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Visual Identity in the Digital Age: A Qualitative Study of Generation Z on Instagram

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how Generation Z constructs and performs visual identity on Instagram through a qualitative methodology grounded in visual ethnography using digital diaries. As digital natives, Gen Z's everyday life is saturated with visual communication, where platforms like Instagram function not only as tools for connection but as dynamic arenas for identity negotiation. The research investigates how Instagram's algorithmic logic, aesthetic conventions, and social feedback mechanisms shape visual self-presentation and interpersonal dynamics in both personal and professional contexts. Drawing from Identity Theory, Performativity, Visual Culture, and Semiotics, the study unpacks how cultural signifiers, symbolic imagery, emotional cues, and platform strategies coalesce to create a hybrid digital selfhood. Thematic analysis of 100 participant-generated Instagram posts reveals key patterns: the strategic use of narrative identity through visual storytelling, the blending of local cultural aesthetics with global digital trends, and the emotional ambiguity often encoded in symbolic visuals. Participants actively engage with platform features like hashtags, filters, and algorithms to optimize visibility while negotiating tensions between authenticity and aesthetic expectations. Findings highlight Instagram's dual role as both a space of creative freedom and one constrained by algorithmic visibility politics. Gen Z users respond with hybridized forms of expression that reflect both resistance and adaptation to platform norms. The study offers new insights into how visual identity is not merely a personal construct but a collaborative, performative process deeply embedded within socio-technical systems. It calls for a critical re-examination of how platforms mediate cultural participation, emotional expression, and digital well-being. By focusing on non-Western perspectives and symbolic strategies, the study contributes to decolonizing digital identity discourse.

Keywords: Visual Identity, Generation Z, Instagram, Digital Ethnography, Cultural Hybridity

Introduction

The 27th Amendment of the Constitution of Pakistan was a turning point in the political history of the country as it signified a great change in the political system of governance and the organization of the institutions. This constitutional reform has caused a heated debate and discussion among the citizens as well as other wider issues of representation, accountability and the rule of law. It is imperative to understand the aspect of political communication on this amendment especially on the dynamic political environment in Pakistan which is highly polarized and mediated through media and social media as the twitter medium has become the major front in public discourse and political issues.

Political communication is a key factor in the formation of the popular perspectives; it has an impact on the results of the policy and promotes participatory governance. Within the framework of the 27th Amendment, various stakeholders, such as government authorities,

anti-government figures, media outlets, civil society actors, and regular citizens, have relied on Twitter to generate, spread, and dispute reforms discourse. These accounts do not only indicate conflicting ideals of how Pakistan ought to be governed politically but also point to the difficulties of maneuvering through democratic governance in society where political instability is the norm, institutional competition is the order of the day and media ecosystems are changing.

The current research seeks to study the rhetorical communication approaches used on Twitter during the enactment of the 27th Amendment, how the stories were created, framed and spread in the pre-amendment, during-amendment, and post-amendment periods. Through the analysis of tweets, retweets, quote tweets, and replies within one month i.e. November 2025, the research presents the evidence of how political actors use digital platforms to foster population awareness on the constitutional reform, gain or lose support, and influence the attitudes of the legitimacy and democratic accountability.

The amendment has been a matter of wide discussion with those who support it claiming that it empowers the democratic institutions and improves on representation but opponents believe that the amendment weakens the rule of law and concentrates power. This polarization renders greater democratic issues in Pakistan, such as the politics of power between the political forces, the place of non-elected institutions and the necessity of transparent and inclusive governance. In this respect, twitter serves as a dynamic public space where stories are not only debated but also exaggerated, and in which citizen agency can shape the direction of political communication.

Within the context of the qualitative approach of the study based on Twitter, this study has studied five major elements of political communication:

1. **Narrative Construction:** The way the government and opposition actors construct the narrative about reform and threats to impact the masses.
2. **Framing Techniques:** The definition of the problem, causal attribution, moral evaluation and suggested remedies are the ways in which discourse is structured.
3. **Temporal Dynamics:** How communication strategies have changed prior to, during, and after the amendment.
4. **Sentiment and Emotional Tone:** The influence of positive, negative and neutral sentiment on the formation of engagement and ideological alignment.
5. **Actor Influence and Public Engagement:** How elites, media organizations and common citizens amplify, challenge or reinterpret narratives.

With emphasis on the elements, the study does not only portray the content of the political communication but also the form, distribution, and effects in the digitally mediated political front of Pakistan. As the analysis points out, Twitter has been used as a platform of elite agenda-setting as well as involvement of the citizens, in which narratives of reform, legitimacy and democracy are continuously negotiated.

The importance of this research is that it helps to shed light on the role of digital platforms in political communication in the process of constitutional reforms. Twitter, in contrast to the traditional media, can be disseminated quickly, gather the feedback of the people immediately, and the political actors and citizens can interact directly. This makes the investigation of the real-time narrative changes, emotional and rhetoric approaches being used, and the effects digital communication has on the understanding of democratic governance and legitimacy possible. The research derives further than black-letter constitutional research by imposing a narrative theory and a framing analysis, and

mediatization approaches the understandings of the communications through which people link consent and dissent.

In addition, constitutional changes in Pakistan have traditionally been followed by a heated political debate, the attention of the people, and the press. The 27th Amendment, carried out under the atmosphere of political instability and disputed institutional legitimacy, is a great case to observe Twitter as a venue of political contestation. The use of hashtags, mentions and retweet campaigns allowed the players of the government and opposition to position the amendment favorably or negatively, media organizations and citizens facilitated the amplification, contestation or reinterpretation of the narratives. These interactions highlight the pivotal role of social media in current governance discussions and the need to learn about the concept of political communication as a multidimensional, participatory, and mediatized activity.

Overall, this paper inquires into the process of constructing, spreading and challenging the narratives about the 27th Amendment on Twitter, pointing at a complicated interaction between politicians, media and citizens. The research offers a rather detailed insight into digital political communication in Pakistan by analyzing narrative strategies, framing approaches, sentiment dynamics, and engagement patterns of pre-, during, and post amendments. Finally, the analysis has also aim to add to the larger debates concerning the role of social media in the processes of democratic governance, the perception of citizens, and participation in situations of critical constitutional amendments.

