Ethnocentric Tribal Conflict in Former Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan

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Abstract

Militancy in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan is generally investigated in terms of socio-political and religious differences among different militant groups. However, ethnocentric roots of the combatant groups are not considered as a significant basis for the conflict in those areas. When socio-political and religious goals of various groups are in harmony, ethnic identity of the groups still can be an important factor of conflict among them. In this context this research has attempted to explore the constituting factors of various groups in order to understand the dynamics of operational discrepancies that prevail in the seven regions of FATA. This paper has attempted to answer the following

questions. Firstly, what has been the internal set of causes for startup of militancy in the region? Secondly, what has been the joint appeal of these militant outfits? Thirdly, what separates them from each other? Lastly, how do these groups make inroads in socio-political set up of FATA? For sake of theoretical coherence Ibn Khaldun's concept of Asabiyyah is applied in an order to trace the ethnic bondage's strength over ideological appeal.

Key words: Militancy, FATA, Asabiyyah, Pashtunwali, Taliban, Pakistan.

Introduction

Ethnic divides in Pashtun dominated Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have been an important cause of conflict in the region. Although, political scenario has been changed after Pakistan's successful military operation, FATA's merger with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province and the US peace deal with Afghan Taliban, possibilities of militancy based on ethnic differences still exist. It is pertinent to note that a strong sense of Asabiyyah is prevalent in Pashtun tribes who strongly believe in values based on Pashtunwali. Analysis of post 9/11 militant groups, their support bases and targets, socio-cultural causes of militancy, and several agreements with state can help to understand the ethnic fault lines in the tribal area.

These dynamics reveal deep-seated but highly problematic militancy problems in Pakistan's tribal regions. Therefore, the central objectives of this paper are to find the causes of the origin of the militancy in the tribal regions of Pakistan, militants' method and forms of recruitment, and the differences in ideology among the various militants. Furthermore, the objective is to examine the methods and the ways in which these militants penetrate the socio-political configuration of FATA.

This article is divided into three parts. The first provides a survey of previous literature that includes an explanation of the

concept of "militant ethnocentrism", describes the requirement of the concept of militancy and Asabiyyah. The Asabiyyah model is used to assess the strength of ethnic bondage in ideological appeal. The second gives an overview of the geography of the region and the political topography of FATA. In particular, it identifies important militant groups. The final section, the most important of all, provides an empirical analysis and seeks research objectives. Essentially it means that it critically analyses the origin and evolution of ethnic conflict in FATA, giving meaning to the inter and intra-tribal conflict in FATA, and the nature of the conflict in FATA.

Militant Ethnocentrism

Militant Ethnocentrism is manifested in one's views about other cultures as inferior to their own and force their beliefs and values to others. Whereas, ethnocentrism has been defined as a strong sense of ethnic group's interconnectedness and self-coherence that exert inside the group expressions of liking, supremacy, pureness, and manipulation. Such undertaking reflects that in-group is more important than other groups. Following the ethnic group sociality intragroup expressions such as devotion and group cohesion assume that the in-group itself is more important than its individual members.[i]

Militancy

Militancy can be defined as an antagonistic act of a group or its members aiming to support an aggressive cause.[ii] It is actually the portrayal of aggression, which is based mostly on self-created agenda. In this context, a person involved in a belligerent act can be regarded as a militant. According to Philip Bobbitt militancy is the expression of unfulfilled demands, awareness of which propagated due to autocratic regime, which otherwise could be addressed under democratic rule.[iii] Iram Khalid asserts that militancy is expressed in religious to ethnic and political dimensions.[iv] To her in any case, militancy is an indication of offense against the inconsistencies and hardships created and produced by the institutional frameworks. On account of the socio-political or

denial of ethnic identity, such components are urged to advance their separatist radical plan with scary and coercive means.

Tribal Societies: Quest for Survival, Security and Identity

Tribal societies are based upon group coherence as well as group rivalries, following the symbolism of religion and shared identity. Raymond Millen writes, for example, that Hobbesian theory explains that the search for scarce livelihood resources causes conflict in tribal societies.[v] Tribesmen may become adversaries for same property. Thus, rivalries within or outside the group continue, as in the case of the FATA tribal groups. Richard Tapper argues that Durrani Pashtuns have been in continuous conflict with other ethnic groups over resources including pastures and farmlands.[vi] Moreover, Richard Tapper asserts that asset jealousy and the requirement for security have required aggregate guard of individuals and assets.[vii] This reared a solid faithfulness to the tribal gathering; a steadfastness that turned into an essential quality in the endurance of the tribe. This portrays the social association of tribal gatherings.

