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**THE POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN PAKISTAN: IMPACT ON RIGHTS, ECONOMY, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND SECURITY**

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Political Instability, Human Rights, Economic Disruption, Public Services, State Fragility, National Security	<p>This study examines the multifaceted consequences of political instability in Pakistan, focusing on its effects upon human rights, economic conditions, and access to public services such as education and healthcare. Employing a qualitative research design, data were collected over 15 semi-structured interviews conducted with the civil society members, educator, healthcare professionals &amp; policy experts in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The analysis reveals that persistent political instability donates to systemic violations of civil liberties, economic disruption, and deterioration of essential services, which collectively undermine national security. These dynamics intensify institutional mistrust, social fragmentation, and the potential for conflict and unrest. The results provide significant information for reaching desired conclusion. Theoretically, the study contributes to the discourse on state fragility by linking political instability to security through the mediating role of socio-economic and institutional breakdowns. Practically, it offers insights for policymakers on the need to prioritize the political continuity, institutional resilience, and inclusive governance to mitigate broader risks to national stability.</p> <div> <b>2024 Journal of Social Research Development</b></div>
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INTRODUCTION

Pakistan has since its inception in 1947 been characterized by major dynamic of political instability that has been part and parcel of its socio-political development. Despite periodic changes between democratic and authoritarian forms of the state, its institutional continuity has not been achieved. The repeated cycles of military intervention, judicial activism, civil-military tension & undermining of political institutions have weakened trust of people in governance. Such paths leave governance

gaps and policy gaps that make state agencies prone to politicization and in effectiveness (King, 2022). Besides, the cycle of military and civilian rule has hindered the consolidation of democracy & establishment of political expediency over long-term policy planning. This historical experience has, therefore, led to deep-rooted socio-economic disparities that undermine the performance of institutions, strengthen structural weaknesses (Chari, 2024). The symptoms of political instability, however, do not confine themselves to elite politics; instead, they permeate daily life, manifesting themselves in broken public services, chipped civil liberties and economic insecurity everywhere (Shrotriya & Pachauri, 2021).

These shortcomings are reflected in the placement of Pakistan in the world indices like the Human Development Index, the Global Competitiveness Index and the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index. Foreign investment, ease of fiscal binds and limits to developmental efforts have also been hampered due to the political instability, thus increasing socio-political fragmentation and posing more threats to national security (Mathebula, 2023). In the context of this study, political instability is defined as a periodical state of governance dislocation characterized by regime change, policy discontinuity, protests and lack of legitimacy of state institutions. Human rights are constitutional and internationally recognized civil, political, economic & social freedoms accorded to individuals (Agwor, Nyekwere, & Okogbule, 2022). The economic conditions include the employment levels, inflation, private and public investment, fiscal health and growth patterns. National security, still, is no longer solely a military-oriented concept, but it now includes internal stability, social cohesion, institutional integrity and the safeguarding of the country against the internal and external threats (Hofmann, 2023).

All these variables are interdependent and mutually reinforcing; political instability acts as both a cause and a result in this system of mutual causality (Samans, 2023). The economic stagnation that follows increases unemployment and poverty, which in turn increases disenchantment and further protests, crime, and extremism, are the main factors of further destabilization. In tandem with these economic processes, erosions of state legitimacy enable law-enforcement excesses, which inspires security organs to act with impunity and to violate dissent in the name of maintaining social order (Moyo, 2024). Public institutions that usually furnish health care and education become targets of clientelism and chronic underfunding, thereby eroding access and eroding quality. Through such triangulation, the study makes clear the epicenter of Pakistan contemporary malaise: a deep crisis of state performance brought on by political instability. Human security, as defined by the UNDP is another important theoretical lens, which redefines national security as the security of people by providing them with the necessary services, civil liberties as well as socioeconomic opportunities (Badewa, 2020).

Within the framework of this triangulation, political instability can be considered as the systemic multisectoral threat rather than a political phenomenon. Despite growth of scholarship on political instability and governance in Pakistan, there are still major gaps in the accounts of how instability spreads to various areas at the same time. Empirically, most of the studies have been done using quantitative indicators and macro level data, thus blurring the realities on the ground experienced by citizens who are either victims of policy failure or institutional breakdown (Yeng Chai, 2024).

