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Political Power, Affine Kinship Structures And Elite Politics: A Case Study Of District Nowshera, KP, Pakistan.

Abstract:

This study is significant for the fact that unlike consanguine kinship relations, this research mainly focuses on the affine kinship structures and their inter-relationship with the consolidation of political power by the political elite in the locale. While agreeing with Armytage, who argues that political elite is “not a distinct class separate from bureaucracy and military” (2016, p.108), I will focus on the affine marital ties that bind political elites together and extend their political power. Thus, the political outlook of KP is being looked through the lens of political kinship networks by adopting ethnographic case study analysis. Out of a grand multi cited ethnographic locales, a political elite family in district Nowshera is one case study that will be focused in this paper. The main objective of this research is to understand and analyze the local affine kinship or marital structure and its relationship with the extension and consolidation of political power that may give resilience and robustness to the fragile political system by one way or another. Finally, this research is held under the umbrella of structural functionalist paradigm of Claude Levi-Strauss along with the theoretical consideration of C. Wright Mills’ Elite Theory.

Key words: Political Power, Elite Politics, Affine Kinship Structures, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Introduction:

Elites are those with vastly disproportionate control over or access to a resource; it can be a position or a resource that a social actor occupies or possesses respectively. Therefore, the study of elites is the study of power and inequality i.e. the balance of power relations of the elite vis-à-vis the people. It involves looking at the distribution of social resources, which can include economic, social, cultural, political, or knowledge capital. Over the past decade, particularly as social power and economic rewards have become increasingly concentrated in the hands of the few, elite sociology has experienced a revival (Khan, 2012). Some of the basic questions that are investigated throughout the research are; how the affine kinship networks are used as a source of wielding political power in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa? How the affine marital ties can provide stability to the fragile political system by any means? How kinship relations shape political structure in KP? And how political power is wielded through marital networks in KP? Some basic hypothetical assumptions have also provided the basis for this research like whether the political structure of KP is dynastic in nature as in Punjab or it is free from dynastic politics up to a great extent with a few exceptions, affine kinship plays an important role in the politics of the KP, the affine kinship is strategically planned and interlinked and the kinship system of the Pakistani political elite differs in many significant ways from that of the ordinary society.

A number of the prominent researchers have investigated the fundamental question that who actually rules Pakistan (Ishtiaq Ahmed (2013), Aqil Shah (2014), Christophe Jaffrelot (2015), and a number of others). An apparently important part of the answers is military or military-bureaucracy oligarchy etc. which has a generalized viewpoint of the political structure or system of Pakistan and especially emphasized on the polity of the Punjab. According to Kohari

“approximately 600 families account for roughly 43 per cent of the 7,600-plus legislative seats....), these are often accused of handing down party leadership to their next generation “like a piece of family furniture,” a similar practice appears (overwhelmingly) to be at district and constituency levels, with seats often passed from father to son ... like hereditary jaagir (property)” (Kohari, 2013, p.28-9). This does not mean that this is a uniform practice country wide. There are many differences, at the broadest level, among provinces (ethnic groups); at the lower levels within province like southern regions of the Punjab and northern parts of the Punjab and there are differences between urban and rural areas, etc. For example we also noticed a strong divide across ethnic, sectarian, religious as well as urban/rural lines in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It has further been pointed out that the composition of the families that constitute the dynastic pool is not stagnant. A lot of non-dynastic entrants into politics thrived and formed successful dynastic families in their own right (as is the case in this research). This means that the emergence of a new pool of politicians may not imply a weakening of the dynastic system of politics it may only result in replacement of one set of dynastic families by another (Cheema et al., 2013, p. 12-13). The question here lies in the survival techniques or simply the reasons which may lead to the success or failure of one political dynasty. Thus, it is pertinent to search for such reasons which may cause the downfall of one political dynasty and success of the other. It is here, where there is a strong need of affine kinship ties that ultimately helps in consolidating political power and enhancing family relationships.

Kinship can be divided into two categories; Consanguine i.e. kinship by blood and Affine i.e. kinship by marriage. Most of the ethnographic research on politics has focused on blood relatives. I focused here as a first priority on the affine relatives and forwarded the assumption that affine kinship plays an important role in the politics of the elite. I also wanted to test the assumption that the family and kinship system of the Pakistani political elite differs in many significant ways from that of the ordinary society. For instance, the affine relationships take on priority among the elite compared to the ordinary society which gives preference to descent i.e. preferably exogamy among the political elite. As we also know from the ethnographic literature that marriage partners are sought from within close relatives: children of mother’s brother, father’s brother, mother’s sister, father’s sister, followed by next relatives within Biradari and only exceptionally with complete strangers (Eglar, 1960; Barth, 1959; Alavi, 1972). Marriage ties among the elite, on the contrary, are reported to be strategically planned that may cut across lineage and sectarian divides (Lyon & Mughal, 2016, p. 110 and Armytage, 2016, p. 112). The close agnates among the elite due to absence of clear rules of succession, if not strengthened by marriage ties, might lead to frictions as was also found out by Barth (1959), Lindholm (1982) and Chaudhary (2008).