Further, Meirdav Ram-Mishali discusses the prevalence of ethnic and sectarian aspects in the nature of political leadership and frameworks of tribal groups.[viii] This hints the core of politics of identity which also characterizes the ethnic dimension of the tribal networks. Ethnic identity and political fidelity are the markers of tribal power ties of family relationship and patrilineal descent. Tribes emphasize the individualistic, moral and well knitted inward group dimensions of status. In this context, tribal feelings are internalized by the persons. Hence the group feelings are nurtured and internalized through tribal modes of association and attachment. Kinship affiliations are concrete among the tribal inhabitants, and this is reinforced via the Arabic notion of '*Qawm*'(tribe). Central to this notion is the idea that individual members have a mutual bonding due to agnatic lineage having a common geographical territory and social companionship.

Asabiyyah: Group Solidarity in FATA Society

For conceptual and theoretical framework and understating of the tribal culture and ties in the FATA region of Pakistan this study is based on the Ibn Khaldun's concept of Asabiyyah. Asyiqin Ab Halim reflects that Asabiyyah is rooted from '*asab*' which means to bind or to fix.[ix] She quoting Faud Baali[x] asserts that feeling of Asabiyyah binds an individual into a group. Furthermore in Faud Baali's words Asabiyyah is socio-cultural bond to manifest the strength of social groups. [xi] For Thomas Barfield the concept of Asabiyyah is adjoined with *Qawm* (tribe).[xii] Hence, as the result of Asabiyyah, a strong bonding based on kinship or patron client relationships are developed among members of a tribe. Such ethnic or tribal bonds, during warfare warrant communal aid and cooperation in contrast to interest groups employed by the state(s). Tribal system is overwhelming in Pakistan and Afghanistan among the Pakhtun ethnic group and particularly visible in the Pak-Afghan border areas.[xiii] Nuclear Family the phenomenal unit of tribal system extends from individual family to escalation of one tribal mass unit.[xiv] In the case of ethnic groups as a practical expression of Asabiyyah, Donald Horowitz describes that ethnic groups share racial differences making up the combination of language, religion, color, appearance and common origin.[xv] Thus, ethnicity accepts groups whether due to the distinction of color, religion and language, in the same vein of tribes, races, nationalities and casts.

Mishali-Ram is of the view that cohesion emerging from a common identity of members of a group is very strong and makes those members perceive their common interests.[xvi] Consequently, presence of many such groups whose individual members share a common identity, provide the basis for the existence of diverse but internally cohesive groups within the state. In this scenario, group identity becomes a factor for collective response of the group in order to differentiate the in-group members from the other groups on the basis of rejection, segregation and grievance. In such a society, for members ethnicity is more important than the social or political appeal. Political organization in the form of state requires its citizens to

look beyond their narrower ethnic identities. However, in their natural pursuit for group cohesion, groups may challenge state legitimacy and authority which in their opinion is not giving a due share of resources to them.

The notion of Asabiyyah, similarly, relates to Pashtun concept *Pashtunwali* or *pakhtunwali*. Blood relations are tied to shame and honor. In case, a violation of any code will possibly, lead to revenge and an unending conflict. Asabiyyah as predominantly prevalent in Arab tribal cultures, in the same vein *Pashtunwali* is pillar of the tribal foundation of FATA. *Pashtunwali* is practiced through *Melmastia,*[xvii] *Badal,*[xviii] *Nanawatay,*[xix] *Nang,*[xx] and *Namus.*[xxi] Solidarity, mutual support, shame and revenge determine social order and individual responsibility. This code consists of core elements of *Badal* and *Hamsaya.*[xxii] The protection of *namus* even unto demise is mandatory for each Pashtun.[xxiii] Akbar S. Ahmed's interpretation of *Pashtunwali* or *pakhtunwali* represents the idea of *Tarboorwali*, truly, the ill will of sibling's children (or cousin-contention), as a critical constrain in deciding societal structure, since it restrains the improvement of political pecking order.[xxiv] As cousins vie for rare assets in a patrilineal society, coalitions shape that balance those with an excessive amount of desire, re-setting up the social adjust. Cousins go up against cousins, yet even with an outer adversary, where there is an obvious family or tribal other option to browse; the nearer kinfolk might be bolstered.

