



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

Ethnic Politics, a Hurdle to National Integration; A Case Study of Pashtun Ethno-Nationalist Politics

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ABSTRACT

Ethno-politics, such as Pashtun ethno-nationalism, is key in defining national identity, politics, and social life. Being areas of major Pashtun concentrations, comprehension of Pashtun ethno-nationalist politics is vital to deal with local and national issues pertaining to identity, state-building, and development. This study explores the intricate relationship between cultural identity and political awareness among the Pashtun community in Pakistan. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, particularly the unwritten code of Pashtunwali, the Pashtuns of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continue to navigate their political identity within the framework of cultural practices such as the Jirga and Hujra. Through qualitative insights gathered from participants, the research highlights how cultural values, rather than religion alone, drive political engagement and ethnic consciousness. While modern influences such as globalization, state media narratives, and educational policy have impacted traditional norms, there is a noticeable rise in political engagement among Pashtun youth. Opinions vary regarding the generational adherence to cultural values, yet a common concern remains the gradual erosion of language and heritage. The study also addresses the effects of longstanding conflict, state marginalization, and military dominance on regional representation, pointing to the need for strengthened local leadership and grassroots governance. Discussions around the idea of a unified Pashtun polity revealed both historical longing and contemporary pragmatism, emphasizing that meaningful autonomy and cultural preservation are key to future stability. The role of education, youth activism, and women's inclusion emerged as critical elements in shaping a more participatory and resilient political identity. Overall, the findings suggest that Pashtun political ethnicity is not static but actively evolving rooted in tradition, yet adapting to modern socio-political dynamics. Empowering local voices, protecting cultural heritage, and promoting inclusive democratic practices are essential steps toward ensuring the community's collective future.

Keywords: Ethnic Politics, National Integration, Pashtun Nationalism, Hujra, Identity Politics.

Introduction

In multiethnic nations such as Pakistan, ethnic politics have been a defining feature of processes of state-building since long. The Pashtuns stand out from its other ethnolinguistic groups by their politics, high degree of identification, and historical independence. A deeper conflict between the centralized nation-state policies and the aspirations of ethnic groups is evidenced in the persistence and evolution of Pashtun ethno-nationalist politics in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and parts of Baluchistan. The current research study challenge highlights the compelling necessity to understand how these identity-based political groups hinder national integration as well as provide a lens into



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

broader questions of representation, justice, and governance (Hashmi, 2017).

The disputed Durand Line, colonial legacies, and battles for political and cultural recognition have all influenced the Pashtun political identity throughout history. Greater autonomy within an amalgamated framework was desired by movements like the Khudai Khidmatgar during the British colonial era and the Awami National Party (ANP) in post-independence Pakistan. However, the effects of the War on Terror in the area, recurrent military operations, and a lack of political accommodation exacerbated Pashtun discontent. The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) has been an effective platform in recent years, bringing attention to concerns of ethnic profiling, militarization, and enforced disappearances. These changes reveal a persistent pattern of conflict, resistance, and misinterpretation (Hayat, 1997; Marwat, 2017; Waseem and Yousaf, 2019).

Both internal and regional factors now impact the Pashtun political environment. Ethno-nationalist narratives have taken up the void left by the state's inability to adequately integrate Pashtun issues into the national framework. However, transnational ties to Afghanistan and international human rights discussions have given these groups fresh credibility. The integration process is made more difficult by the conflict between national allegiance and ethnic identification, which calls into question the inclusiveness of Pakistan's institutions and the federation's character (Aslam et al., 2024).

Literature Review

Siddiqi in his work "The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan" Pakistan's political history is a complex narrative of challenges, triumphs, and transformations since its independence in 1947. The country's early years were marked by significant difficulties in governing both East and West Pakistan, ultimately leading to the military coup of 1958. General Ayub Khan's rule centralized the government, replacing the parliamentary system with a presidential republic. The 1971 separation of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, was a pivotal moment in Pakistan's history, leading to a shift in power dynamics with the Punjabis becoming both politically and numerically dominant. Since then, Pakistan has experienced periods of military rule and democratic governance, with ongoing ethnic conflicts and movements, particularly among the Sindhis, Mohajirs, and Baloch. These groups have struggled for greater representation and autonomy, often facing military action and political repression. Understanding Pakistan's political history is crucial for grasping the complexities of its current political landscape (Siddiqi, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan*, 2012).

