

①

# Political polarization: Governance and Society

A- Introduction

B- Political Polarization and Historical Context

Impacts of

C- Political Polarization ~~Impact~~ on Governance

i- Political polarization leads to governance gridlock

① Case study: government shutdown in US, on allocating of \$5.7 billion for a border wall, between Democrats and Republicans.

ii- Results in poor decision making

① Venezuela: The political opposition refusal to negotiate with president Hugo Chavez, resulted in the loss of control of the Congress entirely. (Book: How Democracies die)

iii- Political polarization leads to policy stagnation

① Australia: The ongoing debate on climate change policy, which has lead to a lack of meaningful ~~fill~~ action (The Guardian)

Avoid minor grammar mistakes  
Improve sentence structure

Structure?

(2)

(B) U.S. failure to pass comprehensive immigration policy despite bipartisan (Pew Research Centre - 2023)

1 IV - Makes democracy weak

(A) Case study: Hungary (2006-2019) - causes the erosion of democratic institutions and the rise of authoritarianism (Freedom House).

(B) Thailand: political polarization and military rule

(C) Martial law of South Korea - 2024

V - Causes lack of compromises among political leaders.

(A) Case study: 2022, vote of no-confidence against Imran Khan in Pakistan.

VI - Promotes patron-client politics

(A) Political system of Pakistan since independence (Feudal, Tribal chieftans, businessmen)

(B) Case study: African countries Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania

VII - Decreases governance effectiveness and efficiency

(A) South Africa: political polarization within the ruling African National Congress party has hindered effective governance and led to political instability (UIB - 2023)

Weak sentence structure

viii - Weakens the transparency and accountability of the government institutions.

(a) Research studies of World Bank and IMF - show that political polarization greatly compromise transparency and accountability of institutions. (2023)

ix It can lead to political violence

(a) U.S: 6th January 2021, Capital attack to overturn the 2020, election results (BBC-news)

(b) The 2019, Easter Sunday bombing in Sri Lanka, killed 250, people (Al-jazeera-news)

### D- Political polarization Impacts on Society

1- Decreases Social Cohesion in Society

(a) Case study: South-Africa - The rise of xenophobic attacks in 2019, which were fueled by political rhetoric and led to the displacement of thousands of people (Human Right watch)

(b) Sudan- 2023/24, 13 million people displaced due to polarization between the military groups (UN- 2024)

(4)

II - Undermines trust in institutions

① Brazil: The impeachment of president Dilma Rousseff in 2016, which led to decline in trust in institutions and widespread protest (New research Centre)

III Exacerbates economic inequalities

② Chile: widespread protest in 2019, sparked by economic inequality due to political polarization led to rewrite the Constitution

IV - leads to voter suppression

③ Russia - suppression of political opposition (Human Right watch - 2023)

V - Affects availability of equal and quality education

④ Case Studies: Sudan, Chile, South-African education Systems

(5)

VI - Makes access difficult to fundamental human rights

(a) United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), report about human rights violation in Syria, Venezuela, Sudan, Chile.

Suggest remedial measures as well

B. Conclusion

Universally, there are some basic pre-requisites required for a country to grow economically and socially. One of these pre-requisites is the political circumstance of the nation. If it is based on mutual collaboration and understanding, it will provide a suitable environment to other sectors of the country to thrive. Contrary to it is the political polarization, where there will be confrontation and hatred between politicians. Political polarization affects both governance and society of the country. It leads to governance gridlock and poor decision making in the country. It also causes policy stagnation.

(6)

and weakens the democracy of the country. Similarly, it erodes the compromises and tolerance ~~between~~ among politicians. Beside it, political polarisation makes the governance ineffective and inefficient. It, too, decreases the transparency and accountability of the government institutions. Additionally, it invokes the political violence. Similarly, in society it decreases social cohesion and undermines the trust of the people in institutions of the government. Political polarisation further aggravates the economic inequalities of the people. Similarly, it leads to suppression of the voters by different means. It also negatively affects the education system of the country, and other fundamental rights of the humans. Hence, political polarisation is an evil which has ~~no~~ consequence for governance and society in the country.

Political polarisation is not a new phenomenon, it has been present since primitive times in the states. And has affected the governance and society everytime. The 16th Century French Revolution

(7)

occured due to the political polarization of the country. which resulted in fascist and communist government. Similarly, the political polarization in Italy and Germany after world-war-I gave birth to an authoritarian government in the country. ultimately affecting the government function and society. So, it can be said that political polarization has grown parallel with the growth of the modern states.

Political polarization leads to governance gridlock in the country. Governance gridlock is a situation of the country when the responsible institutions of the country stop performing their duties. By creating gridlock in the governance, political polarization affects working of the government body. Political polarization makes it very difficult for law makers to find a common ground and pass legislation. During 2018-2019, the government of United state shutdown, because of political differences between the democratic and Republican party government.

