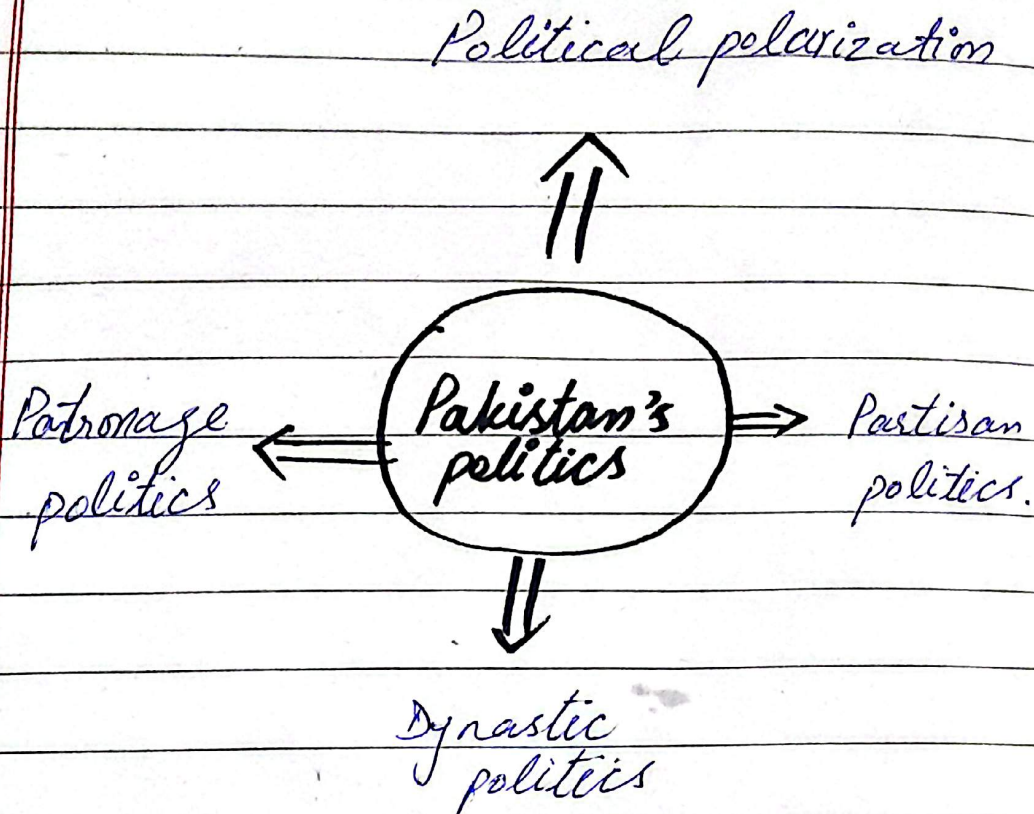


Question

“Discuss the causes and consequences of political polarization”

Political Polarization:

The degree of political polarization in a society is a key variable that quantifies the extent to which the public opinion is split into two opposing ideas. There are many ups and downs in the politics of Pakistan. Since the creation of Pakistan, it is facing challenges both external and internal. Pakistan is a democratic country but has faced four martial laws.



Political polarization is a global issue from India to Poland. Due to political instability, it is very difficult to achieve the goals of unity and nationalism. It hinders the "causes of nationalism" and then consensus among the people of the country and promotes social and political unrest to vast extent. It is not single country's illness, but global. A spectre

is haunting Europe, a spectre of polarization. Intense partisanship has gripped United States for an unusually long time. Pakistan is also not free of it.

"Pakistan: a land of dented democracy and increased polarization."

Causes of political polarization.

The causes of political polarization are many that are discussed below:

• military coups

Since 1947, Pakistan has faced four military martial laws which has created great political unrest in the country. Military always influenced economy, politics and defense of the country.

Ayub Khan regime (1958-1969)

Ayub Khan dismissed the government of Iskander Mirza and abrogated the constitution of 1956 which declared

Bengali and Urdu the official languages of Pakistan. Then language crisis again commenced that create agony and distress among the East Pakistani which was settled in the constitution.

In March 1966, Ayub Khan denounced the autonomy movement in East Pakistan and in April 1968, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested.

Yahya Khan (1969-1971).