Literature Review

Transitional democracies are linked with the constitutional reform processes that are highly embedded within the process of political communication in which actors actively construct narratives to defend, challenge, or delegitimize institutional change. The current literature also highlights the fact that constitutional amendments are not only exercises of law but acts of communication that generate high-intensity political rhetoric that can lead to the development of certain attitudes about society and shape the policy outcomes (Memon et al., 2025; Ali & Hasnain, 2023). The theorists of political communication suggest that the process of legitimacy of reforms occurs not only in the context of legal rationality, but also in the context of persuasive narrative building that appeals to the collective identities, historical memories, and political expectations (Iftikhar & Chaudhary, 2025; Arshad et al., 2023). Constitutional change is even more consequential during the time when the political institutions in Pakistan are disputed, and the confidence of the people is low (Ashraf et al., 2025; Memon et al., 2025).

There is a substantial amount of literature that emphasizes the nature of political contests where political actors participate in framing to influence masses to understand reforms. (Shahid, Saeed, & Khan, 2023) and Rehan, Aamir, & Noor-ul-Hayee (2024) define narrative framing as a process by which elites frame problems, assign blame and offer solutions. The studies of constitutional politics indicate that political actors present reforms as a democratic necessity or as a threat to institutional balance, relying on political interests (Haseeb & Hussain, 2025; Hassan, Saleem, & Ashraf, 2023). This corresponds to the interest of the present study because it had the focus on narratives of reform and competing visions because actors used twitter to establish legitimacy, mobilize or challenge constitutional authority.

Coupled with narrative construction is the media as the arena of political struggles. Traditional, as well as digital media, increase elite discourse, remake conflicts, and change the attitudes of people (Hassan, Saleem, & Ashraf, 2023; Entman, 1993). The Pakistani government has a partisan media coverage in the mediatized politics, which supports

polarized interpretations of the constitutional amendments (Gormley et. Al, 2010; Fairhurst, 2005) These debates have centered around social media platforms, especially Twitter, which enables the fast spread of emotionally-charged stories and makes more citizens engage in political discussions

(Bennett & Livingston, 2018; Towner, 2014; Strömbäck, 2008; Couldry & Hepp, 2018). Research shows that Twitter does not only enforce the elite narratives but also enables the counter-narratives and deliberation by the masses, which is why Twitter is significant as a research location to comprehend the current political communication in Pakistan.

The relationship between transitional democracies and narrative construction is associated with legitimacy, democratic accountability, and public consent. Political sociology suggests that the reforms should be supported by the long-lasting public legitimacy, which should be formed by the means of strategic communication, using symbolic politics and making appeals to the democratic principles (Norris, 2017; Easton, 1975). The history of constitutional amendments in Pakistan can be characterized by a tendency to use constitutional amendments as one of the tools to support the cause or prevent any opposition (Bang, 2020). This highlights the importance of communication as an instrument of information acquisition but a means of political validity especially in online platforms such as twitter where the discourse is shared at fast rates and interacting about it with others is highly engaging.

The discourse analysis and framing theory is another tool that can be used to understand the impact that political communication has on reforms. Iftikhar & Chaudhary (2025) asserts that the choice of some of the provisions of the constitutional reform like the representation, rule of law or redistribution of power may lead the opinion of the population. Equally, Narrative Policy Framework (Ginsburg & Huq, 2018) underscores the role played by plot structures, moral claims, and characters (heroes, villains, victims) in influencing institutional changes support. At the South Asian context, the elites develop the reform discourses based on the stability, national interest, and democratic consolidation (McNair, 2017), which is also reflected on the discourses of reform, stability, sovereignty, and democracy in the framing patterns on Twitter in the 27th Amendment debate.

The mediatization theory can provide additional explanations of the process of modern political communication. According to scholars, the political actors adjust to the media logic, which means the dramatization, personalization, and emotionalization of the opinion of the people (Shafqat, Shah, Naaz, & Taj, 2025; Ahmed & Skoric, 2015)). Media logic in Pakistan shrinks a complexified legal argument to dramatized politics (Shafqat, 1997), which is apparent in the sense of social media discourse about the 27th Amendment where most of the tweets focused on conflict, moral urgency, and political polarization. Such disposition of law and spectacle highlights the applicability of twitter as an arena in which to examine the construction and spread of real-time narrative.

Lastly, the literature on transitional democracies and institutional tensions, point to the fact that constitutional reforms are often considered to represent implicit power games, such as civil-military relations and the tension between the judiciary and the executive (Ray, 2016). These contests are expressed by political actors by using strategic rhetoric, in which reforms are seen as supportive of democracy or a danger to the institutional equilibrium. The case study of 27th Amendment in Pakistan reveals that social media sites are platforms which legitimacy, authority and support are discussed and bargained (Pappas, 2017).

Together, the literature proves that constitutional reform is essentially a communicative process which is framed by the construction of narratives, media framing, institutional contextual factors, and power relations. Nonetheless, the literature has a deficit in terms of

systematic study of the construction and contestation of political narratives in the hybrid media landscape in Pakistan and especially on the social media platform such as Twitter. Although there are previous researches that have been conducted on political communication and constitutional politics individually, not many have incorporated the two in a digital environment. This study fills this gap by evaluating a one-month i.e. November 2025 twitter data under the pre-amendment, during-amendment, and post-amendment timeframes, which offers a combined study of narrative practices, sentiment, framing and involvement in the 27th Amendment debate in Pakistan.

Theoretical Framework

The present work is based on the Framing Theory, according to which the political actors can emphasize selected aspects of a reform proposal strategically to influence the public perception and impact political consequences. The selectivity of political leaders, parties, and media institutions in constructing reform narratives to highlight themes including transparency, democratic consolidation, institutional restructuring, or political control is based on the 27th Amendment to the constitution of Pakistan. Such frames play a significant role in creating meaning on the part of the people about constitutional amendments, which influences the citizen perception of the intentions, interests, and implications of the suggested changes. This framework assists in finding out how reform is framed as an absolute need to governance better or a means of political games.

Narrative Theory also gives more credence to the analytical base by emphasizing the role played by the political actors in presenting reforms using stories, sequences, and characters as coherent solutions to national issues. Crisis narratives, progressive narratives, modernization, or democratic developments are typically used to justify constitutional reforms and gain support. The reform in the case of the 27th Amendment is often entrenched in larger nationalized narratives, like the reinforcement of federalism or the promotion of political stability, and thus the legal changes are turned into powerful political narratives. Such a narrative strategy allows the research to examine how the politicians are able to construct emotionally appealing and ideologically motivated narratives that has legitimize reform agendas in front of different audiences.