8

On the allocation of \$5.7 billion for border wall construction. It is a result of government stop performing their duties for almost thirty-five days. Thus, political polarization badly affects governments by creating governance gridlock in the country.

Similarly, political polarization leads to a breakdown in democratic governance, causing decline in the government's ability to make decisions.

To make difficult decision in the favour of a country requires a harmonized political force. Political polarization creates a breakdown in the leaders of political parties. And resultantly, they try to oppose every single movement of the government. Due to which sometimes necessary decision for countries growth become difficult to approve. And ultimately, it pushes the country into turmoil. Like in Venezuela case when the political opposition refuse to negotiate with president Hugo Chavez. Which led to the complete control of Congress.

by chavez government later on, he led the country autocratically. And made the opposition and other institutions of the country subordinate to him. Briefly, political polarization erodes the government's ability to make decisions on their own.

Furthermore, political polarization causes policy stagnation and ultimately affecting the governance. For a country to grow or progress regular policy making is compulsory. Without good policy and on time policy making countries struggle to ~~it~~ thrive. Political polarization creates an environment of hatred and confrontation between the policy makers and among the political arena of the country, which makes it difficult for them to come on the same ground for policy making process.

For instance, the ongoing debate on climate change policy in Australia, which has led to a lack of meaningful action regarding climate change - The Guardian.

Similarly, the United State of America fail to pass a comprehensive immigration

policy, despite being a bi-partisan political system, as stated by 'Pew Research Centre' in 2024. Thus, political polarization is a big hurdle in the way of policy making process.

Additionally, political polarization makes the democracy weak. Democracy can be made down-and-out when the politicians prioritize their personal or party gain compared to country or people interest. When there is uncertainty in the political circumstances, the chances to ignore democracy increases. Because where there is personal gain, sticking to the norms of democracy becomes harder. For instance, the recent scenario of South Korea, where the president declared martial law (emergency) in the country. Mainly, due to his weak coalition government and political polarization in the country. Similarly, the political environment of Hungary, from 2006-2019, resulted in the erosion of democratic institutions and rise of authoritarianism in the country - according to Freedom House report.

Thailand, too, has been victim of political polarization and gave ~~rise~~ to military rule in the country. So, it is proved from above case studies that political polarization is dangerous for the health of democracy.

Moreover, political polarization leads to lack of compromises and tolerance among the ruling class of the country. In multiple parties system, it has become extremely difficult for a single party to make a government. So, they have to make a coalition government. Where mutual tolerance and compromises play a crucial role. However, due to political polarization the circumstances change at one-eighty.

Even after making government, they will hardly compromise on political issues due to political polarization.

For example, the weak coalition government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, which was ended with the vote of no-confidence against ex-prime minister, Imran Khan.

It was just because of political polarization between the government allies

(12)

as well as it among the party members.

To sum up, it can be said that political polarization erodes the compromises and tolerances.

In addition, political polarization promotes patron-client politics in the country.

Patron-client politics refers to a governance

where politicians provide benefits to

voters in exchange for their loyalty

in the elections. Due to political polarization

politicians usually lose their popularity

among the masses. And they then try

to provide maximum benefits to the

elders of the families, tribes or any

group, in order to take maximum votes.

Political system of Pakistan is ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup> of

the best example in this regard. Even

since independence clientelistic politics has

existed in Pakistan which is mainly

dominated by feudals, tribal chiefs and

businessmen. Similarly, few African countries

like Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania have

suffered from patron-and-client politics. Briefly,

political polarization makes the ground for

patron-client politics in the country.

(13)

Furthermore, political polarization ~~make~~ decreases ~~governance~~ effectiveness and ~~inefficiency~~ ✓ Good governance is one which is effective and efficient. Means that it does the job ~~greatly~~ and with minimum resources. ✓ But, these two qualities of governance ~~can~~ can be greatly compromise due to political polarization in the country. ✓ Corruption and unequal distribution of resources are further promoted by political instability. Resulting in the ~~bad~~ performance of the government. ✓ According to the report of world bank in 2023; the political polarization within the ruling African National Congress party has greatly reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of South Africa. ✓ Hence, it is difficult for a governance to be effective and efficient parallel with political polarization. ✓

Similarly, political polarization weakens the transparency and accountability of the government institutions. ✓ For the better performance of the government

(14)

It is important to have better transparency and accountability system in the country. Which not only question and investigate the civilian but also the government institution. Unfortunately, when there would be unstable political systems circumstances in the country, it will be extremely difficult to have such an independent institute to make the government accountable.

It is because during such a scenario every politician wants person of their own choice. Which they never want to be investigated. This, too, has been proved by the research study of World-Bank and International Monetary Fund in 2023 which state that political polarization greatly compromises transparency and accountability of the institution. Hence, for better transparency and accountability of government institutions it is important to have political stability.

Moreover, in extreme cases, <sup>political polarization</sup> it leads to political violence in the country.

