Factors Determining Political Socialization in Young People (A Case of Pakistani University Students)

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims at determining the factors responsible for shaping as well as building political ideas and values. By conducting a survey in a Public University in Pakistan and filling of questionnaires by the respondents, results were obtained. Estimation results showed that Media and education emerged as the domineering factors significantly contributing in the political socialization process. Both variables were positive and significant at 1% level of significance. While, family and youth participation had a lesser contribution. As these variables were though positive but statistically significant at 10% level of significance. Thereby, in accordance with the results it has been suggested that influence of media and education be enhanced in a control environment to induce positive political attitudes.

KEYWORDS: Political Socialization, Media, Education

1. Introduction

Emergence of newly established states soon after the turmoil experienced in WWII, imparted a dire need for political stability as well as a framework for proper functioning of the economy. The process was lengthy and challenging for it required a framework which would not only help in running and functioning of the economy but also in lessening the trauma experienced by the masses and thus shaping their ideas for a better society. This steered the course of literature towards a deeper studying and understanding of politics by theorists and policy makers. Many profound literary works were carried out as well as transformed into policies and later implemented.

However, on another side of a coin, developing countries even today are struggling towards attaining political stability. Therefore, it's of prime importance to consider factors that shape our political ideas and norms and later model our society.

The term was coined by [1] and was defined as the process of development of political values that were influenced by personal experiences and social agents. Predominantly, the stimuli that sprouts such behavior include family, educational institutes, peers and media (inclusive of print, electronic and social) as explained by [2] Moreover, the understanding of the subject is crucial not only for development of a viable political culture but also to allow for individuals to learn and have personal growth as well as to socialize in a political set-up [3].

In recent years, the concept and idea has picked up steam. A research analysis by [4] highlighted the importance of political socialization (PS) in determining political inclinations of youth, understanding of prevalent norm in a society, the political learning, and the socialization process. Therefore, it is needed that an extensive study be conducted for thorough understanding of the subject matter.

Though literature on different aspects of PS remain adequate, however, in context of Pakistan it is almost negligible. Therefore, the current study will a bridge the gap and contribute towards the body of existing literature. Moreover, factors responsible for formulation of political values and ideas will be identified. This will be accomplished by employing and making use of first-hand information gathered through questionnaires. Not only this, but domineering factor will also be identified which by appropriate measures can be enhanced for desired results in terms of PS in the country.

2. Literature Review

The scientific theories about political socialization have two distinct positions [5]. One of this suggest that aim of political socialization is to strengthen the existing system while the other extreme believed that aim of political socialization is to aware people that they are being manipulated by current political system. The aim of other theoretical perspective is to assist people in developing self-political identity in prospect of political socialization.

The components essential for theory of political development are Illustrated by [6]. A theory shall consider the unique nature of political assignation and could not only depend upon extension of cognitive, social and emotional development. It was argued that democracy is vital as it promotes effective citizens' participation. Youth at the age of 18 attain right to vote and became cognitively and emotionally intact. But the presence of all these factor did not guarantee the active participation of the youth. Inclusion of youth as a co-participant is need to be ensured. If politics become part of youth's life and are given opportunity to participate then democracy would be sustained in future as well [6].

In study of [7] political socialization is defined and the views of different theorist upon political socialization are highlighted. Political socialization is considered as a process by which the political dogmas and ideas are formulated in a society. In a society there are several means for promoting the political socialization the most important agents for political socialization are family, peers and media. Sociological theories deliberated political socialization as long run process which is considered to be crucial for a society.

Similarly, the classical theorists regarded political socialization critical as it is seen as a way to promote democracy and could enhance participation rate of civil society. The modern theorist saw mass media as a driving force behind political socialization. Whereas the societal, culture and institutional approach to political socialization stressed on government institutions, family and school as mean for disseminating the political values in a society [7].

