

# Influence of a Civil Society on Political Strategy? Evidence from Pakistan

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## Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to find the role of civil society on designing the political strategy. Without a strong and effective political strategy, a political party will lose its popularity among the people. It is found that civil society gives, information security, governance, information risk management and political competitive advantage to a political party if consulted properly. The research is based on quantitative method and SPSS was used for the analysis of data. The result is applicable to all political party strategies.

**Keywords:** Civil Society (CS), Information Security (IS), Information Governance (IG), Information Risk Management (IRM), Political Competition (PC) and Political Strategy (PS).

## 1. Introduction:

A political party is a social organization which links the society or citizens with the government. Without it, democracy is just a dream. Different democratic countries have a different political environment, some have two parties while some have multiple political parties. Pakistan, like many other countries, has multiple political parties. Many popular parties some years ago have no existence in today's political environment. Several time military dictators used political parties for their personal interests and provided a very tough time to those which refused to surrender before them.

In the previous election, many large parties became limited to a province and lost their popularity in other units of the country. Despite a strong political ideology and legislative reforms, Pakistan Peoples Party did not achieve a notable position in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and Punjab and Balochistan. As there is no restriction over political parties in Pakistan, in the coming election a very tough competition is expected among the few parties in Pakistan. This research paper is going to find out the factors due to which a political party loses popularity in society even with a strong ideology and work. After finding the necessary factors a model is proposed for strategy development of political parties.

## **2. Literature Review:**

### **2.1 Civil Society:**

A political party and civil society are mutual interdependent despite the fact that political party always tries to control the society. It will not be wrong if said that they both work closely as a society consists of many groups, other small or large organizations, unions, races and religious groups etc. Anyone of them if failed to look after the other interests, both usually see a harmful result. For example, if a political party becomes isolated from civil society, it becomes weak and even gets collapse. It not only damages the being of a political party but a civil society associated with the party will also see an injurious impact [1].

Civil society is made of many kinds of formal and informal organizations like ethnic and communal institutions; various interest groups, professionals, educational entities, issues-oriented groups, development organizations and nonpartisan civic groups who work for making the political and economic system more accountable and transparent [2]. This shows that both the political parties and civil society act as a go-between the state and the individual but they have different ways of doing so and have different functions. The main difference between them is civil society groups do valuable functions only for the betterment of society not for gaining power neither for forming a government and so they are not accountable. On the other hand, political parties offer policy choices and do functions for which they are held accountable in the electoral process and also for their level of performance [3]. Based upon the activities and functions, there is periodic and orderly competition for power between political parties in democratic politics.

Civil society represents specific needs and interests, but they cannot translate their actions into national decisions but can only initiate and continue a democratic transition. It can neither make trade-offs and compromises. It is a political party which after coming into power will turn its policy and slogans into reality take decisions on national interests. Interestingly, up to now, there is no generic model for capturing the role of political parties and civil society organizations in the democratization process, because the role varies from society to society and from country to country [4].

Political parties have also many problems. Many of them have weak top-down structures deficient in transparency and single personality dependent. Many of them have little or no analytical and policy development aptitude etc. they are more responsive to any externally driven reform agendas rather than to their electorates [5].

Though civil society and political party are two distinct sectors, their cooperation with each other should be encouraged at each level. A political party has to recognize the importance of civil society for itself and should find effective ways for fostering its policy and conditions as required and demanded by the civil society. This, in turn, will give popularity to the political party and increases the chances of gaining power and votes. Autonomy of both should be respected by each other and they both have to realize each other democratic objectives [5].

### **2.2 Information Security:**

The most valuable and precious resource and input for a political party or organization is its information i.e. what it knows which the others do not know. Decisions, strategy, and objectives all are associated with

information and knowledge. It is an irrevocable fact that due to the developments in communication technology, it is very difficult for someone or party to keep its information secure and safe. This important problem was further accelerated by the use of transmission methods and tools like mobile phone, memory cards, chips, internet etc which originates many other security concerns for information theft or its illegal use [6]. Information security can also be affected by the management which uses this information. [7].

