POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION THROUGH COMMUNICATION: AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS INTERACTIONAL EFFECTS OF MEDIA INPUTS

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ABSTRACT

Political Communication explosion at global and national levels and the multiplicity of communication techniques adopted by advanced countries have a wide spread impact on the political socialization in developing societies. Therefore, the great influx of exposure to the Public Affairs contents of Pakistan Television into a Pakistani society merit investigation. This paper treats Televised Public Affairs use as an independent variable and Public Affairs Interaction as dependent variable. It is assumed that there is significant linear correlation between the variables. This theoretical statement hypothesized that as the use of Televised Public Affairs use goes up, the respondents' Public Affairs Interaction also goes up. Concepts are measured on Lickert Scale. Data collected through interview-cum-questionnaire is analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Science. Pearson product movement co-efficient (r) is utilized to determine the zero-order correlation between the major variables of the study. The findings reveal the significant role of media in Political Socialization.

INTRODUCTION

In any society political culture is developed through the process of Political Socialization. Mass media provides political orientation and moulds political opinion. The rapid changes in Public Affairs Interaction are occurring daily in Pakistani society. However, the established social setup is being slowly and imperceptibly corroded. The use of video media has become more commonplace and is exerting great influence on Pakistani society. As the television is known as electronic carpet that transports millions of persons each day to far away places, one is naturally curious to update through real time dissemination of information. Because of the ideological conflicts and technological

development, one needs the most recent information and the television, due to its audio and video nature, fulfills this requirement of the people very successfully. There is a need to investigate the hierarchies of media effects in political socialization through more advance techniques of communication research.

Mass media use and political participation under the ambit of mass communication role in political socialization is a broader concept of very vast implications. In order to make our study more concrete we explicate this concept into lower order desired dimension of 'Television Public Affairs Use and Public Affairs Interaction'. In the present study we have conceptually and operationally focused on exploring the effects of exposure and attention to Public Affairs programmers being presented by Pakistan television on respondent's Public Affairs Interaction as our desired dimension. However, it is hypothesized that a strong positive relationship between the amount of watching Public Affairs programs on PTV and Public Affairs Interactional effects, i.e. aspects of acquired political socialization. Similarly, one may expect high correlation between various items measuring two indexes: (i) Frequencies of exposure and amount of attention to media public affairs stimuli, and (ii) Public affairs interactional effects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political socialization is an activity through which different members of any society gain awareness/orientation about political culture. This activity is carried out by different agents such as family, schools, mass madia and political parties (Glass, 1986 and Campbell 1960).

Several studies indicate the rapid political change /socialization among the young members of the society. Their political knowledge, attitude and behavior gets altered which brings political stability (Jennings 1987, Franklin 2004, Hooghe and Stolle, 2005; Plutzer, 2002; Franklin *et. al.*, 2004; Galston, 2001 and Sapiro, 2004).

Current socialization exploratory study is conducted on the issues of 'sources of gaining political orientation', 'youth's interest

in political activities', 'extent of their participation in political compaign' (Hooghe and Stolle, 2004 and Torney-Purta, 2004).

There is very clear evidence in the mass Communication research that a combination of mass media and interpersonal channel is must for achieving complete diffusion of message. In fact the notion that mass media are some how fitted against interpersonal sources is a synthetic notion. There is a constant interplay between interpersonal interaction and mass media use. The two have mutually reinforcing function (Chaffee and Izcory, 1972).

Considerable research evidence exists which suggests that for a complete diffusion of a message it is important that the media channel be supplemented by interpersonal interaction on the topic. For example, Kebber (1985) shows political activity as a potent media use predictor.

THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK

Human beings have the ability to understand the message and then its reflection. They can select a message and with given energy accept or reject it.

