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Identity Construction and Political Activism in South Asia: A Case of Student Wing of Peoples Party Pakistan (PPP) in Punjab

ABSTRACT

This study explores the party strategies of political identity construction of young members of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) during pre-elections campaigns of 2018 in Pakistan. Drawing on in-depth interviews with party leadership and members of Pakistan student federation (PSF) in Punjab, the paper focuses on the key narratives that PPP employs for mobilization of voters in Punjab. Party leadership uses ethically constitutive stories in the center to create political loyalties through "narratives of accomplishment". On the contrary, "narratives of political activism" where economic and political power stories become more effective in mobilizing youth in periphery of influence where party lacks political influence.

KEY WORDS: Economic Stories, Ethically Constitutive Stories, Political Identity, Politically Marginalized Party, Political Power Stories and voter mobilization

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan has been unable to pursue a stable political system since its inception in 1947 as a result of continuous struggles between civil governments and military regimes¹. Consequently, the young generation of Pakistan has grown up in a complex sociopolitical context that lacks coherence and predictability. However, politically active youth has always played a critical role in challenging traditional socio-political institutions of the country including military regimes, judiciary and civilian governments^{2,3,4}.

Youth politics in South Asia is a persistent and significant feature of our socio-political landscape⁵. Significance of youth's engagement in political processes and social movements has been critical in upholding democratic tradition in the region. However, more important is the political socialization and training of future political leaders. For this reason, youth politics is an important focus of most political parties in Pakistan and South Asia⁶.

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¹ El-khawas, Mohamed. (2009). Musharraf and Pakistan: Democracy postponed. *Mediterranean quarterly*, 20 (1), 94-118. DOI: 10.1215/10474552-2008-037

² Khilji, Usama. (2011, 05 07). Case study: The lawyers movement in Pakistan. (Movements.org) Retrieved 08 21, 2018, from *Activism, Human Rights*: <https://usamakhilji.com/2011/05/07/the-lawyers-movement-in-pakistan/>

³ Paracha, Nadeem. (2008). Student politics: a brief history. *Pakistan Defence Forum*. Retrieved from <https://defence.pk/pdf/threads/student-politics-a-brief-history.9874/>.

⁴ Rehman, Saeed., Naqvi, Ahmer., Sadiq, Annum., & Sameen, Zoya. (2013). *Literature on Youth/ Student Activism in Pakistani Context: A Historical Analysis of Youth Participation in Pakistan Politics*. Islamabad: A Jinnah Institute, 1-34.

⁵ Paolo, Sebastian. (2017). Political party youth wings and political violence in sub-Saharan Africa: A case of Ghana. *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, 8 (1), 1-14. DOI 10.5897/IJPDS2016.0284

⁶ Kadaga, Rebecca. (2016). Engagement of youth for future political leadership. *The Parliamentarian* (4), 280-281

Role of youth has been central in South Asian landscape⁷ such as the role of Indian student's federations in independence movement led by Mahatma Gandhi; the role Muslim Student Federation during the independence movement for Muslims under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Ideological father of Pakistan⁷. After the partition, student's political activism was an integral part of the national politics of South Asia⁷. Student's movement in India such as "Justice for Rohith" in 2016 that demands structural change in government policies against caste-based structural inequality and oppression in higher education⁸; In Bangladesh politically motivated students held a public protest to against complicated and overarching structure of quotas in government jobs and to protect student rights⁹.

Generation and sustenance of a constructively political youth has its own challenges. Numerous commentators on social politics have pointed out the efficacy of narratives and political stories as effective strategies for constructing political agency¹⁰. Political scientists argue that political identities of the individuals are heavily embedded in the political ideologies of the party¹¹. Political identity therefore, provides a "mental map" to frame the political positions¹². Importantly narrative construction of political identities is a key strategy employed by political parties to mobilize voters and the increasing significance of youth political activism during election campaigns of political parties¹³.