It is also influenced by the **Political Communication Theory**, which describes the direction of political communication along institutional, media, and public channels. According to this view, the relationship between the producers of a particular message (politicians, parties, government officials), the intermediaries of the message (news media, social media platforms) and the receivers of the message (citizens, civil society groups) is dynamic. In this perspective, the PR approaches to the 27th Amendment can be perceived as a larger struggle with political legitimacy and influence on the masses. Another issue highlighted in the theory is how media ecosystems, both traditional and digital, amplify distort or counter official reform narratives thus influencing how the people perceive constitutional change.

Lastly, the **Agenda-Setting Theory** can be used as a complement to this framework in order to explain how political elite and media institutions shape the salience of reform issues. The political leadership influences the views of the population regarding what they consider the most crucial features of the amendment by repeatedly emphasizing some of the reform content of the amendment, e.g. electoral changes, restructuring of the institutions, or improvement of governance. Agenda-setting processes, as in the case of 27th Amendment, contribute to the revelation of the reform themes priority, marginalization, and the change in priorities at various stages of the political debate.

Among themselves, they offer a strong basis in the analysis of the way political communication creates, advances, and justifies the reform discourses in Pakistan. Combining the frames, narrative, political communication, and agenda-setting lenses, the research is able to provide a fuller picture as to how the 27th Amendment was relayed to society and how the communication tools influenced the opinion of political reform.

Research Question

What did the political actors, media organization, and citizens construct narratives about the 27th Constitutional Amendment in Pakistan, how they were framed, and circulated on Twitter and what effect did these narratives have on how the public participates in it and on their sense of legitimacy?

Methodology:

The present research paper has a qualitative, digitally oriented research methodology, whereby political communication discussions around the 27th Constitutional Amendment in Pakistan are analysed based on a one month i.e November 2025 Twitter (X) data, November 2025. Since twitter has emerged as a mainstream means of real-time political discourse in Pakistan, especially among political leaders, journalists, activists and even news outlets, it provides an abundant resource of data to how the narrative of reform was built, propagated and challenged. The immediacy and quick dispersion of messages in the platform have rendered it a worthwhile source of researching the tactics of persuading the masses, the endeavors of elite framing, and the responses of the citizens during times of constitutional transformation.

The research adheres to a **three-step time model**, i.e., *pre-amendment (10 days before introduction)*, *during-amendment (the time of parliamentary discussions, debate, and media coverage)*, and *post-amendment (10 days after major changes in legislation)*. Such division of time allows exploring changes in the focus of the narrative, tone, and political framing as the events occurred. The agenda-building process and initial attempts to influence the audience expectations are captured with pre-amendment tweets, whereas rhetorical competition, conflict narratives, and instant reaction to parliamentary events are recorded with during-amendment tweets, and finally the process of the public reviewing, justifying, and contesting the narrative is registered with post-amendment tweets.

The targeted keyword and hash tag searches were made on the 27th Amendment, which included the following keywords: 27th Amendment, Constitutional Reform, Reform Debate, usernames of major political leaders, and the names of major political parties. Authenticated testimonies of politicians, journalists, media houses, activists, and other powerful commentators were used. The sampling of citizen tweets was done according to the number of retweets and level of engagement to get the sentiment of the people. The retrieved last dataset comprises tweets, retweets, quote tweets, and replies, which guarantee a multistory perspective of how the narratives were spread on the elite and popular tiers. This was purposive sampling, which targeted the tweets that had a direct interest in the themes of reform, governance, legitimacy, institutional restructuring, or democratic accountability.

Data analysis was done in a triangulated qualitative approach that involved combination of thematic analysis, framing analysis, and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Thematic analysis produced overriding themes at each of the three phases, which could be stability, legitimacy, institutional reform, threat narratives, or political opportunism. The framing analysis focused on how political actors framed the amendment, as something the reform needed, or the amendment was threatening democracy, or that the amendment was consolidating power. CDA was used to comprehend the way authority, political legitimacy and ideological positions

were encoded into language and rhetorical decisions, especially in tweets of political elites. It is this mix of techniques that secures recording of not only the shallow themes but also rich discourse structures that are power-filled.

In order to keep the reliability and analytical rigour, the tweets of various categories of actors were compared: government officials, opposition leaders, journalists, civil society and citizens. Cross-referencing of categories assisted in identifying narrative convergence, divergence and conflict. The ethical aspects were also taken seriously; completely open tweets were utilized, and the anonymity of users was maintained where needed. The qualitative analysis itself was considered to be interpretive, and reflexive processes were taken to reduce the researcher biasness.

Five Key Components Analyzed in This Study

There are five important elements that are under analysis in this paper.

The current paper is concentrated on five analytical elements that are based on theoretical premises in the field of political communication and transformed to suit Twitter-based discourse, namely:

1. Narrative Construction

This element analyzes how political players created overriding discourses on the 27th Amendment. It expands upon patterns of storyline, such as reformist narrative (e.g. progress, accountability, institution strengthening), and counter-narrative (e.g. threat, illegitimacy, politics manipulation). Such narrative structures as crisis-solution framing, hero-villain positioning, and moral justification were prominent in this component.

2. Framing Strategies

In framing analysis, the problem was defined in ways that were given responsibility and policy justified, as presented in tweets. The amendment was discussed as a reform that was inevitable and as a reform by the government and as unconstitutional or politically motivated by the opponents. The media players tended to present developments as being conflict-ridden or crisis-prone. The coding of the dataset involved issue framing, value framing, conflict framing, and procedural framing.

3. Agenda-Setting Patterns

This bit considers the use of Twitter by political actors during the various stages to lay emphasis on certain issues. It looks at what issues were popularized (e.g. democratic governance, judicial restructuring, political stability) and what themes actors were trying to drive public attention towards or away of in regard to some aspect of the amendment. The use of retweet spikes, hashtag campaigns, and trending topics were the signs of agenda-setting influence.

4. Tone, Sentiment and Emotional.

Tone was examined through the analysis of emotion-based rhetoric and how the tone changed in the pre-amendment era, the period of the amendment, and the post-amendment period. Tweets were sorted according to positive, negative, and neutral attitude, emotional trigger, fear, hope, anger or trust. The emotional amplification that is frequently employed by political parties and supporters was analyzed as a purposeful persuasive technique.

