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Terrorism and Politico-Cultural Deviant Behavior: A Case Study of the Rise and Fall of Secular and Religious Political Parties

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Abstract

This paper assumes a part of scholar's Ph.D. dissertation on (comparative analysis of the electoral politics of religious and secular political parties both at macro and micro level) and examines the causes of their success and failure in district Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The paper specifically examines Awami National Party (ANP) and Jamiat-e-Ulama Islam Fazalur Rehman (JUI-F) having opposing ideologies. ANP leaders and workers suffered when faced with an unrestricted socially revolutionary message from the Taliban as the Taliban could only appeal to Pakhtun nationalists' aspirations against the disgust of US presence in Afghanistan. Being part of the government ANP hindered Taliban confrontation against US forces which seemed a start of civil war between Pakhtun nationalists and Pakhtun Taliban. A qualitative research method was used, and data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. This paper suggests that terrorism had significant impacts on the rise and fall of ANP and JUI-F in the electoral politics of Pakistan. Furthermore, this study finds that on the grass-root level, deviant cultural behavior of both the parties' leaders and workers affected the vote bank badly, causing the emergence of new political thinking in the area under study.

Key Words: Terrorism, Cultural Deviant Behavior, Election, Voting Behavior, Khanism, Taliban, TNSM, Floating Voters

Introduction

After 9/11, the terrorist strikes and security situation badly affected the political environment, parties, and their leaders and workers in Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa specifically. It is also evident from the literature and empirical data that the Taliban militant differently treated secular and religious parties. Most of the secular parties' leaders were threatened by Taliban militants, and because of which they were unable to participate in election

campaigns. While discussing the 2013 election, [Waseem \(2016, p. 83\)](#) argues that the "Taliban group threatened and later attacked the three "liberal" and "secular" parties—the PPP, ANP, and MQM—and virtually drove them out of the field in terms of reaching out to their voters."

Hence, all the parties' candidates were feeling threatened during the campaign due to massive

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militancy across KP. In the following section of this paper, the researchers tried to explore the impact of militancy on ANP and JUI-F. Furthermore, the Taliban were against democracy and called the constitution of Pakistan un-Islamic. The paper further tried to explore the Taliban's dealing with secular and religious democratic parties that they deal differently due to their close ties with Islamist parties. The JUI-F leaders openly run their election campaign as compared to ANP.

The war on terror and Taliban militancy in Pakistan was started during the MMA government. After 9/11, the Musharraf government started a military operation against the Taliban and scrutinized madrassas for militants. Meanwhile, MMA adopted dual policy, i.e., being part of the provincial government and sympathetic speeches for Taliban and withdrawal of US and NATO army from Afghanistan. This dual policy benefited and protected JUI-F leaders and workers from Taliban militancy in both the 2008 and 2013 elections.

Terrorism is a much controversial topic among social scientists, and until now, unable to present a universally agreeable definition. There is an old adage that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States (US) defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives" (Shanahan, 2016, p. 108). In this regard, Chomsky (2007, pp. 44-45) while criticizing the American government definition states that "It's hard to craft a definition of terror that applies solely to the terror that they carry out against us [the United States] and our clients but excludes the terror (often far worse) that we and our clients carry out against them... Underlying conventional discussion of terrorism and aggression is the consistent rejection of the most elementary of moral principles: that we apply to ourselves the same standards we do to others, if not more stringent ones". Hence, due to limitation of space, the United Kingdom (UK) definition of terrorism is incorporated which is outlined in section 1 of the country's Terrorism Act of 2000. It interprets terrorism as "the use of threat or action... designed

to influence the government or an international governmental organization or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause" (Government of the United Kingdom Home Office, 2007).

The ANP and JUI-F different secular leftist and religious Islamist groups were dealt with differently by the Taliban groups. The Taliban government in Afghanistan was supported by JUI. The movement was expressively opposed by the secular ethnic-nationalist party who aggressively competed with *mullahs*. (singular *Mullah*) for votes in KP. Although ANP and JUI-F both were part of government (JUI-F from 2002-2007 and ANP from 2008-2013), the terrorism and militancy incurred higher costs to secular ethnic-nationalist party than the religious Islamist party. ANP suffered a lot and was unable to properly conduct its election campaign, which was one of the main reasons of loss in the 2013 general election.

