

CULTURAL COMPONENTS OF PAKISTAN IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE:
IDENTITY, DIVERSITY, AND CONTESTATION

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Abstract

The research examines how public spaces developed over time and how national identity emerged in an Islamic society comprising multiple ethnic groups. The study aims to assess how centralised Urdu-language management, together with ethnic group underrepresentation, impacts cultural-national identity and access to Habermas-defined public space. The Punjab Sufi Forum conducts a qualitative research project that studies Sufi Punjabi people, Sindhi people, Pashtun people, and Baloch people through their complete linguistic, sartorial, ritualistic, artistic, and culinary practices for a comprehensive ideological community assessment. The Islamic ideological community can find support from that particular subjectivity. The research will demonstrate how national heritage organizations use their heritage preservation programs to protect heritage against foreign threats and global cultural diffusion. The study will adopt a qualitative constructivist research design and purposively sample 105 public artifacts from 2006 to 2026. The study will use thematic content analysis, applying open and axial coding, to assess the functioning of Islamic unity, ethnic fragmentation, and institutional mediation in Pakistan's public space. The research will show how national media and institutional events express Islamic unity through the representation of cultural features. The expression of these powerful ethnic groups, who are underrepresented, together with hierarchical division, causes a condition that looks like a small community but does exist in minor provinces. The study will develop multilingual media and cultural policies together with inclusionary institutional programming. The digital heritage projects will require provincial quotas that apply to both State-owned media and private-sector operations throughout the country. The study will assist in achieving the Pakistan 2020 Vision by developing initiatives to enhance intercultural dialogue and social cohesion. The introduction of these measures will create a public sphere in Pakistan where all citizens can engage equally.

INTRODUCTION

The public sphere's use in Pakistan's non-Western context will result in multiple difficulties. Jürgen developed the concept of the Public Sphere through his work. Habermas refers to this area as a space for communicative interaction. The private individual uses rational-critical discourse to obtain public will through this particular spatial area. Pakistan's Islamic normative civil society creates a public space where citizens share their opinions through logical conversation, while their religious authority and family connections create multiple points of disagreement between them (Anwar & Saba, 2018). The public engages in debates in mosques, the media, cultural festivals, and other arenas. However, the people who frequent these venues are well aware of the respect that must be shown to the ulama and communal traditions, so they operate within such constraints rather than in pursuit of sheer individual freedoms. Pakistani citizens created a democratic system through Islamic governance in public spaces following their 1947 achievement of independence. The creation of an Islamic governance system followed this event. The public space moral system governed society more than the method of attacking disagreements did (Schmitt, 2012).

People use the public sphere in Pakistan to express themselves through traditional cultural practices of different ethnic groups and their historical experiences of peace-building. Language serves as a basic identity that plays an important role. The media and education systems have been tasked with promoting Urdu as a symbol of unity among all citizens (Khan et al., 2025). Language rights are primarily communicated in dealings with the provinces in regional languages, including Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto (Pashtun), and Balochi. People judge others based on their clothing choices. Women in urban settings do not wear hijab or abaya as a mark of Islamic identity (PAS, 2010). The local area's styling leads men to prefer shalwar kameez as their main outfit. The outfit features a bright embroidered shirt, making it the most eye-catching piece. The design element is a fundamental part of Baloch tribal fashion. The most common male dress code for political events

in Lahore consists of this traditional outfit (Hassan, 2025). Other festivities feature a similar type of style. Society has strong food connections and interactions. The iftar meals during Ramadan serve biryani and nihari, which help people connect with each other. The fish curry, made with spices, represents Sindh at the national food fair (Muqaddas, 2025).

The Arts use rituals to create movement for these elements. Folk musicians perform Sufi Qawwali at Data Darbar in Lahore while Balochistan dancers present their regular Lewa dance on the national television channel PTV. Folk spirit creates public identity by displaying its unique identity through traditional art. Truck art and miniature paintings are visual arts that have historically adorned public buses and participated in artistic competitions alongside Western art (Ali, 2025). Pakistan maintains its ethnic diversity through its strong public presence. The national event Lok Mela, organized by Lok Virsa, celebrates this pluralism and conviviality in society, but tensions create conflicts in the country. The media representation of Baloch folklore accords it a specific kind of visibility (Our Correspondent, 2025).