The marital ties among the political elite belonging to different ethnic groups and regions according to Lyon & Mughal (2016), also provides the much needed stability to the country: “the complex network of marital alliances that cut across lineage and sectarian divides helps explain notable levels of stability despite the fragility of state and other public institutions”(2016, p. 110). Marital maps, they found out, allow us for an “accurate prediction of allegiances and decision making and contribute to a transparent assessment of political process in the country” (2016, p. 110). I am of the opinion that social structure like ethnicity, family background, capital, etc. are important in providing the foundation i.e. starting point and structural base to the politicians but this does not alone explain why some political dynasties are stable and others are not. The affine kinship is dynamical, can be and is generally planned; therefore, plays a very significant role in this regard.

Through this research, I also wanted to fill a gap in the baseline data about the nature of ethnicity in Pakistan particularly about marriage practices and recent trends in them. By this I mean the marital practices and trends of common people vis-à-vis the political elite i.e. affine kinship

networks. As an assumption, it is perceived that the marital ties of the political elite in Punjab are very strategically planned. For this purpose, an online survey of at least 100 respondents from the locale is conducted i.e. to find out the current trend of marriages in the families of the elite as well as common people. That is the reason that these ties are majorly denoted as socio-political networks i.e. the term network guides us to be a set of entities having familiarity along with interests and connections. Beside familiarity, interest and connections, a network would be meaningless. Thus, searching for such meaningful socio-political networks in KP was a difficult yet interesting task to fulfill. One thing that needs to be clarified is that maximum of the rich ethnographic literature on political kinship and dynastic politics is on the Punjab; that's why, mentioning Punjab as a comparison is utmost necessary in order to bring fresh and rich ethnographic data on KP in this regard.

The study of political dynasties is actually the rise and fall of political families. The idea of exploring the link between kinship and politics in the recent political system of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province of Pakistan is the central objective of this research. The importance of kinship in politics can be gauged through a simple rule; a relative is better than a non-relative i.e., relationship and importance of the post assigned. It can be simplified that the more closer the relation is, the most powerful post will be assigned i.e. in order to consolidate and extend political power, a relative is favored over a non-relative. This scenario has to be true in cases of earlier dynastic politicians especially in Punjab; but currently, after the rise of PTI in to the power in KP, this question needs serious research efforts to answer.

Literature Review:

Available ethnographic literature on Pakistani politics can be divided into two main types: Whereas, the first category may be called Instrumentalists; deny the primary importance of common blood, family and kinship or give-ness in politics. The second group known as Primordialists; is of the opinion that assumed common blood, family, kinship and ethnicity is the most important factor in politics. Fredrik Barth, representing the first group, concluded in his seminal ethnography (1959) 'Political Leadership among Swat Pathans' that: "Closely related descent units are consistent rivals; each establishes a net of political alliances with the rivals of allies of their own rivals" (Barth, 1981: 56). Therefore, political decisions were based on personal interests "and do not emerge by virtue of a mechanical solidarity" (Barth, 1981, p. 58). Charles Lindholm, who did ethnographic research in the same region as Barth more than two decades later, supported Barth's basic findings: "Alliances continued to be made and broken on the basis of Tarburwali, the hostility of the sons of brothers; in other words, antagonism among first and second cousins. This implies that the closest relatives and allies are more likely traitors/enemies and the chances of mistrust and betrayal are pervasive" (Lindholm, 1996, p. 98). Both of these studies highlighted the negative role of consanguine kinship for political elite in KP.

Some other members of this group Asad (1972) and Armytage (2015), though criticize Barth's opinion that the political structure of Swat society was determined by the free choice and personal interest based 'individual captaincy' but argued that it was embedded in structural inequality which positioned Pukhtun landlords as a 'sovereign class' who pursued their own collective interests at the expense of landless non-Pakhtuns. Thus, they thought that, structural constraints on the individual decision making were not only present but were determinative of Swat's political structure and social order. These critics of Barth treated political elite as a class and gave kinship only a secondary importance. Saghir Ahmad and Hamza Alavi argued that: "political behavior was determined more by class than by traditional caste or kinship ties" (as cited in Wilder, 1999, p.6). Rosita Armytage the most recent in this group argued that Pakistani elite has: "shifted away from their separate ethnic, class, and sectional identities, so that these identities are no longer their primary source of identity and affiliation, but secondary to their identity as members of a united

ruling elite” (Armytage, 2016, p. 109) and claimed that “instrumental friendships and clique” (Armytage, 2015, p. 453) were important bounds for the elite. This clearly indicated that role of kinship was once again seen as secondary to the instrumental structures of mutual interests in the political system.

