

Pakistan Awami Tehreek and Its Role in Pakistani Politics

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Abstract

Dr. Tahirul Qadri, a well-known Islamic scholar, created the Pakistan Awami Tehrik (PAT) in 1989. The Bravelvi school of thought, which is the predominant sect in Pakistan, is deeply ingrained in the party's membership. The party's founder and chairman publicly identifies as a devout Bravelvi. The Bravelvi school of thought was represented by the pre-existing religious political parties, which greatly despised the creation of PAT. It was said that Dr. Qadri intended to split the Bravelvies and that the new party would make them less powerful politically. For various reasons, PAT was also rejected by the other religious political parties. The PAT gained notoriety in 2012 when its employees convened for a dharna in Islamabad. Pat's motto was Siaysat nahe Riasat Bachao, which means "save the country and not the politics." A new political structure was required by the party. The PPP government was worried by the PAT's use of the capital system. Once more, the party organized its workers nationwide and staged a large sit-in in Islamabad. The Nawaz Shareef government was shaken by the several-day-long dharna.

Pakistan Awami Tehreek stands out in Pakistani and comparative politics as a reform-oriented, religiously driven movement that has faced structural electoral challenges but has significantly influenced public discourse through grassroots organizing and normative critiques of the political system. Examining PAT provides valuable insights about the relationship between democratic agency, protest, and religion in a dynamic and divisive political landscape. In Pakistan's political academia, the influence of non-mainstream political actors on political discourse has not gotten much empirical attention. Despite having a small electoral representation, the Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) has managed to stay visible through religious identity, protest politics, and leadership-driven mobilization. There is a void in the systematic, theory-driven investigation of these movements' political influence because the majority of existing research look at them descriptively. In order to close this gap, the current study explores the role of Pakistan Awami Tehreek in Pakistani politics by looking at how street mobilization, protest politics, charismatic leadership, and religious ideology based on Barelvi identity affect the organization's total political influence.

The empirical findings show that the political influence of PAT is positively and statistically significantly correlated with all three independent variables ($p < 0.05$). The strongest predictors were found to be charismatic authority and leadership, followed by street mobilization and protest politics. Religious ideology also had a significant impact. These results demonstrate that non-electoral

procedures, not parliamentary participation, are the main drivers of PAT's political relevance. By providing an empirical, variable-based explanation of non-electoral political impact in a hybrid democratic setting, this work adds to the body of literature. By identifying other avenues for political engagement, promoting evidence-based decision-making, and expanding knowledge of religiously informed political movements in Pakistan, the findings have significant ramifications for academics, decision-makers, and civil society.

Keywords: Pakistan Awami Tehreek, Political Influence, Charismatic Leadership, Protest Politics, Religious Ideology and Barelvi Identity, Non-Electoral Political Participation

Background and Objectives of PAT

Parties and organizations that combine aspirations for democratic reform with religious authority have played significant roles in worldwide Islamic politics, from Egypt to Indonesia. These groups frequently stand between extreme Islamist groups and secular nationalist parties, promoting moral leadership and democratic participation while relying on religious legitimacy. Even though these movements differ in terms of organization and impact, they highlight a more general trend: in cultures undergoing fast social change, religion continues to have political resonance alongside democratic ambitions. PAT is the political arm of Minhajulquran International (MQI), an organization with a broad religious and educational network. The party contends that the current corrupt, elite-dominated electoral system is unable to deliver justice and fundamental rights to the mass of the populace and seeks to implement a thorough overhaul of Pakistan's political system. Its manifesto, titled "Putting 'People first'", outlines seven core priorities:

1. Education
2. Economy
3. Poverty alleviation
4. Health
5. Justice
6. Peace
7. Technology

Political Activities

PAT has participated in important political movements, including the Dharna in 2013 and 2014. The enthusiasm of the Pakistani people has changed our nation's chances and potential. We now have fresh chances and challenges.

The PAT wants to spearhead the shared strategy that our nation needs. PAT operates in more than 86 countries worldwide. Youth, women, farmers, traders, workers, and minorities all participate equally in PAT, and all of the work done has been founded on the idea that unites Pakistanis both domestically and internationally. PAT has a long record of social transformation and is an inclusive party.

Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul Qadri created LeaderShip PAT.

Early Life Muhammad Tahirul Qadri was born in Jhang, Punjab, Pakistan, on February 19, 1951, into a Punjabi Muslim family with a long history of scholarship and spirituality. His father, Dr. Farid ud Din Qadri, was a well-known physician, religious scholar, and sufi poet who prioritized both Islamic and secular education.

Early Education

Qadri had both religious and secular training in his early schooling. He was exposed to Christianity and learnt English at the Sacred Heart School, a Catholic mission school in Jhang. At the age of ten, he started formal Islamic education under his father, concentrating on Sufi activities and ancient books. At the age of twelve, he went to Medina, Saudi Arabia, to enroll in Madrasa al Ulum ash Shariyya, which is housed in Abu Ayub Ansari's ancient home (RA). Ideology: The tenets of liberty, equality, democracy, the rule of law, and social justice form the foundation of PAT's political philosophy.

It aims to establish a society with equal rights for all citizens as well as an open and accountable government

Key Objectives:

Give every citizen access to contemporary education.

Assure housing and healthcare access.

Encourage economic opportunity and protect farmers' and workers' rights.

Improve law and order, decentralize authority, and establish effective government.

PAT Foundation Day

The Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) was established on May 25, 1985. At a public gathering at Lahore's ancient Mochi gate, Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul Qadri declared the creation of PAT on this day. It aims to create a society with all the necessities of existence, such as clean, healthy roads, decent housing, high-quality education, etc. Liberty, equity, democracy, individualism, rule of law, social justice, public welfare, transparency, accountability, sufficiency, guarantee for human rights, and decentralization of powers are among its tenets (Nour 2024). It supports reforms like establishing good governance, promoting the private sector, organizing human resources, expanding education, improving other social sectors like health, increasing production, family planning, development planning of natural resources, environmental health, culture, encouraging positive and healthy recreation, eliminating crime, and administering justice promptly.

