethuijsen et al., 2014) are listed below in tabular form:

<b>Cronbach's Alphas Value</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
0.91-1.0	Excellent
0.81-0.9	Very Good
0.71-0.8	Good
0.61-0.7	Acceptable
0.01-0.6	Not acceptable

**Table 5.21 Reliability data**

<b>Summary Case Processing</b>			
		<b>N</b>	<b>%age</b>
<b>Cases</b>	Valid	380	100
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	0
	Total	380	380

**Table 5.22 Case Processing**

<b>Reliability Statistics</b>	
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>
.924	15

**Table 5.23 Cronbach's Alpha**

The value of alpha is .924 for all the items in the instrument as shown in table 5.23 above. This means the reliability of instrument is excellent.

### **5.3.3 Normality of Data**

The descriptive analysis details are shown below. Skewness and Kurtosis (+/-3) are within the acceptable range (Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2002), indicating that the data is distributed normally.



<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>							
	N Statistics	Min Statistic	Max Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
Do you have an account in any of these social media?	380	1.00	4.00	1.7658	1.10188	1.248	.064
Which of the social media, you are more active in?	380	1.00	4.00	1.7711	1.10537	1.240	.041
What is the time spending every day on social media?	380	1.00	4.00	1.6526	1.10187	1.458	.492
What do you primary use on social media for political campaign?	380	1.00	4.00	1.7947	1.12771	1.188	-.136
Are you aware of political campaign on social media?	380	1.00	2.00	1.0237	.15226	1.290	2.757
What do you primarily use social media, including social media, for?	380	1.00	5.00	3.0974	1.02140	-.002	-1.534
What social media do you use to keep track of political developments in Pakistan?	380	1.00	6.00	2.2921	1.55512	.724	-.957
Are you following social campaigns of political parties?	380	1.00	3.00	2.1105	.60638	-.056	-.331

What would you like political parties' social media strategy to focus on?	380	1.00	3.00	2.3579	.71789	-.653	-.823
Which party, according to you, is most visible socially?	380	1.00	4.00	1.8237	1.20376	.936	-.889
Which social media platform do you find the easiest for political communication?	380	1.00	4.00	1.8289	1.15075	1.070	-.448
Have you ever posted a question or a comment to a political leader on Facebook or twitter or any other social media platforms?	380	1.00	2.00	1.3105	.46332	.822	-1.331
If yes, did you get a response?	380	1.00	2.00	1.5947	.49159	-.387	-1.860
Are you following political leaders on social media?	380	1.00	2.00	1.2526	.43509	1.143	-.697
Which Political leader are you following on social media?	380	1.00	4.00	1.8921	1.23127	.931	-.876
Valid N (listwise)	380						

**Table 5.24 Descriptive Statistics**

## 5.4 Summary

To summarize, political usage of modern communication technologies continues to pique the interest of both academics and practitioners. As shown in the graphs above, there is some variation in politicians' level of social media activity as determined by activity index.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that Facebook adoption and use rates was significantly greater than those of Twitter. Usage of Twitter in the two instance countries is frequently stated to be low (Larsson and Moe, 2013), on the other hand, Facebook's acceptance among the general public is relatively higher (Nordicom, 2012). Our results indicate that political leaders are generally more active and visible on Twitter as compared to Facebook, which is a reflection of mismatch of online communication predilection between elected and those who elect. The demographics on social media's use vary significantly depending on context (Hargittai and Litt, 2012; Hargittai and Walejko, 2008). In developing countries, use of Twitter is commonly associated with urban elite (Christensen, 2013), signifying politicians to seek alternate platforms beyond Twitter for their everyday social media activities if they wish to directly engage with ordinary citizens and voters.

In the end, for our first point, while we mainly focused on Facebook Pages – Which are particularly created for more professional uses – politicians can certainly achieve similar objectives by using personal profiles. While acknowledging the limitations of work, our focus on Pages should be purpose driven tracking degrees of political professionalization in social media as described earlier. Second, as prior study has shown, the activities under investigation vary "not only among countries, but also across different party kinds" (Lisi, 2013). There were no discrepancies in this regard, which could be owing to the parallels between the two countries under

consideration. Future research may find it interesting to compare use patterns across nations that are more dissimilar in relevant ways using "least-similar designs," which compare use patterns between countries that are more dissimilar in relevant ways.

