

Changing Character of Political Islam in Pakistan

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Abstract

Pakistan's confessional parties are re-inventing themselves. The Parties that are carrying a legacy from the time before partition are struggling to keep themselves relevant in mainstream political discourse. Pakistan's political landscape is changing because of the rise of Tehreek-i-Insaf, a progressive center-right political party that has altered the electioneering environment in Pakistan. Two main confessional parties Jamaat Islami (JI) and Jamiat Ulma e Islam Fazal Ur Rehman (JUI-F) are trying to develop an inclusive and pluralist political agenda. JI is a hierarchical Islamic party whereas JUI-F is a network Islamic party. Political Islam is in the process of shrinking in Pakistan because of the rise of political alternatives and outdatedness of the political and electoral discourse of confessional parties. Political Islam in Pakistan is changing by improving its ideological, political, and organizational structure in relation to its contemporary rivals. Changes in political Islam are not because of intellectual diversity and growth within confessional parties but to manage and compete for the rise of competing domestic political perspectives. Transnational connections with like-minded Islamist groups have scaled-down as the like-minded religio-ideological partners are termed as extremists and terrorists.

Keywords: Political Islam, confessional parties, Islamist perspective, identity, social contract

Introduction

The second half of the twentieth century has been important because activist groups across the Muslim world came up with competing Islamist perspectives that directly collided with existing political narratives erected and sustained by colonial powers. Islamist perspective challenged the status quo and touched the hearts of the Muslims who were in search of an Islamist identity (Shadi, 2014, p.174). Muslims were facing serious crisis of recognition where their socio-cultural and religious ideas were being ignored marginalizing the entire section of the population. Islamists were divided into

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three different geographic and cultural tendencies. The first one was Sunni Arab Middle East, the Second was the Sunni Indian sub-continent, and the last one Iran–Arab Shiism (Roy, 1994, p. 2). In the Sunni Arab Middle East, the largest organization which shaped regional and international view of the Arabs is Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt based religio-political party. It was organized on a national basis in many countries but primarily Egyptian leadership of Sayid Qutb influenced in shaping its ideas. In the Indian subcontinent, Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) set up its organizational apparatus in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Abul Ala Maududi was the architect of JI and his ideas were appreciated across the Muslim world. Political parties like Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) also had a political base that got separated from Jamiat ulema-i- Hind (JUH) because JUH was close to the Indian National Congress and did not support the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. As far as the Shia movement was concerned, it took power by the revolution in Iran and the Iranians emerged as the vanguard of this movement. They enhanced their regional power and influence which put their regional rivals on alert as the sectarian competition started which is still going on in the Arab world (Rieck, 2015, p.307).

This paper discusses that how the confessional parties in the Sunni Indian Sub-Continent created and changed the political discourse and how these Islamic political parties are changing their narrative to create relevance to the contemporary political dynamics. Pakistan's confessional parties are re-inventing themselves to keep themselves relevant in changing political landscape. Parties that are carrying legacy from the pre-partition time are thinking seriously that how to bring reforms as their vote bank is traditional but youth inclusion in their movement and political struggle is need of the hour. Whereas youth get attracted to a more modern, democratic, ethno-nationalistic and progressive ideology, Islamic parties are working to grab the support and votes of 60% of the population that comprises youth. Since Pakistan's Political landscape is changing where two main religious political parties JI and JUI-F are trying to make themselves more attractive to new voters without losing traditional and religious vote bank. JUI turned JUIF when Maulana Fazal Ur Rehman took control of the party after his father's death. Both confessional parties have brought changes in their political, organizational and socio-religious discourses because they were being criticized for being conservative and not open to moderate voices (Jamal, 2014, p18). Both Islamist parties have always desired to enforce religious laws and practices but could not materialize because of lack of electoral support. There is huge ideological diversity between them but both have tried to have a political alliance which normally did not work as their interests diverge frequently.

