

**POLITICAL AGENDA OF IMRAN KHAN GOVERNMENT: A CONTENT  
ANALYSIS OF SPEECHES**

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**Abstract**

This article aims to examine the substance and rhetoric of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf's (PTI) government through content analysis of Imran Khan's speeches delivered between May 2018 and July 2019. The content of the speeches is analysed to observe top leadership's emphasis on international, economic, social, education, corruption, and other issues in order to assess the priorities of the ruling party during the selected period. Findings of this research disclose that Khan was more concerned with domestic policy issues than that of foreign policy. Subsequently economy, corruption, and education found more space in his speeches than Pakistan's foreign affairs. Though Khan remained concerned about relations with India, Afghanistan, and the United States, his preference was to improve fragile economy and eradicate corruption from society. However, in terms of external relations, it is neither China, India, nor Afghanistan that concerned him, but the United States was referred the most in his speeches.

**Key words:** Content Analysis, Economy, Imran Khan, International Affairs, Speeches.

**1. Introduction**

Imran Khan, a former world cup winning cricket captain and celebrity, became the Prime Minister of Pakistan in 2018 (BBC News, 2018; Hashim, 2018). Since Khan was the first sportsman to be voted as the chief executive of the country, it marked a socio-political shift in country's political culture. Previously, none of the prime ministers had a celebrated sports background and most of the ruling elites belonged to feudal or industrialist families. After retiring from cricket in 1992, he pursued his philanthropic agenda by establishing first cancer hospital in the country. Although, he had offers to join politics since Zia-ul-Haq's time, he did not bother to get involved (Abbas, 2018). During this period, while struggling to realise his hospital's dream, he was exposed to harsh socio-political realities of the country. Ultimately, he perceived that the nation was on the path of continuous decline as the ruling elite was corrupt, cruel, and inefficient and commoners were subject to injustice in all spheres of life.

In this background, in 1996 he established his own political party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI, the Movement for Justice) with an objective to create conditions for social justice and accountability in the country (Abbas, 2018; Naeem-ul-Haque, 2018). According to its ideology it stands for "justice, humanity and self-reliance" (Mufti, 2015). Commenting on the establishment of PTI, Imran Khan said,



I never wanted to enter politics till 1995 as I was busy collecting donations for Shaukat Khanum Cancer Hospital for which I wanted to do a fundraising show on PTV. But, I was disappointed when denied permission on political grounds. I was then advised by my friends to form a political party if I wanted to challenge them. Finally, we launched a small party of people with little experience in politics, who wanted to change the system. (Abbas, 2020)

A successful political party needs dynamic and charismatic leadership capable of attracting popular support. Imran Khan as cricketing superstar bringing fame and glory to the country was recognised as a national hero well known to almost everyone in Pakistan. Further, his significant philanthropic contribution for health and education, which is primarily a responsibility of the state and government, increased his popularity among the masses manifold (Gettleman, 2018). He spoke against the dynastic politics prevailing in the country. He idealistically argued to make the country prosperous and make it respectable in the comity of nations.

However, from the start, most people believed that he was just another politician and would not be able to make a significant difference in traditional Pakistani politics. Many believed that though he spoke good for the nation with good intentions, he might not be able to get through Pakistan's traditional electoral system. By his own words, initially he was less serious contender in Pakistani politics, Khan said, "in my initial years in politics, I used to discuss more cricket and less politics" (Abbas, 2020). But once he got going, he talked against the very class which was supposed to be essential for winning elections and making it to the government, but his win was not less than an achievement. Zulfikar Rao (2018) commented that "Imran Khan's ascendancy as the 22<sup>nd</sup> Prime Minister of Pakistan is indeed a spectacular outcome for Khan's 22-year-old political struggle."

He consistently challenged two of the traditional left-and right-wing political parties: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) then led by Benazir Bhutto in 1990s and Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N) lead by Nawaz Sharif. Khan criticised the two parties for taking turns to run the government and putting each other's corruption under the carpet. However, during these odd years, he struggled to turn popular support into electoral gains. PTI new-born party took part in the 1997 elections and were disappointed for not securing even a single seat in national and provincial assemblies.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf was finally off the mark with securing only one seat, Imran Khan himself being the winning candidate, in 2002 elections. Though, it was expected that it would perform better than before, over the issue of restoration of judiciary, PTI was among the parties who boycotted the 2008 elections (Z. Khan, 2016; Mehdi, 2013). The popular leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on 27 December 2007 leaving a leadership vacuum in PPP. Elections were held in 2008 and President General Pervez Musharraf was forced to leave the office.

The democracy finally returned to the country in 2008. The new democratic government of PPP had to face many challenges. Terrorist activities were going out of control as number of incidents kept increasing year after year making Pakistan "most terror-hit nation" (I. Khan, 2014). The US drone strikes in Pakistani territories also increased. Economy was crippling due



to severe energy shortfall, increasing terrorism, and soaring corruption in the country (Haider, 2013). Furthermore, traditional political parties in general and the ruling PPP in particular highly disappointed the people when the traditional ruling elite failed to protect the sovereignty of the country with its relations with the United States.

