INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN PARTY POLITICS: INTERNET AND THE JAMA’AT-E-ISLAMI OF PAKISTAN

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In memory of my uncle, “Baba”
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ABSTRACT

Surviving the dot com boom successfully, the use of new Information and Communication Technologies by representative political organizations is on the rise. This study explores and explains the relationship between new ICTs and their use by Jama’at-e-Islami of Pakistan – an “Islamist” party with an organized and rigid hierarchical structure. Though there is a significant amount of literature on the politics and history of the JI, it lacks a focus on JI’s use of the new ICTs, internet here, for communication purposes. This study suggests that, ideally, internet is a level playing field for the JI. Due to the involvement of the JI in electoral politics of Pakistan, a target population with majority of youth and their interest and availability in the online spaces present ample opportunities for the JI to use these media for extending its sphere of influence. However, the study proposes that while using new ICTs for extending its sphere of influence online, the JI faces significant challenges. These challenges are twofold: first, ideological message attracting specific groups and people in the “pull” and “bonding” media of internet at the cost of finding new supporters; second, a clash between the strategic participation mechanism by the JI (supply side) and the one demanded by the young online public through internet technologies (demand side). The study is thus concerned with what direction the JI may take amidst its leadership struggling to steer it on their own terms against the decentralizing forces coupled by the changing nature of participation in politics through online technologies while at the same time extending its sphere of influence online. To answer this question, the study adopts a theoretical framework comprising a blend of ‘technological determinism’ – a realist ontological position, and ‘social determinism’ – a constructivist ontological approach, albeit, with a tilt towards the latter. The research takes a mixed method approach for collecting and analyzing the required data. It used Comparative Manifesto Project for codification and quantification of the online message of the JI. Further, to find a meaning into what happens when the JI faces demanded participation from the young citizens through internet, the study resorts to collecting and analyzing qualitative data through interviews of the website managers and leadership of the JI besides informal discussions with IJT students and members from the JI. The findings of the study reveal that the online articulations of the JI were more of a catch-all and post-Islamist (retreat from creating an Islamic state) nature. The study argues that these sorts of
articulations help the JI traverse the “pull” and “bonding” nature of the internet. Nevertheless, the JI falls prey to the power of the decentralized technologies, for instance, in the case of its student wing’s (IJT) former members who exert influence on the decision making in the JI through a virtual forum on Facebook. Thus in the context of new ICTs’ use, the JI’s positional elites are not the one to strategically determine either its public or organizational policy. Rather, ‘new elite’ join them in steering the direction of the JI. Moreover, due to the importance of digital activism handed over to the ‘social media’ team of the JI, I argue that it de-emphasizes the ideological zeal and traditional activism of the formal supporters of the JI. The study fills an important gap in the literature on the JI’s history and politics in Pakistan. Further, the study claims that the theoretical approach adopted in this research can better explain the use of internet by parties concerned with their ideology and representative structures.
Pakistan Online (POL) was one of the pioneering internet service provider companies in 1990s in Pakistan and was owned by none other than Jama’at-e-Islami – an “Islamist” political party of Pakistan.\(^1\) The emergence of worldwide web in the same decade met the desire of social and political actors that could not enjoy a significant share in the traditional media. Before media was liberalized in 2002 during the regime of military ruler General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistani state enjoyed a monopoly over the media. This monopoly began during the regime of the military ruler Field Marshal General Ayub Khan in 1962 with his promulgation of Press and Publication Ordinance (PPO). The ordinance empowered the authorities to confiscate newspapers, dose them down, and nationalize larger news agencies. Some were driven into severe financial crises. Pakistan Radio and Television, established in mid 1960s were also brought under the strict control of the government. Even during the democratic periods, Pakistani media were mainly used for propaganda purposes by the ruling parties. Jama’at-e-Islami (hereafter referred to as the JI), being never a majority party in the parliament and the filtering mechanisms as the characteristic of these media were amongst the primary reasons that can partly explain a quick adoption of the internet by the JI.

The JI, originally a da’wah (missionary) movement, was founded in August 1941 and is the brainchild of Syed Abul A’la Mawdudi (hereafter referred to as Mawdudi). Mawdudi was elected the JI’s first Amir (president) (Nasr, 1994; Ullah, \(^1\) This company was established by the JI while keeping in view the importance of communication technologies for furthering the JI’s mission besides monetary benefits to meet a portion of its expenditures. The company, according to the Social Media Manager of Jama’at-e-Islami Pakistan Mr. Shamsuddin Amjad, did not thrive and the project was abandoned. Interview with Mr. Shamsuddin Amjad – 14th September, 2017, Mansoorah, Lahore.
2014). Built on the Leninist principle of ‘democratic centralism’\(^2\) the party structure was strictly hierarchical with the leadership on top of the pyramid playing the role of ‘ahl hal wal-a’qd’\(^3\) (Arabic words: those who resolve and prescribe). These are men of “higher” learning in Islam and politics who have agreed with Mawdudi on his re-interpretation of Islam. Together they strive for materializing the revolution by fulfilling the objectives set forth in accordance with a new interpretation of Islam and its relationship to politics by Mawdudi.

The JI would act as a ‘vanguard’ to lead the revolution, albeit, not in a Leninist fashion. Mawdudi believed that Islamic revolution would not be brought by the masses; instead it will be materialized by winning over the elites of the society. This revolution would, thus according to Mawdudi, be a top-down, albeit, by resorting to democratic means and not violence. The JI’s platform, therefore, is strongly ideological aimed at replacing the “popular sovereignty” with the “kingdom of God”\(^4\) by Islamizing the state of Pakistan in accordance with the Sharia Law (Islamic Law). After partition of India in 1947, Mawdudi moved to Lahore and the JI got divided into Jama’at-e-Islami Pakistan, Bangladesh Jama’at-e-Islami and Jama’at-e-Islami Hind (India). The JI in Pakistan started working independently under the leadership of Mawdudi. Operating in the electoral politics of Pakistan since 1951, the JI has shown a weak performance in this regard. However, it has demonstrated a strong organizational performance by influencing state policies and legislation despite being out of electoral power.

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\(^2\) This principle was derived from Leninist Bolshevik party where the decisions are made centrally but the leadership is accountable to the rank-and-file of the party in periodic meetings (Nasr, 1994).

\(^3\) They are the people in an Islamic community who, ideally speaking, by virtue of their knowledge of Islamic theology derive rules from it for how to pass one’s life in accordance with the approved ways ordained by God.

\(^4\) Mawdudi believed that popular sovereignty was reprehensible in Islam and instead Islam dictated to establish an Islamic state which would not be run by the will of the people, but by the will of God. This is thoroughly explained in the third chapter.
Mawdudi, one of the influential co-founders of the JI, kept high emphasis on the propagation of the written content produced by him. He produced an extensive literature on Islam and politics. His emphasis on the written material for the propagation of his message underscores the importance of modern educated people to be the target of his ideology. As a modern Islamist party with a rigid hierarchical structure, the JI drew its support from universities, colleges and urban educated middle and lower-middle classes (Nasr, 1994; Ullah, 2013: 84). Going through transformations from a “vanguard” to a political party, the JI needs to extend its sphere of influence since it contests elections. It has recently adapted to widening the sphere of membership. Its membership or formal participation levels are divided into three tiers. Full member is called *rukn* (plural: *arkan*, literally means “pillar”, in the JI, a *rukn* is a sponsored member) which is entitled to vote on intra-party matters and policies and carry out organizational activities. The second tier *muttafiq* (affiliate) – not entitled to vote but can be assigned party work. The third tier is *Hamdard* (sympathizers) who neither can vote nor are assigned party activities but are only aligned informally with the ideology and mission of the JI (Nasr, 1994; Ullah, 2014).

The relatively low number of full members is yet consistent to the JI’s vision of being a vanguard party. However, figuring 350,000 in 1992, recent developments in the JI show that it wants to increase its affiliates up to five million (Ullah, 2013: 81-82).

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5 Mawdudi’s central works (books) include: Islami Riyasat (1967); Khilafat-o-Malukiyyat (1967); Al-jihad fil Islam (1930); Sunnat ki Aaini Hesiyyat (1961); Tahreek aur Karkun (1979); Tajdeed wa Ahya-e-deen (1960, 5th Edition); Dinyaat: Islam ki Mukhtasar, Jami’ aur A’am-fihm Tashreeh (n.d.); Quran ki Chaar Bunyadi Istilahein: Ilah, rab, ibadath aur deen (1973); Pardah (n.d.); Tafheem-ul-Quran (translation and exegesis of the Holy Quran (1972). Some of his books translated into English are: Jihad in Islam; Towards Understanding Islam; Purdah & the Status of Women in Islam; The Islamic Law and Constitution; Let Us Be Muslims; The Islamic Way Of Life; The Meaning Of The Qur’an; A Short History Of The Revivalist Movement In Islam; Human Rights in Islam; Four basic Qur’anic terms; The process of Islamic revolution; Unity of the Muslim world; The moral foundations of the Islamic movement; Economic system of Islam; The road to peace and salvation; The Qadiani Problem; The Question of Dress; The Rights of Non-Muslims in Islamic State; Caliphate and Kingship (Khilafat o Malookiat).

6 The JI’s current full members’ number is 38,000. Interview with Mr. Shamsuddin Amjad - Social Media and IT Manager of the JI, Mansooarah, Lahore, Sept. 14, 2017.
As stated above, the JI has maintained an emphasis on propagating its message through written content which has a deep connection with Maulana Mawdudi being a journalist and pamphleteer (Nasr, 1994: 85). However, the youth’s interest in online political engagement in Pakistan and also as the general literature has noted the younger generations’ political participatory preferences facilitated by online technologies, it makes sense to assume that the JI uses the ‘digital media’ to extend its sphere of influence. Moreover, the JI’s purposive focus on the students of colleges, universities and the urban middle and lower-middle educated classes demands use of new media that can help the JI reach and target them online. This research is an endeavor in this context and focuses on the online strategy of the JI for extending its sphere of influence and the accompanying challenges the JI may face while using internet for this purpose.

Whereas the JI tries to extend its influence online, it is important to discuss some issues for representative political organizations in the age of new ICTs. In this context I invoke two strands of normative theory. On the one hand it argues that the presence and working of representative political organizations is a must in the age of complex mass societies, on the other the antagonists to representative democracy argue that ‘new media’ are the sources of emancipation for the people. Let us have a look at the first argument of this debate by considering the role and function of representative democratic organizations with reference to political parties.

1.1. Role and function of political parties in the representative democracy

There have been differing views about the appropriate role and function of parties. The current advocates for “direct”, “participatory”, “deliberative”, or “strong” democracy regard parties with great suspicion. Though, they emphasize that citizens are the one to discuss issues and decide on priorities within each community thereby
eliminating the partisan bias. However, in practice, direct forms of decision making such as referenda, initiatives etc. can ever play a limited role to determine policy for and govern mass societies. The presence and working of parties is a must at the nation-state level to the practical workings of government which makes representative democracy unworkable without them (Schattschneider, 1942). Political parties therefore serve multiple functions. The key functions political parties fulfill in the representative democracies can be summarized under five key headings:

(i) The integration and mobilization of citizens; (ii) the articulation and aggregation of interests (iii) the formulation of public policy (iv) the recruitment of political leaders and (v) the organization of parliament and government (Bartolini & Mair, 2001).

Sarcinelli (1998: 277 cited in Rommele, 2003) ascribes a ‘communicative hinge function’ to political parties in the democratic process and that they basically function as a reciprocal middleman service in the communication between state agencies and citizens, in both the process of opinion formation and interest mediation. In other words, parties are better thought of as means of communication (Sartori, 1976: 28).

Moreover, normative theory about democracy asserts that political engagement on part of the citizens is a must so that their voices are heard in the political processes which affect their lives directly or indirectly. However, with the increasing complexity of mass societies around the world today, representative democracy is deemed of as the most viable solution for this purpose (Rommele, 2003). There is also agreement in the normative theory on parties that their legitimacy

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7There are some democracies where parties do not exist. They are the independent islands states of Belau (Palau), the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Tuvalu. Factors like their size, archipelagic geography and cultural resistance contribute to the absence of parties in these democracies. See Ankar and Ankar (2000).
lies in engaging the public to know their preferences and respond to them in the representative institutions. In reality parties may well avoid engagement of supporters/citizens in their affairs and policy decisions when they find such engagement not that desirable and gains for parties seem easy without the support of supporters.⁸

One may, however, question the difference between political parties and pressure groups as many functions performed by political parties are also carried out by pressure groups. The main difference between a political party and pressure group is that political parties perform the function of interest aggregation while pressure groups generally do not. There are however instances that pressure groups have also started bringing together a wide range of issues and interests to give their issue more force. The Reclaim the Streets marches of 1999 and 2000 are examples (Margetts, 2001). This increases a pressure on political parties, particularly in the age of internet, to be quick in aggregating interests like some pressure groups or social movements are doing while we also know that parties compete among themselves as well.

Whereas some normative theorists do not favor the oligarchic representative structures for governing the public unless they become “the necessary evil”, the advent of ‘digital media’ technologies has triggered this debate further. We need to highlight the second part of the normative theory, stated above, in this changing context characterized by virtual interactive technologies and also consider the corresponding empirical evidence.

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⁸ A more detailed view of this can be found in the 2nd chapter where I reflect on the theoretical understanding of this phenomenon in detail.
1.1 Internet and politics

Media and politics are related in several ways. Internet is the latest development in the history of information and communication technology having been noted for its significant impact on politics. In the following, I turn to different scholars who offered different perspectives in this regard. However, it is important to mention here as to what do I mean by implying the term ‘internet’ in this study? I take internet for its specific characteristics of networking, multimedia and collaborative and interactive communications. Scolari prefers to lump these characteristics of internet together into what he calls ‘digital media’ (2009). Understood in this sense, I use the word ‘internet’ and the phrase ‘digital media’ throughout the dissertation interchangeably.

1.1.1 Disintermediation:

As far back as the eighteenth century, Madison and Rousseau viewed party organizations as “sinister interests” prone to undermining, perverting, or usurping the will of the majority. Today, advocates of “participatory”, “direct”, “deliberative”, or “strong” democracy look at parties with considerable suspicion on the grounds that citizens should discuss the issues and determine priorities within each community “uncontaminated” by partisan bias (Norris, 2005). The last decade of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of ‘worldwide web’ (www) and some enthusiastic speculations about its impact on politics, thus, claiming that representative democracy was going to be doomed dawning into the era of a “direct”, “deliberative”, and “participatory” democracy. It was, indeed, a radical view. Scholars uphollding this view argued that new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) would lead to the demise of these institutions by de-institutionalizing them with the result being the hierarchies displaced by direct input from citizens (Rheingold, 1995; Leadbeater & Mulgan, 1997; Morris, 1999). Such revolutionary ideas envisaged the
use of new ICTs as a return to the age of “classical direct democracy” where
electronic fora, e-voting and referenda would be used by the citizens to govern
themselves thereby bypassing the representative institutions (Budge, 1996).

However, the thesis regarding disintermediation of politics or erosion of
representative institutions looked whimsical. An in-between-the-lines assumption in
these studies was that, organizations did not possess any agency to influence the
outcome while using new ICTs. Moreover, rational choice assumes that citizens may
lack the required skills, time, resources and interest to input into the system of direct
democracy on the scale required (Ward & Gibson, 2009: 32). Finally, this radical
opinion lost its much heralded significance when empirical studies showed the
decreased tendency of people in online politics (Norris, 2001).

1.1.2 Internet and the level playing field argument

Alongside, another debate, though radical too, underscored the importance of
the internet for politics in another way. Central to this understanding was the idea that
the internet would facilitate oppositional/outsider and fringe players to benefit the
most from its use and present a challenge to the established political organizations.
Operating in a communication environment made as a leveled playing field, the cyber
environment thus offers opportunities to direct action campaigns, protest activity and
transnational networks to organize and mobilize (Doherty, 2002). Empirical evidences
of the activities of such players have been noticed, for example, in the campaigns of
anti-globalization at Seattle and elsewhere, anti-fuel tax in the Britain, and anti-Iraq
war (Kahn & Kellner, 2004). The thesis relied on the arguments such as less costs
associated with the use of internet for organization and mobilization, disintermediation and a growing internet culture. The internet being a cheap
publishing source as compared to the journalistic skills and costs required for printing
or television channels (Ward & Gibson, 2009) significantly reduces communication and kicking off costs for the resource-poor networks and organizations (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000). The decentralized communication environment of the digital media, in comparison to the mass media where the small space and editorial control can easily edit out fringe concerns, websites, weblogs, YouTube and other social network tools provide opportunities for small players to get their message across. Also the viral quality of the email can afford faster connections and momentum in campaigns (Ward & Gibson, 2009). The way the internet got developed, its decentralized nature and its initial audience (techies and academics) have given rise to a particular ethos or online culture. Flexible and organizations of non-hierarchical nature are the one to benefit from the free flows of information unregulated by governments in the anarchic environment of the internet. Hence values of protest activities, anarchistic and libertarian networks are the one who best suit cyberspace for their reflection (Scott & Street, 2001).

Similarly, Bimber (1998) argued that not all organizations were to gain benefit from the use of internet in the same way; actually, single-issue campaigns, protest networks and new social movements were the one to benefit from the internet the most. Others argued that not all non-party organizations were supposed to take the lead. In fact some party organizations e.g. far right and the greens may also get benefit from the internet the way non-party organizations can (Ward et al., 2007). While some scholars argued that environmental organizations might gain much by using internet to mobilize and organize because of their participatory culture and ability to connect global issues to the local campaigns (Pickerill, 2000; 2003). Nonetheless, it is argued that this may not be the case always as new social movements and large pressure groups may be challenged by their loose networks because of being devoid
of clear and identifiable leadership and structures (Lebert, 2003). This raises the question of stability and organizational maintenance for these organizations and hence dispels the notion that these players can get the maximum benefit out of the use of internet technologies as compared to the larger established ones. Nonetheless, keeping into account the resilience and agency of the more established political organizations, some scholars came up with a skeptical and more critical view of the “level playing field” perspective.

1.1.3 Normalization of cyberspace and fringe political concerns

According to this view, the internet does not favor alternative organizations of politics and hence it did not give rise to a new politics. Resnick (1998) put forward the idea that though in its initial stages internet could offer a level playing communication field in which new players got influence, however, gradually this sphere has been normalized. Thus the established political interests are supposed to dominate the online environment as they do in other media. Four main assumptions are given to justify this thesis: that commercialization, fragmentation, new skills and an increasingly regulatory control of the internet have led to its normalization (Margolis & Resnick, 2000).

The overall picture in the arena of inter-organizational competition is mixed. Internet lowers the start-up costs for networks and organizations that were deemed impossible in the past. In fact internet is widening the playing field and tends to be a mean for accelerating trends such as direct action and single-issue campaigns that existed prior to the arrival of internet (Ward et al., 2003; Ward & Vedel, 2006). Though established collective organizations have neither been destabilized and nor revolutionized, however, new social movements, protest campaigns, and flexible and
decentralized networks have got the most of benefit out of its use (Ward & Gibson, 2009).

Nonetheless, to ascertain about the relationship of politics and representative democracy, a balanced approach will be to take into account Wring & Horrocks’ (2001) idea that historically most representative organizations tend to adopt and adapt the technology. While so far, we have some idea about the impact of internet on representative democracy and the inter-organizational landscape in the age of new ICTs, in the following lines I turn to the intra-organizational debate and the use of internet.

At the intra-party level there appears to have been an increasing focus on ICTs as tools for campaign coordination and voter targeting rather than as mechanisms for empowering members and developing wider internal channels for communication and participation. The uptake that has occurred among the wider membership appears to be concentrated among an already active IT literate minority (Gibson & Ward 2009).

Similarly, Pederson and Saglie (2005) while studying the orientations of online and offline members of Danish and Norwegian parties with regard to new ICTs found that only one-third of them admitted to have visited the party website. Having observed a digital divide in terms of being passive and active users, they argued that in future this situation might lead to elite empowerment at the local rather than at the headquarters level.

While there has been considerable autonomous use of the technology within parties by individual candidates, local branches and thematic groupings, there is also evidence of a move toward greater uniformity and centralized control through distribution of web templates, centrally provided online campaign materials and general monitoring of local party output (Ward, 2005).
Similarly, Fernandes et al. (2010) argued that though there are endless possibilities for political participation that the online social networking provides, yet studies showed that this aspect was not being materialized. They asserted that although the use of social network sites by political parties was rich in quality information and with ease of accessibility, nevertheless, without interactivity. Fear of politicians to lose control over conversation was the main reason that the interactive approach of online social networking was abandoned in favor of top-down dissemination. Johnson (2003) claimed that the dialogical and mutually communicative capability of internet was not being utilized with the result that most patterns showed a one-way flow of information: from politicians to the public.

Some turned their attention at the limitations pertaining to the distribution of internet technologies primarily the digital divide (both physical and technical) (Norris, 2001) leading to various outcomes in terms of imbalance in online activism. Similarly, Curran et al. (2012), for example, pointed toward the advantaged political elites who tend to be the most active leading to the imbalance in online activism. Yet, some pointed out to the structural imbalance of the internet itself and suggested that the online spheres were mostly dominated by the established interests. A clear expression of this critical perspective can be found e.g. in the word ‘Googlearchy’9 coined by Hindman (2009). This claim is associated with the assumption that Internet did not give rise to new politics of emancipation. That it simply provided tools thereby reinforcing the participation of the people who already had an access to formal politics.

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9 According to Hindman (2009) ‘Googlearchy’ implies that the most heavily lined websites rule the internet. The link structure of the Web actually limits the contents the people see. The giant search engine Google, for example, helps concentrate the attention of the public. The link structure of internet puts the most popular on top of the search list. As a consequence the average users use the first contents on the list. This results into prioritizing the already prioritized on internet.
However, one needs to consider both the claims when analyzing internet and politics. The creative online campaigning of Harward Dean in 2004 which narrowly missed a victory in the US primaries bears great deal of significance. The campaign mobilized great numbers of citizens and collected huge online donations. Similarly, Barak Obama got a victory in the 2008 US presidential elections by using internet technologies creatively. Smith (2010) argued that Obama’s online campaign turned many passive onlookers into active participants.

Whereas we have reviewed the theoretical considerations and empirical evidences about representative structures and their use of new ICTs, it is also important to note down that political participation has become more dynamic in the recent decades.

1.2 The decentralized communication over internet and the changing patterns of political participation

An increasing fall in the membership of political parties observed across the industrial democracies (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Heidar & Saglie, 2003; Seyd & Whiteley, 2004) begs the question whether the potential of new ICTs can help reinvigorate democracy or not. However, answering this question quite depends upon the perspectives of scholars about political participation and hence democracy. Some scholars approach studying political engagement and internet from a different angle. They consider that the traditional concept of participation falls short of explaining various participation patterns that emerge with utilizing the online technologies. The ‘digital media’ favor some decentralized forms of participation and often informal identity politics, largely manifested in single-issues relating to lifestyle, cultural affiliations and personal values (Webster, 2001). Youth, particularly speaking, thus participate in variety of ways through ‘digital media.’
Scholars assert that digital social media play an important role in mobilizing and organizing people for a variety of non-institutional forms of politics. Gladwell (2010), for instance, argues that ‘digital media’ help reinvent social activism. The contemporary digital activism or transnational activism as the new form of social movements, attest to the significance of ‘digital media.’ Whether it was the environmental movement in 1990s with mass demonstrations coinciding with the summits where “green” issues were being discussed by the world leaders; protests against the WTO ministerial meeting in Seattle in 1999 or disparaging the Iraq War, all hint at a new beginning of politics and engagement energized by new ICTs.

Another aspect is that of organizing traditional politics in new ways while using new ICTs. Romero (2014) argues that ICTs facilitate the formation and maintenance of traditional activism too. Activists coordinated through online technologies in Ukraine and took to the streets to demonstrate against the fraudulent elections in November 2004. This resulted into heavy mobilization and demonstrations and led to force National Election Commission to reorder the electoral process. This time the massively supported Yuschenco was declared as the winner (Goldstein, 2007). Similarly, the examples of protests e.g. against the allegedly fraudulent parliamentary elections in Moldova in April 2009 (Cullum, 2010); the “Green Revolution” in Iran in 2009 against the alleged rigged elections that Ahmadi Nijad had won (El-Nawaway & Khamis, 2012), all reveal the significance of new ICTs which were used for mobilizing and organizing these events. Further, the use of social networking technologies in protests across several Arab countries, known by the name of Arab Spring, caught the attention of the scholars for the great potential online technologies have for politics in terms of organizing and mobilizing. Moreover, new ICTs provide activists with networks that are capable of converging
digital activism with global activism (Rheingold, 2002). It can be argued that new ICTs impact politics in ways different than we have seen before 1990s.

Thanks to the representative democracy there are thousands of political parties around the world today. The multi-party systems make it difficult to simply define political parties as organizations trying to control the government apparatus by winning elections. Scholars have paid attention to this issue by identifying multiple goals for parties than simply winning elections as their only/primary goal (see Strom 1990). Still some argue that winning elections or expecting it in the future is the one overriding goal of every political party (Schlesinger, 1984). Despite this disagreement, it can be argued that in representative democracies political parties can serve as the primary loci for public to participate in the formal institutional politics. Literature has paid considerable attention to this aspect of parties in the face of growing communication possibilities. Parties were once considered to be effective with regard to public participation. However, with the emergence of some demand factors on part of the citizens, parties have kept on transforming in accordance with these demands while simultaneously sustaining their resilience factor to adopt strategic measures in one way or the other to survive. The demand factors can be listed as increasing reluctance on part of citizens to join political organizations especially political parties, an increased involvement in single issue activity and multiple but fluctuating partisanship and the increasing tendency among citizens to use internet socially and particularly for political activities (Margetts, 2001). In the face of these growing demand factors, the parties’ struggles to survive and revive their support have attracted a growing number of research studies.
The growing demand factors for participation, as outlined above, and this research being aimed at studying the JI’s struggles for extending its sphere of influence online, dictate to take into consideration the internet penetration statistics of Pakistan.

1.3 Internet and social media statistics of Pakistan

In Pakistan the internet penetration rate is 22%. Out of the 198.9 million population, 44.6 million people use internet with active social media users as 35 million. The penetration rate of social media in Pakistan is 18%. 92.06% of the social media users are Facebook users with YouTube as 4.68% and Twitter 1.50% (Pakistan Social Media Stats, 2018). Though, these statistics show a huge digital divide/gap between the haves and have-nots, according to UNDP, Pakistan has the highest number of young people ever recorded in its history. 64% of the total population is below the age of 30 while 29% is between the ages of 15 and 29 years (Kundi, 2018). This makes the population of young people in Pakistan to be 127.29 million. Among the smart phone users 77% are in the age of 21 to 30 years old (Attaa, n.d.). Out of the 44.6 million people using internet in Pakistan, 32 million of them use and access internet from the smart phones (Pakistan Social Media Stats, 2018). The high ratio of young among the total population of Pakistan with an increasing tendency to use smart phones and access internet through them is indicative of the fact that young people use and access the internet and social media the most in Pakistan. Their presence online thus make them high targets of the political actors besides other interests. The JI being one of those political actors uses internet for extending its sphere of influence.
1.4 Jama’at-e-Islami of Pakistan and the internet question

There are a number of studies on the JI. Of them the most important ones are Bahadur (1977), Nasr (1993; 1994; 1996), Moten (2003), Ullah (2014) and Amin (2016). All these studies are worthy academic pursuits. For example Nasr has studied the JI as a revivalist movement: tracing its roots and further development. He has given a very comprehensive account of the politics of the JI. Nasr has given the importance of intellectual breakthroughs out of which rose Jama’at-e-Islami – initially a revivalist movement until it took the form of a political party. One can find in Nasr’s (1994) manuscript about the JI’s ideology, organizational development, maintenance of the organizational discipline through a hierarchical set-up etc. Nasr’s this work is a breakthrough in studying Islamic revivalism in the sense that he uses analytical tools that despite looking external to studying Islamic revivalism, reflect on the very origin, development and onward course of the JI in a systematic way. Specifically Nasr (1994), the book completed in 1994, covers the events until that time. Focusing on the developments from 1988 to 1993, Nasr gives an account of how the JI had an internal discord on the issue of pragmatism and a principled stance typical of the JI’s ideology. This discord within the JI was between two groups from amongst the JI’s leadership. The first group or broadly pragmatists wanted to direct the course of its politics by focusing on popular and secular socio-political concerns while the other concerned with the question of ideological principles on which the foundation of the JI is based. The latter’s concern was to steer the JI’s direction in accordance with the principles laid down by Mawdudi.

Similarly, Moten (2003) gives a detailed account of the JI’s trajectory/direction from being a top-down revolutionary Islamist movement into a mass revolutionary one. He has analyzed this development through studying the steering capacity of elites who
determine the course of action of the JI because of their positions on upper hierarchies. However, his work is more focused on the JI’s presidents (in Urdu sing: Amir) who in their respective times have impacted this transformation process.

Ullah (2014) has given an account of Islamist parties of Pakistan. His focus is on the pragmatism, violence and moderation exhibited by the JI besides other Islamist parties. He argues that the JI moves back and forth on a policy continuum between the two extremes of Shariah and pragmatism.

Amin’s (2016) manuscript gives an account of post-Islamism observed with the JI. He argues that abandoning the creation of Islamic state is the primary criterion to judge whether an Islamist movement has entered into the phase of post-Islamism or not. To fully comprehend this phenomenon, he defines post-Islamism as “an emergent intellectual-social response to internal and external socio-political and economic conditions but primarily a quest for “truth” embedded in epistemological uniqueness, with a focus to idealize and create a democratic culture, state and society, and re-Islamization of it through reformation of individual behavior rather than sharia enforcement and Islamization of state” (Amin, 2016:5). Though Moten’s work is based on the period since the JI’s inception until 2003, he arrives at the conclusion that the JI was being popularized since Qazi Hussain Ahmad took over its leadership and finally introduced a comprehensive populist movement that would guarantee the realization of the JI’s objectives.10 Amin’s work is based on developments in the JI since 1988 to 2006. However, he arrives at a modified conclusion than Moten’s argument which covers more or less the same period for his argument to have found

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10 Qazi Hussain Ahmad was elected as the third Amir (president) of the JI in 1988 after Mian Tufayl resigned from the post of Amir and was re-elected four times. Moten’s idea that the JI was becoming popular is based on period from 1988 to 2003, though his work covers the JI since its inception in 1941 (his book published in 2002 and Qazi Hussain had been the Amir of the JI from 1988 to 2008).
populism in the JI. Amin argues that the JI was found post-Islamist in its articulations during this period. This modified understanding of the JI might be due to one methodological reason. In Moten (2003) appears an in-between-the-lines assumption that this transformation in the JI has occurred for capturing power for realizing the objective of Islamizing the state guided by the leadership. This approach thus analyzes these developments in the JI with a singular logic of utilitarian perspective i.e. to embark upon a route that would help the JI achieve its objective of Islamic state through a revolutionary mass struggle. Amin on the other hand takes into account leadership articulations – data obtained meticulously from newspapers during this period and analyzes it for its contents. After arriving at a clear picture of the JI’s articulations as post-Islamist in nature, he analyzes this transformation by taking into account the institutional characteristics in which the JI operates, the JI’s responses to these changing institutional dynamics and an intellectual deficit that produced and reproduced a gap between the JI’s practical articulations (post-Islamist in nature) and its ideological platform (Islamist in nature) that drove this transformation. The former reason more or less covers the neo-liberal regime and the JI’s rank-and-file and elites’ response to it by capitalizing on the opportunities it provided. The latter is an intellectual deficit that leaves the JI post-Islamist in practice but at the same time with an unchanged ideological platform.\textsuperscript{11}

All these studies, though, worthy academic pursuits do not address meticulously the JI’s response to a new reality of the twenty first century, the ‘digital media’ of internet. Amin (2016) takes into account the response of the JI to ‘digital

\textsuperscript{11} Amin argues that the JI has become post-Islamist in practice rather than changing its ideological platform which is based on Mawdudi’s Islamist ideas.
media’ as an opportunity space,\textsuperscript{12} but just incorporates this into his overall analysis. This research takes Amin’s work further, albeit narrowly, by investigating the JI’s response to the opportunity space of internet, the ‘digital media’. For doing so, the characteristics of this ‘opportunity space’ are analyzed with reference to the opportunities it offers for extending sphere of influence for representative organizations such as the JI. Second, challenges that arise ahead while this opportunity space is being used for this purpose by the JI. Third, strategy adopted by the JI to cope with these challenges.

Though Amin carried out a meticulous analysis of news papers contents of the JI’s articulations, I, in the second place, problematize this approach by arguing that traditional media’s gate-keeping mechanisms might have affected the JI’s articulations. This limitation has been acknowledged by Amin (2016) too. Therefore, I turn to the ‘digital media’ technologies such as internet and its use by the JI for extending its sphere of influence. I argue that the JI might present its original ideological articulations on internet given the fact that these media being “free” from the gate-keeping mechanisms enable the party organizations to disseminate what they want. However, I also take into consideration the decentralizing nature of these digital media technologies while they are being used for extending its sphere of influence by the JI – a hierarchical and “ideological” party. Overall, what direction the JI may take amidst its leadership struggling to steer it on their own terms against the decentralizing forces coupled by the changing nature of participation in politics through online technologies. The JI, compelled to target online citizens for extending its sphere of influence, embraces opportunities and at the same time faces challenges,

\textsuperscript{12} Amin takes this concept from Yavuz (2003) which according to Yavuz refers to “fora of social interactions that create new possibilities for augmenting networks of shared meaning and associational life”. According to Yavuz, such fora include “civic and political forums, electronic and print media, and cyberspace and the market.” (in Amin, 2016: 9)
is the focus of this research. In view of this rationale, I analyze the JI’s direction and argue that how the response of the JI to this opportunity space has impacted its course of conduct.

This research also takes Moten’s (2003) perspective further that the JI is being steered by the policy decisions of its positional elites. Positional elites of the JI are those that occupy a position on the JI’s upper hierarchies such as office of the amir (president), naib amir (deputy presidents), the office of Mu’tamid (secretary general) and members of the Shura (consultative council) as identified by Moten. However, I assume that the JI can be joined by ‘new elites’ who share the steering capacity with the positional elites while internet is being used for extending the sphere of influence by the JI. Strategically the JI provides an atomized participation for membership thereby coping with the problem of faction formations. This results into centralizing power at the center, though, with the principle of ‘democratic centralism’ yet claimed by the JI to be in place. This situation renders the positional elites of the JI the ‘sole’ determinants of the JI’s direction such as in terms of organizational and public policy making. However, if we consider the most important variable, the internet, it facilitates a vertical and horizontal interactivity of supporters with the positional elites of the JI which can alter the composition of elites that steer the JI’s direction.

Another challenge that is associated with the use of internet for all ideological parties is its bonding or polarizing nature. Given the relatively higher polarizing characteristic of internet due to control of individuals to search for materials befitting their mindset thereby leading them to expose themselves to online contents on selective basis, how the JI reaches the common online citizens amongst this bonding nature of internet. To convey its message to the maximum number of online users for
extending its sphere of influence, it is argued that the JI’s ideological message may attract a little traffic. In this situation, the JI’s supporters might be those that receive the JI’s message leading to reinforcement than mobilizing the non-supporters. I argue that the JI uses social network platforms, Facebook and Twitter, as the media of choice just to bridge the gap being reproduced and reinforced by the bonding nature of internet, specifically the organizations’ websites. I argue that it is important for the JI to use these platforms and not emphasize website only because it can lead to reinforcement by attracting its existing supporters at the cost of extension of its influence among the non-supporters. Using these social network platforms, the JI can extend its sphere of influence by bridging the gap between the JI and those who are not its supporters in any sense as these platforms are resided by non-supporters of the JI too. To rationalize this argument further, I argue on two grounds, i) that the JI contests elections and ii) the JI uses the popular platforms of Facebook and Twitter as the second rationale that the JI tries to extend its influence. On this basis of “extending influence” argument I assume that there must be implications for the JI if it wants to bridge the gap between the JI and common citizens online. These implications, I assume, may involve implications for the JI’s membership organization while trying to bridge the gap between the JI and the common citizens online. The JI may selectively mobilize/empower some at the cost of others, for instance, official social media activists at the cost of its traditional activists and members. In the first place I try to explore whether there is any online mobilization in the organization of the JI. Second, I try to find if there is any online mobilization for the youth external to the organization of the JI.

Moreover, the bridging causes some challenges when common citizens try to engage with the JI by participating through the official online platforms of the JI. I go
on to exploring as to what extent the JI adapts to the changing styles of participation and what can be its potential impact on the membership organization? During this process, I take into consideration the highly-likely possibility that the JI may consolidate its position against the decentralized nature of participation e.g. common citizens participating in its politics online. On this basis I assume that the JI will try not to provide participation to common citizens online on their platforms just because the JI may lose control over its agenda (agenda is that: Jama’ta wants to project a message that is devised by the JI’s positional elites as, for making a proposition in this regard, I so far agree with Moten that the JI’s direction is steered by the positional elites and if participation from common citizens is allowed, it will distort its agenda). Second that the JI may not put off with the organizational cost. The direction that the JI’s agenda may take under a decentralized participation may loosen the interest and zeal of its formal membership in the JI. I argue that the JI avoids such participation opportunities in line with these two fears (losing the agenda and organizational cost). However, I argue that the JI’s agenda may not solely be steered by the positional elites while using internet for extending its sphere of influence. Rather they may be joined by some ‘new elites’ who identify themselves with the JI and who share the agenda setting of the JI with the positional elites. Thus the positional elites theory, suggested by Moten (2003) may not be sufficient to study the JI’s online strategy.

One of the broader questions pertaining to the relationship of internet and politics can help us take a step towards investigating the relationship of internet and the JI: does the internet help reshape political campaigns, political debate, political choice, political representation and political decision making? Bimber (2003) argues that internet has impacted the structure of political representation in significant ways. This research looks into the effect of internet on the structure of representation of the
JI while trying to extend its sphere of influence through its use. With increase in information and a changed direction of the flow of information new political actors may emerge thereby changing the nature of political debate, political mobilizations and decision making that were hitherto framed by the one-way media communications of mass media. Studying the JI’s use of internet means the JI being a strategic representative political actor will never want to let lose its grip over its external as well as internal communications. They will use it in a top-down manner which is the characteristics of traditional ‘media politics.’ The internet on the other hand giving rise to ‘networked politics’ (Castells 1996; 1997; 1998) besides facilitating top-down communications, might impact the structure of such a top-down representation by the JI. This two-way mutually constitutive scenario is investigated by this research thereby trying to understand the JI’s structure of representation and the subsequent potential impact of internet on the JI while the JI trying to extend its sphere of influence online. So far, the studies on the JI have shown no interest to study the JI’s use of virtual networking technologies.