According to the second group, primordial ties of kinship and tribe were significant determinant of politics in Pakistan. In response to the question; who is voting for whom in general elections, Mohammad Waseem came to the conclusion that: “Overall, the 1993 voter was a parochial voter, ... bound by considerations of local power structure in terms of caste/biradari and tribe...,” (Waseem, 1994, p. 240). Wilder who observed 1993 elections wrote about the impact of biradari in elections: “The importance of biradari is most apparent when political parties are selecting National and Provincial Assembly candidates, and when biradri considerations are often the determining factor in deciding which candidate is awarded a party ticket. (...). A detailed analysis of the biradari ties of all the PPP and PML(N) candidates for the 1993 elections concluded that, ‘apart from a few seats in big cities like Lahore and Rawalpindi, all the candidates represent dominant biradaris of their constituencies’” (Waseem, 1994, p.184-185).

A recent study by Lyon and Mughal (2016) noted that: “Pakistani politics are characterized by strong corporate social links through kinship and caste that impose reciprocal obligations and rights” (2016, p. 110). We are of the opinion that it is not surprising that close relatives form the core of every corporate group including politics because Pakistan continues to remain fundamentally a kinship based society as was also observed by Pfeffer: “Punjabis carry different notions of public order, notions unwritten in the law books. These value-ideas do not, like our own, center around the individual, or individual rights and duties or individuals utilizing whatever nature, business, and bureaucracy have to offer. They play an altogether different game. Caste and kinship (...) set the rules of this rather different contest determining public order” (Pfeffer, 2007, p. 3).

In most recent studies by Cheema et al. (2013), Zahid (2013) and Lyon and Mughal (2016), it was noted that one of the major reasons of PTI’s defeat in Punjab (2013 General Elections) was the moving away or non-reliance of PTI on dynastic politicians. If this is the case so, then PTI’s overwhelming and consecutive victories in KP since 2013 is an interesting comparative case study that needs to be find out. Moreover, the relevance of affine kinship networks in the political system of KP needed to be focused and examined differently than Punjab but also keeping in mind the role of the affine kinship networks in the Punjab.

According to Hassan and Taieb (2021), there is a relationship of kinship system with the emergence of political leaders in district Charsadda of KP. While covering for electoral politics at micro level i.e. Village Council, Union Council, Tehsil Council and District Council, the authors have concluded that kinship played a significant role in the victory or defeat of candidates belonging to ANP and JUI-F in district Charsadda, KP (Hassan and Taieb, 2021). In the same way, Dr. Azizullah’s Ph.D Dissertation shows us the changing trends of electoral politics from religious authority to kinship based political structure in Kila Saifullah, Baluchistan. He is of the view that the recent trends affirm the reliance of religious leaders on kinship structures (both descent and affine) to derive political authority and gain political power (Azizullah, 2021). Hassan and Taieb (2021) are also of the opinion that kinship is significant for the electoral politics of religious political party like JUI-F in Charsadda, KP.

Theoretical Considerations:

The overall research is looked under the broader paradigm of Structural-Functionalism of Claude Levi-Strauss having the guidance and support of C. Wright Mills’ Elite theory which are briefly explained as under;

1. Elite Theory by C. Wright Mills: C. Wright Mills' Elite Theory (1956) posits that power is concentrated in the hands of a small, interconnected elite group. This power elite comprises top leaders in business, government, and military institutions; shares a common worldview, interests, and values, maintains power through social networks, institutions, and cultural hegemony and also manipulates public opinion and policy to serve their interests. Mills argues that the power elite undermines democracy by limiting access to decision-making processes i.e. fosters a "mass society" characterized by alienation, apathy, and powerlessness (Tripura University (TPU online), 103-115).