5. Engagement and Actor Influence Dynamics.

This aspect examines the role of various forms of users in creating discourse visibility. It also analyses the engagement data (retweets, likes, replies, and quote tweets) to find the accounts that have been most influential and trends of narrative diffusion. This comparison of elite-led communication (political leaders and media) and that of the people (citizens, activists) is to see how the politics discourse took off, developed, or was challenged on Twitter.

Research Design

The study has utilized an exploratory qualitative research design to investigate how the narratives about political communication about the 27th Constitutional Amendment in Pakistan were constituted, framed and challenged on twitter (X). Since political stories are social collections expressed in the discourse, a qualitative design has facilitated the research to delve into meanings, rhetorical mechanisms, and framing approaches that are inherent in online political communication. The study design focuses on the analysis of a one-month corpus of Twitter data, November 2025 which is divided into the pre-amendment, during-amendment, and post-amendment periods during which the study has been able to detect the changes in political rhetoric over time and the development of narratives. The research design is effective as it also offers a very rich perspective to consider the dynamic nature of interaction between political events and digital communication practices by focusing on organic, real-time communication created by political actors, journalists, media outlets, and citizens.

Research Approach

The research is based on constructivist and interpretivist qualitative research methodology, which imagines political discourse as a result of social interaction, rhetoric persuasion, and narrative construction. Constructivist approach presupposes that the 27th Amendment is not predetermined, but is negotiated using alternating discourses on online platforms. The interpretivist lens enables the researcher to analyze the subjective meanings that are contained in tweets, hashtags, and reactions of the people with a focus on how political actors seek to influence the minds of people in the regard to reform, legitimacy, and democratic accountability. This method is especially applicable to the kind of political communication research in case of twitter where messages are highly contextual, strategic and influenced by the changing political conditions. The research combines approaches of thematic analysis, framing analysis, and critical discourse analysis to explain the underlying ideological patterns and power relations inherent in the communication in the context of the amendment.

Data Collection Methods

On Twitter (X), the data were gathered on a key word basis and hashtag basis via purposive search in relation to 27th Amendment. Relevant tweets were obtained using keywords like; #27thAmendment, constitutional reform, names of political figures, parliamentary terminologies and phrases that are commonly related to the discussion (e.g., democracy, rule of law, reform agenda, etc). The data collection has occurred over a period of one month, November 2025 and has been broken down into three stages: ten days before the amendment became visible politically (pre-amendment), ten days of the discussion in the parliament and the press attention (during-amendment) and ten days of the consequences of legislative results (post-amendment). The data comprises of tweets, retweets, and quote tweets and replies by verified political leaders, journalists, media houses, activists, and highly regarded social media commentators. Tweets by citizens were also selected, and the most engaged ones were used to ensure that public opinion was captured. All the tweets were saved either by hand or by using the available tools to scrape data and followed the guidelines of Twitter API and use of public data. The end result was the cleaned, categorized, and thematic, framing, and discourse analysis ready data corpus.

Unit of Analysis

This paper has used a single tweet as a unit of analysis, including its text, hashtags, mentions, retweet format, and engagement (likes, retweets, replies). Tweets are individual acts of communication where political discourses, rhetorical devices and framing are presented.

Although higher categories are users (politicians, journalists, citizens), the analysis is performed on the communicative content of each tweet. The patterns of tweets are applied to discover general themes, discourses, and narrative strategies. The temporal segmentation (pre-, during-, and post-amendment) also enables the study to consider periods in time as units of analysis in contrasting the intensity of narratives, tone, and framing changes across the various stages of politics.

Ethical Considerations

The paper follows the accepted principles of ethics in digital research using publicly available data. As all the tweets captured are open-source there is no infringement on privacy of the users or no direct consent would be needed in the research. To ensure ethical integrity, however, personal identifiers of regular citizens are anonymized except when the accounts are of verified members of the public, policy makers or institutional actors whose statements are already in the public domain. Material of sensitive content, abusive language, or politically inflammatory nature are taken care of and interpretations are done without exposing vulnerable users. The research is based on the Twitter terms of service, so the collection of data has not breached the platform policy concerning automated scraping, data redistribution, and unauthorized access. Reflexive documentation and triangulation of data sources as well as open coding procedures help to reduce the possibility of researcher bias. Lastly, the research recognizes the political sensitivity of the constitutional reform discussion in Pakistan and sees to it that the interpretations are objective, scholarly and respectful of all the political standpoints.

Data Analysis

The qualitative analysis of data in this study was carried out in a systematic, multi-stage analysis in order to reveal the political discourses, framing strategies, rhetoric pattern and discursive power relations that existed in a month of Twitter communication on the 27th Constitutional Amendment issue in Pakistan. Since Twitter is a fast and real-time forms of political communication, the analysis was designed in such a way that it has captured both the micro-level meaning of individual tweets and the macro-level narrative changes across the pre-amendment, during-amendment, and post-amendment periods. They were combined with the analytical process comprising the thematic analysis, framing analysis, and critical discourse analysis to understand the multifaceted communicative dynamics of political, media, and public communication in Twitter.

Data Familiarization

The initial phase of the analysis was data familiarization when all the obtained tweets were read on numerous occasions so that the context, tone, and the topicality could be grasped. The Tweets were then sorted by time in the three temporal segments, pre, during and post amendment, to determine initial agenda-setting themes, real time response in parliamentary debates and post-legislative narrative integration. This sequencing through time gave some ground to the determination of the development of interpretations of the amendment among political actors and groups of people.

Open Coding

The second phase involved open coding during which descriptive codes were given to portions of the tweets that contained important concepts, keywords, emotive indications, and rhetoric. Such codes as the legitimacy challenge, reform justification, institutional critique, political blame, public anger, constitutional protection, and power consolidation were developed in this stage. Particular care was given to hashtags, which frequently were used as an abbreviated form of indicating narrative frames or political mobilization campaigns. At this

point, codes were retained general to prevent the interpretation that might have been forced prematurely and the patterns to come out naturally through the information.