New developments in Pakistan's politics in general and in KPK particularly have forced ultra-right wing conservative parties to revive Muttahida Majlis-i- Amal (MMA) to keep right-wing conservative vote bank united. MMA was formed in 2002 when General Pervaiz Musharraf was ruling the country (Rieck, 2015, p.359). MMA is an alliance of religious parties which was formed because of anti-US sentiments in the Muslim world. The reason for those sentiments was the American attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq. Meanwhile, MMA emerged as an opposition party after the 2002 elections and later on dismantled because of political differences. MMA revived itself in 2018, the election year, where JUI F and JI were the main forces in this alliance whereas other parties were Tehreek-i-Islami Pakistan (TIP), Jamiat Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP), and Markazi Jamiat Ahle Hadith (MJAHA). The real challenge for MMA was to deal with the rise of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) of Prime Minister Imran Khan in religiously conservative province of KPK. PTI is still a popular party among youth and won the 2018 national elections with a narrow majority.

The public narrative of MMA is that the U.S. has undermined Palestine's cause (Gordon, 2019, P 56). Kashmir is still an unfinished issue of British Partition and international community has not fulfilled its promises related to its resolution. East Jerusalem has been recognized as the capital of Israel, Rohingya Muslims are facing genocide, and the Muslims are being killed in the Middle East, are the serious concerns for which the Muslim world needs to stand (International Crises Group, 2011). On the domestic front, MMA believes that enforcement of Islamic Khalifat is possible if all Islamic parties are together. They believe marginalized sections of society need to be mainstreamed and minorities must be protected although the status of minorities is compromised in the constitution and they have done nothing extraordinary for the protection of minorities but they keep this as part of their electoral campaign and political rhetoric. MMA believes that there is a need of an ideal state like the state of Madina, Nizam-e-Mustafa and the concept of Ummah needs to be made clear to masses for having support. MMA also believes that Pakistan needs to get rid of sectarianism and all this struggle should be through democratic means and political struggle by means of democratic institutions. MMA could not get the desired outcome and the idea of the Islamic parties was defeated in the 2018 elections (Shah and Sareen, 2018). It only secured 2.54 million votes in 2018 elections across the country and the moderate political force PTI managed to form government first time in the Federal Capital and KPK province where it has been ruling since 2013.

How the two confessional parties will now find new avenues to keep themselves relevant in political discourse and among their voters after defeat in the 2018 elections, is a challenge for them. Since they could not get the desired results in the election. By

implication, their unity and united political discourse will potentially change. MMA may not form an alliance as it did in the past to counter PTI and keep right-wing voters intact. Political Islam is shrinking in Pakistan as confessional parties are losing international support from like-minded political quarters and Islamic parties are careful in developing their transnational ideological linkages because Islamists are unpopular and lack inclusiveness (Noor, 2019). Therefore, political Islam as a phenomenon is shrinking from transnational to national level while, at the domestic level, its erstwhile political and ideological space is being reduced because of the new progressive nationalist actors. So how both parties will keep their identities and how they will keep propagating about political Islam when their political discourse faces challenges and space is shirking for their political survival, is the focus of this paper.

Political Islam: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of Political Islam will make readers understand this research. Two major questions have been raised in this research which the conceptual framework will answer. The first question is that the transnational character of political Islam is changing after 9/11 where Islamist's role got compromised and choices got contracted. The second question which will be answered in this research is about changing nature of confessional parties in Pakistan because of evolving nature of domestic politics in Pakistan. Both of these questions have not been answered Political Islam and Islamism have the same meaning and have been used interchangeably by scholars for making them understand Islamists politics. Theorists and historians have competing and cutting-edge perspectives on Political Islam to inquire whether it's modern phenomena or old Islamic religious commitment. Islamists in Pakistan and the rest of the world keep changing their perspectives looking at changing global environment and adjusting them in domestic apparatus (Dabashi, 2017, p. 105). In the west Islamists are looked from the lens of ultra-right-wing or right-wing but Islamists lean to different political ideologies for their political adjustments with other political actors and this makes them liberal conservatives. But they did not transform those looking changing global and domestic orders which made them irrelevant at domestic and international levels.