The study covers the time frame from 2000 to 2018, in which three general elections and three grass-root elections were conducted. This paper has two parts. Part one discusses the external causes that affect the politics of ANP and JUI-F. While the second part discusses the internal reasons that cause the fall of both secular and religious parties in Charsadda. This paper suggests that terrorism badly affects the electoral performance of ANP only as compared to JUI-F while the deviant cultural behavior as the second determinant affected the electoral politics of both ANP and JUI-F.

While defining political party, Ullah (2014, p. 31) states that "any organization can be termed as a political party as soon as it nominates a candidate for election." ANP and JUI-F can be located on the opposite poles from the center on an ideological continuum. At present, ANP is considered to be a left-of-center party with a progressive social and economic policy (Shahid, 2017, p. 53). The party upholds Bacha Khan's discourse of non-violence, human dignity, pluralism, and indigenous wisdom and identity. Though the party has undergone ideology over time, before the 2008 election, the party's main demands were 1. Provincial autonomy

in local government, health, education, and agriculture, 2. Changing the province name from NWFP to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 3. Political development in FATA ([Siddique, 2014, p. 92](#)). During the ANP government in KP (2008-2013), the party succeeded while fulfilling some of the demands through the 18th amendment. In contrast, the JUI-F is considered to be a right of the center party with the aim of implementation of Islamic law (Sharia) through state institutions. [Ullah \(2014, p. 93\)](#) argues that "JUI is a religious movement, that turned to politics in order to safeguard its interests—that is the primacy of the Deobandi *ulema* in the future of Pakistan." [Pupcenoks \(2012, p. 274\)](#) concluded that "the advocacy of Islamic democracy justifies their position through appeals to the existence of the democratic Islamic principles in Sharia, the need for the consultation in governance (*shura*), the need to seek consensus (*ijma*), and the use of independent interpretive judgment (*ijtihad*)."

Political scientists have classified a number of voting patterns on the basis of the motivations of people. In this study, the researchers have discussed the permanent and floating voters. The permanent voters are the ideological followers of political parties. These voters cast their votes to their respective parties without any consideration of electoral candidates. They always respect party leadership decisions and cast votes to candidates who have been selected with the consent of the party organization. They are stable and consistent in their voting patterns. In contrast, the floating voters are the people who can change their decision any time before the elections. Their voting patterns are not stable and consistent. Himmelweit et al. (1981), as cited in Kelly (2007, p. 28), identified three main reasons for floating voters. The first is voters' perceptions of differences that exist between political parties. The second is the notion of attachment; voters are less likely to be attached to any political party. The final reason is voters' liking of the relevant party. Hence, the floating voter is a systematic voter who votes differently in different types of elections (Kelly, 2007).

During the 1980s, the Taliban Were backed by US and Pakistan governments against the Soviet Union. They also considered the Taliban anti-Iranian and pro-Western. The madrassas

mushroomed in Pakistan, which is considered as the reservoirs for future *jihadis* and militants ([Ghufran, 2009, p. 1094](#)). For this purpose, a large number of madrassas were established across Pakistan, and after the 9/11 incident, America and its allies changed their policy towards the Taliban. Pakistan also took a U-turn policy and supported US and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in the war on terror against the Taliban. The US and NATO intervention in the Pak-Afghan border for eliminating extremists and Al-Qaida operatives triggered insurgency in KP since 2001 ([Ghufran, 2009, p. 1093](#)). During the operation, the Taliban took refuge in the Pakistan border from Afghanistan while the Pakistan army and FC (Frontier Corps) started operations against the Taliban and sealed the border. In response, the Taliban started insurgency across KP and FATA region and targeted the army, police, politicians, government servants, and government buildings. Later on, terrorism and militancy affected the whole country within a short span of time. The Taliban insurgency was accelerated after 2006. In 2007, the Taliban kidnapped over 1000 security personnel and government officials, and in return, the government released more than 500 militants that year ([Rana, 2009, p. 15](#)). There were an estimated 2148 terrorist and insurgent attacks in Pakistan in 2008, a dramatic 746% increase since 2005, an estimated 2267 people assassinated, and 4500 injured ([Ghufran, 2009, p. 1094](#)). Most of these attacks were in FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Area) and KP; hence the whole country was badly affected by militancy.