Mir in his work "Pashtun Nationalism in Search of Political Space and the State in Pakistan" the article discusses Pakistan's ongoing political turmoil, highlighting the country's struggles with insurgency, terrorism, and ethnic identity. The image of Pakistan as a "pariah state" has been perpetuated due to its alleged support for the Afghan Taliban and export of terrorism to neighboring countries. The Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) has emerged as a response to the state's actions in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), particularly in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The movement embodies the dissatisfaction of Pashtuns over human rights abuses, property destruction, and large-scale displacement. The article also touches upon Pakistan's policy of imposing Islam as the dominant identity, disregarding cultural and ethno-linguistic diversity, which has led to a series of ethno-linguistic assertions. The author argues that this process has been an "engineering" of society and "collectivization" which has often failed to improve the human condition. Overall, the article provides a nuanced analysis of Pakistan's complex political landscape,



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

highlighting the need for a more inclusive and diverse national identity (Mir, 2018; Ullah, 2025).

Sheikh in his work “Pashtun Nationalism: Politics and Talibanization This paper comparatively examines the two phenomena of Pashtun nationalism and Talibanization. Building upon certain anthropological theoretical models, the paper argues that Talibanization is neither an extension of Pashtun nationalism nor does it altogether lack sociological roots. This paper thus theoretically demonstrates how Talibanization is a historical continuity of many militant movements that had arisen in the Frontier region in the past, whenever there was an attack on Pashtun society from external forces and that these movements also used religious idiom, just like the modern-day Taliban, to stir the local people into joining their ranks. Talibanization is, therefore, neither a socio-historically isolated phenomenon nor a new face of Pashtun nationalism. To understand this 'modern' phenomenon, we have to look to the history as well as the socio-religious patterns of Pashtun society rather than nationalist politics that has already reached its 'end' due potentially to the Pashtun people's integration within the political and economic structures of the state (Sheikh s. r., 2016; Ullah, Khan, Shakir, Shah , & Ullah, 2023).

Rafiullah Khan in work “Between Independence and Autonomy: The Changing Landscape of Ethno-nationalist Movements in Pakistan Since its inception, Pakistan has faced challenges of ethnic-nationalism from her ethnicities. The various nationalities that make up Pakistan have consistently opposed state attempts to combine these disparate identities into a single communal Muslim identity. Depending on the relationship between the state and the particular ethnic group, the demands of ethno-national movements have varied between autonomy and independence. As was the case with Bengali ethnic nationalism, there are instances when the call for autonomy has grown into a desire for independence. At other times, as demonstrated by Pashtun nationalism, the desire for independence has diminished to a demand for autonomy. The relationship between ethnic groups and the state explains this change. Using Paul Brass' instrumental theory of elite competition as a lens, the author examines this change. Ted Gurr's theory of relative deprivation is used to analyze the elements that led to Bengali nationalism's success in attaining statehood and Baloch nationalism's failure to do so. Andreas Wimmer's concept of state ownership explains how the Pashtun and Sindhi ethnic groups were incorporated into the state structure (Khan R. , 2021).

Mir and Siddiqui in his work “Nationalism, Status, and Conspiracy Theories: Evidence from Pakistan” discuss that does nationalism increase beliefs in conspiracy theories that frame minorities as subversives? Analysts and public commentators from China, Russia, and India are increasingly assuming that nationalism encourages people to believe unreliable or misleading information. However, this connection has not been studied theoretically or empirically in previous academic work. We investigate the effect of nationalist sentiment on belief in conspiracy theories pertaining to ethnic minority groups in Pakistan using a survey experiment with 2,373 participants and six focus groups with 6–8 participants each, for a total of 50 participants. We discover that statements about domestic minorities working with hostile foreign powers are more likely to be believed when nationalist primes are used, even when they are meant to highlight the integration of various groups into a single superordinate national identity. According to focus groups and subgroup analysis, nationalism may make people more likely to perceive rights-seeking minorities as undermining the pursuit of national status (Siddiqui, 2024).