Jan Michiel Otto, Sayyed Vali Raza Nasr, and Peter Mandaville present a conceptual framework that Political Islam should not be seen from the lens of social movements only (Otto, 2011, p. 45). Islamists work on domestic legislation for making their inroads in state apparatus. These scholars conclude that Islamists should not also be seen as revolutionizing the state and its system. Political Islam cannot be understood if it is only looked through the lens of social movement or lens of militant Islam. Islamists in Pakistan have philanthropist and socio-cultural agenda for welfare and

moral policing of society (Mandaville, 2007, p. 75). Although JI and JUIF have Al Khidmat Foundation and Al- Khair Trust which they use to translate their social work for their political gains. Islamists are not categorized as institutional Islamists and Militants Islamists and for this, they are normally termed as revolutionary. The above schools have categorized that all Islamists do not want revolutionary governments like in Iran and Afghanistan. Similarly, institutional Islamists in Pakistan did not support revolutionaries but it took them a long time to disassociate themselves from militant Islamists. Institutional Islamists stopped the ideological supply line but the damage had been done which made JI and JUIF weak domestically and compromised their transnational connections with other Islamists and Islamic states.

Otto, Nasr, and Mandaville made their case that the priority of Islamists has been to lead domestic legislation through the 'Top Down' approach as they could Islamize the entire population rather than using the 'Bottom Up' approach. Countries like Nigeria, Egypt, Morocco, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan had such governments and political parties for Islamizing domestic legislation (Vali Raza Nasr, 2001, p. 25). JI and JUIF both supported elected and unelected governments for Islamizing domestic legislation for being mainstream Islamists. They did not just rely on to be a change agent by supporting the social movement and rejected militants as well for bringing change by force.

Scholars like Stefano Allievi, Nielsen Jorgen Faisal Devji, Peter Mandaville, and Seyyed Vali Raza Nasr make their case that Islamist differ on the idea of a nation-state. Islamists societies did not understand the idea of a nation-state system for long and for this Muslim societies remained politically weak and confused (Allievi & Nielsen, 2003, p. 61). JI and JUIF are part of this as they created an environment where Muslims kept considering the international system and nation-state system as Western-dominated conspiratorial formwork against Islamist states. JI and JUIF being part of the state understood the sovereign rights of states but when the issue of disputed territories like Kashmir and Palestine arouse their followers joined Jihad even bypassing Pakistan's constitution. This created division among Islamic societies as Islamists came under their propaganda when it became clear that any armed struggle without the approval of the state is illegal and pressure of the international community increased after 9/11. Transnational connections of JI and JUIF with their like-minded Islamists groups like the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and other Islamists got scaled-down or disconnected when Jihadi organizations and their like-minded ideological partners were termed as extremists and terrorists.

Islamist's view of liberating Muslim lands was flawed. Intellectually, ideologically and through the lens of international law they could not justify their struggle utilizing

force and this decreased their transnational connections. The idea of Islamic Ummah (Community of Believers) and its activism because Muslims used this for transnational and cosmopolitanism but it did not survive because of vested interests of Islamists powers and irrelevance of institutional and militant Islamists in Islamic states (Devji, 2005, p. 34).

Political Islam in Pakistan's Context: Pakistan's Islamic Confessional Parties

Islam has been central to the political system and national identity for Pakistan's entire history. For about a decade after independence initial leadership of Pakistan be it religious elite, secularists and bourgeoisie were unable to draft a constitution because of having differences that what kind of role Islam will have in constitution (Rais, 2017, p.8). After a public campaign and compromises shown by all stakeholders, it was decided that Pakistan will be the Islamic Republic with the head of state to be Muslim. The first constitution of Pakistan mandated that Quran should be taught in schools but the constitution did not impose Shariah and deliberately remained vague on matters of public policy (Ullah, 2014, p.22). Minorities were given minimal protection to which many criticized as a deliberate move by the state and because of pressure from right-wing religious parties.