Axial Coding

The third stage involved the clustering of related codes into general thematic categories through the use of the axial coding. The themes that emerged in this stage were mainly: (1) reform and accountability narratives which described the amendment as harmful or unconstitutional, (2) threat-based narratives, (3) political conflict narratives between government and opposition, (4) institutional trust and distrust narratives and (5) public sentiment which reflected polarization, skepticism or support. These themes were echoes of the unresolved strain in the political communication environment in Pakistan and the unveiled competing symbolic subjectivity of the 27th Amendment.

Framing Analysis

The fourth phase used the framing analysis to determine how political actors tried to influence the interpretations of the amendment. The Tweets were framed according to the framing dimensions presented by Entman; problem definition, cause interpretation, moral judgment and remedy proposal. Indicatively, government actors interpreted the amendment as the need to strengthen democracy, whereas opposition actors interpreted the amendment as constitutional threat. The media coverage frequently presented the argument in the format of conflict journalism, which focuses on institutional friction. This framing analysis showed how the construction of narratives was strategically organized to shape the opinion of the people.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used after the framing analysis to consider the underlying ideological and power-based issues entrenched in the tweets. Some of the tools of rhetoric that CDA paid attention to included appeals to nationalism, democratic legitimacy, constitutional morality, institutional credibility, and the public interest. It also looked at how political actors framed themselves as champions of democracy and undermined their opponents. The paper identified the influence of political strength, symbolic authority, and identity constructions on the narrative struggles that surrounded the amendment through the use of CDA. The rhetoric of resistance and constitutional protector was used by opposition politicians, whereas government rhetoric consisted of discourse of reform, stability and modernization.

Sentiment Analysis

The sixth step was sentiment analysis, which was done in a qualitative, but not computational, manner and taking place in terms of emotional tone and affective framing of the entire dataset. Tweets were classified as either positive, negative or neutral, and emotional themes including anger, fear, hope, frustration, and trust were also covered. The trends in sentiments moved actively throughout the three phases: pre-amendment tweets were characterized by curiosity and speculations; during-amendment tweets were characterized by an increase in polarization and confrontation; and post-amendment tweets were characterized by relief, outrage, or inactivity depending on the agent and political affiliation.

Narrative Synthesis

Lastly, the outcomes of each layer of analysis were drawn into a narrative synthesis, which charted the way in which the political communication changed over the course of the amendment process. This synthesis showed that Twitter was an active location of political contestation in which elites, media, and citizens created and re-created narrative in real-time. It pointed at explicit narrative changes, opposing ideological assertions, and changing

rhetorical modes at different stages, which is informative about the process of constitutional reforms being communicatively formulated in the Pakistani digital political space. The multi-stage analysis of this study offers an insightful perspective of the processes of discourse that had any bearing on how the 27th Amendment was perceived by people.

Discussion

The current paper has reviewed the role of political actors, media houses, and citizens in Twitter to create, spread and challenge accounts of the 27 th Constitutional Amendment of Pakistan. This study using the tweets collected in a month-long period divided into pre-amendment, during-amendment and post-amendment offers an insight into how political communication strategies influence the perception of the population, their legitimacy and how they frame the debate on reforms in a mediatized political environment. The study findings are incorporated into the theoretical frameworks of narrative policy, framing theory, mediatization, and political legitimacy, which the discussion provides a comprehensive discussion on the process of communication dynamics during constitutional reform.

Among the main conclusions of this study is the fact that the creation of competing reform narratives was a fundamental policy of both the government and the opposition players. The tweets as aligned with the government continued to project the 27 th Amendment as a progressive measure enabling democratic institutions and enhancing the nature of governance and accountability. Through such narrative strategies as heroes and villains, government actors took the role of reformers, doing their job to modernize the governance system of the country and defend institutional integrity. This is much in line with the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) which stresses on how political players utilize stories, characters, and appeals to morality in order to create support to policy or law reforms. The words of the twitter tended to portray the opposition leaders as hindrances to democracy, anti-democratic or politically expediency, which reinforced the moral dichotomy on the narrative constructions.

On the other hand, the counter-narratives employed by the opposition actors emphasized the illegitimacy of the amendment, its constitutional inadmissibility, or that the amendment is a concentration of the executive and military authority. The stories pointed to the risks of concentrating power and subverting checks and balances, pointing to the possible threats to democracy. Opposition tweets were often very emotional and grounded in moral framing to contest the authority of the process of reform. This rhetorical technique appeals to the framing theory, which proposes that the manner of defining, interpreting, and morally evaluating an issue has a great influence on how the issue is perceived among the citizens. Including risk, danger, and breach of the constitution, opposition actors managed to engage the uncertainty and skepticism of certain group of the population.

The temporal dynamics of the narrative development in the three phases of analysis was also discovered in the study. The agenda-setting, introduction of the amendment, and the framing that either the amendment represented a reformist opportunity or a possible threat were the main themes in tweets during the pre-amendment phase. The government actors tried to prepare the people with the reform narratives whereas opposition actors expressed initial questions about procedural legitimacy. At the time of the amendment debate itself, the storytelling was extremely polarized and emotional, and more people were engaged, retweeting and commenting on it, which signified a rise in the level of political tension. The shift to post-amendment narratives was towards consolidation and appraisal, with tweets about the government aligning with the regime having promotions of successful implementation and democratic gains and those against it showing the perceived failures,

anomalies, or lack of democracy. This time series approach illustrates that political communication on twitter is very receptive to any ongoing event and conforms to the principle of mediatization theory which argues that political players modify communication tactics according to media logic and real-time cycles of mass attention.

The other significant discovery is the effect of framing techniques on the development of a narrative salience. The four main dimensions of framing included in the code of Tweets consisted of problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and remedy suggestion, and they indicated the way political actors framed issues strategically around the amendment. Government frames were based on necessity of reform, democratic improvement and stability of the institutions, and the opposition frames rested on constitutional violation, failure to govern and power centralization. Conflict oriented frames were often used by the media actors such as journalists and news organizations, with their primary emphasis on the conflict between the government and the opposition and intense narrative tension. This is consistent with previous work on political communication in Pakistan which argues that media framing can tend to amplify polarization and emotional appeal and influence the direction of the public attention and opinion formation.

The paper also emphasized the importance of emotion and tone of the narrative in the effectiveness of the story. The tweets that were generated aligned with the government tended to use positive and progressive terms to generate hope and trust whereas the opposition ones were characterized by anger, fear, and doubt to organize opposition. The corresponding reactions of citizens reflected these emotional framings, and it was evidenced that the sentiment landscape is polarized and the level of emotion corresponds to political sides. This observation explains the relevance of affective communication in digital politics, where emotion can enhance the reach of the narrative and strengthen ideological boundaries.

