



“Understanding 'Partisanship' and 'Patriotism': A Close Examination of Pakistan as a Case.”

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Introduction

Patriotism, often defined as the love of one's country, encompasses more than a simple sentiment. It involves a special affection for the nation, a strong personal identification with it, and a genuine concern for its well-being. These core elements reflect the profound connection and devotion individuals feel towards their country. In contrast, partisanship refers to unwavering loyalty and dedication to a political party and its associated ideology. Extreme partisanship, which could be called as 'partism', can hinder the effective functioning of democratic governments, leading to a lack of cooperation, institutional warfare, and the politicization of independent institutions. This persistence of extreme partisanship, known as political polarization, divides a country's population into opposing camps, impeding progress and eroding trust in democratic institutions.

Partism, is observed in Pakistan, where harmful propaganda and the defamation of state institutions are prevalent in the political discourse. Understanding political discourse requires considering all participants, including politicians, citizens, and various groups, as their engagement shapes the public sphere. Politics involves not only professional

politicians but also citizens, pressure groups, and dissenting voices, highlighting the complexity of political activity and discourse.

In order to uphold a sense of responsibility towards our country, we must distinguish between patriotism and partisanship. While patriotism binds a diverse population together and promotes the common good, partisanship acts as a parasite that diverts attention from the nation's interests. Recent events in Pakistan, including violent protests and attacks on institutions, highlight the need for responsible and constructive approaches to address internal issues. It is essential to prioritize the welfare of the nation and work towards its progress through dialogue, understanding, and collective responsibility of every citizen. Political discourse analysis should be introduced as a separate subject to educate young people about the workings of political parties and the importance of critical thinking. Additionally, we must recognize that present-day leaders cannot be equated with historical figures like the father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam, and evaluate them objectively based on their abilities and integrity. Promoting responsible patriotism and combating extreme partisanship is the only way forward to deal with the current political situations.

Patriotism is the Love of One's Country

The standard dictionary definition states that patriotism is the "love of one's country." While this definition captures the fundamental meaning of the term in everyday usage, some may find it too simplistic and in need of elaboration. Stephen Nathanson's dissects that patriotism encompasses several key elements that contribute to a deep love and dedication towards one's own country. It involves having a special affection for the nation, cultivating a strong sense of personal identification with it, and nurturing a genuine concern for its overall well-being.¹ Patriotism goes beyond mere sentiments and encompasses a willingness to make sacrifices for the betterment of the country. It

¹ Nathanson, Stephen. "In defense of" moderate patriotism"." Ethics 99, no. 3 (1989): 535-552.

embodies a selfless commitment to promoting the good of the nation, even if it requires personal sacrifices. These fundamental aspects of patriotism reflect the profound connection and devotion individuals feel towards their homeland.

Partisanship, within the realm of democratic politics and government, refers to a strong adherence, dedication, or loyalty to a political party, as well as to the associated ideology or agenda linked to that party. This loyalty is often accompanied by a negative perception of opposing parties. Extreme partisanship is generally considered detrimental to the effective functioning of democratic governments due in part to its basis in motivated reasoning and misconceptions about political reality. Among political leaders and officeholders, such 'hyper-partisanship' is typically demonstrated by an unwillingness to cooperate or find compromises on significant matters with leaders and officeholders from other parties. It can also manifest as institutional warfare, where institutional authority is misused to undermine public support for another party or impede their effective governance, even at the expense of the national interest. The politicization of traditionally independent and apolitical government institutions is another indication of extreme partisanship.

Taking the case study of United States, partisan electoral strategies have included both legal and illegal methods of voter suppression and vote dilution. These techniques are designed to make voting challenging for supporters of another party and to ensure that another party is underrepresented in a legislature relative to its proportion of the total votes cast in a given election (also known as gerrymandering). Partisanship among political leaders naturally fosters and is fostered by partisanship among ordinary citizens, characterized in part by hostility and prejudiced attitudes towards members of other parties.² In cases of extreme partisanship, significant portions of both ordinary citizens

² Duignan, B.. "partisanship." Encyclopedia Britannica, February 21, 2023.
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/partisanship>

and political leaders may believe that a government led by another party lacks legitimacy or even justify resorting to violence against such governments.