In what ways do Pakistani cultural elements shape national identity development within public spaces? The Islamic dimension is intercessory of the two sides of the argument in a way that relates to religiosity. Public prayers and Eid celebrations began in 1979 after Zia-ul-Haq established Islamization. The term 'Pakistani Muslim' was created to establish a unified identity between Muslims from Pakistan. Ethnic groups block citizens from developing a shared national identity. The Sindhi group refuses to accept Urdu, while the Pashtun group rejects jirgas, demonstrating their dedication to subnational public sphere activities (Khan et al., 2025). The paper examines how media content, along with institutional policies and public events from 2006 to 2026, shapes public discourse that either creates new systems or maintains existing power structures. The study examines how events alter media studies about postcolonial public spaces.

Literature Review

The research shows how cultural public spaces in Pakistan affect the development of national identity among ethnic groups and the dominance of Islam. The research evidence demonstrates that state authorities control all aspects of cultural activities. The PNCA and Lok Virsa operated as cultural organizations that combined different traditions through their artistic work. The research paper presented all research decisions but did not report the actual outcomes of the research (Mustansar & Siddiqui, 2020). Ullah et al. (2025) studied these organizations, which highlighted Islamic symbolism while ignoring the province's heterogeneous cultural representation through identity politics. The staff members from Islamabad and Sindh demonstrated different methods for engaging in dialogue.

Youth media develop research instruments to study how young people connect with their ethnic identities in public spaces that allow for transparent expression. Dattoo (2010) was conducted the study demonstrates how transnational movements utilize diaspora media platforms. The study shows two distinct ways in which transnational movement created hybrid identity forms. Research on British-Pakistanis found that youth used television and the Internet to manage their Punjabi and Pukhtoon backgrounds. The study productively contested the notion that the national identity of the whole country exists as a single entity (Khan & Mythen, 2021). Khan (2024) researched urban youth in Karachi interacting with global media content. The two groups show different patterns, as research has shown. The characters in the narrative delivered messages that aligned with the content of MTV shows and Bollywood. The local youth responded to the situation with humorous performance skits. The skits presented Muslim-oriented socialization through their depiction of local traditional beliefs. Ghorzang (2025) conducted a study to examine how Pashto- and Sindhi-speaking people use platforms as social networks. The content creators decided to maintain their cultural identity. The cultural conservation project created a barrier that halted cultural conservation efforts, yet it managed to

preserve cultural heritage. The digital tools enabled access for some users while blocking access for others. The growing digital divide enabled some groups to gain greater authority while others experienced a loss of power.

The largest gaps exist between ethnic and religious minorities in society. Nafees (2025) reports that mainstream media spread blasphemy-related fears, which resulted in elite groups silencing minority voices, thus damaging public discussion about the river. The Sindhi and Baloch movements used festivals and print materials to create their public space, which interacted with the state. Evolvi (2018) studied nationalism online using Twitter studies, which demonstrated the manifestation of two oppositional groups using traditional music to contest in a space where Islamophobia is prevalent. Cultural policy and the critique of globalization were the primary topics of investigation for the study. According to his research on heritage institutions, Lodhi found that the Zia government programs brought folk arts to public access, but they preferred to use local Punjabi stories instead. Hashmi (2020) found that Netflix users experience decreased knowledge of local ceremonies. The youth have preferred adopting cosmopolitan hybrid fashions rather than traditional indigenous clothing or foods. Iqbal (2023) employed visual art for peaceful activism, which presented creative work to the audience. The collection examined how cultural elements clashed, but it had weaknesses that were very specific. The study showed that media elites were overemphasized, leading to hidden institutional happenings. Researchers did not apply Habermas's and ethnic federalism's theories to study events after the Eighteenth Amendment. Researchers have yet to investigate how young people use TikTok or whether it gives them digital power.