The society is partitioned into tribes in FATA. An approximate system of enumerating the tribes puts the number at around 60; the number is around 400 including all sub-groups.[xxv] *Pashtunwali* is the pre-Islamic Pashtun set of accepted rules which directed the intra and inter-tribal progression. It is more an arrangement of standards than systematized law. Respect and valor possess a focal topic in this custom, alongside undying devotion to the tribe, and furious restriction to occupation. However, the effects of *Pashtunwali* on social dynamics in FATA have sometimes been exaggerated. It may be more fruitful to try to understand the FATA society through the lens of social solidarity which exists in group structures like

tribes and clans. For this, it may be relevant to refer back to an early Muslim social scientist Ibn Khaldun, whose treatise the *Muqaddimah* has been celebrated as one of the most profound works in social dynamics.[xxvi]

Khaldunian logic gives social solidarity an empowering and hindering impact which basically makes an open advantage in individuals meeting up by improving the limit of tribal gathering [xxvii]. When a tribal society like FATA adheres to its group values at the levels of the tribe, clan, family, and nation, there is a conscious effort at the level of the members of the particular group to try and approximate their value to an ideal set of behavior, which has been transmitted intact by preceding generations. Khaldun called this group solidarity named Asabiyyah.

Geography of the Region and Political Topography

In the wake of twenty-fifth amendment to the constitution of Pakistan in 2018, seven former agencies and six frontier regions of FATA were merged into the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Bajour is in the north, Mohmand, Khyber and Orakzai in the centre, whereas North and South Waziristan and Kurram are the districts in the south of FATA region.

Kohat (former Kohat Frontier Region) district is adjacent to Peshawar. Other districts include Bannu, Lakki, Tank and Dera Ismail Khan [xxviii]. The total area of FATA is 27,220 sq kilometers and according to 2017 Census its total population is 5,001,676.[xxix]

Ethnic Profile of FATA Agencies

There are various Pashtun Tribes living in seven former FATA agencies. Details are provided in the following table:

	Name of Agency/District	Major Tribes	Other Details
1	Khyber	Afridi, Shinwari, Mulagoori	Established in 1879

		and Shalmani	
2	Kurram	Turi, Bangash, Parachinari and Masozai	Both Shia and Sunni sects are the residents of this area. This agency was created in 1892.
3	South Waziristan	Mehsud, Ahmadzai and Wazir	This is the largest territory of all tribal agencies.
4	North Waziristan	Uthmanzai, Wazir, and Dawar	Second largest territory of all tribal agencies.
5	Mohmand	Mohmand, Safi and Uthmankhel	Created in 1951
6	Bajour	Uthmankhel and Tarakani	Established in 1973. Smallest territory in all tribal agencies.
7	Orakzai	Orakzai and Bangash	Established in 1973. Population has both Shia and Sunni Sects.

Important Militant Groups

Since 1980s Pakistan has been engaged with warlike situations in Afghanistan and Pashtun tribes living in FATA have been entangled in these situations. Following table contains information about important militant groups in FATA:

Group	Area of operation	Target Groups	Assistance Base
Tehrik-i-Taliban	North & South	Pakistan Military	Mehsud Tribes,

Pakistan	Waziristan, Orakzai Agency, Khyber Agency, Southern Punjab	Personals, Civilians	Foreign Militants
Mullah Nazir Group	South Waziristan	Pakistan and US Military, Pakistani Civilians	Wazir Tribe (Wana), Haqqani Network
Turkistan Bhittani Group	South Waziristan	TTP, US Forces	Pakistan Military
Haqqani Network	North Waziristan	US Forces	Zardan Tribes (Khost Province, Afghanistan), Al-Qaeda, Mainly Own Strategy
Gul Bahadur Group	North Waziristan	Pakistani Forces (North Waziristan) and US Forces	Wazir and Daur Tribes Miram Shah, North Waziristan
Lashkr e Jhangvi (North)	Tribal Territories especially Kurram & Orakazai (Shia Population)	Shias, Pakistan Military, Western Nationals in Pakistan	Anti- Militant Shia Groups from Punjab
Lashkr e	Khyber	Pakistani	Hard Line Deo