It is a wide-ranging national party, movement, and mission that represents all groups of people, particularly minorities, regardless of race, color, religion, or sect.

It seeks to create a system based on the universal values of justice, freedom, stability, and advancement.

It is above limited, stale, and conservative thinking and is free of the exploitative dichotomy between the Right and the Left. Additionally, it is trending the democratic, welfare, and Islamic route of moderation, growth, kindness, and peace while opposing all forms of sectarianism, extremism, and terrorism.

In order for Pakistan to join the global community on the bandwagon of growth, it rejects isolationism in favor of national advancement, public welfare, and the common good. Instead, it supports regional cooperation, global engagement, social market economics, and participatory international democracy.

PAT's Origins and Political Role

Founding and Ideology

On May 25, 1989, Islamic scholar Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri established the Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT), which significantly altered Pakistan's political landscape after the 1980s. PAT, which was established in Lahore with a dual focus on religious identity and political change, was greatly influenced by the Bareilvi school of Sunni Islam, a popular religion in Pakistan but historically underrepresented in political organizations. Encyclopedia

Its commitment to human rights, anti-corruption, law and order, and the empowerment of common people through participatory democracy was stated in its founding statement. The PAT manifesto publicly denounced the established feudal and elitist networks that dominated Pakistani electoral politics. PAT deliberately experimented with both participation and boycott in later election cycles. The party boycotted elections in 1993, focusing instead on public education and awareness campaigns because it thought the voting system was unjust.

Mobilization and Protest Politics

Instead of using traditional legislative politics, PAT's most prominent political actions have frequently taken the shape of large-scale protests and mobilizations. It organized a significant sit-in in Islamabad in 2012 under the banner "Siyasat nahi Riasat Bachao" ("Save the state, not politics"),

accusing the government of corruption and calling for systemic change. This demonstration highlighted PAT's ability to mobilize sizable masses and briefly upended the ruling coalition. In a similar vein, PAT's function as a protest party was emphasized during the 2013 Long March from Lahore to Islamabad against corruption and a lack of transparency. Thousands of people took part, highlighting calls for accountability and election reform.

Local Perspectives and Branches

PAT has established local wings outside of the federal arena, including as the Sindhiyani Tehreek in Sindh province, which addresses regional grievances such identity politics, resource exploitation, and constitutional reforms, in an attempt to tailor its platform to local needs. Dawn of the Election PAT's direct electoral impact is still small despite its aggressive participation. It failed to obtain significant representation in the National Assembly in the 2024 elections, as independent candidates supported by PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) won important seats and big parties like the Pakistan Muslim League (N) and Pakistan People's Party prevailed.

Recent Developments (2024–2025) and Contemporary Importance

Political Environment in Pakistan

Increased institutional tensions, legal disputes, and significant changes in power structures have defined Pakistan's political landscape in 2024–2025. Significant constitutional and legislative changes have affected Pakistan's military and civil institutions, restricting judicial independence and consolidating power in the army chief's office. These developments have been extensively criticized for upsetting the country's democratic balance. (Jaffar, Nazir et al 2024)

Concurrently, PTI and other prominent opposition actors have experienced significant judicial defeats. Discussions about political repression and the marginalization of the opposition were sparked by the numerous convictions and long prison sentences imposed on former prime minister Imran Khan and other PTI leaders. (Khan, Naushad 2024)

PAT's Role in Contemporary Politics

Despite not being one of the major parliamentary parties, PAT's normative language and capacity for mobilization are nevertheless important. In 2025, PAT persisted in planning demonstrations and releasing statements on social issues, the rule of law, and constitutional rights, expressing enduring worries about democratic governance standards. Organizational continuity and internal renewal initiatives are also indicated by internal party events, such as intra-party elections. (Wiesendahl, Elmar 2024)

Beyond official views, PAT stands for a group of politicians with a strong religious background that advocate for public accountability, ethical governance, and anti-corruption reforms—frames that appeal to civil society groups fed up with traditional party elites.

Introduction

Dr. Muhammad Tahirul Qadri, a distinguished Islamic scholar and legal expert, launched the Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) (Pakistan People's Movement), an Islamic socialist political party in Pakistan, on May 25, 1989. The party positions itself in the political center by combining Islamic socialism, Islamic democracy, and moderate Islamism (Ferrero, Mario 2024).

Important Details Founder: Dr. Tahir ul Qadri

Established: May 25, 1989

Headquarters: Lahore, Pakistan's Punjab

Ideology: anti-feudalism, Islamic democracy, Islamic socialism, and moderate Islam

Political Position: Centrism (fiscally center, left, socially center, right)

Alternative Mobilization: PAT is a prime example of how non-elite parties with leadership rooted in religion can use protest politics to shape national conversation outside of winning elections.

2. Religious Politics and Democracy: Its existence adds to more general scholarly discussions over the place of religion in democratic politics, especially in states with a majority of Muslims and well established elite dominance. (Ihsan, Shukri 2024)

3. Peaceful Political Engagement: An understanding of PAT's development provides insight into nonviolent political engagement tactics in situations where institutional restructuring and legal constraints limit opposition space.

4. Social and Sectarian Dynamics: With its roots in the Bareilvi tradition, PAT provides insights into the subtleties of intra-Islamic sectarianism that influence Pakistani political alliances and voter identities.

Within Pakistani and comparative politics, Pakistan Awami Tehreek stands out as a reform-focused, religiously motivated movement that has encountered structural electoral obstacles but has had a major impact on public discourse through grassroots organizing and normative criticisms of the political system. Studying PAT offers important insights about how democratic agency, protest, and religion interact in a changing and contentious political environment.