The current project establishes multiple cultural elements, including language, dress, food, and arts and rituals as permanent features within Pakistan's public domain from 2006 to 2026. The study conducted content analysis of PTV, newspapers, and Lok Virsa to assess the institutional identity boundaries that Shah and Ahsan created through their respective global-local tensions. The

research findings will serve as a basis for developing media guidelines that support inclusive public discussions.

Habermas's Public Sphere and Postcolonial Critiques

The Public Sphere Structural Transformation (1962/1989) is a fundamental work by Habermas that established the public sphere as a space where citizens could engage in rational and critical discussion without state interference. According to Habermas, the public sphere emerged in the 18th century, when coffeehouses, salons, and the distribution of printed materials began in European countries. The bourgeois public sphere enables individuals to defend themselves against totalitarian rule through the application of logical reasoning and public display of their thinking abilities (Bohman and Rehg, 2023). Post-colonialism, as a theoretical framework, criticizes Habermas for his universalism, which he applies without considering historical context. Charles and Fuentes-Rohwer (2015) conducted that Western public spheres establish two distinct systems that exclude religious practices and social relationships from their design. The people who colonized the land established Imperial hybrid spaces, creating a social system that blended elements of both the colonizers and the indigenous population. The spaces established here did not serve as standard areas for logical reasoning.

Pakistan benefited from the criticisms of postcolonial societies, which examined their own social structures. The Pakistani public sphere develops through Islamic republicanism and the continuation of hierarchical feudal systems that persisted after 1947. The essential element needed for Pakistan to extend its secular route from Habermas remains absent from the nation (Shaikh et al., 2018). Muslim publics functioned as spaces through which Muslim communities expressed their Islamic beliefs, similar to printing and media platforms, but without the complete intellectual freedom that existed during those times. Zia-ul-Haq's 1979 Islamization created a situation where God's laws needed to be applied before discussions could commence through sharia-based media

(PTV) and fatwa systems (Khosro, 2024). The government imposed a religious interpretation of sharia, fundamentally transforming how people discussed matters in public. According to the state system of ethnic federalism, Punjabi governance prevented Sindhi and Pashtun counterpublics from operating, as it failed to provide the necessary state resources for their activities (TWAIRL, 2022).

Habermas established the foundational principles that Pakistani media scholars used as their research framework. Naveed et al. (2023) explained that the Urdu press employed lexical prime and visual elements in their media coverage of Imran Khan's wedding to shape public opinion. The elite-controlled public sphere forced the team to develop new strategies to comply with Habermas's public sphere regulations. Iftikhar (2018) examined how different social classes participated in dialogue through various social situations. Urban elites control television programming, but rural communities rely on kinship-based jirgas to access the shows. Through artistic activism, artists gain the power to lead peaceful resistance movements against a tyrannical system. Iqbal (2023) uses Habermas to analyze how visual elements construct public spaces through their representation. Street artists in Hong Kong used their public performances to challenge government restrictions on street speech, which had been in place since 2018. This period marked the start of provisional counterpublics (Saleem & Shafiq, 2025).

The studies presented here contain particular shortcomings that directly impact the current thesis. The Pakistani regime maintains its civic structure through hierarchical systems, which Islamic principles (e.g., blasphemy laws) allow to operate in public space. The Habermasian rational-critical standard encounters its first challenge from civil society organizations that have evolved across different historical periods (Siddique & Hayat, 2008). The study before 2015 examined media elements while excluding cultural elements, which serve as identity mediators through their control over language hierarchy and the visibility of rituals (Eid/qawwali) and dress (abaya vs tribal), among others. Lodhi's cultural

policy study demonstrates how institutions (PNCA/Lok Virsa) operate as syncretic channels, but it does not explore how they can counter global trends through their current operations (Nawaz & Mazhar, 2024). TikTok and Sufi revivalism trends have enabled youth counterpublics to establish new digital narratives that remain unaddressed by Habermas' theoretical applications. The research examined how cultural elements spread in Pakistan's public sphere between 2006 and 2026. Theoretical framework of counterpublics. The study used Fraser's theories of counterpublics, along with postcolonial theory, to examine whether media and events supported Islamic unity or rejected ethnic expression through their presentations of dominant political narratives. The study aims to create media research frameworks that will become obsolete in the future while reducing their dominant power over research activities.