Islam	Agency	Civilians	Bandi Sect
Ansar ul Islam	Khyber Agency	US Forces	Less Hard Liner Deo Bandi & Brelvi Sects
Tehrik e Nifaze Sharirat e Muhammadi	Swat Valley, attempts to influence Dir	Pakistani Civilians (Government Figures, Teachers, Military personals)	Disillusioned member of Pakistani Religious and Political Parties

Source: IRIN News[xxx]

Origin and Evolution of Ethnic Conflict in FATA

Since the early days of Islam, jihad has been an important element of Muslim resistance against the enemies. Similarly, appeal of jihad as the obligation of each Muslim beyond the ethnic identity attempted to pull the tribal society of FATA to a different basis of loyalty and obligation towards a wider group called *Ummah*. Jihad as an obligation was actually propagated by religious pioneers, who did not belong to tribal traditions of FATA. Waging a holy war named Jihad is not a decision of a private individual and is announced by a designated authority in a Muslim state. The appeal for Jihad addresses every Muslim in his individual capacity and not on a collective basis of his tribe or ethnicity. However, the Asabiyyah, the Khaldunian concept of social cohesion applies to the tribal groups where individual members feel themselves tied to their respective tribes on the basis of ethnic kinships. The concept of Asabiyyah distinguished from the *Ummah* helps understand a valid dimension of tribal warfare.[xxxi] The Militancy in FATA as was witnessed since 1980s and more specifically in post 9/11 period certainly did not grew overnight, rather it has been rooted in the history of political dismay resulting from Muslims role in international politics over the centuries.[xxxii]

1970s was the time period when the possibility of Pashtunistan, a proposed homeland for Pashtuns on ethnic basis thrived in the psyches of Pakistani and Afghan nationalists. In 1973, Daud Khan returned to power as President of Afghanistan, after overthrowing his ruling cousin Zahir Shah. During his first stint as Prime Minister of Afghanistan, he had established close relations with New Delhi and Moscow. Furthermore, he had a strong bias against Pakistan and was a strong supporter of Pashtunistan. Under Daud tutelage, Kabul trained numerous Pashtun and Baloch youth to destabilize Pakistan.[xxxiii]

In the wake of Soviet invasion, Afghanistan witnessed the strong inter-tribal rivalry as the Afghan Communist party split into two factions: *Khalaq* (flag) and *Parcham* (Banner). *Khalaq* were Ghilzai Pashtuns, hailed from rural areas, claimed to truly represent the Afghan working class. They were mostly in charge of armed forces of the country and were revolutionary in their political and social agenda. They longed for modifying the customary *zar, zan* and *zamin* (gold, woman and land) beliefs of the *Pashtunwali*. Raised concerns for universal literacy, women in the education, imposition of land reforms, moderate Islamic influence and removal of the veil. In 1978 Khalaq led the coup against President Daud's (a Muhammadzai) government in order to end Muhammadzai rule supported by Durrani tribes.[xxxiv]

The *Parcham* faction generally included Muhammadzai and Durrani tribe Pashtuns joined with Dari-talking non-Pashtun elites (for the most part Tadjik). They guaranteed to speak to the progressive elites. They were mainly based in Kabul and in control of most of the administration organs and capacities. *Parcham* were in favour of a gradual progress in the socialization and liberation of the people, aiming for a more stable and drawn out period marked with less savagery. They supported Daud in his 1973 upset against King Zahir Shah (a Durrani of the Barakzai) and after that bolstered President Najibullah (a Ghilzai of the Suleiman Khel) until his topple.[xxxv]

Hasan Abbas notes during war of Afghanistan and Soviet Union FATA became a springboard for jihad and later turned

into a sanctuary by various warring Afghan warlords to pursue their power struggle.[xxxvi] Extremism escalated in FATA due to active support of Zia-ul-Haq to Saudi Arabia and United States. The Soviet War in Afghanistan (1979-1989) resulted in the one million deaths of Pashtuns and nearly 6 million of the war affected Afghans migrated to different parts of the world. An estimated 3.5 million migrated to Pakistan, 2 million to Iran and the rest to other parts of the world. Those who migrated to Pakistan were settled mainly in the FATA generally invited by their Pashtun kith and kin based on the *Pashtunwali* precepts of *nanawati* and *malmastia*.[xxxvii] In this migration move and ongoing war in Afghanistan, Zahid Hussain notes that important leaders of Taliban and Al-Qaeda which included Mullah Mohammad Omar, Mullah Dadullah, Mullah Obeidullah, Jalaluddin Haqqani, Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden moved to the tribal areas of Pakistan.[xxxviii] These migrants included Afghan fighters which were aided by Arabs, Chechens, Uzbeks, East-Asians, and Sudanese insurgents. Al-Qaeda's Arab leaders were the wealthiest of all the insurgents, who paid millions of dollars to the tribal chiefs of their host territories in FATA. Most of Al-Qaida and Taliban leaders took refuge in South Waziristan where they were protected mainly by the Ahmedzai and Wazir tribes, who after a prolonged engagement with their guests became sympathetic to them.[xxxix]