Islamic parties especially JI and JUI which were at the center of politics at that time were instrumental in declaring minority sect Ahmadiyya as non-muslim in 1974 and surprisingly progressive Pakistan People's Party (PPP) controlled parliament passed this law. 1973 constitution also ensured that Ahmadis cannot hold posts of President or Prime Minister (Hassan, 2006, pp. 263–84). It was in 1970,s when the Islamization of public life started. Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) which was an opposition coalition of mainly Islamic parties including JI and JUI used Islam for contesting elections in 1977. When PNA could not win against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of PPP, it brought religious issues into a national political debate. Since PNA lacked any concrete agenda but its slogan was to bring Nizam I Mustafa (System of Prophet PBUH). Bhutto made a significant shift and changed party literature by removing the word socialism and incorporating Islamic egalitarianism and banned alcohol and made Friday weekly holiday (Ullah, 2014, p.22). JI and JUI had strong street power within PNA which forced powerful leader like Bhutto to change his domestic narrative despite that he already had popular support and won the national election.

Former military Dictator Zia Ul Huq overthrew Bhutto,s democratic government in 1977. He was a religious person and used to distribute religious literature in army officer's corps. Looking at ethnic divisions in country, he realized that the only factor that can give him legitimacy internally is religion and thus he instrumentalized religion.

Once he said One God, One Prophet, One Country, One System, and No dissention (Ahmed, 1996, p.384). Zia wanted a true Islamic society and for that, he focused on areas like judicial reform, implementation of Islamic penal code, economic activities, and new educational policy (Talbot, 2012, p.272).

For implementing his agenda he needed the support of right-wing elements who were natural partners of Zia in this struggle and they were already demanding these reforms in national legal, social and political discourse. JI and JUI helped Zia in implementing his agenda and they could never get this opportunity before and after Zia. That was a favorable time for both confessional parties that it had a long-lasting impact on society in every sphere. JI and JUI which influenced the political and democratic system and had political roots and power of mobilization transformed national discourse. Both are confessional parties that have leveraged aspects of religious ideology and culture to activate, recruit and campaign in electoral competition (Ullah, 2014, p.7). Both parties mainstreamed Islamism in Pakistan. They are considered mainstream Islamists because of their electoral performance in elections as compared to other Islamic parties. Their other credentials like religious education mostly in madrassas, mosques, dawah activism, providing private school education, and social welfare increased their space in society. For analyzing how both parties have made an impact one has to see the ideological, organizational, and political strategies of both parties (Ullah, 2014, p.9).

Changing Character of JUI-F

Since the party was established and till times of Mufti Mehmood JUI remained nomenclature of the party. The Party's name changed to JUIF after the death of Mufti Mehmood when Maulana Fazal Ur Reham became chief of the party through a difficult transition. Party is known as a network Islamist party because it has a structure of loosely affiliated workers and leaders and over all structure of the party is broad-based (Ullah, 2014, p.48). Party draws its support from Sunni Deobund Muslims. The Religious Elite of the party is less educated and they get their education from the Madrasah system. A huge number of Madrasah network which is across the country and propagates Deobund religious sect also supports recruitment for a party. (Pirzada, 2000). Party is known as pragmatic as its leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman not just believes in ideological commitment but understands power centric notion of politics. He stays close to the powerful political elite be it left-wing politicians or right-wing (Arqam, 2017). Party has a religious ideological commitment and believes in having Shariah in the country but wants to have Sharia through parliament and democratic process. So JUI F did not start any agitation against a state which is unconstitutional and above law for the implementation of Shariah.

The roots of the party could be traced to British Colonial India. Before partition in colonial India Deobund ulema organized under a political platform known as Jamiat Ulma e Hind (JUH). JUH at the time of partition supported the All India National Congress and was not in favor of a separate state for Muslims in the shape of Pakistan. JUH was of the view that provincial autonomy should be given to federating units but there must be a united India. (Amin, 2016, p.66). Ulema,s in Pakistan influence social and political domains so they were included in the party so that people to know this party belongs to clerics and religious elite will be future political leadership in the country (Amin, 2016, p.66).

Pro partition group of clerics who formed Jamiat e Ulema e Islam (JUI) were DeoBund clerics under Shabir Ahmed Usmani. Usmani along with members of JUI worked with the Muslim League for the establishment of Pakistan. The JUI was led by madrassah-educated clerics who came from a rural background and had ethnic and religious ties with the rural electorate (Ullah, 2014, p.90). JUI had to face legitimate questions from the rank and file of clerics because of its association with Muslim League. JUI was concerned about working with irreligious workers and members of the Muslim League.