The advent of popular social network tools such as Facebook and Twitter bears much significance for this study. Moreover, this study does not rely on studying the computer-mediated participatory provisions on the JI website only. In reality, a much scholarly emphasized human-to-human interactivity (Strommer-gelley, 2000) is needed to be discerned while internet is being used by the JI. I argue that, it is this sort of interactivity that bears on the membership and party organization of the JI the most.

The argument of this thesis mainly springs from the linkage of ‘digital media’ having a decentralizing characteristic to the JI as an ideological and hierarchical
political party. Literature shows, as furnished above, that in majority of the cases related with the use of digital media and established political parties, these media are not used in an interactive fashion as politicians fear losing control over conversation and agenda. Moreover, when ‘digital media’ are used for mobilization, it costs organizations some costs e.g. ideological, organizational and financial costs. Therefore, parties behave paradoxically by not mobilizing online despite a great potential for this purpose in the ‘digital media’ (Cardenal, 2011). The nature of the main question that I raise emanates from this understanding and I ask:

*Given its ideological and hierarchical organization, to what extent can the JI successfully extend its sphere of influence online?*

Given this argument, I assume that while the JI needs extension of influence, it might suffer from these costs if it mobilizes online. I, therefore, in the first place, turn to understand whether the JI mobilizes online? I reiterate the concept of online mobilization taken from Smith (2010) who defines it as a new degree of empowerment in the digital world transforming passive onlookers into active political participants as opposite to the phenomenon of reinforcement which means the replication of offline patterns of participation (giving chances to the already active and privileged ones for participation) in the online world.

However, ‘selective exposure’ behavior on part of citizens who by virtue of their control on what to visit and what not while using ‘digital media’ poses a hurdle for the JI to extend its sphere of influence effectively. In such a situation, polarization of opinions occurs causing reinforcement of the pre-existing socio-political and economic beliefs of the individuals. Websites, acting as the virtual face of political organizations, thus attract little traffic primarily limited to few interested and active
supporters. In the age of new ICTs equipped with the popular social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter, the JI can break the bonding nature of ‘digital media’ by resorting to these platforms and extend its sphere of influence. This is because these sites are resided by citizens with different kinds of socio-political beliefs. Further, Facebook and Twitter equipped with networks of ‘weak ties’ (Granovator, 1973) hold great strength for the JI to extend its sphere of influence. To answer the above question, therefore, some sub-questions have been raised in chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this study.

1.5 Significance of the study

Most of the studies oversee the role of the ‘real networks’ within the JI just because the JI is considered a tightly controlled hierarchical organization. Nasr (1993; 1994) is an exception in this regard. In one of his articles, he explains the role by an informal group named ‘Karachi group’ within the JI which impacted the JI’s direction in significant ways. While the iron’s law of oligarchy\textsuperscript{13} yet persists despite the advent of the ‘digital media’, this research also tries to see if any ‘virtual networks’ outside the official ambit of the JI exert any influence over policy making within the JI whereas internet is used for extending its sphere of influence. Overall, this study is different from other studies concerning the JI by taking into account the JI’s elites role vis-à-vis the decentralizing capacity of internet. That said, this research looks into how internet’s use for external communications purposes affect the JI. Therefore, some sub-questions emanating from the need to answer the main question are asked: Can the JI’s leadership sustain their oligarchic position in terms of grip over policy making and steering the party while using internet for extending its sphere of influence?

\textsuperscript{13}Explained in the next chapter.
influence? As a consequence of using the internet for this purpose, to what extent can the JI’s membership’s ideological position and activism be affected?

Further, sparing efforts to this research are significant in several ways. This study, on the one hand, will explore the relationship of an “ideological” party and internet and add to the limited literature in this regard. On the other, it will contribute also to understanding “Islamist” movements’ behavior in the age of new ICTs in particular. Thought of being monolithic and rigid in nature, studying Islamist movements often ends into methodological biases. This study emphasizes that more refined methodologies and frameworks are needed to study the phenomenon of Islamism. In the case of internet and political institutions or organizations, most of the studies ignore the need for synthesizing frameworks that are guided by the empirical considerations. Instead, most of the theoretical frameworks are guided by the normative assumptions e.g. desire for “strong”, “participatory”, “deliberative”, or “direct” democracy while analyzing the relationship of internet and political institutions. On the other hand, those who do not believe in the practicability of direct ways of conducting politics in the age of a complex mass society tend to emphasize the socially determined ways of exploiting technologies by the representative institutions. This study, rather, takes an approach that is more in accordance with the empirical and on-the-ground realities and the potential of internet technologies by developing a framework that can warrant more reliable findings. This is, however, done in detail in the next chapter.

1.6 Objectives of the research

The JI is a hierarchical party steered by its positional elites. Moreover, it is an “ideological” party with a narrow organizational strength in terms of the number of its
membership. The policy guidelines of this party are provided by its positional elites who comprise the *Shura* (central consultative council) with above it its president (*Amir*). These policy guidelines descend down followed by the membership for materializing the objective of “establishing” the Islamic state. On the other hand, internet is characterized by its ability to facilitate both media politics and networked politics. It can be used for the revival of a “participatory” democratic process by the political parties representing the public or group of publics. The JI while so far relying on a combination of publicity instruments such as gatherings, door-to-door canvassing, books, magazines, dailies and a small share in the electronic media has gained access to ‘digital media’. Though the vast potential of ‘digital media’ where those can be reached who are not accessible through other media offer great potential for the JI to extend its sphere of influence, the ‘networked-politics’ being the characteristics of ‘digital media’ communications offer a simultaneous challenge to the JI. The ‘digital media’ can, though, be used in a mass-media style, this research tries to understand how far the JI can successfully extend its sphere of influence and maintain its top-down hierarchical nature with its positional elites’ position not disturbed. A number of objectives emanate from this question while answering it:

- To explore the online message of the JI for extending its sphere of influence
- To know how much subordinating role the internet technology plays in the JI’s use of it. This objective can be met while evaluating internet’s use by the JI for centralizing tendencies in contrast to decentralizing ones.
- To know the extent of online mobilization by the JI. This objective can be met by investigating into the areas of voluntary and involuntary online mobilization that can impact the JI.
• To know about the impact of subordinate or dominating role of internet, while used by the JI, on the ideological position of the JI’s formal membership. This can be done after evaluating whether internet plays a subordinate (socially determined use) or dominating (technologically determined use) role in the JI’s communications.

• To explain the impact of online strategy of the JI on its future direction in terms of its membership’s ideological position and its leadership-supporter/leadership-citizen communicative relationship.

The study tries to achieve these objectives by inter-relating a number of variables in a mutually inclusive way. For example the centralizing tendencies if found can be analyzed for impacting the ideological position of the membership. Similarly, if the online message of the JI is found broader, it can impact the ideological position of its formal membership. For centralizing power at the elites, some may be empowered to do so online at the cost of activism in favor of ideology through traditional activism. This might impact the ideological zeal and activism of the JI’s membership too.

1.7 Structure of the study

The study attempts to answer the questions and achieve the corresponding objectives by following a structure comprising the following chapters:

Besides discussing the theoretical aspects of internet and politics and the justification of relating internet’s use with the JI’s politics while raising questions for research in this introductory chapter, it was needed to consolidate a theoretical framework in the second chapter. In the second chapter, I argue that to study the JI and its use of internet for extending its sphere of influence, we need to take into account the JI’s main characteristic of being hierarchical and “ideological”. This leads
to a framework where one needs to tilt towards more of a ‘social shaping’ of technology approach than ‘technological determinism’, albeit, taking both approaches to comprehend the online behavior of the JI.

The third chapter draws on the origin, history and ideology of the JI in detail. This chapter relies on secondary data for this purpose. The chapter is essential in that it helps strengthen the researcher’s understanding required for connecting the findings regarding online behavior of the JI with its current and a prospective trajectory/direction that the JI may take in future in terms of its ideological position of the membership, leadership to supporter/citizen relationship and impact on the message of the JI.

The fourth chapter analyzes the contents of the online message of the JI. For this purpose, it uses Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) primarily focused on studying the contents on popular social network sites, Facebook and Twitter. The official central accounts of the JI have been selected for this purpose only. Moreover, it also takes into account the contents of the JI’s website for this purpose. The chapter argues that the JI’s online message is more of a catch-all nature. The message is characterized by a more general appeal to the youth with the slogan of ‘financial corruption’ as the biggest issue amongst others on both the platforms. The second highest projection, on both the platforms, was that of ‘party visibility’ in which the leaders are presented as an alternative to the ideology of the JI. The third category that got prominent on Facebook was that of ‘Islamic ideology’ which lays far greater emphasis on the general religiosity of the people than Islamizing the state. Contrary to Facebook, the third category on Twitter was that of ‘External relations’. Overall, the message was found a catch-all and post-Islamist than an Islamist one.
The fifth chapter focuses on the online participation through the official platforms of the JI and the possibility of influencing the JI’s elites with it. Besides, the case of ‘Ahbab Discourse Forum’ (ADF) – a virtual forum on Facebook where both horizontal and vertical interactivity takes place among former members of Islami Jamiat Talba (IJT, the student wing of the JI) and the JI’s positional elites, is taken into consideration. The study found that the JI’s leadership avoids the ‘human interactivity’ on its official platforms. However, the positional elites of the JI get influenced by the members of ADF to some extent in their policy decisions. The steering of the JI, it is argued, is not solely in the hands of its positional elites.

The sixth chapter outlines the overall online strategy of the JI and assesses its impact on the ideological zeal and activism of the formal membership. It is argued that the online strategy of the JI tends to centralize power further into the leadership against the formal membership thereby promoting the leadership instead of ideology. This trend if continued, it is argued, might cause significant reduction in the ideological zeal and activism of the formal membership of the JI.

Finally, in the seventh chapter the researcher concludes the full argument. The chapter reiterates the research thesis and in light of the findings in the previous chapters reflects on the objectives. The chapter argues that most of the objectives have been achieved. Limitations of the study are outlined and lastly, an attempt is made to make recommendations and suggestions for further research in this area.
CHAPTER-2

NEW INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND POLITICAL PARTIES: A THEORETICAL DEBATE

A framework, relying alone either on ‘technological determinism’ or ‘social shaping of technology during use’ for investigating the relationship of political parties and their use of new ICTs, leads to speculative conclusions. The empirical evidence on the relation of internet and politics, as given in the previous chapter, points to mixed results. Hence, this research relies on a mix of both these approaches thereby assuming that neither of these theoretical positions alone can explain the relationship of the JI and its use of ‘digital media.’ Nevertheless, my approach is more tilted towards ‘social shaping of technology’ while explaining the JI’s use of ‘digital media’ for extending its sphere of influence among the youth. This is because I consider the JI, like other political organizations, a rational actor to cope with perturbations within the communicational environment thereby consolidating its organizational leadership. Moreover, as Strommer-gelley (2000) asserts that the great potential of ‘digital media’ lying in their feature to enable human interactivity between the politicians and the public for reviving engagement and participation is avoided in favor of ‘media interactivity’. While this strategy points towards more of socially determined use of internet by political parties, at the same time such a strategy also hints at a changing situation of politics exemplified by e.g. less interest of people in the institutional politics and the alternative approaches to politics by them through interactive digital media. To avoid disintermediation of politics and survive, political parties thus

14 Human interactivity in the case of political parties is the interactivity between politicians/party organizations and the supporters or common public. Media interactivity, on the other hand is the interactivity that is used in a controlled manner through parties’ websites e.g. downloadable forms, links to other sources, surveys etc. For further details see Strommer-gelley (2000).
provide media interactivity on websites. Interplay of both the socially determined and technologically determined side of politics can thus be seen in this scenario. However, still we see that the control over agenda goes into the hands of politicians while using internet.

Technological determinism, on the other hand, entails that the JI might become a decentralized political organization letting loose its agenda into the hands of common citizens or its supporters while using ‘digital media’ for extending its sphere of influence. Keeping in view the argument from empirical studies that the mobilization potential of ‘digital media’ is not being realized because of the fears of politicians to lose control over conversation and agenda, I argue that the JI’s characteristic of being a hierarchical and elites driven party (Moten, 2003) make me tilt towards more of ‘social determinism’ approach. This approach emphasizes the participatory ethos, ideology, norms and habits of linkage functions of parties in which technology plays a subordinate role (Lofgren & Smith, 2003). This approach is also based on institutional change whereby technologies are adapted by parties strategically mainly consistent with their norms, habits and traditions. Consequently such adaptations will be less deterministic and more endogenous.

Political parties, it is argued, behave in a paradoxical way while using internet for political communication. Cardenal (2011) argues that majority of parties, despite having the opportunity to use interactive internet or ‘digital media’ to involve people in a more participatory politics, do not use them for mobilization. Reasons for this paradoxical behavior are extent of ideological cohesion, organizational structures and financial resources. The focus of this research is limited to exploring the role of ideological and organizational dimensions while the JI uses internet for extending its
sphere of influence. I assume that the JI will use internet for extending its sphere of influence in ways not truly mobilizing in their nature. This is because I agree with Moten (2003) and the implicit argument in Nasr (1993; 1994) that the JI’s direction is steered by the positional elites. Therefore, assuming that the JI uses internet for mobilization of their supporters and common citizens will be a too generous assumption without taking into consideration the institutional characteristics of the JI.

Having provided the reason for avoiding a technologically deterministic and adopting more of a socially deterministic approach, I raise the question: Given its ideological and hierarchical organization, to what extent can the JI successfully extend its sphere of influence among the youth online?

For answering this question, I assume that the JI has an online strategy aimed at extending its sphere of influence, however, at the same time towards strengthening the position of leadership (positional elites) against the decentralizing nature of these media. This is because authority through hierarchy witnessed in the structure of the JI has been institutionalized not only in the JI, rather, the very requirement of religious leadership to steer a Muslim community in accordance with what the religion dictates institutionalizes this behavior. Perhaps, the idea of leadership, representation and the like even in the domain of the temporal concerns institutionalizes this behavior among other communities too. This is why the post-modern thinking tends to de-institutionalize this norm and has been the concern of scholarship in the changing environment characterized by new ICTs. Therefore, this research takes ‘social shaping of technology’ approach combined with ‘technological determinism’, albeit, tilted towards the former as the nature of the study demands. Also, this approach advocates the need that studying most of the hierarchical and representative movements can be studied through such an approach for a number of objectives. Whereas having tilted
towards more of a ‘social shaping of technology approach,’ I, nonetheless, pay attention to the deterministic nature of ‘digital media’ and look for the possibility of rising of other elites in or outside the JI whose influence on its policy decisions could not have been possible without the interactive ‘digital media.’ Having argued so, I assume that the JI may fall prey to the deterministic characteristic of ‘digital media’ if it wants to mobilize online. In doing so, the JI may broaden its message at the cost of its ideology to bridge the gap between the JI and the common citizens and not provide common citizens with opportunities on the JI’s official online platforms to participate in its policy development. The broadening of the JI’s message might have an indirect consequence on the ideological commitment of its formal membership. However, such a strategy will save the JI’s elites’ positions by not institutionalizing online participation for either the common citizens or supporters. This will yet be a top-down conduct of politics attempting to mobilize citizens through a broad message instead of allowing either the online youth or supporters to decentralize the JI’s politics in favor of the rank-and-file supporters or common online youth. This approach by the JI can again be aligned to the second theoretical position outlined above i.e. social shaping of technology during use.

To consolidate this theoretical framework, I add to it the Michels’ (1962) ‘Iron law of oligarchy’ and the theory that internet technologies foster and support a decentralized participatory culture. Michels’ law points towards the inevitability of existence of elites in any organization. Elite studies were developed in the early twentieth century European scholarship to provide an alternative to the Marxists’ emphasis on class and a corrective to the egalitarianism of the democratic philosophy (Moten, 2003: 12:13). Michels (1962: 389-90) observed that whatever form an organization takes, elites are bound to emerge and occupy the positions of authority.
To him, thus, any organization is a way of spelling “oligarchy.” To this inevitability of emerging elites in any organization, he attached the label of “iron law of oligarchy.” To identify oligarchs or elites in the JI, Moten (2003) relies on three fundamental questions asked in empirical studies to identify elites: who occupies the formal positions of power? Who is reputed to possess the most power?, and who actually makes decisions? These methods are termed as positional, reputational and decision-making respectively for the identification of elites (Merritt, 1970: 104-40 quoted in Moten 2003:15). Moten (2003) uses the positional approach as the suitable one for studying the Jama’at-e-Islami movement in Pakistan. In the context of the power struggle between elites of the organization of the JI and the digital natives (both common citizens and associates/supporters of the JI), this research also takes the positional approach as the most relevant for understanding the phenomenon of participation in the JI's politics in the age of internet. This research, therefore, takes into account the positional elite of the JI who chart out the ways on how to participate in politics under the banner of the JI. To reiterate, under the iron law of oligarchy, the elites in the JI tend to determine the course of participation thereby consolidating the organization and hence, as a consequence, their position.

Nonetheless, while the elites of the JI tend to determine the mechanisms of participation, in the age of the internet the situation becomes complex and a need arises to ask whether these elites pay attention to the participation through digital technologies or not. Moreover, how much pressure is exerted on the elites of the JI by the young digital natives (both citizens and the JI associates) through internet technologies to influence the decision outcomes by the elites? To understand this struggle between the elites, here those elites who occupy formal positions on the JI's
hierarchies, and the digital natives, Livingstone’s (2007) sketch of the ethos of the internet is a must to reflect on:

Possibly, the very architecture of the internet – its flexible, hypertextual, networked structure, its dialogic, interactive mode of address, its alternative, even anarchic feel – particularly appeals to young people, fitting their informal, peer-oriented, anti-authority approach, making this an environment in which they feel expert and empowered. Thus, it contrasts with the traditional, linear, hierarchical, logical, rule-governed conventions often used in official communications with youth (Livingstone, 2007).

Though Moten’s (2003) approach helps us significantly to uncover the online politics of the JI, nevertheless, his sole reliance on positional approach gives rise to a methodological issue in the age of new ICTs. I consider it pertinent to rely on two approaches instead of one viz. the positional and decision-making elites to uncover the politics of the JI in the age of new ICTs. This is what the struggle for creating a decentralized participation by the digital natives and sustaining the existing status quo by supplying mechanisms of participation by the elites in the JI is deemed very important and focused on in this research. The JI’s associates are those who have an affinity with the JI: they may be members/affiliates/sympathizers of Jama’at-e-Islami or current and former members of Islami Jamiat Talbaa (IJT), members of its various unions.

Further, for reinforcing this framework we need to outline some studies which observed Islamism, post-Islamism, and populism with the JI and see what trajectory the JI takes while using Internet. The framework develops the case study of the JI with reference to both the centralizing and decentralizing characteristics of the
internet and assesses the potential impact that internet might have on the trajectory of the JI while it is being used for extending its sphere of influence among the online youth. Therefore, to arrive at clear understanding about what direction the JI might take while using internet, the characteristic of the JI viz. its ideology, organizational structure, participation levels and elites’ composition with their steering capacity are taken into consideration. On the other hand, the characteristics of digital media such as selective exposure, provision of a “leveling playing field,” and their decentralized nature resulting into creation of demanded participation different from the strategic ones provided by the JI (supply side of participation) are added. To identify who are in the position of strategically driving the JI, I use the concept of positional elite. However, as the argument about approximation of ‘digital media’ technologies by some advantageously than others contributes to this model and reinforces the theory of ‘Iron’s law of oligarchy,’ I invoke another element, the ‘decision making elites,’ of this law to see if new elites emerge while the JI uses internet for extending its sphere of influence.

Further, the theory about membership in political parties is worked out to comprehend what constitutes membership in the JI strategically and what can be the impact of online technologies on it.

To know the impact of using internet for extending its sphere of influence by the JI, while confronting a centralized and decentralized politics in the world of internet, on its ideological position and organizational structure it is necessary to explore the online strategy of the JI. The online strategy of any party can be judged from three angles: contents of the message, target audience, and finally the way the message is communicated e.g. top-down or bottom-up (Rommele, 2003). To
implement the online strategy of the JI, in the first place, the JI may empower some for online activism through its official platforms of Facebook and Twitter, however, at the cost of traditional on-the-ground activists’ activism. Second, the JI may attempt to mobilize outsiders i.e. the general youth with a message that befits their mindset instead of allowing them to participate through its platforms in an interactive way. It is important to understand that both of these mobilization attempts i.e. external and internal, if found can cause the JI to incur ideological and organizational costs.

A rational approach, while speculating the impact of ‘digital media’ on politics, will take into account that the magnitude of participation by the public and supporters is not homogenous even if provided with online technologies. As noted by some scholars, the skilled and those more interested in politics participate more than others, such participation creates a challenge for less-technically skilled politicians that can make them lose control over policy making. Having argued so, a third cost, that I assume while reflecting on the decentralized and deterministic nature of ‘digital media’ might be in the form of losing control over agenda by the JI’s elites. The argument that the decentralizing potential of internet can empower some outsiders to impact policy decisions, usually the prerogative of elites in centralized parties, is invoked here. This situation leads to weakening of oligarchy in the parties and hence can be applied to the JI. I assume that under this scenario, the JI’s positional elites’ composition might get disturbed if confronted with those who are more interested than others in the JI’s politics having access to ‘digital media.’ This may either be direct or indirect influence on policy decisions of the JI. The cases of Ahbab
Discourse Forum\textsuperscript{15} and official social media activists of the JI are explored and their influence on the JI’s trajectory/direction is explained in this research (Chapter 6).

Lastly this framework is narrowed down and adds to it the ‘professionalization of campaigns’ theory in the face of communication technologies thereby promoting the centralizing tendencies in parties since the age of television and more recently the ‘digital media’ technologies. To arrive at clear conclusion on what online strategy the JI follows, different online strategies of parties are charted out. The impact of these online strategies on the overall course of conduct or direction parties take is also worked out to assess the position of the JI and locate its position on the party-typology.

This framework emphasizes the works of previous scholars on the JI to comprehend the JI’s behavior online. An emphasis is laid on the latest work by Amin (2016) in which he observed post-Islamist behavior with the JI. Post-Islamism is not an ideology like Islamism. It is “an emergent intellectual-social response to internal and external socio-political and economic conditions but primarily a quest for “truth” embedded in epistemological uniqueness, with a focus to idealize and create a democratic culture, state and society, and re-Islamization of it through reformation of individual behavior rather than shariah enforcement and Islamization of state.” Though there are various types of Islamist movements, their objectives and trajectory can be judged with the theoretical lens of post-Islamism. The least required criterion that turns an “Islamist” movement to have entered a post-Islamist phase is when it abandons the idea of creating an Islamic state. The JI by virtue of its practical

\textsuperscript{15}An unofficial forum of former IJT activists on Facebook. The details are provided in the 5\textsuperscript{th} Chapter.
articulations, albeit without changing its ideological and ideational framework, has entered into a post-Islamist phase (Amin, 2016: 5-15).

Another important claim with respect to the JI’s trajectory is that of Moten (2003) who argues that the JI has undergone a transformation from a ‘holy community’ or revivalist movement through to a pressure group to a cadre party to a mass party to a mass revolutionary movement. The JI in the opinion of Moten owes this transformation to the leadership and elite structure of the JI which he terms positional elite. The last phase was driven by the populist policies of Qazi Hussain Ahmad as its Amir (president) and reached its climax during his leadership.

Further, keeping into view parties’ appeal to the electorate at a time of diminishing class lines, catch-allism is one of the additional concepts used here for adding to the framework to study the JI’s online behavior. This claim is associated with Kircheimmer (1966; 1996) who suggested that in the wake of a diminishing ideological landscape in the industrial democracies, political parties have resorted to catch-all slogans devoid of ideological contents. Though his more recent work was published in an edited book in 1996 posthumously, according to Kirchheimer (1966: 184) one of the dynamics which bears crucial importance in giving the name of ‘catch-all’ to transforming European parties was the electoral dimension. Keeping into account the declining socio-economic and cultural cleavages, argues Kirchheimer, the catch-all people’s party tried to contravene them to attract a broader audience (p. 184). During the mid-1960s, political parties of the continental Europe and Britain were transforming considerably into what he termed American-style catch-all political parties. Instead of recruiting their voters from specific clienteles and, albeit parties can never make appeals to 100 per cent of the voters, ‘the general
appeal is to all social classes. Only those are excluded who hold definite rival opinions about the party. For instance a Catholic party would appeal to all people except those who are convinced anti-clericals (pp. 185–188).

The framework further borrows from Rommele (2003) to comprehend the JI’s online strategy. This approach distinguishes parties’ online strategies on the basis of party goals. Though, there is a debate on the issue of whether parties pursue a single goal at a specific time or they can pursue mix of these goals. However, for analyzing parties’ ICT strategy it provides a useful tool. The characteristics of a party’s online behavior can be matched against the four ICT strategies and the magnitude of approximation to one or multiple of these strategies can be known. Adopting one or mix of these strategies may impact a party’s membership. Since we will explore the JI’s online strategy, its impact on the JI’s membership in terms of what it means to be the JI’s member while internet is being used by the JI, is one of the objectives that this research tries to achieve. Therefore, the concept of membership is focused upon in the following lines.

In the recent decades, a growing number of studies have noted a fall in the membership of parties in the liberal democracies (Mair & van Biezen, 2001) and parties are said to be in decline. This analysis is the result of a methodological problem where scholars still rely on the traditional concept of party membership. Such an approach does not take into account the increasing tendency among citizens to participate in politics online. This increasing tendency of citizens to participate in politics in alternative ways lead us think over the changing nature of party membership in the age of new ICTs.
2.1 Parties and the changing nature of party membership in the age of new ICTs

Unless dictated by the state, membership in political parties is not normatively desirable by parties themselves and certainly not by mass parties (Young, 2013). Rather political parties enroll members out of strategic reasons which they believe will give them a competitive electoral advantage – for instance providing resources in the form of monetary and volunteering capacity and as an evidence of broad public support (source of legitimacy) (Faucher, 2014; Scarrow, 2009). Even in some instances of party systems parties may not desire their member to be active e.g. Cartel party where passive and inactive members are more desirable (Katz & Mair, 1995). However, this recruitment strategy must be bearing some internal coherence and ideally fit within the party worldview (Scarrow, 2014). Therefore, the concept of membership will be different in parties of different ideologies as political parties use membership as a strategy to mobilize supporters and create a shared sense of identity (Snow & Benford, 1988). This is the functional aspect of membership in political parties. Besides this parties also construct notions of membership that accommodate demands and conceptions of belonging to a party from the individuals as well as state perspective. As argued by Margetts (2001), various pressure groups and new social movements have started aggregating a wide range of interests to give their main issue more salience; this puts additional pressure on political parties to adapt to the growing trends of participation from the citizens’ perspective facilitated by the rise of new ICTs. Therefore, available alternatives for citizens to participate through channels other than traditional political organizations have instigated the interest of scholars on the changing nature of participation and its possibility in party organizations as political parties also balance the demands and conceptions of participation from both state and individuals’ perspective (Gauja, 2015). A considerable portion of party
literature has consumed space on party membership; however, membership itself remained under-theorized. To this end the work of Gauja (2015) is a comprehensive step which builds on a tripartite framework considering membership as a constructed concept: from the perspective of state, the individual and the political party. Under her framework, in order for political parties to mobilize resources and gain legitimacy, they construct myriad notions of membership thereby balancing the demands for participation from the individuals with the normative expectations and legal requirements imposed by the state. The growing trend in party membership decline is often associated with the “death” of political parties. One of the reasons may be the obsolete continuity, in party literature, of traditional comprehension of party membership and activities. Therefore, the need arises to look at whether the parties are in decline or that the forms of political participation have changed which need to be counted as supplementing the old participatory activities. As mentioned earlier, the decline of party membership was equated with a decreased political participation; however, scholars paid attention to the growing trend of participation through other loose ephemeral organizations such as direct action protests and single issue campaigns etc. online. Keeping in mind the alternative approaches to political participation, one idea is to give up relying further on the old notions of often deep and lasting membership of political parties. Taking into account the varying novel degrees of participation besides the traditional one that political parties support can lead the scholars to adapting and recognizing new forms of participation by parties as well. To this end, this tripartite framework is a first step which can helps us understand membership through a refined theoretical lens.

One strategy of parties towards this balancing exercise is to increase the exclusive incentives to party members (Faucher, 2014; Young, 2013). In compliance
with the requirements from party law and the need and possibility to access state resources, parties’ constitutions clearly express incentives for members such as candidate and leadership selection, conference attendance, the right to stand for public office, participation in policy development and internal decision making processes. In parallel, the obligations on members comprise dues payment, requirement of exclusive membership and obedience to party’s constitution and norms (Gauja, 2015: 240).

Another adaptive strategy is to accommodate the increasingly ad hoc and individualized participatory preferences by creating different notions of affiliation and membership that blurs the boundaries between formal party members and informal supporters (Gauja, 2013b). Scarrow identifies six structured opportunities that multi-speed membership party offers to citizens as: traditional individual members, “light” members, cyber members, sustainers, social media followers and friends, and as news audience. Another categorization encompasses affiliation options as “traditional” forms of direct and indirect (e.g. union membership) through to informal links, to social media activists (Kosiara-Pedersen et al., 2014). All these strategies reflect organizations’ attempt to respond to expressive and social identity needs of its members (Hasenfeld & Gidron, 2005: 107).

Since the advent of internet, no study has paid attention to the issue of membership in the JI. The researcher, therefore, feels the need to understand membership in the JI while it uses internet for extending its sphere of influence. For this purpose, I borrow from Gauja’s (2015) tripartite framework of membership. However, this research explains only as how the online strategy of the JI impacts its membership’s ideological zeal. It is in this context that the JI’s membership is also
focused upon in this research. For this purpose, I borrow two aspects of membership from Gauja: the supply side which is strategically determined by the party e.g. the JJ’s three participation levels stated above, and the demand side which might be a response to changing conditions e.g. peoples’ low interest in party politics, and alternative approaches to participation in politics.

Whereas we have paid some attention to the inter-party landscape with respect of usage of new ICTs in the previous chapter, an intra-organizational aspect is necessary to be explored here.

2.2 **New ICTs and its impact on the Intra-organizational aspects of parties**

In reality parties may well avoid engagement of supporters/citizens in their affairs and policy decisions when they find such engagement not that desirable and gains for parties seem easier without the support of supporters. However, as will be discussed below, parties mobilize and engage the supporters/citizens in one way or the other to achieve their goals. We will have an overview of the literature to know how and why party elites needed/not needed to engage supporters in their internal affairs as well as policy decisions while simultaneously mobilizing their opinion.

We have discussed, in the previous chapter, about the demand factors that put pressure on political parties in the age of new ICTs. Political parties, nevertheless, are in a constant struggle to survive by adopting various strategies. In this connection, we can reflect on various ideal party models/strategies keeping in mind that they may co-exist even in a single country and that these models are not rigid classifications but to which parties approximate in one way or another (Margetts, 2001) or better illustrated as ‘logic of appropriateness’ e.g. (March & Olsen, 1989: 23-24).
So far three important areas of intra-organizational aspects of parties with relation to new ICTs have been focused by scholars though with contested claims.

### 2.2.1 Internet as a source of extending organizational influence

In comparison to the mass media, new ICTs offer political parties the opportunity to directly communicate both with the members and the specific target groups. Parties are in control of the content and dosage of the information that they disseminate without the traditional media bias. Internet may thus be a useful source for resource poor parties and organizations. While parties in the initial days of internet were using their websites as broad information boards offering material on their history and charters (Lofgren, 2000: 63), they have started turning their sites into more of an ‘online magazine’ with news updates and also personalizing options. Parties have developed sophisticated web portals which serve as wide-ranging entry points for users to politics online (Leggewie & Bieber, 2001: 39 cited in Rommele, 2003). Besides expanding general information, they also inform specific groups and particularly members online. In some instances, members are provided with password protected accounts through which they can access private party documents and news (Rommele, 2003).

Moreover, new ICTs have been considered as sources for attracting new supporters for political organizations and also diversifying social base of membership, bringing new life to traditional political organizations besides sustaining new political forms. With the collection of email databases of addresses of potential supporters organizations can make streamlined, regularized and swifter appeals at low cost. Once members have been recruited, email can serve as an effective tracker of the supporters (Ward & Gibson, 2009: 28). The internet and email have also been seen as effective
marketing devices. A website, as a combination of traditional print with audio-visual tools and interactivity, becomes an attractive medium through which parties can advertise and canvass support. Furthermore, features that enable organizations to gather information on a website’s visitors and the narrowcasting potential of the internet can be used to target sympathizers (Bowers-Brown, 2003). Similarly the organizational message can be proliferated further while using viral marketing techniques because email, web pages and video clips can be simply shared by the existing supporters with their friends, family and colleagues.

Nonetheless, in the internet politics there is the debate as to how different is the cyberspace for recruitment from the traditional media. Hence a question arises: is there an audience that cannot be reached through traditional media by the organizations? The interest in this debate is triggered by the observation that the so-called “digital natives” - mostly young and grown up in the age of computer technologies are difficult to reach through traditional media as using such technologies make an important aspect of their daily lives (Ward & Gibson, 2009: 28).

However, despite these advantages and potential opportunities for organizations to recruit online, there is one potential challenge which can limit this potential. That the internet is a “pull” medium as opposed to a “push” medium like offline media, which makes it hard to get one’s message across to a general and often more passive audience. A certain amount of political interest and pre-existing know-how are essentially required before visiting a website. Simply the availability of an organizational website does not make the apathetic visit it. As noted by several
scholars, most of the politically active visit political sites which is a reinforcing
tendency rather than mobilizing one (Norris, 2002; 2003; Gibson et al., 2003a; 2005).

Moreover, the “pull” nature of the internet creates another challenge for
deliberation and engagement. In view of the scholars, the selective exposure exacerbates the challenge when applied to the online realm. Central to the understanding that there are other divides other than the digital one, scholars have also identified that “the information rich get richer” while using the internet (Brundidge & Rice, 2009). Keeping this in mind, however, question may be raised as to whether the like-minded become more similar? This question can be answered by taking into consideration two contradictory mechanisms: selective exposure leading to narrowed online political discourse among the like-minded and another of weakening social boundaries which widens exposure to disagreement online (Brundidge & Rice, 2009).

Rooted in cognitive dissonance theories, selective exposure suggests that when individuals receive information that contradict with their political beliefs, they feel uncomfortable with them which make them seek for conforming messages and avoid conflicting ones (Festinger, 1957). Keeping this theoretical understanding in mind, some communication scholars have simply applied it to the realm of online world where it is the most manifesting due to the increased control of individuals on the internet for accessing information as a special media compared to other media. Thus the structure of the medium has also been argued to be facilitating the case of selective exposure phenomenon. Bimber & Davis (2003) for example argue that compared to other media such as television and newspapers, internet reinforces the phenomenon of selective exposure. We can also identify this phenomenon with the “bonding” role associated with online technologies (Norris, 2004) where the beliefs
and backgrounds of the close-knit ties are reinforced rather than diversified (Putnam, 2000). This finding has important implications for online political mobilization and engagement studies. For example it can be asked whether internet can be used by parties to mobilize and engage general citizens or reinforce the existing beliefs of the partisans? However, this is not the complete picture of the story. Despite some evidence that people are biased in searching out information in accordance with their pre-existing beliefs, research has not been able to demonstrate that people eschew contradictory messages (Festinger, 1957; Chaffee et al., 2001). Another addition to the theory of selective exposure is that it is not for all to seek conforming messages, rather they are politically sophisticated individuals only that seek such sort of messages. Also, some scholars argue that selective exposure is not as pervasive as once thought of (Kinder, 2003). Garrett (2005) found that though online environment facilitates exposure to selective messages but does not comparably promote avoidance of contradictory or challenging perspectives. It was also found in the study that 36% of the surveyed users reported to have met political campaign messages online which were not directly searched by them. Rather, the users accidently met such messages while being online for an altogether different purpose.

While the theory of selective exposure may help in understanding online behavior of the people in terms of information seeking, the theory of weakened social boundaries by developing broader and lower density or weak ties online (Granovetter, 1973), may well be thought of a constraint on such behavior. Online technologies besides its “bonding” role also function as “bridging” one (Norris, 2004) through which unite disparate members of a community (Putnam, 2000). As the physical boundaries of a population may help reinforce the existing viewpoints of a community, internet is not bound by such considerations. Whether, they get advantage
of such opportunities or not, internet may well enable people to expose themselves to different political perspectives that the geographic boundaries, otherwise, would not allow for (Brundidge & Rice, 2009: 152). People may also encounter challenging political perspectives simply by chance (Garrett, 2005). For example exposure to political disagreement most likely happens in non-political chat rooms as opposed to explicitly political, where people discuss topics other than politics (Wojcieszak & Mutz, 2007). Similarly Boase et al., (2006: 55) found that the internet may be transforming small tightly knit communities into far-reaching social networks. Brundidge and Rice (2009) found that though the selective exposure may dictate people not to expose themselves to overwhelming amount of diversity present online, the weakened social boundaries made possible by internet and other constraints may expose them to challenging viewpoints inadvertently if not intended, thereby leading to a resultant increase in the heterogeneity of people’s political discussion networks. Moreover, it was found that they are mostly the young who are more involved in this sort of political engagement i.e. heterogeneous political discussions online. Political knowledge, though small, but was also a positive predictor of involvement in heterogeneous political discussion networks. One of the findings which receives the most support from the research is the possibility of an environment facilitated by internet where political knowledge gaps continue to increase (the information rich get richer) and simultaneously exposure to alternative perspectives also increases, may give rise to elite demagoguery. In such a situation the formation of stable public opinion becomes a greater challenge. This situation is exacerbated by the mobilization tactics used by mobilist elites e.g. suppressing their identities and motives as a means to achieve instrumental political goals (Howard, 2006).
However, Ward & Gibson (2009: 28) argue that organizations can, at least modestly, extend their reach and mobilize when they use technologies creatively. Lusoli & Ward found the same results among U.K. parties with online recruitment aimed at the young, particularly students (2003; 2006).