Social scientists have carried out detailed investigations on the role of political activism of youth in shaping south Asian landscape¹⁴. Political activism among youth rests on construction of young individuals as particular kinds of political agents with specific set of principles and goals. Much of this literature has focused on construction of particular youth identities within and across party politics¹⁵. However what this literature lacks is attention to the ways that political strategies vary and often diverge within party frameworks across social classes, ethnic groups and geographical landscape. An important determinant of this variation in identity politics within political parties is with respect to geographical variations in party's political influence. Therefore, a nuanced investigation of party politics is needed to ascertain the scope of identity politics in Pakistan.

For this reason, the current study focuses on the strategies and practices of identity construction that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Central Punjab. In doing so, we propose that the strategies of identity politics related to Pakistani youth that PPP rely on and the ensuing political identities often diverge from the mainstream party narrative in the *peripheries of influence* i.e. political spaces where political parties lack effective control over manipulation of political resources¹⁶.

Ethically Constitutive Stories and construction of Political People: "A Case of Student wing of PPP in Punjab"

⁷ Altbach, P. (1989). Perspectives on Student Political Activism. *Comparative Education*, 25 (1), 97-110

⁸ Lal, N. (2017, March 07). The Diplomat. Retrieved August 12, 2018, from Student Activism Rears Its Head in India: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/student-activism-rears-its-head-in-india/>

⁹ Roy, Siddhartha. (2018, April 14). The Diplomats. Retrieved July 30, 2018, from Bangladesh's Students Back on the Streets in Protest: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/04/bangladeshs-students-back-on-the-streets-in-protest/>

¹⁰ Caliskan, Gul. (2015). The Politics of Narrating Everyday Encounters: Negotiating Identity and Belonging Among Berlin's German-Born Turkish Ausländer. *Narrative Works: Issues, Investigation, & Interventions*, 25-49.

¹¹ Porter, Tenelle. (2013). Moral and political identity and civic involvement in adolescents. *Journal of Moral Education*, 1-18.

¹² Smith, Rogers. (2004). Identities, Interests, and the Future of Political Science. *American Political Science Association*, 2 (2), 301-312.

¹³ Memoli, Vincenzo., & Vassallo, Francesca. (2016). Political Activism Research: Studying The Evolution Of Political Behavior. *Paco*, 9 (1), 1-18. DOI 10.1285/i20356609v9i1p01

¹⁴ UNDP. (2014). Youth and Democratic Citizenship in East and South-East Asia. Bangkok, Thailand: Asia-Pacific Regional Centre United Nations Development Programme

¹⁵ Townsend-Bell, E. (2007). Identities Matter: Identity Politics, Coalition Possibilities, and Feminist Organizing. Washington University, Department of Political Science Publications. Washington: Iowa Research Online.

¹⁶ IGNOU. (2017). Unit-3 Marginalization. <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/9063>, 48-61.

The oldest political party of the country, Pakistan Peoples Party¹⁷ emerged as a leftist party in the country's political spectrum of the country under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1967¹⁸. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has a recognized political legacy of standing up against military dictators including Ayub Khan in 1969, Zia ul Haq in 1981, and Pervez Musharraf in 2008. Since its inception in 1967, the PPP has been voted into power on five separate occasions. The party came into power in 1970 and 1977 under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto followed by his daughter. In 2008, the party came into power under the chairmanship of Asif Ali Zardari. A distinguishing feature of PPP's political legacy in the country however, is the sacrifices of party leadership's lives in the course of struggle for establishing civil democracy in the country. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was executed by Pakistan Supreme Court in 1979 and Benazir Bhutto was assassinated in terrorist attack in 2007. Both the party leaders are remembered as martyrs, *Shaheed* in the nation's popular political consciousness¹⁹.