International organizations have also take the issue seriously as it is witnessed that many secrets were theft and shared illegally. As security of information is the need of organization, nationally and internationally laws, policy and regulations were developed in the context. Up to some extent information theft was controlled but due to a dramatic development in technology, new ways were used in information theft. [8].

Therefore it is necessary that a political party should have an information security strategy. It should make available only the required information to a responsible person for using. The following assumptions are supposed to be true.

### **2.3 Information Governance**

Information is the most valuable asset of an organization. It may be about the political environment of a country or it may be about an issue. Political party leaders must analyze the information such that the party can get the maximum advantage than any other party. It must be in the mind of a leader that the information must be used according to the choice of people. Based on this analysis, people's concept can be made.

Information can also make a key role in designing and formulating, the party policy, strategy and making short and long-term decisions [9]. This shows that information must not be used for the personal interests but for the interests of the party in the most honest and party friendly manner.

The process of seeking, transmitting and using information is known as information governance [10]. A political party must be in touch with its workers for obtaining information. As a worker belongs to the class which brings the party into power, so the party must use the information obtained from him.

### **2.4 Information Risk Management**

Finding and addressing the unauthorized use of information is called information risk management. As discussed above that information is the most valuable asset, there is always a fear of information theft. For this purposes management continuously identifies the threats and weaknesses of illegal use of information [11]. Safe information of a leader or political organization today does not mean that this information is safe tomorrow. Therefore it is always the need of an organization to analyze and identify the risks involved. Once the risk is identified then it can be faced positively.

IRM is not an easy task. Most of the time incidents related to information security occur from an unexpected and unpredictable side and are unique in its nature. This gives additional importance to IRM and gives an organization a message to endlessly identifies and analyze all the expected and unexpected areas of risks [12].

It is important to note here that identification of all types of risks is impossible and the unaddressed risk is known as residual risk.

Management chooses the lowest acceptable risk when the occurrence of risk is unavoidable. Sometimes risks are mitigated while sometime it may be transferred from one area to another but always the management prefers to get less loss [13].

### **2.5 Competitive Advantage:**

Politicians need to have the capabilities of holding their own parties united and active and also need to have the abilities to keep the party workers and voters mobilize and active in the society. Leadership must have the aptitude of solving conflicts between the party workers by ensuring the self-respect and political interests of all of them. Rival parties as a vote against each other, therefore political party should have clear policy and strategy about institutions; and should educate its workers about the spirit and aims of their policy better than its rival party/parties do [14].

In elections, politicians and party supporters try to influence policy by competing directly for votes. This process is called election campaign and often need a huge cost [15]. Interestingly, less than average citizens have sufficient information about politics who cast their votes. There are many other studies which argued that voters lack the basic understanding of contemporary issues, they do not know about the ideology of political parties etc [16]. Voters merely cast their votes and base their voting decisions upon the physical appearance of the party leader and candidate [17].

According to a theory, voters during an election have less or incomplete information and the policy preferences of the candidates [18]. Similarly is the case of multiple ideological proportions [19]. It clarifies the fact that the voter will vote a candidate for what they know about him/her or for the hope they have associated with. Most of them do not know about the preferences and party policy of a candidate. Some voters also consider the legislative ability of the candidate rather than ideology [20].

For getting high reputation in a society, it was proposed that political parties should screen their candidate so that they have a competitive advantage in election upon their rivals [21]. Party affiliation of a candidate is also a source of information, and many voters see it before casting their votes [22].

The above literature review shows that a major portion of a society does not know about the party policy and preferences. People have less information about politics and political party. Citizens only vote for what they apparently see better and the one who gives them a strong hope of doing well. Corrupt and nameless people will not only give the chance of winning to their rivals in their constituency but will also decline the vote bank of the party they are in.

### **2.6 Political Strategy:**

Political strategy is defined as “A way used for convincing people and to maximize votes or party supporters.” Generally, the term STRATEGY may be used in politics in different ways. Here it is just like a

campaign for increasing party supporters and votes as many as possible [23]. Despite the fact that this is, of course, the main aspect of a strategy of a political party, it may not address all of the strategic aspects of a political party. Here the intended meaning of strategy is an organizational strategy instead of campaigning strategy [24]. Organizational Strategy is the integration of an organization's functions and units into a unified strategy which involves the ability to improve the party under uncertain and complex conditions.