Raymond Davis case in January 2011 and Abbottabad Operation to kill Osama bin Laden in May 2011 were two major events in which Pakistanis thought that country's prestige and honour was compromised. All this chaos created due to internal and external conditions produced the very environment in which Imran Khan was finally able to attract a large number of people for the first time in his political rally held on 30 October 2011 in Lahore (Dawn, 2011a). It made headlines when Shah Mehmood Qureshi, former Foreign Minister in PPP government joined PTI in November 2011, followed by another prominent leader Javed Hashmi of PML (N) joining the party in the following month (AFP, 2011; Dawn, 2011b).

The increasing popular support and prominent leaders of other political parties joining one after the other raised the hopes of Imran Khan predicting a political tsunami sweeping all the traditional political parties and bringing PTI to government in forthcoming elections of 2013. In a public rally in Lahore, he roared, “[now] nothing can stop us. This is a revolution, a tsunami. We will not just win the next elections – we will sweep them” (Walsh, 2011). To his disappointment, PTI won the third largest parliamentary seat in the elections, and Khan missed opportunity becoming Prime Minister.

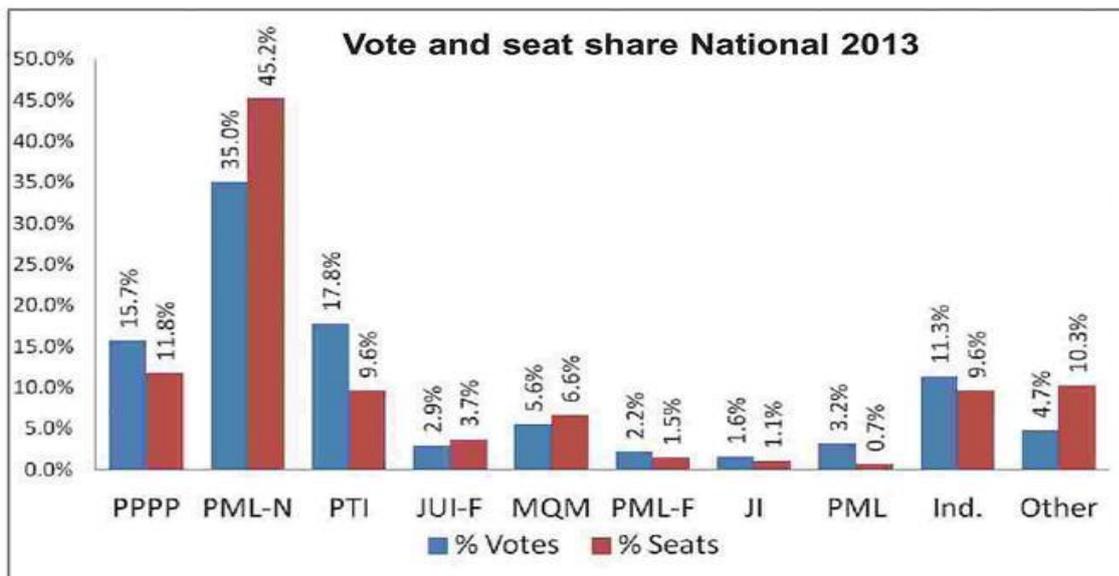


Figure 1: 2013 election results and political parties share (Dawn, 2013).

However, his party emerged as a serious competitor in Pakistani politics (Cookman, 2013). It sent shock waves among the established and traditional political parties and the media alike. Imran Khan continued to engage his voters and public at large over various different national issues. First, demanding a transparent inquiry of alleged rigging on various National and



Provincial Assembly seats and asking for the electoral reforms to make the elections more reliable. He resorted to protest and managed a long march followed by 126 days long sit in the capital Islamabad pushing Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to resign. The sit in was finally called off after a terrorist attack in a school of Peshawar (Asad, 2015).

Former Prime Minister Sharif was relieved for a while and Imran Khan was at peace for few months. However, the peace proved to be short-lived as the Panama Papers (report of The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists) appearing in April 2016 mentioned Sharif and his family involved in corruption through offshore companies. Khan, already waiting for the right time, asked the government to respond to the matter. He demanded to constitute a judicial commission to probe the matter.

Due to a stalemate in the progress of judicial inquiry, he once again resorted to public protests in Lahore on 30 September 2016 and threatened for yet another long march to lockdown the capital on 30 October 2016. Earlier in August 2016 PTI had also filed a petition seeking Prime Minister's disqualification with Supreme Court of Pakistan. The apex court finally disqualified Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from holding a public office on 28 July 2017. This success to Imran Khan was also used as an empirical evidence for his claims that the traditional ruling elite was corrupt in Pakistan (Cheema, 2018).

In the July 2018 elections, PTI secured a plurality of parliamentary seats, allowing Khan to seek a coalition with other smaller parties and independent members of parliament. He took oath as Prime Minister of Pakistan on 18 August 2018. His electoral politics was built around the fight against corruption and the creation of a *Naya* (new) Pakistan in which dynastic politics has no presence. *BBC* wrote on this occasion, "but it's his campaign against corruption and dynastic politics in Pakistan, and a promise to raise a whole new class of 'clean' politicians, that seems to have chimed with his supporters" (BBC News, 2018).