Despite their political legacy, PPP has struggled to maintain broad vote bank in the most populous province of the country; Punjab. A sharp decline in the mass popularity of Pakistan People's Party was witnessed in 2013 elections in Punjab when it succeeded in securing just seven seats in Punjab assembly out of 297 general seats (Provisional Assembly of Punjab, 2013)²⁰. In 2018 General election of Pakistan, PPP secured fewer seats (seven seats) in Punjab assembly (Provisional Assembly of the Punjab, 2018)²¹. Therefore, the current study conceptualizes Pakistan People's Party (PPP), as politically marginalized in Punjab as a result of its inability to effectively influence decision-making process and manipulate political resources according to party objectives. Therefore, the study explores the strategies that Pakistan People's Party (PPP), has used during the pre-election period in year 2018 in order to create political space in Punjab and to mobilize voters.

A key political strategy of (PPP) has been producing politically conscious youth and their mobilization for engagement in the country's key political processes. Historical standings of Party politics suggest that student wing (PSF) of Pakistan People's Party (PPP), is considered the backbone of the party for its contribution in social movement against military dictators (Ayub Khan in 1969, Zia Ul Haq in 1981, and Pervez Musharraf in 2008 (Paracha, 2008). In Punjab two youth organizations of the Pakistan People Party are operational, People student Federation (PSF) and People Youth Organization (PYO). During election campaign for 2018, People Student Federation (PSF) was primarily responsible for conducting study circles, running membership drives in their constituencies and approaching wider audience through social media to create and sustain the political membership and mobilize voters during the Pre-election (General election of Pakistan, 2018). The current study analyzes the student wing of Pakistan People's Party (PPP), People Student Federation (PSF) as a case study. We investigated how party leaders create and sustain a political identity of the young members of the party in order to generate political activism during the Pre-Election period and vote bank for the general election (2018).

To generate political activism in the members of party, it is important that a particular sense of political membership is constructed in line with the party's political objectives. As a matter of fact, any thriving community such as a political party constructs, maintains and transforms the sense of political membership through the process of political socialization of party members. The question arises how this sense of political membership or the sense of "We" (in-group identity with a sense of belongingness) and "They" (out-group- with a sense of rivalry) is created?

Political scientist Roger Smith (2003) in his book "Stories of Peoplehood" argues that the basic dimension of all the "political activity is making, maintaining and transforming the sense of political Peoplehood in a community of political people"²². The formation of political people or community requires "*potential rivalry with a set of other social groups or associations so that its proponents can be required to affirm their loyalty to their community in references to these other groups*" (p. 20). These people are "political" because they are communities "imagined" with particular boundaries; political goals and sense of unities that impose binding obligations and duties of the political

¹⁷ Humayun, Siddique. (2010). The Bhutto frame. DAWN.

¹⁸ Jones, Phillip. (2003). The Pakistan People's Party: Rise to Power. London: Oxford University Press.

¹⁹ Baker, Aryn. (2007). Making a Martyr of Bhutto. TIME.

²⁰ <https://www.urdupoint.com/politics/general-election-2013/constituencies/punjab.html>

²¹ https://www.pap.gov.pk/members/party_pos/en/21

²² Smith, Rogers. (2003). Stories of Peoplehood: The Politics and Morals of Political Membership. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,.

party. Smith therefore argues that “No political people are natural and primordial” (p. 32). These people are constructed via constrained and asymmetrical interactions between the party leaders and the constituents to create a political agency that accomplishes and maintains the political power (p. 36).

What compels these “political people” to affirm their sense of political Peoplehood? According to Smith (2003), political groups valorize political objectives of the party and the political identities of their members by relying on Stories of Peoplehood (p. 45) that personalize the narrative of party leadership. Three kinds of stories of Peoplehood affirm the sense of Peoplehood: firstly, “economic stories that offer material benefit of the membership; second type of story is political power stories that indicates the collective power and promise to protect the safety of the membership; lastly ethically constitutive stories that claim and based on the shared experiences, almost always intergenerational” (p. 60).

Although all three types of stories are important in creating a sense of Peoplehood, ethically constitutive have always been central to people making for two reasons. First, it is intrinsic in nature and values transmitted from generation to generations. Secondly, ethically constitutive stories are highly mythological and less subject to tangible evidence than economic or political stories (p.100).