The persistence of extreme partisanship in a two-party system, referred to as political polarization, results in the division of an entire country's population into two opposing political camps. This polarization can harm a country's long-term interests, partly because the resulting dysfunction and gridlock make it challenging for any government to adequately address national problems. Moreover, it poses a serious threat to democracy by eroding public trust in electoral institutions and undermining the commitment to democratic values and the rule of law.

Hyper-partisanship could be simply understood by the term “Partism” in Pakistan

Pakistan is currently experiencing a contentious political environment characterized by the dissemination of harmful propaganda by different political parties against various individuals and groups. For example, the removal of a former political leader and their party from power, there has been a notable trend of spreading false information and defaming state institutions, particularly the military and its leadership. People were on streets, damaging public property and attacked institutions.

Political Discourse Analysis and Political Parties of Pakistan

In simple terms, politicians are a group of people who get paid for their political activities. They are elected, appointed, or designate themselves as important figures in the political system. This definition of political discourse is similar to how we identify medical, legal, or educational discourse with the respective participants in those fields, like doctors, lawyers, or teachers. However, politicians are not the only participants in politics. By analyzing political discussions, one should also consider the various people involved, such as the public, citizens, the masses, and different groups. In other words, once we

look at politics and its discussions in the public sphere, we realize that there are many more participants in political communication. In the words of Van Dijk,

“The easiest, and not altogether misguided, answer is that political discourse is identified by its actors or authors, viz., politicians. Indeed, the vast bulk of studies of political discourse is about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidents and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament, or political parties, both at the local, national and international levels. Some of the studies of politicians take a discourse analytical approach”³

The same applies to media discourse, which should also focus on its audiences. Just like in medical, legal, or educational contexts, we think about not only the professionals but also the patients, defendants, and students. Therefore, defining political discourse solely based on its main authors is not enough. We need to include all relevant participants, whether they actively engage in political discussions or receive information through one-way communication.

There's another complexity when it comes to defining politics. It's not just about official or professional politics and politicians. Political activity and the political process involve citizens, voters, members of pressure and issue groups, demonstrators, dissidents, and more. All these groups, individuals, organizations, and institutions can take part in the political process, and many of them actively engage in political discourse. So, if we consider a broad definition of politics, it means expanding the scope of "political discourse" to include practices involving all participants in the political process.

Applying political discourse analysis to political parties also examines the language and communication strategies they employ to shape public opinion. It is evident that political parties have the power to influence the beliefs and perspectives of society through their

³ Van Dijk, Teun A. "What is political discourse analysis." *Belgian journal of linguistics* 11, no. 1 (1997): 11-52.

discourse. However, it is important to note that while political discourse can garner support for a particular party, it can also contribute to the division of citizens.

Political parties strategically craft their messages to appeal to certain segments of the population and mobilize support. Through their discourse, 'parties aim to create a positive image of themselves while often criticizing or undermining their opponents. By highlighting certain issues, using persuasive language, and employing rhetorical techniques, parties seek to shape public opinion in their favor.'⁴

However, it is crucial to analyze the impact of such discourse on society as a whole. While political parties may succeed in garnering support, their divisive tactics can also contribute to the polarization and division among citizens. This is because political discourse often accentuates differences, perpetuates stereotypes, and fosters an "us versus them" mentality.

By subjecting political discourse to analysis, we can better understand the strategies employed by parties to sway public opinion and the potential consequences of their language. It enables us to critically evaluate the intentions and tactics behind their messages, identify any manipulation or misinformation, and recognize the impact it has on societal cohesion.