The political leaders, particularly secular parties, were targeted by the militants. During the 2008 and 2013 election campaigns, Taliban militants threatened ANP leaders. In these election campaigns, hundreds of ANP workers and followers were assassinated and injured due to militancy. In 2008, ANP campaigning for peace, democracy, and development, emerged as the leading political party in KP and secured almost half the seats of the provincial assembly ([Siddique, 2014, p. 116](#)). The ANP formed a coalition government with PPP in KP and Islamabad. But the real challenge was there in the northern region of KP. In 2008, the Swat Valley was completely

controlled by Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM), headed by *Mullah* Fazlullah. He never completed his religious education in madrassa but claimed that he was inspired by his father-in-law Sufi Muhammad (Siddique, 2014, p. 120). The TNSM group had ties with JI, accelerated violent actions against government officials, and also opposed rival sects and Sufism (Ullah, 2014, p. 138). In Swat, Mingora Bazar, the Taliban established a place where they hanged people called *Khoni* Chowk (Blood Chowk). In 2008-2009, TNSM Taliban extended its networks to districts Buner and Dir. In Buner, they captured the shrine of Pir Baba and banned all the Sufi religious observances in the sanctuary (Siddique, 2014, p. 122). The ANP leaders realized the tense situation in the Malakand region, they offered a peace agreement with TNSM. In May 2008, ANP sat with TNSM for a peace agreement which did not prove successful for a long time. In February 2009, again, ANP started negotiation for a peace agreement with TNSM. Despite the international and domestic pressure, ANP agreed on the demands of TNSM and established a Sharia court in Malakand (Siddique, 2014, p. 123). The ANP, backed by Islamabad and the military, demanded from Fazlullah to disarm the Taliban. The TNSM denied the government's demand and continued assassinations and militancy in the region. In April 2009, Sufi Muhammad, instead of calling the Taliban to disarm, claimed that the constitution of Pakistan was un-Islamic. Many politicians realized that the peace agreement was finished (Siddiqui, 2014, p. 123). They banned dancing girls, entertainment shops of music, and girls' schools. Compared to other FATA regions, the inhabitants of Swat are educated and have access to media. The people realized the atrocities of the Taliban and openly expressed their views while demanding from the government to change the course. Meanwhile, a video was leaked on YouTube, a female in a *burqa* (veil) was pinned down by unknown men, and her cries of pain could be plainly heard (Siddique, 2014 p. 124). After investigating the extremism of Taliban militancy and the international pressure Pakistani army moved towards Swat in April 2009. The ANP cooperated with the government in a military operation against the insurgency and extremism (Ghufuran, 2009, p. 1111). In response, ANP

progressive leaders and workers were on the hit list of Pakistani Taliban and allied militant groups. They targeted party rallies, procession, and other meetings with suicide bombings and ambushed candidates' motorcades. The attacks roughly started in 2007; the Taliban killed more than eight hundred ANP leaders, workers, and supporters (Ullah, 2014, p. 152).

On the other hand, JUI-F did not face threats from the Taliban compared to ANP. Siddique (2014, pp. 120-121) argues that:

The rise of the Swat Taliban was aided by a coalition of six Islamist political parties known as the Muttahida Majlis-e-Ammal (MMA). During its five-year rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, from 2002 to late 2007, the MMA turned a blind eye to the rise of Taliban militancy in Swat. Some MMA leaders even encouraged and supported the Taliban. To strengthen their local control, one of the Taliban's first acts was to crack down on Swat's dancing girls. They closed the Banner. Neighborhood in Mingora, where the dancing girls lived and performed. They even tried to vandalize Swat's rich Buddhist archeological heritage by attempting to blow up a 1,500-year-old stone carving of Buddha in 2007.