In addition to the theoretical literature, a number of previous researchers have conducted empirical studies to establish the components that influence political socialization. The following is a summary of these studies:

Diversity in group of people exists on the basis of education, gender and age thus it is most commonly observed that participation level of group political socialization differ from each other [8] analyzed the political socialization among youths, targeted sample included 16-18 years' students. Different variables were employed for examining their role in determining political socialization among youths. Variables included in the model were age, gender, discussion with parents and peers, activate participation in voluntary work, education level and media's role. Results indicated that parents, peers and voluntary work participation appeared to have a highly significant impact on political socialization among youth. Variable for media was significant indicating media also influence political socialization. By taking into account gender differences it was found that political socialization among young girls was more compared to boys.

The relationship between news use and political socialization among youths is studied by [9]. In order to measure news delivery different variables like TV news, newspaper and radio broadcast were used. For capturing new media blogs and text messaging were employed. For gauging political socialization two indices were utilized namely government appraisal and political trust. Targeted sample included people aged 18 to 35 years and sample size in study was 321. Regression analysis was used to analyze the impact of news consumption on political socialization. It was concluded that if news is related to the foreign country then it would have limited impact on political socialization in domestic country. News consumption variables appeared to be unrelated with political socialization because individuals were likely to expose more to foreign news compared with domestic news. Interpersonal communications among a group or in a community were found to be significant in determining political socialization.

In the past study of [10] the association between education and political socialization is examined. Sample size contained 525 adolescences from Kenya. Three factors of political socialization (political information, political interest and support for political system) were taken in education category with no level of education was added in order to judge how educated people behave differently in socializing politically. Regression analysis was carried out for empirical analysis. It was found that more educated adolescences usually have the more information about the political system similarly adolescence with the higher level of education were more likely to take interest in political activities and supported for political system. It was concluded that education was the most effective mode for political socialization in Kenya therefore [10] suggested that government should focused more on education policies in order to improve political socialization.

Political discussion with friends and family is seen as a vital factor in framing the political attitude of an individual, thus it is also considered to be a factor of political socialization. Analysis conducted by [11] explored the political socialization among youth by gauging the political discussion of youth within family and friends. Sampling technique used was random sampling as well as structure interviews were conducted for data collection. After empirical analysis it was found that parents with more level of education encouraged their children to engage in political discussion. Consequently, low level of political discussion was observed in family where father had distant political views. Media was found to have mediating affect in parental political discussion.

Study conducted by [8] aimed at analyzing the impact of age, gender, discussion with parents and peers, activate participation in voluntary work, education level and

media's role on political socialization similarly [10], [9], [11] also focused on role of media and education in determining Political Socialization. The study will fill the literature gap, as there is no study to the best of my knowledge, which examines the political socialization in young people in context of Pakistan.

3. Methodology and Data

3.1 Methodology

To accomplish the desired outcome and obtain data of the required variables questionnaire was developed. It was amalgam of both, qualitative and quantitative type thereby including closed and open-ended questions. The questions used were of open ended, multiple choice and dichotomous type. Moreover, the information obtained was codded and interpreted using the IBM SPSS Software. This provided the statistical analysis that was required for the current study, which contributes in understanding data and analyzing trends as well as validate assumptions and make accurate conclusions and thus forecasts.

Study was conducted to determine the general political opinion in context of Pakistan. The targeted sample was Public University Students and was chosen due to time and resources constraint.

3.2 Variables

The variables chosen for the current analysis are Age, Gender, Educational level, Family, Mass Media, Education and Youth Participation. These have been taken into consideration, in harmony with the studies by [12]-[15]. The involvement of public and private employees can also influence political socialization, but this variable was neglected because the study's focus sample was university students who were not employees of any organization.