Social media can also be a leveler, as it can be the most cost-effective marketing instrument available. Some expect that it will assist Pakistan in moving away from the existing paradigm, in which political campaigning success is determined by money. Furthermore, the campaign message incorporates the candidate's views that he or she wishes to express with voters. When standing for a political office, it is to enlist the support of those who share their viewpoints. Several talking points about policy issues are frequently included in the message. The points condense the campaign's main points and are repeated frequently to ensure that people remember them. In many elections, the opposition will try to "off-message" the candidate by bringing up policy or personal concerns that are unrelated to the talking points. In order to appeal to the broadest number of potential voters, most campaigns aim to keep their message as wide as possible. A limited message may alienate people or force the candidate to spend time explaining minor points. The report claims that social media is becoming increasingly important in Pakistani democracy. We live in a new media age, with a profusion of social networking sites attracting millions of members from all over the world. People are now spending a large amount of time on social networking sites as part of their "online social lives." In recent years, global connection has increased substantially. A decade ago, there were just a few social networking sites, but the number has increased dramatically since then. The most basic definition of social networking sites is that they allow users to communicate with one another through text, photographs, and videos. The use of social media in political campaigns is not just crucial; it also allows for rapid, consistent, and low-cost communication with big groups of people. Given the speed of communications and the number of people involved, the

impact must be significant because politically active people are subscribing to the candidates on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Blog, and even if less politically savvy people aren't doing so, they're still seeing those messages when their politically active friends comment and like them.

According to the findings, social media has played a significant role in political campaigns and will continue to do so in the future. A correlation was identified between an individual's social media activities and their likelihood to vote, according to the study. When television, newspapers, and magazines were selected as the media with the biggest influence on voting decisions, it's apparent that traditional forms of media continue to play an undoubtedly important role in shaping public opinion. Despite being outranked by traditional media, social media content clearly influences voting decisions in some way. It was also observed that no amount of advertising (online or offline) had any impact on people's political beliefs. Individuals' political opinions are impacted more by online public discourse on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Forums than by content provided by official political party and politician accounts.

Text messaging, e-mail, photo-sharing, and social networking are examples of social media tools that have no intended consequence. As a result, attempts to characterize their influence on political action are sometimes reduced to a tale-telling contest (Shirky). The size, ethnic diversity, and educational levels of the population appear to have an impact on its success. It appears that social media has continued to be more utilized in political campaigns since the PTI's election campaign's centerpiece social media. Many changes have occurred in social media, according to the report, and many politicians have responded by establishing new social media strategies

In terms of future political campaign use of social media, it can be concluded that, while traditional channels of communication such as e-mail and fundraisers will continue to be

employed, social media will play an increasingly essential role. Through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, political candidates will continue to engage with their supporters and get financial and volunteer assistance. Many social media specialists hold opposing views on how social media should be used in the future. Some suggest that it should be used to target certain demographics for advertising, while others think that it should be used to foster meaningful relationships through contributions. Because social media is constantly evolving, this study can provide a foundation for using social media in political campaigns, regardless of how politicians use it.

In terms of quantitative data, the majority of respondents had a Twitter or Facebook account and were well-versed in the use of social media for political communication. Respondents also spend about two hours every day on social media, according to the study. In addition, the vast majority of persons who participated were aware of the political campaign's social media presence. Only a small percentage of the population was aware that political campaigns were being conducted on social media. The majority of respondents use social media to keep up with political developments, have fun, communicate with political leaders, acquire news and analysis, and share their thoughts.