Nevertheless, Khan's victory was cloaked in allegations of electoral fraud, allegedly orchestrated by the Pakistani military to guarantee Imran Khan's success. Madiha Afzal of Brookings Institution maintains,

The military is considered to have favored and bolstered him in recent years. In particular, there were allegations of pre-election manipulation—behind-the-scenes manoeuvring to get politicians from Sharif's party to switch over to Khan's party or to declare themselves independent. (Afzal, 2018)

After coming to power Imran Khan's government had a challenging agenda to implement. He had to put in practice all that he had been criticising for 22 years of his political struggle. PTI's manifesto for 2018 Elections discloses that the party wanted to implement its six-pronged plan. First, transformation of governance was aimed through improving accountability of the ruling elite especially of governments, strengthening of local governments, depoliticising and strengthening law enforcement agencies more specifically police, reforming criminal judicial system and civil services, introducing more e-governance practices for public institutions, legislation on right to information and service, and ensure freedom of press in the country.



Second, strengthening the federation by merger of Federally Administered Tribal Areas with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, removal of alienating factors of smaller provinces, accelerate creation of new South Punjab province, poverty alleviation, protection of rights of women, minorities, and overseas Pakistanis. Third, attaining inclusive economic growth by improving tax collection, creation of 10 million jobs, construction of five million houses, improving ease of business and attracting foreign direct investment, meet Pakistan's energy requirements, increase exports, support the tourism, and improve and use IT industry to develop a knowledge based economy.

Fourth, improving conditions for agriculture, livestock, fisheries, conservation of water, and construction of dams. Fifth, revolutionising social services such as healthcare, education, social security, drinking water, climate change, care for special persons, population growth, arts, sports, and culture. Sixth, strengthening national security through management of both external and internal affairs (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, 2018). Apart from manifesto of a political party, televised speeches of top leadership are also a source of public assessment of party's political priorities and agenda.

A country developing country with very low literacy rates and poor reading habits, the oral speeches of political leaders provide a significant opportunity for people to assess leaders' perspectives, intentions, priorities, and even capabilities.

Therefore, this research aims to analyse the political priorities and agenda of Imran Khan's government. Specifically, the aim is to examine his government's preferences and priorities using content analysis of his speeches he made two months before elections and one year in government. This study attempts to answer the following questions: To what degree has the Imran Khan government focused international versus domestic issues. It essentially means which factor/area has received more attention than other. Moreover, what domestic issues have dominated more in Imran Khan's speeches. Does Imran Khan's rhetoric match the manifesto of PTI?

## **2. Literature Review**

There exists a body of literature to analyse the political speeches of Imran Khan in order to determine how he used his rhetoric/language to achieve his political goals or to propagate his ideology to control people's minds. Those previous studies are limited in scope as they are based on a single speech on some particular occasion of political significance such as speech at the UN or victory speech after 2018 Elections. There is also an exceptional study which analyses speeches delivered between 2008-18. However, this did not attempt to analyse the political priorities and agenda of Imran Khan's government. This present research is aimed to fill this lacuna in the existing literature.

Muhammad Imran Shah and Rafya Alyas, using the Halliday's ideational metafiction, conducted an analysis of Imran Khan's speech which he delivered at Global Peace and Unity Forum. The main objective of the study was how Imran Khan used language to represent his power of thought, to build his ideology, and tried to control people's minds (Shah & Alyas,



2019). Likewise, using the Fairclough's Discourse Analysis model, Muhammad Imran Shah and Aqsa Noreen examined the use of language by Imran Khan to control the minds of Pakistanis using his inaugural speech (Shah & Noreen, 2019).

Yet another study by Uzma Khalil et al. employing Fairclough's model and with the help of other tools like referential strategies, repetition, word choice, positive self-representation and negative other representation, scrutinise Imran Khan's 2013 speech which he delivered from Shaukat Khanum Hospital after falling down from stage. The aim of the study was to see how specific words and phrases carry power to transform the perception and political views of the people. It was found that political discourse is often deliberately crafted to project specific ideologies, which are always located in the discourse in an implicit way. Moreover, politicians employ certain linguistic strategies to persuade people to follow their hidden agendas. (Khalil, Islam, Chattha, & Qazalbash, 2017)

Shazia Akbar Ghilzai et.al also used Fairclough's model of Discourse Analysis to study Khan's first speech in parliament. The objective of this study is to examine the persuasive tactics of Imran Khan's political speeches as well as the covert ideology of his party's manifesto, his political maturity, enriched linguistics possessions and his aim for democracy in Pakistan in his first speech in the parliament (Ghilzai, ud din, & Asghar, 2017). Aisha Rauf et al. pursuit is based on the theoretical perspective of Fairclough and Van Dijk. This study analyses the linguistic elements and contextual facets to find hidden ideologies. The findings suggest Khan use of multiple strategies to get the political power and promote his ideology by urging the urban youth and less-privileged part of society to play a role. (Rauf, Sajjad, & Malghani, 2019)