### 2.2.2 Enhancing engagement of the supporters/members

Moving a step forward beyond the argument that organizations can reinvigorate through recruitment of additional supporters/members, there is another argument that internet can be used for deepening their engagement on a regular basis. Organizations can create new opportunities to let their supporters participate through, for example, virtual discussion forums, intra-nets, online surveys, email links, blogs and social network sites such as MySpace or Facebook. These tools can support a consistent and comprehensive input from the supporters. While traditionally opportunities to participate are limited to meetings and other activities at specific intervals, new ICTs could provide for discussion and dialogue between supporters/members and between organizational elites and supporters/members on a continuous basis (Ward & Gibson, 2009: 30). Commentators note that these channels lead to the creation of stronger links between the organization and its supporters and also among its supporters as a positive incidental effect which can help promote trust and commitment. It is argued in the majority of participation studies that more contact between organizations and their members help members feel efficacious and lead them to participate (Jordan & Maloney, 1998). Nevertheless, such benefits have been challenged by both the academics and political activists. For example Pickerill (2000; 2003) argues that those who are involved in direct action think of such participation as distraction from the real world activities with an insignificant impact. Putnam (2000) argued that rather than motivating for activism, internet is more likely to create
passivity. Nie & Ebring (2000) found that internet eliminates social setting, place and time thereby leaving behind television in its isolating experience. Diani (2001) argues that being devoid of trust, such interactions and participation cannot contribute to high-risk radical activism. This is because such activities need collective identification which is dependent on interpersonal interaction. People can join organizations but being devoid of the real-life connections with supporters or local networks such interactions tend to encourage ephemeral ties and passive cheque-book membership at the cost of active and long-term ties (Lusoli & Ward, 2004).

2.2.3 Internet and the erosion of institutional hierarchies

If we agree that internet may help organizations increase their membership and deepen their engagement, question arise. Will it result in reworking the internal dynamics of the organizations? Though there is enough argument about the supposed democratizing influence of internet such as weakening of oligarchy and institutionalization and a flexible, decentralized grassroots behavior (Washbourne, 2001; Greene et al., 2003). Nevertheless, to what extent ICTs can overrule the prevailing practice and culture within an organization and give rise to new intra-organizational democracy? Gibson & Ward (1999) look at this possibility along two dimensions through which this intra-organizational democracy can be conceptualized. The first is vertical one where the creation of electronic communication channels such as intranets, e-mail lists, blog networks, internal discussion forums, to which ordinary members can have access and interact with, will turn elites more accountable in their decision-making to the membership. The second dimension is horizontal member to member relations. The independent usage of the digital media either by individual members or internal groups enables them to communicate their views to local, national and global audiences more effectively. Under this possibility, members can
independently network without the need to use organizational channels. A prominent
evidence of this sort of interaction is noted in Friends of the Earth by Washbourne
(2001: 132-3) as “translocalism” under which the local branches and activists have
exploited the digital media to enable decentralized action without the involvement of
headquarters. Further, that it is increasingly difficult for elites to control dissent and
internal information flows, with the consequence of elites being easier to be
challenged from below (Greene et al., 2003). Nevertheless, Ward (2001), nonetheless,
notes that this challenge is being managed through increasingly atomized membership
thereby extending exclusive rights to members/supporters under Kartelized and catch-
all party models.

Often such arguments are presumptive based on the assumptions that
flattening hierarchies will promote more participatory intra-organizational democracy
by empowering its grassroots. However, the skeptical scholars take these views to be
biased in the sense that technologies do not facilitate unidirectional changes. Burt &
Taylor (2001) argue that providing members simply with electronic channels for
participation is not parallel to their empowerment. Much is dependent on the context
of participation e.g. who is controlling agenda for electronic discussions? What rules
define access to such fora? How do the existent organizational rules incorporate these
channels? And whether participation is regarded as important? Several studies show
that due to being more powerful and in possession of more resources, the
organizational headquarters dominate such discussions and use them for strengthening
their position of power (Pickerill, 2001; Ward & Gibson, 2003). Often the use of new
ICTs has been found to be patchier beyond headquarters of many parties and interest
groups (Gibson & Ward, 1999). Besides, it is argued that despite challenging the
hierarchies, ICTs within the organizations create new divides. Grignou & Patou
(2004: 178-9) in their study of ATTAC, a French originated social movement, found that the incorporation of electronic channels tend to increase gaps between the experts and non-experts, active and non-active supporters.

It is in this context that this research explores the vertical interactive relationship between the JI’s positional elites and supporters/general youth through internet. Two exploratory questions can be asked here: *whether the JI’s positional elites empower its supporters online or further concentrate powers at themselves? And to what extent the JI’s online strategy adapts to the changing styles of participation from the common youth online?* To answer these questions in a better way, it is essential to review the literature on the communication channels and the corresponding parties’ strategies impacting party-supporter/member and party-citizen relationship.

### 2.3 Party models and their corresponding communication channels

The first of party models was Cadre parties, developed during the 19th Century, that were based on elites within the legislature and the principle aim of the elites was to secure election for their members. If such a party was to secure help from people in mobilizing voters, it will search for those who will not demand an influence in the party affairs for their assistance (Ware, 1995: 87). Membership in such parties is small largely elitist with party communication channel as interpersonal networks. The next were mass parties, developed outside the legislature organizing its members directly or indirectly into local branches and integrating them into national parties through democratic organizations formally. Membership under this model is large and “card carrying” with party providing its own channels of communication. Mass parties were the first parties that explicitly claimed to represent the interests of
only one segment of society. This type of political party was the forum in which the political interest of the social group it represented was articulated.

In such parties, democratic legitimacy depends on popular and direct involvement of individuals in the formulation of party policies, for which the extensive membership organizations are essential to provide avenues for input into the policy-making process (Katz & Mair, 1995). However, a decline in membership has been noted across liberal democracies in mass parties (Dalton, 2000).

This trend in decline in mass parties is accompanied by various party developments. For example scholars have pointed out to the emergence of “catch-all” parties e.g. in United States – loosely structured parties for which elections revolve around choices of leaders and to which voters are free floating available to any party which aim to satisfy the demands of pragmatic elector-consumer (Lovenduski et al, 2000). Under this system, parties compete for access to non-party channels of communication (Katz & Mair, 1995).

Another response to the demand factors is the development of “cartel” party. Under a “cartelized” system established parties turn to resources from the state. This is a party model where state and party interpenetrate with a resultant inter-party collusion. Parties do not compete lively and the government is often expected to be shared by major established parties. In such a model, participation from members is not encouraged, rather members play servicing roles which in turn in the age of mass media turns to be less important. Cartel parties gain privileged access to state regulated channels of communication. In other words, party model is characterized by ‘disengagement’ of membership organization from the party. The main ground for this disengagement is the strategic adoption of mass media by cartel parties which
facilitates contacts between elites and citizens/voters and reduces their reliance on membership for mobilizing the electorate, as media professionals take on this role by getting across the message of the elite to the electorate/citizens. Furthermore, being in receipt of public funding, they do not rely on membership for financial support. Thus the boundaries between members and voters are blurred while extending some incentives to the few remaining members as individuals and not as an organized collective. Many European parties e.g. German, Austrian and Scandinavian parties approximate to this model with the exception of British parties (Katz & Mair, 1995: 5-26). Moreover, quest for members in such a party system is viewed cynically but yet important as members are deemed necessary sustaining the ‘legitimizing myth’ (Mair, 1997: 111). In other words this can be described as atomized membership, the result being the centralization whereby leaders get relieved from the challenges that may be posed in case of organized collective membership organizations (Ward, 2001). Such parties view the electorate more important than representing specific interests as competition in the electoral market has increased with the result that targeted and professional campaigning has become their need. Also, the increasing importance of professional and targeted campaigning needs more financial resources (Katz & Mair, 1995: 5-26). Another response is the emergence of ‘cyber party, the origins of which lie in the novel communication possibilities on a wide scale especially the internet, new trends in participation made possible by new ICTs and de-institutionalization\(^\text{16}\) of political parties. Unlike older ICTs being principally internally based, the new ICTs such as web based technologies provide real opportunities for political organizations to transform relationships with their consumers. ‘Cyber party’

\(^{16}\)For understanding this term better is to refer to the term institutionalization and then consider its reverse. Institutionalization is measured by the number of members and local branches (organizational density), the capacity of organization in terms of financial resources (organizational strength) and the extent of committee structures and layers of internal bureaucracy i.e. hierarchical organization (organizational formality) (Ward, 2001).
uses web-based communication channels such as intranets and extranets. This party model, like cartel party, is characterized by a blurring of boundary between members and supporters. Rather than focusing on the classic notions of membership, this party uses web technologies to strengthen the relationship between voters and party – that is potentially all voters. Also that ‘cyber party’ offers benefits to voters traditionally ascribed to members. It tries to ensure lively party competition for voters’ multiple preferences. They are rather organizations than institutions operating on boundary between state and society (Margetts, 2001).

2.4 New ICTs and Party Strategies

Given the advancement in communication technologies specifically in the age of internet, Lofgren and Smith (2003) outline some models through which we can reflect on their linkage and mobilizing functions. Better, they argue, is to call them “strategies” reflecting more of an institutionalist account of change. Therefore, in addition to the ‘mass party’ and ‘cartel party’ strategies, they give two more strategies such as the ‘grassroots’ and “consumerist’ ones.” However, their approach is more of a social shaping of technology than being a deterministic one. As such, while emphasizing on the participatory ethos, ideology, norms and habits of linkage functions of parties, Lofgren & Smith (2003) favor an approach where technology plays a subordinate role. Their analysis is based on institutional change whereby technologies are adopted by parties strategically mainly consistent with their norms, habits and traditions. Consequently such adoptions are less deterministic and more endogenous. They argue that the ICT strategies of political parties in Western liberal democracies show mix of but different emphasis on representative or participatory form of democratic linkages. In the following lines I draw on the accounts presented by Lofgren & Smith (2003).
Keeping in view the characteristics of the parties stated above, Lofgren and Smith (2003) argue that main forms of ICT-mediated participation in mass parties will be through electronic conferences, political website and personal contact with politicians which will encourage public debate. Moreover, mass parties, per se, will look at the role of new ICTs as complementary to other forms of political communication. Arguing that there is no “pure” mass-party strategy/model and under the conception of “logic of appropriateness”, as stated above, evidence of such adaptations or traits can be seen in the Danish Social Democratic Party (SP). The SP maintains a clear division between services for their members and services for the voters and citizens. SP has joined a Bulletin Board System operated by Danish Federation of Trade Unions (LO) naming it ‘net.Dialog’ in 1996. The Bulletin Board also functions as an intranet between the different ‘associations’ within the Labour movement. The members are provided with channels to affect policy-making process while its website serves servicing function and manifestation for non-members without the possibilities for them to affect policy making process as the members can. Similar evidence can be provided from the British Labour, Liberal Democrats and SNP providing established conferencing systems supposedly developed to involve their membership as participants. However, during campaigns it then gets difficult to assess its member specific interactive character because of top-down dissemination of information which in turn contradict the assumption that they are manifestation of classical mass-party model/strategy (Smith, 1998).

In view of the traits of the cartel party, Lofgren and Smith (2003) argue that ICTs’ use in such parties will mainly be for campaigning purposes while availing its narrowcasting potentials. The party website will particularly focus on the ‘leader, rather than the party as a whole. If any interactivity takes place, its outcomes are
largely controlled by the party bureaucracy and leadership. Moreover, such interactivity is used for intercepting public opinion. Members are provided with selective fora for discussion and easier access to information but largely similarly channels are provided to voters as well. Local branches are allowed to develop their own websites, however, within centrally authorized templates and rules. Scandinavian parties’ examples, which approximate this strategy, are also found in Swedish Moderate Party and Danish Liberal Party. Common in them are the top-down control of expression with downward dissemination of information to a broader public instead of a narrower one of traditional sympathizers and members. Beside websites manifestations, there are other internal communication networks that focus on transmitting campaign information around their organizations, and advanced database technologies to identify critical groups of voters by targeting them with specific messages to win their support (Lofgren & Smith, 2003).

Another of party models/strategies is the consumerist one, which though in embryonic stages, may likely develop further. As an extreme form of cartel, such parties adopt a utilitarian and rational conception of democracy based on the assumption that individual interests must be protected and satisfied. Citizenship, from this perspective is limited to notions of voters who gauge the efficacy and efficiency of public decisions through a market mechanism. Thus the public becomes a ‘super market’ who participates to affect the public decisions outcome. Consumerist parties do not retain members to participate to affect policy decisions, rather they are kept as temporary campaign workers. In line with cartel, consumerist party tries more to discern public opinion to know their preferences. Like the cartel party, the ICT strategy of such parties is multi-dimensional. For example besides websites, advanced databases are kept in place to intercept public opinion and get their messages across to
the targeted groups for a successful campaigning. New ICT applications are not for the purpose of encouraging membership organization and participation. Public opinion is gauged about the services in the inter-election period by using websites. This data is stored for marketing purposes. (Lofgrin & Smith, 2003). The Canadian Reform Party can be cited as example which conducted a referendum over phone on the proposed changes to the juvenile crime Act. The individuals casted their vote to participate in this legislation on a pay-phone number. This ‘pay-per-vote’ forced voters into making a strategic assessment of the importance of registering their preferences (Barney and Laycock, 1995 cited in Lofgrin & Smith, 2003: 48).

Unlike a mass membership strategy, ‘grassroots strategy’ is characterized by the elimination of formal membership and replacement with informal relationships among members. As opposed to the consumerist strategy, grassroots strategy reflects more of a participatory ethos of the new popular movements like environmentalists and peace activists. Rather than prioritizing office seeking, this party emphasizes on extra-parliamentary activities and participation. Based on a horizontal organizational structure, opportunities are provided to participants that ‘equally’ weigh their votes and influence on policy decisions. Another trait which differentiates grassroots party from the mass-party is the empowerment of its members through development and representation of democratic identities instead of representing interests. New ICTs carry prime importance for this party as they create an ideal opportunity in the form of new public spheres which help in deliberation and creation of new identities. The organization, with the help of internet, keeps as a loose network instead of having a ‘fixed center’. The participants assemble in the cyberspace interacting on an equal basis. Prejudice is reduced by hiding the visual cues which help in creating new self-identities. New ICTs also serve as internal communication channels within the
network, besides being ‘political weapons’ to expose ‘scandals’ within the system by posting them on their websites within the system and circulation through electronic petitions. The empirical evidence for this strategy is also hard to trace. However, Die Digitalen, a German party, where policy development is open to all members who organize and coordinate it collectively. Nevertheless, influence to those accrues the most who regularly participate. Swedish Leftist Party also bears traits of this strategy for their hearings on party policy to the electorate at general on the internet (Lofgrin & Smith (2003).

2.5 Methodology

Since this research has established the rationale/justification for choosing the JI for this project in the previous chapter, another justification might be necessary here regarding the data needed to answer the question raised. The theoretical model/framework for this research and the questions determine the nature of the data required. I rely on three sets of data for this research. The first of them is content analysis of official accounts of the JI on Facebook and Twitter. The purpose of these data is to explore one of the important aspects of the online strategy of the JI for extending its sphere of influence, the online message of the JI. I borrow from Amin’s (2016) work the Comparative Manifesto Project. The allocation of data to the corresponding categories/domains is based on following Amin (2016). However, I have slightly modified Amin’s method which, as this study claims, can render CMP method more useful in the context of internet’s use by parties. Website’s data is not included for the purpose of knowing the contents of online message of the JI. This is because website is more of a tool of reinforcement than mobilization. I have only described its contents whenever it was needed to refer to the phenomenon of online reinforcement. Further, to know about the online participation through official
platforms of the JI, features that enable human-interactivity than media interactivity were focused upon. This aspect of interactivity has already been outlined in the previous chapter. The ‘discussion forum’ on the JI’s website was, therefore, evaluated for its contents and the pattern of interactivity. The discussion on the forum can easily be viewed by anyone.

For analyzing the contents of Facebook and Twitter central accounts of the JI, I recorded 600 posts from Facebook account and 600 tweets from its Twitter account. This study does not study the JI’s campaign strategy for elections; rather it explains the JI’s online behavior in what some scholars call peace times. Therefore, it selected the duration between two elections i.e. between 2013 and 2018 general elections. For this purpose, a first set of data was obtained by recording posts from the JI’s central Facebook and Twitter accounts and were analyzed. The researcher recorded posts and tweets from the JI’s central social media accounts in the month of July and August 2014; September and October 2015; and March and April 2016.

These months were randomly selected through a random sampling technique in a way that each set of the months had equal probability of being selected for the study. The contents from these accounts were carefully recorded based on their contents and messages which represent online discourse/narrative of the JI between two elections and not its online elections campaign strategy. A sample of 600 posts from Facebook account and 600 tweets from its Twitter account were recorded.

A second set of data, the need for which emanates from the nature of the question, are ethnographic data obtained through interviews and informal discussions with the JI’s activists. Since some close groups either devised by the party or its associates do not allow outsiders, “as I am to the JI,” to be part of these groups,
interviewing the members or administrators was the only option. Further, to know whether the JI’s positional leadership perceives online participation important, and if yes, how much are they involved in such interactive participation was possible through interviews and informal discussions only.

As stated above, two lengthy semi-structured interviews of the central Social Media Incharge and IT Manager Punjab Chapter the JI were conducted for the purpose of knowing about the activities they perform. Questions regarding the challenges and prospects that the ‘digital media’ present to the JI, the JI’s strategy to capitalize on the opportunities and cope with the challenges, the online interactivity, if any, that the official social media activists perform, and the importance of activism through ‘digital media,’ and the composition of and the way the social media department works were specifically focused upon during these interviews. These interviews, significantly, helped me analyze the online strategy of the JI.

Furthermore, keeping in view the importance of university students for online political participation through the JI’s platforms, I had some informal discussions with Islami Jamiat Talba’s (IJT, the student wing of the JI) students from University of Punjab and from University of Peshawar. These discussions focused on their access of the JI’s website, efforts to engage online with the JI’s leaders, efforts to influence the JI’s policies through online interaction and the importance of such online interactions in their relationship with the JI.

The methodology for this research is in part based on studying the contents of website of the JI for participatory purposes. Since a number of features were found on the JI’s website which can increase interactivity and hence lead to participation that can clash with their strategic participatory preferences, attention was a must to be paid to this
aspect of the JI. With increased activism on social media especially Facebook, the JI is under another pressure whether to accommodate or not the virtual participation mechanisms. Also, since some close groups either devised by the party or its associates do not allow outsiders to be part of these groups, interviewing the members or administrators was the only option. Therefore, I stick to the use of the method of semi-structured interviews for exploring the underlying power struggle between the positional elites of the JI and associates in these groups. Ahbab Discourse Forum on Facebook is an example of the associates of the JI who carry out lively discussions on almost all spheres of the JI viz. ranging from organizational through to public policy to ideological issues. Two of the active members who regularly participate in discussions in the group were interviewed whom I found access to. Questions about the activities in Ahbab Discourse Forum from the leadership were also asked during interviews as many of the JI's leadership are part of the group. Similarly, to what extent the JI's website and social media administrators are engaged in the balancing exercise of participation on behalf of the elites of the JI, was also assessed through interviews. Last but not least interviewing the leadership on how important do they see activism through social media and how much they engage with the common youth and associates online was sought through interviews as well.

Access to the field data, particularly the interviews, was facilitated by one of my classmates who belongs to the JI as its member. He took appointments for interviews with some of the JI’s leaders at Mansoorah, the JI’s headquarters at Lahore. This selection was based on availability of the interviewees and their schedules. Some of them could not be interviewed due to their busy schedules of
party activity. Semi-structured interviews of the JI’s Social Media Incharge/Manager, the JI’s Punjab chapter IT Manager, the JI Youth Information Secretary were conducted. Two JI’s Naib Umaraa (sing.: Amir) (deputy presidents) at the central level, incharge of foreign affairs of the JI, and Punjab chapter’s Mu’tamid (secretary general) were among the leadership that I interviewed at Mansoorah during this time. At the provincial level of Khyberpakhtunkhwa (KP), one Naib Amir (Naib Amir by default is a member of central consultative council – the shurah), mutamid, and a union council’s Amir of District Peshawar were interviewed. The semi-structured interviews were particularly important for the purpose of knowing about instances/cases of online interactivity of the leadership either with the supporters or common youth. Also, the semi-structured interviews were particularly helpful in exploring the views of leadership on the JI’s mission/agenda and message. Some informal discussions with those associated with the JI also added to the primary data. Occasional references have been given to such data when and wherever required.

For exploring what constitute the JI’s online message, I relied on content analysis technique. For this purpose, I borrowed from Amin (2016) the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP). Applying CMP to studying the contents of official social media accounts of the JI on Facebook and Twitter means we can know what are the contents on these platforms for extending the JI’s sphere of influence. Whereas the website of the JI might be an interesting source for studying the contents of its message for more of reinforcement purposes and not for extension of influence, I do not take these contents under the CMP method. Rather I delineate the significance of website’s contents for reinforcement wherever it is needed.

\[17 \text{ I am thankful to all the leaders whom I interviewed for their generous time and attention. All of them were very cooperative. Shamsuddin Amjad – the Social Media Incharge of JI, facilitated me a lot and provided hospitality including stay at Mansoorah Guest House.}\]
2.5.1 Comparative Manifesto Project and analyzing the JI’s online message

The CMP’s (comparative manifesto project) coding scheme is a useful tool that can be used for codification and quantification (Budge, 2001: 50-65) of the online message of the JI. Originally the CMP consists of seven domains namely external relations; freedom and democracy; political system/political activism; economy; welfare and quality of life/social activism; fabric of society/ethno-politics; and social groups. However, as this method has already been successfully used for Christian Democratic Party. Amin (2016) felt the need to add another, 8th, domain to the original CMP scheme. The need for the new category springs from the nature of issues like establishment of Shariah Law, moral approval and active support for Jihadi movements across the world, shaping of public policy in light of doctrinal injunctions etc.

The coding unit in the online contents on social networks of the JI was a quasi-sentence defined as “an argument”. An argument equates to “verbal expression of one political idea or issue”. The basic unit is the sentence but it can be further split into two or more arguments if the structure of the sentence allows (Amin, 2016: 71). For example “corruption ny qaumi idaron ko tabah kar diya hy” (corruption has destroyed the national institutions). This sentence has two arguments (i) corruption as an issue and (ii) national institutions being at dismal position due to corruption as another issue. Similarly, “siyasi parties family limited compnyan ban chuki hain” (political parties have become family limited companies” conveys only one idea or issue here as a criticism on the dynastic politics in other parties. Complex sentences were broken down into more than two arguments or quasi-sentences where a quasi-sentence was “a set of words, containing one and only one political idea.” (Volkens, 2005:3 cited in Amin, 2016:72). Since the multi-media nature of the internet allowing one to post
falls short of helping in constructing the categories. Thus a 9th domain, “Visibility/Party Events” enables the modified CMP encompass the remaining important posts since a handsome amount of share among the online contents was noted during data collection as being given to such posts by the JI.

The modified CMP method by Amin provides a useful guidance to add new sub-domains to them and to code the contents under the respective sub-domains. However, being very comprehensive, it was difficult for the researcher to follow the sub-domains devised by Amin strictly while coding the contents of the online message of the JI. Therefore, new sub-domains were added by the researcher though by closely following Amin’s 8 domains. The researcher thus adopted a coding scheme that was partly based on Amin (2016) and partly on searching for themes in the collected data which corresponded to different sub-categories/sub-domains identified by the researcher himself, however, complying with the scope of the individual domains devised by Husnul Amin. Thus, it was made sure that the new/distinct themes appearing from the collected data fit either into one or the other domains adopted from Amin (2016) except the 9th domain which was solely the researcher’s addition. Since the 9th domain was added to the modified CMP by the researcher himself, all the sub-domains/categories appearing in the said domain for coding the contents were also devised by the researcher himself. To reiterate, the pattern devised by Amin (2016) for outlining sub-domains of the individual 8 domains was also followed by the researcher. However, some additional sub-domains were added to the respective 8 domains that Amin’s devised sub-domains could not absorb. For example the sub-domain in the domain of ‘external relations’ by Amin could not absorb the issue of Palestine which got a lion’s share in the JI’s online message contents. This is because Amin (2016) has fixed a sub-domain with the title ‘Kashmir & Afghanistan’
in this domain to code the JI’s position on the issues of the Muslims on international level. Similarly, the issue of energy crisis in Pakistan was raised by the JI which was coded under a new sub-domain, ‘energy crisis,’ by the researcher under the general domain of ‘economy.’ The sub-domains under the domain of ‘economy’ appeared very comprehensive to the researcher which posed a difficulty to decide which sub-domain could accommodate the arguments regarding ‘energy crisis.’ It can be acknowledged from the fact that, for instance, Amin gives sub-domains under the domain of ‘economy’ with these titles: free enterprise; incentives; market regulation; protectionism; economic planning; general economic goals; technology and infrastructure; nationalization; and privatization.

A third set of data for this study was based on consulting secondary sources. These included books, journal articles, news papers and websites. All these three sets of data were used to conduct this study.

This study could rely on the online contents of the JI and interviews of the IT Managers at the central level alone for evaluating the use of ‘digital media’ by the JI for extending its sphere of influence. However, the rest of the interviews were conducted to comprehend the JI’s online strategy in detail. It was, most probably, the homogenous structure of the JI which caused quick saturation of ethnographic data. A total of eleven interviews were conducted from the JI’s leadership. The purpose of these interviews was to ascertain how the institutional characteristics of the JI e.g. hierarchical nature and ideological considerations hindered/facilitated online activism/mobilization by the JI.
Data Analysis and Method of Interpretation

This study approaches the problem and hence answers the questions raised through mixed-methods approach. That is, it uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze data. It is mostly the nature of the first question that pushes for both quantitative and qualitative methods to answer it. For example the researcher was interested to explore the contents of the message on the popular social networks of the JI i.e. Facebook and Twitter and then how these contents (message) help the JI in extending its influence online. Exploring the contents of the message thus required a content analysis, which this study does through Comparative Manifesto Project, albeit modified once by another researcher, Amin (2016), and later by the researcher himself to suit analyzing the online message of the JI. The strength of a particular type of domain(s) calculated in percentage thus helped the researcher to draw inferences from it as to what constitute the JI’s message on these popular digital social network platforms. It was one but significant step that needed to be taken prior to the other method used i.e. qualitative. The mixed-methods approach also helped in cross-verifying the online contents of the JI’s message against the one sought about through interviews. The researcher also agrees with another reason given by the researchers as why to use mixed-methods approach. This reason comes from Wisdom et al. (2012); Bryman (2006); and Greene et al. (1989) who give ‘expansion’ as one of the reasons/justifications to use mixed-methods approach. Under this logic, i.e. ‘expansion,’ the depth and breadth of the study is expanded for various components of the research by using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Further, the second question relates to finding out the JI’s strategy to cope with the problems emerging from the clash between its strategic participation and
participation via internet. Answering this question also depended on the answer from the first component of the first question i.e. what message the JI disseminates through the popular social networks of Facebook and Twitter? The second method that was used in this study was qualitative method. Since the JI uses different close groups for internal discussion which the outsiders cannot access, interviewing the Social Media and IT managers/administrators was the only option. Moreover, exploring whether the JI leadership is involved in interactivity with the common citizens/youth online or not was possible through interviews only. Semi-structured interview method was used just because it provides flexibility for the interviewees to convey the instances of interactivity they have experienced in detail.

The first set of data i.e. content analysis was analyzed through allocating respective arguments/categories to the individual sub-domains in the 9 domains of the modified CMP. The frequency of each sub-domain contributed to the overall percentage that a particular domain holds among the 9 domains. Three domains each on Facebook and Twitter dominated the rest of the domains percentage-wise. For instance, the top three domains captured a total share of 67.88% out of the 9 domains on Facebook. Similarly, top three domains got 65.35% out of the 9 domains on Twitter. An inference about what was the predominant message of the JI on the online social network platforms was, therefore, drawn from these data. This quantification of the JI’s online message helped me in explaining the JI’s use of ‘digital media’ for extending its sphere of influence and the strategies coping with the problem of participation via internet by the common youth/JI associates in the politics of the JI. However, comprehending that how the JI copes with the challenges of participation via internet from the common youth, it was imperative to opt for interviewing the JI’s website and social media managers along with its leadership. The qualitative data was
of high importance to identify the challenges besides strategy of the JI to cope with them while using internet for extending its sphere of influence among the youth. The interviews data of the leadership provided significant material to be assessed for the meaning of how the JI leadership interact with supporters/common youth through ‘digital media.’ They provide significant stuff from which meanings can be drawn while answering the questions raised. Informal discussions with the JI’s and Islami Jamiat Talba’s (IJT – a sister organization of the JI in universities) associates also added to the primary data that the researcher gathered. The researcher had informal discussions with eight IJT students from University of Punjab and ten from University of Peshawar. References to such data were given where and when the need arose.

2.6 Limitations of the study

This study assumed that interviewing leadership, IT managers and IJT students from the center (Mansoorah – the headquarters of the JI at Lahore) and one regional set up, the JI’s regional headquarters at Peshawar Khyberpakhtunkhwa (KP – the province of Pakistan located at the North-West side of Pakistan) would be an enough representative sample because of the supposedly homogenous structure of the JI across Pakistan. This, though, a plausible assumption was essential to make the study possible. The JI may be more diverse and complex and hence relying on the assumption about the homogeneity of the JI is one of the biggest limitations of this study. Moreover, at the central level the Amir (president) of the JI Sirajul Haque could not be interviewed due to his busy schedule. Also, in Khyberpakhtunkhwa a Naib Amir (Deputy President) and the Secretary General were interviewed besides a local level Amir (president) in Peshawar. Their accounts do not represent a full understanding of the interactivity through technologies between the leadership of the JI and supporters/non-supporters that this research tried to investigate. Further, the
time and finance were those constraints that limit this study to a tightly representative sample. A study at the level of Pakistan could have been a more realistic account of the JI’s use of new ICTs.
CHAPTER-3

A SELECTED HISTORY OF THE JAMA’AT-E-ISLAMI: IDEOLOGY AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Introduction

The JI’s roots can be found within the history of Islamic revivalism in the Indian sub-continent. Syed Abul A’la Mawdudi was one of the revivalists who for the first time struggled to revive Islam systematically. He tried to give an updated explanation of Islam and influenced many in the Indian sub-continent and across the globe. This chapter charts out Mawdudi’s efforts, his ideas about Islam and its systematic connection to the temporal dimensions of life, his perceived ultimate solution to the predicament of the Muslims of India and his practical steps undertaken to materialize his new found vision. Further, the chapter outlines the transformations that Mawdudi’s party, Jama’at-e-Islami, underwent. As such it draws an account of the JI’s electoral history with an emphasis on the role of the JI’s leadership and the adaptive strategies to cope with the changing dynamics within the socio-political and economic environment of Pakistan.

As the nature of the question of this study demands, this chapter only focuses on the various selected developments in the JI and does not present a critical assessment of its ideology. The role of the positional elites as identified in the previous chapters is assessed first. Second, the transformations in terms of the JI’s organizational strategy, public policy and an alternation between its ideology and pragmatism are charted out.
3.1 About the founder of the JI

Syed Abu’l-A’la Mawdudi, the founder of Jama’at-e-Islami, was born on 25th September, 1903 at Aurangabad in the then state of Hyderabad (Deccan). He traced his lineage to an old notable family of Delhi who had been in attachment with the Mughal court and later with the Nizams of Hyderabad. The family took pride at the glorious days of Islam and was, therefore, conscious of the fall of Delhi at the hands of British in 1858 (Nasr 1994: 3). His father despite being educated at Aligharh did not send Mawdudi to the English school. He was taught at home various subjects including English language and literature, modern disciplines, and all classical subjects with Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages (Faruqi, 1968: 128). However, Mawdudi managed to obtain his religious education from some of Deobandi tutors in the evening classes and earned certificate (ijaza) which boosted his self-confidence (Hartung, 2013: 19). After completing dars-i nizami curricula and receiving certificate under Deobandi tutors, Mawdudi rather than joining the sodality started studying modern subjects on his own. Studying English and Western thought, Mawdudi embarked upon a career in journalism. It was between 1921 and 1924 that he became involved in the Khilafat Movement aimed at preserving the Muslim caliphate. His literary zeal attracted the leaders of the pro-congress Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i Hind (JUH: party of Indian religious scholars). Mawdudi was, thus, invited by its leaders to serve as the editor of their newspaper (Nasr, 1994: 3). He also served the two leading journals of JUH namely *Muslim* and *al-jamiyat* (Sayeed, 1957: 61). However, Mawdudi did not like the pro-congress Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i Hind and soon parted ways with them in favor of revival of Islam as the sole solution for the Muslims’ predicament in India (Nasr, 1994: 3).
The religiopolitical awareness of Mawdudi is said to have been aroused with the decline of Nizam’s government in Hyderabad. In fact the balance of power in this long held bastion of power by Muslims was shifting towards Hindus which saddened Mawdudi. Whereas the Muslims had lost its power with the collapse of Mughal rule in India, experiments of accommodation to the British rule by some Muslim leaders e.g. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Punjab’s Unionist Party failed to resolve the Muslims’ predicament. Muslims were now aiming at restoring their political power to safeguard their interests. During the two world wars Muslims turned to communalism. In the decades of 1920s and 1930 Islam was projected in the political arena by using Islamic symbols for mobilizations. As a result hostilities between the Hindus and Muslims further intensified. During Khilafat Movement the hostility between Hindus and Muslims emerged into open causing further fears among the Muslims about their future. At the end of Khilafat Movement, Muslims committed violent acts against Hindus which aroused the anger of Hindus. As a result Hindus launched their revivalist campaign, “shuddhi,” aimed at reconverting the low-caste Hindus from Islam back to Hinduism. This campaign challenged the place of Islam in India. Mawdudi’s political consciousness was in the making while he was witnessing all these events and the Muslims’ experiments for solving them politically. He, like his fellow Muslims was in search of solution to the Muslims predicament. However, he arrived at the conclusion that the best remedy was in Islam (Nasr, 1994: 4-5).

In the history of revivalism in the sub-continent, Shah Waliullah is believed to have gone for re-interpretation of the religious sources with a rational approach. It was done in a time when the Mughal rule in India was decaying. Shah Waliullah felt the need for re-interpretation than relying on the four schools of thought in Islam because a re-interpretation was more in harmony with the needs of their time and
Following the Government of India Act of 1935 and the elections of 1937, Indian politics became much polarized. The Congress, a pro-united Indian party started serious attempts at recruiting Muslims in the party by embarking upon a ‘Muslim mass contact program’ (Hassan, 1986). On the other hand the Muslim League – a Muslim communal party under the leadership of Muhammad ‘Ali Jinnah (1876-1948) demanded a separate homeland for the Muslims.¹⁸ Mawdudi did not join either of the parties. Rather his concern for the Muslims predicament grew further while Muslims were joining Congress which he believed to be essentially leading to Hindu dominance. He believed that Muslims should reject Hindu ascendency and place claim to whole of India. However, this communalist aspiration had its rival, the party named All India Muslim League who were struggling for a separate state for Muslims and Mawdudi considered it a great hurdle in his control over the communal politics of India (Nasr, 1994: 5-6)

Both the Muslim League and Mawdudi had their own aspirations of “two nation theory”. However, despite believing that Muslims were a separate nation, Mawdudi opposed the creation of a separate state – the Pakistan. He believed that all Muslims of the world constituted an Ummah (nation) and Muslims of the India is a part of the Muslim Ummah. Nevertheless, still he opposed the creation of Pakistan at the hands of Muslim League. He rejected the Muslim League’s argument that the Muslims would establish a separate state and then improve their cultural and moral

standards while gradually transforming this democratic state into an Islamic state (Mawdudi 1942, pp. 6-7). To understand the logic behind Mawdudi’s argument, we need to reflect on his ideology and the way of realizing his objective of Islamic state.

3.2 Ideology of Mawdudi and the JI

The philosophy of the JI with a comprehensive framework of thought and analysis represents the ideology of Mawdudi and hence his JI. The JI’s ideology encompasses all of the socio-political and economic aspects of life (Smith, 1963: 236). Mawdudi’s prolific writing and speaking skills enabled him to write and speak on all aspects of theology and politics. Whereas Mawdudi claimed that his philosophy of religion and politics was a derivation from the Quran and Sunnah, it obviously entailed into halting any further new addition by anybody else in the JI (Bahadur, 1977: 159-160).

On the other hand, the peculiarity of the JI’s organizational structure provided a dominant position to its Amir over its rest of the levels. The 1952 constitution of the JI and later amendments even further empowered the Amir. It clearly stated that in case there was a conflict over a matter of interpretation of injunctions and Shariah between the Amir and Shura, the latter would yield to the former.19 Since Islam was ideologized as “an all encompassing/comprehensive system of life”, the constitution obviously gave powers to the Amir concerning interpretations on all aspects of life.

The starting point of the Ideology of Mawdudi and hence by implication his Jama’at-e-Islami was that, “Islam is not a jumble of unrelated ideas and incoherent mode of conduct. It is rather a well-ordered system, a consistent whole, resting on a definite set of clear-cut postulates” (Mawdudi, 1960: 133). One of the basic postulates

from which follows a logical order is the premise regarding the unity and sovereignty of God. God is sovereign over the entire universe and hence the political sovereignty lies with Him. If one accepts this premise, conclusion of the argument gives a logical and consistent philosophy of Mawdudi. This acceptance follows that God alone is the law-giver. This divine law has been provided to the humans through His book Quran and Sunnah i.e. the ideal demeanor exhibited by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to explain and exemplify the meanings of God’s book. Therefore, no person or group of persons can independently legislate in any sphere of life (Bahadur 1977: 161).

