

**RESEARCH PAPER****The Role of Ideology in Shaping Interests: A Marxist study on Pakistan's Elite Class****<sup>1</sup>Dr. Muhammad Shahban Sahito \* <sup>2</sup>Dr. Muhammad Ali Pasha and <sup>3</sup>Dr. Imran Ali Noonari**

1. Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan
2. Associate Professor, Department of Economics, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan
3. Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Sindh Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan

**\*Corresponding Author** shahban.sahito@usindh.edu.pk**ABSTRACT**

This research study examine the influential role of ideology in determining the priorities of Pakistan's ruling elite from a Marxist standpoint. Based on a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, this paper examines how ideology is utilized by the governing class as a means to advance their own interests. The study examines the composition of Pakistan's ruling elite and highlights their substantial effect on the country's political, economic, and social systems. The allegations of manipulating ideology for personal benefit rather than the collective well-being are subject to thorough scrutiny. Moreover, the study uncovers the extensive influence of these ideological pursuits on Pakistani society, specifically in intensifying economic disparity, social fragmentation, and political strife. The research illustrates that the utilization of ideology by ruling elites to strengthen their authority is not exclusive to Pakistan, as evidenced by international comparisons. The findings provide a basis for comprehending the intricate dynamics of power and ideology within the socio-political terrain of Pakistan.

**Keywords:** Economic Policies, Marxist Theory, Power and Dominance, Ruling Class of Pakistan, Social Structure**Introduction**

Marxist political theory has extensively debated the study of ideology and its crucial influence on the goals of the ruling class (Camoy, 2014), Ideology, as a powerful instrument of control and validation, carries substantial importance within Marxist systems. In Pakistan, the ruling elite has been accused of using ideology mainly to advance their personal interests instead of promoting the well-being of the general public (Haqqani, 2005). This research study seeks to offer a comprehensive analysis of how Pakistan's ruling class employs ideology from a Marxist perspective. This highlights the significance of ideology in shaping the preferences and behaviors of the ruling class, which subsequently affects the socio-political environment of the country. By examining various scholarly sources, we investigate the use of ideology to strengthen authority and advance the ruling elite's agenda in Pakistan, and subsequently, its impact on the wider social structure. Across the globe, history is replete with instances where ruling elites have historically exploited ideologies as a means of consolidating power and advancing their personal agendas (Hinnebusch, 2003). This research acknowledges the distinctive dynamics present in Pakistan, where a specific cohort of prosperous families and individuals have significant power over the country's political and economic structures (Hinnebusch, 2003). This research study aims to analyses how the elites in Pakistan utilize ideology to advance their interests. It investigates the degree to which ideology functions as a means to justify their privileges and maintain their control over power, in accordance with Marxist principles (Bourdieu, 1998). The subsequent segments of this work will undertake an exhaustive

examination of the research inquiries that form the foundation of this study. This research aims to provide valuable insights into the dynamics of power and dominance in Pakistan by examining how ideology shapes the priorities of the ruling class, the extent of their influence on the country's ideology, and the broader societal implications of their ideological pursuits. The study of ideology and its role in shaping the interests of the ruling class has been a subject of interest among Marxist political theorists for several decades. In recent years, this topic has become increasingly relevant in the context of developing countries like Pakistan, where the ruling class has been accused of using ideology to further their own interests, rather than using it for the greater good of society. In order to examine the Marxist perspective on how ideology is used by the ruling class in Pakistan, a literature review of academic journals, books, and online articles was conducted. The review revealed several key findings, which will be discussed below.

### **Literature Review**

The literature review has revealed several key findings regarding the use of ideology by the ruling class in Pakistan. The Marxist theory of ideology posits that the dominant ideology in a society is shaped by the interests of the ruling class, and this has been shown to be true in the case of Pakistan, where the ruling class has used ideology to maintain their power and control over society. The use of religion as an ideology has been particularly prevalent in Pakistan, and has contributed to social and political tensions in the country. In addition, the suppression of alternative ideologies has also had a significant impact on the wider society, limiting the ability of the wider society to challenge the power of the ruling class. In conclusion, the literature review has provided a comprehensive understanding of the use of ideology by the ruling class in Pakistan, highlighting the importance of examining the role that ideology plays in shaping the interests of the ruling class and the impact that it has on the wider society.