There are number of cognitive theories which stress on the mental process, perception, knowledge, idea and expectations as the major determination of human brains. The process of gathering information giving it meaning and organize into knowledge and similar mental activities are most important component of human behavior. The following two theories are mainly related to our topic:

- Symbolic Interaction Theory
- Cognitive Consistency Theory

Symbolic Interaction Theory

The major focus of the theory is on human interaction. People possess the ability to perform the process of thinking, reasoning and planning which are not possessed by other animals. It calls attention to the cognitive process and possesses the highest qualities and lives in symbolic world as well as physical world,

unlike the animals which respond directly to the stimuli. They use their information to decide how to react towards other peoples.

Cognitive Consistency Theory

The human beings use perceptions, feelings and thoughts etc. in their every day life. Each individual attempts to maintain some degree of consistency to maintain that balance in their cognition, for example, when on knowing that there is direct link among lungs cancer and smoking, if one abandons smoking, it means that he/she maintained the consistency.

However, an element of ego maintains the balance by minimizing the internal consistency, interpersonal communication and beliefs.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION LEARNING

Since interpersonal communication may play vital role in information gathering process, another important variable in cognitive effects is the time of decision, for example, when people make decision to vote for. Besides, as an inhabitant of the same society, the researcher observed that people take keen interest in national issues because their attitudes and behaviors are affected directly or indirectly by these issues. In this connection T.V. is more effective to the public, because they discuss at interpersonal level what they view on television. This situation leads to the interaction among the audience. When they view any significant news on the television, they are likely to discuss it with their family members, neignbours and coworkers. Television medium through its audio-visual characteristic attract attention, develop knowledge (cognition), compel interest and create desire, i.e., (attitude or affect), and promote action about any action, movement, campaign, event, statement and meetings as indicators of Public Affairs information. Similarly, it provides Public Affairs information through national news, local news, special news bulletin and documentary program as predictors of TV Public Affairs Use.

On the receptive end, youth in an impressionistic period of life are more susceptible to public affairs influence, because the present psyche of the Pakistani society, particularly of the youth,

pulsating with sentiments and adventurous ambitions, thus television viewing has rapidly become a more common and readily available medium. The youth are the higher consumers of TV and show greater influence of Public Affairs use.

Television programs offer variety and novelty. There are many PTV programmes. But among these PTV national news, local news, special news bulletin and documentary as Public Affairs predictors are more popular among Pakistani youth community. The impact of PTV on Public Affairs Interaction is gaining more importance, i.e. exposure to PTV national news, local news, special news bulletin and documentary and its effects on respondents' every day discussion with other people about Public Affairs issues.

THEORITICAL PROPOSITIONS

i)   Mass media are the main carrier of information about Public Affairs.

ii)   Mass media channel carry information about Public affairs mainly through its predictors of national news, local news, special news bulletin and documentary broadcast on Pakistan Television.

iii)   PTV Public Affairs use uniformly influence audience members' Public Affairs Interaction. The emergence of Interactional influence is rather decomposable into various dimensions. The chief dimensions are discussing the Public Affairs issues with Family members; all of these dimensions are likely to be more pronounced in the case of PTV viewers than any other medium.

The above derived theoretical statements can be fit into the present study's hypothesis for Public Affairs Use and its effects on respondents Public Affairs Interaction.

HYPOTHESIS

As the use of Television Public Affairs programmers goes up, respondents' public affairs interaction with peers and family goes up.

CONCEPTUAL REPERTOIRE

Major Concept of the Study: The present social research on 'T.V- Public Affairs viewing and Public Affairs Interaction' comprises the following two concepts/variables:

a) Exposure to Public Affairs programs on PTV,
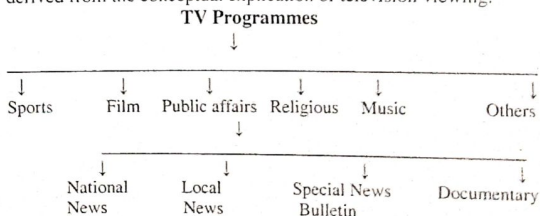b) Public Affairs Interaction of Respondents.