Whereas JUI F has always kept themselves open to all political forces and for practical matters they keep themselves open to engaging with all. For such political accommodative behavior, concerns have always been raised at the worker's level because they are given a narrow perspective of the party's political ideology. Whereas top-level leadership looks at situation strategically as their canvas is large and they make decisions for bigger incentives.

JUI F tried to bring change through institutions and influenced institutions and became part of those. Starting from constituent assembly where Shabbir Ahmed Usmani was a member along with Muslim League and constituent assembly passed an objective resolution on 12th March 1949. Although JUI failed to make inroads in electoral politics in 1946 elections when the party put up candidates in former Northern Western Frontier Province (NWFP) which is now KPK under new legislation by the provincial and federal legislature.

JUI chose Mufi Mahmood as Amir (President) of a party in 1962 and the general elections of the 1970 party were successful enough to win few seats to make itself relevant in national and provincial politics. JUI got seven seats in the National assembly and provincial assemblies of NWFP and in Baluchistan party got nine seats. JUI was successful enough to form a coalition government with the Left-wing progressive National Awami Party (NAP). JUI made a political alliance in 1970 not just with ANP but with another left-wing progressive party (PPP). Party has been criticized by this

approach of losing ideological commitment to the pursuit of power. Meanwhile, JUI has also been encouraged for this pragmatism among political quarters although they have to face criticism on their opportunism and extraordinary ideological flexibility.

JUI F got branched off from JUI and two factions came into being. One was Jamiat Ulama e Islam Samiul Haq (JUI S) and the other became JUI F. Sami Ul Haq is known as the father of Taliban because of his madrassah Darul Uloom Haqqania which is known as the University of Jihad in West. The majority of Taliban studied in this university and learned their Islamic teachings from here. JUI S supported Zia and its Islamization whereas JUIF opposed much of Zia,s Islamization and policies of his regime but favored many of Zia,s Islamization moves.

The major reason for the split between both factions was a difference in Afghanistan as both supported the Taliban but had different perspectives on Jihad and armed struggle (Akbari, 2019). Maulana Sami Ul Haq wanted to take credit for developments in Afghanistan. Fazal ur Rehman knew Sami Ul Haq could use influence in Afghanistan for achieving its political purposes in Pakistan. During the lifetime of Mufti Mehmood when Maulana Fazal ur Rehman was a student in Darul Uloom Haqqania his father asked Fazal not to be a student of Sami ul Haq. Sami was jealous of Fazal ur Rehman,s political outreach as he was not having influence in KPK and among Deobunds (Akbari, 2019). Because of major ideological and political differences, both did not want to go together and separated their ways.

JUI F which is known as a pragmatic as well as opportunistic party is facing difficulty in shaping its political narrative because of stagnation in the ideological program. For almost two decades with changing regional and global strategic matrix, religious political parties like JUIF are going through a transformation. (Safi, 2017). Such parties had transnational political and ideological commitments and because of patronage-based global order, such commitments are shrinking. Old loyalties and ideological bondages are being revisited by nation-states and political groups. Concepts like sovereignty and national identity have reduced space for transnational ideological commitments by political groups which reduces the role of political Islam in Pakistan as well.

JUI F celebrated hundred years of JUH in 2017 where delegations from thirty states came to celebrate a historic day of the party. JUI F had guests from across the world for three days. Delegates from across the world participated which means the transnational value and identity of the party is intact but influencing their religious political ideas transnationally has become challenging task. Top religious figures like Imam e Kaaba and the Saudi religious affairs minister came to Nowshera a city in KPK. (Dawn, 2019). These religious figures have a direct link with Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab who was

the founder of Wahabism. Religious leaders from the Deoband school of thought also came and participated in celebrations. Religious leaders from India, Bangladesh, Iran, and many other Islamic countries came to participate in a hundred-year celebration of the party. Despite ideological and political differences party was able to invite delegates from Saudi Arabia and Iran (Dawn, 2019).