Indeed, a comprehensive textual analysis of thirty speeches of Imran Khan made between 2008 and 2018 is conducted by Lawrence Kuznar and Weston Aviles. This study by employing quantitative discourse analysis and the Linguistic and Inventory Word Count was aimed to address the question: How can the US increase the resolve and capability of Pakistan to support political reconciliation in Afghanistan and the region? This work helped to analyse themes present in speeches of Imran Khan that reflect his particular worldview, values, interests, and emotions (Kuznar & Aviles, 2018). From the above review it is clear that there is an existing gap to examine Imran Khan's speeches to determine his political agenda.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This research is aimed to investigate the political priorities and agenda of Imran Khan's government through content analysis of his eight speeches delivered between May 2018 and July 2019. The data is drawn from Pakistani English newspapers publishing the content of the televised speeches. The newspapers include *The Dawn*, *The Nation*, *The News*, and *Express Tribune*. A speech means which he made on the television, to the procession, press conference and journalists in one to one meeting. His brief statements are not selected for investigation. During the investigation, a total of eight speeches were found and all of them were used for this study.



Content Analysis (CA) used for this research is helpful to classify the intent, focus, and trends of the statements of state leaders, groups, and organizations/institutions. It is also useful if the researcher is interested in examining the psychological or emotional conditions of a group of people. Holsti defines CA in following words, a “technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages” (Holsti, 1968: 601). Whereas for Krippendorff CA is a research technique “for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004: 18). Berelson is of the view, that CA “is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952: 18). In simple words, CA help researchers to break big documents into small and manageable words for inferences.

The data for CA can be obtained through interviews, focus groups, survey/questionnaire, speeches, statements, newspaper articles, historical documents, field notes, and media content. In a single study, different types of data text may be used. The unit of analysis can be either words, sentences, paragraphs, and even whole document. In this study, the smallest unit of analysis, the word is used to secure greater precision of the speeches to determine the political plan of the Imran Khan's government.

#### 4. Findings of the Study

The aggregate picture emerging from the analysis is based on six broader categories of words used in the speeches. These six broader categories are further divided into sub-categories. The broader categories are as follows: 1. International; 2. Economic; 3. Education; 4. Corruption; 5. Social; 6. Others.

Of the six categories, the International and Economic categories are commonly used in previous studies. In this study, we made efforts to develop the sixth category (Others), although its name appears without real substance, it allowed data to develop as many categories as possible to have an exhaustive analysis. As stated before, eight speeches were used for investigation, for each of eight speeches, the total number of words were counted. Once we had six categories, then each category was tallied for its sub-category using same method of word counting. The details of total number of words used in six categories are given in the table 1.

**Table 1: Total Number of Words by Category in Imran Khan Speeches**

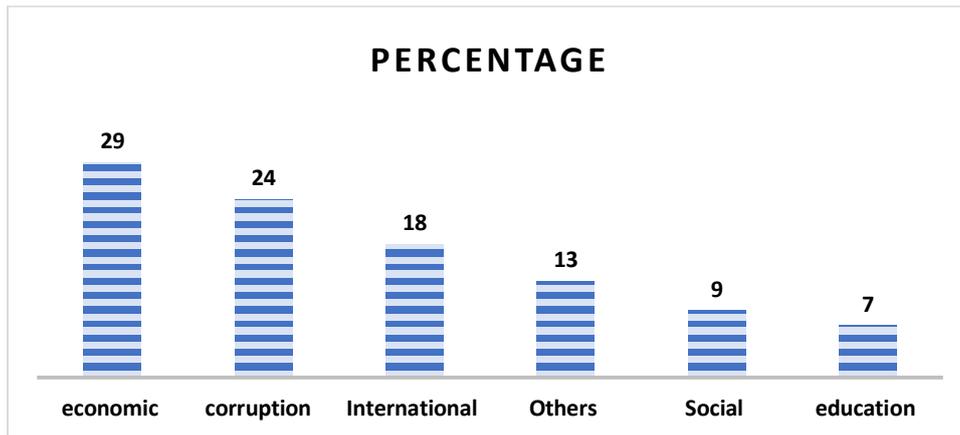
Speeches	Words	International	Economy	Education	Corruption	Social	Others
1	1612	190 (12%)	845 (52%)	140 (9%)	301 (19%)	65 (4%)	71(4%)



2	2931	305 (10%)	1112 (38%)	300 (10%)	637 (22%)	140 (5%)	437 (15%)
3	1721	573 (33%)	287 (17%)	121 (7%)	326 (19%)	174(10%)	240 (14%)
4	4374	1351 (31%)	983 (23%)	211 (5%)	704 (16%)	453 (10%)	672 (15%)
5	2396	307 (13%)	634 (26%)	163 (7%)	1047 (44%)	89 (4%)	156 (6%)
6	1970	187 (9%)	466 (24%)	122 (6%)	512 (26%)	367 (19%)	316 (16%)
7	2233	281 (13%)	576 (26%)	177 (8%)	591 (26%)	356 (16%)	252 (11%)
8	2157	349 (16%)	643 (30%)	214 (10%)	520 (24%)	113 (5%)	318 (15%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>19394</b>	<b>3543 (18%)</b>	<b>5546 (29%)</b>	<b>1448 (7%)</b>	<b>4638 (24%)</b>	<b>1757 (9%)</b>	<b>2462 (13%)</b>

Looking first at the big picture, the economy is at the centre of Imran Khan's agenda. As seen in the figure's eight speeches, Premier used a total of 19,394 words. He allocates 5546 (29%) words to the Economy, followed by 4638 (24%) to eliminate corruption from the Pakistani society, including previous governments' corruptions. The International category (18%) was ranked third, followed by Social (9%), Education (7%) and Others (13%).