Pakistani Scholarship on Islamic-Ideological Culture and Multiculturalism

Pakistani scholars define culture as an Islamic ideological system because it represents a basic Islamic belief system that people adhere to, and the current multicultural society shows the development of diverse cultural manifestations. The two-nation theory began to be discussed publicly after the 1947 Partition, when people began to form their own opinions about its validity. Through their research, Justice Javid Iqbal and Professor Hafeez Malik established a connection between Pakistan's ideological foundation and the two-nation theory. The Khalistan people share their connection to the public through their Islamic belief system (Sadaqat, 2025). The people in Pakistan desire to stop fighting and achieve lasting peace for their territory. The Islamic shariah system established in 1949 through the Objectives Resolution unites different language groups and regional communities through its balanced system. The Zia-ul-Haq Islamization program established an ideological framework that people believed would resolve social division problems (Şahbaz, 2020). The period between 1977 and 1988 saw people forced to dress simply, pray, and conduct media

gazetting in accordance with moral restrictions. The Islamist academy receives state support, which limits its ability to acknowledge community pluralism because Baloch and Sindhi traditions do not appear in PNCA exhibitions, which display popular traditions. The scholars recognized that Pakistan contained multiple cultural elements. Pluralists who study Faiz Ahmad Faiz's poetic masterpiece believe that identity forms concentric circles, which show how people identify themselves. The Islamic system establishes its core values through the principles of justice and tolerance, as well as the prohibition of major offenses (Schmitt, 2012). The system extends to cover all regional languages and ethnic groups, along with their associated folk traditions, customs, and practices. The Indus civilization connects to Punjab, Sindh, Pashto, and Baloch territorial nationalism, according to Saeed Shafqat. The pre-Partition coexistence period laid the foundation for people to stand up to extreme central control. The Sindhi linguistic revival movement for autonomy and Urdu-favored language practices created situations that led to challenges to Islamic unity from ethnic particularism, thus resulting in the development of mixed traditions such as Lok Mela (Khan et al., 2025). Shabbir et al. (2024) conducted the analysis of these institutions led to the emergence of this paradoxical situation. The cultural policies assessment appears in the study of Lodhi et al. The demographics of Punjab create a situation in which people misperceive information. In his 2025 theorization on religion, Khan linked policy with identity through the belief that Islam's communal activities (like iftars) helped people form bonds while excluding minorities from social circles. The best approach to address the post-18th Amendment changes, according to him, should employ multiculturalism. The study on media and globalization revealed additional details about the subject matter. Anwar and Saba (2018) shows that youth can understand Bollywood because its satires combine global cultural elements with Islamic beliefs to create multicultural hybrids. Hashmi (2020) states that TikTok users initiated Sufi trends, leading people to develop ideological resistance to Netflix because it reduced the

visibility of religious rituals. Ullah et al. (2025) identified two primary use case types that serve as the foundation for all use cases. The people established common beliefs, including anti-imperialism, to build the strength to face their adversaries. The thesis of this scholarship highlighted certain entrenched gaps, such as the over-reliance on elite ideologies that ignore the social power of grassroots rituals, such as shrine visits, as mediators of the public sphere, while empirical studies fail to link Habermas with post-Zia multiculturalism. The researchers conducted a study to examine how public spaces in Pakistan reflect their cultural identity. The content analysis examined whether Islamic-ideological simplicity strengthened national identity or whether multiculturalism is divisive, based on Shafqat's pluralist model and Khan's critique of government policies, to develop inclusive communication frameworks.

