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Perceptions of students' in Balochistan on relationship between regime type and counter-terrorism policies.

Abstract

The key objective of this project was to determine students' perception of relationship between regime type and terrorism. It wanted to find out whether the type of regime in Pakistan determines the effectiveness of counter-terrorism policy or not. There is already established literature on both sides of the argument, but this study wanted to illustrate students' perception of regime type in Balochistan that is already experiencing worst form of nationalist and religious terrorism in the presence of weak political government. The level of democracy is not that high in Pakistan, but when it comes to Balochistan, it is totally compromised and crippled. Students have been at the forefront of many violent and non-violent movements in Balochistan, which makes it necessary to determine their perceptions of regime type effectiveness in the war against terrorism and extremism. This study is primarily conducted in Quetta, because of various reasons, which are given in the methodology section of the report. The report is based on quantitative research, where survey has been used as data collection method. The result of the study is supporting the established literature of a positive relationship between democracy and terrorism.

Key words: Perception, Students, Terrorism, Balochistan, regime type

1. INTRODUCTION:

The key objective of this project was to determine students' perception of relationship between regime type and terrorism. It wanted to find out whether the

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type of regime in Pakistan determines the effectiveness of counter-terrorism policy or not. There is already established literature on both sides of the argument, but this study wanted to illustrate students' perception of regime type in Balochistan that is already experiencing worst form of nationalist and religious terrorism in the presence of weak political government. The level of democracy is not that high in Pakistan, but when it comes to Balochistan, it is totally compromised and crippled. Students have been at the forefront of many violent and non-violent movements in Balochistan, which makes it necessary to determine their perceptions of regime type effectiveness in the war against terrorism and extremism. This study is primarily conducted in Quetta, because of various reasons, which are given in the methodology section of the report. The report is based on quantitative research, where survey has been used as data collection method. The result of the study is supporting the established literature of a positive relationship between democracy and terrorism.

This paper consists of eight sections. The first section discusses the objective of the study. The second section is about the existing literature on the relationship between democracy and terrorism. It has given a detailed account of the two schools of thoughts on positive and negative relationships between regime type and terrorism. The third section is about the method and methodology. The fourth one discusses sampling and survey as data collection methods. The fifth one is about statistical analysis of the data. The sixth section covers result of the study. The seventh part is about the discussion. The last section is conclusion of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

The relationship between terrorism and democracy in the existing literature is complex and contradictory. On the one hand, there are scholars, who based on their qualitative and quantitative research claim that democracy plays a pivotal role in countering extremism and terrorism in a society. They claim that the right to elect a government, free press to monitor government actions, and the right to bring political and institutional changes through peaceful ways mitigate the chances of violent activities and tendencies³. While opponents of this claim assert that democracy does not play any role in eradicating and thwarting terrorism but rather provides a fertile ground for breeding for it. They claim that the hallmark of democracy like respect of individual rights, free press, and the ability to run organizations make democracies easy targets and soft on terrorism⁴.

The assertion that democracy can thwart and eventually eradicate terrorism in society is strongly advocated by policy makers and political analysts alike. The

³ Benjamin Acosta, -From Bombs to Ballots: When Militant Organizations Transition to Political Parties. || *The Journal of Politics*, Vol 76, No 3, (2014). Pp.16-30.

⁴ Belgin San-Akca, -Democracy and Vulnerability: An Exploitation Theory of Democracies by Terrorists, || *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol, 58, No, 7, (2014), pp 1285-1310.

belief that democracy can weaken extremist narrative and support is rooted in the popular idea of democratic peace theory or (D.P.T), which believes that –democratic or liberal states never or very rarely go to war with each other and that they are less likely to become involved in militarized disputes among themselves is the most robust law like finding generated by the discipline of international relations⁵. The logic that democratic states and societies never go to war with each other's has been applied on the domestic political setup of democratic countries, where, they believe, the presence of democratic norms and values would eventually eradicate terrorism in a society. They are of the view that democratic mechanisms would eventually reduce extremism by mainstreaming extremists' actors and allowing them to express their demands by nonviolent ways that would ultimately reduce popular support and sympathy of the masses for the issues and causes supported by extremist.

The other strong component of democracy in reducing terrorism is inclusiveness. The presence of open elections, free press, respect of fundamental human rights promote the concept of inclusion of masses in the system and that ultimately weaken the perception of discrimination in a society, which is one of main causes of extremism and terrorism. The democratic norms and institutions provide incentives for extremist non-state actors to participate in peaceful political struggle by contesting elections. According to Benjamin, –militant organizations sometimes seek to adopt party politics in order to continue pursuing their political ends or outcomes⁶. On the other hand, ban on political activities, the absence of free media, the choking of non-violent avenues of action and curb on freedom of expression are the precursors for the growth of terrorism in a society. Proponents of democratic peace argue that in the presence of such circumstance the system –serve to delegitimize the state, alienate citizens and increase popular grievances, thus providing terrorists with a steady supply of support from among ordinary citizens⁷.