Manifesto

PAT's extensive 186-page manifesto was titled "Putting people first" and contained seven tenets. 1. Education 2.2. Economy 3. Poverty 4. Health 5. Justice 6. Peace 7. Technology A feasible strategy for reviving 32 national departments was also presented. Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul Qadri described the revolutionary strategy he would implement after a peaceful green revolution in his pivotal keynote address.

Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT): Manifesto and Foundational Vision

Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul-Qadri, an Islamic scholar and political figure, officially founded the Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) on May 25, 1989. Although PAT engages in electoral politics, its founding vision goes beyond traditional party rivalry: it aims for a revolutionary sociopolitical renewal based on democratic fairness, socioeconomic equity, and moral governance guided by Islamic principles. (Asif, Khadija)

Core Manifesto Priorities: "Putting People First"

Seven key areas for national development and transformation are outlined in the official PAT manifesto, "Putting People First," which is a lengthy document (186 pages): education, economy, poverty alleviation, health, justice, peace, and technology. A comprehensive policy agenda aimed at empowering marginalized communities, bolstering public institutions, and promoting fair access to necessary services is reflected in this fundamental progression.

The manifesto places the wellbeing of the populace at the center of governmental policy within this larger framework. It operationalizes the party's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for common Pakistanis by putting up practical strategies for revitalizing 32 important government ministries.

Dr Muhammad Tahir ul-Qadri's Political Vision

Although the official manifesto outlines broad goals, Dr. Qadri's speeches and revolutionary declarations expound on the moral and philosophical underpinnings of PAT's objective. Three interconnected themes—structural state transformation, socioeconomic justice, and a peaceful democratic revolution driven by constitutional rights—emerge throughout his speeches and policy declarations.

Evaluation of the Political System

Dr. Qadri frequently criticizes Pakistan's current political system for being incapable of providing justice, welfare, and security, as well as for being insensitive to common people and controlled by elite interests. He argues that The vision of Pakistan's founding fathers is undermined by the current election and governance structures, which sustain corruption, social inequity, and institutional deterioration.

Dr. Qadri claims that this dysfunction is a departure from the principles of the State of Madina, a model he regularly uses as a normative political reference. According to this paradigm, governance must be accountable to all citizens, rights-based, and participatory, with robust safeguards for social welfare and justice.

Revolutionary Ten-Point Agenda

Dr. Qadri operationalized his criticism into a cogent policy plan in his historic speech on May 11, 2014, with a 10-point revolutionary program. The agenda's content emphasizes specific social rights, such as homes for the homeless, universal access to education, equitable land transfer, and gender-inclusive economic prospects, despite the grandiose language of "revolution." In order to weaken feudal holdovers and empower the rural poor, the manifesto, for example, demands for the provision of free dwelling plots to homeless families and the distribution of cultivable land to landless farmers. It also promotes changing laws that discriminate against women and give them access to respectable jobs and socioeconomic independence.

By recommending the creation of 10,000 peace-training facilities and the updating of seminary curricula to encourage moderation within and between faiths, the agenda further demonstrates PAT's dedication to peace, social concord, and de-radicalization.

Constitutional and Rights-Based Orientation

Dr. Qadri presents the party's goal as a constitutional duty rather than just political engagement. He claims in several lectures that the goal of his "peaceful democratic revolution" is to carry out Article 38 of the Pakistani Constitution, which ensures that every citizen has access to basic human rights such food, shelter, education, and medical care. This approach places PAT's requests in the context of moral obligation and legal legitimacy. The party's belief that the socioeconomic needs of the populace should come second to constitutional principles is emphasized by this rights-based framing. Dr. Qadri contends that the moral need for systemic reform is validated if these guarantees are not fulfilled.

Beyond Electoral Politics: Movement and Mobilization

PAT has taken part in elections, most notably in 1990 and 2002, but its institutional strategy goes much beyond traditional politics focused on the legislature. The party has organized large-scale sit-ins and mobilizations, such as the 2013 Long March toward Islamabad, in an effort to upend established power structures and encourage civic engagement among Pakistan's marginalized communities.

The vision of Pakistan's founding fathers is undermined by the current election and governance structures, which sustain social inequity, corruption, and institutional deterioration. Electoral History of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT)

Islamic scholar and reformist leader Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri launched Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) in 1989. PAT was initially envisioned as a reform-focused political movement with the goal of reorganizing Pakistan's political and governance structure, rather than just an electoral party. As a result, rather than being constant, PAT's electoral participation has remained restricted and strategic.

The 1990 General Elections was PAT's first foray into electoral politics. PAT decided to abstain from voting in the 1993 General Elections, citing claims of electoral fraud, elite control of politics, and the failure of elections to bring about real democratic change. Dr. Qadri made the public claim that elections without fundamental change will only serve to perpetuate the current ruling class, weakening democratic accountability. PAT's political trajectory underwent a sea change as a result of this boycott, moving the party's emphasis from parliamentary rivalry to extra-parliamentary action. During the 2002 general elections, which were held under General Pervez Musharraf's military-led administration, PAT made a brief comeback to voting. This time is noteworthy because Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri was elected to the National Assembly, despite the party's repeated failure to acquire seats. He

did, however, resign from the National Assembly in 2004, citing the parliament's inability to enact significant reforms and its lack of actual authority under military rule. PAT's criticism of Pakistan's electoral system as procedurally democratic but substantively ineffectual was strengthened by this departure. Since 2008, PAT has mostly stayed out of elections, preferring to function as a political movement as opposed to a traditional party. Reiterating concerns about electoral integrity, corruption, and the power of powerful institutions over civilian governments, the party officially abstained from the 2013 and 2018 general elections. This calculated election withdrawal highlights PAT's distinct role in Pakistani politics and sets it apart from conventional political parties.