Ayub Khan due to severe opposition resigned in 1969 and transferred the power to general Yahya Khan, another martial law. In 1971, Awami Muslim League won 167 seats out of 313 in National Assembly and 288 out of 300 seats in Legislative Assembly of East Pakistan. Awami League proposed the transfer of power from federal government to state government but this demand wasn't fulfilled. In 1-3 March, 1971, 170 individuals were killed which further leads to civil war in East Pakistan and military started "Operation Searchlight".

in the result of which succession of East Pakistan and creation of Bangladesh takes place in 16 Dec, 1971. This was another era of political polarization.

Zia Ul Haq (1977-1988)

Zia Ul Haq, Islamization policy creates two groups in people, one were in favour and the other one group was against this religious conservatism. Hudood ordinance failed to gain the favour as its first victim ~~was~~ Saffiyah, working in house of upper class, being raped was failed to bring four witnesses in the court. So this kind of ordinances create unrest in the people.

Musharraf's regime (1999-2008)

General Pervez Musharraf dismissed the government of Nawaz Sharif under the Article 58(2B). General Musharraf lessed the restriction on media but when he faced huge opposition, then he again restricted media.

There was also lawyer movement in his reign and two groups were divided due to his post 9/11 foreign policy.

"Military's influence in civilian politics is a driver of political polarization in Pakistan"

• Ethnic, religious and religion division

Pakistan is made up of different ethnic groups like ^{Punjabi} Sindhi and Siraiki in Punjab; Muhajir and Sindhi in Sindh; Pashtun and Balochi in Balochistan and Hazarah people and Pashtun in KPK.

So unity and nationalism are very different to create in such type of states. There are so ~~ed~~ religious clashes among people like Shia-Sunni.

Some external factors are also promoting these clashes like according to security analyst, Iran is supporting the Shia community and Saudi Arabia

is supporting Salafi and Deobandi that leads to religious instability.

• Media

Media and its role also results in political polarization due to its bias behaviour. During the general election of 2018, this narrative was built that private channel Geo News support PML-N and ARY news supports PTI.

• Lack of leadership

After the death of Quaid-e-Azam and assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan, unfortunately there was no one single leader to lead the whole population.

The civilian governments of Nawaz Sharif, Benazir Bhutto, Imran Khan faced the allegations of corruption and vote for no confidence in Parliament results in failure of completion of 5 years tenure.

unequal distribution among provinces

There is unequal distribution of collected tax among the provinces which leads to aggression the people and causes provincialism and ethnicity to a great extent. According to NFC award, the distribution is as followed.

Punjab	51.74%.
Sindh	24.55%.
KPK	14.62%.
Balochistan	9.09%.

Economic Challenges

High level of poverty and unemployment causes social economic disparities, contributing to political polarization.

According to World Bank report, the GDP growth rate is as follows.

2022	4.78% to 6.18%.
2023	-0.04% to 0.22%.
2024	2.7%.
2025	2.68% to 3.04%.

Consequences of Political Polarization

The instability of political system, intervention of military in politics, defense, foreign policy and economy contributes to polarization whose consequences are as followed.

• Creation of Bangladesh

Bangladesh was created in 18 Dec, 1979 as a result of political instability. There was huge difference in both East and West wing of Pakistan due to different language, region and culture. The political demand autonomy of state is contradictory to West Pakistan.

• Failure of National Unity

Our politicians fail to create harmony and unity among the people. Disunity paves the way path of extremist or terrorist group in the state that creates terrorism. Our politicians are in stress to find the ways from which P.M can complete his 5 years tenure. So the And nowadays, our

army is also involved in politics which can be seen through the conferences of OGISPR so the issues like terrorism are neglected.

- **less faith in political institutes**

Our elected government is dismissed by the allegation of corruption (Nawaz Sharif or Benazir Bhutto) or by vote of no confidence (Imran Khan government) which reduce the faith in political institutes

- **Lack of human rights**

Instability in politics causes ethnic and sectarian tension, contributes to lack of human rights of minorities. In the country, where half ^{political} history of is covered by military regime, human rights are mostly violated specially the freedom of speech.

- **Delayed progress**

Political polarization results in delayed progress, slow economy and less GDP rate due to usual strikes and protests, disturbance in daily life and business activities

Critical Evaluation

Pakistan faced many military regime due to lack of true leadership and our neighbour country India has not faced even one martial law. So their role of military should be lessen in politics. Our institutes should educate the political tolerance among people. NGOs should play role in constructing political stability. Leaders have to stop building anti-state narratives which leads to political tolerance and ultimately political stability.