The ideology and manifesto of JUI-F show that they did not encourage extremism and always preferred the implementation of Sharia law through the democratic process. But it is also evident from the scholarly literature that JUI-F has linkages with Islamist militant groups. i.e. Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, Sipah-e-Sahaba, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and Jaish-e-Mohammad (Ullah, 2014, p. 145). During the 1980s, the number of Deobandi madrassas dramatically increased, and these were the mainstream recruitment and training centers of the Taliban (Ullah, 2014; Siddique, 2014). The madrassas' organizers were sponsored by the US, Gulf countries, and the government of Pakistan to mobilize and recruit people against the Soviet Union. In 1989, the Soviet Union withdrew its military from Afghanistan. After the factional civil war finally, "Mujahideen" established government in most parts of the country. The influence of the Taliban reached deep into Pakistan, unlike the mujahideen in Afghanistan. The *mullahs* of FATA and KP were energized by the Taliban governance model to enforce Sharia and ban on television and

music (Siddique, 2014, pp. 58-60). Many leaders of the Pakistani Taliban started their careers from the JUI-F group, but the party consistently stayed away from violence (Siddique, 2014, p. 68). Hafiz Gul Bahdar became the leader of the Pakistani Taliban in 2006. He was the head of the student wing of JUI-F in 2000. Similarly, Wali ur Rehman, the head of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in South Waziristan, was also affiliated with JUI-F before he joined the Taliban group in 2004 (Siddique, 2014, p. 68). During the MMA government, Mulana Fazlur Rahman was actively involved in a peace agreement with South Waziristan and other FATA Taliban leaders. But those peace agreements also did not go for long and finished within months.

Methodology

A qualitative method was used for this research, and the study was conducted in tehsil Charsadda having 25 Union Councils. The tools for data collection were participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. Total 60 in-depth interviews were conducted, 20 each from ANP and JUI-F leaders and followers and 20 from floating voters. As Mack and Woodsong (2005) suggest, in-depth interviews are an effective qualitative method for getting people to talk about their personal feelings, opinions, and experiences. The interviews were conducted in both formal and informal discussions. In addition, the data was collected through semi-structured interviews with political leaders, ANP and JUI-F followers, and floating voters. Moreover, three FGDs were conducted | each with ANP, JUI-F followers, and floating voters. In addition, three key informants have been selected from the research area keeping in view the characteristic features for key informants as discussed by Tremblay (cited in Marshall, 1996), i.e., role in the community, willingness, knowledge, communicable and impartiality. The data collected for this research covers the duration of eighteen years, i.e., 2000 to 2018, in which four general elections were conducted. However, the researchers conducted fieldwork of eight months in the area under study from January 2018 to August 2018. For ethical consideration, respondents' names and areas were concealed while using

pseudonyms in order to protect the personal secrecy of the respondents.

For the analysis of data, the recorded interviews and discussions were carefully protected in transcript form. Field notes and external documents were repeatedly read. Basic themes were noted separately. During and at the end of each interview important thematic notes were recorded in the diary. In addition, field notes were taken during participant observation which were very useful during the analysis of certain themes. Based on the nature of the research topic, different respondents were selected through quota purposively sampling and for data collection interview guide was developed. Though the researchers personally belong to the area under study, it was an added value to conduct frequent visits to key informants. The local people were well familiar with the research topic. The data and findings were regularly shared with key informants to validate and cross-check the information collected from permanent voters and leaders of ANP and JUI-F and floating voters of both Muhammadzai and non-Muhammadzai inhabitants.

Findings and Discussion

In Charsadda, there was no visible Taliban militant group, but different attacks were noted on both secular and religious political leaders. While the ratio on secular leaders, particularly ANP, was higher than other parties. The terrorist threat led Asfandiyar Wali Khan not to return to his constituency after surviving a 2008 assassination attempt (Ullah, 2014, p. 152). Similarly, they threatened ANP leaders and party workers during the 2013 election campaign as well. While the ANP leaders and workers who ignored the Taliban threat were desperately affected and lost their lives in different rallies and processions. Farooq Khan District Charsadda, General secretary of ANP, shared, "due to terrorism and militancy, the District Police Officer (DPO) and other police officers did not permit us to do our election campaign. I was with Muhammad Ahmed Khan when the bomb blast with a distance of a few yards in Sardheri Bazar happened. The blast still resonates in my ears."