According to Mawdudi’s philosophy both the State and Din are one and the same thing because both entail obeying something superior as sovereign. The Islamic State, therefore, is opposed to any state which derives its sovereignty from the people for law-making. Hence, Islam has no roots of Western democracy. Mawdudi claimed that sovereignty of God and vicegerency (Khilafat) of man are the foundations for the Islamic state. Islam, according to Mawdudi, thus rejects the popular sovereignty. (Mawdudi, 1960: 147)

In fact, Mawdudi’s view of Islam was state-centric vision and hence political. There were four premises that Mawdudi based his ideology on: Ilah, Rabb, Ibadah, and Din (Arabic terms). Mawdudi asserted that the basic theme of the Quran revolves around these four concepts. He argued that the true meaning of these premises have been obscured over the passage of time and needs be revived. Originally, argues Mawdudi, the essence of ilah is linked with the authority and hence with the authority of God. As such, this concept conveys an indivisible and all-encompassing authority of God over the entire universe. Anybody claiming power and authority in a political sense is a claim for godhood in the metaphysical sense. The second concept Rabb, in the view of Mawdudi, means to bring up. He gives a number of Quranic verses and
examples of the Prophets and summarizes the essence of this concept in terms of sovereignty. Thus the concept of *Ilah* means the indivisible sovereignty of God over the universe. The third concept *Ibadah*, according to Mawdudi, means humbleness and an eagerness to completely surrender to the supreme authority. Its essence is obedience, servitude and worship. The concept *Din* conveys four themes in the Quran: dominance by the supreme authority; servitude by the one submitting to His authority; laws, rules and regulations; and reward and punishment on the Day of Judgment. According to Mawdudi, Quran conveys the meaning of *Din* in a comprehensive system that entails: sovereignty and ultimate authority of God; obedience and submission to the supreme authority of God; the system of thought and practice designed under the influence of this ultimate authority; and the reward and punishment meted out on the day of judgment to those who obeyed and rebelled against the supreme authority respectively. Mawdudi, assigned new meaning to these terms and argued that the comprehensive nature of *Din* is unparalleled in meaning by any other term but the contemporary notion of “state.” Islam, according to Mawdudi, is thus ‘a comprehensive way of life’ and a true religion. The purpose of prophet hood was thus to triumph/enforce it over all other systems/orders of life (Amin 2016: 146). A state, therefore, based on any form of sovereignty other than God’s would be tantamount to challenge the authority and sovereignty of God. It is clear that under Mawdudi’s vision, Islam becomes top-down implemented by the state in all the domains of life viz. social, political, economic etc.

Mawdudi asserted that the modernity project and the Western enlightenment are tantamount to the rule of *Jahiliyya* (literally ignorance) and must be replaced with Islamic divine order. Hartung (2013: 64) observes that central to the ideologization of Islam by Mawdudi and his alternative Islamic path (*Islami tariqa*) was his own
reformulation of the concept of *Jahiliyya* (literally ignorance). He argues that, though this concept divides history, from a traditional Islamic history’s point of view, into pre and post-Islamic periods. However, Mawdudi reformulated this concept and freed it from the constraints of time and space. Thus according to Hartung, Mawdudi turned this temporal character of *jihiliyya* into a typological category.

The meaning of ‘*jahiliyya*’ in Islam comprises every course of action [har ṭarz-i ‘amal] which runs counter to the Islamic culture, Islamic morals and conduct, or Islamic mentality; and ‘*jahiliyyat-i ulla*’ means all those evils [bura’iyan] in which the people of Arabia and every other people the whole was involved in (quoted in Hartung, 2013: 65).

Nasr (1994: 8) argues that Mawdudi rejected both capitalism and communism: capitalism for the secularism, anthropocentrism, and its association with imperialist culture and socialism for its worship of society than God. In practice, however, Mawdudi despised socialism more than capitalism. Hartung (2013: 67) argues that it is the reformulation of *jahiliyya* by Mawdudi that detested capitalist and socialist societies leading to “dominance of man over man.” The only solution for emancipation of man was in realizing the *divine order* in accordance with his four concepts outlined above. Establishment of this divine order was what Mawdudi termed as “Iqamat-e-Din” – the establishment of Din that can be realized by establishing a ‘divine government’ (*hanuman-e-ilahiyya*). However, the establishment of the required divine order would not be possible without establishing an organized group of “*saliheen*” (“virtuous” and committed individuals) (Mehmood & Ahmad, 2018). Thus for Mawdudi any system that rests on a notion of sovereignty other than

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20 This study simply reviews the philosophy of Mawdudi and hence his ideology. For a very detailed account on how Mawdudi ideologized Islam, see Hartung (2013).
that of God is based on jahiliyya what Hartung (2013) argues that Mawdudi had typologized.

### 3.3 Establishment of Jama’at-e-Islami

A meeting was called at Lahore in the April issue of *Tarjuman-ul Quran* inviting all those who were interested in forming a new Muslim party. Mawdudi professed the Muslim testament of faith (*shahadah*) and the rest emulating Mawdudi thereby officially forming the JI on 26th August, 1941. A constitution for the JI and the criteria for its membership were reached in the meeting which lasted for three days. Whereas all those present, many of whom had not seen Mawdudi before and were only familiar with him through his articles in *Tarjuman*, agreed on what the JI had to play, however, were not in agreement as to how the party will be governed. Some favored *amir* (leader) while others a ruling council. Mawdudi himself was in favor of *amir* and declared “Islam is none other than jama’at and jama’at is none other than imarat (amirate).” Yet those who favored the idea of *amir* were not in concord on extent of the powers of the *amir*. Mawdudi suggested that the JI will be led by *amir* with limited powers. The next phase was that of the election of the Amir. To avoid the corrupting influence of politics, many present suggested that no one would forward his candidacy. There were two other strong contenders that could challenge Mawdudi for the position of amir. However, majority of the present felt that since the idea of the JI was the brainchild of Mawdudi, he was therefore, elected as the first *amir* of the JI (Nasr, 1994: 21-22).

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21 Monthy journal edited by Mawdudi for almost thirty years. The mouth-piece of the JI.
3.4 Mawdudi and the Pakistan’s Movement

Muhammad Ali Jinnah\textsuperscript{22}, the president of All India Muslim League, demanded a separate state for the Muslims. He asserted that Muslims and Hindus were two different and distinct social orders. Muslims, by any definition, are a separate nation and must have a separate state. It was on 23\textsuperscript{rd} March, 1940 that a resolution called “Pakistan Resolution” was passed in a gathering by Muslim League at Lahore.

In the landscape of freedom struggle for the sub-continent Indian National Congress, the Muslim League and Jamiat-i Ulama-i Hind (JUH) were the main forces. Mawdudi despised the Indian National Congress for their Indian nationalistic orientation, however, also rejected the Muslim League for its “un-Islamic” character and philosophy besides believing in the Muslim nationalism. He is, therefore, said to have opposed the creation of Pakistan. Whereas Mawdudi was invited twice in 1937 and 1945 to work for Muslim League, both times he rejected the offer (Binder 1961: 94). The reason, according to Mawdudi, was his concern of Islam and the ability of those who claimed to be representing it i.e. the Muslim League. This is because Mawdudi rejected the concept of nationalism which he thought to have brought to the sub-continent by the imperial government of the British. Mawdudi viewed nationalism as a means to break the unity of the Muslims. Since Mawdudi viewed Muslims of India a part of the global Muslim community (Muslim \textit{ummah}), both the secular or Muslim nationalism were rejected as he viewed nationalism hindering the implementation of the Islamic socio-political and economic order (Moten, 2003: 23).

\textsuperscript{22} Muhammad Ali Jinnah is known as Quaid-e-Azam – the great leader. He was born in Karachi in 1876. He went to London for studies and was called to the bar in 1896 at Linconl’s Inn. He joined Indian National Congress and in 1913 became a member of the Muslim League as well to forge unity between the two. He worked for the Hindu-Muslim unity despite leaving congress in 1920. In 1940, however, he espoused his “two nations theory” and demanded for a separate homeland for the Muslims. Jinnah served as the first Governor General of the constituent Assembly of Pakistan.
It is clear that Maududi despite believing into the separate nationhood of Muslims did not favor Muslim League’s plan because such a state would be based on popular sovereignty and not on the sovereignty of God. For example Mawdudi articulated:

Being a Muslim I am not at all interested that Muslim governments are formed in areas where Muslims are in a majority. For me the most important question is whether in your Pakistan the system of government will be based on the Sovereignty of God or on popular sovereignty based on Western democratic theories. In the case of the former it will certainly be Pakistan otherwise it will be as ‘na-Pakistan’ (unholy land) as the other areas where according to your scheme, non-Muslims will rule. But in the eyes of God it will be much more reprehensible and unholy than even that. Muslim nationalism is as reprehensible in the Shariah of God as Indian nationalism (Mawdudi, 1942, p. 76).

Nevertheless, as Nasr argues, Mawdudi groomed his JI to be the true Muslim League and termed it the “rear guard” waiting for the demise of the Muslim League. While Mawdudi had understood Indian politics in terms of Islam, this aspect constituted the blind spot in his career which made him oblivious of the actual dynamics of politics both before and after the partition of India. Jinnah’s example thus misguided Mawdudi expecting the Muslim League’s demise and Mawdudi taking the leading role (Nasr, 1994: 21). Jinnah’s sudden rise enticed Mawdudi and gave him the false expectation that as soon as his message was heard by the people, he would enjoy greater prominence. Jinnah’s example, however, reinforced Mawdudi’s commitment to communal politics the end result of which was Pakistan’s creation in 1947.
3.5 The JI and the creation of Pakistan

While so far it is clear that Mawdudi’s opposition to the Indian National Congress and Muslim League was based on his concept of the *Ummah* (Community of Global Muslims of which the Indian Muslims were a part). In early 1947 tried to convince Mawdudi for cooperation with Muslim League temporarily lest the whole country should fall into the hands of the non-Muslims. However, Mawdudi responded that establishing a Muslim state in one corner of India being Muslims League’s ideal is wrong and that they could transform the entire country into an Islamic state if they were loyal to the faith.23 Ironically, a month later after this statement when the partition of India seemed imminent, in a speech at a JI’s gathering at Pathankot in May 1947 it appeared as if Mawdudi was shifting his stand. He said:

> It is almost settled now that our country will be divided and partitioned. A portion of it will be handed over to Muslim majority, and the other will be dominated by a non-Muslim majority. In the first region we will try to awaken and guide the popular will to base the foundations of our state on the law and constitution which Muslims consider divine. Our non-Muslim brethren should instead of opposing this ideal of ours, allow us the opportunity to work it and see for themselves how far in contradistinction to a secular, irreligious, national democracy, this God worshipping democratic Caliphate, founded on the guidance vouchsafed to us through Muhammad proves a blessing for the inhabitants of Pakistan and to what extent for the whole world (Mawdudi, 1955: 46).

Mawdudi had realized the density of the situation. Lest his opposition to the creation of Pakistan become a liability for the JI in the new state, he, therefore, started mending his ways to play a new role in the state which was bound to come into being. Mawdudi moved to Lahore with the creation of Pakistan. The JI was divided into Jama’at-e-Islami Pakistan and Jama’at-e-Islami Hind (India). Both the parties started working independently, the former in a Muslim majority state and the latter in a Hindu majority state with a secular political set up. Mawdudi remained silent for a few months after the partition of India. Nevertheless, it was in the Law College Lahore that he stressed upon the promulgation of an Islamic constitution and introducing an Islamic way of life espoused by him (Bahadur, 1977: 51).

3.6 Struggle for Islamic State in Pakistan

In his first lecture at Law College he stressed over the importance of a struggle for active politics. Muslims were not only to confine themselves to the Mosque, rather they were to play an active role in all the collective spheres of life since abandoning this duty would render control of these spheres into the hands of ungodly philosophies and hence power. (Nasr, 1994; Khan, n.d.: 12).

In another lecture Mawdudi emphasized upon the gradual transformation of the Muslims of Pakistan in their social, economic, political, moral and religious spheres since these spheres had undergone radical changes and were far from Islamic ideals. With a faulty education system it was, thus, difficult to prepare those people who would run an Islamic state. However, this gradual transformation did not mean that a secular constitution be imposed on Pakistan. As a first step, argued Mawdudi, Pakistan’s Constituent Assembly should adopt the following four principles in its constitution for Islamizing the state:
1. Sovereignty in Pakistan belongs to God and that those running the government shall administer it as His agent.

2. The basic law of the land would be Shairah Law that came to Muslims through Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

3. That all those existing laws that are contrary to the spirit of Shariah will be replaced with Shariah compliant laws in the due course of time and no new laws repugnant to the basic Islamic law shall be enacted in future.

4. The state shall not transgress the limits imposed on it by Islam while exercising its powers (Mawdudi, 1960: 44).

Mawdudi embarked upon a campaign to popularize his four point agenda for the drafting of the constitution (Binder, 1961: 105). It was on March 7, 1949 that the prime Minister of Pakistan Liaqat Ali Khan moved a resolution in the Constituent Assembly. The resolution vaguely incorporated almost all the demands for which Mawdudi, besides other traditional Ulama, were striving. In reality, it was more of a compromise between the modernists Muslim League and the Islamists. Since the JI’s principle that it would not associate themselves with any un-Islamic system had been somehow satisfied by the passage of the resolution, to the JI’s interpretation and belief Pakistan had now principally become an Islamic state. The task ahead was, therefore, to change the leadership to implement the Islamic system. Association with Pakistan’s political system in all spheres was now permissible for the JI members.  

3.7 The JI’s entry into electoral politics: Ideology and Pragmatism

The JI’s strategy was to form voter councils (panchayats) in different localities who agreed to the JI’s program of Islamic state. The JI was, therefore, not to

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put forward any candidate of its own. It would support those who are deemed virtuous by the JI and as determined by the voters’ councils. However, two candidates succeeded in gaining electoral victory. The JI accused the government for rigging the elections. The JI’s newspapers Tasnim and Qasid had been banned and the rest of news media had boycotted the JI’s campaign. The JI’s printing press had been asked to deposit security. Its Majlis-e-Shura met in April 1951 to reassure its demoralized members that constitutional means could still be effective in bringing Islamic reforms. They decided that the JI would take part in future elections wherever they were held. Some, dissatisfied with Shura’s views, argued that realizing Islamic reforms was impossible through peaceful means. Yet others parted ways with the JI advising it to leave politics and work in the religious and educational fields. This experiment proved a turning point in the JI’s history that later routed to controversies and schism in the JI in 1956-1958 (Bahadur, 1977: 64).

However, the party amir was optimistic and argued that it will publicize the JI’s program bringing in more support to the party, an argument that was time and again used by the leaders of the JI to make defeats palatable. A more rigorous organizational and propaganda were sought to correct the situation. Nevertheless, the violation of code of conduct by the workers and rank-and-file of the JI during campaign had caused a serious concern for its leaders. Mawdudi emphasized on the need to maintain party discipline. In the aftermath of the elections, debates on whether the JI should take further part in elections or pursue its religious goals continued. Some suggested detachment from participation in politics for the time being. Amin Ahsan Islahi, one of the influential leaders of the JI and Mawdudi were inclined toward politics and suggested two agenda – the political activism and religious work. In the wake of anti-Ahmadi agitation in 1953-1954 and the subsequent imprisonment
of Mawdudi halted the debate and hence the issue could not be resolved satisfactorily at that time. This issue left here unresolved aggravated further until it caused the most serious rupture in the JI (Nasr, 1994: 30).

In a general meeting of the JI in Karachi in 1954, Sa’id Ahmad Malik, once the provincial amir of Punjab, leveled serious charges of misconduct and financial corruption against a high-ranking member of the JI. The charge was leveled publicly in the meeting which deeply disturbed Mawdudi fearing the JI’s fall from grace. Mawdudi assigned Islahi to dissuade Malik that the matter will be honestly investigated. True to his promise, a seven member committee was formed with Malik being its part. The committee though resisted by the bureaucracy in the JI’s secretariat declared its findings. The findings were disturbing in many ways. Ethical transgressions and financial embezzlements were reported and complaints against the behavior and procedures of the JI’s bureaucracy were registered. The committee prepared a report and presented it to the shura meeting in November 1956 for consideration: that the JI had strayed from the path of haqparasti (holding the truth) to maslahat-parasti (opportunism) and following awam-parasti (popular will). That the JI had deviated from its religious goals and become a political organization. That political work was occupying more space than the religious work. That External sources of finance had greatly influenced the JI’s policies (Ahmad, 1966: 187-201).

The committee’s report suggested that since part of the findings were due to participation in politics, the situation can be remedied only if the JI did not take part in the forthcoming elections. Ethics and politics were termed as antithetical to each other, and hence the JI was to choose between one of them. In the Shura meeting of November 1956 which lasted for 15 days, the committee presented its case. It argued
that the JI had completely gone astray; that politics had dominated the JI’s activities and if it did not desist from politics, it will lose all what it had gained. The shura meeting ended with a resolution that the JI, would thus, keep itself aloof from politics. It also stated that the JI’s policies would be guided by Quran and Hadith (sayings of the Prophet), amir and shura and not by any party document. This point was challenging to Mawdudi since it conveyed that Mawdudi’s work did not dictate policy and hence the party was not an extension of him. Mawdudi was greatly disappointed. For the first time in the history of the JI the powers of the amir were challenged with such a great strength (Nasr, 1994: 31-35). Whereas Islahi and his supports had argued that the JI would not participate in elections for reforming the government until the righteous elements from the society were trained in accordance with the vision of the JI (Bahadur, 1977: 91). Mawdudi called an All Pakistan session of the JI’s members. The matter was put before an open session of the JI members in Machi Goth where 935 of the JI’s then 1200 members participated. Mawdudi’s stand in favor of politics was approved with an overwhelming majority in the session.

The decision caused one of the profound schisms and ended in resignation of almost 56 the JI members and Amin Ahsan Islahi was one of them. Free from the constraints of the shura members who pressurized the JI to desist from politics, the party now started further invigorating its zeal for politics. Mawdudi argued that it is unwise to leave the secular forces flourishing and the JI watching them. However, Machi Goth session entailed what Nasr calls “the end of ideology” of the JI and the beginning of pragmatic politics and decision making (Nasr, 1994: 40).

Whereas so far the JI was acting like a pressure group, it continued its emphasis on participation in politics. However, strengthening its organization was one
of the imperatives that needed to avoid schism in the JI which the Machi Goth affair had brought. The JI revised its constitution in 1957. The amir, so far the selection of which was the prerogative of the shura, will thenceforth directly be elected by the members. The number of shura members was increased up to 50 who could veto the decisions of the amir. Nevertheless, the amir would control the agenda and discussions of the shura. The JI demanded strict discipline from its members. They were bound to observe the religious duties assigned to them by Islam. Moreover, they should perform the duties assigned to them faithfully even at the cost of sacrificing their time and money. Mawdudi’s strategy was to strengthen the cadres of his party and act like what Lenin’s vanguard had done albeit not from within, however, from without. With this strategy and a strong cadre party, the JI would awake the Islamic consciousness of the masses for taking hold of the power to realize the goal of implementing the Sharia Law. Although Mawdudi wanted to win the support of the masses, he never wanted the JI to be a mass party (Moten, 2003: 73-74).

The JI with a strong cadre party was now ready to retry their luck in the municipal elections of Karachi in 1958. It nominated 23 candidates and secured 19 seats. The encouraging results of the Karachi Municipal elections were an enough reason to embolden the JI further. The JI began preparing for the upcoming general elections for capturing power at the national level. To the dismay of the JI, Field Marshal General Ayub Khan imposed martial law on October 7, 1958.

While Ayub stayed in power for more than a decade, it nevertheless increased the zeal of the JI to work for the restoration of the constitution and hence democracy. During Ayub’s regime the JI even supported the candidature of Miss Fatima Jinnah against Ayub for the presidential bid. This support, that the JI provided to her, was
despite the serious pressure from the traditionalist Ulama (religious scholars) and from within the JI itself. However, Mawdudi responded by saying that a woman being head of the state is not against the Islamic law. Moreover, it was a struggle for relieving the people from an oppressive regime. Mawdudi was much confident about Miss Fatima Jinnah’s success, however, the polls favored Ayub. The JI joined Pakistan Democratic Movement in 1967 and participated in its activities irrespective of its ideological differences with other political forces of Pakistan. Ayub, in the face of a mounting mass pressure and agitation stepped down. General Yahya Khan was called in for restoration of the order. Yahya Khan yielded to the situation by holding the most fair and free elections in the history of Pakistan in December, 1970. The JI participated with full vigor. The popularity of the JI gained due to participation in the Pakistan Democratic Movement boosted Mawdudi’s confidence and he expected that the JI will sweep the general elections. However, to his disappointment the JI won only 4 national assembly and provincial assembly each. Surprising were the gains by the two other Islamist parties viz. Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI) and Jamiat Ulama-e-Pakistan (JUP) by gaining 7 national assembly seats each besides 9 and 11 provincial assembly seats respectively (Moten, 2003: 82-85; Nasr, 1994: 168-169).

The electoral loss this time assured many of the members that Mawdudi could not project the message of the JI successfully due to his ill health and old age. Implicit in these questions was a demand for changing the amir of the JI. In 1972 Mawdudi suffered from a mild heart attack and resigned from the post of amir. Mian Tufayl Muhammad replaced Mawdudi as the new amir of the JI in November, 1972 (Moten, 2003: 85)
3.8 The ascendency of Mian Muhammad Tufayl

Mian Muhammad Tufayl was the first secretary general of the JI appointed in 1944 and a close associate of Mawdudi. Mian Tufayl did not possess a charismatic personality, nor was he a well known political figure. However, his ascendency to the post of amir was due his close association with Mawdudi. He lacked the power of command and asserting the power vested in office of the \textit{amir} unlike what Mawdudi possessed. Therefore, he decided to delegate some powers to his lieutenants and to the \textit{shura}. In 1976 he revived the office of the \textit{naib-amir} (deputy president) which was ineffective since its creation in 1941 while Mawdudi the JI’s \textit{amir}. He increased the number of offices of \textit{naib amir} to three. Mian Tufayl assigned the \textit{naib umara} (sing. \textit{amir}) specific activities. The JI was thus effectively decentralized (Moten, 2003: 86).

Mian Tufayl’s tenure witnessed the populist politics of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto – the leader of Pakistan Peoples Party (1972-1977). During Bhutto’s years Pakistan had undergone a considerable transformation in terms of its politics. Politics in this era was characterized by mass consciousness. The March 1977 elections were again in favor of Bhutto. However, this time Bhutto was charged for having rigged the elections massively. Demonstrations soon took over the cities catalyzed by the center-right parties alliance called Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). The JI played a key role in the activities of PNA and hence got greater popularity among the masses. On July 1977, General Ziaul Haque imposed martial law and ended Bhutto’s government (Moten, 2003: 87-91; Nasr, 1993).

Mian Tufayl and General Ziaul Haque being from the same fraternity had close relations. Zia’s promise to hold free and fair elections and Islamize the national law had satisfied the JI’s apprehensions about a permanent military rule. Zia
successfully co-opted the JI and the JI fell to his manipulations. Mian Tufayl was very optimistic and remarked that Zia provided a golden opportunity for the establishment of the Islamic System which should never be allowed to go unavailed of. General Zia instead prolonged his martial rule and never satisfied the JI’s plea for the restoration of Democracy. It destroyed the popularity of the JI that it had gained during the PNA movement in the mid 1970s. For the cooperation of the JI with General Zia, it was dubbed a ‘b team’ of martial law. Many JI’s stakeholders did not view the JI’s association with Zia as beneficial for the JI in the long run. However, it was Mian Tufayl that hindered opposition to parting ways with Zia. General Zia died in a mysterious plane crash in 1988. With it Pakistan entered into another phase of democratic politics (Nasr, 1993; Nasr, 1994: 205).

3.9 Ascendency of Qazi Hussain Ahmad to the office of the amir

Qazi Hussain Ahmad was born in Ziarat Kaka Sahib, district Nowshera in 1938. He was educated in a modern school and earned his Master of Science degree from University of Peshawar. Qazi Hussain was acquainted with the JI from his association with Islami Jamiat Tulba (IJT) – the student wing of the JI. After Mian Tufayl, Qazi Hussain was elected as amir of the JI. Ahmad (1991: 495) observed that by 1983 the JI’s structure had undergone a massive change. Its leadership at district and provincial level comprised 32 percent of the professionals who were educated in secular institutions. Similarly, 57 percent of them were businessmen. It was a structure ripe for Qazi Hussain to embark upon a new trajectory for the JI. He increased the number of the naib umara (deputy presidents) from three to five. Backed by the support of populist minded lieutenants, his first priority was to strengthen his organization with a mass base. Eventually, he organized what are known as “Caravan of invitation” and “Caravan of love and brotherhood.” He
appealed to the masses to support the JI and promised them with provision of social justice. His articulations were thus characterized by the words “feudal,” “liberation,” “class,” and “masses,” – slogans usually associated with leftist political forces and intellectuals (Moten, 2002: 101). He also severely criticized Zia’s policies for clinging to power in the garb of Islam and tried to distance the JI from the military at whose hands the party’s reputation and popularity once it held had come to naught (Nasr 1993).

The party in 1988 and 1990 general elections entered into coalition with an alliance Pakistan Democratic Alliance (IDA or IJI). In 1988 IJI lost the polls to its rival Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). The coalition, it is alleged was formed with the support of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) to prevent Benazir Bhutto’s, head of PPP, victory. In 1990 general elections IJI succeeded. However, the JI being part of the coalition government did not get the status it demanded as a share in the government. In the same year the JI parted ways with Nawaz Sharif.

Since both Muslim League (headed by Nawaz Sharif) and PPP had been accused of corruption, Qazi Hussain thought they would prove vulnerable before the JI. The JI decided to go alone for the future elections. It formed an electoral arm of the JI with the name Pakistan Islamic Front (PIF). It was the JI’s electoral arm and energizing it required to extend support among the masses further. PIF being presided by Qazi Hussain relaxed the criteria for its membership. The JI invited all those who refrained from the major sins, fulfill obligatory rites and are ready to sacrifice for the cause of Islam and domination of an Islamic way of life (Ahmad, 1993 quoted in Moten, 2003: 108). This strategy was, nonetheless, highly criticized by some from the party leadership. They criticized it for its tendency to loosen the character of its
members that the JI so far had difficulty built. The PIF, however, this time campaigned heavily for the 1993 general elections. The election results were again disappointing for the JI despite transforming it into a mass party. Mian Tufayl criticized the managers of campaign for PIF for flouting all the moral and religious regulations for gaining popularity by employing all those means that the leftist parties had done. The activities, especially, dancing to the tune of songs and creating the personality cult of the leader were highly criticized (Moten, 2003: 108-115).

3.10 Diagnosing the problem and the strategy for its solution

Having exhausted all the options for gaining power so far, the JI under Qazi Hussain was bound to diagnose the problem and evaluate its strategy. The JI identified the problem as too complex and this time emphasized a long term strategy to overcome the fault lines. Having identified the feudal class that held monopoly over the political system of Pakistan and resulting into unfair elections, Qazi Hussain announced that it would be suicidal to take part in any future elections. The JI thus boycotted the 1997 general elections. It announced its revolutionary mass movement as a new strategy during this time. The strategy comprised a long term commitment to the achievement of the objectives of the JI through the following three ways:

3.10.1 Education

The first strategy is to go for an all-out campaign for reconstruction of the collective life of the community in accordance with an Islamic concept of life. Islam is to be presented as a complete way of life and an alternative civilization. It would, besides focusing on the basic principles of Islam, also convince the people of the relevance of Islam to the modern day realities of socio-economic and political life. The JI, in this connection, demanded an increase in education budget up to 5 percent
of the GNP and establishment of women’s university in each province. On its own the JI would take steps to improve the teaching curriculum of the private schools run by the JI’s sympathizers and train their teachers.

3.10.2 Social Reform

To reconstruct the collective life people along Islamic concept of life, the JI sought to make the mosque the hub of all Islamic activity. The basic purpose of choosing the mosque is to uplift the common people morally thereby equipping them with a sense to defend their rights. Under this program the JI would develop a group of virtuous men in every locality to suppress evil and try to make the people of their area honest and religious. This will route to the emergence of a popular opinion in the country which will help suppress all kinds of evil.

3.10.3 Jihad or All out Struggle

With this final element, the JI would identify and organize all those under its ambit who are inclined to righteousness and want to establish an upright and noble society. These people will be exposed to the JI’s program for their moral, intellectual and social upliftment. The JI needed these people who will derive its strength from and grow its proportion with. In 1997 the JI, therefore, did not strive for votes. Rather it asked for membership of the JI. Once it achieves its target of five million affiliates, the JI’s vision will become possible (Moten, 2003: 121-128).

Conclusion

The JI’s founder Mawdudi presided over it for three decades. During his time the JI emerged as a ‘holy community’ until it was transformed into a political party. Due to accommodations to the changing circumstances at the hands of its leadership, the JI underwent a serious dispute within its organization. The Machi Goth incident revealed
the fault lines within the organization of the JI over the issue of its involvement in politics. The JI survived and continued with more zeal to participate in politics. Success in the Municipal elections of Karachi in 1958 encouraged the JI to try its luck in the forthcoming general elections. However, with the imposition of Martial Law by General Ayub, the JI had to wait for more than a decade until the elections of 1970. The JI struggled for the restoration of democracy during this period and supported the candidature of Miss Fatima Jinnah. This was another accommodation to the realities of the time on part of the JI. The JI’s efforts for gaining power however did not pay off through elections. When Mian Tufayl ascended to the office of the amir, the JI was decentralized by reviving the office of the deputy amir. It was during General Zia’s martial law regime that the JI came close to him and urged him to hold elections. The JI was manipulated by General Zia for extending his Martial rule. When Qazi Hussain became the amir of the JI, he initiated a mass contact program and tried every popular slogan for coming into power. This strategy did not work and eventually the JI launched a long term movement that would pave way for the JI’s success in the future. The JI would expose all those whom it identified righteous to its program and bring their intellectual and moral development. They will be asked to join the JI. Popularizing the party in this revolutionary way will, in the eyes of JI, eventually pave way for its success.

As stated above, the JI’s focus, as emphasized by Mawdudi and its subsequent leaders was on the educated middle class as its message was intellectual based on a relatively modern approach to religion and its nexus with socio-political issues. The creation of a strategic three-tiered membership, though, allowed in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to institutionalize the distinctions between members and their levels of commitment (Munson, 2001), the JI by following a graduated
pattern of membership also gets the benefit to recruit members in an effective way. Since mobilizing support for the organization of the JI took place in the physical spaces and media sources characterized by books, journals, magazines, pamphlets and others, with the advent of internet and its adoption by the JI signifies its importance for creating additional support and aimed at extending their sphere of influence. We also know from the literature on the use of internet for political participation and access to information that people, mostly the young use internet in a variety of ways other than the institutionalized ones. This situation being coupled with the so-called “level playing field” argument about the internet and political actors compel us to study the JI’s narrative while targeting the youth online.

Though its initial phase shows that the JI did not show direct interest in electoral politics and instead emphasized on building the moral character of those associated with the JI, it eventually diverted some of its energies towards electoral politics in 1951. That said, we can see at the present the JI is politicized to the extent of fighting other parties on equal footings. It has adopted the latest models of campaigning for elections and influencing state policies constituting almost all possible communication channels. Publications in the form of books, journals, magazines, pamphlets, TV talk shows to newspapers to demonstrations are all those channels that the JI has used and been using. With the emergence of Internet the JI was quick enough in adopting the medium. Though some scholars argue that the JI has behaved pragmatically at the cost of its ideological stance and has moved back and forth on a policy continuum, yet the JI emphasizes the realization of implementing Sharia Law to be their overriding goal/concern for all times.25 We will be concerned in the next chapter with one of the primary components of the online

strategy of the JI – the online message for the youth – a demographic that’s associated with the use of internet the most.
CHAPTER-4

ONLINE MESSAGE OF THE JAMA’AT-E-ISLAMI

Introduction

In this chapter I explore the contents of the JI’s online message that it targets the youth with. Political parties around the world have been using online technologies for targeting the youth. This is because, and as stated earlier, the youth referred to as digital natives are difficult to reach through traditional media technologies such as print and electronic ones though the importance of traditional media cannot be ignored for the purposes of political communication. As in Lynch and Hogan’s (2012) study no Irish party preferred social networks over the traditional communication methods (p. 92), however, the generation Z participants in the study emphasized that social network sites should form part of overarching communication strategies of parties (p. 95). Therefore, this chapter focuses on how the youth is targeted online and with what predominant contents of the message? Is this online strategy (message contents, target audience and the way the message is communicated (Rommele, 2003) helpful to navigate the online rival voices and reach its target population effectively? The term “effectively” is a subjective one which can be neutralized somehow when we look at both the ethos of internet, the characteristics of the party (Cardenal, 2011), in this case the JI, and the environment in which it operates (Lofgren & Smith, 2003) and then analyze the JI’s online strategy.

4.1 The predominant ethos of internet and the JI

One of the predominant ethos of the internet is that it is a “pluralistic” and “level playing field” medium, of course in technical and ideal sense, which can impact the JI’s online strategy. The second predominant ethos of internet is that it
leads to selective exposure thereby serving more of a bonding sort of communication than bridging. In other words we would be concerned herewith the JI’s agency to master the rivalries inherent in the internet and use it in a way to target its desired demographic, which is youth in this case, with what they want. The inherent rivalry in internet for JI would be the capacity of internet to enable the rival voices raise their voice and target the youth too. Moreover, internet also “empowers” the youth to obtain considerable information online when we look at the empowering capability of internet. This creates difficulties for parties to keep their message intact as the interaction with their message from different voices tries to alter the message too. This two-way mutually constitutive nature of communication over internet creates difficulties for the JI to target the youth with a message wholly constructed by the party-centered mindset especially on critical matters as pertaining to the relationship of religion and politics. In this chapter I will also be analyzing the JI’s agency – its ability to navigate these online challenges to target its population with their desired message.

Further, as we know that internet is a “level playing field”, it definitely enables the dissenting/minority voices to project themselves. The JI’s agency standing in opposition to such voices also faces problems when it wants to propagate its message on their own terms. As Amin (2016: 15) argues, due to consistent expulsion of scholars, the JI suffers from intellectual deficit. Applying this condition to the online realm, there are voices that challenge the JI’s ideational framework directly or indirectly. This is important since mobilizing the young online in favor of its ideational framework require the JI to be informing them with explanations of religion and politics legitimizing its support among them. For instance, Al Mawrid being led by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi poses such a challenge when it comes to the JI message in
the online spaces, besides traditional media. Similarly, there are other voices which can impact the JI’s message further on the internet thereby halting their support. For instance, civil society organizations, advocates of human rights, minority rights groups and last but not least the Islamic organizations who disagree with the JI when it comes to the way how the goal of Shariah law should be realized and implemented.

Under the bonding and bridging roles of online technologies, online opinion formation of the youth by the JI in favor of its ideational framework/ideology consists of two dimensions: the internal and external. The internal dimension means focus on the opinion formation of those who are already somehow in the fold of the JI – whether they are sympathizers, affiliates or full members. The ideological position of these categories may be labeled as less strong, strong and the strongest respectively by average, bearing in mind that exceptions might exist. Thus trying to inform the opinion of these tiers by the JI is tantamount to reinforcement than mobilization. However, if we accept that ideological beliefs of these tiers are not the same, then we can say that some mobilization of opinion occurs within the internal dimension as well by activating the passive supporters to become advocates of the JI with a relatively more knowledge than what they had previously. Nonetheless, the organization of the JI Youth serves a good example here for mobilizing the opinion of the JI affiliated youth for its ideational framework. The JI recruits the youth under its new sister organization called JI Youth. JI Youth was formed after thoughtful discussions in the Shura when some of the senior leaders were against the idea. They argued that recruiting the untrained in such large numbers will be damaging the image of the party. The one month campaign for membership started on February 20th 2016. According to the JI Provincial Amir of Khyberpakhtunkhwa (KP), the JI is

26 Interview with Habib Orakzai – Amir of the JI Hayatabad, Peshawar, 14 Sept, 2017
using information technology for the first for recruitment to save peoples’ precious time. Hence, one can easily apply for the membership by dialing 9291 via mobile phone and an automated voice message would be sent in response to confirm the membership (Dawn, 2016).

However, first I focus on the external dimension i.e. creating new support for the JI online. Therefore, I explore the online strategy of the JI to see how much they focus in their online contents on their ideological outlook amongst others. And lastly, how effective this strategy is (merits of the strategy) in the face of online rival voices facilitated by internet, the structure of the internet itself and its impact on the overall political behavior of the youth.

4.2 What message the JI markets the most online?

The message of the JI according to the IT staff of the JI is:

We call the youth towards our ideology than mere political party or personalities. Our message for youth is to come with us to get both the successes of this world and the hereafter. Because youth is always the vanguard of change so we offer them a more transparent leadership, stronger structure, and party with a stronger accountability mechanism. And because the corrupt leadership cannot bring change, so we are the one to have a corruption free leadership who can lead the youth to change” (Amjad, 2017)

The JI’s message is based on the one which given by Allah. The JI believes that justice, development and progress can only be ensured by Islamic System and for that the JI strives. Because youth is always the vanguard of any

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27 Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad – The Social Media In-charge of the JI Head Quarter at Mansoorah, Lahore. 14th September, 2017.
organization or movement, therefore, the JI emphasizes youth and for that purpose the JI has organized youth under the umbrella of JI Youth. We have successfully conducted intra elections within JI Youth and hundreds of thousands of youth have joined us (Zaman, 2017).28

It is clear that the JI emphasizes Islamic System or their ideology and the youth as the vanguard to lead the system towards change. However, the addition of the words “corruption” and “corrupt leadership” – which they emphasized during the interviews pointing towards the financial corruption “one of the biggest issues of Pakistan”, indicate that the message contents of the JI in the online sphere must comprise both the ideological content (emphasizing the establishment of Islamic System to eradicate the ills of the society), as well as the popular political slogan to eradicate corruption. To prove or disprove this hypothesis, I rely on the data obtained from the social media accounts of the JI. The website contents are also studied but because such contents are not or rarely accessed by the apathetic, social media contents, which due to the social networking of the JI affiliates can reach the apathetic, are the best to prove or disprove the hypothesis.

4.3 Contents analysis of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan [Official] – Central Facebook Account of the JI

The highest percentage domain wise was that of “political system/political activism” 25.98% getting a total of 323 arguments. The individual arguments under this domain were negative mention of corruption 140, need for accountability 120, negative mention of elections rigging 14, negative mention of the situation of the institutions of the state 14, demanding accountability of dictators 11, criticizing negative campaigning 11, and criticizing dynastic politics in other parties as 13.

28 Interview with Mian Muhammad Zaman, Incharge IT, the JI Punjab, Mansoorah, Lahore.
The second highest percentage of posts on Facebook came under the domain of “Visibility/Party Events/News” 21.23% with total 264 arguments. These were posts projecting the JI’s leadership meetings, programs and gatherings of the JI, and the JI’s organizational merits in comparison to other parties most notably the “honest and corruption free leadership” of the JI. Since internet is a self-publishing tool, it enables the JI to project some of its merits as opposed to other parties. For example keeping in view the internal democracy and meritocracy in parties the JI was termed as the most democratic by a recent PILDAT survey (PILDAT 2016). This situation owes to the organizational discipline and hierarchical set up of the JI already established in his seminal work by Nasr (1994). To let the people know about this merit, a handsome amount of share to the contents of this type should be expected in the online contents. In the individual domain of “party visibility/events/news”, 73 arguments were found in favor of the JI leadership being honest and corruption free. Similarly, 135 arguments were found in the form of pictures regarding events/trainings/conventions; pictures of Khatm-e-Quran and Khatm-e-Bukhari (concluding sessions of the Holy Quran and Bukhari – one of the six books regarding Ahadith (sayings of the Prophet) 15; JI Women activities 7; JI Youth activities 9; IJT activities 8; and projecting the JI leaders solving problems of the people as 17 under this domain.