Identity Politics, Centralization, and Ethnic Underrepresentation

Research in Pakistan shows that public areas disappear because of Urdu language centralization, which creates confusion for people who do not identify with their ethnic backgrounds. After India achieved independence, elite Urdu-speaking groups gained control over state institutions. The Muhajirs who came to Pakistan from Uttar Pradesh formed the elite groups who spoke Urdu. The authorities then introduced an Islamic-Urdu system that operated through a centralized structure (Hussain et al., 2024). The system made it impossible for native people to access its services. The protests began within an hour of the announcement, which declared Urdu as the sole national language and stated that Bengali people made up 56 percent of the country's population. The 1971 secession established a situation in which one language was forced on people as their only means of communication. The process caused people to lose their identity because they lost the ability to speak their first language (Mustansar & Siddiqui, 2020). The West Pakistani education system changed through European-American educational reforms, as 48 percent of Punjab residents who spoke

English were included in educational content, reflecting their historical importance. All study materials on the Ganga-Jamuni culture forbade the inclusion of any historical content from native people. The syllabus did not include the Indus Valley civilization or Baloch oral history as part of its curriculum (Khosro, 2024).

Centralization made it more difficult for bureaucrats to maintain accurate records about migrant recruitment operations. The group of the 1950s succeeded in taking control of all civil service positions in PTV media and judicial offices. The News report describes how Urdu imperialism has transformed how people interact with one another. Public events that display Islamic-Urdu symbols have created a new way for Punjabi spaces to develop their identity in all other cultural spaces (NAQVI, 2017). People currently show more interest in Punjabi truck art and similar items, which have become popular at national events, because they now receive less preference than Sindhi ajrak and Pashtun chapli kebab, which used to be preferred. The political system that Ayesha Jalal and other academics examined used Islam as its tool to create a unified belief system among all people. The Sindhi linguistic revival and Baloch insurgencies of the 1960s showed how exposure to these movements could break this ideological system. The group established its own media outlets in regional newspapers, creating private spaces outside typical public areas (Sheikh, 2018). The Saraiki language movement has emerged as a new method to contest borders by establishing new provincial territories that will halt Punjabi territorial expansion, which started after the 18th Amendment. The two processes of cultural assertion and federalism implementation now occur simultaneously (Hameed & Ghani, 2023). PTV has an Urdu program that serves as its primary content, except for the absence of regional programming featuring non-Urdu provincial languages. The 1980s saw 70 percent of all content dedicated to Punjabi and Urdu. Baloch lewa dance and Pashtun jirgas are ancient tribal artifacts, according to a distinguished scholar who studied their origins. Sheikh (2018) notes that Punjab centralized its authority through a military-civil

alliance, which weakened Muhajir power while maintaining its own strength. YouTube Sindhi channels have transformed the digital media since 2000. The distribution of folklore increased as a result of this phenomenon. Government control has enabled people to use Urdu Islamic content, which has become the dominant cultural force because they want to create an alternative. The phenomenon has caused a decline in the recognizable qualities of the folklore.

Gaps in Research on Public Institutions Promoting Heritage

The research was conducted to investigate the cultural landscape of Pakistan. Public institutions that represent the state have received little scholarly attention, such as the Pakistan National Council of the Arts and Lok Virsa. The two institutions, through their activities conducted beyond their operational boundaries, safeguard cultural heritage. Society has neglected to study most information about them because they exist as public secrets. The literature documents multiple records that show the state Islamization process together with ethnic conflict (Shaikh et al., 2018). The organizations that act as cultural resilience mediators operate without studies that examine their functions. The research examined Zia-era media restrictions that banned Urdu-language content. The National Arts Council of Pakistan (PNCA) exhibition space displays numerous miniature paintings and calligraphic artworks from its collection. The latter was created during the period of Afghan jihad to block Western pop cultural elements in the 1980s (Sadaqat, 2025). The critics refused to recognize the folk festivals which Lok Virsa presented through Sindhi Sufi music and Baloch embroidery as genuine protest movements against Bollywood and MTV.