From these collective conclusions, one thing is quite clear, Imran Khan is not a foreign policy politician, but a domestic policy mainly because his main stress is on fighting corruption and refining national economy including CPEC. This is not to suggest that premier Khan does not pay attention to Pakistan's foreign relations, but his first priority is national issues such as overcoming economic crisis and eradicating corruption in all its manifestations.



**Figure 1: Percentage of Various Categories**

When we take a closer look at the figure 1, we can see that despite the discrepancy in the number of words used in a speech, the economy is followed by corruption. In his first speech, Imran Khan used almost half of the words (52%) for Economy and then 19% for Corruption. The same pattern is found in rest of the speeches. It is only in third and fourth speech only, the International category took over all other categories. The most disappointed result concerns education. It only got 7% of Imran Khan's attention in his eight speeches. In none of the



speeches, education secured more than 10% attention. Given the deplorable conditions of the Pakistani education system, more action can be expected about it.

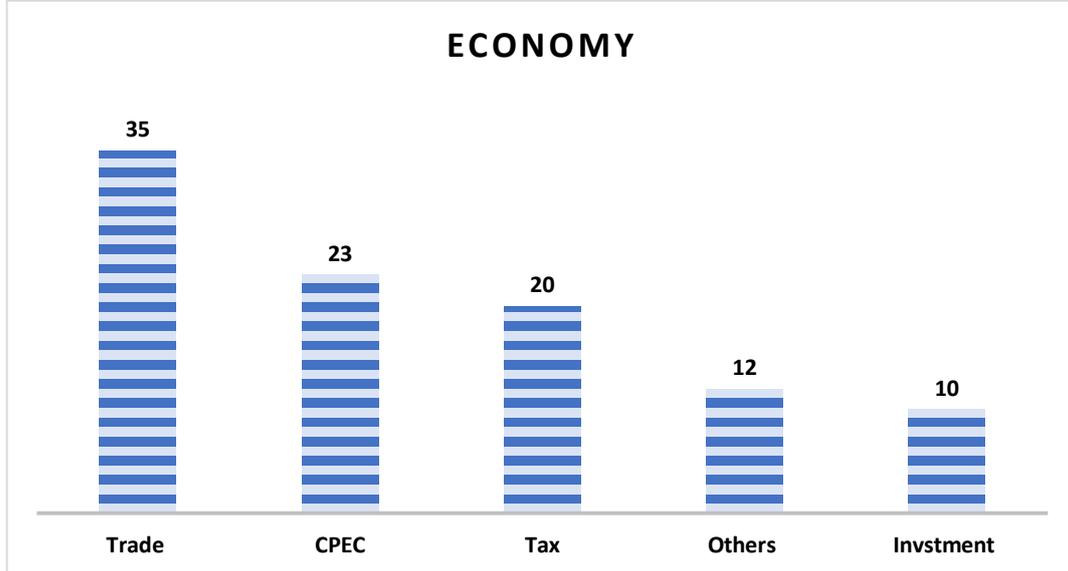
In none of the speeches, the Social, Education, or Others/Miscellaneous category surpasses the two main categories of Economy and Corruption. Yet again it is important as it suggests that Economy and Corruption remain the top priority than any other sector. Prime Minister has more time and words on Economy and Corruption than on Education, and Social Factors. Overall, the Economy and Corruption categories do not diminish in importance and remain intrinsic throughout the eight addresses.

### ***Economy***

PTI's priority to address issues related to economy is also reflected from its manifesto for 2018 Elections:

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), was envisaged as a Movement to fight for a just and equitable society based on the system that Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) laid down in the Medina Charter, which was the foundation of the model Islamic state, an egalitarian society based on the rule of law and economic justice – the first welfare state in the history of mankind. (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, 2018: 6)

Within the economic category following subcategories in order of attention are constructed: Trade; CPEC; Tax; Other/Miscellaneous, and Investment. The breakdown of the subdivisions within the scope of the economy is given in figure 2. This graph shows the differences between the number of words in eight speeches by Imran Khan. As clearly seen in the figure, Trade (35%) is the top priority of Imran Khan's government, followed by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC 23%), Tax reforms ranked third (20%), while Others (12%) and Investment (10%) ranked fourth and fifth, respectively. The data presented here provides a mixed picture due to the large number of categories used. Moreover, all subcategories in the economy category are representative of the same family, for example, trade and investment and taxes are not so different but related.



**Figure 2: Percentages of Various Sub-Categories of Economy**

The closer look at the sub-categories of Economy, as reflected in table 2 given below, increases the understanding of Khan's focus on economy. In almost all speeches, trade dominated. In two speeches, Imran Khan used more than 50% of words on trade, in the case of CPEC, it happened only once, but it does not happen for any other category, except miscellaneous, which is trivial because it is a combination of different words. In speech five, CPEC did not seem at all.