Furthermore, it was discovered that over half of the respondents used Facebook to keep up with Pakistani political events. 26.3 percent of participants use Twitter for this purpose. Furthermore, the vast majority of respondents regularly monitor political party social media campaigns. In terms of social media, PTI was determined to be the most visible party, followed by PML (N) and PPP. A little less than two-thirds of those polled claimed they had used social media to ask a politician a question or leave a comment. The party's social media team responded to half of them.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

#### **6.1 Discussion and conclusion**

The value of social media-based online groups for political communication has risen dramatically in recent years. Young voters, in particular, spend more time on social media sites like as Facebook and Twitter than they do on television or in newspapers. Because Web 2.0 tools are current means of participation and collaboration, democratic regimes may profit from this growth. As a result, political actors are urged to engage in virtual discussion at these places. The findings show that politicians must keep up with current political debates and their own social media reputation, as well as foresee future trends and identify influential people across multiple social networks. An important goal for future political communication from the perspective of politicians is to increase "e-participation" by actively interacting in social media while being able to monitor the social web. This is not a simple procedure due to time and expense constraints, as well as a large number of different social media sites and a tremendous amount as well as complexity of information and unstructured data.

Social media analytics, according to Zeng et al. (2010), is concerned with developing and evaluating informatics tools and frameworks for gathering, monitoring, analyzing, summarizing, and visualizing social media data, which is frequently driven by specific requirements from a target application. According to Zeng et al. (2010), social media analytics experiences a number of challenges, including an augmented set of data or metadata (for example, labels, user-expressed subjective ratings, opinions, and user profile etc.), human-centered computing places a special emphasis on user social interactions, semantic inconsistencies/inaccuracies, disinformation, and a lack of organization, among other things.

Second, in order to increase "e-participation," the research should focus on establishing new or upgrading existing social media-related services. Further, the research should also address human-computer interface features like the design and operation of social media platforms in order to stimulate "e-participation." Based on the theory of social media logic and our model of connective affordances, the study comprised three initial research questions: first, how many individuals utilize social media to connect and communicate with political actors; second, which affordances are most commonly used in citizen-politician interactions; and third, the apparent effect of demographic characteristics on political involvement in social media. A discussion of the findings finishes this phase of the study.

For the first research question, we noticed a significant increase in citizens "friending" and "following" politicians on social media, allowing them to network with them. According to a Pakistani survey, 15% and 17% of Facebook and Twitter users in Pakistan followed or were friends with political personalities, respectively. To put these data in context with more traditional political activity measurements, 5% of Pakistani voters of 18 years or above age are party members. Our findings indicate that people and politicians are becoming more involved in politics on Facebook, which is often dominated by personal interactions. Given the findings, it may be important to investigate the prevalence of comparable behaviour in other countries. While millions of Pakistanis follow politicians on Facebook, few comparative studies are available, and those that do use a range of techniques, question phrasing, and other factors that make accurate comparison impossible. Nonetheless, we would argue that the findings of previous studies, which are summarized here, provide insight into the scope of citizen-politician interactions on social media. According to a poll, 15% of the Internet population in Denmark follows a politician or political party on Facebook or Twitter. In the UK and the US, 18% and 23% of social media users,



respectively, follow a politician, 17% and 19% follow a political party, and 17% and 14% follow a political campaign group.

As a result, Pakistan has a higher rate of linking political actors on social media than Denmark, the United Kingdom, or the United States. According to social media logic, this is a benefit for political players who would create a network to reach as many potential voters as feasible. It also implies that, despite the fact that social media platforms allow citizens to connect and interact with political actors, citizens may choose not to do so for a variety of reasons, including political culture, political actor popularity, or users' attitudes toward communicating political views online.