Through its conceptual explication we intend to clarify our abstract concepts by defining them in terms of other concepts, which enable us to visualize what we mean by the particular concept.

Conceptual Explication of Independent Variable

The mass media use is a broader concept, which includes all types of electronic and print media with verity of concepts. We can break this broad concept down into related dimension. The following lower order concept can be derived from the conceptual explication.

<div align="center">

Mass Media Use

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↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Electronic media	Print media	TV	Radio	Film	others

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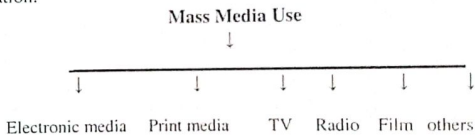
Here television (PTV) viewing is an independent variable and also a concept of very vast implications, which includes variety of programs.   By narrowing down this concept we have got our desired dimension. Following lower order concept can be derived from the conceptual explication of television viewing.

<div align="center">

TV Programmes

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↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Sports	Film	Public affairs	Religious	Music	Others

↓

| ↓	↓	↓	↓
National News	Local News	Special News Bulletin	Documentary

Here Exposure to Public affairs programmes on PTV is an independent variable and also a concept of very vast implication, which includes all types of PTV Programmes e.g., entertainment, education, religious, sports, public affairs and other programmes.

This research is confined to the programmes on PTV. But, it is still a broad concept, and we may explicate it into following lower order concepts: (a) Frequency of exposure to PTV national news, special bulletins and documentaries, and (b) Amount of attention to PTV national and local news, special bulletins, and documentaries.

Following is the conceptual analysis of viewing PTV programms:

Exposure to PTV Public Affairs Programs

$\downarrow$

National News	Local News	Special news Bulletin	Documentary
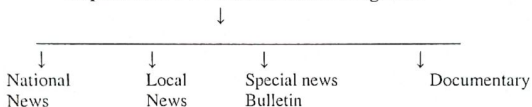
Conceptually it means the extent to which an individual watches T.V public affairs programmes.

Attention to PTV Public Affairs Programs

$\downarrow$

| National News	Local News	Special News Bulletin	Documentary
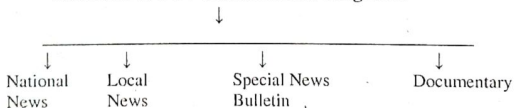
Conceptually it means the amount of attention which an individual pay while watching the public affairs programs on PTV.

Conceptual Explication of Dependent Variable

Under the ambit of political socialization is a broad concept in view of its actual and real domain in Pakistani society. It is necessary to limit it operationally. For this purpose we have explicated this dimension into further relevant lower order desired

dimension/concept of public affairs interaction of respondents. The researcher aims to observe the effects of televised public affairs viewing on public affairs interaction.

Political Socialization
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↓	↓	↓	↓
INTERACTION	INVOLVEMENT	AWARENESS	PARTICIPATION
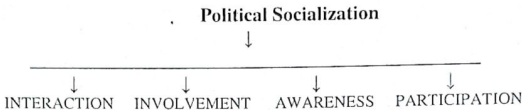
At this stage we have determined to explore the interaction as our desired dimension or concept, which is included as dependent variable in this study as one of the aspects of Political Socialization in its real form.

Public Affairs Interaction
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↓	↓	↓	↓
Family Members	Neighbours	Friends	Coworkers
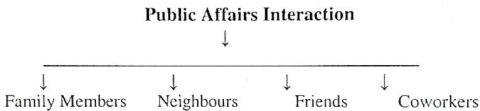
This study focuses on all the dimensions of dependent variable such as family members, neighbours, friends and coworkers as illustrated in the above diagram. The logic behind the selection of all the dimensions is that all the four categories are the indicators of the concept. Therefore, in order to measure the concept perfectly no dimension can be ignored, so conceptually we define public affairs interaction as the extent to which an individual discusses the national issues after viewing on T.V. with his family members, neighbors, friends and coworkers.