In south Asian politics of today youth is an important social capital for political parties. By developing the sense of “political people” of young party members, political parties gain and maintain their political power in the region. The party narratives that revolve around the mobilization of young party members involve amalgamation of all three kind stories of Peoplehood. However, we argue ethically constitutive stories are more effective in mobilizing youth and voters in peripheries of influence where party lacks a successful political legacy. This salience of ethically constitutive stories during election campaigns takes the form of “narratives of accomplishment” in the party center and the form of "narrative of political activism" in the *peripheries of influence*.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A “case study” research design was employed to explore the political stories that are relevant in constructing the political identity of the young members of a political party in *peripheries of influence* and how young members respond to the political stories told by party leadership (center) that helps to create and sustain political identity of the young member of the party. Interpretive approach was used²³. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the phenomena, widely used in qualitative case study research design²⁴. Using the tradition of extended case approach that based on reflexive science that extracts general from unique, micro to macro and to connect present to the past that all builds upon preexisting theories²⁵.

In-depth Interviews

Fourteen In-depth interviews were conducted from the members periphery (student wing), and center (mother wing). In first category (center), Qamar Zaman Qaira (president of central Punjab of PPP), Atizaz Ahsan (Ex-senator, senior lawyer and senior member of PPP) and Shahida Jabeen (senior vice president of labor bureau of Punjab) were interviewed. Whereas in second category (student wing, PSF), where president, vice president and information secretary of Lahore division were interviewed.

The Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to select the participants of the research. The researchers connected President and Information Secretary of PSF through the official face-book of PSF and rest of the research participants recommend by them using the snowball sampling technique²⁶. The un-structured interview guide with

²³ Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing Qualitative Research: A practical handbook*. London : Sage .

²⁴ Marrelli, Anne. (2007). *Collecting Data Through Case Studies*. International Society for Performance Improvement, 46 (07), 39-44. Retrieved from Wiley InterScience www.interscience.wiley.com.

²⁵ Burawoy, M. (1998). *The Extended Case Method*. American Sociological Association: *Sociological Theory*, 16 (1), 4-3

²⁶ Hennink, Monique., Hutter, Inge., & Bailey, Ajay (2011). *IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS*. In M. Hennink, i. Hutter, & A. Bailey, *Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 102-124). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc.

the pre-determined set of open questions that allow the researchers to explore the phenomena of political identity construction was used in the current research. All the interviews conducted during the pre-election time period of general elections, 2018. All the in-depth interviews were conducted in Urdu language and duration of interviews ranged from 30-60 minutes.

Ethical Considerations

The Consent of the research participants were taken at the beginning data collection. Permission was taken from the research participants for recording the conversation between interviewer and interviewee. It was ensure by the researchers that data will be used only for the academic purpose²⁷.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study suggest that political parties employ different political strategies in different regions during Pre-Election campaigns depending on the influence that the political party enjoys in that area. In the regions of political influence where party enjoys a large membership base, the voter mobilization strategies are guided by party narrative from the center; the *narrative of accomplishment*. This narrative of accomplishment relies on ethically constitutive stories based around specific party history and requires familiarity with specific historical discourse for it to be meaningful within constituencies. The stories that are circulated and discussed reinforce the Party’s political mandate by focusing on the party’s role in South Asian politics, their accomplishments and sacrifices in national democratic struggles and highlight their contribution on specific policy issues. This kind of party narrative is much more coherent at the top within the party leadership and political identities are more compliant to party narrative in centers of power. Here the focus is on collective accomplishments, assets, sacrifices and goals that can encourage party members to vote. In the case of Peoples Party of Pakistan, the defining themes of narrative of accomplishment include the shaheed narrative, the history of democratic struggle against multiple military dictatorships and the party as harbingers of women empowerment in South Asian politics (see Table 1).