The principal research question thus concerns unpacking complex, interrelated, and understudied effects that political instability exerts on Pakistan's human rights regime, economic environment, public service sectors, national security apparatus (Zaid & Siddiqui, 2024). The study highlights the role of instability in the macro level in defining administrative practice and social behavior, which undermine institutional trust and civic engagement by emphasizing cascading, as opposed to linear, causality. Methodologically, qualitative research strategies can enrich existing dominant narratives by shedding light on subnational and micro-level complexities (Javid, Chandia, Zaman, & Akhter, 2023).

In practice, the results provide practical advice to policymakers who are interested in stabilizing the state not by relying on law-and-order measures or macro-economic policies, but by instituting broad-based reforms of governance that focus on institutional strength, inclusive governance, and social equity (Khwaja, 2021). The relevance of study is also emphasized by time of its conduction. Pakistan is now faced with series of converging crises, economic breakdown, high unemployment, inflation, severe energy shortages, growing authoritarianism, and growing political polarization (Cheong, Yoo, Hong, & Lee, 2022). The results of the study can thus be used to create more efficient donor policies and international cooperation that would support institutional building and the advancement of human rights (Amir & Sabri, 2023). Overall, study aims at reframing the concept of political instability. Instead of viewing it as a disturbance, study describes it as a structural state with far-reaching roots and far-reaching consequences. Study adds to academic sermon by accent its multidimensional effects and its integration into comprehensive ecosystem of governance and service delivery, and offers direction in designing more sustainable and people-oriented strategies toward national stability.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The current study relies on the theory of state fragility, political-economic approach, and human security paradigm to explain various forms of political instability in weak state settings. The state fragility theory argues that, in event of contest over political power & inability of state institutions to enforce legal norms, provide public services, and arbitrate disputes, the state loses its legitimacy. The resultant loss of institutional coherence creates environment where instability is reinforced by the mutual feedbacks of deteriorating governance and increased insecurity (Samans, 2023). These insights can be supplemented by political-economic perspective that reveals how fragmentation of institutions leads to economic inefficiencies: investment is stifled, fiscal incentives are skewed, and the environment that favors corruption and rent-seeking behaviour is created. These considerations are enhanced by human security framework which assumes that national security extends beyond territorial integrity to wellbeing and dignity of people. The theories have a common ground in that they both assume that the instability of politics leads to breakdown of the system on institutional, economic, and social levels, and hence, dysfunctionality of state and well-being of society (Perveen & Ayyoub, 2023).

These theoretical propositions have empirical evidence. Building on earlier research on developing economies, study confirms that political instability has negative relationship with macroeconomic performance: it reduces investor confidence, interferes with trade and inhibits long-term planning.

The phenomenon is sharp in Pakistan. Uncertainty is created by changes in the regimes, political protests, judicial interventions, and military activities in domestic politics disrupt macroeconomics (Alyeh, 2023). Inflation, investment inflows, employment rates, and GDP growth are the indicators that regularly worsen in the period of political instability. Longitudinal analysis shows fiscal policy tends to be responsive to short term political interests as opposed to developmental interests, which has increased fiscal deficits, reduced efficiency of government spending. This continued uncertainty deters local and foreign investment, restrains industrial activity & halts technological innovation (Alyeh, 2023). Instability encourages patronage networks that channel economic resources based on political affiliation rather than on market or merit-based principles, increases social inequality and economic stagnation.

The repeated governments have elected to abandon or recalibrate the educational reforms of their predecessors, producing discontinuities that hinder sustained progress. The political actors prioritize short-term gains, electoral promises, which renders education budgets susceptible to unpredictable fluctuations (Boileau, Warner, & Zaranko, 2024). As a result, funding in and out of infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development fluctuates. Instability also shifts policy attention away from social sectors toward crisis management, relegating education to secondary importance. The discontinuities that escort them wear out teacher morale and suppress student performance (Richmond, 2024). Therefore, weak educational outcomes foster diminished political commitments to reform, which in turn fortifies social disenfranchisement. The dynamic of the healthcare sector closely mirrors that of the political instability. Service delivery is affected by budgetary limits, administrative instability and reduced regulatory control. In environments marked by heightened violence or insurgency, healthcare workers face threats to their safety, which diminishes the service provision as well as precipitates the critical shortfall in care (Ahmadnia, Christien, Spencer, Hart, & Caio, 2022).