Hashmi in her work “The Politics of Ethnicity: An Issue to National Integration of Pakistan (The Study of Baloch, Mohajir and Siraiki Identities)” discusses that a structural and perceptual perspective is needed to create national integration. The state should



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

adopt political engagement, reforms, and social giving instead of repressive policies (Hashmi R. S., 2013).

Saleem and Islam in his work "Implications on Ethno-linguistic Politics on National Integration in Pakistan" discusses that strengthening political institutions and the federal system can address the grievances of oppressed groups and promote national integration in Pakistan (Saleem & Islam, 2021).

Murtaza and Imroze in his work "Ethnic Identity, Nationalism and Governance in Pakistan" discusses that the intricate dynamics of ethnic identity and national integration in Pakistan. In order to promote social cohesion, equitable political representation, and long-term national development, Pakistan needs to formulate policies that honor ethnic identities and ensure inclusive governance (Murtaza & Imroze, 2025).

Khan in his work "National Integration: Challenges and Option for Pakistan" discusses that National integration is crucial for Pakistan's national security, but it's challenged by a delicate balance between centripetal and centrifugal forces. The country's diverse languages, races, ethnicities, and sects are influenced by this environment, which can either promote or hinder national integration. Some of the major challenges are leadership conundrums, poor governance, socio-economic imbalances, and extremism, among others. Overcoming these obstacles is critical to realizing national integration and enhancing the nationhood of Pakistan (Khan M. N., 2022).

Dinet al. (2023) in his work "Ethno-Nationalist Movements in Baluchistan and its Implications on Political System in Pakistan" discusses that Pakistan, especially Baluchistan, is afflicted with ethno-nationalist movements, communalism, and religious extremism, which hamper socio-economic and political development. This research seeks to determine the motivating factors of these violent movements and recommend solutions to the crisis. It stresses the importance of prioritizing the resolution of ethnic tensions before they reach a boiling point, learning from Pakistan's historical experiences, such as the fall of Dhaka (Din & et al., 2023).

Sheikh in his work "Pashtun Nationalism: Politics and Talibanization." discusses that Talibanization in the Pashtun region is not an extension of Pashtun nationalism, but rather a historical continuity of militant movements that emerge in response to external threats, using religious rhetoric to mobilize locals. It suggests understanding Talibanization requires examining the region's history and socio-religious patterns rather than nationalist politics (Sheikh S. R., 2016).

Research Gap

In order to explore the influence of Pashtun ethno-nationalist politics on Pakistan's national integration, particularly focusing on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and to find possible avenues for encouraging national integration and social cohesion.

Theoretical Framework

Instrumentalism: This school of thought contends that ethnic identities are constructed and manipulated by elites in order to realize political and economic aspirations (Meyer, 2016).

Constructivism: This view posits that ethnic identities are socially constructed and open to alteration through time (Adler, 2016).

Methodology

Research methodology refers to the process which includes scales measurement data collection, sampling and analysis of the present study. In this research study qualitative



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

methodology was used to investigate the topic in a real-world sense moreover detecting quantitative methodology is in details below.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an interpretive method of inquiry focused on exploring human behavior, social practices, and cultural experiences in their natural settings. Rather than relying on numerical data, this approach prioritizes depth over breadth, aiming to understand how individuals construct meaning from their experiences. It involves collecting rich, detailed data—often through interviews, observations, and open-ended questions—to uncover patterns, perspectives, and underlying values that shape social realities.

The present study was carried out under the umbrella of qualitative study design. In this research design the scholar collected primary data from different segment of population including: Social Workers, politicians, Academics, Intellectuals, and Journalists.

The main reason for selecting such populations was exploring ethnic politics a hurdle national integration A case study of Pashtun ethno-nationalist politics. Moreover, the purposive of sampling techniques was used in the present study.

Tools of Data Collection

In qualitative research, data is gathered through methods that allow for in-depth exploration of participants' thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences. The primary tools used for collecting data in this study include:

Semi-Structured Interviews

This method involves guided conversations where key themes and open-ended questions allow respondents to share their views freely while still focusing on the research objectives. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews helps uncover complex insights related to identity, political awareness, and cultural values.

Participant Observation

This technique involves the researcher's direct engagement with the community or setting being studied. By observing behaviors, social interactions, and cultural expressions in a natural context, a deeper understanding of the social dynamics influencing Pashtun political ethnicity is achieved.