The 3rd domain that captured significant amount of arguments was that of “Islamic Ideology” 20.67% with total arguments numbering 257. The individual arguments in this domain were 78 and 50 (total 128) arguments as verses from the Holy Quran and Ahadith (sayings of the Prophet) respectively. These posts were regarding general religiosity aimed at the society and not as doctrinal injunctions directing the course of public policy e.g. “aur jo Allah sy dartha hy, Woho uskey kaam asaan kar deita hay – Quran” (the one who fears God, He eases his tasks - Quran). Or
Hadith “jis shakhas key saath Allah bhalai chahtha hy tho usey deen ki samajh inayat farmatha hy” – Sahih Bukhari” (The one who is destined to receive the blessing of God is the one who is blessed by Him with knowledge of the religion Islam – Sahih Bukhari, one of the six famous books on sayings of the Holy Prophet). The third highest category in this domain which got a share of 39 arguments was against the forces tending to amend the blasphemy laws. This was exemplified by a campaign in favor of the Mumtaz Qadri (who was hanged by the government for being the assassin of former governor of Punjab Salman Taseer) and demonstrations against the forces tending to amend the blasphemy laws. Islamic system/Iqamat-e-Deen/Nizam-e-Mustafa (comprehensively referred to here as Islamic law or Sharia Law) got a share of 27 arguments in this domain with emphasis on the unity of Ulama (religious scholars/clerics) for realizing Sharia Law as 10. Most of the posts under this category came in the wake of Nizam-e-Mustafa Conference. The conference was held on 1st April, 2016 as a reaction²⁹ to the passage of “Protection of Women against Violence Act 2016” by Punjab Assembly in February 2016 just a few days before the hanging of Mumtaz Qadri, the assassin of the erstwhile governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, on 29th February, 2016.

Similarly Islamic versus Western values got 11, popular religious heritage pictures e.g. Masjid-e-Nabvi (the grand mosque in Medina) and Masjid-e-Haraam (the grand mosque in Makkah) 16, resisting changes in the constitution from “liberal” forces 8, posts directing to conservative blog sites 5, and Hijab/Purdah got 13

²⁹Chairman of the Steering Committee of the religious alliance, Liaqat Baloch, said that the conference was being organized for safeguarding the national solidarity, the country’s Islamic ideology and also to counter Punjab Government legislation violating the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah aiming at destroying the Muslim family system. See http://www.sabanews.net/55525 accessed April 7, 2016
arguments individually in the “Islamic ideology” domain. A total of 257 arguments under this category were recorded out of the total 1243 arguments.

The next 6 domains viz. external relations got shares of 10.61%, welfare and quality of life/social activism 6.59%, economy 4.50%, fabric of society/ethno-politics 4.02%, freedom and democracy 3.21%, and social groups 3.13% among the remaining arguments.

4.4 Contents analysis of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan [@JIPOfficial] – Central Twitter Account of the JI

On Twitter the domain “Political System/Political Activism” got the highest percentage of arguments. A total of 315 arguments came under this category with a percentage of 29.41%. The individual arguments in this domain were positive mention of government and administrative efficiency as 16 (performance of the JI coalition government in KP), negative mention of government and administrative efficiency as 9 (targeting federal government), negative mention of rigging in elections 12, campaign for municipal elections 5, negative mention of the situation of state institutions as 6, demanding accountability of the dictators as 6, negative mention of corruption 123, demanding accountability of the corrupt politicians as 81, the JI leadership solving problems of the people 6 (leaders of the JI in coalition government in KP), statements about media and their role 13, negative mention of less opportunities of jobs by other governments 18, and poverty caused by other governments’ policies as 20.

The domain “Visibility/Party Events” got the second highest share with 21.84% among the total 1071 arguments. The number of arguments this category recorded was 234. The individual arguments that contributed to this domain were
biography of Abul A’la Mawdudi 14 (focusing on his birth place, education and career etc), pictures of the JI conventions 15, JI Youth activities 3, IJT activities 6, the JI Women activities 14, programs for journalists of Pakistani media 5, party events and news 137, projecting common leadership (not in government) solving problems of the people 5, programs for influential people (muassar shakhsiyaat) 1, and projecting the JI leadership as honest 34.

The domain that captured the 3rd highest arguments was that of “External Relations” contrary to the “Islamic Ideology” domain that ranked 3rd on Facebook. It got a 14.28% share with total of 153 arguments out of 1071. The main reason of “External Relations” occupying 3rd position pushing back the “Islamic Ideology” domain on Twitter is that postings from Quran and Ahadith which were regarding general religiosity directed at the society and not state were absent from Twitter. On Facebook such postings from Quran and Ahadith numbered 78 and 50 respectively which boosted the Islamic Ideology domain on Facebook. Similarly popular religious heritage pictures were also absent from Twitter account of the JI. The individual arguments that contributed to this domain were criticism over drone attacks in Pakistan 5, emphasis on the unity of Muslim Ummah (Pan-Islamism) 21, Palestine issue 44, Muslim Brotherhood 2, Kashmir 28, Afghanistan 5, criticizing Muslim rulers of the world favoring USA 2, negative mention of Bangladeshi government for hanging the JI leadership 2, national defense 8, Middle East situation 3, anti-Americanization 8, and anti-Israel 13, appreciating Erdogan government’s role in Palestine 3, in favor of Aafia Siddiqui 1, and terrorism 8.

Since the category of “External Relations” ranked second in Amin’s (2016) study of the JI news paper contents, in my study the JI’s articulations gave third position to this
category on Twitter. One of the reasons for this category to get a position among the top three domains on Twitter and not Facebook is this platform’s popularity among the journalists. The JI’s emphasis on external relations on Twitter may be indicative of the fact that the issue of Kashmir and Palestine get frequent share among the traditional media of Pakistan. Since the articulations of post-Islamist politics by the JI (Amin 2016) is indicative of the fact that they have retreated from creating an Islamic state, pan-Islamism may thus be a little purpose for the JI in such posts than internal visibility through traditional media which has greater accessibility to Twitter than Facebook.

The next six domains’ percentage-wise share was: Islamic ideology 12.69%, Welfare and Quality of Life/Social Activism 6.72%, Economy 4.66%, Freedom and Democracy 4.10%, Social Groups 3.26% and Fabric of Society 2.98%.

4.5 Three important issues in the message of the JI on digital social networks (Facebook and Twitter)

The most important issue in the JI’s online discourse was a focus on corruption getting 11.26% share on popular social network platform – the Facebook and 11.48% on Twitter. 140 arguments came under corruption category out of 1243 total arguments on Facebook. On Twitter a total of 123 arguments came in the category of corruption out of 1071 total arguments recorded. The aggregate of the total arguments focusing on the issue of corruption on both Facebook and Twitter totaled to 11.36%, demanding accountability of the corrupt politicians 8.68% and resisting changes in blasphemy laws as 3.67%. There were arguments that occupied more space than the issue of corruption on Twitter e.g. party events 11.75% and projection of the JI leadership as honest and corruption free leadership 5.87%. However, these categories of arguments contributed to the “Visibility/Party Events”
domain and hence excluded from the list of “issues”. The Palestine issue covered arguments on Twitter that lagged behind the issue of blasphemy laws by a slight margin of 0.09%. The total arguments on Twitter regarding Palestine issue were 44 against the competing internal issue of blasphemy laws which got 46 arguments. Nevertheless, the magnitude of arguments on both Facebook regarding the issues of blasphemy and that of Palestine was equal i.e. each got 3.14% share.

### 4.5.1 Discussion

The online message on the social network platforms (Facebook and Twitter) predominantly focused on corruption, accountability of the “corrupt” politicians and the issue of blasphemy. Campaign on Twitter and Facebook regarding the issue of blasphemy lasted for a short time with the JI pouring in material into these two social networks in a condensed manner with only few postings regarding other issues during this time. Almost all the recorded tweets under the anti-blasphemy campaign were in the wake of the death sentence awarded to assassin of the former Punjab Governor, Salman Taseer. Such tweets ranged from sharing the pictures of the funeral prayer of Mumtaz Qadri to carrying out an active series of demonstrations all over the country with the campaign titled “Namoos-e-Risalat”.

Since the issue of Palestine lagged behind that of the blasphemy by a slight margin, attention is a must to be paid to this category of arguments though not in top three issues on the JI’s official Twitter account. As 3.58% of the messages were statements regarding the issue of Palestine. Most of the posts that this category got came in the wake of attacks of Israeli forces on Ghaza in July 2014. The campaign on Twitter was kicked off by the JI on 10th July, 2014 with the most notable of their demonstrations called “Yaom-e-Azm” (The day of determination). Tweets for this
campaign lasted until the end of July, 2014. 2.63% of the arguments were regarding the establishment of Nizam-e-Mustafa/Sharia Law/Iqamat-e-Deen/Shariah System/Islamic Pakistan. Most of the tweets under this category were tweeted during the conference titled “Nizam-e-Mustafa” in April 2016.

The domain “Political System/Political Activism” topped both of the social network platforms. “Islamic Ideology” domain got 3rd position on Facebook lagging behind the domain of “Visibility/Party Events” by a slight margin. Similarly, the “Islamic Ideology” domain occupied 4th position on Twitter and not the third as is the case with Facebook. The main reason for this domain to occupy 3rd position on Facebook is the presence of the arguments in the form of verses from the Holy Quran and Ahadith on Facebook regarding general religiosity and their absence from the Twitter account of the JI.

4.6 Composition and analysis of the message on online social networking platforms

As far as the JI’s online strategy is concerned, its message is both contextual and under a thought out policy – the policy of popularizing the party with new slogans. The JI, ideally speaking, must have been projecting itself with a message wholly centered on the cause of establishing Hakumat-i-Illahiya. Mawdudi blamed the ills of the political system, economy and society based on “Jahiliyya” being devoid of an Islamic system when he tried to mold the opinion of the people for a vanguard formation for creating an Islamic state (Nasr, 1994). However, the current state of popular slogans of corruption and accountability and a more emphasis on re-Islamization of society by the JI reveal that they have either retreated from creating an Islamic state or it is merely a tactic to win power through elections and then establish
an Islamic state. The latter, as shown below, has little chances of being a reality. The former i.e. retreat from creating an Islamic state by the JI seems more valid.

It is interesting to note that the JI has been focusing on a number of domains. All the nine domains that occupied the JI’s online narrative on social networks, though, with different proportions convey the idea that the JI’s online politico-ideological articulations are diverse. However, as we know, the JI is a party with a “clear” program of action since Mawdudi charted out all the aspects of a utopian Islamic state ranging from its social through to political to economic aspects. In his works Mawdudi has analyzed the foundations of the Western civilization based on the concept of ‘Jahiliyya’. Such works of Mawdudi were supposed to won over a limited vanguard of “pious” Muslims and capture political power to transform the system based on ‘Jahiliyya’ thereby eroding the ills of the state and society. However, Amin (2016) argues that many of the JI activists have capitalized on the neo-liberal opportunity spaces in the realm of market, media and politics. These opportunity spaces being capitalized upon by the Islamists including the JI have the impact to change the course of their politics. The importance of opportunity space in the sphere of electoral politics to the JI can best be known from the work of an eminent scholar on the JI who aptly recognized the political interests of the JI in danger under martial law regime of Zia which had even co-opted the JI on the pretext of his Islamization project:

The JI…enthusiastically endorsed Zia's initiatives in implementing the demands of the Nizam-i Mustafa movement, hailing his efforts as the "renewal of the covenant" between the government and Islam. As a result of this initiative, however, the harmony between the JI's ideological position and
political aims was lost. By appealing to the ideological sensibilities of the JI, Zia was able to turn the party's attention away from its political interests, which were seriously threatened by the martial-law regime (Nasr, 1993).

The increasing concern of the JI and its emphasis on political activism (as observed from the online articulations of the JI) means prioritizing political issues. The political system is occupied by “corrupt” politicians and the JI wants to replace these politicians with its “honest and corruption free” leadership as the alternative. This serves the JI political interests and struggle against a dominant “corrupt class of politicians” in Pakistan mutually harmonious, though, within a broader veneer of Islam targeting the society.

Nasr (1994) in his seminal work identifies the JI as a formation legitimizing its existence and hence struggle against the West where the West was made an “other” in a Foucauldian sense. Similarly, Islam (2015) under Laclauian’s terms argues that Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh have been engaged in forming “antagonistic frontiers” against which they legitimize their existence and struggle. During the military regime of Zia an Islamization project was catapulted by the martial law regime which co-opted the JI. However, during this period, a group of the JI high ups and members from Karachi known as ‘Karachi Group’ had influenced the party’s direction by focusing on more secular socio-economic concerns of the underprivileged than ideological concerns of the JI. The new Amir (leader) of the JI Qazi Hussain Ahmad asserted that neither the Afghan Jihad nor the Islamization of Zia justified the abrogation of democracy in Pakistan. On account of the distrust and schism that developed between Zia’s regime and the JI due to postponement of holding elections on the pretext of Islamization of Pakistan, Qazi Hussain, whose
agenda reflected the Karachi Group’s interests, declared that the JI would not participate in the discussion on the Sharia bill prepared by the regime. They rejected the final draft of the sharia bill in 1988, which even reflected the original proposals of the JI by asserting that it did not address popular concerns (secular socio-economic issues of the underprivileged) (Nasr, 1993). Ideally speaking, and as articulated by Mawdudi, the founder of the JI, that once Islamic state is established, the politico-social and economic ills of the society will automatically be eradicated (Nasr, 1994). In light of this situation, the JI should not have rejected a Sharia bill that reflected their original proposals on the pretext that it did not address popular socio-economic concerns of the underprivileged. Thus one can conclude in light of Amin’s (2016) opportunity spaces, that elections being such an opportunity space was sought more by the JI than Islamization under Zia’s regime. In Laclauan’s terms, if the JI tried to create an antagonistic frontier, as exemplified by the Karachi Group’s aspirations articulated by Qazi Hussain Ahmad as soon as he was in the office of the Amir, capitalizing upon the opportunity space of elections was another organizational and political interest these aspirants aspired for. In light of these developments and the articulations of the JI on digital social networks explored in this study, it seems that the JI has been trying for creating another ‘antagonistic frontier’ or ‘other’ – in the present Pakistan’s case the “corrupt” politicians. In the JI’s view the corrupt politicians have evolved into a hegemonic formation against which the JI’s struggle is justified and hence is an ‘alternative’ for emancipation. It can be verified from the JI being prioritizing the issue of corruption and their accountability and presenting its leadership as “honest and corruption free” as found in this study.

However, this new ‘alternative’ to the existing situation is a task with more reasons. Amin’s (2016) work is invoked here to know why the JI has been behaving
so. Post-Islamism in the context of neo-liberal age is the probable answer. The emphasis of the JI on its ideological domain, as observed on Facebook, with more arguments focusing on Islamizing the society without doctrinal justifications indicates that the JI has been pursuing post-Islamist articulations. An absence of updated version of Islamists (the JI here) as a response to the core issues and answers pertaining to the relationship of religion and politics by key post-Islamist scholars seceded from the JI is one reason that leaves the JI in a post-Islamist situation. The indirect influence of the seceded post-Islamist scholars can also be one of the reasons to which the JI has responded in their performative articulations, though without altering their ideational framework, as being post-Islamist. This response may also be due to the “truth” that the seceded scholars have come across while the JI incorporating it in their performative religio-politico and economic articulations. The opportunities neo-liberal environment provides viz. ranging from market through to political to social sector to the media with ‘digital media’ as the latest addition, secondly, mediates the observed post-Islamist behavior of the JI.

To get across their message on Facebook and Twitter to the maximum number of the youth, the JI (i) target popular political issue in which the youth is interested and probably getting suffered from and (ii) sticks to the religious cover but not in the narrow sense of their ideology. Since the JI needs more and more support to gain electoral victory, a narrow focus on ideology of the JI in the online spaces may lead to reinforcement than mobilization. Therefore, the JI emphasizes on continuing their post-Islamist articulations on the online social networking platforms. Thus the JI broadens their message at the cost of a narrow one based on their original ideology.

30 The recent general elections of 2018 were won by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) with anti-corruption slogan. The slogan was popularized by PTI among the youth which led to the success of PTI. This slogan has successfully been hijacked by PTI leaving JI in a meager position to capitalize on it.
For example the issue of corruption got a lion’s share among the other categories of the contents analyzed; the absence of Sharia System/Hakumat-e-Ilahiyya and thus the advocacy for establishing and realizing it got 6th position on Facebook and 5th on Twitter. The fewer arguments in favor of advocacy and need for establishing and realizing Islamic Sharia/Hakumat-e-Ilahiyya were devoid of any doctrinal injunctions justifying their claim. Since we also know that the digital media vest in organizations the ability to self-publish material, arguments/posts projecting parties’ visibility looks to be a natural outgrowth of the online strategies of parties. Political parties, like the JI, who want to capitalize on the existing opportunity spaces in the era of neo-liberal globalization, find digital media (internet) an ideal space to project their visibility. It can be argued that the Party Visibility domain, along with the formation of a new antagonistic frontier in accordance with the environment of Pakistan, were logical outcomes on popular social network platform – the Facebook.

The leverage that the JI enjoys over other parties, as far as the democratic politics by political parties in Pakistan is concerned, is their leadership and the internal “democracy” within the JI revealed by a pildat survey, mentioned earlier. Justice Khosa – a Supreme Court judge remarked during a hearing that applying article 62 and 63 of the constitution31 will spare no one except Siraj-ul-Haque – the current Amir of the JI (The News, Jan. 10, 2017).32 The JI seemed to have been trying for

31 The article 62 “lays down some qualities like education, age, sagacity, righteousness, trustworthiness, adequate knowledge of Islamic teachings, piety, and clean past record as qualifications for eligibility of the candidates to the national and provincial assemblies. Article 63 lists such qualities as insanity, insolvency, moral turpitude, corruption, and holding of any opinion or acting in any manner, prejudicial to the ideology of Pakistan, or morality or the maintenance of public order as grounds for disqualification from being elected or chosen as, and from being, a member of the majlis-e-shura.” (Moten, 2003:118-19)

32 Post projecting this statement on JI Official Facebook account. During Panama Leaks case proceedings, Justice Asif Saeed Khosa remarked “We have to lay down the parameters. If the situation continues then no would be able to escape from Articles 62 & 63,” he said and in a lighter vein remarked that might be only Sirajul Haq would survive.
capitalizing on this merit on their part and hence portrayed him and the rest of their leadership as corruption-free on the social media platforms.

This study found that the JI is in the process of making its message more of a catch-all nature than what it had been. As a result such contents have the ability to traverse the polarized terrains of the digital public spaces and impart some support to the JI in terms of getting popular among the youth belonging to the middle and lower middle classes. The message of the JI, as told by the IT managers and other tiers of leadership as stated above, was not found in total conformity with what this research found on the JI’s official social networks – Facebook and Twitter.

4.7 The JI and challenges in online opinion formation and mobilization/winning new ideological support

According to the social media head of the JI, one of the challenges to the JI is that they need to be very attentive to their language in their messages and contents online. This is because they do ideological politics, so those who even do not vote them expect a decent behavior and language from them. Secondly they have to refrain from involving themselves in the blame-game politics (ilzamat ki siyasat) which has become a tradition in party politics. This is because the JI is not only a political party, it is also a religious ideological movement. And third that other parties are mostly owned by rich personalities, the JI faces financial constraints but the JI is trying their best to use all the available means within their financial capacity (Amjad, 2017).

Further, the social media head remarked that the ideological arena in Pakistan is empty these days. The politics of left and right wings used to be during cold war but now-a-days the leftists have joined the Western bloc ideology so they have become liberal. But as such the JI does not have any big challenge as far as other ideologies

33Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad
are concerned. The Amir of the JI (Sirajul Haque) says that because now-a-days there is no right and left wing politics in Pakistan, there should be politics based on right and wrong! (ibid).\textsuperscript{34}

Similarly, to the JI social media head the only challenge that he thinks as far as winning new online support is concerned, is that they want to convey their message to those youth even who are not using social media. Though most of the youth are using social media and they have reached them, but those who are not using social media and internet are their concern (Zaman, 2017).\textsuperscript{35} This challenge, as mentioned about by the JI social media head points to their concern for the digital divide.

However, with the spread of internet services to Pakistan and especially with the availability of web 2.0, there are certain challenges that still hinder the progress of the JI towards a stable public opinion in favor of the JI and its ideational framework. The presence of civil society on the internet and their mobilization tactics online offer a serious challenge in this regard. For example, the demonstrations against the Facebook authorities and the blockage of the Facebook itself in Pakistan in the wake of the provocative cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad published on Facebook, there had been people writing blogs thereby mobilizing people against the religious extremism. Similarly, though the powerful parties like Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) which itself was a victim in the form of its former governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer who was assassinated on the charges of being blasphemous, could not speak a world against the act. This was because such statements would inflict a loss on PPPP in terms of vote support. While it was difficult to speak against the religious extremism, some civil society groups took the cause upon them and circulated a petition in the form of a letter to all heads of the state institutions to ensure rule of law in the wake of

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Interview with Mian Muhammad Zaman
religious extremism. The campaign “Citizens for Democracy”, terming itself an umbrella group comprising professional organizations, political parties, trade unions, and individuals, called for rallies in different cities to express solidarity with the victims and aware the people of the negative effects of the law. It also established a weblog and several Facebook groups to spread information about its activities and provide a platform for debate (Aziz, 2011a; Sarwar, 2011b; Michaelsen, 2011). Provision of such information and activities online at times when they are blacked out by the traditional media due to fear of the sentiments of the people and other reasons, indicate that views can be softened about such extreme position when information are made available. However, such information, due to the selective exposure quality of the internet may reinforce the relevant side of the discourse and not create plurality. It is, however, possible that the offline discourses may get chances of being exposed to people of different mindset due to the availability of the social networking websites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter etc. One of the advantages to the left wing civil society organizations on the internet is that, they can post stuff in accordance with their ideational frameworks than those of the religious political parties like the JI. The reason for this is that, since the JI is involved in electoral politics, they must be very cautious while disseminating any message by also keeping in view the existing public opinion. Posting any material which does not conform to the mindset of the majority may reduce support for the JI in terms of vote-support. The social movements with no electoral politics involvement are relatively advantaged to promote the causes they want online because of their reliance on their ideational framework and goals they set and not on the vote of the people. Cornfield et al. (2003) argue that while citizens are increasingly being drawn to the digital media, the interest group and non-partisan websites attract them the most. Nonetheless, one of
the problems for such civil society organizations comes from the crowd sourced censorship/threats/intimidations. While the nexus of religion and politics is not only believed and being promoted by the “Islamist” parties in Pakistan, it is the case with the state itself too. Sometimes, the state institutions encourage the people to report any blasphemous content on the internet. For example Pakistan Telecommunication Authority displays a public notice on its website to report any blasphemous URL (Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, n.d.). According to Freedom House, the Internet Freedom Scores for Pakistan in 2017 was 71/100 where 0 is the most free and 100 is least free. There are several obstacles to the freedom of internet in Pakistan. There are obstacles related to restrictions on connectivity e.g. mobile internet service was blocked in the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) for more than a year starting in June, 2016. Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act in August 2016 is the legal structure that introduces stronger surveillance and censorship. There are also prosecutions and detentions for online activities e.g. a teenager was arrested for allegedly “liking” a post on Facebook which was “blasphemous”. Similarly, a court awarded death sentence in a separate blasphemy case in 2017. Moreover, there are dangers of intimidations and violence for online activists. Five bloggers known for criticizing authorities and religious militancy were abducted in January, 2017, one of them saying he was detained and tortured. Mashaal Khan, a Journalism student in Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan was lynched by a mob on the charges of committing online blasphemy. There are also technical attacks on the online activists. In January and April 2017 Dawn News, a leading English newspaper, reported that its website was under sustained cyber-attacks. Dawn had reported on the apparently enforced disappearances of bloggers and on civil-military relations aggressively (Freedom House, 2017).
It appears that in most of the above discussed cases, the JI must have no problem. This is because those who are pro-Pakistani and pro-Islam are the JI’s target to convey their message to (Zaman, 2017). All the above online restrictions, intimidations, violence and technical attacks, thus, must have little to no effect on the online activities of the JI as compared to the civil society organizations advocating human rights and following a progressive agenda. Section 37 of Prevention of Electronic Crimes Bill 2016 grants the PTA wide powers to block or remove any online content that it deems unlawful, “if it considers it necessary in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defense of Pakistan or any part thereof, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court or commission of or incitement to an offense under this Act (Freedom House, 2017).”

Keeping in view the JI’s position for their emphasis on Pakistaniaat as opposed to ethnic and sub-national politics and on pro-Islam, it can be argued that such legal, illegal and technical arrangements to contain the dissenting discourses pertaining to the identity of the state, its security vis-à-vis the human rights, minority rights and other issues on internet might benefit the JI and cause the opponents to impose a self-censorship on themselves in the wake of these threats. Thus in the context of Pakistan, the progressive online challenges to the JI’s ideational framework/narrative may prove less competitive and hence gain lesser attention in the presence of these threats. It is noteworthy, that demonstrating against the blasphemous issues has been a significant part of the JI’s framework and politics as the data collected from the JI’s social networks and analyzed above show. Nevertheless, such political and top-down arrangements may not prove to boost support for the JI in the arena of electoral

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36 Interview with Mian Muhammad Zaman
37 It should not be taken as if JI does not have an understanding of human rights, minority rights. Rather the dissenting discourses differ significantly with the view of JI in some of these basic areas due to the difference in their worldviews.
politics. The history of the JI has a big chunk of demonstrations and show of street power thereby influencing state policies though being out of legislature (Nasr, 1994; Ullah, 2014). Such efforts, however, have never acceded success to the JI in the arena of electoral politics. The presence of left wing civil society’s discourse on the internet, as the case shown above, however, can create impact by encouraging the like-minded to form shared identities thereby promoting their cause. The efforts to develop a narrative by “Citizens for Democracy” on internet and social networking platforms, as stated above, directly oppose the one by the JI since the JI was the party to aggressively campaign in favor of Mumtaz Qadri thereby stirred the public sentiments. Numerous other progressive civil society organizations can be found on the internet in Pakistan thereby targeting the very roots of policies the state has been pursuing and the JI endorsing.

4.8 Blogs, their potential for impacting public opinion and the JI’s message

According to social media head of the JI, the JI has bloggers who advance their cause. They send their writings to Daleel, Mukalma, Danish and other blog sites in Pakistan. Usually media houses have their own blog sites now-a-days, so the JI bloggers send their articles to all these blog sites and get published. But the main are Hum Sub and Daleel which are right and left blog sites. Also, Express, Dawn, Geo etc. publish the JI activists’ blogs on their sites (Amjad, 2017).38

Similarly, according to the JI’s Punjab chapter IT Manager there is a team of bloggers who write blogs both in Urdu and English. However, the JI official website only publishes those blogs which are written by the JI member activists. The affiliated

38Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad
bloggers’ blogs are only projected through the JI social media accounts (Zaman, 2017).

Nonetheless, I did not notice blogs from the JI activists concerning the JI’s ideology or way of bringing the change in accordance with their ideational framework on the official social media accounts of the JI. Sometimes, they share blogs/media articles on social media official page when they are in favor of the JI leadership and corruption-free image or a response to an issue with IJT in the university campuses. For instance Amir Khakwani’s, a journalist, article was posted on the JI official account on Facebook praising IJT and its positive role in universities. The article was posted in the wake of violent clashes between IJT and Pukhtoon Students in the University of Punjab in March 2017. Similarly, an article written by a young man on a blogging site was posted by JIP Official on Facebook showing how positively he was influenced with the behavior of the JI's people and which is why he became a member of the JI. Popular social media site, Facebook’s, official account of the JI is empty of links as far as ideological articles/blogs regarding the JI’s ideational framework are concerned. Posts focusing the most on issues other than the ideological are symptomatic of popularizing the leadership by enhancing their image in the online spaces and not articulating on the critical and theoretical questions pertaining to the JI’s ideational framework of analysis for religion and politics.

A relatively progressive blogging site is “Hum Sub” where civil society activists, professional and amateur journalists publish their views. It is a blogging site encouraging amateur journalists and writers by publishing their articles/blogs. The site publishes articles/blogs in Urdu language. Its global rank according to Alexa is

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39 Interview with Mian Muhammad Zaman
40 Data collected from Facebook and Twitter official accounts of JI
41 The article titled “May Jamaat-e-Islami may keun aaya: Zeeshan Ahmad Teepu ki qalam sy” (Why I joined Jamaat?: From the pen of Zeeshan Ahmad Teepu) - Data collected from Facebook official account of the JI
The website usually follows a progressive agenda by publishing material in opposition to the right wing narrative. For instance, it published a series of articles commenting on the violent activities by IJT – a sister organization of the JI, in University of Punjab on March 21, 2017 (Shehzad, 2017). Similarly, it projected Ghamidi by appreciating his “intellectual” and critical views on various policies of the state standing in contrast to the very basis of the ideational framework of the JI.

“Daleel” is a website publishing articles in Urdu and follows mostly a right wing agenda. As the head of social media department of the JI told me, “several activists from the JI publish their material on “Daleel,” I recorded a very tiny portion of links to “Daleel’s” website by the JI during the course of data collection. E.g. a single article during this period was found on the JI’s Facebook official account. The articles of both the websites can though be found on Facebook – the popular social networking website in Pakistan. The absence of links by the JI official accounts on Facebook and Twitter to the right wing blogging site Daleel and others, if any, does not negate the influence these blogs have on the public opinion. However, the scope of this study is limited to exploring the narrative being officially adopted by the JI on its online social networks and website. Though, the impact they both have on the public opinion will be a worthy study, this study only underscores the importance and potential impact of these two leading blog sites when it comes to cyberactivism from both the right and left wing civil society groups in Pakistan and the JI’s strategy to navigate through these voices by influencing the public opinion. The JI’s strategy was more of an image building by projecting their leadership as “honest” and “morally upright” and “corruption free” in contrast to the “corrupt” politicians at the cost of

42 The article was published by “Daleel.org” under the title “May Jamaat-e-Islami ka karkun hon - Ahsan Sarfaraz” (I am a worker of Jamaat-e-Islami by Ahmad Sarfaraz). The article was shared on JI’s official account on Facebook.
advancing the ideological material pertaining to the critical questions like the relation between religion and politics and hence Pakistan and its political system.

### 4.9 Website of the JI, the message and its outreach

The website of the JI shows a good amount of ideological material. They range from Mawdudi’s work to Khurshid Ahmad and other writers from the JI. The importance of website, however, was described by the JI social media head thus:

> Actually social media has reduced the importance of website because you can gain information through it in quicker manner than a website. That is why we do not use website that much for communicating our message to the supporters. Usually website may be a tool of interest for the organization and its people but not for others. For that purpose we use social media to communicate our message to them (Amjad, 2017).

It shows that the JI targets the common youth on social media platforms rather than the website. Because websites are not usually visited by the apathetic, the JI also acknowledges this fact. Their message to the youth in general is mostly on social media platforms. As the Naib Amir of the JI (Rashid Naseem) told me that according to a survey majority of the people of Pakistan want Islamic system. Therefore, the JI

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43 Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad

44 Though he did not point to the said survey, a report on Religious Behavior in Pakistan: Impact on Social Development (2010) summarizes the religious mindset in Pakistan thus, “Religion is one of the most, if not the most, fundamental characteristics of Pakistani society. Few people dare to call themselves secular publicly. Seculars also pretend to be religious to avoid the wrath of society and attacks by extremists. In Pakistani society, individuals start learning about religion literally as soon as they are born. In the laps of their mothers, children listen to parents and other family members reciting the Quran. In schools, Islamic Studies is a compulsory subject from the beginning to the graduation level. Most children receive daily lessons from religious teachers visiting their houses, or attend classes at mosques and madrassas, on how to recite the Quran and read other Arabic texts. Mosques are spread across the country, almost all of them equipped with loudspeakers. A’azan (call to prayer), Friday sermons and prayers, and sermons on other religious occasions are delivered using the loudspeaker. Clerics and students at madrassa established in mosques use loudspeakers whenever they want to recite Quranic verses, or sing praise of God and Prophet Muhammad or to deliver a speech to convey or remind people of the religious commandments. In everyday social interaction, individuals are keen to lecture others on how to follow the religion and conform to the injunctions ordained by God, His
looks pretty confident and content in this regard and tries to tap into the merits of its organization – the JI being “Islamist”, “free” from dynastic politics and its leadership being “not implicated” in corruption. However, majority of Pakistanis do not behave under a ‘religious’ fashion. Many would not attend to the “narrow” interpretations of religion and politics and similarly, many others act in a secular way. The acceptance and popularity of interest-based banking and other businesses illuminate this point. Though usury (interest) is *haraam* (reprehensible) in Islam and all Muslims believe it to be un-Islamic, yet, with a few exceptions, they do not mind engaging in interest-based activities (Azam, 2010).

Despite the popularity of social networking sites in Pakistan, the JI’s website may still be a strong source for reinforcing the existing support and hence the most active will visit the website (Norris, 2002; 2003) of the JI which is loaded with the contents analyzed below:

The website of the JI (Urdu version: www.jamaat.org/ur) on its first page shows the title “Jama’at-e-Islami Pakistan”. The contents of the website begin from “important news” with headlines and their links to the details of the news. Mostly such news was found pertaining to the JI leaders’ statements and press releases. Next is a vibrant photo gallery depicting internal events of the JI along with leaders meetings and press conferences. Then comes the section of *Markazi Khabrein* (central news). These news range from the JI central leadership’s statements on national to international issues. The next is “provincial news” section where statements of the provincial leadership are projected besides various events where provincial leaders participate. In parallel to the provincial news there is a section named “Districts news”. This heading covers news regarding the JI activities on district level as well as

Prophets and religious authorities and leaders. Against this backdrop, one can imagine the extent of influence religion has on people’s lives and behaviors” (Azam, 2010).
the JI districts level leadership’s statements. Then is the section pertaining to women wing titled “Women Section”. This section covers the JI women leadership’s statements besides the JI women activities. In parallel to the women section is the section titled “Brother organizations”. These range from statements by different Brother organizations of the JI e.g. IJT, Jamiat Talba Arabia (based in seminaries of the JI), Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) etc.

The next section is “Videos” section containing videos of the leadership of the JI. The videos range from press conferences to TV talk shows to videos on ideological issues. Then comes the section titled “Tasaweer” (pictures). This section contains pictures from the JI marches to different meetings of the leadership to conventions and gatherings.

The next section is that of “Mazameen and Qarardadein” (Essays and Resolutions). This section contains articles written by the JI leaders and other the JI intellectuals. The articles cover subjects ranging from national to international issues. Adjacent to the “Essays” is the “Resolutions” sections where there are different resolutions passed by the JI central legislative assembly (Markazi Majlis-e-Shura). The resolutions range from issues pertaining to socio-economic and political issues on national and international basis. The sections in parallel are “Islamic Library” and “Rasail wa Masail” (Journals and issues pertaining to Islamic jurisprudence). Under the “Islamic Library” there are books and pamphlets mostly written by the founder of the JI Abul A’la Mawdudi. These are the books and pamphlets covering the ideological message of the JI. The “Rasail wa Masail” section contains articles regarding issues pertaining to Islamic Jurisprudence.

The left side of the first page of the JI website has important links. The first link is a graphic one directing the visitor to become a member of JI Youth. It displays
“Become a member of JI Youth for a corruption-free Pakistan”. Adjacent to it is the link to “download corruption-free Pakistan anthem”. The next link is “download corruption-free Pakistan design”. The aim of the design is to run a homogenous campaign throughout Pakistan in terms of design. The link provides various Corel Draw files for download to run a homogenous campaign in terms of writing, size, colors etc. There is another link adjacent to it titled “corruption free Pakistan central circular”. The circular is from the Secretary General JI Pakistan Liaqat Balooch addressed to the provincial and lower level Amirs of the JI, the JI Women wing and sister organizations. The central circular tries to mobilize the the JI activists for running the campaign and gives some directions on how to run the campaign. The next link facilitates the visitors to download Urdu font to easily read the website of the JI. All these mobilizing contents are analyzed in the 6th chapter in detail.

The website then provides links to the popular social media platforms of the JI e.g. Twitter, YouTube and Google Plus. It is followed by “Tweets by Jama'at-e-Islami@JIP Official”. Tweets by the JI central leadership can also be accessed here. The next important graphic link is to the popular social media platform Facebook with title “Jama'at-e-Islami Pakistan (Official). The current number of subscribers to Facebook page of the JI is above 38,00,000.

The next important section is “Blogs” where no blogs were found. The important part here is the availability of “Forum” where anyone can participate by becoming its member. However, this is discussed in the next chapter where I elaborate on participation opportunities through internet provided by the JI.

Next to it is the section providing links to various websites. These websites include Jama’at-e-Islami Women Wing, Jama’at-e-Islami Punjab, Jama’at-e-Islami Lahore, Jama’at-e-Islami Jammu & Kashmir, Jama’at-e-Islami Gujranwala, Rah TV (online
TV), Tarjuman-ul-Quran (a reputed monthly journal of the JI known as the mouth piece of the JI), Islamic Research Academy Karachi, Al-Khidmat Foundation, Islami Jamiat Talba Pakistan (IJT), Islami Jamiat Taalibaat Pakistan (female student wing of the JI), Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon (Muslim Brotherhood), Jama’at-e-Islami Hind, Bangladesh Jama’at-e-Islami, Tafheem-ul-Quran (Quranic exegesis by Mawdudi), Quranurdu.com, Daroos.com, Quran House Society, Islamic Publications Pvt Ltd., the weekly Asia and the daily Jasaarat.