JUIF has a close connection with Saudi Arabia. Party believes that the Islamic Military Alliance which is led by Saudi Arabia is a positive move that will give Pakistan a role in Muslim World. Former Pakistan's army chief is head of Islamic Military Alliance. Although JUIF is a religious political party on the left of the military in Pakistan but because of Saudi Arabia partly supports this military alliance. JUIF says the impression that this alliance is against Iran must be dispelled and Pakistan must engage Iran on this issue. Party believes the state must make policy on this issue as political parties just have a role to assist the state. This shows that JUIF does not believe in transnational link with other states and political forces which excludes the role of state (Safi, 2017).

JUIF gave an unprecedented space to minorities, even local Christians were given a stage to speak and share views at three days international gathering in Nowshera. A Christian lady from Baluchistan Asiya Nasir is a senator of JUIF. How independent is she in making her political and social choices that is something else and debatable. But compulsion of the system has changed the ideas and structure of JUIF (A. Nasir, personal communication, December 3, 2019). That is how this research says that Political Islam is changing in Pakistan. Maulana Fazal Ur Rehman openly states that anyone can be a member of JUIF including Shia, Sunni, and non-Muslims. This is changing the character of JUIF which is embracing all others to make them a member of the party. In the past, JUIF was considered a party that has given rise to extremist elements like banned organizations like Sipah-e-Sahaba, Lashkar-e-Jhagvi and Harkat-ul-Ansar and non-Muslims could not be part of party but now party is changing itself. (Safi, 2017).

Whereas in the last few years especially after 9/11 politics of JUIF is more like a liberal-conservative party. Although Party overrated its significances in Pakistan to get engaged with national security institutions for political relevance. But militants rejected the politics and loyalty of JUIF with them and JUIF had to face terrorism of the Pakistani Taliban. The policies of JUIF have been progressive when issues of sovereignty and implementation of sharia were raised by non-state actors. JUIF stood with the state and parliament and even mainstreamed other religious forces under the banner of MMA. The way liberal parties like ANP, PPP, and MQM were targeted by the Taliban after 9/11, the leadership and workers of JUIF were also targeted. Maulana

Fazal Ur Rehman was targeted three times by suicide bombers. Former Deputy Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Abdul Ghafoor Haidri and Former Chief Minister KPK Akram Durrani were targeted in suicide attacks in Baluchistan and KPK. Party leadership in Sindh has also been targeted and killed. JUIF has made it clear that party leaders and workers are being attacked for supporting Pakistan, democracy, and for the welfare of the people. (The Express Tribune, 2018). JUIF created a narrative that was contrary to religious extremism and terrorism. Party trained and equipped thousands of its workers, members, and supports on ideological lines. Its supports and voters have been told to follow guidelines of the state and its principles which portrays political Islam is changing in Pakistan. The traditional view of confessional parties is of hardliners and extremists which changed when party supported state apparatus against extremist elements.

JUIF has categorically stated that it does not have any political bonding with JUH now despite having the same history and ideological understanding. Both parties believe that working in the contemporary state framework is a need of the hour and any transnational link will not be according to rules of contemporary statecraft.

Meanwhile, the organizational structure of JUIF is changing and now the number of members in the Central Executive Committee (Markazi Shoura) is increasing from 45 to 70 (Akbari, 2019). Since the party believes it needs wider public opinion and participation from all quarters and areas is needed for broader decision making. This happened because the party lost an election in 2018 and they want mobilization and re-indoctrination of party ideas in members. Although the party says they have a membership of over three million people which is a sizeable number (Akbari, 2019). While organizational restructuring is going after the 2018 elections and the party is gathering the support of workers, members, students of madrassahs, and voters and creating awareness about the 2018 elections are fake. JUIF knows that its electoral base was KPK and PTI has made inroads there and made provincial government twice. So JUIF is using religious cards where issues of the finality of Prophethood and conspiratorial theories are being used to discredit and destabilize PTI in KPK and at the national level calling them a Western agents. Using religious cards against other progressive political forces is normally done by religious parties to gather support from their workers. But the rise of a third political force in the shape of PTI in KPK and at the national level shows religious forces have failed to make their case and win voters and supporters.