Preventive health care and vaccination programmes are also not well implemented and followed through. The high turnover of governments disrupts flow of programs that makes institutionalization of best practices ineffective and limits the ability to scale-up effective interventions (Arshad & Mobeen, 2024). Political appointments and procurement corruption further undermine the efficacy of the systems of public health, leaving the systems resource limited and poorly prepared to address the needs of the population in times of emergencies like pandemics or natural disasters (Ingram, 2023). When such shortcomings are not properly addressed, they undermine the confidence of the people in the administration, which further strengthens the patterns of instability and weakness of institutions. Political instability in Pakistan has been frequent, coupled with curtailing measures on media, civil society & judiciary (Ahmed, Yilmaz, Akbarzadeh, & Bashirov, 2024). The emergence of military interventions and long periods of emergency have created a legal framework, where civil liberties are suspended in the name of maintaining order in society. Politicization of the police and intelligence services has turned the justice system against opposition leaders and activists even in civilian governments.

Such an atmosphere of fear and repression is a contravention of basic rights and discourages civic life and politics (Negri & Pazderski, 2021). Religious and ethnic minorities are scapegoated, ignored

by marginalized communities, which further divides society. These trends are signs of a profound undermining of democratic standards, and they help create a vicious cycle, in political weakness leads to authoritarian reactions that increase instability. During political crisis, militant groups take advantage of power vacuums and use distraction of the state to increase operational reach (Forest, 2023). The federal level is unstable, reduces its ability to control regional grievances, contributing to ethno-nationalist movements and insurgents. Incoherent national security policy coupled with a high turnover of the leaders leads to the development of incoherent counterterrorism strategies that undermine the capability of state to respond (Budning, 2024). Moreover, legitimacy of institutions is also eroded, which weakens the moral authority to fight extremism in cases when citizens feel that law enforcement agencies are politicized or abusive. The connection between political instability and sector specific outcomes in Pakistan have been subject of substantial literature; however, there are important gaps.

First, majority of existing studies isolate economic, educational, health, human-rights, or security variables, thereby ignoring their interconnectedness within a broader manifestation of the systemic breakdown (Khan, Rana, & Ghardallou, 2022). The studies that favor quantitative formulations and macroeconomic indicators often fail to shed light on realities of people and groups that have to live with state failure day in day out. Rarely do studies integrate qualitative data that capture the perspectives of civil-society actors, educators, healthcare workers and security experts who operate within and respond to instability (Zorbas et al., 2024). In this connection, these gaps require an interdisciplinary approach that views political instability not only as a political issue but as the key disruptor of the governance and delivery of the services provided by the government to its people. Using these theoretical understanding and empirical evidence, this research develops a series of interconnected hypotheses to inform the study. Consequently, the second hypothesis contends that political instability diminishes capacity and effectiveness of public-service delivery particularly in education and healthcare through administrative discontinuity together with funding volatility (Memorandum, 2020).

The third hypothesis implies that instability creates an atmosphere that is friendly to the erosion of human rights like suppression of civil liberties and politicization of law-enforcement and judicial institutions (Rabbani, 2020). Finally, the fifth hypothesis proposes that the relationship between political instability and national security is mediated by the cumulative degradation of economic performance, public service delivery, and civil liberties that, together, erode societal cohesion and state legitimacy. Jointly, these hypotheses offer a comprehensive framework of effects of political instability in Pakistan in its ripple across the key functions of the state and the fabric of the society. In this way, it is easier to analyze the systemic character of instability and its consequences in the context of long-term national development in a more refined way (Shao, Zhou, Wang, & An, 2024). Through empirical data and qualitative information, study aims to address a major gap in available literature and provide a better comprehension of concept of state fragility as applied to Pakistan. The general aim is to educate policy frameworks that not only cure symptoms but structural causes of political instability, would pave the way to more robust and inclusive governance (Zaheer, Abid, & Abbas, 2022).