Document and Text Analysis

Analyzing speeches, historical texts, political party literature, and other cultural artifacts provides contextual understanding. It supports the interpretation of political narratives and identity formation among the Pashtun people.

As it mentioned above that the study was carried out under the umbrella of qualitative study that's why in-depth interviews was used for data collection to collect data regarding to research question and objective of the study.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a systematic process of examining non-numerical data such as interview transcripts, observations, and textual materials to identify patterns, themes, and meanings. The goal is to understand the underlying perspectives, values, and experiences of participants.

In this study, the data collected through interviews, observations, and textual materials were analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach involves several stages:

Familiarization with the Data

The first step involves reading and re-reading the interview transcripts and field notes to



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

gain a comprehensive understanding of the content and context.

Coding the Data

Key phrases, expressions, and recurring ideas are highlighted and assigned codes. These codes serve as labels that help organize the data into meaningful segments.

Identifying Patterns and Themes

After coding, related codes are grouped to form broader categories or themes. These themes reflect recurring topics or insights relevant to the research questions, such as identity, nationalism, cultural traditions, and political participation.

Interpreting the Findings

The themes are then analyzed in relation to the cultural, historical, and political context of the Pashtun community. This interpretation seeks to understand how these themes contribute to shaping Pashtun political ethnicity.

Verifying and Presenting Results

Finally, findings are cross-checked for consistency, supported with direct quotations from respondents, and presented in a narrative format. This ensures that the participants' voices remain central to the analysis.

In order to answer the study objectives, I critically review the existing literature and develop themes from the existing empirical work. Furthermore, data collected from Social Workers, politicians, Academics, Intellectuals, and Journalists which are discussed in details on the upcoming chapters.

Results Discussions

Cultural and Historical Context

Due to their religious formation, the Pashtuns, the predominant ethnic group in the Pakistani-Afghan region, have political significance that influences the other groups. The Pashtuns of Pakistan, like other Asians, have a complicated code of conduct where social standing, clan reputation, and wealth are highly valued. In terms of population, the Pashtuns of Pakistan are second only to the Punjabis. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, formerly the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), has the densest population, with Peshawar as its capital. Nearly 85% of the Pashtun population resides in this city; similarly, the data for the (Gankovsky, Gordon-Polonskaya, 1961: 381).

Likewise, in my study Mr. X also stated that:

The Cultural and Historical Perspective of Pashtun Ethnicity “in whole world all human beings are connected to his own soil the new world is made by nation. In the start the human lived merged life after that converted into nomadic life and after that they moved to tribals after that the world has been going towards nation when world is going toward nation there are some things which is same for nation state. Like Language, Culture, and Territory which makes nation. Every Religion gives importance to Identity. Like in Quran “I make you from one male and female after that I divided you in tribes for you know the Identity”.

Likewise, Mr. Y stated that:

Pashtuns has his own ethnicity the ethnicity of every nation is different from another nation it depends on his geography, cultural, needs, and languages. Pashtun ethnicity is different from other nation because they have its own code and unwritten law, they have its oral traditions like: Jirgah, Geography, Hujrah and other many things.

Likewise, some of my respondents stated that “Pashtun is a sub part of the whole nation on basis of narrow nationalism in regional terms. Pakistan is a multi-ethnic state and in Pakistan that Pashtuns is Pashtun ethnic identification”.



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

Likewise, some of my respondents Stated that:

Every nation should express his own ethnicity Pashtun ethnicity is that: Pashtun is not just a language or nation Pashtun is a whole system where Pashtun do is (Pashtunwali) They love and express culture, tradition, and History. In politics and economic they connected each other and connect his Pashtunwali.

Likewise, Mr Y stated that:

Pashtuns are nation they relate to Israil because they claim that Pashtuns are our cousins and other perspective the German Dutch claim that Pashtuns are our cousins his language relate to us and Religious people argued that Pashtuns are relate to Hazrat Yousaf (AS)and Hazrat Yaqub (AS).

Likewise, some of my respondents stated that:

The Pashtunwali code has still strong influence on Pakistani political decisions. Because its practice in Pashtuns unconsciously, because when Pashtun educate in Pashtun family and traditionally, culturally they have connected to pashtunwali and practice by genetically. Influence the geography of Pashtuns when China makes trade, they use the Pashtun ruts and in 18th Amendment the representative of Pashtuns is very low but they changed the name province from NWFP to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. And democracy is emerged from Pashtunwali because Pashtun law was older from English law.