During interviews, most of the ANP leaders and followers shared that terrorism and militancy

were some of the main reasons for the fall in the 2013 general election. They shared that their hands were tied, without campaign, how they could contest the election. Due to terrorism and militancy, the ANP workers preferred to visit at late night time in order to avoid unforeseen situations. It is evident from the literature that since 2008, ANP leaders and workers have been the hot target of militants. Hundreds of ANP workers were killed and injured before and during the 2013 election campaign.

The political leaders of JUI-F did not face as much as the threat faced by ANP leaders during the 2013 election. Mulana Gul Muhammad, a Mohmand migrant and Union Council (UC) president of JUI-F, shared that "during 2013 election campaign people told Shakoor Khan (MPA candidate) that while shifting to JUI-F from ANP, he had protected his life. The *mullahs* will be around you (Shakoor Khan), and the militants will not target you." These arguments of religious leaders depict that the Islamist militants were in favor of JUI-F compared to ANP. Similarly, Maulana Gohar Shah was the MNA of MMA in Charsadda. He did not receive or face any threat during his government (2002-2007) and 2013 election campaign. The JUI-F leaders openly did their election campaign compared to ANP.

Khan and Extremism

The ANP and JUI-F follow non-violent philosophies for conducting their political affairs. But there are certain factors that cause violence and conflict among the people. The ANP claims the ideology of Bacha Khan is based on non-violence, and JUI-F believes in the peaceful struggle for the implementation of Islamic law. In contrast, some of the political leaders and workers create violence and conflict that badly affect both parties. These deviant behaviors are observed on both micro and macro levels, which induce the people to become floating voters. The perception of local people also shows a change in the culture among the Pakhtuns of Charsadda. Most of the people are against topak/Kalashnikov culture. The Pakhtuns of Charsadda strictly observe the behavior of political leaders and workers. During elections, most people

decide their votes based on the past experiences and attitudes of party leaders.

Khan is a way of life resembling to feudal landlords. In Charsadda, particularly among the ANP workers, the culture of *mechanism* is more prominent compared to other parties workers. In her study, [Banerjee \(2000, p. 9\)](#) also identified some *Khudai Khidmatgar*. (KK) followers are not happy with the current leadership of ANP. Why currently people are not happy with the leadership of ANP? Bacha Khan set a criterion for the recruitment and membership of KK movement. Through his criteria for recruitment, the movement was not only spread among the Pakhtuns, but it also decreased the number of feuds. If a person approached to join KK, he asked him whether he had any feud or not. In case the person had a feud, he would tell him to first resolve his disputes and then join the KK movement. He also gave valuable suggestions and strategies for resolving the feuds ([Banerjee, 2000, p. 82](#)). In contrast, currently the ANP leadership does not examine the personal background and relationship of the potential person for recruitment with local people. Aimal Khan was against his father, Asfandiyar Khan, and told him that he did not have any concern with his personal life. He is able to win his polling station and this was enough for him." Similarly, there are a number of cases that depict that ANP leaders support all those *khans* who are not acceptable in the area.

Bacha Khan's ideology is based on non-violence and pluralism, and his struggle was against the feudal system. He was a simple person and always encouraged simple life. After the partition, most of the landlords (*khans*) of the central region of KP joined ANP for power and privileges and to secure their personal benefits ([Khan, 2005](#); [Mahmood, 2014](#)). Though the majority of the ANP leaders and followers are from the middle class, however, there are certain workers whose behaviors badly affect party popularity among the masses. Their behavior with poor people is discriminatory and exploitative. Wazir Muhammad further shared, "this discriminatory behavior shocked me, and soon I left my job with *Khan*." Such kind of discriminatory behavior and dealing with servants and tenants is very common among the *khans*. Pakhtuns did not like discriminatory

behavior, particularly in the presence of other people. They feel dishonored and do not like to work and politically support the one who disrespect poor people.