2. Structural Functionalism by Claude Lévi-Strauss:

Claude Lévi-Strauss' Structural Functionalism (1940s-1950s) focuses on understanding societies as systems with interconnected structures and functions. It examines underlying structures such as kinship systems, myths, and rituals. It analyzes how these structures function to maintain social order and stability. It also considers societies as integrated wholes, rather than focusing on individual parts. Lévi-Strauss argues that human societies share common structural features, despite surface-level differences, cultural practices and institutions serve to maintain social equilibrium and resolve contradictions (Levi-Strauss, 1969). How Elite Theory and Structural Functionalism informing the analysis of affine kinship networks and political power in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa? To answer this basic question, we can describe the whole theoretical paradigm as following;

Integration of Elite Theory and Structural Functionalism:

Integrating the elite theory into the structural functionalist paradigm and assimilating these two concepts will direct our research as following;

1. How affine kinship networks operate as a mechanism for maintaining power and influence among the elite in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
2. The ways in which these networks contribute to social cohesion and stability, while also reinforcing the power elite's dominance.
3. The interconnectedness of affine kinship networks with other social institutions and structures, such as politics, economy, and religion.

Research Methodology and Locale:

In order to achieve maximum credibility and reliable outcomes, this research was conducted in rather more modified research design i.e. a qualitative research approach supplemented by a few other techniques like survey through online descriptive questionnaire for covering a larger audience in a short span of time. Such an assistance is usually seen to be used under the umbrella of "Digital Ethnography" i.e. the target is not to remain stick to classical methodology but to achieve what is required for a successful research work. In short, the research design for this research stands on three basic pillars of research methodology; Qualitative approach having ethnography, data collection through fieldwork, participant observations, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), informal discussions, online survey etc. and finally, data analysis through case studies analysis. The detailed research methodology is given as under;

To conduct my research work, I have planned an ethnographic fieldwork and participant observation in selected areas and collected case studies of chosen politicians. This article is an outcome of a multi-sited fieldwork strategy in which the respective locale was one of the sites selected through judgmental sampling. The other sites for fieldwork included central districts like Peshawar, Charsadda, Mardan, Swabi, and other areas close to the center like Buner, Swat and also District Dir (North) and Dera Ismail Khan (D.I. Khan in South) were also kept in mind.

The genealogical charts of every selected political elite whose family data was acquired sufficiently, was drawn in terms of both consanguine and affine kinship networks. By combing the genealogical charts of different politicians, I have tried to find out how different politicians are

interlinked like with other regions, parties and ethnic groups. It was also seen that whether interconnectedness has positive impact on the success of the politician's families.

Similarly, I have conducted an online survey of randomly selected about 100 households from the immediate locale of the selected politicians. The main focus of this survey was to record trends in marriage practices in order to be able to compare the political elite and the rest of the society. The political elite was asked about their marital trends in in-depth interviews and also through observation and informal discussions. Besides, two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and three in-depth interviews were also arranged to have an overall discussion regarding the research area (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 254-256).

Data analysis: Analyzing And Interpreting Ethnographic Data.

Ethnographic research is one approach under the larger umbrella of qualitative research. Methodologically, it is, "a theoretical, ethical, political, and at times moral orientation to research, which guides the decisions one makes, including choices about research methods" (Harrison, 2014, p. 225), that is at its crux "based upon sharing the time and space of those whom one is studying" (Ó Rian, 2009, p. 291 as cited in In Byrne & Ragin (Eds.), p. 289–306). It is a research process in which the researcher is situated in the field for seeking a thick description through observation and field notes. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), "an ethnography focuses on an entire culture-sharing group and attempts to develop a complex, complete description of the culture of the group." In short, ethnographers look for patterns of behavior such as rituals or social behaviors, and how they attach meanings to ideas, beliefs, material activities, and actions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Yin (2016), suggests that ethnographies seek "to promote embedded research that fuses close-up observation, rigorous theory, and social critique." Furthermore, according to Yin, Ethnographic work is based on the experience in cultural texture of social relations and structures that are being found out by the researcher as an end result (Yin, 2016, p. 69). The main aim of the ethnographers, however, remains about the same: to observe and analyze how people interact with each other and with their environment in order to understand their culture. Continuing with this strategy, I had to translate the interview guide in to simple Urdu language or ask questions, inquire problems in Pashto directly.

Almost every ethnographer faces the dilemma of insider and outsider roles in ethnographic work. During my field work, I had the assumption or somewhat perception of belonging to the same inhabitant and speaking the same language that may help me get what I aimed as a researcher but the reality out there in the field was not the same. Even, I had difficulties in reaching out participants who shared my common culture and language. While inquiring about marital links, the concerned respondents sometimes behaved in a manner that put my status in a situation where I doubted myself to be more of a spy than a researcher (Field work, 2021-23).