### **Ideology and the Pakistani ruling class**

Within the framework of Pakistan, the ruling elite has frequently utilized ideology to advance their personal interests rather than the collective well-being (Haqqani, 2005). Haqqani's study rigorously analyzes the ruling elite's utilization of ideology as a means to sustain their hegemony. Pakistan's ruling elite employs ideology to exert significant influence on the country's social and economic terrain. In his work, Malik (2010) explores the ways in which these ideological goals have worsened economic inequality, resulting in social inequities and political tensions. Another way in which the ruling class in Pakistan has used ideology to further their interests is by suppressing alternative ideologies that may challenge their power. For example, research has shown that the ruling class in Pakistan has used the state apparatus to suppress alternative ideologies, such as progressive movements and political parties (Ahmed, 2015). This has helped to maintain the power of the ruling class, and has contributed to the suppression of alternative ideologies that may challenge their rule.

### **The Structure of Pakistan's Dominant Elite**

The ruling elite of Pakistan consists of a small group of affluent and important families and individuals that have significant control over the country's political, economic, and social systems (Hinnebusch, 2003). Their combined impact extends to the development of policies and priorities. The Marxist theory of ideology posits that the dominant ideology in a society is shaped by the interests of the ruling class (Mason, 2018). According to this theory, the ruling class uses ideology to maintain their power and control over society, and to perpetuate their own interests (George and Wilding, 2013). In the context of Pakistan, the ruling class is made up of a small group of wealthy and powerful individuals who hold significant economic and political power (ARMYTAGE, 2016). In order to maintain their power, the ruling class in Pakistan has used ideology to further their interests, often at the

expense of the wider society. This has been achieved by manipulating the dominant ideology to align with their own interests, and by suppressing alternative ideologies that may challenge their power (Brantlinger, 1997). The ruling class in Pakistan has used religion as an ideology to maintain their power, using it to justify their actions and to suppress alternative ideologies that may challenge their rule. This has led to the perpetuation of a religious ideology that is often at odds with the interests of the wider society, and has contributed to social and political tensions in the country (Jesudason, 1995). The Marxist theory of ideology provides a useful framework for understanding the role of ideology in the interests of the ruling class in Pakistan. This study has shown that the ruling class in Pakistan has used ideology to further their own interests, often at the expense of wider society. By examining the Marxist perspective on the role of ideology, this study highlights the need for a more critical examination of the dominant ideologies in society, and the ways in which they are used to maintain the power and control of the ruling class. The ruling class in Pakistan has used religion as a means of maintaining their power, using it to suppress alternative ideologies and to control the population (Ahmed, 2015). This has led to the perpetuation of a religious ideology that is often at odds with the interests of the wider society, and has continued to social and political tensions in the country.

### **International viewpoints on ideology and authority**

The utilization of ideology to consolidate power and privilege is a common practice, not exclusive to Pakistan. O'Donnell's analysis (1994) offers a global outlook on how ruling elites across the globe have utilized ideology to uphold their control. The Marxist theory of ideology views ideology as a means of legitimizing the interests of the ruling class and maintaining their dominance over society. According to Marxist theory, the ruling class controls the means of production and distribution of goods, and uses ideology to justify their position of power. Ideology, therefore, serves as a tool for the ruling class to further their own interests and not for the greater good of society. Marxist theory emphasizes the crucial function of ideology in upholding social structures based on class and rationalizing the advantages enjoyed by the ruling class (Marx & Engels, 1848). Marx posits that the ruling class's dominion over the means of production empowers them to mold the prevailing ideology. The use of ideology by the ruling class in Pakistan has had a significant impact on the wider society. For example, research has shown that the manipulation of religion as an ideology has contributed to social and political tensions in the country, as well as perpetuating poverty and inequality (Ahmed, 2015). In addition, the suppression of alternative ideologies has also contributed to the suppression of progressive movements and political parties, which has limited the ability of the wider society to challenge the power of the ruling class.