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present investigation employed a qualitative research design to examine the repercussions of political instability in Pakistan across six interrelated domains human rights, economy, education, healthcare, national security, and wider social fabric. Since it was acknowledged that phenomenon was complex and multidimensional, qualitative approach was mainly appropriate as it allowed the to address subjective realities, social meanings and institutional courses that quantitative measures could overlook. Such design allowed to lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations, but not only to surface indicators. Philosophically, the research relied on interpretivism, which is the belief that the reality is socially constructed and that it is most understood in the context of individuals who are placed in respective sociopolitical settings. This ontological and epistemological position was in tune with thematic analytical approach applied, which placed co construction of meaning between the researcher and the participants to fore. In such a way, research goals were not stated in context of statistical generalization but rather in generation of rich, context-sensitive description of phenomena in question.

The study population was composed of those people who live in Pakistan, and more specifically, the Islamabad and Rawalpindi cities. The choice of these municipalities was due to their administrative importance and their political and bureaucratic importance, hence access to those subjects having firsthand experience of political transformations & operations of institutions. The sample consisted of a purposively selected group of 15 participants who represented a cross-section of civil society educators, healthcare professionals, advocates, security analysts, and policy experts. The purposive sampling was used to make sure voices that will be included are those that can make significant contribution to thematic domain. The selection based on professional experience, civic contribution, and knowledge of region in terms of governance. The structured questionnaire used to collect the data consisted of open-ended questions that provided subtle, thoughtful answers to the perceived implications of instability on human rights, economic stability, delivery of public services, national security, social cohesion. The questions were designed to be neutral but inquisitive, allowed to give their own accounts of what they have lived, what they observed professionally, and what they care about as citizens.

The questionnaire was provided both in English and Urdu as a linguistic preference and to make sure that the words are clearly expressed. The participants were allowed ample time to fill in their answers and they were also requested to give an example or an incident in case it was necessary. Since it was acknowledged that the phenomenon was complex and multidimensional, qualitative approach was particularly appropriate as it allowed researcher to address the subjective realities, social meanings and institutional processes that quantitative measures could overlook. Such design allowed paying attention to lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations, but not only to surface indicators. Philosophically, the research relied on interpretivism, is belief that the reality is socially constructed and that it is most understood in the context of individuals who are placed in sociopolitical settings. Political instability, as a structural phenomenon and as a lived experience, therefore, needed an interpretive framework to understand the ways in which it is incorporated into citizens and how it influences their interaction with state institutions, state services, and with each

other. The study population was composed of people who live in Pakistan, specifically, Islamabad and Rawalpindi cities.

The choice of these municipalities was due to their administrative importance and their political along with bureaucratic importance, hence access to those subjects having firsthand experience of political transformations and the operations of institutions. The sample consisted of the purposively selected group of 15 participants who represented the cross section of the civil society educators, healthcare professionals, legal advocates, security analysts, and policy experts. These people were selected not only because they are professionally close toward the main areas that are impacted by political instability but because they could be critical about the consequences of the institutions and the society. The purposive sampling was used to make sure that the voices that will be included are those that can make a significant contribution to every thematic domain. Purposive sampling was justified by the fact that it was relevant to the research aims and not by its diverse statistical representativeness. Thus, the questionnaire was provided both in English and Urdu as a linguistic preference and to make sure that the words are clearly expressed. The participants were allowed ample time to fill in their answers and they were also requested to give an example or an incident in case it was necessary.