**Table 2: Number of Words Used for Different Subcategories of Economy**

Speech	Words	Tax	Trade	Investment	CPEC	Other
1	845	399 (47%)	139 (16%)	14 (2%)	101 (12%)	192 (23%)
2	1112	109 (10%)	264 (24%)	40 (4%)	603 (54%)	96 (8%)
3	287	30 (10%)	51 (18%)	42 (15%)	117 (41%)	47 (16%)
4	983	55 (6%)	729 (74%)	114 (12%)	34 (3%)	51 (5%)
5	634	292 (46%)	135 (21%)	95 (15%)	0 (0%)	112 (18%)
6	466	146 (31%)	238 (51%)	24 (5%)	41 (9%)	17 (4%)
7	576	73 (13%)	189 (33%)	51 (9%)	237 (41%)	26 (4%)
8	643	17 (2%)	211 (33%)	162 (25%)	156 (24%)	97 (15%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>5546</b>	<b>1121 (20%)</b>	<b>1956 (35%)</b>	<b>542 (10%)</b>	<b>1289 (23%)</b>	<b>638 (12%)</b>



In addition, there is no gradual increase or decrease in the subcategory. For example, the trade in the first three speeches stayed between 16 and 24 percent, then it went to 74, suddenly plunged, then jumped a bit and remained constant. This model is also visible in all other categories. There is therefore no gradual increase or decrease in a systematic way, but rather a mixture from top to bottom.

### **Corruption**

PTI's priority to eradicate corruption is visible in its manifesto for 2018 Elections:

PTI will end this corrupt and decaying system to build a new one on the foundations of Justice and Equity. The legacy of misrule and misery by a corrupt inept elite will be relegated to the dustbin of history ... [we] will ensure full autonomy for, and build the capacity of, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), and other accountability institutions and pursue all major corruption scandals regardless of political affiliation. (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, 2018: 6,12)

There are notable differences in references of corruption in political parties and other institutions (see Fig. 3). Corruption in political parties was mentioned at 65%, 20% in institutions while of police only 6%. From this result, it is clear that for Imran Khan, political parties are more corrupt than the institutions. One of the conclusions is that a discussion on corruption in the parties has remained constant, it does not fall behind 50% in a single speech. This means that whenever he spoke of corruption over a period of one year, he spoke of corruption within political parties.



**Figure 3: Percentage of Various Subcategories of Corruption**

The contented analysis results resemble Khan's agenda for corruption. Khan has consistently aimed his political struggle against corruption in the country. While addressing an election rally on 14 July 2018, he said:

How can you rid the country of the scourge of corruption if you join hands with politicians who have been accused of looting billions... We must rid ourselves from these thieves that have been governing us for the last 30 years and defeat them with our vote. (News Desk, 2018)

He reiterated his determination to fight against corruption on 9 July 2019:



For 22 years, I was saying our biggest problem is corruption. The people should know what happens when a corrupt leader comes. Their assets are all abroad, their Eids are abroad, their treatment is abroad ... even if my life goes, I will not leave these thieves alone...I had prayed to God to give me one chance—I will not leave them. (Dawn.com, 2019)

**Table 3: Total Number of Words for Subcategories of Corruption**

Speech	Words	Political Parties	Institutions	Police	Other
1	301	209 (70%)	18 (6%)	67 (22%)	7 (2%)
2	637	341 (54%)	96 (15%)	70 (11%)	130 (20%)
3	326	218 (67%)	59 (18%)	0 (0%)	49 (15%)
4	704	469 (66%)	190 (27%)	32 (5%)	13 (2%)
5	1047	644 (62%)	181 (17%)	85 (8%)	137 (13%)
6	512	423 (83%)	52 (10%)	27 (5%)	10 (2%)
7	591	314 (53%)	215 (36%)	0 (0%)	62 (11%)
8	520	407 (78%)	95 (18%)	0 (0%)	18 (4%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>4638</b>	<b>3025 (65%)</b>	<b>906 (20%)</b>	<b>281 (6%)</b>	<b>426 (9%)</b>

The closer look at the data, as detailed in table 3 above, it appears that Imran Khan consistently referred to corruption of political parties ranging from 53% to 83%. Corruption of government institutions was mentioned from 6% to 36% and of police from 0% to 22%.

### ***International***

There is no denying the fact that the economy is important for any nation, the importance of external environment cannot be denied. Pakistan's foreign relations have always been critical since its inception. In addition, three countries, United States, India, and China, have been very important. The United States and China are Pakistan's external partner; Pakistan has sought external alliance with these two nations, while India is a central threat to Pakistan's territorial integrity and independence. Therefore, it is not surprising to see these three nations with the order of the United States 32%, India 29% and China 23%, appearing in Imran Khan speeches, as shown in figure 4.