Numerous factors combined to create this situation. Researchers who focused on elite classes would rather devote their efforts to studying political economy than to examining how creative individuals create cultural spaces. The Scholar exclusively interviewed policymakers, neglecting to engage with curators at PNCA or artisans at Lok Virsa. The three sources that constitute the complete coverage of Pakistan National Council

of the Arts Annual Reports never been examined through media studies (Naveed et al., 2023). The institutional outputs that demonstrate public heritage promotion through their evidence require quantitative content audits for assessment because such audits do not exist. The measurement of public discourse on cultural heritage promotion requires quantitative content analysis of institutional outputs, which matched the PTV investigations of media to establish these measurement methods. Theoretical applications widened the gaps between existing theories. Public sphere concepts from Habermas's work apply to Islamic hierarchical structures. He eliminates all institutional spaces that function as "third spaces" where people can discuss the rational-critical legacy of Islam (Saleem & Shafiq, 2025). The postcolonial perspectives described cultural hybridity, but they showed no interest in studying the state agencies that manage these cultural mixtures. UNESCO and Lok Virsa have formed a partnership to protect their cultural rights through collaborative efforts.

Problem Statement

Public spaces in Pakistan serve as locations where different cultural elements have combined to produce various languages, clothing, food, goods, and rituals that people use to construct their national identity. Jürgen Habermas describes the public sphere as a realm where individuals participate in rational-critical discussion while maintaining their status as equal participants. Postcolonial Pakistan adopted spaces structured to confer authority (Naveed et al., 2023). The establishment of these hierarchies depends on three factors: centralization, the dominance of Urdu, and the Islamization process that began in 1979. Public speech patterns among Punjabis (44%), Sindhis (14%), Pakhtuns (15%), and Baloch (3%) reveal shared cultural elements. People express themselves through their authentic voice during Lok Virsa PTV festivals and urban protests. The individuals who should be present in these areas fail to appear at any time. The result is an emergence of counterpublics. The emergence of counterpublics creates obstacles to different

groups holding important discussions with one another (Nafees, 2025).

The study demonstrates that national unity becomes difficult because cultural elements function as "grand simplifiers," using Islamic standards to control the movement of Emirati abayas during public processions and in Eid congregational events. The existence of 'grand dividers' between ethnic groups manifests through Sindhi ajrak wearers and Pashtun jirga users. National identity elements combine with specific cultural elements to create a national identity. Therefore, it becomes hard to recognize them as distinct entities (Khan, 2024). The nomination of Pakistan's heritage to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List is a successful achievement that has sparked conflicts among different parties. The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) and Lok Virsa serve as institutions that safeguard Pakistan's syncretic heritage by opposing both homogenization and the effects of globalization, including Netflix and Western cultural elements. The empirical effectiveness of these methods remains unknown (Iftikhar, 2018). Media analysis is a common research area in academia because scholars study media content, yet they fail to conduct systematic content analysis of the material elements of events and policy from 2006 to 2026, which prevents them from determining whether these elements foster inclusion or maintain elite power. Policymakers lack confidence in their options for multicultural strategies, which might lead to greater alienation of remote communities (Muqaddas, 2025). The differences in existing theoretical frameworks prevent researchers from understanding postcolonial public spheres within communication studies. The research investigates how Pakistan's cultural characteristics shape the development of both national identity and community identity through public space usage. The media and institutions, through their events, produce outputs that need assessment to establish methods that enable participants to engage in equal discussions.

Research Objectives

- To investigate how cultural elements express themselves in Pakistani public spaces, which display Islamic unity through the display of different ethnic groups.
- To evaluate the ability of public institutions (PNCA, Lok Virsa) to protect heritage resources from outside dangers. The research will examine both centralization problems and under-representation challenges.
- To explore whether these elements promote integration or create a top-down authority structure during the period of national identity development from 2006 until 2026.