The behavior of local people toward *khanism* and Kalashnikov culture is rapidly changing. During the subcontinent, the British administration allotted a large portion of land to certain people and called them big khans. For the revenue and tax collections, they introduced the class system. At the top were big *khans*, they were assigned thousands of acres of land. The big *khans* also assisted thousands of *lambardars*, and these *lambardars* also acted as village headmen, worked as policemen to maintain law and order on the local level. These big *khans* had direct contact with colonial officers ([Banerjee, 2000, p. 31](#)). After the partition particularly in late 1970's and early 1980's the social organization was changing and leading towards the traditional horizontal relationship. The power of local *khans* decreased in terms of tenants and servants. Most of the tenants and peasants have secured small plot of land from local khans and built houses. Usman Jan, a Muhammadzai Khan and floating voter, shared, "the population of *Sardheri* is more than 50,000. In Charsadda, *khanism* still exists but nobody is bound to another person. Here you have to give respect and reciprocally you will receive it. A few *khans* have a smaller number of tenants and peasants while the rest of the people are free from their dominance. Only through good behavior a person can win an election and attract Pakhtuns. This is the reason that every person loves and respects Shakoor Khan because he respects everyone everywhere. He deals all upper, middle, and lower-class people equally and participates in their *gham khadi*." Similar feelings about the reasons of the fall of ANP were shared by permanent voters of ANP. In this regards, Asfandiyar Khan, a Muhammadzai Pakhtun and permanent voter of ANP, shared "most of the party leaders and workers on the district and UCs level were corrupt. The ANP government released a huge amount of funds from the center, but leadership did not monitor and blindly trusted their workers. Mostly *badmashan* are affiliated with ANP. Imran Khan's (PTI) government did nothing in KP but I appreciate him in one thing that the party vanished Kalashnikov culture. During ANP (2008-

2013) government every second person was moving with his rifle and robbery and snatching was very frequent in the area. Currently PTI government controlled it effectively and did not encourage any behavior which is not acceptable in the local culture." Mudassir Khan, living in urban area MC-2, changed his party. Once he was a permanent voter of ANP. He shared, "in 2013 and 2018 elections I did not cast vote to ANP. During the ANP government, drugs smuggling, robbery and snatching was very frequent in our area. If we again cast vote to ANP, such kind of people will reemerge who are always supported by ANP leaders." The UC Nazim, Hayat Khan also shared, "one of the main problems is when we are in government, most of the thieves and drug smugglers are around us. The main purpose of these people is to protect themselves from law enforcement agencies, i.e. Police, Army etc. Most of us are unwilling to support these people; however, this is our area and people which is one of the main reasons that we support these people." Hence, *khanism* and Kalashnikov culture was in boom during the ANP government. The local people did not accept these culture deviant behaviors.

The religious political parties claim to empower democracy and establish peace in the region. Nevertheless, there are also certain speeches of political leaders that triggered extremism and silent support of the Taliban. [Rahman \(2018, pp. 211-212\)](#) explained a shift in JUI-F from political conservatism to modernity. He categorized Islamic organizations into three groups. The one group believing and practicing parliamentary politics (e.g. JUI-F, JI), the second is concerned with socio-spiritual matters of Muslims (*Tablighi* group), and third as pro-violence or *jihadis* group (e.g. TTP, TNSM). Nonetheless, he concluded that all the three organizations are interlinked with each other to some degree. Similarly, the speeches of JUI-F leadership and other workers indicate a strong support of militant groups. In addition, the *mullah* speeches and tutelage also triggered conflicts on local level among the different parties' workers.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Islamist groups, both violent and non-violent, had become

a force, and their influence cannot be ignored. In April, 2001, the JUI organized a power show with the name of "International Deoband Conference" in Peshawar. In the conference all the three main Islamic organization groups participated. Maulana Fazalur Rahman as cited in [Siddique \(2014, p. 115\)](#) vowed, "if the United States 'continues to speak in the language of force,' Muslims were ready 'to fight back and defend themselves.'" Similarly, as cited in [Siddique \(2014, p. 115\)](#) the leader of Taliban Mullah Muhammad Omar stated in an audio message, "the infidels consider Islam a threat to their worldwide interests, so every effort is made to weaken Muslims. In Afghanistan, we control 95 per cent of the country, but we are referred to as one of the factions and denied recognition." Similarly, the "Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden used the occasion to urge support for the Taliban". Though JUI-F, unlike the other militant Taliban groups, always prefer parliamentary politics, however, the rhetoric and messages of both the militant groups and JUI-F bear greater resemblance on some occasions. Nonetheless, their hatred based speeches and *fatwas* triggered uncertainty and conflicts among parties' workers. During *Azadi* (independence) March on 30 October, 2019 at Lahore, Maulana Fazlur Rahman shared the main reasons of *Azadi* March to the participants. In his speech apart from the other main agenda points, he shared that "the 25 July, 2018 election was not free and fair, so we can't accept its result and hence the Prime Minister (PM). Imran Khan meets Ahmadiyya sect and assures them that he will revise the 1973 constitution of Pakistan." Before and after the *Azadi* March most of the *mullahs* on the local level called Imran Khan the spy of western countries.