3.3 Estimation Technique

Following econometric model has been considered for empirical analysis of the nexus considering the studies by [10] and [9].

$$
\begin{aligned}
Political\ Socialization_i \\
= \beta_o + \beta_1 Gender_i + \beta_2 Age_i \\
+ \ \beta_3 Education_i + \beta_4 Media_i +
\end{aligned}
$$

$$\beta_5 Family_i + \beta_6 Youth\ Participation_i + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

where, i= cross sections and μ= error term

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Graphical Statistics

The graphical results obtained by employing the SPSS software have been obtained and explained in the succeeding paragraphs.
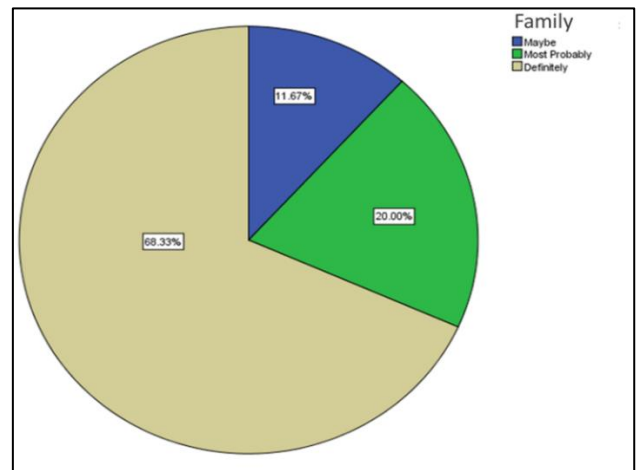

Figure 1: Displaying responses of the variable Family

To check the impact of Family Environment on PS, questions related to this factor were asked. Here 68.33% and 20% respondents thought that friendly home environment definitely and most probably contributed in PS respectively. While the remaining 11.6% were did not consider it as a possible factor, as presented in figure 1.
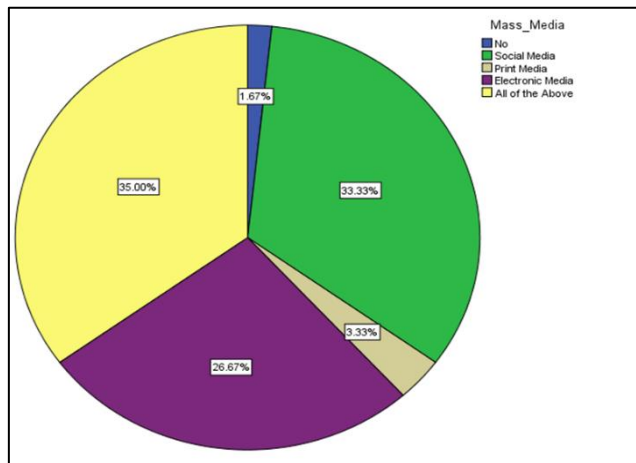

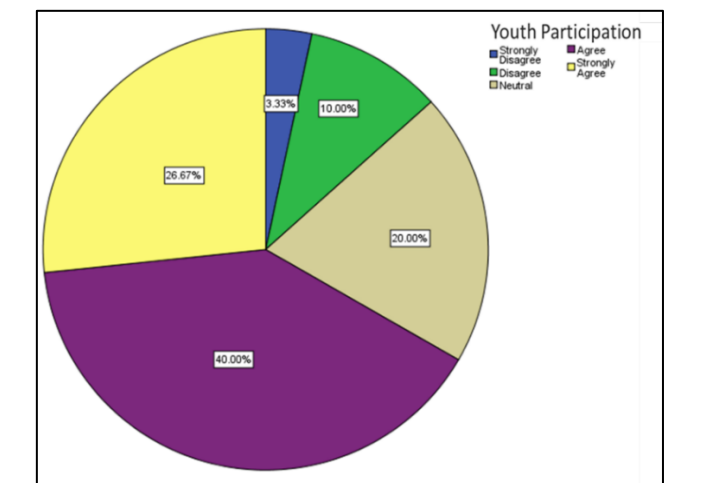Figure 2: Displaying responses of the variable Mass Media

Figure 3: Displaying responses of the variable Youth Participation

As displayed in Figure 2, on response upon Mass Media 33.33% respondents consider social media as an important factor in determining PS. 26.6% think that electronic media is an important element. 3.33% gave

importance to print media and 35% respondents consider all of the above factors playing significant role in determining PS. While only 1.67% respondents thought that there was no role of media in PS.