On the contrary, the “narrative of accomplishment” is less effective in gaining voter loyalties in *peripheries of influence*. This is because these regions are dominated by other political parties or the potential voters lack emotional as well as historical familiarity with party specific history. Therefore, the political parties rely on mobilization of new voters that requires re-constructing old loyalties and commitments with respect to the party’s political mandate. Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) accomplishes this political feat through “narratives of political activism” that focus on young voters with less established political loyalties than their older counterparts. The primary political objective is maintenance of political visibility and challenging absolute power of dominant political parties in the region. Since gaining new voters is not the prime agenda, the narrative of activism makes it politically appealing to youth with divergent political motivation and levels of commitments.

However, findings of this study suggest that normative reorientation and construction of political selfhoods requires long-term sustained efforts. Sporadic and short-term pre-election efforts like this are bound to backfire for political party’s membership base in peripheries of influence.

Table 1: List of themes, sub-themes and codes

Themes	Sub-themes	Major codes
Narrative of political accomplishment in the center	Shaheed Narrative Struggle for Democracy	Martyr in the conscious of common mass long struggle of the party against military dictator, Ayub khan, Zia ul Haq, and Pervez Musharraf importance of the vote Role in MRD movement First Prime minister of Pakistan, first speaker Sindh assembly, and first deputy speaker of Sindh assembly

Narrative of political activism in the periphery	Youth Activism Party strategies to encourage youth Youth and leadership	Membership drives quota in party tickets Role in social movements Conducting rallies, political processions, election campaigns and study circle
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1. Narrative of political accomplishment in the center

1.1 Shaheed Narrative

Narrative of “Shahadat” i.e. martyrdom is a distinguishing feature of PPP’s political identity in South Asian political landscape. PPP is represented as the party of “martyrs” that has one of the most jarring histories of unswerving political victimization in the course of political struggle in the region. Martyrdom here represents at the most extreme level, loss of one’s life. However, it also includes the death of one’s political careers or motives in the struggle for civilian democracy. Party Leaders, including the founder of PPP Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto represent the ideals of political martyrs.

The following excerpt from an interview with Aitzaz Ahsan, senior leader of PPP who has served as former member of the National Assembly of Pakistan (1988-1990, 2002-2007) and the former Interior Minister of Pakistan (1988-1990) reflects this narrative of political martyrdom succinctly.

The narrative of Shahdat will go with the PPP as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Bibi (referring to Benazir Bhutto) have sacrificed their lives in the struggle that is why people remember them as shaheed.

The party members therefore, symbolize party leaders as political martyrs and narrative of political martyrdom is used to construct and sustain the ideology of Bhuttoism. Bhuttoism based ideology represent the party mandate around the slogan of “Roti (bread), Kapra (clothes), and Makaan (shelter)”. This discourse is reflected in an excerpt from the interview with Qamar Zaman Qaira, currently PPP’s president of Central Punjab)

We are safeguard of their graves; by remembering them as martyr we commemorate their political struggles. Bhuttoism is an ideology that will remain alive because he is alive in the heart of common man.

1.2 Contribution of the Party in Democratic Setup of Pakistan

The uncertainty of political setup of Pakistan is very evident. The majority of participants considered that PPP is the only political party that has major contributions in the political setup of Pakistan.

During the interviews, majority of respondents viewed the role of Pakistan People’s party (PPP) in continuing the struggle for civilian democracy against the military dictators; Ayub Khan at the end of 1960s, Zia ul Haq (1977-1988), and Musharraf in 2001-2008) as critical. This is reflected in the fact; many suggested that every military dictatorship has been followed by PPP’s government by popular vote. For example after Ayub Khan’s downfall Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came into power in 1971 as the fourth President of Pakistan. Zia ul Haq plane crash in 1988. Benazir Bhutto was elected as the first woman Prime Minister of the country while President Pervez Musharraf was followed by PPP government under Asif Ali Zardari in 2008.

This discourse is reflected in the following excerpt from the interview with party leader Shahida Jabeen (Senior Vice President of Labor Bureau of Punjab)

PPP played an important role against the military dictators. PPP had always formed its government after defeating military dictator BIBI shaheed has a long struggle against dictators. She was a fearless lady; she stood against dictators, for the democratic setup BIBI alliance with

different political parties and headed a movement MRD. In restoration of democracy, Bhutto has sacrificed his family and embraced Shahdat.