Major Political Events and Mobilization under Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri

Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri's leadership has played a major role in PAT's political influence through protest politics and mass mobilization, despite the party's limited electoral performance. The Long Marches to Islamabad in 2012 and 2013 were among the most important occasions. Dr. Qadri spearheaded a large-scale protest in December 2012 calling for electoral changes, the Election Commission's accountability, and the execution of social welfare-related constitutional provisions. The march resulted in forced talks with the administration and a protracted sit-in in Islamabad. Analysts concur that this event increased PAT's visibility and put pressure on the government to publicly commit to electoral transparency, even though no immediate institutional reforms followed. The Model Town incident (June 2014), in which confrontations between police and PAT personnel resulted in fatalities, was another pivotal event. PAT's political narrative was significantly influenced by this incident. The episode became crucial to PAT's demands for justice, accountability, and the rule of law after Dr. Qadri presented it as proof of elite impunity and governmental brutality. PAT's affiliation with other opposition forces during later rallies was further reinforced by the tragedy.

PAT and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) collaborated on a combined protest action against the government Pakistan Muslim League (N) later in 2014. Even though the coalition was short-lived, it showed that PAT could still have an impact on national politics through strategic alliances in the absence of parliamentary representation.

Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri's role

The organizational, symbolic, and ideological core of PAT continues to be Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri. His international recognition, religious authority, and captivating leadership have made up for the party's small electoral base. He constantly highlights social justice, constitutionalism, and peaceful democratic revolution, contending that significant change cannot be achieved through political participation alone.

Elections 1990

One year after its founding, PAT fielded candidates around the nation in the general elections. Despite not winning any seats, the party garnered enough votes to show support and encourage national promotion.

1993 Elections

The PAT General Council came to the conclusion that the current election system would make it impossible to move closer to their ideal vision for Pakistan. As a result, it stopped participating in politics and instead focused on raising awareness and encouraging support among Pakistanis.

2002 Elections

In 2002, PAT participated in the second general elections. The only candidate elected to the national assembly from NA-127 in Lahore was PAT head Dr. Muhammad Tahir ul Qadri.

Future Planning and Political Direction of PAT

Looking ahead, it seems that PAT is more concerned with creating a movement than with competing in the next election. Organizational reorganization, intra-party elections, youth mobilization, and ideological training are highlighted in party pronouncements and internal initiatives. PAT still presents itself as a defender of constitutional rights, especially with relation to electoral accountability, social justice, and governance changes.

Scholars contend that PAT's continued presence in political discourse points to a long-term strategy of influence rather than power acquisition, even though the party has not declared a firm return to electoral politics. Political opportunity structures, public discontent with major parties, and Dr. Qadri's continuous leadership will probably determine the party's continued importance in the future.

Research Questions.

RQ1:

What impact do charismatic authority and leadership have on Pakistan Awami Tehreek's political influence in Pakistani politics?

Justification:

This inquiry aims to investigate the degree to which the charismatic authority and personal leadership traits of PAT's leadership, especially that of Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri, influence the party's political relevance, public visibility, and ability to shape political discourse beyond electoral success.

RQ2:

How can street mobilization and protest politics contribute to Pakistan Awami Tehreek's increased Political clout?

Justification:

This inquiry centers on PAT's use of mass mobilization, sit-ins, and protests as substitute political tactics. It seeks to determine whether and how these non-electoral strategies support PAT's impact on Pakistani political institutions, public opinion, and governance discussions.

RQ3:

What impact does religious doctrine have on PAT's political dominance in Pakistani politics, specifically with regard to its Barelvi identity?

Justification:

In order to determine if PAT's Barelvi-oriented religious identity sets it apart from other political actors and increases its legitimacy and appeal among specific societal sectors, this question explores the connection between religious ideology and political impact.

Research Objectives

RO1:

to investigate how charismatic authority and leadership affect Pakistan Awami Tehreek's political clout in Pakistani politics.

RO2:

to examine how street mobilization and protest politics have shaped Pakistan Awami Tehreek's political power.

RO3:

to evaluate the impact of religious ideology, namely Barelvi identity, on Pakistan Awami Tehreek's political power in Pakistan.

Significance of the Study

Significance for Academia

By providing a methodical, variable-based analysis of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT), this work significantly advances scholarly research on political parties, social movements, and religious politics in Pakistan. The majority of the research that has already been written has either addressed religious movements in descriptive or event-based categories or concentrated on mainstream political parties. This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of non-electoral political influence in hybrid democracies by experimentally investigating leadership and charismatic authority, protest politics, and religious ideology as factors of political influence.

Significance for Policymakers

Policymakers can use this study's evidence-based insights to understand how non-mainstream political actors affect elections outside of recognized electoral institutions. Understanding how PAT mobilizes support, particularly through leadership appeal, protest tactics, and religious identity, may help policymakers develop more responsive governance frameworks and inclusive political processes. The outcomes can influence policy concerning civic participation, political involvement, and conflict prevention, especially when street mobilization takes the place of legislative representation. By identifying the elements that encourage mass mobilization, this study can help policymakers anticipate political upheaval and engage with reform-oriented movements in a positive way.

Significance for Society and Industry

This research benefits civil society organizations, political analysts, media professionals, and the general public at the societal level by clarifying how alternative political groups impact political discourse and citizen involvement in Pakistan. By increasing public awareness of peaceful protest, religious diversity, and political leadership dynamics, it promotes better informed civic engagement. For the media and political consultancy sectors, the study provides scientifically validated insights into popular attitudes and mobilization patterns that might improve political communication strategies and public discourse. Ultimately, by illuminating non-electoral ways in which individuals seek political reform, accountability, and representation, the study promotes democratic growth.