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES
Additionally, in the present study eight demographic concepts of sex of person, age of person; education, marital status, residential status, mother tongue religion and monthly household income have been used for statistical control purpose.

METHODOLOGY

Universe of Study

To apply this research practically we have selected students (male and female) from four big universities of all four Provincial capitals of Pakistan, i.e., Peshawar University, Peshawar; University of Punjab, Lahore; Karachi University, Karachi and University of Baluchistan, Quetta as our unit of analysis.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study survey research design was employed for collecting data. Survey design was felt appropriate by the researcher to conduct research on the topic relevant to measurement of the independent variable, i.e., frequency of exposure and amount of attention to PTV public affairs program, and the dependent variable i.e., public affairs interaction of respondents.

SAMPLING AND SAMPLING FRAME

For this survey research, we have selected simple random sampling technique. The study's population is divided into different heterogeneous strata that are called stratification of our population by sex. One stratum comprised male students while other includes female students and then selected a required sample randomly from within each stratum which is the representative sample for our study.

In this fashion 161 male and 145 female students were selected for inclusion into sample. About 30 cases were additionally selected and these were used as substitute for the missing cases in the initial sample. Since we did not use mailed or hand—delivered questionnaires but preferred the use of trained interviewers and since the random substitutes were used for the non-available cases, we had a 100% response rate.

ORDINAL LEVEL OF MEASUREMENT

To measure the independent and dependent variables, ordinal level of measurement has been used. The logic of selecting ordinal level for the present study is that ordinal level consists of mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. However, instead of all

categories on the same level and thus equal in value, categories are ranked in order of their value on the property. More, multivariate statistical analysis can be conducted on ordinal level of measurement. Given the nature of variables, their level can be safely assumed to have interval level characteristics as well.

DATA COLLECTON

The researcher preferred to use interview-cum-questionnaire as data collecting method. Because in formatting of interview and questionnaire there is considerable flexibility that the question can be repeated if the respondent misunderstands. The researcher met the respondent personally, explained the purpose of investigation and explained more clearly the purpose and filled the questionnaire according to respondents' answers. In this way, the researcher assesses the validity of the respondents' answers.

DATA ANALYSIS

By applying different statistical tools i.e., univariate frequency distributing techniques, Zero-order correlation and Chi-square tests to determine the strength and direction of relationships among the independent and dependent variables.

TABLE-1
ZERO-ORDER CORRELATION BETWEEN THE INDEX ITEMS OF THE INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES
N=183   *P < 0.05   ** P < 0.01

Correlation	Exposure to TV National	Exposure to TV Special	Exposure to TV Documen	Attention to TV National	Attention to TV Local	Interaction with Neighbour	Interaction with Family	Interaction with friends	Interaction with Coworker
Exposure to PTV National News.	1.0000								
Exposure to PTV Special News	.2270	1.0000							
Exposure to PTV Documentary	.0742	.3139**	1.0000						
Attention to PTV National News.	.3839**	.2716**	.1111	1.0000					
Attention to PTV Local News.	.1421	.1991*	.1327	.1073	1.0000				
Interaction with Neighbors	.2545**	.2043*	.2559**	.3455**	.1651	1.0000			
Interaction with Family Members	.0538	.0494	.1675	.1201	.0960	.1991*	1.0000		
Interaction with Friends	.1480	.0972	.0678	.2718**	.0673	.3526**	.0029	1.0000	
Interaction with Coworkers	.1115	.1927*	.1039	.3046**	.1174	.3053**	.1100	.4877**	1.0000

TABLE-2

Univariate Frequency Distribution of Public Affairs Television Use

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
5.00	4	1.3	2.1
6.00	9	2.9	6.9
7.00	14	4.6	14.4
8.00	15	4.9	22.3
9.00	19	6.2	32.4
10.00	32	10.5	49.5
11.00	21	6.9	60.6
12.00	32	10.5	77.7
13.00	25	8.2	91.0
14.00	12	3.9	97.3
15.00	5	1.6	100.0
Missing	118	38.6	