Case studies analysis:

While there is much debate over what, precisely, delimits a case study, the general consensus seems to be that ethnographic case studies differ from other types of case studies primarily in their focus, methodology, and duration. In essence, ethnographic case studies are case studies "employing ethnographic methods and focused on building arguments about cultural group, or community formation or examining other socio-cultural phenomena" (Schwandt & Gates, 2018, p. 344 as cited in Dezin & Lincoln (Eds.), p. 341-358), typically with a long duration, per the demands of ethnographic work. While Ó Rian (2009) states that "indeed, ethnography has a case study character and is intimately related to case studies (Ó Rian, 2009, p. 291 as cited in In Byrne & Ragin (Eds.), p. 289–306). As ethnographic research has long been synonymous with case studies, conceived of as grounded in the local and situated in specific, well-defined and self-contained social contexts." Because ethnography, in practice, is often a kind of case study, it's useful to consider ethnography and case studies each in their own right for a fuller picture of

what ethnographic case study entails (Ó Rian, 2009, p. 290 as cited in In Byrne & Ragin (Eds.), p. 289–306). Hence, this research is being conducted, interpreted and analyzed under the umbrella of ethnographic case study analysis.

Limitations of the Study:

I plan to restrict it here to those political elite who have had multiple family members contesting national or provincial elections after 1970. With limited time and resources for a single researcher, it is very difficult to cover a fieldwork throughout KP, therefore, a few research locale were selected for this ethnographic research. This research was further limited by the existence of numerous political dynasties; therefore, only six case studies were selected by employing judgmental sampling. Although, these six case studies were selected by keeping in view various variables as explained in the research methodology but the main hurdle was that of the accessibility and feasibility for the researcher. Out of these case studies, the family of Khaleeq-ur-Rehman belonging to PK-87 of District Nowshera, is one selected for this article. It is also important note that in some areas where the respondents were reluctant to show the real names or I, as a researcher, felt the sensitivity of certain names or events, I opted to use pseudonyms i.e. fictitious names. Lastly, it was very earlier noticed that the common masses were not able to understand the concept of political kinship structures, thus, unable to understand the true aim of this research. Therefore, University students and faculty members (especially belonging to sociology and anthropology) at each district of the concerned case study were engaged in data collection like FGDs, informal discussions, descriptive questionnaire survey etc. While, in-depth unstructured interviews were conducted only from the members of the political elite family as part of the fieldwork.

Ethical considerations:

Before starting this research, a comprehensive ethics plan that ensured confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent was devised and shared with the respondents and all other concerning this research. The only motive was to protect vulnerable populations and maintain ethical standards.

Political Elite of District Nowshera: A Case Study Analysis.

Mr. Khaleeq ur Rahman belongs to a reputable business family of Khattak tribe residing in Dhok Ismail Khel, Pabbi of district Nowshera. It is very interesting to note that his success in the presence of strong rivals like Mian Iftikhar Hussain of ANP and Pervaiz Khattak, recently a PTI defiant and formerly, a strong candidate of PPP. Khaleeq ur Rehman joined politics (2006) in a very critical situation i.e. after his brother, who was a Nazim, was martyred by unknown assailants. In 2008 general elections, he claims to have been defeated by Mian Iftikhar Hussain (ANP) with only 300 votes. Furthermore, he gained decisive and consecutive victories against the same rival in 2013 and 2018 general elections. In the recent election of 2024, he defeated the PTI defiant Pervaiz Khattak (PTI-P) with a great margin thus marking his hat-trick of victories from the platform of PTI. In 2013 he served as Parliamentary Secretary Planning & Development Department. In his second tenure he was appointed as Advisor to the Chief Minister for Higher Education Department in 2020. In the same year he was made Advisor to the CM on Food Department. In 2021 he was appointed Advisor to the CM on Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department. Currently, he is serving as provincial minister for Excise, Taxation & Narcotics Control (M.Pervaiz, Family Lineage and History, Pabbi, September 7, 2023).

As according to the elite theory of Mills, the power elite is a distinct class vis-à-vis the society and it forms social and economic relations to become a strong part of the elite network, the elite family under study is no exception to it. It has started politics very recently but has been successful

in consolidating and extending political power in a very short span of time. As to Levi-Strauss, there are structures that bind the society as a whole in which kinship structures are of key importance. The polity of district Nowshera is telling the same story as it has been the home to at least four strong political families including Haqqanis of Akora Khattak (JUI and then JUI-S), Pervaiz Khattak family (PPPP, PTI and now PTI-P, Qazi Hussain Ahmed’s family (JI) and Mian Iftikhar Hussain of ANP. As it is assumed that the decline of one dynasty may lead to the end of the dynasty or give rise to another dynasty and also the rise of one dynasty may lead to the weakness of another; therefore, the case of the polite elite under study is very suitable in this regard. Although, not being a big dynasty or having numerous members in active politics, the family of Mr. Khaleeq-ur-Rehman has not only gained considerable political power in a very competitive political environment of Nowshera but also maintained and extended his political power for more than a decade(FGD: Peshawar, 2024). Before discussing in detail, the marital trends, kinship structures and political power, it is important to discuss the family chart and marital trend of the said political family;

taken in marriage from outside family:

Exchange marriage:

mutual relationship:

■ Head of the family (non Political)

▲ Nazim

▲ Ex-Nazim (Deceased)

△ Non political brothers

▲ Current head of the Political family (Minister and MPA)

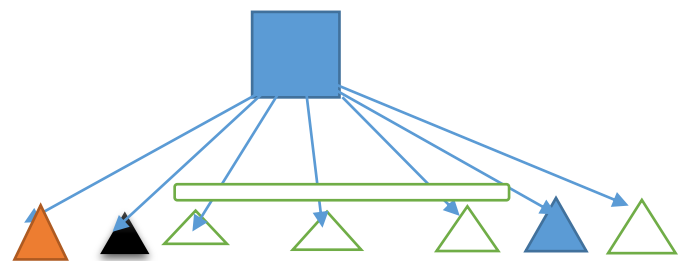


Figure 1: current political dynasty

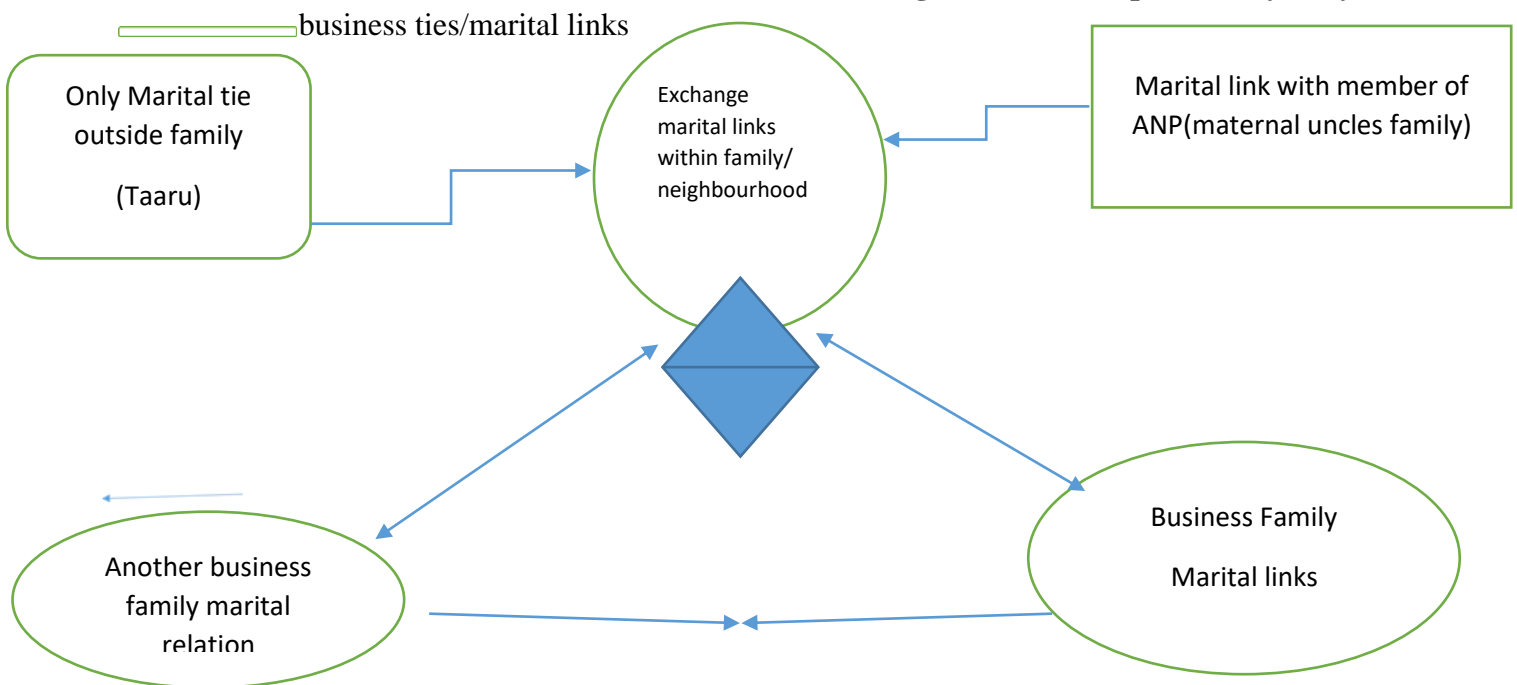


Figure 2: Showing marital ties of the dynast.