The findings of the research indicate that the young member of the party believe that their political leaders had sacrifice their lives in the course of establishing democracy in Pakistan.

2. Narrative of Political Activism in the Periphery

Narrative of political activism administer active participation of youth in politics in order to generate the potential vote bank for the party and maintain political visibility in peripheries of influence. Therefore, the party relies on different kinds of practical engagements with youth from diverse educational, income and ethnic backgrounds. For this reason the party requires safe political spaces where feelings of activism can be stimulated with respect to party's mandate in the elections. PPP relies on PSF, Pakistan student federation to organize mobilizing activities and interactions with youth for this very purpose in pre-election period. These PSFs are activated specifically during pre-election campaigns where they are responsible for conducting study circles where young students discuss issues related to student's activism and strategies of political participation, run membership drives in their constituencies and approach wider audience through social media to create and sustain the political visibility in Punjab.

2.1 Youth Activism

PSF plays an important role in mobilizing young students across universities in Punjab, especially in Lahore. Lahore has one of the highest numbers of higher education institutes HEIs in the country. The PSF leadership, consisting of young party members guides as well as encourages students from different universities to engage actively in politics. These young students are socialized by their fellow peers into the discourse of the party, providing them the political vocabulary and political content necessary for political engagement. For this reason, regular study circles are arranged to transform political passivity into a particular kind of political activism among these youth. This focus on youth is evident in the following excerpt from a conversation with PSF leadership:

We are focusing on youth mobilization and young people. The basic goal of PSF is the revival student unions. We are conducting study circles at university, college and zonal level to mobilize the youngsters. We talked on socio-political issues and motivate youth to become an active part of politics.

However, the nature of this youth activism in the periphery is reactionary and critical. The students are trained into critiquing the current election manifestoes of dominant political parties and their political legacies using the political vocabulary of PPP. In addition, the activism resolves around specific issues that are highlighted by PPP political manifesto in the election. This includes for example a focus on free speech and democracy. Practicing study circles not only allows students to discuss issues of free speech in Pakistan but to actively practice in it as well. An excerpt from a conversation with PSF leadership:

PPP is the only party that gives a political space for their young members where we can discuss real socio-political issues unlike the other dominant parties like PTI and PML-N. Only PPP student wing is properly functioning in recent times that show how much PPP is investing on its young members.

2.2. Youth and Leadership

The particular forms of political participations that ensue at PSF and youth wings during the pre-election campaign are designed to generate a party specific narrative of youth leadership. The young party members and participants are envisioned as the "change agents" that represent Pakistan's only hope of progress. These young participants are seen as emerging leaders in the process of political training. They can be disconnected from and absolved of all their historical roots of political tyranny or series of political mistakes because of their youth. This narrative is most strongly reflected in how Bilawal Bhutto, the current thirty year old Chairman of PPP is constructed as a young political leader in Pakistan who absolves PPP of its past mistakes and generates hope in a new future of the party based on his young leadership:

Leaders of the other dominant party like PTI who claims we are true representative of youth” but he is around 70 years old. But PPP has young leadership, our chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari who truly understands issues of youth..

Hence, politically active youth is considered as the future leaders of the country. Given responses are obtained during the conversations with the members of the young member of the party. The responses indicated that young members believe their political activism will give them a chance to become future leaders of the country as well.

Pakistan People’s Party has always encouraged youth to become an active participant in a political course. It has always provided a platform to the youngsters from where they emerged as leader such as Shela Raza who has been deputy speaker of Sindh assembly.

In another conversation with the young member of the party asserted that:

PPP firmly believe that Youth is an asset of the country and considered as the future leaders of the country. Our top leaders had started their political journey as a youngster. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had started his political career when he was only 26 years old, Benazir Bhutto had started her political career when she was 26 years old, and now Bilawal Bhutto he is also 26 years old who is a real representative of youth. Leadership always emerged from youth.