## **RESULTS OF STUDY**

### **Erosion of Human Rights**

The political unrest in Pakistan is closely connected to the systematic undermining of human rights, which is established tendency in literature on governance in fragile states. When political players are more concerned about consolidation of power or weakening of opponents, then civil liberties, which include freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and the right to due process were used as the first casualties. Theorists believe that authoritarianism is likely to appear in settings of political instability, especially when the institutions are weak and cannot limit the executive excesses. The history of democratic interruptions in Pakistan, the low level of the rule of law and the growing surveillance have created a situation where people are not safe when exercising their fundamental rights. The participants noted that political dissidents are targeted through loose national security laws and the practice has become normalized, creating a chilling effect on free speech. "We can't speak openly anymore people have gone missing for just criticizing the wrong side." "Even peaceful protests are labeled anti-state, and the police respond with force rather than negotiation." "There is no protection if say controversial. You either stay silent or face trouble." "Laws are weaponized. It's not justice; political revenge under cover of legality. Our rights only exist on paper, there's no access to them in real life.

### **Economic Disruption & Uncertainty**

Political instability imposes pronounced downward pressure on Pakistan's economy by eroding investor confidence, amplifying fiscal mismanagement, and fueling inflation. As per the existing economic theories and case studies in the region, economies cannot thrive in those settings where there is no policy consistency and the state institutions are at the mercy of partisan interests. Such circumstances have a direct impact on the domestic business and foreign investment, which require

predictable regulatory systems and long-term strategies. The results of this study revealed that the respondents experienced severe effects such as insecurity of jobs and capital flight, unstable prices and closure of business operations. A number of them cited the absence of a consistent industrial policy and high turnover in the economic leadership as negative to growth. The instability that comes with any change at the governmental level adds to the economic vulnerability which forms a feedback loop of economic frustrations that aggravate political dissatisfactions. "Every time a new party takes charge, they undo the last one's economic reforms—it's chaos." "How can you grow a business when there are weekly political shutdowns?" "I've seen investors pull out just because they can't predict where the country is going politically." "Inflation is killing us. One day sugar is 130, the next it's 180. There's no stability." "People are more worried about politics than the economy, but the two are connected."

### **Collapse of Education Policy & Delivery**

Education in Pakistan has long contended with scarce infrastructure and chronic underfunding; yet political instability magnifies these challenges by relegating education to a low-priority position. Empirical literature underscores the necessity of policy continuity for educational reform, which demands sustained investment, comprehensive training, and rigorous monitoring. Nevertheless, the frequent rotation of elected governments crops recurrent shifts in curricular content, administrative personnel, and educational strategy, by impeding long-term progress. According to interviewees, constant political rallies, teacher strikes, and safety issues especially in the state schools, as well as political interference in appointment of ministers, continued to disrupt the sector and interviewees were frustrated by constant change of ministers and politically driven appointments have killed professionalism in the sector. There is a general belief by the respondents that children in the public schools and most importantly in rural or marginalized areas are affected by political instability. "School closures during the political protests are common, we lose months every year." "Ministers change every few months and bring in new policies with no follow-up." "We've trained teachers under one system, and then the government changes it all overnight." "Public schools are neglected as they don't serve elite interests, only poor." "We try to bring reforms, but there's no political will to see them through."

### **Degradation of Healthcare Services**

The healthcare constitutes another domain profoundly shaped by political instability. Empirical evidence shows that health systems rely on regular planning, non-interrupted funding and efficient coordination, which is undermined in the case of political crisis. Political instability in Pakistan has resulted in a failure to deliver services, failure to provide budgets, and poor health policy structures. Such interferences compromise preventive and curative care, creating inefficiencies in the system. The respondents emphasized the politicization of health initiatives and their utilization as publicity stunts rather than part of the public service. They pointed to shortages of essential medicines, poor working conditions for healthcare staff, and abandonment of long-term public health campaigns because of shifts in government. The result is a fragmented healthcare system, particularly affecting rural and low-income communities that lack access to basic medical services. "Every new health minister wants to launch the new program instead of fixing the old ones." Vaccination drives were



stopped halfway since of budget freezes after government changes. Doctors are leaving government hospitals as there's no career stability anymore." "Our hospital didn't receive supplies for three months because of a bureaucratic reshuffle." "Political leaders use health projects for photo ops, not for sustainable impact."