The *mullahs* also spread such kind of information in their speeches without any solid proofs. The Pakhtuns always respect *mullahs* because they perceive them as the descendants of the Holy Prophet (SAW). The *mullahs* are actively involved in daily religious ceremonies. In mosques, they also deliver lectures in different times. On every Friday noon, they deliver lectures regarding certain Islamic knowledge and tutelage based on moral and spiritual matters. Some of the *mullahs* also discuss politics in mosques which causes anger and hatred among different political parties' workers

and followers. The following case of Maulana Rooh Ullah illustrates that how *mullahs* generate conflict in a small village. He is a JUI-F worker and also the organizer of his madrassa. He is also a government school teacher and performing prayer in *Wardaga* mosque. Fayaz Khan, a floating voter, living in the rural area of Rajjar II *Mera* shared, "Maulana Rooh Ullah always discusses politics in mosque and other places. On Friday noon, during *Juma* prayer Maulana Rooh Ullah was talking against Imran Khan and PTI workers. He said that Imran Khan is a Jewish agent and also discussed his wives. Maulana's hatred and baseless speech triggered conflict inside the mosque. Meanwhile, one of the JUI-F workers screamed that Maulana Tariq Jamil also belongs to Ahmadi sect. Resultantly, the conflict spread among three groups i.e. JUI-F, PTI, and *Tablighi* groups. I told my friend Kamran Khan that he should stop Maulana because this is his area. Then he stopped Maulana while discussing about political parties and leaders in the mosque. Later on, the elders of the village came forward to resolve the conflict." A number of respondents shared certain kinds of examples about *mullahs* that triggered conflict, extremism, and violence in the area.

The floating voters are the main catalysts while winning or losing electoral politics in Charsadda. There are different determinants that triggered people to shift their party loyalties. The emergence of new parties, charismatic leaders, and party organization are the main determinants while making people from permanent to floating voters. In the past, most of the inhabitants of Charsadda belonged to ANP or JUI-F. During the 1970s and after, with the emergence of new parties and political leaders, the people shifted their party affiliations.

The ANP and JUI-F lost their permanent votes due to centralizing tendencies in both the parties thereby rendering their parties vulnerable to *khanism* and extremism during their tenures. The party organization and leadership of both parties did not encourage a political leader from grass root level to participate in provincial or national level electoral politics. Pakhtuns always encourage political discussions and keenly observe political parties and leaders. The ANP and JUI-F's certain leaders and workers have promoted certain norms

which are not acceptable among Pakhtun culture. On the other hand, PTI did not encourage culture deviant behaviors that helped them attract a large number of voters in district Charsadda. The behavior of political leaders and workers directly affects the vote bank of their respective parties. Pakhtun culture is also undergoing a major shift. In past, Pakhtuns loved and symbolically showed their bravery while showing *topak* (rifle). But currently, they did not encourage *topak* being part of culture and mostly prefer education, prosperity, and development in the society.

Bravery a Code of Pakhtunwali

Bravery is one of the core elements of Pakhtunwali code. Different anthropologists define bravery in different relative terms i.e. *izzat*, honor, *Badal* (revenge) e.g. [Barth \(1959\)](#), [Ahmed \(1976\)](#), [Banerjee \(2000\)](#), and [Lyon \(2002\)](#). The Pakhtunwali code is the ideal standard behavior of Pakhtuns and considered the 'yardstick to measure normative or deviant behavior' of Pakhtuns ([Ahmed, 1976, p. 57](#)). [Barth \(1959, pp. 136-138\)](#) discussed *zan*, *zar*, *Zameen* and summarized *izzat* (honor) in different case studies related to blood revenge. [Ahmed \(1976, p. 56\)](#) has criticized and explained the various types of approximates found in the code in varying degree of practice. While elaborating *Badal* (revenge) [Ahmed \(1976, p. 57\)](#) argues that "Pathans measure warrior-prestige or marital status by valor or deaths in battle and not over quarrels for land; for every man killed the code demands compensatory 'Badal' or revenge." As [Ahmed \(1976\)](#) explained that the code varies in different analytical contexts. For this study we will elaborate the bravery as one of the main prerequisites which the Pakhtuns expect from their political leaders.

