INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL DISCONNECTION, DEHUMANIZATION AND MEANING IN LIFE ON SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT
The study examines the relationships between social alienation, dehumanization, meaning in life and support for political violence among drug addicts, prisoners and students. A total of 354 individuals from various departments, prisons and different drug rehab centers participated in the study, with a number of male and female respondents. Using a purposive sampling technique, participants completed validated scales: the social alienation scale, dehumanization scale, Meaning in life scale and support for political violence scale. The results show positive association between social alienation and support for political violence (r = .335, p<.001), dehumanization and support for political violence (r = .304, p<.001), support for political violence and meaning in life (r = .409, p<.001) indicating that individuals with higher consistent dehumanized behavior, meaning in life and those who are socially alienated people tend to experience a greater support for political violence. The study highlights that people who feel isolated or feeling cut out from others, who perceive other people less than humans, and people who have strong meaning in life to justify any act of violence. For the future studies it may also ruminate examining defensive factors, such as social care, community involvement, or religious surviving, that may decrease the effect of alienation and dehumanization on violent behavior.
Keywords: Social Alienation, Dehumanization, Political Violence, Drug Addicts, Prisoners.

Introduction
The term alienation derives from the Latin word alienation, which is occupied from the verb alienare, meaning to take away, remove, or create separation. According to Sarfraz (1997) and Banat (2005), this word was first commonly used in religious or spiritual literatures. Alienation means a person starts to lose construction or agreement with their social, cultural, or natural surroundings, which can lead to feelings of loneliness and hopelessness (Kongar, 1979). Alienation is typically a process where a person reserves themselves or sacrifices their own needs for the sake of a larger or noble goal that welfares the cluster. (Schacht, 1980). If theorists

concentrated on studying the language used by today's researchers and philosophers, the word alienation would probably view out as one of the most frequently used terms (Rajab, 1986).

Sas (1992) proposed that social alienation can often lead to feelings of self-shame and seeing oneself in a negative way, which is known as self-stigmatization. Social alienation is a condition that can make a person feel powerless in society, lost in meaning, detached from social norms, and quarantined from others (Albdwawi & Nashwan, 2024). People who have a solid sense of meaning in life are less likely to feel socially alienated, which helps them stay more involved with others (Mer & Jak, 2013). However, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are strictly related to loneliness, social isolation, and depression (Hevlin et al., 2015). In research it was stated that many patients dealing with the disease often experience disputes like anxiety, depression, and physical problems, which can lead them to extract from social interactions and struggle to build healthy relationships with others (Song & Yao, 2024; Dewar et al., 2021).

One study suggested that social alienation is one of the main reasons that can lead to radicalization and support for political violence. (Lobato et al., 2023). In a study it was concluded that a person is seen as politically withdrawn when they feel like they have little or no chance to make a variance or effect what happens in their community (Ahmad, 2022)

Dehumanization means considering someone as if they are not fully human or ignoring their ability to think and feel like other people. It can involve seeing them as less than human or comparing them to animals rather than identifying their humanity. One type of dehumanization, as explained by Kelman (1976) and far along argued by Chalk and Jonassohn (1990), is called animalistic. In this form, people are seen as missing human traits like intelligence, self-control, rational thinking, and refinement—traits that fixed humans apart from animals. It is often stated in the framework of topics such as race, ethnicity, immigration, and genocide.

In a study it was explained that dehumanization can perform in different forms, fluctuating from clear and dangerous to more hidden and slight means (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). According to dual model of dehumanization, there are two types of dehumanization consistent to two different forms of humanness being rejected (Haslam, 2006). In a study it was point out that a wider understanding of dehumanization has established in latest years. This novel viewpoint shows that dehumanization can happen not only between groups but also in everyday interactions between people, even when there's no open conflict (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014).

In research it was explained that even mild forms of dehumanization can highlight through understated behaviors like disrespect, arrogance, being ignored, left out socially, or other small relational slights. These are frequently obvious only through facial expressions, body language, or tone of voice (Bastian & Haslam, 2011). It has been highlighted in a study that dehumanization is often a key topic in feminist discussions, especially when it comes to how women are described in pornography (LeMoncheck, 1985; MacKinnon, 1987). In order to dodge dehumanizing people with disabilities, we should know their ability to think, view them as exclusive entities, notice their struggles to connect with others, and include them as valued members of the community (Bogdan & Taylor, 1989). In one study it was debated that

standardized testing and inflexible teaching methods can have dehumanizing effects, as they often overlook students' individuality, creativity, and exclusive ways of learning (Courts & McInerney, 1993). In one other study it was surveyed that how dehumanization plays a part in letting bulk violence to happen, particularly when moral boundaries that typically inhibit such acts become weaker under certain situations (Kelman, 1976).