Likewise, some of my respondents stated that “The Pashtunwali code can’t have still influence on Pakistani Political decisions because the Pakistani military have very strong influence on Pakistani political decisions and in other words the military established state within the state.”

Likewise, all of my responded stated that “Cultural traditions is more important in shaping Pashtun political Ethnicity because if a Pashtun follow the cultural traditions in politics it will influence the people from every perspective but living in the past is not helpful for us.

Political Awareness and Participation

There is no question that a campaign to help secondary school students grasp fundamental political concepts is necessary and crucial for the best civic engagement and political consciousness in a state. Numerous studies have supported students' comprehension of and participation in the political process. Numerous international organizations are working to encourage young people to participate in the political process. Election turnout rates in various nations have caused concern in pertinent departments over time, particularly the youth's disengagement from politics and the poor quality of the political process as an indicator (Jan et al., 2011).

Education is essential to bolstering the political system, but Pakistan has many flaws and pitfalls in this area. The creation of an innovative and dynamic educational system is the path to advancement. The idea that greater democracy equates to greater education is widely acknowledged. As a result, education must be founded on solid principles. Undemocratic citizens who are unable to establish a robust democratic political system are the product of a flawed and inadequate educational system. This is how emerging democracies have fared in the global political landscape (Kenneth & Kent, 2014).

Likewise, some of my respondents stated that “We are not actively involved in politics because we are government implies and some are journalists and there is corruption and merit exploitation in politics”.

Likewise, some of my respondents stated that:



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

We are actively involved in politics because all the problems and wars are in our Pashtun land which is imposed on us from many years ago so! We want to depend our people, society, and resources which is exploited by others and to counter terrorism in our land.

Likewise, Mr X is stated that "Mehmood Khan Achakzai and all the Pashtun nationalist parties are best representing Pashtun interests because they know the grassroots problems of Pashtuns."

Likewise, some of my respondents stated that "Aimal Wali khan and all the Pashtun nationalist parties are best representing Pashtun interests because the ideology of Awami National Party is best for Pakistan and Pashtun because they promote peace."

Likewise, some of my respondents stated that:

The Pashtun political ethnicity is strengthened in recent years because in early years the Pashtuns are uneducated peoples but now, they aware from his own rights and rise voice for it and recently Pashtun language is in top three languages in world.

Likewise, some of my respondents stated that:

The Pashtun political ethnicity is weakened in recent years because Pashtuns are divided and they can't follow the Pashtunwali practically, they follow the west culture and it is diluted by the Pakistani state and the destroying of sub nations is the policy of Pakistan which is the worst ideology of Pakistan because they can't make the Pakistan but they are destroying it. Non parliamentary stake holders and Talibanization are affecting the ethnicity of nation.

Likewise, all of my respondents stated that:

The local leadership is more important in contemporary Pashtun politics because the issues are from grassroot level emerges when the local leaders are strong the issues will solve. The local government is very important but out politics is not independent and the policies are in hand of some peoples.

Nationalism and Regionalism

In his 2004 book *The Idea of Pakistan*, Stephen Cohen made the claim that "the Pashtun nationalist movement is perhaps the separatist group that poses the largest threat to Pakistan today." The problem of "Pashtunistan" existed before Pakistan was even established. The tall Pashtun leader, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, also referred to as "Badshah" Khan or "Frontier Gandhi," battled for the rights and independence of the Pashtuns, who make up 15% of Pakistan's population. However, after their immediate interests were met, the Pashtuns gave in and joined mainstream politics after Pakistan was able to co-opt their leadership. In 1957, Ghaffar Khan's son Wali Khan joined the National Awami Party (NAP), which leans left. Furthermore, the military regime of the time co-opted a significant number of 444 Nazir Ahmad Mir Pashtuns who were serving in the military and were in fact the second largest ethnic group within the army. The Pashtun leadership later believed that their political interests would be protected by the 1973 constitution, which was enacted following Bangladesh's liberation and guaranteed provincial autonomy. However, the concept of provincial autonomy was severely damaged by the overthrow of the Awami National Party (ANP) government in Balochistan and later in the NWFP. Although Jihad in Afghanistan took precedence, this rekindled Pashtun nationalism. Other provinces have generally believed that Punjab has dominated the economy and politics at the expense of other provinces. Furthermore, the government employed Islamic political groups like the Jamiat Ulema-e Islam (S) and Jamiat Ulema-e Islam (F), which were at the vanguard of Afghan jihad, to marginalize