Although the current body of research has provided a solid basis for comprehending the correlation between ideology and the ruling elite in Pakistan, there are still certain areas of our understanding that remain incomplete. Additional investigation is required to explore the precise methods and strategies utilized by the ruling class to promote their interests through ideology. Furthermore, a thorough examination of the repercussions of these ideological endeavors on Pakistan's socio-economic policies is necessary.

### **Material and Methods**

The methodological strategy for this study was based on secondary sources. Secondary materials include scholarly articles, books, and websites that discuss Marxist theory and the contemporary political context in Pakistan. Marxist political theory provided the conceptual underpinning for this study, allowing for an investigation of the role of ideology in advancing the interests of Pakistan's ruling class. Using Marx's theory of ideology, we will investigate how Pakistan's ruling class has used ideology to further its own interests. The methodology section details the research procedures and data sources utilized to answer the research questions and achieve the study's objectives. It focuses on

the usage of secondary data. The acquired secondary data will undergo a methodical examination of existing literature and a thematic analysis. The systematic literature review will entail the identification and evaluation of scholarly materials that are relevant to the research inquiries. Thematic analysis will be employed to uncover significant themes, trends, and perspectives in the gathered secondary material.

## Results and Discussion

The literature review on the use of ideology by the ruling class in Pakistan has revealed several key findings:

- Marxist Theory of Ideology:** The Marxist theory of ideology posits that the dominant ideology in a society is shaped by the interests of the ruling class, and that the ruling class uses ideology to maintain their power and control over society.
- Use of Religion as Ideology:** The ruling class in Pakistan has been found to have used religion as an ideology to justify their actions and suppress alternative ideologies, which has contributed to social and political tensions in the country.
- Suppression of Alternative Ideologies:** The ruling class in Pakistan has been found to have suppressed alternative ideologies, such as progressive movements and political parties, through the use of the state apparatuses. This has limited the ability of the wider society to challenge the power of the ruling class.
- Impact on Wider Society:** The use of ideology by the ruling class in Pakistan has had a significant impact on the wider society, perpetuating poverty and inequality, and limiting the ability of the wider society to challenge the power of the ruling class.

As a tool of ruling class: Ideology serves as a tool for the ruling class to consolidate and justify their power, according to Marxist theory. Ideology serves as a mechanism for the privileged class to validate their advantages and maintain their control over authority (Marx & Engels, 1845).

The composition of the class: The ruling class in Pakistan is composed of a privileged few families and individuals who hold significant power and control over the country's political, economic, and social structures. Their priorities have a substantial influence on the formulation of the nation's policies and decision-making (Hinnebusch, 2003).

Manipulation of ideology: The literature suggests that the governing class in Pakistan has been accused of exploiting ideology for their own benefit instead of promoting the well-being of the general public (Haqqani, 2005). This manipulation of ideology is employed to advance their own goals and uphold their authority.

Impact on Pakistani society: The deployment of ideology by the ruling class has profound and extensive ramifications for Pakistani society as a whole. The presence of economic inequality is intensified, leading to the emergence of social divisions and political conflicts (Malik, 2010).