Research Questions

1. How do cultural components reinforce or challenge national identity in Pakistan's public sphere?
2. What role do PNCA and Lok Virsa play against external influences and centralization?
3. Do these dynamics foster inclusive discourse or hierarchical fragmentation (2006-2026)?

Significance of the Study

The research investigates how Islamic cultural elements help Pakistani ethnic groups establish their national identity through public spaces. The research paper examines postcolonial studies, which require scholars to modify Habermas's rational-critical framework for studying Pakistan's power structure and social hierarchy, focusing on the use of the Urdu language and institutional mediation (Khosro, 2024). The research assesses whether national identity derives its power from distinct historical events or cultural elements that people categorize as "grand simplification." The project includes Eid celebrations, abaya-wearing traditions, Sindhi ajrak, and Pashtun jirga customs, which reflect ethnic divisions. The research will investigate elite media content in an observable phenomena assessment, which has not been done yet (Hussain et al., 2024). The author's theoretical interpretation of the public sphere in 2006-2026 makes an overall theoretical contribution by drawing on Fraser's subaltern counter publics and Pakistani multi-culturalism,

which critique globalization through Platforms like Nashriyat (Netflix) and Western media. The author evaluates post-Zia Islamic transformations by examining PNCA and Lok Virsa as the two main contestation spaces (Ghorzang, 2025). The overall framework connects universal principles with specific details, which helps develop a discourse of postcolonial identity politics. The research results will enable cultural policymakers to create policies that safeguard multiple cultural groups. The Baloch and Sindhi community representatives have expressed their demand for a provincial quota for the Lok Virsa festival and PTV to resolve their representation issue (Bohman & Rehg, 2023). The TikTok Sufi trends enable media creators in Pakistan to develop professional skills in syncretic heritage through modern digital youth culture. The research establishes a qualitative content analysis system that Lahore communication programs can use to develop bachelor's degree thesis work about how the media affects public places. Through this research, the standards for public discussion within communities are established to build national unity against the forces of disintegration.

Methodology

Research Design

The research will employ a constructivist design to assess the cultural elements in public spaces across Pakistan. The study will display its public artefacts through PTV clips, including major newspaper publications such as Dawn and Jang, and reports by PNCA/Lok Virsa, spanning the period from 2006 to 2026 (Ali, 2025).

Population

The study will use PTV clips as its research population, together with Dawn articles, Jang articles, PNCA reports, Lok Virsa reports, and daytime events of Lok Mela from 2006 to 2016. The research will draw on elements from Pakistan's public sphere, including Punjabi and Sindhi, Pashtun and Baloch cultures, to represent the federal/urban cultural discourse (Bohman & Rehg, 2023).

Sampling Technique

The researchers will choose 105 artefacts from 2020 to 2026 that demonstrate public importance through their extensive written content. Public significance is evidenced by a selection criterion requiring a specific number of cultural elements to be present in combination with three ethnic groups. The additional requirement states that they must have links to both national media outlets and events that hold national public importance.

Sample Size

Researchers will select 105 public artifacts from the 2020-2026 population based on their qualitative saturation benchmarks. The project includes fifty cultural shows and news clips that capture both festivals and rallies. The collection contains 40 news articles, including 20 Dawn articles and 20 Jang articles, as well as 15 Lok Virsa reports (Hashmi, 2020). The selection process will use different methods to achieve ethnic balance, drawing from all federal and urban areas. The ethics application research study sample size approval satisfied the theme saturation from a range of 9-30 units. The research maintains an appropriate depth, which is typical for a bachelor's degree research.

Data Collection

The research project will systematically collect information for the digital archiving of public artefacts from 2020 to 2026. The researchers will assess audience reach by accessing 50 cultural and festival coverage clips, which they will retrieve from official site archives and YouTube. The researchers will use the Dawn archives to search for the keywords "lok mela", "cultural identity", and "Eid-related practices" to generate a list of 40 newspaper articles (20 from Dawn and 20 from Jang). The team will obtain 15 reports and programs from PNCA/Lok Virsa through their institutional website, annual publications, and their physical visit to the Lok Virsa Islamabad Library. The researcher will include recent Lok Mela exhibits in our notes, which we collected from all available events. The collected data will be digitized in chronological order by ethnicity and

made freely available in compliance with our ethical and cultural protocols.