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

provincial parties, such as the primarily secular ANP in KP and Balochistan. The coalition disbanded in 1998 after Nawaz Sharif rejected the proposal to rename the NWFP as Pakhtunkhwa, even though Pashtuns were softening their stance and the ANP had joined the Pakistan Muslim League (N) in 1997 to form the government in what was then known as the NWFP. Only in 2009, when the Pakistan People's Party controlled the central government, did the ANP succeed in renaming the NWFP as Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (Mir, 2018).

Likewise, Mr. X stated that:

The idea of unified Pashtunistan is good for us because we are Pashtuns and we have same ideology, rules, and rights for all but in long term we want a long Afghanistan because the Pakhtunkhwa is the part of Afghanistan which is cut from Afghanistan in early years.

Likewise, some of my responded stated that:

The idea of unified Pashtunistan is not good for now because the changing of geography is making more challenges like we are a Pakistani state but we linked with UN and UN resolve our more issues we are a state and we can't do it by our self. That's why our future is not safe in Pashtunistan because we couldn't capable for it now instead of this. We worked on Pashtun nationalist parties to rise our voice for rights and implement it on parliaments and mention our problems and challenges. And the independent Pashtunistan is not possible in now days because the world is becoming borderless and Pashtuns are divided by (Durand line) and unfortunately some peoples started forcefully companies in Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan against Pakistani state.

Religion and Political Ethnicity

One of the biggest ethnic groups in Afghanistan, the Pashtuns are also made up of numerous tribes with a common ancestor. A common ancestry, history, culture, specific homeland, and named population define ethnic groups, which are a conglomeration of tribal groups¹ that strive for their own nation-state. Most significantly, ethnic groups influence a nation's identity and shape an individual's perceptions, interactions, and behavioral patterns, as evidenced by the country's larger Pashtun nationalism. Conversely, tribes are regarded as social entities founded on locality and kinship, with developing cultures and strong, organized ancestry (Abraham, 2013).

Likewise, my entire respondent stated that:

Religion plays very crucial role in shaping Pashtun political ethnicity, complete Islam and complete Pashtun politics are parallel to each other but we wouldn't aware from Islam and we blindly follow Mulla and we gave importance to religion as compare to nationalism. The partition of Islam is hurdle to national integration and all Pashtuns are Muslims but Pashtuns wouldn't compromise on Pashtunwali. But unfortunately, establishment spread a populist religion in Pashtun politics.

Likewise, all of my responded stated that:

The interaction between Pashtunwali and Islamic principles in politics are similar, like loyalty with nation is the part of Islam and the Islam is preaching peace, prosperity, helping of needy people and poor. And in the time of colonialism in Hindustan the Britishers were exhaled from Hindustan by Bacha Khan Baba with Khudai Khedmatgar Tehrik and Ulama e Deuband they worked combinedly at that time.

Likewise, all of responded stated that



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

The misinterpretation of religious teachings influenced Pashtun politics like, State makes them religious extremist, if a Pashtun nationalist is talk about nationalism Mula impose (fatwa) on him he says he is Hindu (kapir) EG: When Bacha Khan and Wali Khan were talked about nationalism the Mula impose the (Fatwas) on them they say they are (kapir). In Taliban wave many peoples were killed by the of religion (Islam) blaming on Islam, Imran Khan using the word Riyasat-e-Madina all the Pashtuns were misused by the name of Religion (Islam).