Response on Youth Participation in PS was also different among respondents. Here 26.67% respondents were strongly agreeing and 40% agreed that Youth Participation is major factor in building PS. 3.33% strongly disagreed and 10% disagreed from the role of youth in PS. While 20% remained indifferent towards the role of young people in PS, as shown in Figure 3.

The last important variable was Education, the chosen respondents were of education of 14 years, 16 years, 18 years and above. Here the respondents with 16 years of education were 51.67%, 18 years and above were 45% and only 3.33% were of 14 years' education. Here 51.67% respondents with 16 years' education, 45% respondents with 18 years and above education and 3.33% respondents with 14 years' education considered that education plays important role in PS, as depicted in Figure 4.
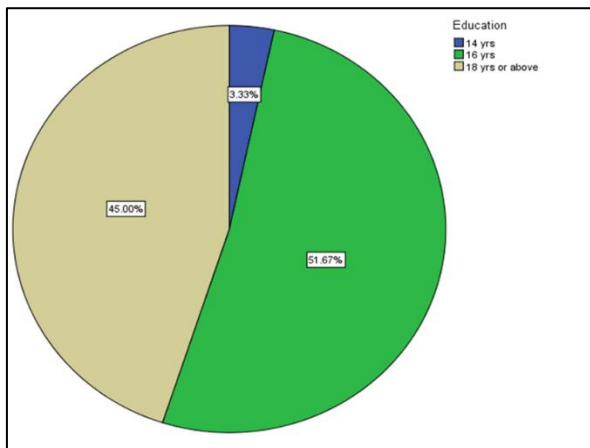

Figure 4: Displaying responses of the variable education

4.2 Empirical Estimates of Political Socialization

The results obtain after running regression are displayed in the Table 4.1.

Table 1: Estimates of Political Socialization

Panel A: Estimation Results: Dependent Variable Political Socialization	
Regressors	*Model*
Gender	0.017
	(0.033)
Age	0.034
	(0.038)
Family	0.024*
	(0.012)
Media	0.114***
	(0.019)
Youth Participation	0.03*
	(0.015)
Education	0.396***
	(0.076)

Panel B: Diagnostic Tests	
Observations	60
P-value	0.000
Adjusted R-Squared	0.484

Note: *, **, *** denotes significance at 10%, 5% and 1%, respectively while Standard Errors are in the parenthesis.

This study has provided a considerable theoretical realization as well as imperative and informative material for all participating factors in this PS. The demographic factors like age and gender were taken along with other factors like family environment, media, youth participation and education. The results indicate significance of family environment, media, youth participation and education in construction of PS, while the age and gender remained insignificant. A survey was conducted through proper questionnaires on sample of 80 respondents.

Gender appeared positive but statistically insignificant suggests that might not have much contribution in formation of political ideas. The results were in line with [12] who finds that female and male respondents report similarly levels of interest in paying attention to politics and government, regardless of what family type they live in. However, males report somewhat higher interest in politics and government than females. Civic engagement among young men and young women, while similar, is not equal.

Age was statistically insignificant but depicted the desired sign shows that that one-year increase in age will increase PS by 1.7 percent. It does not affect the process of PS.

Family environment is the primary agency in forming PS. In our results Family appear to be positive and statistically significant at 10% indicates that a friendly home environment increases building of PS to 2.4 percent. A study done by [16] got the same results that family is the most important agent determining the extent and direction of political learning. He suggests four important functions performed by family that include direct teaching of PS, developing child's personality and perception toward PS, self-identification (political self) and placing its members within a network of social and economic relationships. Family plays important roles in instilling in youth basic, positive, general beliefs, attitudes, and opinions and cognitive understanding of the political system.