Engaging in political discourse analysis allows us to develop a more nuanced understanding of the role of political parties in shaping public opinion. It equips us with the tools to critically assess the language and tactics used by parties, fostering a more informed and discerning citizen. Through this analysis, one can strive for a more constructive and inclusive political discourse that promotes unity and collaboration rather than division.

⁴ Van Dijk, Teun A. "What is political discourse analysis." *Belgian journal of linguistics* 11, no. 1 (1997): 11-52.

Understanding Partisanship and Patriotism in Pakistan Considering Current Political Situation

Throughout the history of Pakistan, numerous politicians have faced arrests and disqualification on charges of corruption. However, no political party had ever dared to target military establishments and engage in the burning of their residences. The recent attacks by supporters of Imran Khan's party on Pakistan Army installations, including the house of Corps Commander Lahore and the General Headquarters (GHQ), are unprecedented acts that cannot be attributed to any political party. It is worth noting that the house burnt by protestants was previously occupied by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan.

The actions carried out by people following a specific party have never occurred in the 75-year history of Pakistan. Regardless, invading national properties and sensitive institutions, and setting them on fire, does not reflect the actions of a patriotic Pakistani. Witnessing the destruction of these properties evokes deep sorrow. While it is acknowledged that protesting is a fundamental right of any citizen, civilized societies do not sacrifice the lives of ordinary individuals in the name of mass processions and protests.

Those individuals involved in damaging the country's properties through their protests have either willingly or unknowingly become tools of anti-national forces. Setting fire to national properties and sensitive institutions is not an action that portrays patriotism among Pakistanis. Instead, it is merely a display of partisan behavior.

From Love to Action: The Responsible Role of Patriots in Pakistan's Progress

Pakistan, being a diverse country with multiple cultures and languages, faces the challenge of maintaining unity amidst its pluralistic society. However, there is a crucial factor that binds Pakistan together despite these differences, and that is the sense of

security and the military establishment. These institutions play a significant role in unifying the nation and providing a sense of stability and protection.

It is natural for every country to have its share of insecurities and internal issues, whether at a lower or higher level. However, it is important to recognize that these challenges cannot be effectively addressed through aggressive actions. This is where the distinction between patriotism and partisanship becomes crucial. As patriots who love our country, we must also uphold a sense of responsibility towards our state. Instead of resorting to destructive behaviors or attacking our own institutional buildings, we should channel our efforts towards constructive and mature approaches.

Engaging in acts of vandalism or aggression towards our own institutions not only fails to project a positive image of our nation but also demonstrates immaturity. It is vital to understand that true patriotism involves working towards the betterment of our country through responsible and constructive means. By promoting dialogue, understanding, and a sense of collective responsibility, we can contribute to the growth and progress of our nation in a peaceful and sustainable manner.

Patriotism Acts Like a Cement in the Developing Countries

In developing countries, where there is often a lack of strong national institutions, patriotism can help to bind together a diverse population and provide a sense of common purpose. Taking China as an example, patriotism has been used to promote economic development and to build a sense of national pride. The government has actively promoted patriotism through education, national symbols, and public events. In Brazil, patriotism has helped to overcome the challenges of economic inequality and social unrest. It has provided a sense of common purpose and has helped to unite Brazilians around a shared vision for the future. This shows that the interest of the state and people is not to support a specific party but to support the national interest of the state and focus on its prosperity.

Partisanship is a Parasite to the States

Partisanship, akin to a parasite, poses a threat to the well-being of a nation. It diverts people's attention away from the interests of the state and hampers their ability to prioritize the welfare of the nation. However, it is crucial for us to emphasize the importance of flexibility within our democratic system. Democracy grants us the freedom to choose and live our lives. As the population, we hold the power to shape our country together but in an objective and sensible manner.