Modern Challenges and Globalization

Sociocultural, political, and economic integration of nations and communities worldwide is encouraged by globalization. Both positive and negative effects on the local cultural fabric, especially languages, are produced by globalization, which also leads to intellectual and cultural assimilation. The goal of the current study is to identify the risks that globalization poses to regional languages, with a focus on the effects on Pashto. The study was carried out in the Malakand Division's two districts, namely District Swat and Dir Lower. Twelve Pashto Language Lecturers and Assistant Professors (five from the University of Malakand and seven from other colleges) were conveniently chosen from the two districts to provide primary data. Using an interview guide, in-depth interviews were used to gather data. The study demonstrates how globalization is a pervasive phenomenon that has endangered Pashto language and culture in general, despite its benefits. Additionally, it was discovered that Pashto dialects, concepts, and terminologies have either vanished or changed as a result of globalization, which will lead to future problems with identity and cultural preservation. According to the study, scholars who specialize in Pashto should take into account the gravity of the problem and endeavor to preserve Pashto in order to preserve Pashtun cultural identity (Sana Ullah, 2023).

Likewise, all of my responded also stated that:

Challenges do Pashtun political ethnicity face in the modern world and media and technology influenced Pashtun political awareness like Pakistani state can't show Pashtun picture to the world how they are but they show Pashtun as a terrorist and in Pakistani dramas, films they show very low character to the world and Pashtuns have no independent Media Chenal.

Likewise, some of my respondent stated that:

The younger generation is not connected to Pashtun political values because they shouldn't aware from our history, culture, and shouldn't know his own heroes because state sponsored the youth to change his mind and use them for his own interests and they can't do that after that they suppress his voice. Pakistani promote incompetent and disposable peoples like Imran Khan.

Likewise, some of my respondent stated that "The younger generation is connected to Pashtun political values, they aware from his own culture, history, heroes and also Pashtunwali they know how to do Pashtunwali."

Conflict and Resolution

This book describes how the socio-political and cultural dynamics as well as the security situation in Pakistan's Pashtun "tribal" areas—formerly known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)—were adversely affected by colonial legacies and the postcolonial state of Pakistan. It provides a local viewpoint on resolving disputes and promoting peace in Pakistan's Pashtun "tribal" area. The author discusses the history and background of the former FATA region, the function of the Jirga's, a Pashtun conflict resolution mechanism, and the continued existence of the Frontier Crimes Regulations



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

(FCR) from the colonial era in the area. The author contends that the security situation in the area has been adversely affected by the military's overall influence on security policy as well as the persistence of colonial legacies in the Pashtun "tribal" areas, particularly the FCR.

The book illustrates how Pashtuns have taken their own actions to deal with the emergence of militancy in their area by concentrating on the Jirga and Jirga-based Lashkars (also known as Pashtun militias). Furthermore, the book argues that not much has changed in the area, particularly with regard to the treatment of "tribal" Pashtuns as equal citizens of Pakistan, despite the implementation of constitutional reforms and FATA's merger with the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This book provides a detailed explanation of why traditional peace and conflict resolution techniques, like the Jirgas, may contribute "some" to the long-term stability of the South Asian region. Scholars studying South Asian Studies, International Relations, Peace, and Conflict will find this book interesting because it is historically and contextually informed and focuses on North-West Pakistan (Yousaf, 2020).

Likewise, some of my respondent also stated that:

The impact of ongoing conflicts on Pashtun ethnicity is when anyone is talk about Pashtun nationalism state killed our leaders and elders sate weak us economically and destroyed our infrastructure and our people was mentally disturbed because of violence. State is using our resources and they cannot give us right on them.

Likewise, some of my respondent stated that:

The impact of ongoing conflicts on Pashtun ethnicity is its all propagandas they using by imperial and intelligence forces all the nationalist peoples make the government with the state and sate can't do anything without the permission of provincial government.

Likewise, my entire respondent stated that:

Pashtun representation in national politics and measure to strengthen Pashtun political representation is Pashtun representation is not adequate in national politics because government representation not receive by nationalist parties and state not allow them to represent Pashtuns and also about lack of education in Pashtun area. State needs to give them independence and rights on Pashtuns resources to Pashtuns and educate the people to make literacy rate good.

Likewise, my entire respondent also stated that:

Opinions on the role of peace building initiatives in Pashtun areas are nothing is possible without state first of all state change the two-nation theory and make policies policy for Pakhtunkhwa people for betterment of them, and give justice them in Pakhtunkhwa Unrest, Terrorism, and violence no one can own it because Army doing its own politics if someone own it will be sought out. When foreign involvement was stopping all well be ok.