The study also considered the pattern of actor influence and engagement, and a clear pecking order exists regarding the narrative dissemination. The most influential nodes were government and opposition elites such as political leaders and journalists who determined the content and visibility of the narratives. Frames spread quickly with the help of retweets, quote tweets, and hashtag campaigns and citizen tweets were a combination of alignment, opposition, and neutral commentary. This correlates with the theory of agenda-setting, which also focuses on how elite participants of Twitter can objectify which facets of a political problem are popularized and which are pushed to the background, thus organizing the political discourse.

Notably, the implications of the study findings in general give insight to the political legitimacy and democratic governments. Stories that were built around the 27th Amendment were well connected with the views that were associated with procedural and input legitimacy. There was a positive effect of Tweets that framed the amendment as a democratic, accountable institution that brought people confidence in the government, and those that raised doubts about legality and fairness which were counter-narratives that led to a lack of legitimacy and increased polarization in politics. This highlights the theoretical point that political communication is not passive in relaying information but it is directly involved in the process of forming consent, dissent, and public opinion and is a determinant of democracy.

Another way of communication through digital means, which the study brings out is the mediating factor of Twitter. Twitter was both a place of political opposition and an agenda-setting platform, as it allowed political actors to circumvent media gatekeepers, as well as expose narratives to popular scrutiny. Such a duality is indicative of the mediatized quality of

modern politics, in which social media not only increases the pace, radius, and emotional appeal of social actors, but also puts them at the risk of immediate criticism and counterattack. The results indicate that this mediatized ecosystem, comprising of the communication of elites, media framing, and citizen involvement, is becoming a more dominant force in constitutional reform debates in Pakistan, where the two elements of the puzzle, namely the narrative circulation and the role of citizens, interact in a network of complex relationship.

Lastly, this research also adds to the body of knowledge on political communication in the transitional democracies by showing a complex interaction between narrative creation, framing, emotion, and involvement in the development of public opinion on constitutional reform. The research incorporates narrative policy, framing, mediatization, and legitimacy theories to give a holistic comprehension of the manner in which political actors can exploit digital platform and utilize their tactics to strategize and shape political discourse, legitimacy and democratic accountability. The implications on the findings include also practical implications to policymakers and media practitioners and actors in the civil society that would like to understand how reform communication works in highly polarized political settings.

To sum up, the discussion has shown that twitter has been instrumental in crafting the narratives that were associated with the 27 th amendment in Pakistan. The use of well-crafted narratives, strategic framing, appeal to emotions and engagement strategies were used by the political players to shape the opinions of the populace and challenge legitimacy. The dynamics of time showed how focus and sentiment changed in the run-up to the amendment as well as those changes during and after the amendment, showing how political communication can be adaptive. Through the integration of theoretical knowledge and the empirical research findings, this paper has helped to highlight the role of digital platforms in the modern political discourse by providing the example of how reform narratives are created, challenged, and transmitted in the mediatized setting of Pakistan.

Results

The event of one month, November 2025 Twitter data in the area of the 27 th Constitutional Amendment in Pakistan indicates that the political communication environment is multi-faceted and highly dynamic, with competing narratives, framing approaches, tone of emotion, and actor influence playing the crucial roles in defining the ways of how people talk. The findings are structured in a thematic way, which provides major tendencies that occurred at the pre-amendment, during-amendment and post-amendment stages, as well as combines the findings of thematic, framing, and discourse studies.

Dominant Narratives

The analysis of the data showed that there are two large-scale accounts that vie to attract the attention of the population: the reform and progress accounts that are being advocated by the actors that are on the side of the government, and the threat and illegitimacy accounts that are being advanced by the actors that are on the opposition side. Government actors always framed the 27 th Amendment as an action taken to enhance democratic governance, federal institutions and accountability. The ideas of modernization, democratic consolidation, and institutional fortification were frequently mentioned in tweets and placed the government actors in the role of the agents of reform. These stories often used the hero-villain patterns whereby the government was taken as the agent of reform or the defender of national interest and the opponents were described as being in the way or taking political advantage.

Conversely, the amendment was interpreted as a danger to the constitutional norms, democratic accountability, and political balance by the opposition players. Centralization of power, loss of checks and balances in the parliament, and the danger of executive overreach were the primary themes of threat stories. Tweets by opposition frequently had emotive words, appeals to fear and moral urgency, and describes the government as subverting democratic values. This narrative polarity depicts the contentious aspect of constitutional reform in Pakistan and emphasizes the expediency of narrative construction to change the mindset of the people.

Framing Techniques

Framing analysis revealed four major dimensions that are used throughout the Twitter discourse and these are problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and proposed remedy. The actors allied to the government interpreted the issue as institutional reform and efficiency of governance, and held the old or inefficient constitutional frameworks of governance to blame. Moral judgments put across the moral imperative of reform of national development and democratic validity. Some of the remedies presented by the government were legal amendments, procedural modifications, and institutional accountability.

In its turn, the opposition actors presented the issue as a constitutional infraction and a threat to democracy, laying the blame on the overcriminalization of authorities and the political opportunism. The moral judgments were oriented towards threats to fairness, inclusiveness and sovereignty, and remedies that implied a reviewing parliament, judicial oversight or popular resistance. Conflict frames were commonly used by the media players such as news organizations and political commentators who focused on the strife between the government and opposition and exaggerated the narrative polarity. Such framing pattern highlights the strategic choice of issues and interpretation cues to have an impact on public opinion and shows the active construction of meaning in a mediatized political process.

Dynamics of the Temporality of Communication

The comparison of the three-time frames, i.e., pre-amendment, during-amendment, and post-amendment, has shown dramatic changes in the focus of the narratives, the engagement and the mood. During the pre-amendment period, tweets were largely dedicated to the agenda-setting aspect, making the amendment visible to the public discourse, and ensuring that the attention was drawn to the reform or threat stories. Actors within the government highlighted the need and advantages of reform and those within the opposition did the same regarding legitimacy and risk. During this stage, the level of engagement was moderate as it showed initial interest of the population and speculation about politics.