Figure 1. shows that the head of the family Haji Fazle Subhan, the father of Mr. Khaleeq-ur-Rehman, was not a political personality but rather a common elder of his village. As also mentioned by Mr. Khaleeq-ur-Rehman in his Curriculum Vitae (CV), he joined politics after his elder brother was martyred by unknown assailants in 2006, which indicates the embryonic basis of his family in politics. There is no such role of his other brothers in active politics beside supporting and campaigning for their brother in elections. Beside him, his martyred brother was a Nazim and recently his elder brother Haji Murtaza remained in office as Tehsil Nazim. As compared to politics, his brothers have business relationships with other strong families in terms of economic and marital relations. Figure 2. Shows that going with earlier trend of endogamy, his family has endogamous marital relations initially with a few exceptions. For example, they have one marital link with the member of rival party i.e. the ANP but that too comes within the family because they are their maternal relatives. And on the other hand, they are known to have a marital relationship with a strong family in Taaru; which is the only connection they have outside their family. In short, we can say that his family has not only remained endogamous but also moved towards exogamy at some point. There are strong economic connections in some areas that may not directly add to the political power of the family but may remain helpful in providing timely economic, social as well as political support (M.Shehzad, Marital links and Political Power, December 12, 2024).

Political power, kinship structures and elite politics:

The following analysis is based on the data collected as a result of 3 in-depth interviews, 2 FDGs and an online survey (100 respondents) during the fieldwork done for this ethnographic research;

According to the one interviewee, family lineage and marital trend was explained; “As far as I know political marriages were endogamous by and large but now we have seen exogamous trend i.e. strategic marriages planned on interest basis. In such marriages, marital alliance with rival political parties is seen. Now the trend is changing for commoners and politicians too. Yes! People usually think of interests which is unfortunate for both. As interest can lead to many negativities” (M. Bahram: History and marital trends, November 11, 2022).

While discussing political power and marital links in FGD and in an interview, it was endorsed that marital ties are used for political power, not only this but also business ties. While it is also fact that majority politicians having strong business ties and also marital ties for enhancing business ties too. The ruling class will continue to rule as they have strong ties in terms of business as well as political. New entrants are not as successful as marital links are based on interests and not merit. By this, the respondents meant that old ties are strong ties while new ties are easily broken if interests are not served. Religiously, marriage based on interest would bring negative results. For example, the marital trend in Asfandyar Wali Khan’s family is not politically motivated as claimed by some experts having closed relations with them, but the current president of ANP and son of Asfandyar wali Khan, Aimal Wali Khan refused his endogamous marriage (with his Aunt’s daughter) and took exogamous bride (i.e. daughter of Shahi Syed from Mardan) (FGD: Peshawar, 2022 and M.Pervaiz, Family Lineage and History, Pabbi, September 7, 2023).

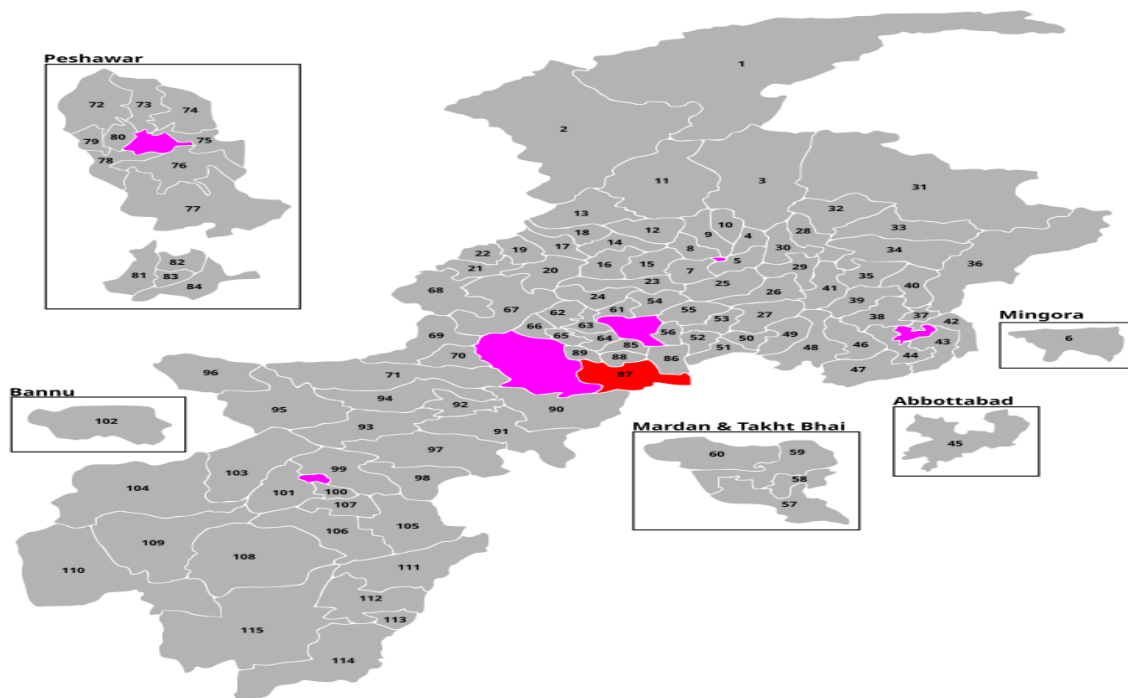
The traditional family politics is prevalent in KP and it has a long history. Every family has more than one member in ruling coalition enjoying power. And I support family ties to be everywhere as networks playing positive role but so far it has negative role in terms of de-meritization in political competition. Positive role for the ruling elite family not KP as a whole (M. Bahram: History and marital trends, November 11, 2022).