During studying the contents of the website, it was noticed that the first page headings remain the same while its left side, except the social media links, is loaded with new links and headings in accordance with the context of the time e.g. providing templates for various campaigns, video messages from the leadership etc. The second page of the JI website begins with “introduction”. Here the JI introduces the visitors to what the JI is, what is its way of action, its purpose, constitution, manifesto and various resolutions. The third page portrays the JI leadership. It begins with the founder of the JI, Mawlana Mawdudi. A comprehensive introduction to Mawlana Mawdudi is followed by names of the central leadership through to provincial to district level leadership. Then come the JI’s brother organizations, the JI’s various departments, its Markazi Majlis-e-A’amila (central executive body? check), Markazi Majlis-e-Shura (central consultative body), and Tehreek Shakhshiyath (important personalities of the movement). The last category in this page comprehensively introduces seven personalities who contributed to the movement of the JI. These personalities are: Mian Tufail Muhammad (late), Qazi Hussain Ahmad (late), Chaudhry Rahmat Ilahi, Niamatullah Khan, Dr. Nazir Ahmad Shaheed, Maulana Jan Muhammad Abbasi (late), Khurram Muraad (late).
The fourth page constitutes news pertaining to central, provincial, district level and brother organizations’ leadership statements, activities, press releases, press conferences etc.

The fifth page “multimedia” gives pictures and videos of various events of the JI, articles written by the JI leadership and activists, reports, circulars from the general secretary of the JI and important historical documents.

The sixth page constitutes “links/contacts”. It gives names of the group leaders at various levels of the JI, contact details of the central to provincial to district level offices. It also summarizes links to various sites e.g. brother organizations, Islamic websites and Islamic movements.

The seventh page is for registration in the JI. It gives an online form which can be filled in for either becoming a member of the JI or a volunteer. The eighth page asks for contribution e.g. feedback, comments, experiences, ask a question, and send report/article. Online forms are available for contributing in all these areas. Finally, the ninth page gives contact details of the department for donation to the JI.

The JI website is also available in English language. However, the English version is not frequently updated as that of Urdu. The format of both the English and Urdu versions of the JI websites is almost the same except the front page. The English language version front page does not have provincial and district level news. It also lacks, in contrast to the Urdu version first page, the women wing leadership statements sections as well as that of the brother organizations’. The rest of the makeup of both the versions is the same.

4.10 Message on website of the JI and its analysis

There is a bulk of ideological literature on the website of the JI with “sufficient” material ranging from books/pamphlets written by Mawdudi and the
blogs/articles focusing on socio-political and economic issues with a JI’s ideological outlook. However, the problem with website contents is that, they are most visited by people from within the organization which is a type of reinforcement and not mobilization. This means the website contents help reinforce the existing membership/affiliates/sympathizers’ mindset in accordance with the mindset/ideology of the JI. The apathetic would not visit the website and read the contents (Norris, 2003). My informal discussions with IJT students from both the University of Punjab and University of Peshawar also show that none of them have visited the JI’s website. Therefore, it will be safe to say that a very limited amount of the JI’s, that too core supporters and activists may be visiting the website (Norris, 2002; 2003; Gibson et al., 2003a, 2005). Since the application of theory of “Weakening social boundaries” (Granovator, 1973) to digital social networks helps us explain the widening of exposure to disagreement online (Brundidge & Rice, 2009), therefore, the possibility for these contents to get across the apathetic lies in sharing them on popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and others, where there might be people apathetic to the JI befriended with the JI associates in their digital social networks. However, my collected data confirm that the JI does not share websites’ contents on their social media sites. According to the social media head of the JI, website is more of a tool for the organization (Amjad, 2017).45 The JI is aware of the fact that digital media induce its users to expose themselves to contents selectively and to bypass the contents they are not interested in. It may be a corollary of the selective exposure on internet that the JI does not direct the users on social media platforms to study its website contents where the interest of those visitors is fulfilled who have either a strong ideological attachment to the JI or some professionals e.g. journalists and

45 Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad
researchers who might be interested in knowing the JI’s position on various issues etc. It may be safely said that the website of the JI caters, in terms of the ideological discourse, to the needs of the internal core audience thereby serving the reinforcement purpose than mobilization of the apathetic.

Though in Pakistan we do not see strictly conservative and leftist parties which were the characteristics of industrial democracies, with hype in the cold war era representing interest of the specific classes, the JI’s focus on corruption as the biggest issue indicates to be representing interests of the middle, lower middle and underprivileged classes. Since, internet penetration is yet far from being universal in Pakistan, it is assumed that the remaining poor population, which is yet a majority\(^{46}\), is devoid of accessing the articulations of political parties on internet. The middle class, presumably mostly the youth, who access and use the digital media the most, can mediate the message of the JI in the offline spaces (Margetts et al. 2016). Elites in Pakistan may be thought of relatively safe from the consequences of corruption as compared to the middle and lower middle classes and the poor population. Throughout the long campaign that this research undertook to study, it appears that the JI’s appeal is more on a catch-all party line. The space that the JI gives to the values and identity plus nature of political system of the state on its virtual platforms was far more less to the one concerning a political but at the same time material issues – corruption the main issue here. Along with efforts to articulate the interest of the middle and lower middle classes and the poor in terms of ‘corruption’, it is projected as if the entire problem of the country is the “corrupt” political leadership who has bank accounts in foreign banks and properties outside the country the corollary of that being the deprivation of these classes from state resources. To grab the vote and

\(^{46}\) Pakistan has 61 million of its population composed of middle class. Geographical distribution of the middle class across Pakistan is: Punjab and Sindh have more than 36\%, Khyberpakhtunkhwa 32\% and Baluchistan 28\% of the middle class population. See Nayab. (2011).
support of these classes, the JI’s message appears more of a catch-all nature. The emphasis of the JI’s leadership on the financial corruption associated with the opponent parties’ politicians shows a bone of contention situation between the JI and PTI. The JI endeavors to project mainly PMLN and PPPP in the center and ANP in KP as the culprits implicated in corruption, on the other, they compete PTI to attract the “disenchanted”, “disappointed” and “dispossessed” youth mainly comprising the middle and lower middle classes toward the JI. As stated above, the middle class youth who have access to the digital media can mediate the message of the JI in the offline spaces and enhance support of the JI among the poor population. The formation of JI Youth testifies to this fact as getting membership of this sister organization is easier and anyone can easily participate in the politics under the umbrella of the JI though indirectly which is focused upon in the next chapter.

Moreover, the JI feels at ease with PTI when it comes to coalition government. Though the competition between them is evident and natural, their emphasis on the issue of corruption brings them near to each other on a policy continuum – PTI being ideationally there while the JI due to manifestation of its practical politics and thus away from its ideational framework. This argument can, somehow, also potentially explain the fact that PTI and the JI were allies to form government in KP after 2013 elections.

For understanding the JI's articulations on the digital media, I borrow from Amin (2016) the concept opportunity spaces.\(^{47}\) I argue that the civil society among

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\(^{47}\) Amin (2016) has in turn borrowed the concept of opportunity spaces from Yavuz (2003). According to Yavuz opportunity spaces refer to “fora of social interactions that create new possibilities for augmenting networks of shared meaning and associational life”. Such fora include “civic and political forums, electronic and print media, and cyberspace and the market.” Thus according to Amin (2016) “domestic opportunity spaces mean emerging opportunities for social movements to set up economic, media and educational institutions as a result of weakening of state monopolies in these three domains.”
other forces also capitalized on these opportunity structures. The proliferation of private TV channels logically marks the beginning of diversity of the political discourse which until 2002 was under the control of the public TV channel, Pakistan Television (PTV). To get across the social networking platforms, these private media channels and other established interests have the necessary resources to sustain their dominance in the online media under the phenomenon of normalization as pointed out by Margolis & Resnick (2000). Therefore, a number of competing narratives regarding the political system and society is expected to be seen in the online media in Pakistan.

While advancing their narrative, the JI shares those talk shows of the TV channels in which their leadership participate for discussion on political issues. It is important to note that the agenda for these talk shows is set by the traditional media thus rendering such moments almost empty of ideological discussions. Similarly, the JI post those newspapers or traditional media contents on their social media pages which favor the JI’s leadership and its organizational merits than its ideology. This has the possibility to boost up the image of the leadership and also helps sustain the existing support while articulating it online (Amjad, 2017; Zaman, 2017). Thus political struggle against corruption, demanding accountability of the “corrupt” politicians and image building in the online spaces by projecting its leadership being “honest”, “corruption free” and “Islamic” compose the predominant contents of the message the JI wants to get across the social networking platforms as opposed to their ideological disposition. Moreover, most of the posts on Facebook and Twitter regarding Sharia Law/Islamic state etc, as pointed out above, came in the wake of the conference held by religious

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48 Data collected during three years in the selected months show 28 talk shows shared from JI’s official Facebook account.
49 Interviews with Shamsuddin Amjad and Mian Muhammad Zaman
leaders of various parties in Mansoorah points to the fact that the JI’s struggle for such a system is limited to certain contexts. Gone are the days when the JI termed the ills of the state and society as a corollary of the absence of Islamic System/Hakumat-e-Ilhayihha. Further, not a single verse of the Quran or Hadith (saying of the Holy Prophet) was found in support of the system they advocated for on such moments. Thus it is argued here that on digital social networking platforms, the message for Islamic system/Sharia Law was a tiny portion of the overall discourse. The discourse was more of a political nature focusing the most on a need for political activism to eradicate the malice of corruption. The tiny portion that the JI gave to its ideological core in its online discourse was also without any doctrinal justifications for it.

Conclusion

The post-Islamist framework of analysis for studying the transformations in the “Islamist” parties of Pakistan by Amin (2016) provides a useful insight for the overall analysis of the online behavior of Jama’at-e-Islami. However, while longing for centuries for a medium to propagate one’s own voice in a “pure” and “original” form meet the emergence of Internet, this research hypothesized that the JI would be disseminating a message online that primarily facilitates the intellectual pursuit of the educated youth in Pakistan regarding the relationship of religion and politics besides other socio-economic issues. This hypothesis was inevitable since there are a number of voices that pursue an online agenda targeting the very roots of the Jama’at-e-Islami of Pakistan directly and indirectly in terms of the discourses they have been pursuing. The credibility that the JI carries with it for being an “Islamist” political party must, therefore, be established in the online spaces to counter these “rival” voices. The website of the JI provides original and pure ideological contents of the JI among others. Loaded with ideological literature, website of the JI may act as a strong source
of reinforcement for few associated visitors and not mobilization by the message presented on it. This is because the literature tells us that the activists mostly visit party websites and not the passive or apathetic ones (Norris, 2002; 2003). However, the narrative that the JI has been leading in the online spaces especially the social network platforms was seen deviating from that of an Islamist and ideological one. “Free” from the constraints of gatekeeping and agenda setting of the traditional media, the JI still reflected more of a catch-all and Islamic appeal than an Islamist one on Facebook and Twitter focusing on the popular issues of corruption, demand for accountability of the “corrupt” politicians and projecting the JI’s leadership as honest and corruption free. Pertinent, probably, this strategy may be to satisfy its organizational and hence political interests with a change and transformation in the opportunity structures, the online rival voices ranging from civil society organizations through to intellectual and reformist voices in the traditional Deobandi school of thought to Ghamidi’s movement and their presence online (Amin, 2016) may prove more potent to inform the public opinion in matters pertaining to the relationship of religion and politics. This situation of the JI is being coupled, and probably caused, by the lack of a fresh and up-to-date intellectual message and a tendency to reinforce the world view of its supporters with more of a political orientation typified by an emphasis on leadership projection which they think of as symbolic of the JI’s ideology. Having clarified the idea of the online message of the JI on their website and digital social networks, the researcher is interested to see what happens to the JI’s participation strategy amidst the pressing demands from the youth for participation online. That is, how far the mobilizing potential of such a message is effective in the face of growing demand for participation by the youth online. Does the JI provide opportunities for the online youth to participate in its policy development? If yes,
whether this opportunity is provided in matters concerning organizational policies or public policy? Also, if yes, whether the boundaries of the membership are kept intact while allowing the youth to participate in online forums or such opportunities are provided to anyone irrespective of his/her association with the JI? These questions guide my inquiry of the JI’s online strategy further in the next chapter.
CHAPTER-5

STRATEGIC PARTICIPATION BY JAMA’AT-E-ISLAMI AND PARTICIPATION VIA INTERNET

This chapter answers the research question: To what extent the JI adapts to the changing style of participation facilitated by the internet keeping in view its hierarchical organization structure and strategic participatory preferences?

5.1 Political Participation and internet

Most of the studies on internet and political participation in the early days of internet focused on the question whether internet has a positive or negative impact on participation. Having the existing understanding about political participation, some scholars argued that internet will revitalize the “deliberative”, “participatory”, or “direct” democracy thereby eliminating the necessity of representative institutions. Others observed that the impact internet will have on politics will lead to atomization or weakening the social cohesion. In fact, this question was relevant, however, within a normative framework that if the social cohesion is diluted, the changed mode of participation will not be suffice to the needs of democracy in a mass society. To some other observers this question is inadequately presented. A number of different dimensions are intertwined which should be dealt with separately. The concept of political participation is multidimensional since the boundaries between what constitutes it and what not are often unclear. Thus the generic question about the positive or negative impact of internet over political participation is itself confusing (Krueger, 2006). The effect of internet on political participation should be asked in three distinguished ways: activities which are only possible online; those which can both be carried out in the real as well as online world; and finally those which are only possible offline. Keeping these separate modes of participation in mind,
questions should, thus, be asked with reference to each mode separately. For example posting comments on government websites and forwarding emails constituting political contents were non-existent before internet. These are new ways of participation and hence their impact on the level of political participation will depend on their use: if its use is trivial, it is unlikely that they will lead to a more participatory society. Secondly, there are offline activities which can also be carried out online. For instance, it is possible to contact a government official, politician or any department of the government to protest about a problem by letter, in person, telephone or email etc. Similarly petition sharing and donations online fall within the range of activities which can be carried out offline. However, a contra-factual question will be to ask: would those who participate online have participated offline if they had no access to internet? If the inactive people do such activities through internet only, then we can say that internet leads to increased participation. Thus the overall impact internet would have on participation will depend on the number of people who have become active through internet. However, if the offline methods of participation are replaced with online ones, e.g., if someone whose method of participation is writing a letter is replaced with an email, then there would be no impact on the volume of political activity (Anduza et al., 2009). Thirdly, it is asked whether the use of internet affects offline level of participation or not. There are three hypotheses: first that it is unaffected, second that internet leads to increased participation and third that internet lowers participation.

Some scholars have noted a growing level of dissatisfaction of the public with the ways and institutions of representative democracy (Dalton, 2004; Norris, 1999; Pharr & Putnam, 2000). However, those who are highly educated and have large cognitive capacities are determined to intervene in the political activities out of their
belief in the democratic ideal despite their distrust in the traditional institutions of representative democracy. These critical people reject the hierarchical and traditional institutions of democracy in favor of activities possible horizontally, with low cost of entry and exit. Such activities can be exemplified by boycotting a product, attending demonstrations or signing petitions. Internet thus offers such people to participate in politics albeit in different ways than the traditional and classical institutions provide.

Two hypotheses justify this argument: first that there are certain activities that can well be carried out through internet than in any other medium. For instance, anybody can increase one’s repertoire of information concerning his/her issues of particular interest. Also one can make a contact with individuals or organizations without the limitations imposed by the offline world. Resultantly, these characteristics support single-issue mobilizations (Ward et al., 2003). Individuals, who want to organize themselves, are therefore, offered autonomy and novel possibilities by the internet thereby promoting involvement of individuals and groups to carry out political activities outside the institutional ambit (Castells, 1997).

Secondly, these characteristics (outlined above) have helped certain actors to adapt more quickly and effectively to the internet. This is the case of new social movements who are well adept to the use of technology. The inherent characteristics of these movements i.e. being horizontal organization, use of symbolic resources, predominance of post-materialist values, and decentralized and networked modes of functioning, thus, make adaptation to the new medium of internet much easier (Lopez et al., 2003 cited in Anduza et al., 2009). These arguments can explain the participatory behavior of those who are, somehow, active while participating through the traditional political institutions. That these participants can find new channels in the digital sphere thereby changing their mode of participation and hence political
action. However, it can be considered, additionally, that the alternative mode of participation can act as a driving force for the inactive members of the public whose inactivity can be explained by the failure of classical institutional mechanism of participation which does not fit in with the current needs (Innerarity, 2002 cited in Anduza et al., 2009). It can also be considered that internet foster new participation mechanisms which would otherwise have been non-existent. Therefore, it is not only necessary to consider difference in types of activities by participating users and non-users but also the changes that can, as a result, occur in the intensity of participation be addressed (Anduza et al., 2009).

From the above discussion it can be derived that the traditional political institutions viz. political parties’ efforts at mobilizing the general public and their inactive sympathizers through internet will relatively yield minimal fruits if these organizations stick to strict hierarchical patterns. Second, that some political parties may resist changes in their participatory strategies in the digital age. The elites in these organizations would like to immune these organizations from intrusions from the common public or unofficial intrusion of those associates whose activism is sought in accordance with the guidelines charted out by the party elites. In this light, I argue that Jama'at-e-Islami of Pakistan, being a hierarchical party whose positional elites chart out the ways on who can participate and to what extent within the organization, faces the pressure of online participation in policy deliberations. This chapter will spare a handsome space to this aspect of the JI and its online participatory strategy viz-a-viz the offline mechanisms of participation both for its associates and the common public.
5.2 Internet and the modification of resources for participation

Normatively speaking, participation of citizens in the public affairs is a must for the functioning of a democratic society and polity. However, the available resources, be they cognitive, time, monetary or other explain as to who will participate and who not as demonstrated in the most influential model on political participation in the civic voluntarism model by Verba et al. (1995). The model asserts that the higher the cost for participation, the lower the activity. For those citizens who lack time, money, cognitive or organizational resources the cost of participation will be too high. As a result they would not be able to participate. Thus the availability or unavailability of resources bears heavily on participation. However, when this model was developed, internet was not or rarely under use. Anduza et al. (2009) consider internet as a new resource in itself which modifies the cost of participation. In the case of political parties and several other contexts, despite the availability of these resources, certain actors within these organizations e.g. elites can determine the extent and level of participation and hence a balancing exercise by parties (Gauja, 2015) may be expected to impact the final outcome in this process.

Keeping parties’ resilience in mind to retain or modify their structures and participation levels strategically and the rising pressures on them as a result of demand factors from the online citizens to expand their structures and make them more inclusive, this chapter tests the case of the JI in Pakistan. I begin with reiterating the levels of participation in the JI’s matters which are more or less determined by the party’s higher and central hierarchy (Nasr, 1994). The levels of participation is the result of an evolutionary process taking its present shape in the form of full members (rukn, plural arkan), entitled to vote on internal ballots and are also assigned party work. The second level that of affiliate (Muttafiq), not entitled to vote on internal
ballots but can be assigned party work and the third level that of sympathizers (hamdard) who are aligned with the message and objectives of the JI but can neither vote on internal ballots nor assigned party work (Ullah, 2014). These categories comprise the supply side or strategic participatory mechanisms of participation determined by the positional elites in the Jama'at-e-Islami of Pakistan.

Having drawn a sketch of the demand side impacting participation with the availability of novel routes and different modes to participation through internet and the supply side as those mechanisms determined institutionally within the JI, I explore, in the next lines, as to what extent the JI adapts to the changing modes of participation facilitated by the internet keeping in view their hierarchical organization and strategic participatory preferences.

5.3 The JI and the strategic participation opportunities

The JI’s Amir is elected after every five years by a secret ballot arranged through mail. This reform was introduced after the Machi Goth affair of 1957 (Nasr, 1994). Prior to 1957, the election of Amir used to be the prerogative of the Shura members of the JI. The candidates cannot campaign for votes among the party full membership the members are “autonomous” under this system to vote any candidate for the post of Amir at all levels of the JI’s organizational hierarchy. As a corollary, the system leads to an atomized membership as far as the election of amir and shura members is concerned. It also results in a centralized decision system resulting in hierarchies where the decisions concerning nominating the candidates for the post of Amir ranging from central (president/leader of the JI) through to regional level leaders (Amir) to Shura members are taken. This, on the one hand makes the leadership accountable to the whole membership, on the other maintains the discipline of the
party as well besides other measures for keeping the discipline intact – as discussed earlier. That said, the JI has the reputation of nominating the candidates for various posts and their subsequent regular election by the membership which makes it a “democratic” party (according to PILDAT survey mentioned earlier) in comparison to other parties of Pakistan.

5.4 Towards a changed praxis too?

In the previous chapter I explored the online articulations of the JI which are post-Islamist. My findings are in line with Amin (2016) who came to such conclusion while studying the articulations of the JI from news paper contents. However, besides being post-Islamic, the online articulations were more of a catch-all nature than economically popular. The leadership has been trying to incorporate catch-all appeals in their articulations to win popular political support. While Moten (2003) came to the conclusion that the JI has undergone a shift from a vanguard approach to a mass revolutionary movement, the changed nature of articulations by the JI in contrast to what the ideational framework of the JI dictates (Amin 2016) reveals that the praxis of the JI has changed besides a teleological shift. This research reinforces the previous findings regarding the changed praxis of the JI and argues that the JI has entered into a phase where its articulations are post-Islamist and more of a catch-all nature rather than economically popular. Overall the argument is that, the JI’s praxis has changed. However, changing the praxis does not happen in vacuum. Rather setting some new ideals to realize are essential. This might be the consequence of setting new ideals such as coming into power is more important than realizing its ideological goals. Whether the new ideal is an end in itself or a means to an end can be a matter of further debate. However, a plausible argument can be that the JI has retreated from creating an Islamic state. Further, we know as of now that by changing its
articulations, the nature of its organization is affected. If the vanguard approach needed strict hierarchical organization for realizing the ideals of Islamism espoused by Mawdudi, a populist and revolutionary praxis is dictated by the populist discourse exhibited by the JI (Moten, 2003). In the contemporary times with ‘digital media’ technologies getting ubiquitous and the JI’s catch-all and post-Islamist articulations through them demand an inquiry into their effects on its organization. Broadening the membership base, focus on the target of 5 million affiliates (Ullah, 2014), the creation of JI Youth (where the Mawdudi’s laid down principle that presenting oneself for candidature is the first sign of disqualification and which still prevails within the organization of JI proper) has been replaced with internal competition for candidature to various posts during internal elections all reveal a changed praxis by the JI. The idea of a vanguard approach (an incremental change in effect though) Nasr (1994)), populist and revolutionary (Moten, 2002) has been replaced by a catch-all revolutionary strategy for efficiency gains at the polls.

As far as the role of the positional elites is concerned, Moten (2003) emphasizes the capacity of these elites enough to steer the JI. However, this research feels the need to explore the role of the positional elites of the JI in the face of digital natives and online associates of the JI who also seem to have a considerable influence on the steering of the JI. As identified above, the struggle between the digital natives, digital associates of the JI and the upholders of traditional approach to participation in politics within the JI can shed light on the new power relations among them in the age of new ICTs.
5.5 Political Participation, Jama'at-e-Islami and the internet

Political participation, taking it into the traditional and classic definition of participation, has been considered as not more than clicktivism on the digital media technologies (e.g. Morozov, 2012) and judged to have no meaning or significance. Nonetheless, there are other authors who propose that the concept of political participation must not be limited to its narrow sense and hence it is not a one-dimensional activity but rather multi-dimensional encompassing a range of activities (Koc-Michalska et al., 2014). Such activities on the internet lead to expression of opinions, gaining understandings, building of alliances, and exertion of vertical and horizontal influences thereby materializing the ideals of collective participatory and semi-deliberative decision making (Bang, 2005). This argument does not imply that the digital environment is privileged over on-the-ground engagement; rather it points to the fact that novel routes to engagement are getting possible thereby resulting into new forms of participation (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

In view of the above, a question ensues: to what extent ICTs, internet here, can overrule the prevailing practice and culture within an organization and give rise to new intra-organizational democracy?

Gibson and Ward (1999) conceptualize this along two dimensions along which this intra-organizational democracy can be conceptualized. The first is vertical one where the creation of electronic communication channels such as intranets, e-mail lists, blog networks, internal discussion forums etc to which ordinary members can have access and interact with, will turn elites more accountable in their decision making to the membership. However, it indicates that it is increasingly difficult for the leadership to control dissent and internal information flows, with the consequence
of elites being easier to be challenged from below (Greene et al., 2003). As noted by Ward (2001), this sort of challenge is being managed through increasingly atomized membership thereby extending exclusive rights to members/supporters under cartelized and catch-all party models. However, the only mechanism with the JI to tackle such issues is to bind the members to agreement on the ideational framework as well as the organizational structure which renders the members under the control of hierarchies at various levels.

The JI’s leadership and ideology compel the membership to be both well aware of its ideology and having understanding of things with the help of the JI’s ideational framework. The constitution, as stated earlier, clearly says that those who agree to the interpretation of the JI about religion and politics can become members of the party. Thus discussion on many issues requires members to be agreeing to the JI’s interpretation and also be on a specific hierarchy to influence certain decision outcomes the JI provides for. As the JI operates a closed group on Facebook with the name “Jamaat e Islami”, this raises the possibility that there are questions which can be raised by ordinary members and also suggestions that they deem appropriate for policy development e.g. questions and suggestions pertaining to the JI’s operations, campaigns etc. From the interviews of the leadership, it was found that they do not answer/reply questions asked by the JI’s associates in the close group on Facebook “Jamat e Islami.” They are mostly silent observers as the JI leaders during their interviews confirmed. The reasons they said, during interviews, were lack of time because of involvement in huge on-the-ground activities of the JI (Naseem, 2017; Wasi, 2017). However, the official social media staff, who are also activists from

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50 Interviews with Rashid Naseem – Naib Amir of the JI Mansoorah; Abdul Wasi – General Secretary, the JI KP
the JI, participate in such discussions in the form of mostly setting the agenda of discussions in the group “Jamaat e Islami” (Amjad, 2017). It was stated by the social media manager of the JI that videos and posts regarding the JI’s stance on various political issues are mostly posted by the social media official activists which is a type of setting the agenda of the group discussion. Moreover, the corollary of using these close groups on Facebook is that it raises pressure on the leadership indirectly. This is because the official social media activists of the JI convey these things and the group membership’s dominant opinion about certain issues to the leadership. This offsets the consolation of the leadership who do not confront such reactions in such a magnitude in the physical spaces e.g. gatherings etc. This is an indirect pressure for decentralization and flattening of the hierarchies that the internet poses to the JI’s hierarchical organization. However, the group is mostly used for devising campaign strategies. The social media head at Mansoorah told me that they carry out mobilization of activists in the group to participate by promoting various campaigns online. This sort of mobilization is the very focus of the next chapter where it is properly analyzed.

The second dimension conceptualized by Gibson and Ward (1999) is horizontal member to member relations. Under this possibility members can independently network without the need to use organizational channels. A prominent evidence of this sort of interaction can be found in the example of Ahbab Discourse Forum – a Facebook group administered by three former IJT members. The influence this group has or potentially has over the policies of the JI, however, is outlined later in the chapter.

51 Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad
Whereas we proceed further, a question arises regarding the online horizontal interactivity among the associates of the JI: does the JI’s membership’s/associates’ interactivity with each other (horizontal interactivity) in such groups induces an attitudinal change that can impact the attitude imposed by the hierarchical communication in the JI? The broader answer to this question can be found in the behavioral psychology models. Cognitive behavioral psychology models assert that any activity which is repeated time and again leads to interiorization in the form of a patterns of behavior which are later applied even in the fields which are different from the one in which they were learned. Thus the attitudinal effects of the general use of internet would be visible in practicing new forms of communicating and establishing relationships with others (Hill & Hughes, 1998). As the new forms of communication on internet, especially the Web 2.0, emphasize interaction, therefore, the more frequent use of internet leads to attitudinal changes through the interiorization of the new skills and relational forms which are characteristics of the internet. For instance, one of the most notable possibilities of internet is that it affords the users multi-dimensional exchange and interactivity thereby merging the emitter and receptor, acting together without hierarchies (Yildiz 2002 cited in Anduza et al. 2009). The case of Ahbab Discourse Forum is thus a suitable case to explore the impact of horizontal interactivity among associates and activists there and assess its impact on the hierarchical nature of communication within the JI. This group being open to many members of the IJT including many from the JI leadership who remained part of IJT in the past, therefore, presents an excellent case for both vertical and horizontal interactions since several from the leadership who remained part of IJT in the past either participate or are silent members of the group. Though the JI leadership does not interact online with its common members/activists in the official closed group
“Jamaat e islami” on Facebook, the official social media activists of the JI does this interactivity and thereby protect the attitude of hierarchical communication as prevalent in the JI official communications. In the case of Ahbab Discourse Forum, which is a forum for “rational” and “independent” debates for the “intellectuals” outside the organizational ambit of the JI proper, a significant pressure and influence of this group was found on the JI as outlined later in this chapter.

As the JI Punjab chapter IT in-charge told me “we have an excellent system of Shura and we do not need public opinion as far as policies regarding ideological issues are concerned” (Zaman, 2017). This reveals the fact that the JI does not use Internet for eliciting policy suggestions regarding expert opinions on how the nexus between its ideology and political realities should respond to the current issues, but rather believes in supplying choices to the citizens who search for such ideological stuff and the way of realizing the ideological goals. In other words the JI tends to be trying to align people with what they think appropriate as far as ideological issues are concerned. Thus participation in such issues cannot be allowed to those who neither agree to the JI’s ideational framework nor their organizational design. Secession from its ranks is the only way as we can see in the case of Dr. Israr Ahmad, besides many others, who disagreed with the JI mainly on the issue of elections thinking of it as unsuitable for realizing the goals of the movement. Thus the constitution allows participation in such issues for Shura members while binding the Shura members’ agreement to the interpretation of religion by the JI. This is tantamount to keeping intact the supply side of participation (Norris, 2003) as far the ideological issues are concerned. Nonetheless, as noted by Amin (2016), there is a growing gap between the

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52 Interview with Mian Muhammad Zaman
53 Dr. Israr launched his own movement with the name “Tanzeem-e-Islami”.
practice and ideology of the JI. This is because the JI still shoulders Mawdudi’s works while facing an intellectual deficit. This is also a partial explanation as to why the JI does not talk about its ideological goal in the public, particularly in the media. If it articulates about it rarely, it is without solid and systematic references to Quran or Ahadith. However, this does not mean that the JI is immune to such dissenting discourses as pertaining to its ideology. As outlined in the previous chapter, Amin (2016) argues that the JI has undergone a shift towards post-Islamism in its practical articulations despite its intact Islamist ideational framework. Such a transformation is indicative of the fact that the JI has gone to the extent of deviating from its Islamist framework. However, with the multiplication of digital channels for participation and influencing party leadership, the JI faces more and more pressure. As will be analyzed later in this chapter, the indirect pressure created by the Ahbab Discourse Forum on Facebook over the JI may affect the JI in several ways.

5.6 Internet and the elites of the JI amidst the digital citizens

Whereas the JI is a party that go through survey polls conducted by some think tanks e.g. Gallop, yet they also conduct such surveys themselves. This was confirmed by both the central as well as the Punjab chapter IT heads emphasizing the words “scientific” surveys when asked. What does consulting surveys by the JI mean then? Is it equivalent to taking into consideration the public opinion? Evidently yes because surveys help them locate their position on the political system as well as political culture. Logical is to argue here that such public opinions put pressure on the JI like other “democratic” parties in Pakistan and elsewhere. The corollary is that the JI has either to adapt their policies to the public opinion or ignore it at the cost of a potential rejection by the public or groups of public. Prior to saying anything final in this regard, I raise a question: whether the JI allows participation for the general public in
the non-ideological issues on internet? This question is pertinent here because, as noted by scholars, an array of forms of participation have been stimulated through Information and communications technology (ICT) and digital social networks (Micheletti & McFarland, 2011). There are abundant studies on political participation as a demand category mediated by internet technologies i.e. citizens behaviors and attitudes leading to various new participation forms (Norris, 2002; 2003). Therefore, it is relevant to raise this question here: whether the JI, irrespective of their strategic participation mechanism, allows for common citizens, who are outside the official ambit of the JI, to participate in the policy development regarding issues other than the ideological ones? Under this category, citizens’ attitudes and behaviors are responsible for the evolution of new forms of participation. It is now up to parties, either to ignore them and provide them the institutionally determined mechanisms of participation, or else to let such participants participate on their own terms. A third scenario will be to accommodate some of the participation mechanisms out of an adaptive strategy by the parties. In issues, other than ideological, the JI shows a slight indication that it accommodates such preferences. The JI’s KP Chapter Deputy Amir Dr. Khalil told me during interview that there was a proposed session of central Shura on what stance to adopt on the issue of Panama leaks? That Shura members, including him, were asked to present their opinion on the matter. Dr. Khalil posted about the issue on Facebook from his profile himself to ask for suggestions from the public. As a result a lot of suggestions were offered by the general public. He, consequently, articulated them in the Shura meeting and were appreciated (Khalil, 2017). This case, though a single evidence of soliciting general public opinion in a policy matter of the JI by its elites on digital social networks that I collected, points to

54 Panama leaks, in which certain journalists leaked the information regarding various politicians to be possessing estates outside their countries illegally.
55 Interview with Dr. Iqbal Khalil – Deputy Amir of the JI KP, Peshawar. Sept., 14, 2017
a significant impact the internet might have on their strategic participatory mechanisms. First, that the JI’s strategic participatory mechanisms involve taking opinion from their members at different levels of membership. For example, and as outlined above, the JI full members can vote on the election of Amir, Shura members and the lower level leadership in the organizational hierarchy. Second, that the affiliates can carry out organizational duties but are not voting members at any stage. Third that sympathizers are invited along with the other two tiers i.e. members and affiliates to various trainings, workshops and gatherings etc. Thus it is clear that participation opportunities in the JI can only be extended to these three tiers in which members enjoy relatively a full opportunity to participate. This is the JI’s core strategic participation mechanism and in other words supply side of the participation determined by the JI. Nonetheless, such accommodation on internet to let the common public mold public policy preferences of the JI can pose a potential threat to the organizational discipline. That the strategic membership tiers may not like the course of direction the JI may take under such public influence. Though most of the IJT students during informal discussions of the researcher with them did not clearly oppose the idea to take opinion from the common public, still this creates an interesting scenario when we look at the organizational policies of the JI in recent times. In fact, almost all the IJT students liked the catch-all appeal of the JI. They were those who are currently enrolled in the universities and members/affiliates/sympathizers of IJT and did not express any dissent on the catch-all appeal e.g. emphasizing corruption as the leading issue in the JI’s continuous campaign since Sept., 2016. While some supporters of the JI e.g. members/affiliates/sympathizers may be worried due to a potential damage to its image due to such new participations and its influence on party, others may not like
the strategy because of their ideological commitment and agreement to the fact that the JI should represent the ideological membership and not be popularized. Therefore, this section remains incomplete without taking into consideration the formation of the JI Youth – an interesting case, though outlined in this chapter later. Moreover, such a decentralized approach to exhibiting politics by the JI elites may cause the boundaries between members and non-members blurred.

5.7 The Digital Citizens’ Participation and the JI’s Website

The JI’s core engagement through online technologies in policy development is through polls section. Such polls are arranged on their website www.jamaat.org. Under this section the JI puts some open ended questions within specific policy areas. It is pertinent to mention that agenda for polls is set by the JI. It is evident from the website that the JI does not allow participants to personalize polls which will enable the participants to set the agenda for policy suggestions. When asked in interview from the JI IT and Social Media head, he confirmed that they don’t have any intention to provide personalizing options on website where participants can set the agenda for the polls (Amjad, 2017). Yet it is important to solicit public opinion in certain policy areas.

Some of the questions under such polls were found to be regarding the JI’s policy. For example “whom do you think JI should make alliance with?” Some of the questions are regarding discerning public opinion. For instance, “should Pakistan support Saudia against Yemen?”; “are mid-term elections a solution to the current state of crisis?”; “can the current government eradicate corruption?”; “is the government serious in talks with Taliban?”, and “will Nawaz Sharif (prime minister)

56 Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad
be able to stop droning Pakistan?” As far as engagement in the development of website is concerned, the polls ask “how do you think about the new website of the JI?”

It is interesting to note that a very little amount of people participate in such polls: first question has been answered by 24, second by 8, third by 24, fourth by 24, fifth by 24, sixth by 24 and seventh by 24 persons. Also that the same questions which I recorded from the JI website on 22nd January, 2017 are still there until today June 2018. The JI could come up with new questions in its polls on its website but so far they did not. It means the polls are either just an expression that the JI provides greater possibilities for online participation through its website or that the JI does not believe in the importance of online polls on its website due to a lower number of participants. When I asked the social media incharge, he replied that they encourage and motivate the activists/members to participate in polls and visit the website. However, one of the reasons for the low level of participation in the polls is that social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter reduce the importance of going through websites of parties. The Analyzer – an online website that gauges the traffic and other statistics about a website, when applied to the JI’s website also revealed that the JI’s website has a little traffic as compared to visiting social media pages. Thus conducting polls at website may not be a useful exercise. As stated earlier, the JI’s website managers confirm the reduction in websites’ importance as far as engaging the public is concerned (Amjad, 2017).57

It is no surprise that a very thin amount of human to human interactivity as compared to media interactivity is noticed on other numerous websites of political

57 Interview with Shamshuddin Amjad
parties around the world (Stromer-Gelley, 2000). The JI though has built a forum on their website, lacks discussions and deliberations. In fact, in theory the forum facilitates everyone to participate in debates and initiate discussions on issues, practicing it was found very weak. When asked from the website managers “do you educate and motivate your activists/members/associates to participate in discussion forum on the JI website”, they replied that yes they inform its activists through the Facebook group “Jamaat e Islami” and also Whatsapp group and SMS list they have. However, such participation is practiced by those activists who are active on social media. This is because the JI does not have a database of its members’ social media IDs and nor their email addresses to communicate about polls and discussions on policy to them (ibid). Also, rational choice dictates, all the members might not be using digital technologies. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the JI's majority members’ age is below 40 (ibid), it is safe to say that the JI does not want to take a revolutionary step by devising online groups for its members’ opinions. Since online activists are few as compared to the JI’s membership, it is wise to rely on few activists in the online realm for promoting various campaigns directed from the center and regional headquarters as is done in the closed group on Facebook “Jamaat e islami” (ibid). Mostly such activists are mobilized to carry out campaigns when and as the need arises. Participation in organizational or public policy deliberations through online channels for common members of the JI yet looks distant to be made possible by the JI’s leadership.