We are unable to confirm or modify the findings of Nielsen and Vaccari (2013), who discovered that voters primarily support a few high-profile politicians, while the majority of candidates are largely ignored by the electorate, because the data does not reveal which political actor has citizen's support. As a result, a more detailed method like this could be useful for future research. Second, when it comes to the most common connecting affordances among citizens and politicians, "Acknowledging" (likes/favorites) on Facebook is clearly the most popular. A like is a social media tool that allows for low-barrier political participation. Slacktivism and clicktivism are phrases used to describe political involvement with few or no political consequences (Morozov, 2011). However, because online interactions are unpredictable, it's difficult to say whether or not a like will have an impact (Carr, 2012). Because the number of likes is part of the algorithm that determines what material appears "on top" in the newsfeed, a like is an important feature of Facebook's distribution strategy. To achieve viral effects: large-scale dispersion in a short period of time, encourage likes and shares on social media. Twitter's favorite features, in comparison to likes, have not yet established themselves as a strong mechanism within social

media logic, hence this behavior may not be as strongly encouraged among users. Furthermore, Twitter's favourite function is more hidden than Facebook's like button, and it might be argued that Facebook's "acknowledge" feature is more prominent than Twitter's.

We were especially shocked by the data related to "Interacting" (comments/mentions/replies). More respondents claimed they had interacted with politicians through comments (Facebook) or mentions when compared to the percentage of respondents who said they had communicated with politicians through comments on political actors' social media profiles (Twitter).

This is a surprise conclusion when compared to earlier studies on limited contact from political players due to time, resources, and potential reputation costs (Enli and Skogerb, 2013; Stromer-Galley, 2014). Citizens appear to interact with political actors more than political actors interact with citizens. This mismatch is most obvious on Twitter, where it equates to a 15% difference. There are no clear explanations for this surprising result, not when it comes to the panel's recruiting (normal Gallup Panel study, not self-recruited), and we have no evidence that the respondents are more politically motivated than usual. It's probable that one of the reasons politicians want to engage with Twitter users is because of their privileged status. However, it's important to remember that these conclusions are based on self-reported data, which may or may not be completely accurate due to social desirability bias and other issues. In the end, we have no reason to anticipate that when it comes to political activity, the responder sample will be slanted in this manner. Nonetheless, the relatively high level of responsiveness among political actors is both intriguing and surprising. According to social media logic, politicians can build a network by engaging with sympathizers and potential voters through comments and mentions, and our data reveals that this is a social media feature that politicians exploit.

Finally, among our sociodemographic predictors, political interest was found to be a predictor of political connection via social media (Boulianne, 2015). Our data also suggest that the more citizens' political interest, the more connective affordances such as commenting and sharing are used. While political interest was able to predict four dimensions of Facebook engagement, just two aspects of Twitter use — employing likes and retweets in relation to political actors — were found to be associated with higher levels of political interest. This gap could be attributable to the demographics of the two networks: Facebook is exploited by "everyone," whereas Twitter is mostly utilized by Pakistan's highly educated urban elites (Enjolras, et al., 2013). Recognizing and redistributing through favorites and retweets are the most common actions on Twitter, which could specify that in general Twitter users are more politically motivated. In addition, those with the extreme political interest received more responses, including comments, from political actors. On Facebook and, to a lesser extent, Twitter, this is true. Politically engaged and interested Facebook users are more active social media users, receiving more attention from politicians than people who interact less.

Only one sort of involvement, however, is explained by gender: Twitter questioning. It means that some gendered discrepancies may still be at play when attempting to comprehend political social media use. People with less education are more active on Facebook, while those with more education are more active on Twitter, particularly in asking questions, which clearly reflects the demographic characteristics of the two social media platforms — Twitter use is largely associated with urban, highly educated people (Enjolras, et al., 2013). Similarly, age predicts activity in the sense that younger people are more active than older people, especially when it comes to liking on Facebook and using all of Twitter's connections. Nonetheless, older voters receive more answers from political figures on Facebook, but the opposite is true on Twitter.

Indeed, age is a major negative predictor for all three parameters reflecting the different types of connective choices available to respondents. As a result, political interest is the most powerful predictor of who engages with political actors on social media, according to our research. Citizens' social media responses to political actors are also influenced by their political interests.