Meaning in life means that a person's happiness is closely associated to how much meaning they feel their life has (Steger et al., 2007). The hunt for meaning and the feeling that life is already has meaning are two important portions of what gives life existential worth (Steger & Shin, 2010). In a study it was found that having a sense of meaning in life is allied to lower levels of existential distress and advanced overall life satisfaction (Heintzelman & King, 2014).

In a study it was found out that people who see their lives as meaningful are more likely to take care of their health, which is connected to better physical well-being and a longer life (Hill & Turiano, 2014). Steger (2009) further supports this idea by presenting that individuals who have a clear sense of meaning in life incline to feel more contented and experience less indications of depression and anxiety. In a theory it was suggested of meaning therapy that the main motivation in a person's life is the constant search for meaning and purpose (Frankl, 1963). In one study it was concluded that meaning in life as the sense that one's existence is important, has purpose, and makes sense overall (Heintzelman & King, 2014).

In research it was explained that having meaning in life helps in protecting a person from stress, supports emotional balance, and strengthens their capability to compact with difficult situations (Steger, 2009). In a study it was emphasized that people have the capability to find meaning even during hurting or problematic times, and that having a sense of purpose is important to staying mentally strong (Frankl, 1985). Having meaning in life is a key factor that helps people experience real happiness and fulfillment (Hu, Liu, & Wang, 2022). In a study it was suggested that, in association to a happy life, a meaningful life is habitually understood as more valued, less common, and more morally worthy (Ward & King, 2016a). In one other study it point out that because there is something intensely personal and secretive about the indication of meaning in life, efforts to define or measure it often leave people feeling displeased or even suspicious (Heintzelman & King, 2013a).

Political violence meaning the use of physical power against people or clusters to accomplish definite political goals is now becoming a serious area of interest for public health. People who show greater levels of aggression frequently feel frustrated with their lives, which aligns with other theories signifying that socioeconomic adversity can increase support for violence (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). It was found in a study that affective detachment like strong emotional displeasure between political groups is not directly related to, nor does it lead to, bigger support for political violence (Broockman et al., 2023; Lelkes & Westwood, 2017).

Individuals with democratic views or those who back democratic parties are more persuaded to ruminate the use of political violence as justified (Armaly & Enders, 2022; Krekó, 2021). In a study it was found that individuals who shows extreme anger and hostility toward politics are not only more likely to involve in political activities but also less likely to support democratic values, creating a risky mix that may increase support for political violence (Webster, 2020). In one other study it was

explained that aggression, which frequently leads to violence, is a core characteristic of the authoritarian personality (Altemeyer, 1981). Adding to this personality type is manifest by a strong inclination to conform to authority, even if it means giving up social freedom (Adorno et al., 1950).

It was found that even before major events like the pandemic, Donald Trump's accusations, or the Capitol disturbances, most Americans were already aware that extreme political speech could increase the risk of political violence (Drake and Kiley (2019). Miller and Conover (2015), in one study it was observed that strong supporters, who tend to be more involved with and exposed to political content especially violent bombast are also the ones who frequently hold the toughest and most impolite views toward conflicting political parties.

Conceptual Model
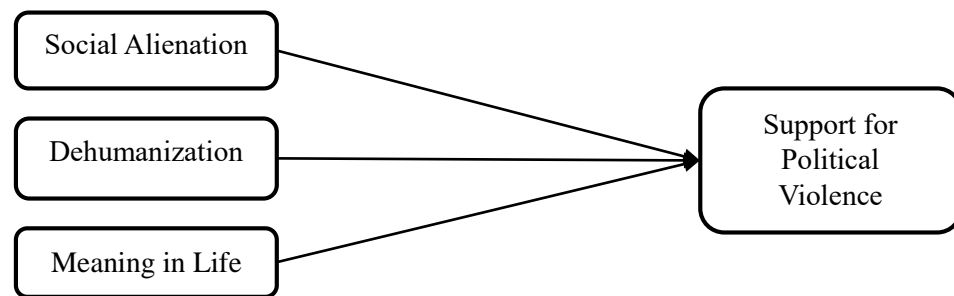
Hypothesis

H1: Social alienation, dehumanization and meaning in life leads to support for political violence.