The “Forum” on the website shows some topics where different number of posts has been given by the forum members. Currently, the number of forum members was above 27,000. Under 125 topics 779 posts have been posted. The directory shows a number of headings ranging from members introduction through to
Islamic learning to Jama'at-e-Islami Pakistan to social welfare to brother organizations to information technology and social media to videos to library. These headings cover a number of sub-headings with topics under them. Different posts can be posted under these topics. Almost no activity was found from the members except one who posted under the “Members introduction section” introducing himself. The remaining 778 posts were from the administrators in which two of them had a lion’s share. This points towards the fact that the agenda of discussions so far is being largely set by the administrators who are party activists too\textsuperscript{58}. Moreover, the most topics and postings were found under the sub-heading “JI Questions and Answers”. It reveals the fact that the JI is very much cautious about their image in the online spaces. Because most of the posts under this category were answers taken from Tarjumanul Quran (the JI’s monthly journal) and other excerpts, and most of them were replying answers to allegations against the JI. For example the role of the JI in the 1971 war and its connection with Al-Badr. The number of posts here was 49 under 41 topics. The second largest number of posts was under the sub-heading “Talk Shows”. The number of videos posted was 22 under 22 topics. No activity was found under the sub-heading “Discussion Forum”. Similarly, the JI Youth sub-heading had no activity under it till date. The heading “Library” had only two and one posts under the sub-headings Syed Abul Aa’la Mawdudi and Khurram Muraad respectively.

The next important section is “Blogs” where no blogs were found.

5.8 Participation opportunities through Social Network Platforms on internet by the JI

I did not notice vertical interactivity on the posts of the JI on its official Facebook page. It was like a digital ethnography that I undertook during the last four

\textsuperscript{58} My stay at Mansoorah – the headquarters of Jamaat, enabled me identify that the administrators were also JI activists who work in the social media department.
years. However, on some of the posts horizontal interactivity was noticed. This was mostly in the form of users-to-users interactivity where mostly the JI sympathizers or any other “neutral” user replied to a negative comment of another user on the JI posts. When asked about any Questions and Answers (Q&A) sessions by the JI on social media platforms such as within Facebook or Whatsapp open or close groups, the Social Media incharge and the JI leadership’s answer was in negative. The leadership remains silent observers in these groups (Naseem, 2017; Amjad, 2017; Wasi, 2017).\(^5^9\)

It is often that such groups are used for mobilizing some the JI associates regarding different campaigns besides mobilizing and motivating their opinion with some ideological and party literature in the form of short pamphlets, videos and audio files (Amjad, 2017).\(^6^0\)

### 5.9 The associates of the JI and struggle for online participation

Some argue that western democracies are going to see an increasing number of ‘catch-all’ parties as typified by the US party system. In this case parties essentially revolve around the selection of leaders and the ‘pragmatic elector-consumer’ in an environment where votes change allegiance much more freely. Essentially parties become like football teams, if one supports the ‘reds’ or the ‘blues’ then one is part of the tribe, with common views on policy secondary but not completely ignored. The most important aspect of such a ‘catch-all’ system is the altered relationship between members and party elites: Members have diminished influence and there is little to distinguish between a supporter and an explicit member. (Kitcat 2003:12).

Ward (2001) argues that the cartel and catch-all parties are predicated on a more individualistic notion of the party member than previous modes of party

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\(^5^9\) Interviews with Rashid Naseem; Shamsuddin Amjad; and Abdul Wasi

\(^6^0\) Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad
organization. The result is that while members may have more formal influence, such as through postal ballots on party leadership, the parties are run in a highly centralized and top down manner which atomizes the membership – participating in a very limited way from home and unlikely to organize into groups or factions of any real or lasting influence on the party’s direction.

While the JI follows an atomized membership giving members individual participation opportunities, it “successfully” prevents the formation of factions and challengers. In the offline world this experience, as stated above, may be a successful strategy for sustaining the power of the elites within parties. In the case of the JI, which is a hierarchical party, different elites who occupy positions on various levels of the hierarchy in the party benefit from the atomized membership and thus “save” their position from being challenged by common members in the form of factions. However, the creation of online groups help forge shared identities as some authors argue that interactivity is not neutral and can impact participation as it leads to the development of an “electronic identity” (Wolton, 2000, cited in Anduza et al., 2009). The shared electronic identity developed under the possibility of new participation opportunities via internet thus creates the potential to impact the “saved” hierarchies of political parties by its dissidents and dissenting voices out of the organizational ambit online. Ahbab Discourse Forum, an “intellectual” forum may thus have a significant impact on the policies of the JI unofficially and indirectly.

5.10 Ahbab Discourse Forum (ADF) on Facebook

Ahbab Discourse Forum is a virtual forum on Facebook. It is administered by three former IJT (Islami Jamiat Talbaa) members. According to the administrators of the group its objectives are as follow:
This group is created for insightful intellectual discussion on issues and topics of interest to Islam, Muslims, and Pakistan. Members are expected to remain polite and decent, present their viewpoint, preferably based on arguments and evidence, and to avoid getting personal against each other, losing cool, getting emotional, doubting each others' motives and intentions. Effort must be made to remain impartial and objective, open minded and receptive to ideas because closed minds are not conducive to learning. Members are expected to kindly also keep the following principles in mind and adhere to them if they want to keep their membership intact (Administrators of Ahbab Discourse Forum).

The group is especially for those who remained part of IJT in the past though some current IJT members also participate in the group. However, there is no hard and fast rule that only IJT related people can join it and hence some members have no relationship with either IJT or the JI but are participants in discussions and debates in the forum. Most of the leadership ignored the role of this group by simply dismissing them arguing that they don’t know about the ground realities and that most of their demands are ideal (Wasi, 2017). Majority of the debates set the agenda of the group through critical discussions regarding the organizational and public policies of the JI. Moreover, various scholars’ works are also discussed and debated in the group e.g. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, a seceded scholar from the JI whose ideas hit at the very root of Islamism. It can be gauged from the post of a member “those who oppose Javed Ahmad Ghamidi in the group are blocked. Let us form a separate group for those who are sincere with the JI” (Ali, 2017). The word ‘sincere’ implies that the group blocks those who out of ideological zeal reject Javed Ahmad Ghamidi’s views in the group –

61 Interview with Abdul Wasi
a post Islamist scholar in Pakistan who was once a part of the JI and who disagrees with the JI on many issues which are fundamental to the very existence of the JI. He is a religious scholar leading Al Mawrid – an organization working on Quran and Ahadith having branches around the world. Ghamidi came up with a different interpretation than the JI’s about religion and politics.\textsuperscript{63} It is important to note that Ghamidi’s views are discussed in the group besides many other issues with the JI. However, the Islamist minded who were termed as hardliners blame the “moderates” for being Ghamidis (influenced by Ghamidi’s thoughts). One of the group administrators has been blamed to be a follower of Ghamidi by the hardliners too (Hafeez, 2017).\textsuperscript{64} It can be said that the group has both the “hardliners” and “moderates” in it as members.

5.11 Ahbab Discourse Forum’s influence on policy decisions of the JI

The criticism that social media and thereby ADF does on the Amir of the JI for example was never possible before the advent of social media. Different suggestions are provided in this group. For example it was debated whether the JI should adopt a Turkish model or any other one as other experiments by the JI failed. Similarly, a survey was carried out in this group before elections 2018 on what the JI should do in the elections and was sent to the Central leadership in the form of suggestions. There are members in the group who come from the central and provincial leadership of the JI. Despite majority of them being silent members in the group, few of them are also active members. The active members provide explanations to certain critical questions asked and debated in the group. For instance, it was debated in the group that the JI should provide opportunities to the young

\textsuperscript{63} For a detailed study of Post-Islamist discourse in Pakistan see Amin (2016) specifically chapters 4 (paper that was co-authored by Prof. Dr. Abdul Rauf from Department of Political Science, University of Peshawar) and chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{64} Interview with Muhammad Hafeez (pseudonym) – an active member of the Ahbab Discourse Forum.
people in elections. Some from the central leadership replied that few tickets have been awarded to the young people but because there was the coalition of Mutahidda Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) – an alliance of religious parties experimented in 2002 and again in 2018 general elections, therefore, it influenced the JI elections strategy a lot and hence the forum’s suggestions were not fully replicated in the JI's policy for general elections in 2018 (Hafeez, 2017).65

Similarly, a lively debate over the organizational policy of the JI pertaining to the separation of its political wing from its ideological movement was carried out in the forum. This debate generated significant discussion for almost a period of more than two months in which different members posted their views. Some went to the extent to write well written lengthy papers as answers to the posts in the forum. A member wrote lengthy argument in this regard presenting the example of Egypt where the political wing of Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is separate from its ideological wing. Lively interactivity with counter arguments emanated from the post among the members. Similarly, the Turkish model was also debated. The debate made its way to the central Shura of the JI where the issue of separating its political wing from its Ideological wing is under discussion and hopefully will be finalized within few months. It is somehow understandable to argue that the forum has a significant impact over the agenda of the Shura meetings (Khan, 2017).66

Discussions and debates are also carried out in the forum regarding the organizational structure and the mechanism of nomination of Shura members and other positional elites. According to an active member of the forum, the “moderates” in the group are of the opinion that the structure of Shura be changed. People who do

65 Ibid.
66 Interview with Ibadullah Khan (pseudonym) – an active member of the Ahbab Discourse Forum.
not know about politics chart out political policies in the center which cannot be translated into success. Similarly, there is a deficiency of scholars e.g. the JI could not produce Ulama (sing. Aalim, religious scholar) like Mawlana Gauhar Rahman or Mawlana Inayatullah. Intellectually and ideologically no progress has been made after Mawdudi and professor Khurshid. That is why the JI failed. Absence of talented people in these spheres from the Central Shura of the JI lead the JI to failure and hence the current mechanism of nomination and consequent elections within the JI reproduces hardliners in the Shura who want to sustain the organization for the sake of organization and don’t bother about its success on public level (Hafeez, 2017).

There are discussions over public policy of the JI. For example the issue of blasphemy was under discussion in the forum in which some members produced articles from scholars who do not come from the JI. These articles were in opposition to the stance the JI has adopted over the issue of blasphemy in the form of street protests. There are various organizational policies on which critical discussions are held by the members in the forum (Khan, 2017).

During my field interviews a leader from the provincial leadership remarked that, “the suggestions of the Ahbab members are ideal and that they don’t know about the ground realities”. When asked about this stance of the leadership from Muhammad Hafeez, he replied that the administrators of the forum are professionals. One of the founders of ADF, a Federal Board of Revenue civil servant officer, knows much about the relevant on-the-ground realities than the ideal leadership of the JI. Similarly, there are professors, doctors, engineers, lawyers and other professionals from

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67 Interview with Muhammad Hafeez
68 Interview with Ibadullah Khan
different fields in the forum who know much about on-the-ground realities (Hafeez, 2017).\textsuperscript{69}

From the above examples, we can argue that there is a serious engagement in the politics of the JI indirectly from people who want to influence the JI’s policies through virtual forums. According to one of the active members, this forum at present may not have the desired influence just because of the presence of “hardliners” who constitute majority of the Shura of the JI (ibid).\textsuperscript{70} However, the scenario drawn above gives the impression that there is a significant presence of the power struggle between those independent associates of the JI who use virtual fora and those who occupy official positions of power within the JI proper. This virtual forum exerts a small but significant influence over the organizational and public policies of the JI. Because some of the leaders from the center and provinces either participate or are silent observers in the forum, it can be argued that the virtual interactivity both horizontally and vertically, though not officially, in the forum has a significant impact over the JI’s policies. The attention to the debates and policy suggestions in the forum by some from the leadership and their consequent translation into policy decisions is indicative of the fact that the JI’s positional elites fall prey to the power of technologies which give rise to new elites: elites who share the power of decision making with the positional elites of the JI who by virtue of their positions are entitled to make decisions. The example of Ahab Discourse Forum can be tied to one of the three fundamental questions asked in empirical studies to identify the new elites: who actually makes decisions? (Merritt, 1970: 104-40 quoted in Moten 2003:15). The case of ADF helps us use the decision-making method to identify new elites and argue that

\textsuperscript{69}Interview with Muhammad Hafeez
\textsuperscript{70}Ibid.
these elites emerge from the virtual forum that actually share decision making with the JI’s positional elites.

5.12 Institutionalizing new indirect forms of strategic participation: the case of the JI Youth

The JI launched its youth wing, JI Youth, in a ceremony on the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah November 15, 2015. It was formed after thoughtful discussions in the Shura when some of the leaders were against the idea. They argued that recruiting the untrained in such large numbers will lead to damaging the image of the party (Rahman, 2017). However, the importance of the wing lies in its future political success for the JI as Mawdudi’s laid down principle “one who puts forward his candidature is a first sign of disqualification” has withered away while operating the internal organization of JI Youth. A lively competition for candidature has been observed during the intra-elections of JI Youth for various positions except the district, regional and national level leadership positions. These leadership positions are awarded to members from the JI whose candidature is nominated through the relevant shuras of the JI. The one month campaign for recruitment of the youth started on February 20th 2016. According to the JI Provincial Amir of Khyberpakhtunkhwa (KP), the JI is using information technology for the first time for recruitment to save peoples’ precious time. Hence, one can easily apply for the membership by dialing 9291 via mobile phone and an automated voice message would be sent in response to confirm the membership (Dawn, Feb. 20, 2016). The ease with which youth can be recruited in the organization can be gauged from comparing it with the membership in the JI which is, relatively, a lengthy process often taking months. Activities and conduct of the would-be members (omedwaar

71 Interview with Muhammad Rahman - a local level Amir at Peshawar, 16 Sept, 2017
rukn) are scrutinized during this time by the local leaders and then recommended for approval from the central Amir of the JI. These two features of JI Youth viz. campaigning for one’s candidature for various posts in the organization and easy entry into it point towards the political significance of the organization. On the one hand it can, plausibly, increase the JI's support among the youth, while on the other it can absorb the increasing pressure for participation from those who cannot carry out politics within the rigid hierarchies of the JI. In fact, operating politics under the JI, though indirectly, through this organization has lowered the cost of participation. The lively campaigning for candidature is in contrast to the principle adopted by the JI where candidates for various posts are nominated by the relevant Shuras in the hierarchy of the JI. This means an increase in the opportunities for participation to the youth which would otherwise have been impossible in the official body of the JI. Opportunities through this indirect platform affiliated with the JI can be translated into future careers which can potentially absorb the pressure on the JI from those who also want to aspire for political careers. We know that the JI offers careers to aspirants through a long term involvement with ideological zeal and activism for the JI. This process carries with it a higher cost to participate in politics under the official banner of the JI organization proper. However, not based upon the ideological but instead on the political commitment and opportunities for career building, we can argue that the JI Youth can absorb a tremendous pressure for participation from the youth that arises out of the hierarchical organization of the JI. According to the central information secretary hundreds of thousands of the youth have been recruited in the organization so far (Razzaqi, 2017).³²

³²Interview with Farid Razzaqi – Central Information Secretary of JI Youth, Mansoorah, Lahore, September 9, 2017.
Conclusion:

Since we have studied the strategic participatory mechanisms and the novel virtual ones enabled by the new ICTs, so far the picture depicts an ongoing struggle between the positional elites of the JI and its digital associates as exemplified by the members of Ahbab Discourse Forum. However, as far as the policy input from citizens and formal membership is concerned, the JI uses the virtual official platforms for more of a discerning public opinion purpose. The virtual forum on website tended to be dominated by the administrators while setting the agenda for discussions. No interactivity between the leadership of the JI and common members of the fora (citizens and the JI members) was observed. Moreover, no lively policy discussions were observed in the virtual fora on website or social media. Most of the topics for discussion posted to the website forum exhibited as if the JI is engaged in softening its image and attests to a top-down information provision in this regard. The official Facebook group “Jamaat e Islami”, however, presents an example of vertical interactivity. In practice, if any interactivity occurs there, it is mostly used for administering campaigns as the social media head of the JI at Mansoorah told me during a field interview. The leadership, having joined the group, remains silent observers in the group. Some of the leaders who use technologies creatively use social media for direct politics by taking input from common citizens in certain policy areas e.g. the case of Dr. Iqbal Khalil – Deputy Amir of the JI Khyberpakhtunkhwa branch outlined above. The impact this sort of direct politics and that of the Ahbab Discourse Forum suggest that the JI is not immune from the impact of participatory mechanisms through online technologies. This raises the need to suggest that the JI's strategic membership is turning obsolete and needs to be redefined. In theory the JI keeps the strategic participation mechanisms intact, however, in reality the novel practices of
participation accommodated by the JI, as outlined above, show that the old notion of the JI’s membership needs to be revised. This cannot be done here. Hence the question that how the administrators running the website and social media pages plus groups activate the passive associates and mobilize new citizens online to carry forward the message of the JI is, however, raised in the next chapter to arrive at a clear picture of what membership in the JI in reality encompasses.
CHAPTER-6
ONLINE STRATEGY OF THE JAMA’AT-E-ISLAMI AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE JAMA’AT-E-ISLAMI’S TRAJECTORY/DIRECTION

Introduction

This chapter begins with the basic notion that online mobilization strategies of parties bear on their organizations. Hence the JI’s online strategy is explored and its potential impact on the party-member relationship is assessed. Parties, argues Cardenal (2011), suffer from organizational costs, besides others, if they want to mobilize the membership and public online. We know from the previous chapter that the discussion forum on the JI’s website was empty. Moreover, the ‘question answer’ section was dominated by the administrators attempting to soften the image of the party and the polls section with minor activities on them not updated since long. This indicates that in theory the JI empowers the common public in the digital world. However, as was stated by the social media administrator of the JI “website gets a far lower traffic and remains a tool for internal organization than a public one, social media, therefore, are the media of choice as far public communications over the internet are concerned which can be quickly updated many times a day as and when the need arises” (Amjad, 2017). 73 Having known about how the JI social media administrator acknowledges the importance of social media accounts for public relations as compared to their website, this chapter tries to know about the online strategy of the JI first. This is done by reflecting on the message of the JI on Facebook and Twitter accounts as found in chapter 4, target audience, and the way of

73Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad
communicating it. Second, the potential impact of the online strategy of the JI on their membership organization is worked out.

The theoretical guidelines for this chapter are provided by the theory that party-member relationship is shaped by the type of direct channels of communications (Norris, 2005). The framework is aided by Romelle (2003) who theorizes that parties’ online strategies are shaped by various goals parties pursue. This enables us to identify the important markers for organizational change within the JI. Before going into these details, however, it is important to consider the theoretical approaches to the role of communications channels and their impact on the internal dynamics of parties. Moreover, party models provide useful analytical insights into studying the direction of the JI while they use ICTs.

### 6.1 Parties and the role of direct communication channels

Parties’ communications are mostly seen as one-way flow of information to the public. However, in reality parties seek the opinion of the public to discover about their priorities and issue concerns to develop their policies and fine tune their messages in light of the public responses. Thus parties’ communications constitute a two-way, interactive and bottom-up process. Parties can communicate through three main channels viz traditional people intensive channels such as local rallies and door to door campaigns, modern channels such as television broadcasts and internet campaigns. In fact, a decline has been noted in using traditional people intensive channels by the parties in industrial democracies with increasing reliance on television news. This situation resulted into an increased role of professional campaigners and media managers/consultants for parties thereby weakening the role of party members and activists. Since the mid 1990s, however, parties have started
adapting to new ICTs: predominantly party websites, and most recently activist weblogs. These developments have been termed as “rise of political marketing”. Many parties use all these three channels simultaneously. However, the interactive technologies such as the digital media, somehow, provide the parties with the advantages associated with the people intensive communicative channels (Norris, 2005: 6-7).

Nonetheless, parties have not remained immune to organizational changes due to adaptations to various communication channels. In fact their adaptations to different communication channels affected their organizational strategies. There has been a constant modification in the communication channels parties in the industrial democracies used to inform, let the public participate and then get their feedback. For example until 1950s political parties relied on interpersonal, traditional face-to-face communications like rallies, town meeting halls, pamphlets and canvassing etc. This period was characterized with an increased role of the supporters/members/volunteers of the parties in carrying out party communicative functions. While at the beginning of 1960s, the traditional mood of interpersonal communication was succeeded by communicating through television thereby increasing the role of experts, managers and political consultants for communicating with the public. The impact was a centralized communicative function of political parties centered at the political leaders. Finally, since mid-1990s, political parties came across newer ICTs especially internet for political communications. The impact all these three modes of communications have brought with their adaptations by parties bore on party-member or party-volunteer relationship. The traditional people intensive channels resulted in decentralized activities by the volunteer/activists for parties. Adoption of television resulted into national campaigns centered at the leaders thereby increasing reliance on
professionals than the party volunteers/activists. Adaptation to internet also resulted into nationally coordinated campaigns but with decentralized targets using volunteers and paid party workers (Norris, 2005; 2000).

Recent studies show a drastic fall in the party membership in the industrial democracies (Mair & van Biezen, 2001). The decline of the ‘mass party’ is thought of synonymous with the decline of political parties as institutions by some scholars (e.g. Seyd, Whitely & Broughton, 1992). Margetts (2001) argues that the age of ‘mass party’ is often perceived as the golden age for political parties in Britain. The emergence of parties with novel membership strategies are, therefore, of importance to study what constitutes membership in different party types after the decline of the mass party. The emergence of ‘cartel’ (Katz & Mair, 1995), catch-all (Kirchemier, 1996), and cyberparty are types of parties that view the importance of membership differently than the ideal mass party (Margetts, 2001). We know that parties’ direct channels of communications exemplified by town meeting halls, leadership tours, door to door contact and canvassing not only help the parties increase their contacts with the people and thereby conveying their messages to the public, also, such direct communications with the public help the parties in providing them gauging the public preferences and issues. While parties have undergone considerable changes as exemplified by the above typology, yet all the parties have the legitimate reason to claim that they have been focusing on the issue concerns of the public or group of publics, albeit, in different ways. Democracy without including the public or group of publics can thus move away from the participatory nature of politics to parties more of a policy supplying machines. Moreover, such indirect politics can well be blamed for being simply electoral efficiency driven than taking care of the public’s preferences. This can be argued while keeping into account the development of
different communication channels that facilitate parties’ access to the public and vice versa through new interactive ICTs. Though various scholars have worked out on how these parties accumulate public preferences for policy purposes (e.g. Lofgren & Smith, 2003; Ward & Gibson, 2003), this chapter focuses on administering public relations activities by the JI’s activists through internet with a subsequent impact on the JI’s membership. This is because the JI is a hierarchical party which has institutionalized patterns of participation for membership and becoming its full member require several months. This impact can be hypothesized as the decreased emphasis on the ideological zeal of members and expanding the organization of membership in ways different than the formal membership of the JI.

Since the JI use all the above channels, use of internet by them make this enquiry more interesting. This is because the JI with their ideal vanguard strategy relied on the works and activities for all campaigns on the volunteers/activists/members before the advent of television. Logical is to argue that this age constituted decentralized activities by their members/activists for communicating the message of the JI to the public and hence party members had significant importance for the JI. While, we know the sole Television channel, Pakistan Television (PTV) which used to be dominated by the ruling regimes (IMS, 2009), the JI never being the ruling party did not enjoy a desired share in the communications over television. However, internet was quickly adopted by the JI upon its availability in Pakistan. In the following lines, first the online strategies of parties are discussed and then the impact of online communications in terms of party typology and their relationship with the membership is worked out. Exploring about the online strategy of a party helps us know about the priorities of parties evident from their message and the personnel involved in getting it across. Thus who gets
importance in the JI for this function and what potential impact the importance given to such personnel have on the party-membership relationship and participatory mechanisms is the subject of enquiry in this chapter.

The adoption of internet for public communications by parties bear on organizational costs if they want to mobilize the public online since such strategies would clash with their membership recruitment and maintenance. While we know that parties recruit and maintain members strategically, each strategy helps us see how important different parties look at their members for attaining organizational goals (Scarrow, 1994; 1996). These strategies are balanced by keeping into mind two considerations by the parties: (i) rights or private goods provided to the members to influence internal party affairs and aspire for careers, and (ii) the duty to carry out voluntary work for assisting the party in attainment of its goals. The more the membership is considered important for the organization the greater the amount of private goods parties will offer to the members and the higher the barriers to entry into the party. The presence of high barriers to entry into the party may clash with the objective of online mobilization. In contrast, if parties want to encourage online participation from common citizens, they would have to lower these barriers. However, lowering down the barriers may lead to a conflict between maintenance of the formal membership and online mobilization (Cardenal, 2011). Since we know from the previous chapters that the JI allows common citizens to discuss various issues under several topics on their website, this may be considered lowering the barriers of entry into their politics. However, as established in the previous chapter that interactivity on the website is controlled by the administrators, therefore, the seemingly lowered down barriers to entry into the JI seems less conflicting with the membership organization.
6.2 Parties and their membership in the age of new ICTs

Mobilization thesis asserts that internet enables accessibility of information by the common citizens and can therefore increase their activism. Internet, in itself, is a resource (Anduza et al., 2009) that modifies the cost of participation thereby making it possible for the low resourced people to participate in politics. This activism of the passive members due to easy availability and accessibility of information leads to mobilization than reinforcement (Smith, 2010). The thesis is shared by a number of optimists who are positive about the potential role of internet to mobilize the people for political activism thereby making participation for the common citizenry possible. Another debate is related to the internal dynamics of organizations while using ICTs. Question arises as to whether all political parties want participation from their members on the members’ terms or they want to mobilize them towards certain participatory activities on behalf of the parties with policies charted out by the organizational elites? In theory, as dictated by the legal requirements from the state for membership, the legitimacy support that parties draw from mass membership and the financial reliance on them compel parties to retain membership (Gauja 2015). Membership in political parties is not normatively desirable by parties themselves and certainly not by mass parties (Young, 2013). Rather political parties enroll members out of strategic reasons which they believe will give them a competitive electoral advantage – for instance providing resources in the form of monetary and volunteering capacity and as an evidence of broad public support (source of legitimacy) (Faucher, 2014; Scarrow, 2009). Even in some instances of party systems parties may not desire their member to be active e.g. Cartel party where passive and inactive members are more desirable in terms of participation and engagement. This is a party model where state and party interpenetrate with a resultant inter-party
collusion. Parties do not compete lively and the government is often expected to be shared by major established parties. In such a model, participation from members is not encouraged, rather members play servicing roles which in turn in the age of mass media turns to be less important. Cartel parties gain privileged access to state regulated channels of communication. In other words, this party model is characterized by ‘disengagement’ of membership organization from the party. The main ground for this disengagement is the strategic adoption of mass media by cartel parties which facilitates contacts between elites and citizens/voters and reduces their reliance on membership for mobilizing the electorate, as media professionals take on this role by getting across the message of the elite to the electorate/citizens. Furthermore, being in receipt of public funding, they do not rely on membership for financial support. Thus the boundaries between members and voters are blurred while extending some incentives to the few remaining members as individuals and not as an organized collective by servicing roles. (Katz & Mair, 1995). Moreover, in certain party systems such as ‘catch-all parties’ typified by the US parties, the distinction between the party members and common citizens is blurred. This is due to the increased centralization of campaigns and parties acting mainly as campaign organizations in the age of television where professional campaign experts chart out centralized mobilization strategies centered at the leaders (Kircheimer, 1996). Pakistan, as not like advanced industrial democracies with a high divide between those who use television and those not along with the digital divide therefore, provides an arena to the politicians where they can still rely on the old methods of mobilization utilizing their membership’s resources. The members provide these parties the time, financial aid and efforts that can be potentially translated into their parties’ success. Since we also know that internet, in reality, is not an equalizing
medium and creates divides other than the digital ones, in such a situation those who even use internet technologies cannot participate equally. Certain knowledge and technical skills can lead to better participation for some in the information society as compared to others (Castells, 1997). Moreover, some scholars observed that even in the organizations seeking a ‘grassroots strategy’, which emphasize participation than office seeking, influence to those accrues who regularly participate (Lofgren & Smith 2003). It can be argued that parties which follow either a vote or office maximizing strategy will accrue influence to those who are skilled in the information management and who participate regularly. Thus certain actors despite being equal members of parties in theory may get more empowered than others in the digital world.

6.3 What guide the online strategies of parties?

Rommele (2003) theorizes about the online communication contents and strategies of parties with reference to party goals. This she does by building on Deschouwer’s (1992) argument that parties have different goals in different contexts. Deschouwer argues that:

Electoral results are important. But they are not equally important for all parties, and for a single party they do not always have the same importance…..
A party primarily oriented towards political power certainly needs voters, but is not necessarily out of power when it loses. Especially in systems where power is reached through coalition formation, electoral losses can be of little importance (Deschouwer, 1992: 16).

Harmel & Janda (1994) also argue that parties have numerous goals, however each party keeps a primary goal and the primary goal varies among parties and even within a party over time. The literature, in general, identifies four main goals of the
parties: vote maximization, office maximization, representation of the members and policy/ideology advocacy (Strom, 1990).

Building on the above premises that parties have different primary goals and even the primary goal varies within a party over time, Romelle (2003) argues that a party’s primary goal will affect the campaign strategy and the nature of their online political communication. The following lines illustrate how she outlines some online communication models of political parties with reference to their primary goal.

A party with vote maximization as their primary goal will try to attract voters from all societal groups. Such parties do not rely on the predefined groups and interests but try to broaden their party message to the maximum possible audience to grab the undecided voters. Also, such parties do not strictly differentiate between the party members and voters. Vote maximization as a goal can be connected to two party models: catch-all party and the cartel party (Rommele, 2003).

To know how they communicate their message, she argues that broadcasting mainly through new ICTs and a top-down dissemination of information is their dominant communication strategy. The online contents under such a communication strategy emphasizes on leaders and candidates within the party thus leading to a personalizing political communication. Also they push some messages to particular subgroups in the society. Party members and voters are provided same channels of communication, although with some selected fora for members for arguments and debates with easier access to information systems. Vote maximizers also allow their local branches to design their own websites but within centrally authorized guidelines and templates.
While mediating interest (participation of the electorate), if there are any interactive sessions in the form of question-and-answer or chat rooms, the process will be strictly controlled by the party. These sessions are used primarily for gauging public opinion instead of a motivating debate (Lofgren, 2000: 15).

It is in multi-party systems that one can easily recognize between the vote maximizers and office maximizers since it is difficult in two-party systems to distinguish between the two because winning elections in such systems also means controlling the government. Office maximizers are concerned with holding positions in the coalition government. Generally, the online communication strategy of both cannot be differentiated exponentially. With office maximizers too, top down information dissemination remains the principal rule. However, they use a targeted information strategy because they expect to be acceptable to any party in the future coalition. Different segments of the society will be provided with tailored information that might be attractive to them. If already in power, office maximizers might also be aggressive in using ICTs for drawing more attention to them. Within the party, new ICTs will be used for internal communications but will play a minimal role in relations with the members. Such a communication will be focused on public promotion of the website through leaflets, general campaign material or even press conferences for relaunches of the websites (Rommele, 2003).

Parties with intra-party democracy as their primary goal appropriate new ICTs in a participatory manner with the aim of active representation of their members’ wishes. This is because they see themselves accountable to their members rather than the public/electorate at large. In this type of party, politicians are legitimate delegates of well-defined and specified groups. Membership in such parties is closely associated
with all aspects of the member’s life. Members enjoy exclusive rights which cannot be extended to the voters. Though traditional mass party type seems matching to this goal, parties with a grassroots strategy e.g. Green parties can also be accommodated in this model. Such parties adopt a bottom-up communication strategy for seeking and promotion of the members’ input. Members express their interests through participatory channels of communication of the party and hence their demands are paid attention (Rommele, 2003: 14). Such parties establish intra-party electronic fora for debates to aggregate the interests/demands/input and also to provide some top-down directions for members (Lofgren, 2000: 13). The predominant contents of the message would be pertaining to the party program instead of personalized features of candidates or leaders (Rommele, 2003).

As far as policy-seeking parties are concerned, being the least developed model of comparative party behavior (Strom, 1990: 568), the literature says little about such parties (Rommele, 2003). Citing Budge and Keman (1990), Rommele argues that policy-seeking parties unlike the office-seeking parties must emphasize the parties’ concern not on important ministries but ministries within the particular areas of their interest. The communication strategy of such parties will be to disseminate one message across with the consequence for ICT strategy as using it for informing a broad audience along with targeted groups. The message primarily will be policy oriented than being concentrated on leaders and candidates. If a candidate is highlighted, he/she must be having an expert knowledge on the concerned policy matter.

The above classification of parties’ online strategies based on party goals can, however, be thought of as ideal ones. That is because the division of party models
cannot be based on parties as pursuing one of these goals e.g. vote maximizing, office seeking, representation of members or policy seeking. In reality parties pursue a mix of all these goals (Strom, 1990). In the case of the JI one can see how they are interlocked among these goals.

6.4 Online Strategy of the JI

The online strategy of any party can best be explained by three aspects of online activities: composition of the message, target audience and the way of communicating with the target audience (Rommele, 2003). To find the JI’s online strategy, we can sum it up in the following sections:

6.4.1 Predominant contents of the message

We know from chapter 4 that the domain that got the highest number of arguments on Facebook and Twitter was that of political activism. The JI targeted the issue of corruption the most in this domain followed by accountability of the “corrupt” politicians. However, as an alternative they presented their leadership which comprises handsome part of ‘visibility’ domain. The ‘visibility’ domain ranked second on both the social media platforms as well. The domain that ranked third on Facebook was that of ‘Islamic Ideology’ while on Twitter ‘External Relations’. The ‘Islamic Ideology’ domain received 136 arguments in contrast to 153 arguments that the domain ‘External Relations’ got on Twitter. The reason ‘Islamic Ideology’ lagged behind the ‘External Relations’ domain was the absence of verses from the Holy Quran and Ahadith regarding general religiosity from the latter on Twitter. We also know from chapter 4 that JI in their ‘Islamic Ideology’ domain, ranking third on Facebook, emphasized the Islamization of society in comparison to that of the state. It can be argued that the JI’s performative articulations on social media did not conform
to their original ideology and attested to Amin’s (2016) post-Islamism observed in the JI. Moreover, I noticed very few arguments in favor of populism e.g. arguments against feudal/capitalists (10 times on twitter and 17 times on Facebook), negative mention of privatization terming it as “ruthless privatization” 3 (Twitter only), in favor of *roti-kapra-makan* (bread-clothing-shelter) 2 (on Twitter only), and demanding farmers’ rights 8, demanding labor rights 6 (on Facebook only). The domains that topped both the social network platforms was ‘Political Activism’ dominated by arguments against corruption (140 on Facebook and 123 on Twitter). Thus the message of the JI on social media is a post-Islamist and more of a catch-all (which appeals to broader electorate than targeting social groups e.g. labors, farmers etc) besides being a bit popular instead of narrowly ideological one. It projects the catch-all slogan of corruption the most coupled by the honest leadership of the JI as an alternative.

### 6.4.2 Target audience of the online message

According to the social media and IT administrators of the JI’s message is as follows:

We call the youth towards our ideology than mere political party or personalities. Our message for youth is to come with us to get both the successes of this world and the hereafter. Because youth is always the vanguard of change so we offer them a more transparent leadership, stronger structure, and party with a stronger accountability mechanism. And because
the corrupt leadership cannot bring change, so we are the one to have a corruption free leadership who can lead the youth to change” (Amjad, 2017).74

The JI’s message is based on the one which given by Allah. The JI believes that justice, development and progress can only be ensured by Islamic System and for that the JI strives. Because youth is always the vanguard of any organization or movement, therefore, the JI emphasizes youth and for that purpose the JI has organized youth under the umbrella of JI Youth. We have successfully conducted intra elections within JI Youth and hundreds of thousands of youth have joined us (Zaman, 2017).75

To know about the target of the message of the JI, we can derive from the above quotes that their target is the youth on social media who are avid users of online technologies. Also as stated earlier, youth constitute 64% of Pakistan’s population. To get across their message on Facebook and Twitter to the maximum number of the youth, the JI (i) target popular political issue in which the youth is interested and probably getting suffered from, and (ii). sticks to the religious cover but not in the narrow sense of their ideology. Since the JI needs more and more support to gain electoral victory, a narrow focus on ideology of the JI in the online spaces may lead to reinforcement than mobilization as the apathetic would selectively expose him/herself to information befitting his/her mindset (Norris, 2003). Therefore, the JI emphasizes on continuing their popular and post-Islamist articulations on the online social networking platforms. The JI broadens their message at the cost of a narrow one based on their original ideology. It can be argued that the JI’s online message is also aimed at targeting the youth.

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74 Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad
75 Interview with Mian Muhammad Zaman
6.4.3 The way of communicating the online message of the JI

While the JI targets the youth online, no vertical interactivity was noticed with the common public (youth) on their social network accounts. The message was found a top-down without vertical interactivity. Questions asked by the citizens in the form of comments on posts from the official accounts were never answered by the administrators. Some horizontal interactivity took place among the visitors of the posts where sometimes a “seemingly” the JI’s supporter or a “neutral” person replied to the questions or negative remarks by others. As far as interactivity between leaders and activists/members/supporters is concerned in the closed official group ‘Jamat e Islami’ on Facebook and other on whatsapp, they never replied to the comments/questions from activists/members because involvement in huge on the ground activities and hence lack of time (Naseem, 2017; Aziz, 2017; Butt, 2017; Wasi, 2017). 76 The way of communication was mostly top-down with some interactivity between the social media administrators and digital activists where mostly various campaigns’ strategies are charted out in consultation with these activists dispersed regionally and locally (Amjad, 2017; Zaman, 2017). 77

6.5 The potential impact of official online activists of the JI on the formal membership

In the case of Jama'at-e-Islami of Pakistan, I hypothesize that they will need more activism from the digitally skilled than those associates who carry out offline activities for the JI. This is because the JI’s articulations on social media are catch-all focused on the political issue of corruption the most in contrast to what their ideational framework dictates i.e. the creation of an Islamic state. Also projection of

76 Interviews with Rashid Naseem; Abdul Ghaffar Aziz – In-charge Foreign Affairs of the JI, Mansoorah; Bilal Qudrat Butt – Secretary General, the JI Punjab; and Abdul Wasi

77 Interviews with Shamsuddin Amajd and Mian Muhammad Zaman
the JI’s leadership as an alternative for emancipation means most of the activities will be focusing on the leadership. The JI with a more reactionary campaign (criticizing the elites of other parties to be corrupt) than a prescriptive and pro-active one (ideational framework of the JI centered at creating an Islamic state and hence ideology) is, therefore, moving away from a ‘vanguard/holy community’ approach towards strengthening the leadership’s political position. A more catch-all and bit popular appeal to the electorate with projection of the JI as an alternative for emancipation points towards the significance of political empowerment of the leadership through a vote support among the electorate. The emphasis on building a ‘holy community’ by the JI (Nasr, 1994; 1996), therefore, tends to be reversed, or at least tilting to empower the leadership without the ideological rigor of its “saliheen” (the virtuous) constituting an important part of the ‘vanguard’ approach. A member of the JI during an informal discussion informed me that the JI recently conducted an experiment of ‘shamuliati program’: a program which is usually intended to publicize a party by inviting outsiders often containing influential people and ordinary voters of a locality to join a political party. The experiment was severely criticized by many of the JI’s formal members and other associates thereby articulating their demands to the JI for maintaining the discipline of the party (Ahmad, 2017). This, in fact, shows how the JI’s leadership has been attempting to change the formal praxis of the JI: a move away from the ‘holy community’ approach to a mass based organization of the JI. In fact the JI’s leadership is recruited from its formal membership. If the JI allows influential people to come to the party bypassing the formal mechanism of attaining a leadership position on the hierarchies of JI, it evidently clashes with the membership’s incentives ensured by the formal scheme of its hierarchical membership organization.