The capacity of a political party to act and organize is always a subject to sudden change occurring in society etc. New parties come with new ideas making the political environment more competitive and unstable. Therefore there is always an overlap between organizational strategy and electoral strategy and the fact is "A good organizational strategy is required for a successful campaign." This means that electoral strategy is always involved when someone is talking about organizational strategy. On other hands, it also clarifies that strategic political planning and implementation are far different from the management and operational activities of a political party. It is important to note here that for implementation of individual strategies to solve strategic issues, operational and management levels become more important.

Strategic planning of a political party is a way of thinking, acting and learning that can enable the party to better achieve its goals and secure their survival in uncertainty and complexity of their internal and external environments. It is an approach to deal with challenges and making opportunities. It is a process of developing and determining vision, activities and measure performance by looking at WHY, WHAT and HOW of a political party [25]. Therefore it can be defined as "A deliberative, disciplined and directive (D3) effort to produce decisions and deeds (D2) that denotes and directs (D2) what a party is, what it does and why it does it (W3)." Rational analysis is very necessary for strategic planning. Vision and analysis reinforce each other and make strategic planning flexible and practical for decision making. In short strategic planning encompasses mission, goals, structures, revenues, and stakeholders of an organization.

Two things must be kept in mind about strategic planning. It is:

1. Outward looking
2. Forward-looking

Outward looking means that it examines the organization in the context of its environment and develops strategies for actions on a broad understanding of the organization's position. And forward-looking means that it is an activity of today, analysis of today's information but keeping a focus on the medium and long-term goals. In short, it is the door of identification the changes that will have to be made by and to the party for ensuring to pursue mission in the future.

## **2.7 Hypothesis:**

H1: There is a relationship between civil society and information security.

H2: There is a relationship between civil society and information governance.

H3: There is a relationship between civil society and information risk management.

H4: There is a relationship between civil society and information competitive advantage.

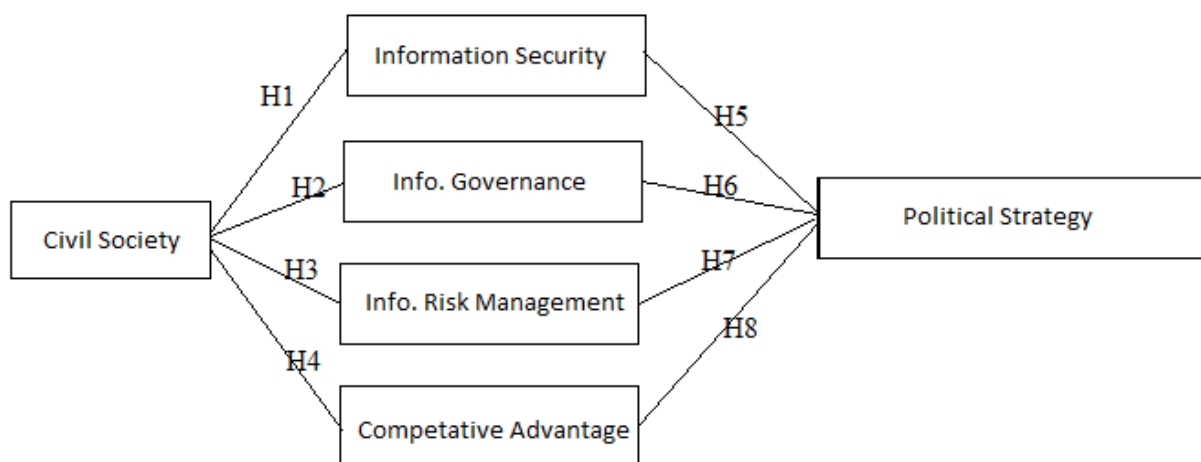
H5: There is a relationship between information security and political strategy.

H6: There is a relationship between civil information governance and political strategy.