### **Undermining of National Security**

The instability in Pakistan politically adds a complex dimension to national security beyond the traditional military battlefield to include weakened governance, porous borders and civil strife. Studies on state fragility have established disintegrated, transitional political leadership, extremist groups and criminal networks use the ensuing gaps to gain more power. In the modern scenario of Pakistan, the changing political priorities and lack of inter-agency coordination have created the loopholes in strategic security planning. Respondents, especially those in security field, complained of sharp increases in militancy, chronically under-funded law-enforcement agencies, and security policies that shift back to reactive rather than proactive mode when political conditions become volatile. Respondents also emphasized that the national security is often used as a rhetoric but is not well pursued in practice. "Whenever politicians are fighting, militants take advantage—it's a clear pattern." "Security forces are confused about orders because leadership keeps changing." "There's no continuity in counterterrorism policies—they stop and start every few years." "The police are under pressure from political bosses focusing on real threats." "Our borders are neglected because internal politics dominate agenda."

### **Collapse of Institutional Trust**

The credibility of the institutions is the determinant of the stability of any democracy. However, violence in Pakistan has resulted in general distrust of electoral institutions, courts, bureaucracy, and even the delivery of civil service. The scholars argue that, when institutions are viewed as a tool of partisan interest instead of being viewed as neutral, then their legitimacy is lowered thus making governance to be difficult. On the professional and demographic levels, the respondents were disillusioned with public institutions describing them as corrupt, biased, and inefficient. The feeling that institutions change loyalties whenever power changes hands has created the feeling of detachment to formal politics and increased the level of dependence on informal or alternative systems of justice and provision of services. "No one believes the elections are real anymore—it feels like a stage show." "Courts only take action when it suits those in the power." "We don't trust any ministry because we know they're run by the party loyalists." "People go to influential individuals instead of the police—it's faster and safer." "Why complain? You just waste time and get no result from official channels."

### **Deepening of Social Fragmentation**

The study shows that the instability of politics has a shaping effect on escalation of social divisions. The diversity of Pakistan as a nation of many ethnic, sectarian, and linguistic groups has often been used by the political elites as a strategic gain. Empirical evidence also shows that identity-based politics as a zero-sum game breeds polarisation, marginalisation and suspicion. There was a constant report of growth of regionalism, ethnic profiling and social mistrust by the respondents. They also noted that the political discourse aggravates identity-related conflicts, thus making the ways to

dialogue and integration more complicated. The fact that even interactions that people have every day such as consuming media and even relations within a household are being politicised shows how political instability is tearing the fabric of society apart. "People from smaller provinces feel they are always ignored they protest." "The media divides us than it informs us every channel has a political master." "I've stopped discussing politics with friends it ends in wiles every time." "Ethnic profiling is getting worse; it's subtle but very real." "Even universities are divided along political and ethnic lines now."

### DISCUSSION

The current research shows the wide scope of political instability in various spheres of the Pakistani life and shows that these spheres support each other with complicated causal structure. The gradual denial of human rights is not only presented to be a side effect of war, but instead a deliberate by-product of governing systems that reward regime maintenance over responsibility. As it is with the literature, the respondents claim that state institutions in fragile polities are likely to shift their mandate to regime maintenance instead of delivery of services to citizens. In this regard, the civil liberties are increasingly being suppressed in name of national security; censorship and suppression have replaced healthy debate and criticism (Khurshid, Sharif, Tabash, & El Refae, 2024). These observations are consistent with the larger theoretical argument that in the states of instability, rights abuses are strategic tools of power and not a side effect. Thus, the repetitive accounts of fear, harassment, and coercion that also confirm that in the environments where there is no institutional legitimacy and where there is no political contestation, human rights are often the first and the most long-lasting casualties. Thus, at the same time, the political instability creates the atmosphere of economic insecurity.