Ethnicity and future Aspirations

This paper has three goals. First, it looks at the origins and broad acceptance of Pashtun neo-ethnonationalism, a more inclusive and expansive political movement in Pakistan. Second, it seeks to examine the different aspects, paths, and expanding impact of neo-ethnonationalism among a range of social forces, such as Islamists, developmentalists, left-leaning organizations, contemporary professionals, and others. The paper's final goal is to go over the main forces and processes that have fueled the rise and spread of neo-nationalism within the heterogeneous Pashtun community. This study explores how ruptures, negotiations, and assimilations shape the changing neo-Pashtun identity, in



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

contrast to stereotypes that portray Pashtun nationalist expression as static and primordial and marked by violence and conflict (Amin, 2023).

Likewise, my entire respondent also stated that:

Pashtun youth contribute to political stability and development and women have also role in shaping political ethnicity is first of all Pashtun youth aware himself form Pashtun culture, history, and Pashtunwali and (Pat) is the root of Pashtunwali and do student politics and also aware others from it and connect with nation identity and committed with Pashtun identity. Women have also complete role in shaping political ethnicity because our 50% population is women and state make policies for them which encourage them and all sate also educate them spread political awareness because if women educate all the race will be educate.

Likewise, my entire respondent stated that “Being a Pashtun! If a Pashtun is complete Pashtun and doing his Pashtunwali, he well is a good Muslim, good human and also a complete social human.”

Conclusion and Findings

The research findings reveal a deeply rooted connection between Pashtun cultural identity and political awareness. The Pashtuns of Pakistan, primarily residing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, possess a rich historical and cultural background, upheld through their adherence to Pashtunwali, a traditional and unwritten code. This system significantly shapes their social behavior, political expression, and sense of community. Despite the pressures of modernity and state intervention, the Pashtun identity has remained resilient, rooted in traditions such as the Jirga, Hujra, and clan-based organization.

Respondents emphasized the importance of cultural heritage in political matters. Many believe that Pashtun cultural traditions—rather than religion alone—are vital in defining political identity. There was agreement that Pashtunwali and Islamic principles often align, though manipulation of religious rhetoric by external factors, including clerics and state institutions, has distorted political narratives, often portraying nationalist leaders negatively.

While there is growing political awareness among Pashtun youth, the respondents were divided over whether younger generations remain committed to traditional values. Some expressed concern that state-led media and education policies are diluting ethnic consciousness, while others saw signs of revival through student movements and local activism. Similarly, globalization has contributed to the erosion of Pashto language and customs, raising concerns about long-term cultural preservation. Respondents suggested that active measures are required to protect linguistic heritage and foster a collective sense of identity.

Most participants highlighted the negative impact of state policies and ongoing conflict on Pashtun regions. The legacy of colonial rule, along with Pakistan’s security-driven approach, has resulted in structural marginalization, economic underdevelopment, and weakened political representation for Pashtuns. There was a shared perception that the military plays a dominant role in national politics, leaving limited space for authentic regional leadership to emerge.

The discourse around Pashtunistan revealed contrasting views. Some advocated for a unified cultural and political entity across borders, while others recognized the practical challenges of redrawing boundaries in the modern world. There was consensus, however, that any political solution must respect Pashtun identity and provide genuine provincial autonomy.



Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

A key insight from the data is the increasing relevance of local leadership in addressing grassroots issues. Respondents stressed that empowering local leaders and strengthening local governance structures could be more effective than top-down political intervention. Education was widely regarded as essential in developing informed citizens and advancing democratic participation, particularly in underrepresented Pashtun areas.

Lastly, all respondents acknowledged the significant role of women and youth in shaping the future of Pashtun politics. Encouraging political awareness, supporting student activism, and developing inclusive policies for women were seen as vital steps toward building a more cohesive and progressive political identity.

In conclusion, the Pashtun political ethnicity is a dynamic and evolving construct influenced by history, culture, religion, and contemporary challenges. While there are internal divides and external pressures, there remains a strong collective desire among Pashtuns to assert their identity, protect their cultural legacy, and pursue political empowerment through democratic and peaceful means. Moving forward, strengthening education, local representation, and inclusive political discourse are critical to safeguarding the political and cultural future of the Pashtun community.

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Vol. 3 No. 9 (September) (2025)

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