While this research has provided helpful empirical insights into the political uses of social media that are theoretically justified, it does have some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, as previously noted, the data used is self-reported — a sampling technique with certain limitations in terms of what respondents claim about their internet experiences versus what they actually had. As a result, a study based on user data from a group of respondents could be a nice complement to the strategy advised here, albeit such a suggested methodological breakthrough would be problematic from a research ethical aspect (Zimmer, 2010). Second, while the functional definitions of a share, a like, or a retweet may be fairly clear, the approach advocated here makes the end-user perspective essentially unreachable. According to Lomborg and Bechmann (2014), these kind of statistics "reveal relatively little about the meanings that individuals attribute to their social media use." With this in mind, future research on the political uses of social media may benefit from elaborating on the findings presented in this paper in order to delve deeper into the meanings associated with these communicative processes. Third, while our independent variables were able to give us some insight into the extent to which our respondents had received comment from politicians on Facebook, we couldn't say the same for Twitter. This could be due to the small number of people who declare they use Twitter, but we can't be certain. Future research could combine a variety of methodologies to acquire a greater understanding of these systems, with the findings provided here serving as a springboard.

With these findings in mind, one would ponder what role social media plays in citizen-politician communication — and, more realistically, what it could become. According to a recent poll of the Pakistani people, 70% of those who follow politicians on social media also participate as opinion leaders in various scenarios, implying that they are already more politically engaged than ordinary citizens. As a result, one could argue that low-threshold behaviours like likes, shares, and retweets have yet to gain traction in political discussions on social media. On the other hand, interactions with politicians on social media appear to be a limited phenomenon, with an overabundance of citizens already involved in politics. The majority of individuals polled had a Facebook or Twitter account and were well aware of how social media could be used for political communication. Respondents also spend about two hours every day on social media, according to the study. In addition, the vast majority of persons who participated were aware of the political campaign's social media presence. Only few had no idea about political campaign on social media. Most of the respondents use social media to see political developments, entertainment purpose, interact with political leaders, news and analysis and exchange of views. It was further found that more than half of the respondents were using Facebook specifically to keep track of political developments in Pakistan. Followed by 26.3% participants use Twitter for this purpose. Further, a vast majority of the respondents regularly follow social media campaign of political parties. Among all the parties, PTI was found to be the most visible party socially followed by PML (N) and PPP respectively. A little less than two quarters of the respondent had used social media platform to post a question or comment to political leader. Among them, half of them were responded by party's social media team.

While we can't say much right now, the potential network impact that social media provides for must be taken into account, the dissemination of content to users who do not follow or interact

with politicians directly, but who are exposed to political content through opinion makers who like, share, or retweet it. Although network effects are beyond the focus of this dissertation, future research should consider them because social media distribution is one of the most prevalent ways young people in Pakistan get news.

To summarize, the data suggest that Facebook's popularity among Pakistanis could be interpreted as facilitating a new kind of communication between citizens and political actors without the need for a mediator. Facebook is a forum for "regular" people to contact with politicians, whereas Twitter is largely utilized for this purpose by a small percentage of the population. Using the concept of social media logic, we were able to discover which connective affordances were most regularly used by citizens and political actors. Giving a like is the most popular social media function among citizens and political actors, making it a low-barrier activity for political participation. Surprisingly, the most powerful predictor of who communicates with political players on social media is political interest. Surprisingly, respondents say they get more political remarks than they produce themselves. Finally, we discovered that citizens' political interests have an impact on the answers they receive from political actors on social media. A historical comparison of online connectivity between citizens and politicians, as well as a comparison of today's situations with 1990s efforts to involve citizens through Web sites or other kinds of social media, could be part of future research.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

A comprehensive review of previous studies and the development of novel research, this study has revealed the social media's significance in political campaigns:

- The purpose of social media is to develop strong brand through social networking and original content creation. Using different social media channels, political candidates

must communicate directly with and influence the voting public. Voters struggle to identify a common ground that supports true human communication while mobilizing the media in today's technologically centered environment.