Method

Participants

The population of this study where we composed data from different location and different people i-e form prisoners, drug addicts and college students. Total 354 individual were elaborate in participation; data was collected from four different place. The data collected from people out of which prisoners were 33.1% (n=117), drug addicts were 13.8% (n=49), students were 24.9% (n=88) and online participants were 28.2% (n=100). Out of all the participants 79.7% (n=282) were males and 20.3% (n=72) were females. Based on education 23.4% (n=83) were bachelors students, 70.6% (n=250) have done FSc, 5.1% (n=18) have done Matric, 0.8% (n=3) were masters students. Of the participants 34.7% (n=123) were married and 65.3% (n=231) were unmarried. From the participants 105 people were prisoners and only 2.5% (n=9) members mentioned that they some type of mental illness. The treatment of participants, their secrecy, the attainment of their free and informed consensus, and the conservation of complete confidentiality were all directed following ethical principles. The purposive sampling method was used in the study and collected data.

1. Social Alienation

Social alienation was measured with 6 items scale established by (Bélanger et al., 2019. Every item was given to be done on a 7 points Likert style scale ranging from (1=Not agree at all, 7=Very strongly agree). The value of Cronbach alpha was satisfied.

2. Dehumanization

The Dehumanization was measure through the scale developed by Viki et al. (2006). It was a 7 items measured and intended to assess attitudes toward the dehumanization of others and the reasoning of violence. Each item must be completed from (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree), with advanced scores showing a stronger leaning to dehumanize and justify violent actions toward others.

3. Meaning In Life

The Meaning in life was measured with the 10 items meaning in life scale suggested by (Steger et al., 2006). Every item was needed to be completed on a 7 points Likert design scale ranging from (1 = Not agree at all, 7 = Very strongly agree). The Cronbach alpha value was satisfied.

4. Support For Political Violence

Support for political violence (M = 2.06, SD = 1.32; α = .71) was dignified using three items taken from Bélanger, Moyano, et al.'s scale (2019). The item was needed to be score on a 7 points likert design scale ranging from (reverse-scored; 1 = not agree at all, 7 = strongly agree). The value of Cronbach alpha was satisfactory.

Procedure

In early stage was pleasing consent from the authorities of the concern organization\institution. Purposive sampling technique was used to approach students, prisoners and drug addicts in the second step. In the third step, people were provided with a widespread explanation, highlighting the voluntary role of their contribution and clarifying that no academic glory would be granted as an enticement for participating in the research survey. Questionnaires were distributed among participants, with which costs approximately 15 to 20 minutes on completion. Following the assumption of data collection, all questionnaire responses were established, and the data were entered into data management software, namely SPSS and AMOS, and then exposed to analyzation.

Analytic Approach

SPSS and AMOS were used to conduct statistical studies. Descriptive statistics were calculated based on the sample's characteristics. Regression analyses were used to define whether the social alienation, dehumanization and meaning in life significantly predicted support for political violence. For this study, the reliability of scales bestowing to Cronbach's alpha was satisfactory.

Ethical approval

Informed consensus was occupied from the members, and described the members about the purpose of the current research. No such committee exists in our institute; therefore, all the ethical procedures were taken into consideration during the entire process.

Result Study

The result of the study shows significant relationship between variables.

Table 1. Regression Analysis between Social Alienation, Dehumanization, Meaning in Life and Support for Political Violence.

Variables	*B*	95%CI		*SE B*	β	*R²*	*ΔR²*
		LB	UB				
						.229	.229***
Constant	7.25	[2.70	11.81]	2.30			
Social Alienation	.167*	[.005	.328]	.082	.148*		
Dehumanization Meaning In Life	.143** .323***	[.036 [.176	.251] .469]	.055 .074	.179** .305***		

Note. CI = Confidence Interval
***P<.001.