According to David Carment and Patrick James conflict may be a rational choice but it also involves identity based on other socio-cultural factors such as culture, traditions, values, and beliefs.[xl] Identity can be a valid basis for conflict in a society as it distinguishes people of one tribe from that of others. Tribal differences, competition, discrimination, prejudice, and mobilization may lead to an ongoing struggle among tribes to hold power in a tribal society. Ethnicity and religion are two more powerful factors that occupy the central place in the whole system of beliefs and values and certainly help in the construction of people's identity. Ethnic ties fused with the religious association firmly consolidate a groups identity resulting in enhanced group cohesion. When strong cultural values are mixed with extremist religious views, group

solidarity is enhanced manifold. In this context, an individual's loyalty to the in-group not only becomes a source of honour in this world but also a way of salvation in the hereafter. In this case if the wider national collective identity is not compatible with the tribal group identity, such group cohesion in tribes may oppose the collective national identity undermining the state's sovereign authority. This has been the case in FATA where religious clergy has been influential in the name of jihad particularly in post 1979 period. This infusion of religious and tribal identity in FATA has enhanced the group solidarity of its Pashtun tribes which at times found themselves opposed to the national identity being Pakistani especially in post 9/11 period. Pakistan's decision to join US led War on Terror was perceived by Pashtun tribes of FATA opposed to both their religious beliefs and their cultural codes based on *Pashtunwali*.

Making Sense of Inter and Intra Tribal Conflict in FATA

The nature of conflict in FATA has generally been explained in very simplified and over generalized manner, by characterizing it as religiously motivated terrorism, a tribal insurgency, or a violent criminal activity of thugs and the mafia.[xli] An informed and realistic explanation of the conflict in FATA should be based on multiple and overlapping factors. If the tribal culture and values placed at the centre, then tribes of FATA could be seen at conflict with state, with other tribes, and with state-backed tribal militants. It is pertinent to note that in case of both inter and intra tribal conflicts resistance against invading powers, whether British or Pakistanis, has been a recurring pattern in FATA.

Zeman quotes Jeffery B. White's[xlii] convincing identification of base elements of tribal warfare in FATA region of Pakistan.[xliii] He describes that the elements of tribal warfare manifest the motivations of tribes, characteristics of clans and core methods of adjoining and association under the words of "irregular warfare". For White the tribal warfare is composed of the following:

1. It is a form of tribal politics, on the basis of the politics of feud, betrayal of tribes, old debts, and narrow economic interests.

2. Tribes mostly have loosely defined organizations having amorphous order of battle, with specific geographical boundaries, as they prefer to fight on their own grounds, and traditional/local structure of control or leadership.

3. Tribes have special mechanisms of attacks including raids, skirmishes, with weapons of rifle, machineguns, mortars, and mines. However, they do not seek decisive battles and prefer to engage in small wars.

4. Tribal powers maintain a strategic distance from operations of augmented degree, span, and force. Tribesmen move under the directions of their supreme authority or leader in the context of existing dangers. Their course of action drives its legitimacy from their cultural values and experience on the basis of their history. Their possession of weapons and their skills to use the same make them powerful insurgents.