- As result of political activity on social media platforms, voters form perceptions of one another and candidates as well. According to findings, whether or not voters engage in online political activities, their political enthusiasm may be quenched or rekindled. Candidates are the campaign's leaders, and they set the example for the audience in terms of good online behaviour and inclinations. Voters' reactions are influenced by candidates' online activities. Voters want a more welcoming and positive environment in which to openly express their opinions online, which can only be achieved if voters and candidates work together.
- This research study supports findings of previous work suggesting the key role of social media in political issues including social movements and election campaigns. It also recognizes the concept of issue ownership as an important factor for political parties to consider when establishing agendas. In terms of interactions between traditional media and social media, our findings fully acknowledge previous research that suggests the progressively increasing influence of social media on traditional media coverage through producing information flows that are then interpreted into conventional news. Given the details, however, these conclusions should be considered with caution. The expected boosting influence of electoral events on social media size and political responsiveness was difficult to see, but it cannot be dismissed. For the most part, this research combines previous research on social media as an emerging medium for political engagement with recent research on political agenda-setting. Thousands of

users use social media platforms on a regular basis to share their opinions and requests. Political players also use social media platforms to communicate with citizens, organizations, and other politicians. As a result, social media interactions are rapidly impacting the formation of political agendas, with long-term political and legal implications. Although these findings are positive in terms of using social media as a political weapon, the qualitative analysis carried out in this study also shows examples of circumstances when social media was useful in generating a soundboard for specific topics but had no political repercussions.

- Unlike other studies, this one used a multi-case, long-term approach. This strategy allows us to understand how, depending on the election, social media campaigns affect political agenda-setting to varied degrees and in diverse ways. The role of social media campaigns as a new component shaping agendas has been underestimated in recent political agenda-setting research. Some of their theoretical theories and empirical findings, on the other hand, apply to the case of social media.
- In the qualitative and quantitative analysis of this study, it is possible to identify cases supporting this notion in issues initiated or promoted from social media platforms. The qualitative analysis presented here shows that political issues are indeed sensational issues triggering social media campaigns and make them grow. Nonetheless, specific analyses on sensational issues on social media are required to observe stronger correlations between both variables.
- This research also leads to a differential political response scale. While this is a simple scale, it could be used as a starting point for research into political agenda-setting



influence. Further, social media platforms could be utilized to enhance "social accountability mechanisms,".

- This study also supports previous empirical work on the trade-offs between social and traditional media, as well as how the former regularly influences the latter. According to the conclusions of this study, social media initiatives have a strong influence on coverage in traditional media outlets. Traditional media, on the other hand, has no effect on the size of social media campaigns, according to this study.
- Despite the findings of this study, previous political agenda-setting research has revealed that traditional media plays a role in establishing political agendas. In these specific settings of social media campaigns and amplifying political messaging, traditional media is not the variable explaining political-agenda setting affectation, according to this study. The influence of electoral events on the scale and political responsiveness of social media campaigns was found to be equivocal in this study's qualitative and quantitative evaluations. The study does, however, provide actual evidence of tiny online campaigns abounding in the run-up to the election. This could indicate that a politicized population is launching internet campaigns that receive little online support and political attention. It's probable that the lack of support and political response is due to the fact that online campaigns compete for attention with election-related topics. Because no previous research has looked at how political events (other than elections) affect social media activity, these findings could serve as a springboard for future research. Establishing a starting point for online campaigns in any area for social media research could be crucial.

- The study's most crucial finding is that social media platforms have a long-term impact on political agenda-setting. This builds on previous research on rare events, which has shown the political influence of social media platforms under “abnormal” circumstances. Opposition to online campaigns, the role of elections in promoting social media campaigns while plausibly discouraging online support and political responses to such campaigns are among the findings of this study.
- Another contribution to the field is empirical support with regard to the behavior of online campaigns, which may allow future research by providing a reference point. Finally, from a tangential point of view, the qualitative analysis allows to observe cases where social media is a tool to strengthen social accountability mechanisms.
- In this study PTI emerged as dominant party using social media tools like facebook and twitter to mobilize their voters and represent good reputation of their leaders. PML(N) and PPP stood at second and third respectively. Thus, the other political parties must realize the significance of social media and use this platform both before and during elections involving people’s active participation for strengthening democracy
- The social media is an effective tool of enhancing political communication in Pakistan most especially during election and electioneering, though post-election use of the new media is still scanty, however, the new media has promoted political participation among users. Thus, its use must be enhanced. However, misuse that causes tension and conflict still abound. In order to overcome dysfunctional media effects, political parties must engage Internet industry professionals for political communication strategy planning, development and management. Because the Internet is open and diverse, its use for political communication requires a high sense of responsibility.