Changing character of JI

JI is an organic creation but it is believed the party has changed its ideological stance on having shariah in the country. It speaks more of sharia in media and for news content

whereas in its manifesto there is less discussion on that (Amin, 2016, p.80). Meanwhile, electoral setbacks and new political entities like PTI in its traditional voter base diminished its political utility. Party believes it lost momentum after 9/11 because new political forces are emerging and unelected forces are influencing the political process (Rehman, 2019). The religious right-wing has been tested and it could not convince its right-wing voter base for gaining electoral support after 2007. Party believes keeping supporters and voters engaged and charged on sharia is necessary and they keep doing this and their support base is large. JI did not support the armed struggle of Sufi Muhammad in Swat as that was a critical time for party supporters and loyalists. Party stood with the state and its institutions for making the state supreme entity.

One important factor which has brought ideological changes in JI is the de-intellectualization of the party. There has been no one after Maulana Maududi who came up with intellectual thoughts like him. There are scholars in the party but they could not intellectually replace Maududi. Meanwhile, all those who were members of the party remained stagnant in terms of ideological development. Party could not enhance its ideological base and could not maintain political relevance in emerging political discourse. It took them much time to understand changing national and international environment to adjust their party perspective. This has decreased their political relevance in mainstream politics and in parliamentary political activities.

One such example of de intellectualization and changing character of JI is of Former Amir Munawar Hassan. He became controversial when he declared death of Amir of globally designated terrorist organization ,Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as a martyr and called that be it American or Pakistani soldier who fought with TTP is not a martyr.(Jamal, 2014). Party called such views as personal and not of a party which shows ideological differences among rank and file of the party (M. Aslam, personal communication, January 23, 2020). Party had to change its stance and Munawar Hassan could not be the next Amir which is unprecedented as he was the only Amir who remained in this position for one tenure. So with changing political situation in the country, JI changed its ideological base because of pressure from state institutions and society.

Over the period, political ideas of the party are losing mainstream attention of the society. Party is talking less about Islamic sharia for the state and trying to engage the masses on socio-economic issues. Party speaks of Islamic morality and the Islamic banking system but since it can only bring changes with an electoral majority in parliament so it has limitations. Although the party supports parliamentary legislation and stands against military intervention in politics when JI was part of MMA it supported Gen (R), Pervaiz Musharraf, in many ways including giving him an extension

for wearing uniform through parliament (Dawn, 2004). JI is under leadership of Siraj Ul Haq is becoming anti status quo party and challenging role of unelected institutions in politics.

JI is considered a grass-root political party having religious and conservative support. Support of the party for Indian-occupied Kashmir and Palestine has never been questionable. JI emerged single religious voice which spoke against India's unconditional act on 5th August 2019 of revoking article 370 and 35 A in Occupied Kashmir and held countrywide protests. Amir of JI was included in Prime Minister's special committee to look into the situation after India unilaterally changed Occupied Kashmir's status. Party turned out to be the only religious political party from opposition to be made part of this because of its commitment to Kashmir cause and street power. This is an unprecedented move and also a recognition of the JI position on Kashmir (The News, 2019). Meanwhile, JUI F leader Maulana Fazal ur Rehman who remained head of parliamentary Kashmir committee for ten years could not develop his credentials on the Kashmir cause. This is because of the fundamental approach to Kashmir issues of both parties. JI has its support for Kashmir because it considers its unfinished agenda of British partition and Muslim lands which have been under the control of non-Muslims must get freedom including Palestine. Whereas JUIF has taken political advantage of the Kashmir issue for engaging conservative voter base which thinks the Kashmir issue is a dispute between Hindus and Muslims.