Pashtuns, having around 60 tribes and 350-400 sub-tribes and further divided on the basis of multiple languages and dialects they speak, are regarded as one of the largest ethnic groups in the contemporary world.[xliv] However, *Pashtunwali* the traditional tribal code considered the true basis for tribal identity and social structure, works as a spine for the divided Pashtuns. The rigid and non-negotiable core values of the Pashtun code include honor, chivalry, and kinship loyalties. Those values are applied outwards: from individual to the family; to clan; to tribe, and then to the major ethnic group. Tribal values are considered more important than the religious and national laws. Killing of fellow tribesmen requires revenge. Hospitality and providing security to the refugees or guests are also mandatory.[xlv]

In post 9/11 period, all those tribal groups which were also religiously motivated challenged the writ of Pakistani state by

disturbing the law and order situation. Pakistan's decision to support US led War on Terror against Al-Qaida and Taliban was not compatible with the religious beliefs and tribal values of tribes living in FATA. US air strikes especially the drone attacks in those areas further infuriated the Pashtun tribes which resulted in the significant rise in the terrorist activities within Pakistan. Pakistani army allegedly was able to make some understanding with some of the groups like Muqami Tehrik-i-Taliban, generally referred as good Taliban, to direct their efforts towards US forces in Afghanistan. However, there were other actors like Tehreek Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan which continued to fight against Pakistan.[xlvi] The US attack on Afghanistan made the Al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban to flee and take refuge in FATA. Al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban's presence in FATA further encouraged the militant operations against Pakistan's civil and military targets.[xlvii]

The militant activities started from North and South Waziristan soon after spread to rest of Pashtun areas. Later on, militant wings expanded their activities in Punjab seriously affecting the peace and order of the state.[xlviii] The militant aspect of tribal mindset has been contained by the military in Pakistan, but a hide and seek game is going on due to the lack of understanding about the strategic and war patterns of militants and tribal warfare. The spread of militant outfits in the rest of the parts of the country and the support base of the militants from the tribal areas has made the militant groups fluid in their nature. Furthermore because of strong ethnic ties, common cultural values, and particular religious motivation the peace arrangements between government and some tribes were not respected by the later in true letter and spirit.

Overview of Agreements with State after 9/11

The Shakai Agreement concluded on 24 April 2004 is regarded as beginning of peace agreements with tribal militants after 9/11.[xlix] This agreement was reached between a young Taliban militant leader in his twenties Nek Muhammad Wazir and Pakistani military. The peace deal was actually to stop the

fierce fighting started earlier in March 2004 between militants in South Waziristan and Pakistan army. According to agreement Taliban in Pakistan were to stop attacking cross border attacks on US forces in Afghanistan, register the foreign militants under their shelter. In return, Pakistani government was expected to release all Taliban prisoners, pay for the damage due to military operation, and render money to militants to repay their outstanding debts to Al-Qaeda.[1] The peace arrangement could not last more than seven weeks for two reasons. First, the tribal elders did not agree with the agreement and secondly Nek Muhammad refused to handover foreign militants to Pakistani authorities. Nek Muhammad was killed by the US drone strikes on 19 June 2004. Consequently, militancy was resumed and Pakistani military responded accordingly. Although, Nek Muhammad violated the peace agreement, he was seen as a heroic figure by the people of South Waziristan.[li] Tribal principle of *Nanawety* required the tribesmen to protect the foreign militants under their shelter.

Srargoha Peace Deal concluded in February 2005 was yet another of its kind between Government of Pakistan and Mehsud militants. Since, the militancy was on the increase and after Ahmadzai Wazir tribe Mehsuds of South Waziristan, the government was expecting to restrict the expansion of Taliban insurgency.[lii] According to deal Pakistani authorities agreed to pay compensation to the militants for their damaged homes, Baitullah Mehsud and his men would not be targeted, foreign militants working with them would not be handed over to Pakistan's authorities, and they were not required to surrender either. In return, the militants were expected to stop attacking on Pakistani targets and deny shelter to foreign militants.[liii] Government failed to utilize the Wazir-Mehsud tribal rivalry. Consequently, later on two tribal groups joined hands, and Baitullah Mehsud and Haji Omar Ahmadzai Wazir publicly announced the continuation of Jihad against the US-led forces in Afghanistan. On August 18, 2007 the deal was breached by Baitullah Mehsud in reaction to military frequent movement in the area. Here again the Pashtun sentiment of accepting no control played and tribal socialization and upbringing was visible. The failure of the deal made Baitullah powerful in the

days to come and he ultimately established Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). In August 2009 Baitullah Mehsud was finally killed in South Wazirsitan.[liv]

Militancy in FATA continued as the peace agreements failed one after the other. Then government of General Pervez Musharraf planned another deal "Miranshah Peace Accord, 2006". Militant revolt expanded to Uthmanzai Wazirs of North Waziristan. On September 5, 2006 peace deal held with militants of North Waziristan. This time the deal was negotiated and signed by the parties. The promised writ of the government was respected but only for some months and militants somehow resumed their collaboration with foreigners and continued with their cross-border militant movements. Militants in-fact used time provided by the deals in order "to regroup and re-organize themselves".[lv] Consequently, the peace deal was finally breached in July 2007. The development continued and militants gained strengths in spite of military operations.