### **6.3 Ethical considerations**

The confidentiality of the data was necessary not just to protect the respondents' privacy, but also to encourage them to give honest and truthful replies to the questions. It was also critical to maintain study's ethical requirements. For achieving this objective, the researcher espoused a number of measures. Firstly, it was made it clear that the information shared by the participants would be kept confidential. Secondly, the respondents were allowed to fill the questionnaire without indicating their names in the demographic data. Lastly, the collected data was kept under lock and key and was accessible only to researcher and supervisor.

### **6.4 Future Research**

A study conducted in the run-up to new elections would be advantageous in providing a more comprehensive account of the events and their implications for the role of social media and the internet. The data would be deeper and more extensive if social network analysis, questionnaires, and interviews were included. In addition, a survey of a broader group of people can be done as part of a more comprehensive study. In Pakistani society, it would be advantageous to achieve broader effects. Also, in compared to other nations, it could be interesting to look how politicized Pakistan's social media is. It is possible to analyze developing countries or countries with a similar rate of internet penetration.

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## Appendices-I

### Interview guide: political parties

#### Background on human / technical resources:

1. How many people work with communication technology / strategy with you?
2. What kind of background / education do they have?
3. Have you hired new people to take care of certain areas in advance election campaign?
4. How many people work with communication (information / press / social media) in the party?
5. How many works with IT / technology?
6. How much of the party's resources (in percent) goes to these two disciplines (Communication technology)?
7. Which politicians or political parties are sources of inspiration for you within communication technology?

#### Facebook:

1. Which social media platform is the most important for you and why?
2. What do you use FB for in the election campaign?
3. What kind of content do you post on FB?
4. Who do you reach by using FB?
5. Is the way you use FB in the election campaign different than outside the election campaign?
6. Do you have the opportunity to connect FB data about fans to other data (ex-party members)?
7. What do you use FB insight for / What kind of measurements do you make of your FB activity?
8. How to handle input from the audience on FB (questions, dialogue, moderation / trolling, etc)?
9. Will FB have a different function in this election compared to the elections in 2018
10. Do you use FB functions (eg FB connect) on other of your websites / services?

#### Twitter:

1. What do you use Twitter for?
2. Is the way you use Twitter in the election campaign different than outside election campaign?
3. Who do you reach by using Twitter?
4. How to handle input from the audience on Twitter (questions, dialogue, claims etc.)
5. How important is Twitter for you as a communication channel?
6. Make analyzes of Twitter use / effect?
7. Will Twitter have a different function in this election compared to the elections in 2018

## Appendices-II

### Interview guide: political journalists

#### Interview guide for journalists' use of Twitter and Facebook as journalists Sources Use

1. When do you start using Twitter / Facebook?
2. How often do you check Tw / FB (daily / weekly)?
3. What kind of device (mobile, computer, tablet, etc) do you usually use for to check Tw / FB?
4. What do you use Twitter and Facebook for in a work context?
  - a. ideas
  - b. Spread your own affairs
  - c. Find sources
  - d. Build networks
  - e. Info
  - f. etc.
5. What are you especially looking for when using Tw / FB in a work context?
6. How to use Twitter / Fb?
  - a. Passive (observes and reads others' Tw / FB)
  - b. Active (shares info, links, photos, video)
7. Do you share opinions?
  - a. Do you participate in discussions on Tw / FB?
  - b. What kind of content do you primarily share?
8. What would you not have published on FB / TW?
9. Twitter: Do you do anything to systematize the flow of information? If so, what?
10. FB: Do you do anything to filter / sort info on FB?
11. Can you give examples of cases you have created that have arisen via Tw / FB?
12. Has the use of Tw / FB changed over time? Why

#### Network

1. Who do you follow on Tw (in terms of profession / background / relationship)?  
(Some examples)
2. Who are you friends with on FB (in terms of profession / background / relationship)?
3. Why do you follow exactly these?
4. Who are you not friends with / follow on TW / FB?
5. Has Tw / FB made it easier to access sources?
6. Are there other social media tools / platforms you use to find sources of cases?
7. Have you experienced that someone has approached you specifically on Tw / FB for to push / tip about a case?