Tweets at the amendment stage became so polarized, emotional, and viral. There were increased retweets, likes, replies and quote tweets, especially of posts that put the amendment in a negative perspective as a crucial step forward or a danger to democracy. Counter-narratives were often direct, as the government and opposition participants were often responding to the other in real-time. Sentiment analysis reflected an increase in emotional intensity, with optimism and hope being dominant in pro-reform tweets and fear, anger, and distrust being dominant in anti-reform tweets.

During the post-amendment stage, the stories changed to consolidation and evaluation. The amendment was presented to be a democratic victory and institutional fortification by government actors, emphasizing the compliance with the procedure and expected positive outcomes. The opposition players focused on the perceived failure, anomalies, or threats to

democratic procedures. A combination of conformity to these messages and a measure of dissociation manifested in citizen tweets which show selective amplification or critique of elite messages. These temporal variations present the ways in which twitter serves as a changing space of narrative formation in which the societal perception and rhetorical practices change alongside political changes.

Sentiment and Emotional Tone

Sentiment analysis showed that there was a very polarized emotional environment. Tweets that were government supportive had a positive sentiment and some keywords like progress, democracy, reform, and accountability were commonly used. These tweets were meant to create hope, trust and legitimacy of the process of amendment. The opposition-related tweets were dominated by negative sentiment with the use of the words such as illegitimate, threat, centralization, and undemocratic that evoked fear, anger, and skepticism. The neutral sentiment was detected in the media tweets that reported procedural updates, statements by the people, or fact-based commentary although even the neutral reporting had the subtle frames of highlighting the conflict or controversy. The tone of emotion turned out to be an important predictor of effectiveness in narratives, increasing the reach and impact of messages and the way people interacted with the amendment debate.

Patterns of Influence and Engagement: Actor Influence

The actor influence analysis showed that the major sources of the narrative dissemination were political elites, journalists and media houses. Confirmed political leaders and parties reached the most, and the content, as well as prominence of the narratives, was influenced by this. The patterns of retweets demonstrated that the government-oriented twitter posts tended to be expanded in the initial stages, whereas opposition ones gained popularity due to the use of emotional framing and the amplification of citizens. The presence of the hashtag campaigns, including #27thAmendment, #ConstitutionReform, and party-related slogans, were the core centers of spreading the narrative, strengthening visibility and topicality. There was engagement between citizens according to alignment, as users agreed or disagreed with elite frames and the argumentative nature of twitter discussions was participatory and polarized.

Implication of Public Perception: The implication of public perception is between dissatisfied and content citizenry human Implication of Public Perception:

A finding suggests that the political stories that were told on Twitter directly influenced how the people perceived the legitimacy and democratic accountability. The tweets that framed the amendment as both procedure-wise and democratically-reasoned and beneficial to the institution facilitated the greater legitimacy of the government actors. On the other hand, posts that pointed out illegitimacy, overreaching and undermining democracy increased doubts among the people especially those who opposed it. The combination of narrative framing, sentiment and the pattern of engagement proves the influence of political communication in forming opinion as well as perceived authority and legitimacy of constitutional changes. The results of this research highlight the significant role of narrative management and strategic framing in the situation of politically polarized and mediatized.

Key Themes and Patterns

The thematic analysis revealed five major themes, which are reform and accountability, threat and illegitimacy, political conflict, institutional trust, and citizen sentiment/polarization. These themes were constant throughout the three periods in time, but they fluctuated in their intensity. Pre-amendment and post-amendment government messages were dominated with reforms and accountability messages. Opposition

communication was filled with threat and illegitimacy themes. The emergence of political conflict and institutional trust became cross-cutting themes, which then indicated the dispute of the governance discourse. Citizen attitude and polarization underlined the mediating aspect of a public that impacts or refutes elite discourse, giving examples of the participatory character of political discourse in the digital platforms.

As the one-month, November 2025 Twitter data analysis demonstrates, the debate around the 27th Amendment in Pakistan was defined by the strongly polarized narratives, strategic framing, emotionally-oriented discourse and temporal development. Government parties advocated reform and progress discourses, and opposing parties advocated threat and legitimacy-based discourse. Framing of conflicts via the media was increased and citizens actively participated in supporting, challenging or decoding elite communication. The temporal analysis showed the changes in the priorities of the narration, sentiment and involvement prior to the amendment, during, and after it. These findings demonstrate that social media is in the center of political communication as a place as well as an instrument and the interplay between narrative construction, framing, sentiment, and legitimacy of the people in a mediatized democratic process is very complex.

Conclusions

The current research is a closer look at the politics of communication involved in the 27th Constitutional Amendment to Pakistan with Twitter being a major discourse placement. This study examines how political actors, media and citizens constitute narratives which influence the social perception, legitimacy and democratic accountability by examining one month, November 2025, of tweets during pre-amendment times, during-amendment and post-amendment periods. The paper validates that narrative production, framing, emotional coloration, and interaction patterns are secondary processes by which constitutional reforms are expressed and disputed within a mediatized political space.

Through the analysis it was found that the state and non-state actors have used very strategic and antagonistic narratives to shape the minds of the population. Government actors always put the amendment as a step needed to strengthen the institution, democratic consolidation and improve accountability in governance. Positive emotional appeals were common in these tweets, which relied on the idea of progress, stability, and national interest and framed opposition actors as obstructionary or politically selfish. Opposition politicians on the other hand presented the amendment as a challenge to the integrity of the constitution and democracy. They stressed on power concentration, process anomalies and possible democratic undermining. These threat-based stories exploited the element of fear, moral urgency and skepticism to generate opposition and undermine the validity of the reform process. The opposition of reform and threat discourse shows that narrative development can be explored as the instrument of political agenda legitimization and counterargument to the antagonistic arguments and represents the key principles of the Narrative Policy Framework.

Framing analysis showed that there were systematic applications of problem definition, causal attribution, moral evaluation as well as suggested remedies in the tweets of the political actors. The amendment was framed within the context of government-aligned messages concerning a solution to the issue of institutional inefficiency and moral responsibility and legal justification. Opposition actors highlighted the dangers and the abuse of power and presented the government as a self-serving institution and one that violates democratic values. The conflict-oriented frames were actively taken by media organizations which covered conflicts and tensions between political actors, contributing to the

intensification of polarization and the effect on the salience of the issues. These results are consistent with the Framing Theory, which shows that the choice as well as the framing of information is a crucial part in influencing the way the people understand complicated reforms in the constitution.