**Figure 4: Percentages of Various Subcategories of International**

When US President Donald Trump announced the suspension of military aid to Pakistan, the relationship reached an unprecedented nadir. The United States has accused Pakistan of failing to take decisive action against the Haqqani network. But since Imran Khan's came into power, he pledged to revitalize Pakistani-American relations. The opportunity came after Trump's announcement to seek reconciliation with the Taliban and, ultimately, the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Imran Khan takes the opportunity, who has already announced that Pakistan will not wage other's wars, to rectify its relations with the United States. As a result, the United States' desire to end the decades-long conflict in Afghanistan has become the starting point for a new era in Pakistani-American relations. Therefore, the Imran Khan government dealt with it frequently, and the United States was the main mention in his speeches. Table 4 shows that with the exception of first two speeches, Imran Khan talked about the United States ranging from 6% to 62%. The consistent references to the United States show that PTI leader considers Pakistan's relations with it vital.

**Table 4: Total Number of Words by Subcategory in International**

Speech	Words	China	India	USA	Afghanistan	Others
1	190	97 (51%)	46 (24%)	00 (0%)	23 (12%)	24 (13%)
2	305	246 (81%)	30 (10%)	00 (0%)	00 (0%)	29 (9%)
3	573	226 (39%)	154 (27%)	89 (16%)	00 (0%)	104 (18%)
4	1351	29 (2%)	323 (24%)	837 (62%)	113 (8%)	49 (4%)
5	307	00 (0%)	257 (84%)	19 (6%)	16 (5%)	15 (5%)
6	187	21 (11%)	47 (25%)	55 (29%)	31 (17%)	33 (18%)



<b>7</b>	281	116 (41%)	62 (22%)	38 (14%)	43 (15%)	22 (8%)
<b>8</b>	349	87 (25%)	96 (28%)	101 (29%)	56 (16%)	9 (2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>3543</b>	<b>822 (23%)</b>	<b>1015 (29%)</b>	<b>1139 (32%)</b>	<b>282 (8%)</b>	<b>285 (8%)</b>

It is quite surprising that India appeared in second place in the speeches of Prime Minister Imran Khan. Historically, Pakistan has had difficulties in relations with India. The two nations fought in the air, the sea, and the land. The two nations have developed lethal weapons of mass destruction to shave each other off the face of the earth. Stephen Cohen says Pakistani-Indian rivalry is one of the longest in modern times (Cohen, 2013: xi). However, over the course of a year, Imran Khan reached India for normalization of relations. Despite Khan's openings, India under Narendra Modi adopted a bellicose attitude towards Pakistan. The relationship took an ugly turn when militants carried out a deadly attack on Indian forces in occupied Kashmir in February 2019.

Pakistan and India have been at loggerheads since then over Kashmir issue. India blaming Pakistan for supporting the militancy, responded with an operation in Balakot and claimed to have killed many militants. Pakistan retorted by shooting down Indian planes and capturing an Indian Pilot, who was released soon as a goodwill gesture. In light of these developments and Narendra Modi's policy of isolating Pakistan, and Hindutva politics at national level, the future of relations between Pakistan and India seems bleak. Imran Khan in the backdrop of these developments mentioned India in all of his speeches ranging from 10% to 84%, as shown in table 4.

In addition, China occupies third place in Imran Khan's speeches. Given the centrality of Sino-Pakistani relations, China should have been at the top of Imran Khan's political agenda, but the relationship is so close and fluid that it may not be necessary to discuss it so frequently. The relationship with India and the United States was more critical than China. However, in the case of China, CPEC is now a project that defines Pakistan-China relations not only for the moment but for the next decade. Under CPEC, China is expected to invest more than \$60 billion in the Pakistani economy. It is a flagship project. It has many advantages both for Pakistan and China and for the entire region. Imran Khan referred to China in his speeches 0% to 81% as per table 4.

What is surprising is the emergence of Afghanistan in fourth place. Pakistan's second biggest security challenge after India emerges from Afghanistan. Afghanistan has emerged as a political irritant for Pakistan. Marvin Weinbaum persuasively argues until 1979 "Afghan had largely appeared political irritant for Pakistan, a petulant and resentful neighbour" (Weinbaum, 1991, 1994). Pakistan has many goals in Afghanistan, but currently Pakistan wants to focus on the peace process in Afghanistan. During this process, Pakistan was neutral, making only efforts to organize a meeting between the United States and the Taliban, it is perhaps for this reason that Imran Khan spoke less about Afghanistan ranging from 0% to 17% as detailed in table 4. It is also pertinent to note that the Middle East/Muslim world, the European Union and Central Asia have largely been ignored by Imran Khan in his speeches.