Data Analysis

Researchers will use thematic content analysis to investigate how Pakistani cultural elements appear in its public spaces through their research. The NVivo software analyzes data from 105 items, including PTV clippings, newspaper clippings, and PNCA/Lok Virsa reports. The initial exploration of cultural markers proceeds line by line, leading to the identification of Urdu dominance, highly Sufi qawwali, Sindhi ajrak, etc. The study identifies regional assertions and under-representation of ethnic groups as fundamental themes that connect different coding categories with Islamic unity. Researchers will use investigative questions to identify connections between events that happened between 2020 and 2026.

Conclusion

The paper will demonstrate how Pakistan's cultural symbols, which had strong ties to Pakistan, transformed into public spaces that fostered national identity from 2006 until 2026. The conclusion demonstrates that language hierarchy and dress rituals, together with the folk arts organized by PNCA and Lok Virsa institutes, constituted components of Islamic ideology that led to increased ethnic under-representation, now creating social division through hierarchical social distribution rather than equal social dialogue (Ghorzang, 2025). The established framework demonstrates its Habermasian roots through its construction of postcolonial scaffolding, while its syncretic potential enables it to resist centralized authority. The policy will propose three recommendations, including establishing multilingual media quotas, ensuring fair resource distribution for provincial festivals, and developing digital heritage platforms (Charles & Fuentes-Rohwer, 2015). The note will explain two research limitations, which include urban bias and the absence of rural ethnographies, while it will direct upcoming research to focus on both quantitative surveys and South Asia comparative studies. The research will contribute to the

scholarship of communication by studying how the Pakistani public space works to include all people.

Limitations

- The research investigates urban, regional, and federal public spaces in Islamabad and Lahore, as these areas do not exhibit a genuine connection between rural residents and their traditional public spaces.
- The project will evaluate PTV, Dawn, Jang, and the PNCA and Lok Virsa through archival and digital media artefacts, yet their findings will restrict the community members from using informal social customs and undocumented traditional practices.
- The study results apply only to specific Pakistani population sub-groups because researchers selected their 105 artifacts through purposive sampling for their investigation.
- The (2006-2026) time frame does not apply to earlier historical periods, including the immediate post-Partition and Zia regime, because these periods set the background for understanding present-day identity politics and cultural policies.
- The researcher used theme coding to analyze the data according to his interpretation. Theme coding introduces researcher bias because it requires personal interpretation to define themes.
- The researcher maintained that reflexivity and triangulation enabled him to handle the situation. The study lacks essential primary research, which includes interviews with policymakers, artists, and community members.
- This teaching method examines how both institutional bodies and artists collaborate to achieve their desired outcomes. And, how people experience their representations.

Recommendations

- The national media and government educational programs will promote the languages of the Counsellor and the cultural celebrations of Sindhi, Pashtun, Baloch, and all other ethnic groups.
- The ethnic presence at festivals, exhibitions, and archives must be established through specific

provincial quotas that need to be implemented. Inclusivity will be achieved by PNCA and Lok Virsa through their programming.

- Public broadcasters like PTV should give regional cultures the chance to present their traditional music, costumes, food, and ceremonies from all provinces during prime-time television shows.

- Cultural policymakers will create multiple social media and other platforms to share their content. Local festivals will be documented and live-streamed by them. The coverage will focus on rural and marginalized communities that practice various folk arts through their shrines and rituals.

- University culture communities will join forces to create research projects, exhibitions, and media content that explore identity and heritage.

- Media regulators will promote guidelines that discourage ethnic stereotyping and encourage dialogue and respect across dramas, chat shows, news, etc. The future study of cultural identity will use multimodal methods that combine qualitative and quantitative research, including surveys and interviews.

- The implementation of special measures will ensure that minority religions and languages are always protected.

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