The findings of interviews support the existing empirical evidence on the adverse effects of erratic policy trends, high turnover of leaders, and politicized economic choices on the business confidence, foreign investment, and inflation (Abbass et al., 2023). The statistics show that economic downfall is not only result of poor planning but structural malfunction which is inherent to political instability. In this connection, the respondents report a climate of incessant economic stagnation in which even the most fundamental survival-level financial choices are accompanied by a sense of widespread insecurity. This fact confirms the opinion that economic growth cannot be isolated of the political reform. A fragmented policy landscape characterized by episodic populism and minimal continuity undermines both the state's capacity to steward the economy and the population's ability to sustain it. The lack of policy consistency, fragmentation of administration and mismanagement of resources became the key impediments of development in the two sectors. Under the conditions of constant instability, the literature observes that, the public services are habitually relegated to the status of symbolic development along with the projects that revolve around the regime (Arshad, Hassan, & Yasir, 2023).

In the Pakistani context, the education system remains mired in continual reform without full implementation, while the healthcare infrastructure deteriorates owing to politicized appointments and misaligned priorities. Respondents expressed the frustration over frequent change of political leadership that leaves previous initiatives behind, breaks continuity and demoralizes professionals.

These results support theoretical arguments about the vulnerability of the social service structures in the presence of a shaky governance where the institutional memory is lost and the accountability of the public is diminished (Zaheer et al., 2022). This empirical study questions the correlation between national security regime cohesion. The results support academic claims lack of governance triggers the vulnerability that can be used by extremist groups and criminal cartels. Also, reduced inter-agency coordination, long-term under-investment in security machinery and re-prioritized strategic focus creates a strategic environment where defense is reactive as opposed to preventive. The conventional understandings of security that do not incorporate variables of governance are thus made ineffective.

In the Pakistani scenario, domestic instability, in the form of mass protests, instability in executive, and bureaucratic deadlock, offers external consequences that undermine the capabilities of the state to protect its borders, protect its people and maintain internal security. Institutional mistrust is one of the major expressions of political instability; structural liability that is detrimental to formal democratic processes. The respondents indicated that they were becoming increasingly alienated, cynical and fatalistic towards electoral, judicial and administrative institutions. Such distrust is pointed out in the literature as a precondition to democratic decay and authoritarian entrenchment as citizens turn to patronage networks and informal justice to meet their expectations. In Pakistan, the distrust is not only explained by corruption or inefficiency, but by perception that institutions have partisan interests other than the welfare of the people. The legitimised power therefore limits advocacy of accountability and continues to investigation further highlights the aggravation of social collapse following long-term political instability. It was found in interviews that instability has increased ethnic, the regional and sectarian divisions creating an environment that facilitates mistrust and polarisation.

The literature available points out that identity affiliations override national loyalty in politically fragile societies especially when elite players exploit shared identities to gain political advantage during elections. This relationship can be identified in bigger politicisation of language, geography and sect in Pakistan where exclusionary discourses and territorial grievances come to the fore in the absence of national consensus. The loss of common civic identity therefore destroys civic unity and creates weak statehood where unity is based on political expediency and not principle. The facts thus indicate that there is need to have all-inclusive state-building approach which incorporates political reform, institutional strengthening and civic inclusion as pillars of stability. Without a long-term dedication to democratic continuity and accountability of governance, socioeconomic improvement is likely to be episodic and reversible, some recommendations are made: (1) political players consider raising democratic stability above partisan progression; (2) long-term growth initiatives should be secured by institutional protection to avoid the political fluctuations; and (3) the security discourse be extended to include political and institutional stability as vital security elements of peace.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of the research can be used both in academic discussion and in policy discussions. In theoretical terms, the study highlights mutual dependence between political instability and state

fragility, and shows that, at same time, instability creates and is created by cooperated governance structures. It is able to offer input into debate because it is able to isolate institutional dysfunction as a key mediator explaining how political crises are transformed into social and economic decline. To the policymakers, the study provides empirically-based advice on the day-to-day manifestations of instability, implying that the reform efforts should not be limited to elimination of structural corruption or financial inefficiency, but should focus on perception and legitimacy of governance. International actors whether through development assistance, diplomatic engagement, or security alliances engaging with Pakistan should recognize that enduring mitigation of fragility depends on confronting its underlying political foundations; otherwise, technical interventions in sectors such as education, health, or security are unlikely to produce durable change. In the end, the stability of Pakistan is not only reliant on on who is in control of power but whether power is exerted in interest of the whole nation.

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