Political violence is a kind of violence when the politicians for personal interest use masses against other party or even government. The confrontation and hatred created by political polarization, will give rise to conflicts between different factions of politics.

And if one group does not get the results they wish for, will use violence against others. In order get want they want. The world has witnessed such an incident on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021, in United States where Republican supporter attacked on the capital, in refusal of 2020, elections results. Sri Lanka, too, suffered such a violence, in the shape of Easter Sunday bombing which killed almost 250 people according to Al-jazeera news in 2019. Therefore, it can be said that political violence nourishes the political violence in the country.

Parallel to governance political polarization severely affects society, too. Like political polarization leads to erosion

of social cohesion. For a society to thrive and live peacefully, it is imperative to have strong social bonds. Political polarization exacerbates the differences among the supporters of different political parties. These differences do not just limit itself to ideology while also reaches families of the people. And they start fighting with each other, widening the gulf between societies. For instance, in South-Africa the rise of xenophobic attacks in 2019 which was fueled by political rhetoric and led to the displacement of thousands of people, according to the 'Human Right Watch' in 2019. Similarly, according to United Nation in 2024, thirteen million people displaced in Sudan as a result of civil war created by political polarization.

Thus, political polarization greatly affects the social cohesion of the societies.

Similarly, political polarization undermines the trust of people in the government institutions. It is

(17)

- Imperious for government institution to keep the trust of the masses of the country. Political polarization creates environment of corruption, economic inequalities, health disparities and other disproportion in the country which due to which the people start mistrusting their governmental institutions. One such a study was released by 'Pew Research Centre' in 2016, about Brazil. As per the report, the impeachment of President Dilma Rouseff in 2016, led to decline in trust of people in institutions and resulted in widespread protests. So, political instability causes decline of the people trust in institutions.

Furthermore, political polarization exacerbates the economic disparities in the country and badly affects the society. Economic inequalities refers to a situation when wealth and property is concentrated in too few hands. Political polarization makes the circumstances in which every ruler want to serve personal interest. As a result, he

will support those people who at the end votes for him in general elections.

Due to which few people grow economically and other remain behind. Such a

situation creates anarchy in the society and the people would want to revenge their right. During 2019,

in Chile, the situation got worst due to mass protest across the country. And even resulted in the rewriting of ~~country's~~ country's secret ~~to~~ Constitutional document.

It was all due to years long political polarization in the country.

Moreover, political

polarization leads to voter's suppression.

Voter's suppression can be in different forms, for example, donot leting them to cast vote, changing their decision through changing ballot papers or even changing end results. Political polarization, usually,

results in the dictator role which then donot takes the voters in

to account. And usually changes the end result by one or other means.

So, the voter's will be deprived.

of their democratic right. For instance, according to Human Rights Watch' research report in 2024. The contemporary regime in Russia have been oppressing the political oppositions as well as voters, for more than a decade now.

Briefly, political polarization is not in the interest of voters and they ultimately get suppressed.

Similarly, political polarization compromises the availability of equal and quality education. The basic need for the well-civilized society is the availability of quality education to them. However, due to political instability the government fails to concentrate on this basic entity of life. They would not be able to give allocate proper budget for education and at the same time monitor the performance of education sector. For example, by looking at the literacy rate and education system of Sudan, Chile, and other South-Subsaharan countries. Because of

massive political polarization the availability of educational opportunities have severely effected. So, for better and quality education system, it is necessary to have stable political grounds in the country.

Moreover,

political polarization in the country makes the access difficult to fundamental human rights. Rule of law, freedom of speech, freedom of movement are some of the fundamental rights. Political polarization creates uncertainty in the institutions. Due to which they cannot perform their due function on time. Also, mostly authoritarian regime rules in political polarization who do not pay due attention to the human rights.

In one of the recent report of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); states that human violation is at its peak in Syria, Sudan and Chile due to political polarization in these countries. Therefore, political instability is one of the leading cause behind human right violation across the globe.

(2)

Political polarization is a precarious and far-reaching phenomenon that not only undermines governance but also erodes social cohesion. In society, it makes access difficult to fundamental human rights. Effects availability equal and quality educations. It also leads to suppression of voters. Similarly, further exacerbates the economic inequalities, and undermines the trust in government institutions. Furthermore, it erodes the social cohesion among the people in society. On the other hand, it is devastating for the governance in the country. It political violence in the country. Decreases the transparency and accountability of the institutions. Similarly, it reduces the effectiveness and efficiency of governance. Furthermore, political polarization promotes patron-client politics in the country. It also causes lack of compromises among political leaders, and weakens the democracy in the state. Moreover, it causes policy stagnation, poor decision making, and governance gridlock in the country.

(20)

To mitigate these effects, it is essential that citizens, policymakers, and civil society organizations work together. In order to foster a culture of dialogue, empathy, and compromise. By doing so, countries can reclaim the democratic ideals of inclusivity, tolerance, and cooperation, which will ultimately result in a more just and equitable society for all.