Naveed Hussain notes that before 2002 the semi-autonomous Territory of FATA was in cordial relations with Government of Pakistan.[lvi] He emphasized in his article; "Militancy or a Tribal Backlash" that according to *Azizwale* (clanship) a code of *Pakhtunwali*, any tribesman is fully supported by the clan even though he is wrong. Presently if a Mehsud, Wazir, or a Dawar is assaulted in South or North Waziristan organizations, his kindred tribesmen are bound by *Pakhtunwali* to offer their assistance. This happened in 2002 when General Musharraf sent tanks into Waziristan to battle the Taliban and al-Qaeda and their tribal accomplices. The response, by the general's own confirmation, transformed into a "people's movement".[lvii]

The Mehsuds and the Wazirs, known for their bleeding quarrels, have constantly joined to battle remote aggressors or anybody testing their way of life. What's more, then they also considered Pakistani troops as "aggressors" in their territory. *Pakhtunwali* warrants "*badl*" (revenge) for each slaughtering. This implies that the Taliban's positions would continue swelling with the murdering of every honest tribesman

believing that the "enemy's enemy is your friend". For example, in April 2007, the situation was further aggravated after attack on a Shia procession killing at least 50 people, in Kurram. The conflict was regarded as tribal warfare, took the sectarian dimension between the Turi Shias, and Bangash Sunni clans. The former had administrative control of Parachinar, whereas later were patronized by the Punjabi Deobandi Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP).[lviii] TTP leader Hakimullah Mehsud, who was known for his violent anti Shia movements in Kurram was also active in this agency.[lix] The Lashkar-e-Islami also got involved in Kurram. Thousands of both Shia and Sunni Muslims have been executed or injured, resulting in the segregation of the Shia-dominated North and Sunni overwhelmed South.

However, J. M. Weinstein is of the view that a militant group's violent activities and the nature of the organization are determined by their initial economic and social capabilities or endowments.[lx] Weinstein's argument helps understand the nature of FATA insurgency. Militancy in the tribal areas can actually be linked with Pashtun movement in those areas. The militants and people in general both in majority belong to Sunni sect. Most of the time they belong to same ethnic origin, hail from same tribe or sub-tribe. Consequently, the shared ethnic identity and ideological beliefs result in their higher degree of social cohesion and solidarity which is then exploited by the militants. For instance, Pashtun nationalism and slogans of Jihad have been used to justify their militancy and to get popular support for the same. Whether it is sectarian violence, inter-tribal conflict, or tribal conflict with state, in all cases ethnic ties and religious appeals are used by the tribal militants of FATA.[lxi]

The Nature of Conflict in FATA

For an external actor, while connecting with tribal groups, risks exist of being entangled into indigenous conflicts. Coordination between the parties may result in the bargain of objectives. If the objectives are compatible, the external agent may become a partner of a local tribe. However, in case the external actor(s)

have different aims than that of local tribes, such external actors may be perceived as a threat to the tribal culture and ideology.

[62] The calculated affiliations of a group or tribe both inward and outward are explained by Roy[63] which is also quoted by Zeman:[64]

> They understand the situation better, and they are capable of abrupt actions and changes of policy that upset the foreigners' goals and sensibilities.... [there is] the risk is of becoming an 'accomplice' of the locals, at least in the eyes of the opposing factions; an accomplice can soon become a target. The outsider also can be quickly jettisoned in the interests of the locals. In these murky situations, it is difficult for the alien elements to match the footwork of their allies.[65]

Talat Masood writes that local militant groups have varying interests, for example, conflict in North and South Waziristan can also be understood in religious and ideological context.[66] In Khyber Agency, he notes that drug mafia, smugglers, and local criminals were involved in criminal and rebel activities. Orakzai and Bajaur consist of rebels motivated by both ideology and criminality. Shuja Nawaz and Arnaud De Borchgrave are of the view that in Mohmand and Khyber, the control of local markets, taxes on commercial activities, and access to other criminal enterprises are some of the important causes of the local conflict.[67]