H7: There is a relationship between information risk management and political strategy.

H8: There is a relationship between political party competition and political strategy

### 2.8 Proposed Model:



### Theoretical Model: Influence of a Civil Society on Political Strategy? Evidence from Pakistan

#### 3. Research Methodology:

The research methods include hypothesis testing and correlation analysis. After designing the hypothesis, a questionnaire survey was conducted from people having official responsibilities at a district level in a political party. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed out of which 311 found satisfactory for the study. The data were analyzed through SPSS.

#### 4. Results and Analysis:

It is mandatory that the data to be used in the research must be reliable. Therefore reliability test was conducted and the value of Cronbach Alpha was found 0.81, which is an acceptable value.

#### **4.1 Correlation Analysis:**

##### **H1: There is a relationship between civil society and information security.**

The following correlation table shows that there is positive and significant relationship between civil society and information security. The correlation value for this relation is 0.622 at a significance level 0.000. Hence the assumption that “there is a relationship between civil society and information security” is true.

##### **H2: There is a relationship between civil society and information governance.**

The following correlation table shows that there is positive and significant relationship between civil society and information governance. The correlation value for this relation is 0.312 at a significance level 0.000. Hence the assumption that “there is a relationship between civil society and information governance” is true.

##### **H3: There is a relationship between civil society and information risk management.**

The following correlation table shows that there is positive and significant relationship between civil society and information risk management. The correlation value for this relation is 0.347 at a significance level 0.000. Hence the assumption that “there is a relationship between civil society and information risk management” is true.

##### **H4: There is a relationship between civil society and information competitive advantage.**

The following correlation table shows that there is positive and significant relationship between civil society and information competitive advantage. The correlation value for this relation is 0.324 at a significance level 0.000. Hence the assumption that “there is a relationship between civil society and information competitive advantage” is true.

##### **H5: There is a relationship between information security and political strategy.**

The following correlation table shows that there is positive and significant relationship between information security and political strategy. The correlation value for this relation is 0.433 at a significance level 0.000. Hence the assumption that “there is a relationship between information security and political strategy” is true.

##### **H6: There is a relationship between civil information governance and political strategy.**

The following correlation table shows that there is positive and significant relationship between information governance and political strategy. The correlation value for this relation is 0.516 at a significance level 0.000. Hence the assumption that “there is a relationship between civil information governance and political strategy” is true.

##### **H7: There is a relationship between information risk management and political strategy.**

The following correlation table shows that there is positive and significant relationship between IRM and political strategy. The correlation value for this relation is 0.344 at a significance level 0.000. Hence the assumption that “there is a relationship between information risk management and political strategy” is true.

**H8: There is a relationship between political party competition and political strategy.**

The following correlation table shows that there is positive and significant relationship between PP and political strategy. The correlation value for this relation is 0.521 at a significance level 0.000. Hence the assumption that “There is a relationship between political party competition and political strategy” is true.

**Table 1: Correlation Analysis**

		CS	IS	IG	IRM	CA	PS
CS	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000					
	N	311					
IS	Pearson Correlation	.622	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000					
	N	311	311				
IG	Pearson Correlation	.312(**)	.342(**)	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000				
	N	311	311	311			
IRM	Pearson Correlation	.347(**)	.511(**)	.212(**)	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000			
	N	311	311	311	311		
CA	Pearson Correlation	.324(**)	.411(**)	.299(**)	.344(**)	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	N	311	311	311	311	311	
PS	Pearson Correlation	.325(**)	.433(**)	.516(**)	.521(**)	.345(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	0.00	
	N	311	311	311	311	311	311

Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) at less that 0.05

**5. Conclusion:**

It is concluded that the society and its people have a major control over the strategy of a political party. It gives many inputs for political strategy designing as shown in the research. Information security, governance, risk management and political advantage are some of the main elements a society has to control the political strategy. The correlation among variables as supported by the results shows that dependence of political strategy on society.

**5.1 Recommendation:**

The following recommendations are made:

1. Consult society for every move in political ground
2. Political party should make strong relationship with people.
3. Precious information may be collected from society.



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