Party has an anti-imperialism agenda as part of manifesto as well as expression through media. It is a rare religious party in Pakistan which supports Hamas and speaks for Palestine and takes a very hard line on Israel. This makes JI a natural partner with Iran and takes the party away from the Arab States whose position has been compromised on the Palestine issue. Although the party has street power but when Israel changed its capital from Tal Aviv to Jerusalem, right-wing Islamic parties including JI took some time to mobilize people. Although Americans and Israelis were expecting an abrupt reaction. But conservative voter base in Pakistan is not that much active because religious parties are facing domestic challenges of political relevance in electoral and mainstream politics.

Despite the fact, a party is losing its political value and electoral support although it became part of a larger political force like MMA in the 2018 elections. JI does not believe in violent revolution or any kind of totalitarian change in society. Party believes that for the broader stability of society a strong socio-economic order is needed. For this moral economy is needed which is a model of development based on the capitalist economy but having Islamic reference (Amin, 2014, p.83). JI is interested in a weaker form of sharia where women and minorities are incorporated in the national apparatus.

Jl and JUI F are working together and keeping political Conesus other than MMA as well. Political platforms like Milli Yekjehti Council (MYC) brought religious harmony and became a source of dialogue for religious parties. It was established in 1995 to be instrumental in reducing sectarian tensions among religious groups. (Amin, 2014, p.84). Jl is also a member of this political conglomeration and party along with JUIF tried to shift the Islamic ideology of religious parties from hardcore religious sharia model to issues that are linked to identity, economy, and society (Amin, 2014, p.83). Jl emerged as a progressive force although its political and electoral space kept shirking which is changing the character of political Islam in Pakistan.

While Jl is changing its ideological base in Pakistan so its transnational partners have changed their ideological commitment. Jl had the same ideological commitment before the partition of India and Pakistan but after the partition, it changed its ideology keeping in view the state's social contract. Jl in India seeks secularism and kept making appeals to the government for secularism to protect the rights of the Muslims (Iqtedar, 2011, p.55). Whereas in Pakistan Islamists opposed secularism. This shows how Islamists shift their political ideology knowing ground realities and adjust their ideological and political objectives. One can analyze confessional parties are not hardcore Islamists who believe in enforcing sharia but they want to give reference to their political activities. Misconception about confessional parties like Jl has been they want to grab power to bring the hard face of Islam through parliamentary politics. In such times when political institutions are attracting youth and the literacy rate is comparatively increasing. Confessional parties are changing their ideological and political stance in Pakistan keeping in mind ground realities and overall global political realities.

There has been an impact of leftist groups, youth, social media, and mainstream electronic media on Islamists (Iqtedar, 2011, p.56). Which has changed the conservative stance of Islamists and societal pressure in urban centers and mainstream media and social media reach in rural areas have changed Islamists methodology of work. Islamists were not ready to face such technological challenges. Forces of globalization which normally have been criticized by Islamists calling them western imperialist inventions and also interventions in Islamic societies changed the mindset of society. Since Islamists are vying for power with other political forces they are adopting new means of communication to keep themselves relevant. That is why Jl has a huge social media infrastructure at the party level and all members of a party using social media to make their reach to the masses. Political Islam is changing and Islamists like Jl are changing their political strategies to make their voices heard.

Conclusion

This research has examined that how confessional parties in Pakistan have developed democratic and institutional credentials. They believe changes in national apparatus can only be included through democratic means. Despite the demand for a sharia-based political structure, both JI and JUI-F avoid bringing sharia through unconstitutional means. Their electoral base has reduced because of the de-intellectualization of political thought in view of the contemporary tendencies in societies. Political Islam is changing and shrinking in Pakistan because of the lack of the religious-political diversity and lack of participation of the youth in mainstream politics. Political Islam is changing because the society is not conducive to orthodox Islam whereas confessional parties have long tried to bring conservative Islam through political means in policymaking. While society in Pakistan is traditional and culturally ultra-conservative in general but not in a religious sense with some possible exceptions. So at times western researchers and thinkers mix religious conservatism with social conservative ideas. Pakistan is moving forward and Islamists have to incorporate modern tools of globalization and communication for making their local, regional and global outreach. The use of communication tools and technology in terms of social media and mainstream media has also exposed Islamists both positively and negatively to society making their case more challenging in the context of the emerging youth population in Pakistan.

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