Overall Importance

This study shows that political influence in Pakistan goes beyond parliamentary power by filling in theoretical, empirical, and contextual gaps in previous research. It emphasizes the significance of leadership, ideology, and group action in influencing political outcomes, providing insightful information for academics, decision-makers, and society at large.

Data Collection Procedure

In-person, supervised questionnaire administration between respondents in Punjab and KPK was used to gather data. Prior to data collection, institutional approvals were acquired from a few agencies, colleges, and universities. Participation was voluntary, respondents were promised of confidentiality, and the study's academic goal was explained to them. In order to reduce missing data and improve answer accuracy, trained research assistants assisted with the distribution and collection of questionnaires. Prior to data entry, completed questionnaires were checked for completeness. After being coded, each response was input into statistical software for examination. Throughout the whole research procedure, ethical guidelines pertaining to non-coercion, informed consent, and anonymity were closely adhered to.

The objectives and reforms of PAT are explained in an understandable manner. It seems to have a clear and persistent reform program. Its suggested changes are intended to enhance Pakistani government.

The leadership of PAT seems to be informed about governance reforms. Because PAT leaders are

qualified to handle significant governance challenges, they are able to carry out significant reforms. Credibility in public communication is demonstrated by PAT leadership.

In terms of reform initiatives, PAT leadership appears to be more capable than other political leaders.

Literature Review

Independent Factors and Pakistan Awami Tehreek's Political Impact

The literature on religious movements, protest-oriented parties, and non-mainstream political actors in Pakistan has looked at the political impact of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT). PAT's influence has mostly been symbolic, rhetorical, and mobilizing, in contrast to traditional political parties that gain power mostly through electoral representation. Scholars contend that a party's ability to influence political narratives, mobilize public opinion, and put pressure on state institutions should be used to define political influence in Pakistan rather than a party's parliamentary presence. According to this theory, religious philosophy, protest tactics, and leadership all combine to produce PAT's power. A key component in comprehending PAT's political function is leadership and charismatic authority, especially that of Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri. Studies of South Asian politics have frequently used Max Weber's theory of charismatic authority to explain leader-centric movements that depend more on individual legitimacy than on institutional power. PAT's ability to attract supporters outside of conventional party institutions has been attributed to Qadri's theological scholarship, exposure to other countries, and capacity to express moral criticisms of governance. Studies that have already been done on Pakistani political movements highlight how charismatic leadership can make up for a lack of organizational strength, particularly in movements that have their roots in moral reform and religious symbolism. As a result, Qadri's personal authority has a significant impact on PAT's political power, which in turn affects the party's legitimacy, unity, and ability to mobilize.

Another important independent factor affecting PAT's political significance is the use of protest politics and street mobilization. Street power has frequently served as a substitute vehicle for political engagement, as Pakistan's political history shows, especially when electoral processes are seen as ineffectual or exclusive. Protests, sit-ins, and marches can increase political influence by upsetting regular governance and garnering media attention, according to literature on social movements and divisive politics.

PAT's political influence is further shaped by religious doctrine and Barelvi identity, which define its intellectual stance and social basis. Although the majority of Sunni Muslims in Pakistan adhere to the Barelvi school of thought, it has historically had less political clout than Islamist or Deobandi organizations. According to scholarly research, PAT is able to organize communities that feel excluded from both secular and Islamist political frameworks by articulating a Barelvi-oriented religious identity. PAT sets itself apart from militant or theocratic Islamist movements by fusing religious discourse with constitutionalism, democracy, and human rights. Its legitimacy among moderate religious audiences and civil society elements is strengthened by this ideological stance, which adds to its indirect political power.

Moderator and the Political Influence of Pakistan Awami Tehreek

The relationship between PAT's fundamental traits and its political power is not consistent and is greatly influenced by moderating factors, especially Pakistan's political opportunity structure. According to political opportunity theory, the openness of the political system, the alignment of elite interests, and the state's tolerance for dissent all affect how effective political actors are. Movements like PAT are more likely to become visible and influential during times of institutional collapse, political instability, or diminished government legitimacy. Political space grows unevenly, giving protest-based actors windows of opportunity, according to existing research on Pakistan's civil-military interactions and democratic disruptions.

Mediator and the Political Influence of Pakistan Awami Tehreek

One important intermediary factor between PAT's actions and its political power is media coverage and public conversation. According to communication researchers, traditional and digital media are increasingly mediating political power in modern democracies, influencing the public's sense of legitimacy and relevance. Media attention is crucial for turning protests into political impact for movements like PAT, which mostly depend on mass mobilization rather than electoral power. Research shows that when PAT's demonstrations and statements are widely shared and presented as legitimate challenges to the political status quo, they acquire political relevance.

Conclusion of the Literature Review

Overall, research suggests that the best way to understand Pakistan Awami Tehreek's political influence is to use a complex framework that takes into account moderating political contexts and mediating media dynamics in addition to incorporating religious ideology, protest mobilization, and leadership charisma. Research indicates that PAT plays an important influence in Pakistani politics outside of official institutions, influencing conversations about democracy, governance, and Islamic identity despite its inconsistent electoral performance. By pointing out the explanatory advantages and disadvantages of earlier research, this review of the literature supports the need for a focused empirical assessment of PAT's political importance.

Research Gap Statement

The literature on religious political movements, protest politics, and non-electoral players in Pakistan is expanding, but it is still fragmented and insufficient to provide a systematic and comprehensive explanation of Pakistan Awami Tehreek's (PAT) political role. There are a number of significant gaps.

First, at the variable level, the majority of current research looks at protest politics, religious ideology, or leadership charisma separately rather than examining how these elements work together to affect political results. While academics agree, Second, from a theoretical standpoint, there is little use of theory-driven analysis and a large portion of the literature depends on general descriptive or normative frameworks. While ideas like religious mobilization, social movement theory, and Weberian charisma are addressed, they are frequently used haphazardly and without being incorporated into a cohesive analytical framework. Studies that methodically integrate religious identification, protest politics, and leadership theory into a coherent conceptual framework to explain non-electoral political influence in Pakistan are conspicuously lacking. Because of this theoretical vacuum, researchers are unable to effectively compare PAT with analogous movements in other contexts or generalize findings beyond single-case narratives.