The emergence of internet and digital communication technologies has great contribution largely in the revolution of youth oriented media. Social networking media has changed the concept of old media. Now our societies are using Facebook, Twitter and blogs as a source of information.in our results Media was positively influences PS and it is statistically significant at 1% shows that 1 percent increase in use of media conveys 1.14

percent increase in PS. Study of [13] also found that the social networking sites have great impact on voters because influence of one network member is highly dependent on the members of other. Furthermore, it is evident that social networking media play vital role during the presidential campaign as each of the social media site provide platform to obtain political information to its user. It also aids in development of political ethics and values.

Youth Participation was positively related with political socialization and statistically significant at 10% level of significance illustrate that 1 percent increase in Young Participants brings 0.3 percent increase in Political Socialization. The results are similar with [14] who argues that, in recent decades, the ways that citizens choose to interact with politics have changed significantly. These changes, she claims, are evident in the types of participation, agencies (the organizations through which citizens participate) and the targets (who or what the participant aims to influence) of political participation. [16] also finds that a strong majority of youth believe that they can make a difference by participating in politics and that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in politics. At the same time, a majority of youth also believe that the leaders in government care very little about people like them. A significant percentage of youth believe that they have the skills and knowledge to participate in politics. These findings are also supported by the study of [17], which reports that a vast majority of the youth (61.8 percent) have trust in democracy and peaceful change as they believe that their vote can be a promoter for change.

Education is positively related with political socialization and was statistically significant at 1% demonstrate that 1 percent increase in Education carries 3.96 percent increase in Political Socialization. These results are supported by the study conducted by [15] who concluded that according to the standard socioeconomic model of participation socioeconomic status is strongly related to political participation. People with more education and higher incomes tend to participate more because they are more conscious of the impact of politics on their lives and aware of the legitimate ways to influence government actions.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the factors like Family, Media, Youth Participation and Education were the main agents of, while Age and Gender had no significant role in formation of Political Socialization. Though some studies suggest that male appears to be more active in political socialization but in our study it comes insignificant. Family is the most important factor as it is the primary source in building political and social ideas. Education is

important because it shapes our ideas and beliefs and teach us patriotism. Media is considered to be a weapon in the modern world that can be used according to the conditions. Every kind of media is in use for promoting political campaigns, slogans, and slowly and gradually changing the minds of people and people follow such campaigns actively. Last but not the least the young people involvement in politics brings a lot of changes. Awareness among people increases and they are not blindly following any leader. The young people thinks and question and that causes a big change in the political movements of the current world.

Some major conclusions can be drawn from the results obtained after estimation. From graphical representation it has come to surface that majority of the respondents, regard family as an important variable in shaping of political views. In particular, it has been highlighted that a friendly home environment contributes more towards formation of favorable political values than a conservative or restricted one. Social media too emerged as a significant variable that helps reform political ideas and social media has been given a higher weightage in this respect than any other form.

A sizeable portion of the sample placed youth participation in political activates as viable channel for PS and are further of the opinion that this influences government policies. In addition, the level of education of an individual appeared to have substantial impact on an individual's political views, as projected by the survey.

While from the estimation results, media and education emerged as the most important conduits in Political Socialization process. Both variables were significant at 1% level of significance and appeared positive. This was in concordance with the studies by [13] and [15] , respectively. Family and youth participation too appeared to have important role in PS but comparatively less than of media and education. Both variables were positive and statistically significant at 10% level of significance.

5.1 Policy Recommendations

In line with the findings from the conducted study some recommendations have been made. However, it is important to consider that results were based on a sample that was restricted to just one institute in the city. Therefore, all projections are in accordance with that. Though it should be noted that results even from such small sample can be generalized to understand the general view point. The recommendations are as follows:

- Promotion and up gradation of the existing education system by means of increased governmental expenditures as well as contributions of professors in the respective fields. This will allow for better

understanding of the surrounding and awareness of youth towards political state in the country.

- Emphasis on the media sector, because the media shapes the perceptions of young, and positive messages from the media can inspire constructive public action.
- Insurance of political, social, and economic stability.
- Provision of conducive environment for enrichment of political ethics and ideas.