Recently, the arrest of a prominent political leader in Pakistan, widespread unrest and violence erupted across the country. Media reports highlighted incidents of stone pelting, vehicle arson, and attacks on law enforcement. The violent clashes resulted in numerous injuries, including over 150 officers and staff in Punjab province alone. Notably, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, and Gujranwala witnessed significant casualties among police personnel. Authorities were actively pursuing those responsible for the incidents. Disturbingly, the situation further deteriorated in Peshawar, with scenes of looting and armed party workers going viral on social media. Protesters also targeted Radio Pakistan, setting fire to the newsroom and nearby vehicles. The breach of Islamabad's heavily guarded Red Zone led to further chaos and clashes with police, including the burning of several vehicles, including an ambulance.

It is essential to reflect upon the principles of morality and ethics, which are the collective responsibility of the people. The citizens are entrusted with the governance of the state, and this responsibility necessitates the establishment of robust institutions. While protests are a fundamental right of every citizen, the well-being of ordinary individuals should not be sacrificed in the name of mass demonstrations. Those who engage in destructive acts during protests have either knowingly or unknowingly become pawns of anti-national forces.

The violent protesters must understand, it is crucial to realize that this country belongs to all of us, and the future of children is intricately linked with the well-being of Pakistan.

One must not allow emotions to cloud our judgment and jeopardize the prospects of a brighter future of the country.

Recommendations

Try to Eliminate the "Ism" Inside the Support:

Living in a democratic country means one has the right to choose political leaders wisely. However, sometimes the support for a particular leader or party can become biased and cloud the judgment. This is called "ism," and it's important for a citizen to try and remove it from support. Instead of blindly supporting someone based on personal biases or prejudices, one should take a step back and think critically. Citizen must consider not only the candidates' qualifications, their past actions, and their plans for our nation's future but also the practical actions and emotional stability of the leader. By doing so, we can make more informed decisions and contribute to a fair and inclusive political system.

Separate Subject of Political Discourse Analysis:

To help young people understand how political parties work and the difference between patriotism and blindly supporting a political party, The education department must introduce a separate subject called Political Discourse Analysis. This subject must be offered as an elective in all areas of study. It would teach students about the way politicians communicate their ideas and influence public opinion. By studying political discourse, students can learn to recognize when politicians are using persuasive techniques or manipulating facts. They can also gain a deeper understanding of different political ideologies and how they shape policies.

Having this subject as an elective would give students the opportunity to explore politics in a structured way, regardless of their main area of study. They would learn to think critically, analyze political speeches and debates, and engage in respectful discussions about political issues. By doing so, they can develop the skills needed to make informed decisions and actively participate in the democratic process.

Nobody Can Be Like the Father of the Nation:

It's important to understand that the "Father of the nation" and its comparison cannot be given, no matter what, to any present-day political leaders. One may feel emotional attachment and respect towards historical figures like Quaid-e-Azam, but it's crucial to recognize that governing a country and facing its challenges different from the efforts needed to emerge as an independent state.

While it's natural to have emotions, but today's political leaders should be evaluated based on their abilities, integrity, and their approach to addressing the challenges our country faces. It is essential to study the principles and values embodied by historical figures, but current leaders are supposed to be assessed objectively.

It's important to question whether present-day leaders truly exemplify the qualities of a great leader. Considering their competence, ethical behavior, and their stance on issues like vandalism, which goes against the values upheld by great leaders. By doing so, citizens can ensure that Pakistan is being led by individuals who are dedicated to the progress and well-being of our nation or is it the other way.

Conclusion

Partisanship hinders people from giving their full attention to the needs of their country, causing a diversion from crucial state matters. This is particularly evident in Pakistan, where the relationship between the military and politics is intricate. The military plays a vital role in safeguarding national security and addressing external threats. Extensive research indicates that the military has been instrumental in maintaining stability and fortifying the nation. However, the damaging impact of political affiliation on patriotism cannot be ignored. Political divisions are progressively fracturing the foundations of patriotism. The unity necessary for pursuing the best interests of the nation is being undermined by these divisions.

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