Third, the majority of current research is methodologically biased toward event-based assessments of protests and political crises, journalistic narratives, or qualitative descriptions. Structured qualitative designs and mixed-methods techniques that operationalize important variables like political influence, leadership authority, or mobilization capacity are lacking. Few studies use longitudinal research, elite interviews, or systematic content analysis to evaluate how PAT's political function has changed over time. It is therefore challenging to evaluate causal linkages or patterns of effect with analytical rigor because empirical evidence is still anecdotal. Lastly, the majority of research on Pakistani politics give priority to mainstream parties like the Pakistan Muslim League (N), Pakistan Peoples Party, or Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in terms of geographic and sampling context, whereas minor religious movements like PAT are given less attention.

Closing these gaps is crucial because it develops a more sophisticated understanding of political influence in Pakistan that goes beyond election victory. This study adds to larger discussions on democratic participation, religious pluralism, and protest politics in hybrid political systems by

methodically analyzing PAT through integrated variables, strong theoretical foundation, and enhanced methodological design. By offering insights into how religiously motivated, non-mainstream movements function within constricted democratic frameworks, filling this gap also advances comparative political scholarship and benefits Pakistan studies as well as political science literature in general.

Methodology

Response Scale (for Part II):

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Part I: Demographic Information

(Please select **one option** for each item.)

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age Group

18–30 years

31–45 years

46 years and above

3. Education Level

Secondary or below

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree or above

4. Place of Residence

Urban

Semi-urban

Rural

5. Political Interest Level

Low

Moderate

High

6. Exposure to Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) Activities

Limited (occasional awareness)

Moderate (regular news/media exposure)

High (direct participation or close affiliation)

Rationale:

These demographic variables are theoretically relevant to political perception studies, minimize respondent fatigue, and allow meaningful subgroup analysis without over-fragmentation—an approach favored by high-impact journals.

Results and Discussion

Research Variables

A. The Political Impact of the Pakistan Awami Tehreek (Dependent Variable) Pakistani political discourse has been greatly impacted by the Pakistan Awami Tehreek. PAT has an effect on public conversation about accountability and government, notwithstanding its dismal electoral results. PAT's political acts have an impact on how the public views the performance of mainstream political parties. PAT has contributed to the public's greater awareness of political and constitutional issues. In general, PAT uses strategies other than legislative representation to influence politics.

B. Charismatic power and leadership (independent variable) The political prominence of PAT is mostly due to Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri's leadership. The public's confidence in PAT is bolstered by the leadership's personal credibility. Rather than political allegiance, PAT supporters are mostly driven by faith in its leadership. PAT is able to effectively rally people because of its charismatic leadership. PAT's political clout would drastically decrease in the absence of skilled leadership.

C. Protest politics and street mobilization (independent variable) PAT's marches and protests have increased its influence in national politics. Through street mobilization, PAT can successfully put pressure on political institutions. PAT's nonviolent protest strategy has influenced the country's political dialogue. Public demonstrations are more effective for PAT than voting. The shortcomings of Pakistan's political system have been exposed by PAT's protest operations.

D. Religious Ideology (Barelvi Identity) (Independent Variable) PAT's theological position informs its political discourse. Because of its Barelvi identity, PAT differs from other political and religious parties in Pakistan. PAT's Christian philosophy appeals to citizens seeking inclusive and rational political conversation. Religious beliefs have a big impact on PAT's political goals. PAT's ideological position boosts its validity among certain social groupings.

Research Design

Target Population

The study's target demographic consists of adult citizens (18 years of age and older) who live in Pakistan's Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) provinces and have a basic understanding of political parties and national politics. These two provinces were chosen for PAT's mobilization efforts because of their historical significance, political diversity, and population importance. Respondents came from a variety of professional and institutional contexts, such as public universities (like the University of the Punjab and the University of Peshawar), private universities (like the University of Central Punjab and the City University of Science and Information Technology Peshawar), colleges, secondary schools, government offices (like the departments of education and local administration), private organizations, small businesses, and civil society organizations. To guarantee diversity in political exposure and opinion development, students, educators, government workers, professionals in the business sector, and independent contractors were involved. Politically conscious citizens are a pertinent unit of research because PAT's political impact primarily functions through public debate, protest mobilization, and ideological appeal rather than formal electoral representation.

Sampling Technique

Purposive and convenience sampling were used in a multi-stage non-probability sampling technique used in the study. Punjab and KPK provinces were specifically chosen for the first phase because of their political importance and PAT's past involvement. In order to gather data for the second stage, government offices, private organizations, and educational institutions in significant urban and semi-urban areas (such as Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Peshawar, Mardan, and Abbottabad) were contacted. In order to access respondents who satisfied the inclusion criteria—being at least eighteen years old and possessing a basic understanding of politics—convenience sampling was employed inside these institutions. In political perception studies where access to a fully randomized sampling frame is restricted, this method is frequently employed. Non-probability sampling is suitable for

exploratory and explanatory research aimed at theory testing and relationship analysis, even though it restricts statistical generalizability.