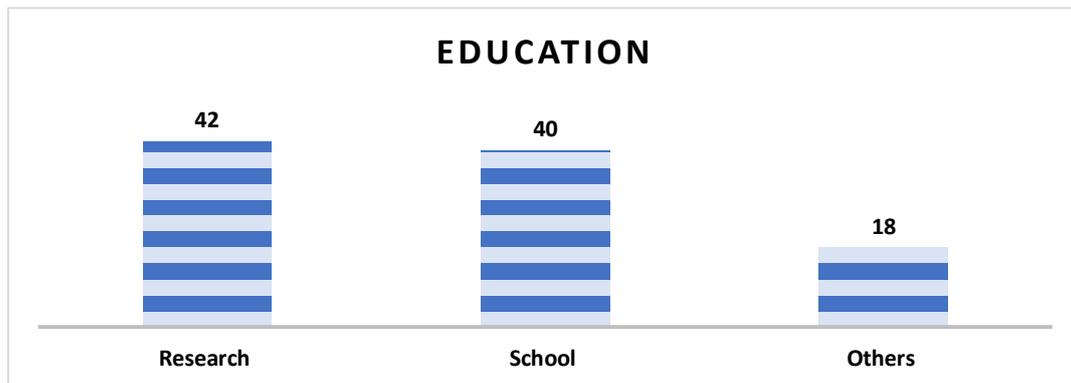


### ***Education***

Through its manifesto of 2018 Elections, PTI promised a state:

where all are equal before the law and where all have equal access to health, education and opportunity in every field ... PTI will put in place the most ambitious education agenda in Pakistan's history, spanning reform of primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational, and special education. (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, 2018: 7, 44)

Imran Khan in his speeches, referred to research related issues 42 % more than that of schools 40 % as shown in figure 5. The minor difference shows that he gives almost equal weightage to school education and higher education.



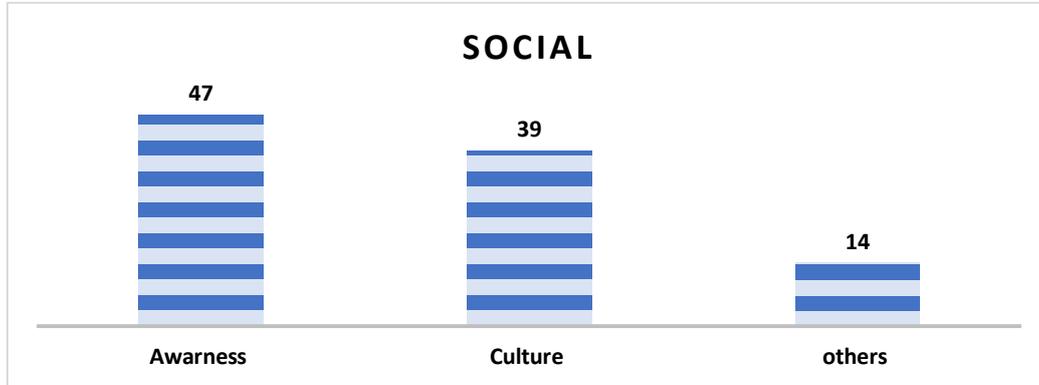
**Figure 5: Percentages of Subcategories of Education**

### ***Social***

While PTI disclosed its political agenda for 2018 Elections, it assured to

provide state patronage to sports, arts and culture by providing the necessary resources alongside local and international exposure to athletes, artists and artisans.(Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, p. 52).

However, during his speeches Imran Khan dedicated few words to spread awareness in the people about the social issues 34% and referred to cultural affairs 41%, as shown in figure 6.



**Figure 6: Percentages of Subcategories of Social**

## 5. Conclusion

The Content Analysis of Imran Khan's speeches have produced several interesting findings. First, improving the national economy holds central place in his speeches, followed by the eradication of corruption in political parties and other national institutions. Second, the international, educational and social categories were secondary in nature. Third, internal affairs dominated Imran Khan's rhetoric more than international affairs. So, it means Imran Khan is a domestic policy prime minister not a foreign policy.

Within the economy subcategory, we found that trade, CPEC, and investment were Imran Khan's top concerns. Within the corruption subcategory, the results indicated that his greatest concern was to eradicate corruption within political parties, followed by institutions and the police department. Within the international subcategory, it was noted that the United States dominated his speeches followed by India and China. Afghanistan surprisingly appeared in fourth place. Similarly, social education has a modest exchange, but it consistently appeared in almost every speech.

Taken together, these findings reveal a current dynamic of politics in Pakistan. Imran Khan's from the very beginning aimed to eradicate corruption from the country, reviving the economy and improving Pakistan's social sector. Imran Khan has repeatedly stated that political parties, such as PML (N) and PPP have looted and plundered the national economy. Furthermore, more recently, foreign affairs suggest that Imran Khan has clearly indicated that his government will not fight anyone's war but will instead help to seek reconciliation in Afghanistan. And it has been revealed in the results of the investigation that Imran Khan fulfilled his promise and negotiated reconciliation between the United States and the Taliban. The two parties finally signed a historic peace agreement in February 2020. Furthermore, the Indian factor is also important. Pakistan's relations with India during the Imran Khan's government have been extremely low partly due to the historical legacy and in part due to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policy of isolating Pakistan. Similarly, CPEC, China is the highest trend in Pakistan.



The findings of this study suggest a link between PTI's manifesto and speeches of Imran Khan. The empirical evidence gives a glimpse of his political priorities and agenda. From this evidence, it can be deduced that the duo-economy and corruption-will probably remain the central agenda for rest of his tenure in office. There is still more left for academics and specialists alike to draw a comparison/contrast of Imran Khan with other leaders like Nawaz Sharif, Asif Zardari and or the late Benazir Bhutto. There may also be investigations to examine the evolution of the Imran Khan government's political agenda over a period of five years.



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