Recently, PTI has challenged the status quo as a third force but it has also majority of dynastic politicians. This party has replaced old dynasties with the new ones. PTI is also dependent on the dynastic politicians and it cannot be judge recently that how much it will challenge the trend of dynastic politics. Apparently, dynastic politics has no such role in stability of the system. If there is a generalized version of marital ties that is established for the purpose of stability nationwide then

we can expect stability up to some extent. Now marriages are not arranged by elders so majorly but interest of the juniors is seen primarily. Interest based exogamous marriages portrays current marital trend. Many factors have contributed to such trend like education, modernity, social media etc. we can hope for positive role in next two decades. And politics is not positive in Pakistan by and large (FGD: Dhok Ismail Khel, 2023).

A comprehensive descriptive analysis based on the results of the online survey of 100 respondents from the research locale shows that 82% male and 18% female having an average age between 20-65 years. While 45% MPhil/PhD and 52% BS/Masters students participated in the survey as only educated class was selected. Constituency locale i.e. PK-87, Nowshera has recorded about 34.5% endogamous, 40% exogamous and 23.6% changing marital trend in respondents' families i.e. from consanguinity to affinity or simply from endogamy to exogamy. Similarly, the marital trend of the concerned elite families show about 34.5% endogamous, 38.2% exogamous and 27.3% changing marital trend i.e. from consanguinity to affinity. 72.7% of the respondents perceived differences between their family's and political elite's marital trends, thus showing a clear difference of strategy in marital relations. This also proves right the major hypothetical assumption that the marital trend of political elite family are different than the common people in terms of interests and strategy as it greatly involves political power or sometimes economic power i.e. ties with business families. As only 27.3% have affine kinship ties with political elites which also shows the level of differences in strategies and interests in terms of marital trends. As much as 78.2% believe affine kinship networks wield political power in KP which also testifies the basic hypothetical assumption in this regard.

Furthermore, 53.7% believe political parties/elites hold most power in KP which means that elite politics still hold the ground for more than 50% of the respondents in this district. While talking about marital links as used for political power, 40% of the respondents think that marital links can be used as a political force. As used for political interests and power consolidation, 43.6% believe affine kinship networks contribute to social integration and national integration. Based on the hypothetical assumption, 40.7% believe marital links are planned strategically among common people and political families. While responding to PTI, dynastic politics and political fragility in KP, 47.3% agree that KP's political structure is dynastic, 60% believe that PTI is also majorly dynastic political party despite having an anti-dynastic narrative i.e. PTI still relies on powerful dynasties and business families. Similarly, 38.2% think that affine kinship is important in resisting political fragility. While knowing the notion of politics among common masses, 44.4% showed positive perception of politics and 55.6% negative.



Note: The constituency PK: 87 is red which is the main focus of this paper.

Conclusion:

To conclude with we must say that strong positive correlation between affine kinship ties and political influence was found. Moderate positive correlation between marital links and social integration was established. Weak negative correlation between political fragility and affine kinship ties was also witnessed. This analysis provides insights into affine kinship networks, political power, and social integration in KP. The findings support some hypothetical assumptions e.g. affine kinship plays a significant role in politics, marital links can be used as a political force and Socio-political networks contribute to social, regional or national integration. However, some assumptions require further investigation e.g. the difference between political elite and ordinary society's kinship systems, the impact of affine kinship on national integration etc. As far as the marital trends of the elite family is concerned, it is majorly endogamous with only a few exceptions. Relations shows great socio-economic ties within and outside the family. The marital trends of the elite family were endogamous even before entering into politics and it majorly remained endogamous after joining the political realm. This shows strong familial links and support based on socio-economic relationships within and outside the family.

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