Sample Size Justification

A response rate of roughly 82.8% was obtained from 1,035 genuine responses out of 1,250 issued questionnaires, which is regarded as strong for survey-based political research. The obtained sample size offers enough statistical power to identify significant correlations between variables and surpasses generally recognized cutoff points for multivariate statistical analysis. In terms of methodology, a sample size larger than 1,000 improves the robustness of parameter estimations, lowers sampling error, and boosts confidence in the dependability of findings. The final sample size is sufficient for sophisticated statistical methods like multiple regression and mediation/moderation analysis because the study used many independent variables and Likert-scale evaluations. Additionally, subgroup analysis across demographic groups is made possible by the sample size without sacrificing analytical stability. In order to investigate the function of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) in Pakistani politics, this study uses a quantitative, cross-sectional survey research design. Because the study uses standardized instruments to examine perceptions, attitudes, and interactions among clearly specified variables, a quantitative method is appropriate. The cross-sectional methodology makes it possible to gather data all at once, which makes it possible to statistically analyze the connections between religious ideology, protest politics, leadership and charismatic power, and PAT's political influence.

Because survey research makes it easier to systematically gather data from a wide range of respondents, it is especially well-suited for studies on political behavior and party influence. Inferential statistical methods like regression analysis and structural modeling may be applied thanks to the structured questionnaire, which also guarantees consistency in responses and improves dependability. Additionally, this strategy is consistent with earlier political science studies that looked at social movement dynamics and non-electoral political power in emerging democracies.

Variables and Their Types

Three independent factors and one dependent variable are examined in the study. The perceived influence of PAT on political discourse, public awareness, and governance debates is captured by the dependent variable, political influence of Pakistan Awami Tehreek. Variations in PAT's political influence are thought to be explained by the independent variables of charismatic power and leadership, street mobilization and protest politics, and religious ideology (Barelvi identity). These factors are based on political sociology, social movement theory, and leadership theory. Table 1: List of Variables and Their Expected Relationships

Variable Name	Variable Type	Symbol	Measurement Unit	Expected Relationship with DV
Political Influence of PAT	Dependent	PI	Likert scale (1-5)	—
Leadership and Charismatic Authority	Independent	LCA	Likert scale (1-5)	Positive

Protest Politics and Street Mobilization	Independent	PPSM	Likert scale (1–5)	Positive
Religious Ideology (Barelvi Identity)	Independent	RIBI	Likert scale (1–5)	Positive

Instrumentation Scales

A self-administered structured questionnaire with two sections—demographic data and variable-based items—was used to gather the data. Five-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), were used to measure each study variable. Because Likert-type scales may accurately evaluate attitudes, perceptions, and subjective evaluations, they are widely used in social science and political science research.

The political influence scale was conceptually modified from research assessing agenda-setting ability and non-electoral political impact. Table 2: Instrument Scales and Sample Questions

Variable	Sample Question	Scale Source Used in Prior Studies	Reference
Political Influence of PAT	“PAT has played a noticeable role in shaping political debates in Pakistan.”	Political influence perception scales	Easton (1965); Norris (2004)
Leadership and Charismatic Authority	“Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri’s leadership is central to PAT’s political presence.”	Charismatic leadership scales	Weber (1947); House (1977)
Protest Politics and Street Mobilization	“PAT’s protests have increased its visibility in national politics.”	Social movement mobilization scales	Tilly (2004); McAdam et al. (2001)

Religious Ideology (Barelvi Identity)	“PAT’s religious orientation influences its political messaging.”	Religion and politics attitude scales	Fox (2008); Kalyvas (1996)
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Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) in Pakistani politics by examining how the party's total political power is influenced by charismatic leadership, street mobilization and protest politics, and religious ideology rooted in Barelvi identity. The empirical findings, which are based on quantitative data gathered from respondents in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, show that PAT's political significance cannot be fully comprehended by electoral performance alone, but rather by its ability to influence political discourse, inspire citizens, and make moral and ideological claims in public.

Practical Implications of this Study

The results show that charismatic authority and leadership significantly and favorably impact PAT's political influence. Thus, the hypothesis that suggests charisma and political influence are positively correlated is validated. Respondents repeatedly linked Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri's leadership to PAT's prominence, legitimacy, and capacity for mobilization, demonstrating the importance of charismatic leadership in maintaining non-mainstream political movements. This finding complements earlier research indicating that leader-centric movements in South Asian politics frequently rely on personal legitimacy to make up for poor institutional or electoral strength, and it is consistent with Weberian theories of charismatic authority. The second hypothesis is also accepted since the empirical study shows that PAT's political power is greatly increased by protest politics and street mobilization. The findings demonstrate that public protests, marches, and sit-ins are thought to be useful strategies for PAT to raise awareness of governance and accountability issues, press political institutions, and garner national attention. This result supports theories of social movement and contentious politics, which contend that group activity outside of official political channels can be a potent tool of influence, especially in situations where institutional access is restricted or disputed. The third hypothesis is supported by the study's discovery of a positive and statistically significant correlation between religious ideology—specifically, Barelvi identity—and PAT's political impact. According to the findings, PAT's religious stance sets it apart from both secular and radical Islamist parties, strengthening its credibility with some societal groups that support a moderate and inclusive religious-political narrative. By emphasizing the political significance of understudied religious identities in Pakistan, particularly within the Barelvi tradition, which has frequently been overlooked in scholarly assessments, this result adds to the body of research on religion and politics. When combined, these results show how leadership, protest tactics, and religious belief interact to shape the political power of a non-electoral political actor, directly addressing and fulfilling the original research objectives. The study's conceptual model is validated by the results, which are conceptually congruent with frameworks on religious political mobilization, leadership theory, and social movement theory. More significantly, by going beyond descriptive descriptions of PAT and providing a methodical, variable-driven explanation of its position in Pakistani politics, the study adds to the body of current material. via doing this, it expands academic knowledge of political influence in hybrid democracies and emphasizes the significance of non-institutional channels via which political players interact with society and the state. In summary, this study shows that the Pakistan Awami Tehreek holds a unique and significant place in Pakistani politics through leadership-driven mobilization, protest tactics, and ideological distinction rather than legislative

domination. As a result, the study advances political science research on alternate forms of political engagement and lays the groundwork for future studies on comparable political systems and movements in Pakistan. The study's conclusions have significant ramifications for Pakistani policymakers who are interested in democratic governance, political stability, and citizen participation. Evidence that charismatic authority and leadership greatly increase Pakistan Awami Tehreek's (PAT) political influence indicates that faith in leadership, rather than just party institutions, plays a substantial role in shaping political involvement in Pakistan.