**Verification of info**

1. How to check the info you come across on Tw / FB?
2. Have you contacted anyone on Tw / FB to check where they got the info from?
3. Have you experienced that info you have used from Tw / FB in journalistic context has been incorrect?
4. How big is the problem with unconfirmed info on Tw / FB for you as journalist?

**Any change in everyday work**

1. Has Tw / FB (possibly other social media) changed your working day? If so, how?
  - a. sources
  - b. tempo
  - c. Timings
  - d. Network etc.
2. What are the disadvantages of Tw / FB in a work context?

## Appendices-III

### Research Questionnaire

#### The Role of Social Media as Tool of Political Communication in enhancing political Message- A comparative study of political parties in Pakistan

Dear Respondent

I would appreciate it if you could take a few minutes out of your busy schedule to complete this questionnaire.

#### Part A

1. Gender

A.	Male	B.	Female
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2. Age groups

A.	18-25	B.	26-30	C.	31-35	D.	36 and above
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3. Education Level

A.	High School	B.	Under Graduate	C.	Graduate	D.	Post Graduate
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4. Occupation

A.	Student/Intern	B.	Working	C.	Entrepreneur	D.	None of above
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5. Locality

A.	Urban	B.	Rural	C.	Semi Urban
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#### Part B

6. Do you have an account in any of these social media?

A.	Facebook	B.	Twitter	C.	Blog	D.	Others
----	----------	----	---------	----	------	----	--------

7. Which social media platform do you use the most?

A.	Facebook	B.	Twitter	C.	Blog	D.	Others
----	----------	----	---------	----	------	----	--------

8. How much time do you spend on social media every day?

A.	0-2 hours	B.	2-5 hours	C.	5-8 hours	D.	Others
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9. What social media platforms do you mostly use for political campaigns?

A.	Facebook	B.	Twitter	C.	Blog	D.	Others
----	----------	----	---------	----	------	----	--------

10. Are you aware of the political campaign that is taking place on social media?

A.	Yes	B.	No
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### Part C

11. What are your main reasons for using social media? (Rankings)

A.	Entertainment	B.	News and Analysis	C.	Exchange of views	D.	Follow political developments	E.	Interact with political leaders
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12. What social media platform do you use to keep track of political developments in Pakistan?

A.	Facebook	B.	Blog	C.	Twitter	D.	Online News Content	E.	Emails	F.	Others
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13. Are you following social campaigns of political parties?

A.	Yes, regularly	B.	Sometimes	C.	Not at all
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14. What would you like political parties' social media strategy to focus on?

A.	National Issues	B.	Local Issues	C.	Candidates' quality
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15. Which party, according to you, is most visible socially?

A.	PTI	B.	PPP	C.	PML(N)	D.	Others
----	-----	----	-----	----	--------	----	--------

16. Which social media platform do you find the easiest for political communication?

A.	Facebook	B.	Blog	C.	Twitter	D.	SMS	E.	Emails	F.	Recorded phone calls
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17. Have you ever asked a political leader a question or made a comment on Facebook, Twitter, or another social media platform?

A.	Yes	B.	No
----	-----	----	----

18. If yes, did you get a response?

A.	Yes	B.	No
----	-----	----	----

19. Do you use social media to keep up with politicians?

A.	Yes	B.	No
----	-----	----	----

20. Which political figure do you keep up with on social media?

A.	Imran Khan	B.	Maryam Nawaz	C.	Bilawal Bhutto Zardari	D.	Others
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21. Which political party do you follow on social media?

A.	PTI	B.	PPP	C.	PML(N)	D.	Others
----	-----	----	-----	----	--------	----	--------