78 An informal discussion with Zahid Ahmad – a member of the JI and ex-nazim of IJT at the University of Peshawar.
Nonetheless, other attempts, though indirect, have been made by the JI to popularize its leadership successfully. The formation of Pasban, then Shabab-e-Milli (when Qazi Hussain Ahmad was in the office of the Amir) and finally JI Youth attests to such attempts on part of JI’s leadership. JI Youth in fact is a more popular wing of the common youth where candidature for elections to various posts during internal elections is allowed contrary to an understanding by Mawdudi that offering one’s own candidature is the first sign of the candidate’s disqualification (Moten, 2003).

The website of JI Youth displays on its front page “nawjawanon! Sirajul Haque ko aapka i’temad chaheyea!” (Youth! Sirajul Haque needs your trust in him! (exclamation signs original))”. On the up-right side of the page is only the photo of Sirajul Haque. All these attempts at projecting the leadership figure the most instead of the ideological message of JI did not begin with the advent of Sirajul Haque to the position of the Amir (president). Rather JI has used such slogans related to personalities of the leaders like the one in the Qazi Hussain Ahmad’s time “Zalimo Qazi Aaraha Hai” (O, the wrongdoers, Qazi is coming) (Ali, 2018) instead of projecting their ideology in the public.

The above discussion helps us explore the underlying power dynamics between the formal membership and the official digital activists and hence their impact on the structure of the JI. It is, however, necessary to look at the power that the decentralized nature of digital media can vest into the hands of the formal ‘digital activists’ of the JI. A first problem, arising out of handing over the job of publicizing

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79 Offering one’s candidature can only be done for posts under the district level administrator post.

80 Though Mawdudi had discarded that principle when the JI decided to participate in elections while offering their candidates’ candidature to the public, it was on the basis of “preferring the lesser evil” that the JI did so. Internally, the JI in its elections yet sticks to this principle by nominating few candidates by the Shura and then put before the membership for election (Nasr 1994).
the leadership to the ‘digital activists’ is the issue of control. The leadership would
tend to keep under control the activism of these activists while letting them participate
on behalf of the JI. Hence, the JI’s elites will try to devise a mechanism to keep their
activism as desired by the leadership. This will lead to an activism that can produce
and provide information on a mass media style. If any interactivity is allowed, the
contours of such activism will be provided by traditional elites. In such a situation the
broader parameters of online activism are charted out by the traditional elites of the JI.
Persons who are awarded leadership position in online activism must be bound by the
traditional elites’ policy decisions. This being a discipline measure, a tradition that is
associated with centralized parties, further empowers the leadership. The history of
the JI shows that it has kept intact membership control mechanisms. The replacement
of the categories of ‘Mutatahhir’ and ‘Mutta’arif’ with the single category of
‘affiliate’ by Mawdudi to tackle the problem of discipline in the JI (Nasr 1994) is an
example.

The social media platforms being used by the digital natives, majority of them
young, dictates the JI to convey their message to the youth residing in these virtual
spaces. We also found in the fourth chapter that the JI’s message is a catch-all and
post-Islamist one paying huge concentration on the issue of material corruption and its
leadership as the alternative for emancipation besides focusing on the issues of
general Islamicity instead of creating an Islamic state. Logical is to argue that the JI
need activists/volunteers/workers that possess the know-how of how to operate the
digital technologies effectively to convey the JI’s message to the online youth and
gauge public opinion. Since website is rarely accessed by the apathetic, social media
are the platforms of choice for the JI to convey their message to the online youth who
are not associated with the JI. On enquiring about the importance of the
communications with the youth over the internet for the JI, the social media administrator replied, “youth is considered as the vanguard of change and that is why we focus on the youth these days the most. We believe that we can reach them through social media which typify an important arena for political activism and news” (Amjad, 2017). This statements show how much emphasis the JI lays on the social media than website. The JI’s social media accounts on the popular platforms of Facebook and Twitter were found to be updated several times a day as compared to its website. Since we have already carried out a content analysis of the JI’s social media messages, in this chapter I hypothesize that the composition of the JI’s message and hence those who are officially tasked with promoting the message in the online social network sites may bear on the strategic importance of official membership of the JI.

The literature is explicit about the fact that the JI needed a vanguard of the committed “saliheen” (virtuous) and ideologically motivated members for promoting the message of the JI for creating an Islamic state (e.g. Nasr 1994). However, with more of a catch-all and post-Islamist message by the JI, we can imagine the importance of a workforce that can promote this message in the online spaces effectively as a priority of the JI. This does not mean that the JI will rely totally on cyber activists for the attainment of the goal of maximizing support. However, the youth utilizing much of their leisure time online may not be available to the offline workers in the physical spaces to whom the message of the JI can be communicated. Cyber activists get an importance in such a situation. Also, in reality the JI leaders do not want to create an Islamic state but rather tend to Islamize the society instead as evident from their print media articulations (Amin, 2016) and as found in chapter 4 of this study. This situation, coupled with attempts to extend the JI’s sphere of influence

81 Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad.
might decrease emphasis on the ideological zeal of the members. Institutionalizing new mechanisms of participation in the JI’s politics, though indirectly as exemplified by the formation of JI Youth and JI’s target of recruiting five million affiliates (Ullah, 2014; Moten, 2003: 129), means less emphasis on the ideological commitment required from the participants.

It can be derived from the discussion in chapter 4, 5 and as outlined above that the JI's online strategy is more or less shaped by three goals: vote maximization, office seeking and representation of members. Rommele (2003) argues that broadcasting mainly through new ICTs and a top-down dissemination of information is the dominant communication strategy of vote maximizers. The online contents under such a communication strategy emphasizes on leaders and candidates within the party thus leading to a personalizing political communication. Also they push some messages to particular subgroups in the society. Party members and voters are provided same channels of communication, although with some selected fora for members for arguments and debates with easier access to information systems.

While mediating interest (participation of the electorate and members) by such parties, Lofgren (2000: 15) argues that if there are any interactive sessions in the form of question-and-answer or chat rooms, the process will be strictly controlled by the party. These sessions are used primarily for gauging public opinion instead of a motivating debate. The use of professionals by parties from United States is an example of how importance these professionals have gained. This shows how parties in the age of new ICTs can value those activists, if not professionals, who possess the abilities to help the leaders devise effective campaign strategies and possibly gauge public opinion through cheaper media such as the internet. Permanent campaigning in
the age of new ICTs (Farrell & Webb, 2000; Norris, 2005) further helps us argue that such activists get more importance.

Since the JI “mobilizes” some activists by handing over the job of carrying out online public relations, a need arises to have an understanding about the JI’s official social media activists and their organization.

6.6 Social Media Team of the JI and their activities

Shamsuddin Amjad is an activist and member of Jamaat for long. He has done dawra-e-hadees (a diploma awarded to students completing the prescribed curriculum of studying Ahadith (sing. Hadith, narrations and tradition of the Holy Prophet) in madrassas. He has also achieved modern education and possesses BA (considered graduation in Pakistan). He is in the field of sahafat (journalism) since 2001 and was the Mudir (editor) of weekly magazine “Idarat” of Jamiat Talba Arabia (JTI, madrassas based students wing of the JI). Then he joined Lahore information office branch of the JI and finally came to the central office. When Social Media department got separated from the Information Department in 2011, he has been heading it since that time. Moreover, 99.9% workers working in the social media department of the JI's headquarters are also activists of JI and not paid workers (Amjad, 2017). According to the Social Media head of JI and IT Incharge of Punjab chapter JI, they have list of digital activists who are dispersed regionally and locally. They draw support in their online activism from these activists, especially, in times of running various campaigns such as celebrating Haya Day (a day celebrated in reaction to Valentine’s Day on every February 14), promotion of Urdu language, anti-corruption campaign etc. Any activity that is deemed necessary to be advocated online by the JI's

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82 Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad
leadership is communicated to the regional and local level activists by the Social Media department of the JI (Amjad, 2017; Zaman, 2017). During my field visit to Mansoorah, I also saw the assistance of Mian Muhammad Zaman (IT Head Punjab Chapter) with the social media department who work out things in close collaboration due to Punjab chapter of JI being located in the Mansoorah headquarters. This shows a tightly coordinated mechanism of digital communications with respect to organizational and public relations by the JI. They have central, regional and local social media departments. However, the social media departments do not work in a strict hierarchical passion as far as administering campaigns are concerned. Rather campaign strategies are discussed with any activist occupying position in any of these locations. It is more of a networked communication than hierarchical. The significance of social media to the JI lies in the fact that it was separated from the ‘Information Department’ of JI to work for publicizing the JI. Nevertheless, the positional elites, using its headquarters’ social media department set the agenda for campaigns for publicity. Consequently, the social media department copies the agenda in the group “Jamaat e Islami” on Facebook primarily thereby determining the direction of campaigns. The activists from the regional and local branches aid the central social media department within these parameters. They have also a Whatsapp group for activists where the Social Media team discusses the strategies for such campaigns with each other (ibid). Thus, it can be argued that the online campaigning strategies are devised in a networked manner within online groups but their agenda remains primarily centralized.

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83 Interviews with Shamsuddin Amjad and Mian Muhammad Zaman.
84 Ibid.
6.7 Catch-allism, JI and the digital activists

How the parties carry out public relations and organizational activities can best be explained by the following:

Parties communicate with the aim of informing, persuading, and mobilizing public opinion. They provide the public with information about their policies, leadership, activities, and principles and also seek to persuade the public and thereby influence favorable attitudes toward their issue concerns, records, and policy proposals. Parties aim to mobilize members, activists, and electors, as well, to “get out the vote” and to generate support through fundraising, recruiting volunteers, and expanding memberships (Norris, 2005).

Whereas this statement tells us much about how parties work by gaining the legitimacy to represent the people in democracies, nonetheless, one consideration is important with regard to JI: the rise of the official digital experts transformed the nature of the vanguard that carried out JI activities offline. The JI, broadly speaking, tends to become a “new vanguard” – which I deem as the combination of the JI's traditional/positional leadership leading a less-ideological formal membership organization and ‘digital-activists’ towards the attainment of goals set forth by a post-Islamist and catch-all organization of JI. A decrease in the intensity of ideological commitment sought from full members or associates by the JI may thus be considered a natural corollary. In fact, the JI has set new targets for recruiting affiliates (muttafiqeen, sing. muttafiq) amounting to five million (Moten, 2003:130; Ullah, 2014). The large number of recruiting affiliates can benefit the JI by providing a potential voting support to the JI in the first place. Second, it can increase JI’s legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Thirdly, many of them can be assigned party
work e.g. to mobilize the citizens for voting the JI in the offline world. During an informal discussion with an active member of the JI, Zahid Ahmad stated that the criteria for becoming a JI’s full member have also got loosened as compared to its earlier ideal vanguard strategy (Ahmad, 2017).

Though Moten’s (2003) investigation of transformation in JI stands correct in as far as studying JI until Qazi Hussain Ahmad’s times. This view claimed that the organizational strategy of the JI being a vanguard of Islamic revolution (Nasr, 1994) is over and replaced with a mass revolutionary strategy (Moten, 2003). However, I argue that this development ahead of the populism does not go linear. Rather, JI has adopted more of a catch-all approach in the present times of Sirajul Haque being the Amir of JI. This, most probably, did not happen without solid reasons. In practice the JI's performative articulations studied from news papers have undergone a shift from being Islamist towards post-Islamist in nature (Amin, 2016) and as also found so from their online performative articulations in chapter 4. According to Amin (2016) post-Islamism is “an emergent intellectual-social response to internal and external socio-political and economic conditions but primarily a quest for “truth” embedded in epistemological uniqueness, with a focus to idealize and create a democratic culture, state and society, and re-Islamization of it through reformation of individual behavior rather than shariah enforcement and Islamization of state.” Thus the change in objectives (set forth in the post-Islamist message) can be termed a teleological shift. A corresponding change in the praxis, by transforming the JI from an ideal vanguard strategy into a mass revolutionary one and then a catch-all, may thus be considered a natural

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85An informal discussion with a JI’s member - Zahid Ahmad, Peshawar.
consequence under the changed telos.\textsuperscript{86} Since changing environment in terms of information and communications and the ensuing ways of public relations for political parties bear on their strategies of internal organizations (Norris, 2005), one should expect, in the case of the JI too, a potential impact of the internet on their internal organization. As outlined above, the social media department of the JI aided by its regional through to local level social media departments pushing forward the message set forth by the leaders constitute an integral part of the JI’s ‘new vanguard’ and hence hints at a new praxis. Reliance on the offline activists is not enough, though yet significant. In fact, the message is needed to be pushed at the online youth by the digital activists constituting an important part of the “new vanguard”. The digital constituents of the “new vanguard” are still under the control of the positional elites. The positional elites solidify their power through publicity by relaying their message to the online common youth through the motivated and “faithful” official social media activists of the positional leadership. In reply to one of my questions, the JI’s leaders acknowledged the projection of its leadership, mainly Sirajul Haque – the current Amir of JI, and such an emphasis was described by its leaders as equivalent to advancing the message of the JI (Naseem, 2017; Aziz, 2017; Wasi, 2017).\textsuperscript{87} The careful use of internet by these digital activists with a significant control by the positional/traditional elites in the JI attests to further concentration of powers within the positional elites of the JI against their formal membership. The decentralized ethos of internet in the official public relations and internal communications of JI can be termed as subject to centralized ethos of the JI for strengthening the positional elites

\textsuperscript{86} According to Merriam Webster the world \textit{telos} is of Greek origin which means an “ultimate end”. I use the world in the context of the new goals set by Jamaat under its discourse of post-Islamism contrary to the Islamist goal of enforcing Shariah.

\textsuperscript{87} Answer to my question, during field interviews, by the Jamaat leaders, Rashid Naseem, Abdul Ghaffar Aziz, and Abdul Wasi
further. As a corollary the interactivity in the closed group on Facebook ‘Jamat e Islami’ was a controlled one by the central social media administrators. Also the articulations for the public were top down in nature devoid of interactivity with the public from the administrators’ as well as leadership’s side. Some interactivity takes place within the closed group “Jamaat e Islami” on Facebook for internal debates, as already pointed out, but such debates are focused primarily on how to administer campaigns within the already fixed parameters set forth by the central social media team at Mansoorah who work in close collaboration with the traditional leadership. Party messages in the form of digital pamphlets, banners and leaflets besides videos of the leadership are shared in the group the most intended to be readily propagated by the activists (Amjad, 2017). A reliance on the ‘digital activists’ potentially forms an important part of JI’s catch-all public relations strategy. Such a reliance on the ‘digital activists’ may not cause a radical shift in the membership organization of JI. However the current online strategy, with the passage of time as the digital divide gets narrower and the need for digital activism dictated by a catch-all praxis rises, may reduce the importance of relying on the formal ideological members who mobilize the electorate both during peace times as well as elections by holding gatherings and distributing pamphlets, books, journals, and door to door canvassing etc. Hence the digital activists may get new powers as compared to the formal ideological membership who carry out offline activities for the JI. Logical is to argue, that the digital activists will be chosen from among the JI’s associates who agree with the policies of the leadership. A public relations strategy that depicts a post-Islamist

88 Emphasis on projection of a popular message along with popularizing the leadership was found in chapter 4. The contents studied did not show any interactivity between the Facebook and Twitter administrators of the JI and the online users. Horizontal interactivity among the common people along besides some supporters was noted in the form of comments and replies.

89 Interview with Shamsuddin Amjad.
message in the performative articulations of the JI’s leadership in contrast to the JI’s ideational framework (Islamist), therefore, raises the importance of those digital activists who agree to the leadership’s policy decisions rather than JI’s ideology. Ideological zeal to lead the party may be considered secondary in such a situation. Digital activists will be thought of more important to accede success to the JI during the era of continuous or permanent campaigns enabled by the internet technologies (Farrell & Webb, 2000; Norris, 2005). It cannot, however, be argued that the JI will reduce its membership size. Rather membership is important for several reasons. Drawing the so-called ‘legitimacy’ benefit besides financial donations and servicing roles are always important for parties for their functioning which contribute to their resilience factor. However, if this strategy is continued, a further decrease in emphasis on the ideological commitment of members may result out of this strategy in the future. Moreover, an increase in the importance of leadership than JI’s ideology in their articulations on social media may arise.

6.8 Difference in impact of strategies on membership: Qazi Hussain Ahmad and Sirajul Haque’s tenures

Qazi Hussain’s is considered to have steered JI into popular politics the most. On securing his position being the Amir (president) of JI, he toured the country for about 40 days launching a massive ‘mass contact’ program. This campaign emphasized the widening of the JI’s base by inviting people to join it contrary to JI’s hitherto stand on the restricted membership comprising the committed “saliheen” (virtuous). This ‘mass contact program’ represented a consumerist approach aimed at securing electoral victory as the JI had not been performing well electorally. His vocabulary was lettered with the words “feudal”, “class”, “masses”, and “liberation” – words usually associated with left leaning intellectuals (Moten, 2003: 101). This
strategy, however, was not spared by the critics within JI’s leadership. They felt that “this might lead to the dilution and corruption of the nucleus of core workers that Jama’at-e-Islami had so painstakingly built over the years” (quoted in Moten 2003: 108). The major implications of this strategy, however, have not been documented.

The impact that this strategy had on JI’s membership organization, as foreseen by the critics within JI, was obvious: it resulted into broadening the membership base at the cost of ideological orientation of its original membership. Sirajul Haque’s strategy meets Qazi Hussain’s at this point in terms of their implications over the ideological commitment of JI’s membership. Though some earlier pragmatism in the electoral periods has been recorded with JI during the tenure of Mawdudi and his predecessor Mian Tufail, yet both these leaders were very much concerned with the ideological commitment of JI’s membership for no Islamic movement, according to them, would succeed in realizing the goal of Islamization without such a base. The beginning of Qazi’s tenure marks a departure from this approach. As a result he transformed JI from a top-down Islamist revolutionary strategy into a bottom-up mass revolutionary strategy.

This strategy implies de-emphasizing the ideological commitment in favor of general Islamicity and struggle for democracy with the support of the masses and not JI’s original limited membership forming its vanguard. Amin’s (2016) account based on these premises argued that JI has been transformed from an Islamist movement into a post-Islamist one. His findings are based on studying JI’s articulations in news papers from 1987 to 2006, which meet the ascendency of Qazi Hussain to the office of the Amir (president) of JI. Qazi Hussain was elected Amir of JI in 1987 and was re-elected four times until 2008. However, Moten (2003) observed Qazi’s tenure with a
different angle and argued that JI had been transformed from a vanguard into a mass revolutionary movement during his tenure. He has focused on the rhetoric of Qazi Hussain being littered with the words “feudal”, “class”, “masses”, and “liberation and his initiatives to broaden the support base of JI through economically popular slogans. Both these studies give a good starting point to analyze the impact of these strategies on JI’s membership organization and then compare it with the current strategy of Sirajul Haque in this regard.

The impact of Qazi Hussain’s populist and post-Islamist strategy can, in the first place, be related to de-emphasizing the ideological orientation of JI’s membership. The same can be said about JI’s strategy under the tenure of Sirajul Haque as has been investigated in this research from JI’s online articulations. However, there is a departure between the impacts of these strategies when it comes to discerning power relations between the leadership and membership. In Qazi’s strategy, power was, although, being accumulated at the center by creating the personality cult of the leadership in lieu of the ideology. Yet it can be argued that Qazi’s strategy needed him and his like-minded leadership to contact the people in the physical spaces as evident from his ‘mass contact’ program at periodic intervals. JI’s activists, under Qazi’s strategy, had a more significant importance for the party. On the other hand Sirajul Haque along with his sub-ordinate leadership is projected in the online spaces continuously by the official social media activists thereby creating the personality cult of JI’s leadership. As a corollary, power is centralized at the leadership, albeit, in a different way. A small number of official social media activists ranging from center to provincial to district to local level are mobilized in a controlled

90 Mian Tufail, the preceding Amir (president) of the JI, had blamed Qazi Hussain’s strategy for creating the personality cult of leader at the cost of ideology of the JI (as stated in chapter 3).
way to do this job, as outlined above. This does not mean that JI no more views mass contacts in physical spaces important, rather, the point here is that JI tries to reinforce the patterns of centralization of power at the leadership, albeit, with another but different type of mobilization: the small number of official social media activists are mobilized to do this job besides the on-the-ground activists. With the passage of time as the digital divide gets narrower, JI may find it more suitable to invest more and more into mobilizing a smaller number of online activists or even in the extreme case professional campaigners to project its leadership and their message without the need for mobilizing its on-the-ground membership. JI’s current online strategy reflects that the leadership is cautious of losing control over the discipline of JI in case it mobilizes its formal membership and common people online. Therefore, JI resorts to a controlled mobilization of a smaller group of official online activists who try to concentrate power at the center primarily at the cost of the membership organization. The popularity of online social networks and more and more people going into online spaces in their leisure times might push JI into mobilization of online activists at the cost of the mobilization of the membership.

**Conclusion**

Taking into consideration the findings from the previous two chapters and the discussion above, it is argued that JI’s online strategy was focused on persuading the electorate for supporting them being honest and corruption free besides being Islamic too. The provisions for engagement on the JI’s website for the common public are symptomatic of empowering them. Yet, these provisions are far beyond conducting direct politics in practice. The popularity of Facebook and Twitter may be termed as one reason to explain the lack of engagement through JI’s website as more and more traffic of the youth is attracted by these platforms thereby leaving behind the necessity.
to go through their website. Yet, there are other reasons for the lack of the “real” online engagement from the youth through website: JI is not involved in interactive discussions over the social media platforms too. If JI involves in online human-to-human interactivity (Stromer-gelley, 2000), it might lose control over pursuing over its more or less intact\(^9\) top-down policy of conducting politics.

The official digital activists are empowered but within certain limits as outlined above. This can be termed as controlled mobilization of the official digital activists by JI as not all mobilizing practices lead to better participation (Anduza et al., 2009). From the perspective of a party and hence JI, it can be argued that its membership is no more strictly as strategic as was before the advent of interactive social media platforms and hence needed to be redefined. Thus it can be divided into two categories: (i) the strategic and (ii) adaptation to official and unofficial elitist and digital membership. The former is in the form of a de-emphasized ideological zeal from the full members (as it appears, no Islamic state is going to be erected by JI) and official digital activists besides its affiliates and sympathizers. The category of sympathizers gets more diversity and hence those who like and share the message of JI online also happen to come under this category. They are members being pushed for getting across the catch-all and post-Islamist message of the leadership and, by implication, moving to converge at the category of affiliates and sympathizers in terms of the servicing roles. The latter is accommodative resulting into emergence of ‘new elites’ who by their interest but lose affiliation with JI and with an elitist nature influence JI’s decisions at the central level through online platforms e.g. members of Ahbab Discourse Forum.

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\(^9\) I term it ‘more or less intact’ just because we have noticed an elitist bottom-up influence on policy decisions through virtual forum ‘Ahbab Discourse Forum.’
CHAPTER-7

CONCLUSION

So what?

This research tried to investigate the potential challenges and opportunities related with the use of internet by Jama’at-e-Islami of Pakistan for extending its sphere of influence among the youth online. Since JI’s original audience in Pakistan comprises a small portion of its population, targeting them online would tantamount to reinforcement than mobilization. However, trying for creating an Islamic state through democratic means dictates that JI extends its sphere of influence. Nevertheless, the approximately 64% youth comprising majority of Pakistani population, their interest in utilizing their leisure time in the online spaces and JI’s aspiration to mobilize them online bear significant implications for JI. Moreover, as JI utilizes online technologies for their political communications, it was necessary to know as to how JI’s membership organization can be affected while using these technologies.

For this purpose it was mandatory first to explore the online strategy of JI. To do so, I borrow from Rommele (2003) according to which the online strategy of a party consists of three dimensions: contents of the message, target audience, and the way the message is communicated to the target audience. This was done while studying the online articulations of JI on popular social network sites – the Facebook and Twitter as several studies suggest that the website of a political party attracts very little traffic usually the supporters than the common people. This was confirmed by the social media administrator of the JI as well. Further, JI’s social media administrator also highlighted the importance the online social network sites carry for
them as compared to their website which is more of a tool for the organization. Exploring the online articulations of JI, in the first place, ended into findings that did not support the idea that JI strives for an Islamic state as would be dictated by their ideational platform. It was found that JI’s message was more of a catch-all nature with post-Islamist and politically popular contents than being an Islamist one as dictated by their ideology. Moreover, it emphasized the projection of personalities typified by the leadership instead of ideology of JI. The message on the online social networks corresponded to the findings of Amin’s (2016) post-Islamist and Moten’s (2003) revolutionary strategy of the JI, albeit, with politically popular contents the most. Another finding that this research came across and which was so far out of the researchers’ sight was the projection of the top leadership as if they were personification of JI’s ideology. These findings were further attempted to be correlated with the efficiency of online mobilization efforts by JI. As the existing literature tells us that narrowly ideological messages online lead to bonding and hence reinforcement of the beliefs of the existing supporters, it is argued here that a relatively catch-all cum Islamic message helps the JI traverse the bonding nature of internet thereby bridging the gap between the JI and common youth. Such a message potentially helps project the JI online and mobilizes the apathetic youth who did not take interest in JI because of JI’s strictly ideological articulations.

From this situation we can understand that to convey the message of JI to the maximum number of youth online, activists or professionals are needed who can convey the message to the maximum number of people effectively. For JI this task is being performed by their digital activists and not hired professionals. The biggest constraints which the corporate media of Pakistan pose for the JI are in terms of incapacity of JI to put off with the costs associated with political marketing and the
filtering mechanisms on these media. In this situation media which are less expensive and can be used by JI on its “own terms” get importance for the JI. ICTs and especially the social media are such media. In the age of internet technologies this task is being performed by the social media department for the JI, comprising the central social media department through to provincial to district to local levels. Nevertheless, a tendency to rely on the mobilizing potentials of such activists online creates some challenges. The most important challenge considered by this research was to know how the positional elites and the membership organization of JI will be affected if JI wants to mobilize online since its structure is hierarchical besides being leading a vanguard – the “virtuous” and “ideological” activists on which the formal edifice of JI is based.

The online strategy of JI on the one hand is trying to consolidate the position of the elites, on the other uses a team of digital activists for this task who further impact the importance of strategic membership for ideological purposes. It was found that the mobilization of the official social media activists, comprising the central through to regional to district to local level, was a controlled one conforming to the policy decisions of the positional elites of JI. They relay the preferences and articulations of the positional elites on the online social network sites by posting their quotes, the essence of their speeches, their images with titles as ‘honest and corruption free’ besides running various campaigns in conformity with their agenda. The designing of the campaigns are then decided by the central social media department, albeit, in coordination with the regional, district and lower level social media official activists. These lower level activists provide support in designing the contents and campaigns and other areas helpful for effective targeting. Overall, it was found that these official digital activists who are mobilized within the agenda set forth by the positional elites
contribute to centralizing or concentrating powers in the positional elites while utilizing online technologies on behalf of JI. This is because the projection of a catch-all message (as in contrast to JI’s ideology) accompanied by the projection of the leadership as honest (again contrary to emphasizing ideology) is against the ideational framework (Islamist and hence ideological) and the interests/wishes of the “committed” plus “ideological” membership. Propagating such a message by the social media official activists helps us argue that this strategy concentrates power in the positional elites and tends to de-emphasize the ideological rigor of its strategic membership (see chapters 4 and 6).

Moreover, an attempt to mobilize the common youth online was noticed with a catch-all message prioritizing issues like general religiosity (religious populism as a proselytizing movement like Tablighi Jama’at in Pakistan would do) and the political activism for ending material corruption accompanied by projection of “honest” and “corruption free” personalities (positional elites) of the JI. Though a forum for discussion is provided on website of JI, yet in practice it was found empty of discussions. The forum was, instead, dominated by the JI’s administrators trying to soften the image of JI against the charges usually leveled against JI regarding violence. Some other interactive features such as polls section did not attract significant traffic and included questions aimed at discerning public opinion (see chapter 5). I argue that JI, with a broader and Islamic message, tries to extend its sphere of influence online. This non-ideological message helps activate the interest of a broader range of the youth online to like and share such material. These attempts, nevertheless, on the one hand empower the common youth online with a message that coincides with the mindset of their majority, on the other empowers the leadership by affirming their position through popularity thereby performing both these tasks
relatively at the cost of the membership organization. Mobilizing the common public online thus creates challenge for JI as such a strategy, which empowers the youth with a new message thereby potentially transforming them into activists, clashes with the ideological commitment and importance of the members for the organization for an ideological purpose. However, those members who strive for JI’s electoral victory at any cost may face no problem in this regard as formal membership is yet the source from which JI recruits its leadership and administrative officials at various levels.

The above discussion shows that the online strategy so far doubly impacts JI’s membership organization. That is, the official social media activists, with a less ideological and more political zeal required on their part besides their conformity with the agenda of the positional elites, gain importance for propagating the message of JI at the cost of the “ideological” commitment of the formal membership. On the other, attempts at mobilizing the common youth online again gives the “ideological” and on-the-ground membership the impression that their traditional on-the-ground activism (offline) with an ideological zeal is not that required as compared to an activism performed with political zeal.

Further, it was found that the positional elites, who enjoy the privilege of decision making due to their position on the upper hierarchies of JI and whose position is attempted to be consolidated by the official social media activists, are to some extent impacted in terms of losing their grip over the policy decisions at the hands of some former IJT members. Ahbab Discourse Forum, a forum on Facebook comprising former IJT members which obviously include several serving positional elites of the JI who have remained a part of the IJT in the past, puts pressure on the positional elites of JI. As a corollary, the positional elites while formulating policy
decisions respond to their demands by incorporating some of their proposals. This disturbs the power of the positional elites entitled to make decisions due to their position on the higher hierarchies. Thus, ‘new elites’ arise which share decision making power with the positional elites while using virtual fora, albeit, unofficially and indirectly (see chapter 5).

From the above, it is concluded that JI tries to mobilize their social media activists, albeit, in a controlled manner. It is argued that this strategy still results into their mobilization just because these activists enjoy new powers compared with the offline and on-the-ground “ideological” membership. In fact, in this situation emphasis on the power of the ideology is substituted with the ability to demonstrate activism digitally. Moreover, as pointed out above, the strategy is aimed at persuading the common youth online, yet this strategy mobilizes the common youth by empowering them with a message that coincides with their mindset thereby making them potential activists for JI.

However, as noticed above, mobilizing online incurs JI organizational costs and can help raise the intriguing question that what might constitute JI’s membership under these circumstances. In fact, attempts to mobilize online alter the nature of membership of JI. This requires JI’s membership be redefined. From the findings of this research, JI’s membership, thus, can broadly be divided into three categories: (i) the strategic, (ii) adaptation to unofficial digital cum elitist membership and, (iii) the common youth who take interest in JI’s politics online, and hence like, and share its message in the virtual spaces. The first category comprises traditional strategic members with attempts from JI to de-emphasize their ideological zeal in favor of more of a political and Islamic JI (as no Islamic state is going to be erected by JI and
their servicing roles are more important now besides sustaining them for legitimacy and financial purposes). They are the full members, affiliates, sympathizers and members of JI Youth. The second element of the first category is that of the official social media activists. The official social media activists are assigned the task of getting across the political and post-Islamist message of the leadership online. The second category is the result of accommodative efforts on part of JI resulting into emergence of ‘new elites’ who by their interest but lose affiliation with JI and with an elitist nature influence JI’s decisions at the central level through online platforms e.g. members of Ahbab Discourse Forum. The third category is that of online common youth who, while having a message coinciding their mindset and liking and sharing it online, become members of the JI. One may argue that stretching the concept of membership in the JI to the level of common online youth may be too generous and devoid of taking into consideration as to what constitute membership primarily. However, it is important to include them in the definition of JI’s membership just because they are represented by the JI by articulating their interests instead of its

92 Studies show that parties in liberal democracies have moved away from the aggregative function to mere articulative functions as their appeals are more general and not ideological in the face of declining ideological landscape (Lusoli & Ward, 2004). This is the case with the JI too. However, the JI in the times of Qazi Hussain from 1988 to 1993 tried to function to some extent as an interest aggregating party. For most of its history it provided a top-down discourse of modern Islamism trying to align people with their ideology. Hence, the JI was not an interest articulation or aggregation tool in its essence. It articulated what can be termed a totalitarian and as an elitist driven narrative for emancipation of all devised by its elites on top of which its leaders stood. It was an Islamist solution to the problems of man ranging from spiritual to mundane. Thus, as opposed to a secular notion of party in the liberal democratic sense of the term, the JI ideologized Islam and presented a holistic solution for emancipating the man from the clutches of every form of ‘ism’ that thrived on earth espoused by various ideologues and activists. Nasr (1993) explains that some of the JI’s elites (termed as pragmatists or Karachi Group) opposed an Islamic Shariah bill, which was to be promulgated by General Ziaul Haque in 1988, on the account that it did not care for the secular issues of socio-political and economic nature of the downtrodden. This reveals that the JI, at a point of time, tried for aggregating economic interests of the downtrodden against the landlords, feudal and capitalist classes. Moten (2003) found populism in the JI which shows that there had been, probably unsuccessful, attempts by the JI to aggregate the economic interests of the downtrodden. However, the message under Sirajul Haque’s tenure, as this research found, is more of a catch-all nature consisting of Islamic (not Islamist) contents and concerns for the middle classes and downtrodden suffering due to the “biggest” problem of material corruption. These two predominant contents of the online message of the JI reveal that Sirajul Haque’s JI is a catch-all appealing to majority of the people beyond the ideology of the JI and the economic populism or aggregative function of the JI under Qazi Hussain Ahmad’s
ideology for their expected efforts to exhibit activism for JI by spreading their message both in the online and offline worlds.

Moreover, this also shows that the concept of positional elites within JI being decision makers is obsolete and hence needs be redefined. JI’s elites, therefore, were found to be of two types: the positional elites and those who by virtue of their interest in JI’s activities and being capable of carrying out intellectual debates share decision power, bearing in mind, that this power is mediated by the internet technologies. The trajectory of JI, I argue, is not at the sole discretion of JI’s positional elites as was found by Moten (2003).

### 7.1 Implications of the research

This study suggests that further research on Islamic movements be studied carefully. For example this study found that JI being getting inward may be continuing their activism regarding Palestine, Kashmir for political gains at national level and hence many not be related with pan-Islamism.

While on the one hand, the Internet is thought of as revitalizing and reconnecting parties with their civic roots by facilitating their engagement in a more democratic way (Haider & Saglie, 2003; Margetts, 2016). On the other, some scholars see internet as the basis for reinforcing the existing trends to the micro-management of electorate and a centralized control by techno-literate elites (Lipow & Seyd, 1996; Howard, 2006; Wring & Horrocks, 2001). The main purpose of this research was to
ascertain the course of conduct of JI while using internet for extending its sphere of influence. The findings of this research show that internet is used in a cautious way by JI like many parties around the world do. Increasing professionalization of campaigning,\textsuperscript{93} attempts to centralize power at the leadership and de-emphasizing party ideology while projecting party articulations online were found which attest to scholarship that has found these phenomena within a number of political parties around the world while they use internet. The controlled mobilization of the official social media activists and the reluctant mobilization of some of the supporters that this study found attest to the findings of scholars that though new ICTs bear the potential to deepen engagement of the supporters, however, further entrenching the participation divide within parties.

Moreover, the findings of this research resemble those in the literature which suggest that parties in the liberal democracies with diminishing ideological arena and electronic and digital communication media at hand have attuned themselves to catch-all slogans. In such situation potentially all citizens are considered voters and the distinction between the party formal membership and informal supporters is blurred. From JI’s articulations, it seems as if it has been responding to the diminished cleavages with a catch-all and general slogan.

The practice of an atomized membership which is already in JI was found to be furthered while using internet. These findings on the one hand meet the findings of scholars who discovered centralizing tendencies in parties while using new ICTs, on

\textsuperscript{93} This research did not study online election campaign of the JI, yet other campaigns regarding different issues carried out by the JI were taken into consideration. Moreover, this research studied the JI’s online articulations during a peace time which is considered in the literature on parties and new ICTs as 'long campaign.' An increased professionalization of campaign (see for instance Norris 2005) was observed with JI tending to de-emphasize the traditional activism consequently centralizing power at the party headquarters.
the other, the ‘new elites’ who by virtue of their pre-existing knowledge, technical skills regarding the ‘digital media’ and regular participation make inroads into the elites’ circle thereby influencing policy decisions. In line with Lusoli & Ward (2004), this study argues that parties may survive disintermediation in the face of new ICTs and increase activism from a large number of informal supporters without necessarily reinvigorating the local grass-roots democracy. JI, which has seldom been a mass party, has come across ‘digital media’ which can erode the ideological commitment and party activism of traditional activists and formal members by centralizing the party further against them.

Further, this study adds to the limited number of studies that approach studying these movements with non-essentialist methodologies. Studying Islamic movements from Eurocentric and Orientalist perspectives might entail a methodological bias. Alternatively, a number of different angles can be taken into consideration to study these movements. They are not solely driven by their ideology, rather dynamics other than ideological matter to them as they do to other secular political actors around the world.

7.2 Recommendations for further research

It is interesting to note that the Facebook account of the JI was deleted by the central Facebook authorities in the wake of activism for Burhan Wani, a commander of the Kashmiri militant organization Hizbulmujahideen, killed by the Indian security forces in July, 2016. The Facebook account of the JI had reached 38,00,000 fans. It is intriguing to ascertain the limits of activism by the JI in favor of Jihadi activities through a technology controlled by its “other” i.e. the West.
It can also be imagined that the society in which the JI operates might have been impacted by the new ICTs socio-culturally and this might further impact the JI. It can be a food for thought to explore that in what subtle ways ICT technologies borrowed from its “other”, the West, can impact the society around the JI in which it operates and hence further impact the JI?
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