TABLE -3

Univariate Frequency Distribution of Public Affairs Interaction

Value	Frequency	Percent	Cum Percent
4.00	2	.7	.7
5.00	1	.3	1.0
6.00	5	1.6	2.8
7.00	11	3.6	6.6
8.00	11	3.6	10.5
9.00	22	7.2	18.2
10.00	44	14.4	33.6
11.00	46	15.0	49.7
12.00	50	16.3	67.1
13.00	39	12.7	80.8
14.00	28	9.2	90.6
15.00	19	6.2	97.2
16.00	8	2.6	100.0
Missing	20	6.5	

TABLE-4

Zero-order correlation between the independent variable,
'Public Affairs Television Use' and the dependent variable,
'Public Affairs Interaction'

Correlation	Television Public Affairs Use	Public Affairs Interaction
Television Public Affairs Use.	1.0000	
Public Affairs Interaction	.4138**	1.0000

N=183   **P < 0.01

TABLE-5

Effects of Television Public Affairs use on Public Affairs
Interaction Television Public Affairs use

		Low	High	
Public Affairs interaction	Low	65 71.4%	28 30.4%	93
	High	26 28.6%	64 69.6%	90
		91 49.7%	92 50.3%	183

Kendall's Tau B = 0.41, P<.01

DISCUSSION

Before formally constructing the indices, all the items in each of the two indices were inter-correlated. Table-1 provides the inter-correlation between exposure to national news stories on Pakistan Television and the amount of public affairs interaction with neighbors. Particularly, the amount of interest with neighbors appears in significantly positive relationship with exposure to special news bulletin, news documentary and attention to national

news stories in Pakistan Television programms. Its significant co-relational amount of attention to local news stories in PTV implies that whatever interaction occurs with nighbours is of cosmopolitan nature. Similarly the amount of national stories on Television figures out strong positive correlation with interaction with friends. Specifically, exposure to special news programme on Television and attention to national stories in television show strong positive correlation with the amount of interaction with the coworkers.

Table-1 reveals no uniform pattern of correlation between 'the amount of interaction with family members, friends, coworkers and neighbours' and 'the television news items'.

Table No.2 and Table No.3 indicate univariate frequency distribution of the independent and dependent variables. The univariate distribution of these two variables approximates normality.

Table No.4 is in fact a formal test of our hypothesis. The two variables have an (r) of .41 which is a strong positive relationship between the two variables as hypothesized.

Although collapsing interval level variable into discrete category is unadvisable because it amounts to throwing away information but for completeness these two variables were categorized roughly at median value into high and low categories.

Table-5 is a cross tabulation of the two variables. This table indicates Kendall's Tau B of 0.41 (P<0.01), which is clear evidence that the emergence of strong effects on public affairs interaction by exposure to PTV public affairs programms significantly and positively contributed to the explanation in hypothesized direction.

In summary, it must be concluded that this study found the overwhelmingly support for the study's hypothesis

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the present study have implications for mass media effects and for the ongoing public affairs interactional debate in the area of mass communication vis-a-vis political socialization.

Clearly, higher the exposure to mass media public affairs programs, the higher the score on an index of public affairs interaction. And the finding in the present study confirmed this statement.

As for as the issues of political socialization in the international foras' debate go, the present study's support to the role of mass media is of great importance. The political socialization issues are very glibly taken care of through asserting greater role for regional media channels and agencies. Enhancement of international flow of politics and communication is often touted as a major panacea or antidote for the political socialization complaints of the developing countries especially of Pakistani society.

To the contrary, by underscoring substantial role of documenting political socialization effects of the media fare, the present study tries to study the tension of the Pakistani society and communication scientists to the political socialization of the communication flow in Pakistan.

It will be of interest to see if the print media use has similar relationship with the frequency of public affairs interpersonal interaction. It is likely that the relationship will be stronger given the fact that print media use is relatively more conscious and planned activity. The intervening role of interest in public affairs also needs to be explored in the Pakistani setting.

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