Table 1 shows the impact of social alienation, dehumanization and meaning in life on prisoners, drug addicts and students' support for political violence. The *R²* value of (.229) revealed meaning in life reveals a 22% variance in support for political violence level of drug addicts, prisoners and students with *F*=16.36, *p*<.001. The findings revealed social alienation (β= .148, *p*<.05), dehumanization (β= .179, *p*<.01), meaning in life (β= .305, *p*<.001) all positively predicted support for political violence.

Table 2 - *Evaluation Table of Correlation among Variables of the study model (N=354)*

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Social Alienation	26.34	4.97	-	-	-	-	-
Dehumanization	29.79	7.00	.345**	-	-	-	-
Meaning in Life	25.08	5.29	.413**	.243**	-	-	-
Support for Political Violence	24.00	5.60	.335**	.304**	.409**	-	-

p<.001 *. Correlation is significant at level of 0.01 (2-tailed).

The table 2 showed that a correlation analysis was run to examine the association between social alienation, dehumanization, meaning in life and support for political violence between the samples of 354 individuals. Social alienation showed a significant positive correlation with support for political violence (r = .335, *p*<.001), which means that people who experience high level of social alienation are more likely to support political violence. Dehumanization also showed positively significant correlation with support for political violence (r = .304, *p*<.001), and meaning in life also showed strong positive correlation with support for political violence (r = .409, *p*<.001) which is the strongest among three predictors. Adding to this social alienation showed positive correlation with dehumanization (r = .345, *p*<.001) and meaning in

life (r = .413, *p*<.001). Dehumanization and meaning in life were also showed positive association (r = .243, *p*<.01).

General Discussion

In our present study examined the data collected from 354 individuals from different institution i-e prison, drug rehab center, through online platforms and college. The sample consisted of both male and female. The sample consisted of 354 individuals from different regions of Pakistan.

To test our hypothesis, a model was presented where it was hypothesized that people with social alienation, dehumanization and meaning in life will increase or affect support for political violence. The findings of the study support our hypothesis. Our study showed that people who are highly socially alienated, dehumanized and have high meaning in life directly increase support for political violence. The results from the regression analysis showed that social alienation was a positive predictor of support for political violence which means that people who feels like more disconnected from the society are more likely to support for political violence. Dehumanization also showed effect on support for political violence which indicates that seeing other people less than human also contribute to justify and acceptance to support for political violence. People who have a strong Meaning in life related to political or radical belief can also lead to support for political violence.

Our study indicates that there is a positive correlation between social alienation and support for political violence. In research it was studied that people who are marginalized or those who feel extracted from society become more inclined to radical believes (Hogg, 2007). People who feel like they don't belong to a society, a group or outsiders are also likely to show aggressive behavior and in this extremist group can give them a purpose or place to belong with them (Doosje et al., 2016). When people feel ignored or isolated from a certain society of social group so they might feel left out which leads to frustration and this emotional state make them think on joining a group to lighten their burden no matter even if the group support violence.

Dehumanization has an effect in support for political violence as well. When people perceive others as less than humans, moral controls in harming them become weakened, which leads to act of collective violence including terrorism and hate crimes, it becomes easier to accept violence or even support violence against others which make people not having empathy and allows violence to feel normal (Bandura, 1999; Haslam, 2006; Kelman, 1976). Perceiving others as less than human leads to lessen the feel of natural hesitation we feel about hurting other people. If an individual believes that their opponent doesn't deserve human rights so in return, they may find it easier to support violence against them.

Our result showed that meaning in life also have effect on support for political violence. Meaning in life is usually consider as positive and good thing but, in some cases, it can lead to violence. People might finds there meaning in contributing or performing to violent actions, someone might believe that violence will bring justice, respect and justice and this believe give them a sense of meaning in life. Meaning in life is usually consider to be associated with positive psychological consequences and prosocial behavior (Steger et al., 2006). However, in context where meaning is resultant from conceptual commitment, crowd belonging, or perceived brave sacrifice, individuals may find meaning in supporting or engaging in political violence

(Kruglanski et al., 2014). People from susceptible populations like prisoners and drug addicts, their thorough ideologies may offer an organized belief system and sense of meaning.

Conclusion

This study shows that people who feel disconnected from others, who dehumanize other people and who find meaning in harmful principles are more likely to support political violence. To prevent and create a safe society, we must try to understand and resolve this psychological conflict among people like those who feel isolated or ignored. We should help people feel involved in the society, respects them, and value them which will reduce the happening of any act of violence.

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