2.3. Party Strategies to Encourage Youth

Mobilizing young people before elections on Party’s specific political manifesto in a region where the party lacks strong historically rooted membership base requires employing particular set of strategies. Therefore, PSF and youth wings focus on young individuals that lack strong parental lineage of political partisanship with dominant parties like PML-N or PTI. This is because shorter time frames mean that strongly-entrenched party loyalties are more difficult to convert and therefore requires much longer investment of resources and time.

In addition, critical minded youth that is active in extra-curricular activities like debating and performing arts in universities is also targeted. This is because these young individuals have broader social networks across universities and within disciplinary programs in their own educational institutes as well. Therefore, these students are not only in a better position to mobilize a large number of students but are also better equipped at voicing the party’s political agenda in terms that are relatable in the current youth. Hence, the role of these young individuals is to actively participate in party’s activities during elections like discussion sessions/gatherings, membership drives and mobilization of other young members with large social circles.

An important consequence for PPP political future in the region that this mobilization of youth allows the party to encourage and identify emerging young leaders that can take key positions as trained politicians in the party in future.

For instance, a young mobilize and Information secretary of PSF Lahore pointed out at the institutionalized policy that opens up the political scope for its young members.

PPP has fixed 10% quota for students for MNA and MPA tickets to encourage youth. Youth organizations such as PSF and PYO are re-established. PSF is considered as main organizing body of political possessions and election campaigns in their constituencies.

The response of young President of PSF Sahiwal division also reflects the same intersection between party idealization of young leadership in Bilawal Bhutto and future of young politically emerging leadership of Pakistani youth within the party.

Bilawal is focusing on young leaders. He is working and actively participating on youth training. He made “team Bilawal”, they are running successful membership drives that encourage young people to become a part of the party.

DISCUSSION

In line with the theoretical idea of Political Peoplehood, the findings of this paper show that there are a number of narratives used by the political leaders of the party for young members of the party. This politically active youth is critical in during pre-election period. In the center, the concern of the leaders is more on 'narratives of accomplishment' that rely on ethically constitutive stories, party include more generic form of narrative such as struggle for democracy, martyrdom, and women empowerment that are widely accepted worldwide. On the contrary, this kind of narrative is less effective in drawing out sustained loyalties from the young members of the party in peripheries of influence where 'narrative of political activism' becomes more effective that rely on economic stories and political power stories.

The findings of this research complement previous researches²⁷ by highlighting the critical role of narrative of martyrdom (shaheed) in creating and sustaining the loyalties for the party (Pakistan Peoples Party). As stated earlier, the concept of martyrdom has a cultural and religious significance in the context of Pakistan. The findings of this paper affirms that the cultural construction of deaths of party leaders as "Shaheed" continues to be one of the most important factors in creating and sustaining the loyalties in the center. Number of researches have indicated that the party leaders of PPP themselves added "martyrdom is our cause" to their basic slogan "bread, clothing, shelter"²⁸ and this political discourse (martyrdom) was critical in mobilizing political support through out Pakistan²⁹.

The findings of the current study suggest that even though Pakistan's extended history of dictatorship, democracy remains a key political value among the country's youth. This was reflected in the PPP's narrative focus on constructing its political image as the saviors of democracy. PPP learders are presented as the symbols of the democracy who sacrificed their lives despite awareness of the imminent security threats to their lives, as in case of Benazir Bhutto. For this reason PPP politics rests on motivating young members to actively participate in the movements of restoration of democracy³⁰.

Patriarchal attitude and arrangement in a sphere of politics in south Asia is very common that restrict women to participate in politics³¹. Therefore, an effective political narrative in order to appeal to modern Pakistani youth has to build a narrative that takes into actual contributions to women's lives and their future in Pakistan. Nevertheless, countries in South Asia have been headed by women such as Indra Ghandi (Minister of India), Benazir Bhutto (Prime Minister of Pakistan), and Sheikh Hasina (Prime Minister of Bangladesh) yet marginalization of women in politics is evident on a larger scale. Women empowerment is one of the most debatable topics in context of Pakistan and continues to be relevant within the country's political youth³².