The Pakistani Taliban movement has been divided into two ideological camps. One of the factions which associates itself to

al-Qaeda targeted Pakistani state institutions particularly army and fought against the US in Afghanistan as a second priority. Militants like Baitullah Mehsud, Hakimullah Mehsud and Wali-ur-Rahman represented such factions. The other group included those Pakistani Taliban including Mullah Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur[68] who associated themselves with Afghan Taliban and were supposedly engaged in fighting against the US in Afghanistan. Those "good Taliban" eventually left their alliance with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) or at least did not agree with the strategy of attacking Pakistan Army. The two factions of Pakistani Taliban were not monolithic in their nature and for multiple times were reported to be engaged in infighting. For example, Mangal Bagh who fought against Pakistan Army but was also an enemy of Baitullah Mehsud.[69]

Johnson and Mason are of the view that militancy in FATA is actually grounded in the history of the region, where from Muallah Hadda to the Fakir of Ipi, many charismatic leaders with religious appeal were able to challenge the writ of the government through armed resistance while mobilizing their fellow tribesmen.[70] Likewise, Akbar S. Ahmed also mentions a similar but recent case of Maulvi Noor Mohammad, the Mullah of Waziristan in 1970s.[71] According to Hassan Abbas a strong element of tribal conflict can be traced in Waziri and Mehsud tribes in their decision to fight against Pakistan and its army after the later attacked FATA in 2002.[72] He is also of the view that the actions of Muqami Tehrik-e-Taliban in Waziristan especially by Mullah Nazir and Hafiz Gul Bahadur to safeguard the interests of Wazir tribes were actually based on the intertribal conflict.[73] In fact, the Waziri Alliance was a response to balance against Baitullah Mehsud and his foreign partners, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Consequently, in 2009, actors like Qari Zainuddin Mehsud and Haji Turkistan Bhittani and local tribal militias in Swat were supported by Pakistani administrative officials to fight against "bad" Taliban. Similarly, some local tribal militias were also facilitated by Pakistan in Mohmand Agency earlier in 2007 and later in Bajur.[74]

There is also a kind of unprofessed class fighting aspect of militancy too, which Nawaz and Borchgrave depict as a conflict between *kashar* (poor, young and from humble lineage) and *mashar* (tribal elders and powerful).[75] Afghan war during 1980s facilitated socio-economic development in Wazir tribes causing emergence of new "tribal business visionaries" having more access to assets and capability to challenge traditional patterns of tribal leadership.[76] The process of change further accelerated after 9/11eventually made the *kashar* to kill more than 600 tribal elders in order to become politically more relevant. A review of the profiles of some of the prominent militants confirms this fact. For instance, Baitullah Mehsud worked as a bus conductor, Hakimullah Mehsud was a madrassa drop out, Maulvi Omar being a cart vendor used to sell perfumes, Mangal Bagh was a truck driver and involved in car lifting and Mullah Fazalullah worked as operator for ski lifts in Swat before becoming a militant. [77] notes that conflict between Wazir being the dominant tribe and Mehsuds can be understood as ethnic in nature.

Conclusion

Pakistani Taliban Movement can also be seen as warlord politics which is manifested through contest, conflict, and cooperation. Militant infighting has been quite evident due to inter and intra tribal conflict. For example, in Mohmand and Khyber Agencies local militant groups engaged in fighting in order to control criminal networks, local markets, taxes on business activities or over differences in religious beliefs. The decisions are taken according to local tribal needs. Militant leaders normally fight and make those decisions which suit their immediate family, clan, tribal, and economic interests.

The emergence of militant segments of FATA was the response of political deprivation and exclusion. This is not unusual that the tribal bonds and practices are the central value to the people of FATA. From above survey of the history and facts of militancy in FATA, it revealed that this conflict also has political, socio-economic, ethnic and tribal aspects. Inter-tribal conflicts have their histories and need to be jolted through

education and economic and political involvement. Pashtuns are connected through the Pashtunwali, which is practiced from thousands of years in the region and have been internalized by the Pashtuns in their psyches, a sociological order when it is stretched by any foreign or non -Pashtun or even Pashtun force they commit to hyper Asabiyyah. The militancy in FATA can be pacified by the state through engagement of tribal people into the mainstream political process.

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