The paper also shows that political communication has much-temporally changing dynamics. The pre-amendment discussion was based on agenda-setting and the government actors tried to pre-empt the public opinion to support the reform, the opposition actors raised questions of legitimacy and expressed worries on the question of democratic checks and balances. The amendment phase resulted in narratives being extremely polarized and emotional, more retweets and replies, as well as quotes tweets, and more so on tweets that used strong moral or emotional appeals. The discourse after the amendment revolved around the consolidation of the narratives with the government actors focused on achievement and institutional legitimacy, and the opposition actors focused on the perceived failures or incapacity of democracy. These time patterns demonstrate the time-specific transformation of the narrative strategies in the context of the real-time political process and publicity, which confirms the concept of mediatization of political communication, when media logic and immediacy influence the formulation of political messages.

The emotional analysis and sentiment also give a better understanding on why affective communication is important to digital politics. Positive sentiment was predominant in government aligned tweets that propagated hope, trust and validity, whereas the negative sentiment dominated those aligned to opposition that were full of anger, fear and distrust. These sentiments were reflected by the citizen involvement, which strengthened elite discourses and led to ideological polarization. These results highlight the underlying nature of storytelling and emotional appeal and show that political communication is not just informational but affective and mobilizations of the opinion of the people by framing emotions and using persuasive rhetoric.

The actor influence and engagement patterns revealed that the major force behind the narrative dissemination was political elites, journalists, and media organizations. The idea of retweeting, quoting, and hashtag campaigns contributed immensely to the publicity and cover age of particular stories. Although the impact of citizen engagement was not as significant as that of the elite accounts, the citizen engagement was instrumental in challenging or strengthening the accounts, which explains the participatory aspects of Twitter as a political communication tool. Such trends are in accordance with the agenda-Setting Theory and they show that the popularity of certain issues is frequently predetermined by elite actors, though the final success of narratives depends on the interaction and amplification of the population.

The implications of the results of the study on the political legitimacy and democratic governance are immense. Tweets that put the amendment in the perspective of procedural soundness, democratic reasonableness and the benefit to the institution increased the perceived legitimacy of government actions. On the other hand, the use of tweets that focused on the illegitimacy, breach of the constitution, or concentrated power eroded the trust of the people and increased polarization. This means that political communication tactics do not only relay information, but also play an active role in determining consent, dissent, and general judgement of democratic institutions. It can be seen that the interaction of narrative framing, sentiment, and engagement all point to the fact that legitimacy in the constitutional reform process in Pakistan is also co-created in the digital sphere, which reflects the increasingly mediatized form of political legitimacy.

In the theoretical sense, the study has validated the usefulness of Narrative Policy Framework, Framing Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory, and Mediatization Theory in the analysis of political communication in connection with constitutional reforms in transitional democracies. It shows that narratives and framing are strategically employed by political actors in order to shape the opinion of the populace, mediate legitimacy and organize support or opposition. Emotional coloring and incorporation of the citizen into the analysis can also be seen as a continuation of the previous research, highlighting the importance of the affective and participation aspects to modern political communication in the digital era. In addition, the temporal analysis also emphasizes the dynamic and adaptive aspect of communication strategies, which provided a finer insight into how political actors react to changing events in the mediated environments of reality in real-time.

Recommendations

On the basis of these findings, we can make a few recommendations that can be adopted by the policymakers, political actors, media houses and civil society groups:

Strategic Narrative Management:

The reform narrative should be crafted and communicated carefully in order to strengthen clarity, legitimacy and trust. The state actors should make sure that the narratives put forward must reflect democratic values, adherence to the law and institutional utility where the state actors should aim at the positive criticism instead of polarizing the rhetoric. Clarity and transparency in factual message can curb false information and misunderstanding of the population when introducing controversial reforms.

Responsible Media Framing

Responsible reporting practices by media organizations must be implemented in order to strike a balance between conflict coverage and analytical and contextualized reporting. Focus on political conflicts too much may intensify polarization, but thorough explanatory coverage may enlighten citizens and lead to an informed discussion. The media houses are also required to make certain that the amplification in the social media does not misrepresent the democratic value of the constitutional reforms.

Emotional and Participatory Engagement

Political actors ought to acknowledge the importance of emotional tone in influencing the perception of the people and use rhetoric that elicits a sense of confidence and trust and not avoidance or antagonism. Equally, participation of citizens positively by the use of digital space can lead to participative democracy, whereby the citizens can play a significant role in discussions without reinforcing polarization.

Observation and assessment of Social Media Discourses

To determine the hegemonic narratives, fake news, and popular opinions, the civil society organizations, policymakers, and scholars need to be systematic in monitoring social media talk on constitutional reforms. This may lead the communication strategy, educate the general population, and foster transparency in reforms.

Capacity Building in Digital Communication

Government actors and the opposition should invest in digital communication capacity building and training to ensure that the message is presented in an ethical frame, is legally valid, and spread efficiently. There is a need to focus on evidence-based narrative building, fact verification and viewer appeal to build credibility and minimize manipulative or misleading rhetoric.

Democratic Literacy Promotion

Lastly, there should be a promotion of democratic literacy where the people are made aware of the constitutional procedures, the law, and democracy. Discussing the competing narratives more critically and having the capacity to engage in meaningful dialogue is more likely to enhance democratic governance and decrease the vulnerability to polarized or emotive messages, which is more likely to happen with informed citizens.

Final Remarks

To sum up, this paper has shown that the 27th Amendment debate in Pakistan was an exceedingly media-driven, narrative-based, and emotionally-stirring and process that Twitter significantly influenced the way people perceived, defined legitimacy, and a process of participatory action. Both government and opposition actors used narratives, framing effects and appeals to emotions to shape the opinions of the population and gain political backing. These narratives were further shaped, challenged, or reflexed by the media framing and the participation of citizens in the political communication between the elites, the media, and the citizens, wherein digital political communication is a complex affair.

The results highlight the theoretical importance of the combination of narrative, framing, mediatization, and agenda-setting paradigms in the study of political discourse in transitional democracies. In practical terms, they offer practical guidance to policymakers, political leaders, media houses, and political actors in the civil society who would be interested in navigating constitutional reforms in a responsible, transparent, and democratic manner. In general, the research highlights the importance of having an effective, ethical, and participatory political communication in developing the public trust, legitimacy, and inclusive democratic government in Pakistan.

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