On the other hand, this paper argues by developing the sense of "Political people" in young member of the party, political activism is motivated that rely economic stories and political power stories (narrative of political activism). Previous researches on youth activism have suggested that youth is important social capital in order to pursuit of power and remain in office such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka (Mitra & Enskat, 2004). Pakistan has failed to establish cohesive and transparent political system in the country³³ yet the youth of the country has proved to be an important agent of social movement against dictators. The findings of the research

²⁷ Chandio, Amir. Ali., & Chandio, Shahida. Amir. (2013). The Execution of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto: Its Impacts on the Politics of Sindh. *Research Journal of Political Science*, 2 (2), 27-36. ISSN 2227-7927

²⁸ Jalal, Ayesha. (2014). *Democracy Restored?* In A. Jalal, *The Struggle For Pakistan: A Muslim Homeland And Global Politics*. London England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

²⁹ Memon, Nazish., & Bughio, Faraz. Ali. (2014). *Critical Analysis of Political Discourse: A Study of Benazir Bhutto's Last Speech*. *Balochistan Journal of Linguistics*, 2, 75-95.

³⁰ Malbari, Naheed., & Laghari, Javaid. (2010). *Transformational Leadership and Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto*. *Journal of Independent Study and Research MSSE*, 8 (1), 203-220.

³¹ Perveen, D. R. (2017, December 12). *Daily Times* . Retrieved 10 12, 2018, from *Daily Times*: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/166437/south-asian-women-politics/>

³² Perlez, & Burnett. (2008). *Benazir Bhutto lived in the eye of Pakistan's storm*. In Z. Halepota, *Benazir Bhutto: Political thinker and diplomat*. Karachi: Sindhica Academy

³³ Zain, O. F. (2010). *Paradox of Our Political Parties*. *South Asian Studies: Research Journal of South Asian Studies* , 89-97.

complement the previous researches that suggest youth is an important political agent as a result of its role in social movements and political negotiations in south Asian political landscape³⁴. The salience of the youth's political contribution is most evident during pre-election period where they engage in door to door campaigns, run membership drives and motivate their families and friends to cast their vote on election days³⁵.

For the political parties to encourage youth political activism, political leaders cannot simply rely on ethically constitutive stories. Matter of fact, to affirm youth membership after pre-election campaigns, party has to offer them some sort of material and political benefit where they feel integral part of the party. The findings of our research suggest that party is actively involved in youth mobilizing strategies such as offering party tickets (economic stories) and giving them leadership role, organizing important political rallies and gathering (political power stories) to encourage youth to become an active member. In the context of current study, PPP is conceptualized as marginalized party in Punjab so it is important for the party that it generates and sustains youth political activism to create political space for themselves under the young leadership of chairman of the party (with reference to findings of the study), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

CONCLUSION

The paper concludes that there were several narrative strategies that Pakistan Peoples' Party (political party in Pakistan) use to construct a political identity of their young member of the party to mobilize them for the General Elections of Pakistan, 2018. Political leaders play an important role in political socialization of the young member of the party. In current study, we have argued that politically marginalized party uses combination of all three kinds of stories in order to motivate political activism in young member of the party where ethically constitutive stories become more relevant in the center (narrative of accomplishment), and economic stories and power political stories become more relevant in the influence of periphery (narrative of political activism).

³⁴ Ortner, Juan. (2017). A theory of political gridlock. *Theoretical Economics*, 12, 555-586. DOI: 10.3982/TE2276

³⁵ Hussain, Sajid ., Sajid, A.R., & Jullandhry, Shafiq. (2018). Politics-media-youth nexus: Analysis of Pakistan's general elections 2013. *MEDIA & COMMUNICATION STUDIES*, 4, 1-14. DOI: 10.1080/23311886.2018.1446688