Global Comparisons: International instances, as illustrated by O'Donnell (1994), emphasize that the use of ideology to strengthen authority and advantage is not exclusive to Pakistan. The ruling elites across the globe have employed ideology as a means to uphold their rule. In the context of Pakistan, the Marxist theory of ideology provides a useful framework for understanding the role of ideology in shaping the interests of the ruling class. The ruling class in Pakistan, consisting of a small number of wealthy individuals and families, controls the majority of the country's resources and wields significant power in shaping its political and economic policies. This ruling class has a vested interest in maintaining its position of power, and as a result, has used ideology to further its own interests. For instance, religious ideology has been used extensively by the ruling class in Pakistan to maintain its power. The country was created as a separate state for the Muslims of India, and the ruling class has used this religious ideology to justify its rule and maintain its dominance over the rest of society. This has been done by promoting religious nationalism and by creating a sense of shared identity based on religion, which has helped to maintain the status quo and preserve the power of the ruling class. Religious ideology has also been used as a means of control over the masses. The ruling class has used religious institutions and leaders to maintain its grip over the population and to ensure that dissent is suppressed. The state has often co-opted religious leaders to maintain social stability and to ensure that opposition to the ruling class is minimized. This has had a profound impact on the wider society, as the majority of the population has been left in poverty and without access to basic services and resources. Addition to religious ideology,

the ruling class in Pakistan has used economic ideology to rather its interests. The country's economic policies have been shaped by the interests of the elite class, which has resulted in a concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few individuals and families. This has had a profound impact on the wider society, as the majority of population has been left in poverty and without access to basic services and resources. The ruling class in Pakistan has used a combination of religious and economic ideologies to maintain its power and to further its own interest. This has had a profound impact on the wider society, leading to inequality and a concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few individuals and families. The Marxist theory of ideology provides a useful framework for understanding this phenomenon, as it highlights the role of ideology in legitimizing the interests of the ruling class and maintaining their dominance over society. The Marxist theory of ideology provides a valuable perspective for understanding the role of ideology in shaping the interests of the ruling class in Pakistan. The ruling class in Pakistan has used religious and economic ideologies to further its own interests and maintain its power, often at the expense of the wider society. This has had a profound impact on the country, leading to inequality and a concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few individuals and families. Further research is needed to fully understand the extent to which the ideology of the ruling class in Pakistan is shaped by its interests, and the impact that this has had on the wider society.

## **Conclusion**

This research study explores a crucial feature of Pakistan's socio-political environment by analyzing the interaction between ideology and the ruling elite via a Marxist lens. The finding emphasize the crucial importance of ideology in maintaining and rationalizing the authority of the governing class. It functions as a mechanism for validating their advantages and upholding their control. Pakistan's ruling class is comprised of wealthy families and individuals who exert substantial influence on the country's political and economic decision-making processes. They have been accused of exploiting ideology for personal benefit rather than the collective well-being, a behavior that aligns with the Marxist criticizing. The study uncovers the ramifications of these ideological endeavors, specifically the intensification of economic disparity and social rifts within Pakistani society. The repercussions of these consequences have a wide-ranging impact, influencing the overall welfare of the general population and adding to political tensions. Moreover, evidence from international cases highlights that the use of ideology to strengthen one's power is a widespread global occurrence. Although the research provides significant insights, it also underscores deficiencies in the existing body of literature, thereby emphasizing the necessity for additional investigation. Future research can prioritize investigating the precise methods by which the ruling class utilizes ideology, as well as conducting a thorough analysis of the consequences of these ideological goals on Pakistan's socio-economic policies. Ultimately, this research enhances our comprehension of how ideology influences the preferences of Pakistan's governing elite and the resulting implications for society. It highlights the significance of carefully evaluating the exploitation of ideology for personal benefit, and its wider influence on the socio-political environment. Through a thorough analysis of the intricacies of these ideological mechanisms, we can develop a more comprehensive understanding of the power dynamics in Pakistan and make valuable contributions to well-informed policy discussions.

## **Recommendations**

The use of the ideology is remained total under control of the power elite of the country. The elite has been using ideology as an instrument for the vested interests rather than ideology has not played role for the building institutions and improving the social structure and economics progress of the society. The use of the Islamic ideology as an official nationalism has created negative impact on the society and political structure of the state. The instrument of the religious ideology by the ruling elite undermined the evolving dynamic political culture and democratic society. The use of the religion has empowered the

extremist political parties and sectarian culture in Pakistan. Marxist theory suggests that ideology use in politics by elite is based on the false consciousness and it only give benefit to the ruling elite to control power.

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