In most of his speeches, Wali Khan used the famous proverb 'Pakhtun leader, *nar* leader' i.e. Pakhtun leader should be a brave leader. Wali Khan was a leader who knew how to lead Pakhtuns. He knew that Pakhtuns appreciate a brave leader and it was one of the reasons that he attracted a large number of followers. After his resignation from practical politics, his son Asfandiyar Wali Khan emerged as the new leader of ANP. Initially, he also attracted a number of followers, but during

terrorism and suicide attacks on different politicians, it badly affected the politics of ANP. In 2008 on the second day of Eid, early in the morning a sleeping cell came and blown himself in Asfandiyar Khan *hujra*. Luckily, Asfandiyar Khan was protected and survived the attack, but after that day he was permanently shifted to Islamabad. Most of the informants shared that he did not participate in local *gham khadi* and even during flood in 2010, he was out of the scene.

The observation and empirical data reveal that Pakhtuns appreciate and like leaders having the courage to face different situations. Pakhtuns respect leaders who participate in local *gham khadi* (sorrow and joy). While Asfandiyar Khan was unable to participate, which was one of the reasons that people did not give him votes in 2013 general election."

In short, among the Pakhtuns leader's bravery and participation in local *gham khadi* are the main determinants for electoral politics. While on the other hand, JUI-F leaders always encouraged people for *jihad*. Though, they are not practically participating in *jihad*, but their speeches are more attractive for Pakhtuns. The JUI-F leaders actively participate in local *gham khadi* and also offer prayers due to their religious background. The JUI-F leaders developed a strong network on a local level. While the ANP leaders were mostly reluctant to visit local *gham khadi* sites due to militancy, and lack of communication.

Conclusion

Since independence secular and religious parties are trying to increase their votes through different strategies and tactics. In this paper, we tried to explore the external reason i.e. terrorism impact on secular and religious parties. In addition, the paper also discusses the internal causes that badly affect the vote bank of ANP and JUI-F. Both ANP and JUI-F should focus on both external and internal factors that causes in the fall of their vote bank. The following are some suggestion and recommendation while following it the extent of terrorism will be decreased and it is expected that both the parties will increase their number of voters.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) should strictly monitor the rhetoric and slogans of all the political parties, particularly religious political parties in order to overcome the extent of militancy in the country. Similarly, it is also important to monitor the political leaders of different parties and their affiliation with militant groups.

From the literature and empirical data it reveals that terrorism and militancy badly affected ANP compare to JUI-F. ANP is struggling for the development of Pakhtuns ethnic group and Pakhtun codes are compatible with Islamic tradition. The ANP leadership should incorporate certain Islamic rhetoric in their speeches that shows their sympathy and attachment with Islam.

Most of the Pakhtuns of Charsadda through encapsulation in the broader state system have changed their attitude toward *topak*, *khanism* and considers it culture deviant behavior. Most of the political leaders of ANP, particularly on grass root

level still encourage the aforementioned traits that cause the loss of number of political leaders and voters. Hence, the party should adopt and strictly follow the Bacha Khan philosophy of non-violence and criteria for party membership, particularly for electoral candidates.

The Pakhtuns of Charsadda are keen observer and always monitor their electoral candidates. They not only considered the salient feature of a political leader as described by Weber, Michels, Kurtz and other scientists but also the *Pakhtunwali* code of honor. The Pakhtuns always expect hospitality, bravery, and participation in local *gham khadi* from political leaders. If a leader is lacking these traits they did not encourage and vote for such candidate. The ANP leadership should focus on these traits in order to attract the voter whom they lost in the previous elections. They should also focus these traits in their electoral speeches like Wali Khan in order to persuade the voters.

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