5.2 Limitations and Guidelines for Future Endeavors

Due to time and resource constraint the selected sample was confined to just one public university. Therefore, for future reference it is recommended that the sample size be enlarged so as to make reliable predictions and thereby deduce plausible conclusions. Additionally, other possible variables such as religion, locality, income and ethnicity have been excluded following the principle of Parsimony. However, inclusion of these variables can add some strength, volume as well as a deeper understanding of the subject.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

INFLUENCE OF SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS ON POLICTICAL SOCIALIZATION IN PAKISTAN

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information on people's attitudes, motivation, and opinions towards political socialization in Pakistan and to gauge the general interest of the public in politics.

The questionnaire is divided into 2 different sections. In Section 1, you are requested to give some personal, demographic information. While in Section 2, you are presented with multiple choice questions in relation to political socialization. All responses of questionnaire will be kept confidential. We would be very grateful for your contribution.

SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please provide the following information.

Gender:

  a. Male
  b. Female

Age:

  a. 15-20
  b. 20-25
  c. 25-30
  d. 30-35

Religion:

  a. Muslim
  b. Christian
  c. Others

Home Town:

a. Punjab
b. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
c. Sindh
d. Balochistan
e. Gilgit Baltistan
f. Other

Monthly Family Income:

a. Below 50,000
b. Above 50,000

Education Level:

a. 14 years
b. 16 years
c. 18 years and above

Political Affiliation: (Are you a member of any political or religious party?

a. Yes
b. No

SECTION II

2. Political socialization is the process through which political culture, ideas and orientations are transmitted in a society, so which agent promotes political socialization in your view?

a. Family, peers, society
b. Media
c. Education
d. Existing laws

2. A friendly home environment encourages discussion and building of positive ideas.

a. Definitely
b. Most probably
c. Maybe
d. Not at all

3. A conservative family environment hampers thinking and political views.

a. Definitely
b. Most probably
c. Maybe
d. Not at all

4. When do the basic political attitudes and values form in an individual?

a. Childhood
b. Teenage years
c. Adulthood

5. Do you think that the mass media in Pakistan is playing an important role in formation of political views of individual? If yes, which form of media is most effective?

a. Yes
• Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp etc.)
• Print Media (Newspapers, Magazines etc.)
• Electronic Media (News Channels)
b. No

6. Which of the following is true about schools and political activism?

a. Higher level of education correlates to higher level of political activism.
b. Higher level of education correlates to lower level of political activism.
c. There is no correlation between education and political activism.

7. Which of the following is true about the connection between religion and politics?

a. A religious person is more interested in politics.
b. A religious person is less interested in politics.
c. A less religious person is more interested in politics.
d. A less religious person is less interested in politics.

8. Politically active people are generally

a. Urbanites
b. Villagers
c. Working/ Business class (irrespective of geographic location)

9. Which of the following Pakistani ethnicities are least likely to have a party affiliation?

a. Balochs
b. Punjabis
c. Pathans
d. Sindhis
e. Others

10. Which of the following factors play an important role in forming an individual's political views? (Can select more than one option)

☐ Economic Conditions
☐ Family Association
☐ Educational Background
☐ Religion
☐ Ethnicity
☐ Age

☐ Mass Media

11. People should listen to several sides of a political issue before making a decision. Do you agree with this statement?

    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neutral
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

12. Youth involvement in political activism influences government policies?

    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neutral
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

13. Do you think educated and illiterate people, both, act irrationally when it comes to political discussions?

    a. Definitely
    b. Most probably
    c. Maybe
    d. Not at all

14. Should political fields be introduced into the educational system to develop and influence the mind-set of the youth?

    a. Definitely
    b. Most probably
    c. Maybe
    d. Not at all

15. In your opinion how much importance should be given to Political Socialization?
    a. More importance
    b. Less importance
    c. Is already adequate

16. In concordance with the previous question, what do you think should be the mode for enactment of positive political socialization in our society?

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