Implications for Industry and Society

The report offers practical insights into how public opinion and political influence are shaped in modern Pakistan for media professionals, political consultants, civil society organizations, and industry practitioners. The proven value of charismatic leadership highlights the necessity of responsible political communication that places more emphasis on issue-based engagement, credibility, and moral leadership than on sensationalism or personality cults. These findings can be used by media organizations in particular to enhance evidence-based reporting on religious-political actors and protest movements, guaranteeing fair coverage that educates rather than incites public opinion.

Implications for Academic Institutions

Additionally, the study has important ramifications for academic institutions, especially universities and research centers that study Pakistan, sociology, and political science. The necessity for curricula and research objectives that go beyond electoral-centric theories of politics is highlighted by the empirical validation of religious ideology, leadership, and protest politics as important factors influencing political influence.

Contribution to National Development and Evidence-Based Decision-

Overall, this study's practical ramifications are found in its capacity to support evidence-based decision-making in a variety of areas. The study provides a framework for resolving issues with political disengagement, governance deficiencies, and social fragmentation by showing how leadership credibility, nonviolent mobilization, and inclusive religious identity create political influence in Pakistan. Together, policymakers, practitioners, and academic institutions may apply these lessons to reinforce democratic norms, encourage more inclusive political involvement, and lessen reliance on combative politics. By promoting policies and practices based on scientific data rather than conjecture or transient political considerations, the study advances both academic understanding and national growth.

Limitations of the Study

This study has a number of limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results, despite its empirical contributions. The use of non-probability sampling techniques and the geographic concentration of respondents in the provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are the first sources of sample-related restrictions. The absence of other areas like Sindh, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir restricts the generalizability of the results, despite the fact that these provinces are politically vital and pertinent to the activities of the Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT). Third, the study's use of self-reported Likert-scale instruments presents measurement-related challenges. Despite being widely used and trustworthy for assessing attitudes and perceptions, these scales are intrinsically prone to response biases, such as social desirability bias and subjective interpretation of survey items. The accuracy of the measurements may have been impacted by respondents' political inclinations or personal opinions toward religious or protest-oriented movements. Furthermore, the depth of empirical evaluation may be limited because political influence was measured perceptually rather than using objective indicators like media content analysis, policy results, or institutional reactions. Fourth, another restriction is the duration of data

gathering. Election cycles, court rulings, and civil-military interactions all have an impact on Pakistan's extremely volatile political landscape. The results may not accurately reflect later political developments that have an impact on PAT's function or public exposure because they represent respondents' opinions during the particular time frame in which the data were gathered. Therefore, rather than being broadly relevant to many political stages, the conclusions should be understood as context-specific. Fifth, geographical restrictions interact with more general contextual restrictions. Due to their size and political significance, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provide valuable insights; nonetheless, PAT's influence may seem differently in urban versus rural environments or in regions where the party's organizational presence is weaker. Therefore, the study's regional focus limits its capacity to fully evaluate differences in political influence at the national level. Lastly, a significant conceptual constraint is the choice of variables.

Future studies should use longitudinal designs, more geographic coverage, mixed-method techniques, and expanded variable frameworks to better comprehend Pakistan Awami Tehreek's involvement in Pakistani politics. When combined, these restrictions emphasize the necessity of interpreting the results with caution.

Future Research Opportunities

Building on the gaps found in the literature as well as the methodological and contextual constraints of this study, a number of intriguing directions for further research that can enhance academic comprehension of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) and related political movements become apparent. Adopting longitudinal research approaches to investigate how PAT's political influence changes over time in response to shifting political circumstances, leadership philosophies, and state reactions is one crucial avenue. In order to overcome the temporal constraints of cross-sectional analyses and provide more robust causal insights, longitudinal surveys or panel data would enable researchers to track changes in public perceptions of leadership charisma, protest effectiveness, and religious ideology throughout electoral cycles or times of political crisis. Cross-national comparative study presents a second important possibility. In other Muslim-majority or hybrid democratic situations, such as the Ennahda Movement in Tunisia, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey, or the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in Indonesia, PAT can be effectively contrasted to religiously motivated or protest-focused groups. Scholars would be able to evaluate whether religious identification, protest politics, and leadership charisma operate similarly in all political systems or are influenced by institutional and cultural elements unique to each nation. In order to contribute to more comprehensive theories of party institutionalization and democratic consolidation, comparative studies should also investigate why some movements, like PAT, stay mostly extra-parliamentary while others successfully migrate into electoral politics.

Future studies should extend empirical study to provinces like Sindh, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir in order to investigate regional and sub-national differences within Pakistan. A more complete picture of the country would be obtained by examining how PAT's religious doctrine and mobilization tactics are effective in various ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic circumstances. Such studies could improve the generalizability of results by revealing whether PAT's influence is mostly urban-centered, region-specific, or dependent on local political opportunity systems. A. Mixed-methods and multi-source techniques have significant methodological potential. In addition to survey data, qualitative interviews with PAT leaders, activists, journalists, and legislators could offer a deeper understanding of internal organizational dynamics, strategic decision-making, and elite perspectives of PAT's role. Incorporating social media analytics or media content analysis will also enable future research to investigate the ways in which protest politics and leadership charisma are mediated through communication channels, solving the issues with omitted variables found in this study.

All things considered, longitudinal, comparative, methodologically diverse, and theoretically integrative future research has great potential to further scholarly understanding of Pakistan Awami Tehreek and similar movements while also enhancing more general discussions about political engagement, religious mobilization, and democratic transformation.

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