Transparent and fair elections in democratic society give legitimacy to decision-making and make the government collective voice of the public and society. Democracy also increases the responsibility of the government to protect its citizens from any act of individual and collective violence. It is the fundamental duty of the democratically elected regimes to provide security, which not only –entitled them to engage in effective counter-terrorism measures, but also forced them to ensure maximum level of law and order to protect their citizens⁸. They further argue that because of increased opportunities provided by democratic setup to express political

⁵ Azar Gat, –The Democratic Peace Theory Reframed: The Impact of Modernity,^{||} *World Politics*, Vol.58, no.1, (2005), pp 73-100.

⁶ Benjamin Acosta, "From Bombs to Ballots: When Militant Organizations Transition to Political Parties." *The Journal of Politics* 76, no. 3 (2014): 666-683.

⁷ Robert Gurr, T, *Why Men Rebel* (New York, Routledge, 2015), p. 34.

⁸ Alison Brysk, & Gershon Shafir, *National Insecurity and Human Rights: Democracies Debate Counterterrorism* (California, University of California press, 2007), 35.

and social grievances, groups and individuals are more inclined to pursue their objectives non-violently⁹. Free and fair elections in democratic societies make sure that desirable political and social changes would be brought without resorting to violence.

On the other hand, there are scholars and academics who claim that democratic norms and institutions do not play a significant role in reducing terrorism¹⁰. They are of the view that mainstreaming extremist and terrorist groups to participate in democratic political system and free elections give them the opportunity to ultimately manipulate the system to advance their conservative objectives. They believe that democratic characteristics like collection of credible and compelling evidences for an open trial before the jury, the restricted use of torture during the interrogation and strict observation of laws before proceeding provide enabling environment to terrorists to move and plan freely. The totalitarian governments, on the other hands, are not bound by these time-consuming processes and are more willing to suppress dissident at home and abroad. According to Kegley, –the security services of Nazi Germany proved to be quite capable of dealing with opponents by using such techniques. The KGB in the Soviet Union was also notoriously effective in dealing with dissidents or presumed dissidents and outbreak of terrorism were noticeably absent in the Soviet Union before its collapse¹¹.

The third school of thought is called U shaped theory, which argues that political systems in transition are providing opportunities and breeding grounds for terrorist and extremist groups to survive and proliferate. According to this theory, the political systems which are in transition from any other form of governance to democracy are prone to instability and provide opportunities for terrorist groups because of weak mechanisms to deal with them. Weak intelligence capabilities, respect for civil liberties and restrictions on surveillance are the hallmarks of transitional societies. According to Yalcin, –the states formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Iraqi government qualify as weaker states compared to their predecessors and also as political systems currently in transition or at least in transition in the recent past¹².

They are of the view that political systems in transition are more vulnerable for extremist and violent dissidents, because the grip of old security forces is

⁹ Alex P. Schmid, –Terrorism and democracy^{||}, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol.4, No.4, pp 14-25.

¹⁰ David Claridge, –State terrorism? Applying a definitional model,^{||} *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 8, No.3 (1996), pp 47-63.

¹¹ Charles W. Kagley, *The New Global Terrorism: Characteristics, Causes, Controls* (Pearson, Noida, 2002), p.20.

¹² Demet Yalcin Mousseau, –Democratizing with Ethnic Divisions: A Source of Conflict?^{||} *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 5 (September 2001): 547–67.

diminished along with freedom given in the newly established setup¹³. The presence of free press in democratic societies also provides the opportunity for terrorist groups to propagate their narratives. Media has been used by terrorist groups in carrying their messages to the wider public in ways that would ultimately incite more violence and result in wider acceptance for such groups in the society. To attract popular attention to their cause and compel the authorities to meet their demands, the terrorist groups publicize their narrative by exploiting the free press. According to Eyerman, –the presence of a free press provides opportunities for greater publicity that permits groups to reach their target audience more easily¹⁴. The vulnerability of democratic society to suffer more from terrorism and terrorist related activities has been further facilitated by free press, open borders and the belief on fundamental human rights, which are inalienable even under the hardest of circumstances. For example, in Spain where –the violence by the Basque nationalists increased when a democratic system was created even though it was initially present under an authoritarian regime and that the violence continued into the twenty-first century after more than two decades of democracy¹⁵.

3. MATERIALS & METHODS USED:

This Study was basically aimed to determine the perception of universities' students in Balochistan. It was decided to limit the population of the study to the province of Balochistan and specifically to universities in Quetta. The students in Universities of Quetta are selected as population of the study. The students in Quetta's universities were selected for the following reasons. University of Balochistan is the oldest institution of the province, accommodating students from all over the province. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that University of Balochistan is a mini Balochistan, because there are reserved seats for all districts of the province. Universities in Quetta, especially University of Balochistan, are also the hub of political activities. Student wings of the various regional parties are the core of their respective parties and have vibrant presence in the institute. Last, but not the least factor for selecting university of Balochistan over other institutes is the level of political awareness and civic activities. Unfortunately, there is wide gender gap among the students of the University, but it was addressed during the survey to give equal representation to the female students as well. University of Balochistan is known for producing political leaders of the province, who are now playing important roles at national and provincial levels.

¹³ S. B Blomberg, K Gaibullov, & T. Sandler, –Terrorist group survival: ideology, tactics, and base of operations, *Public Choice*, Vol. 149, No.3, (2011), pp. 441–463.

¹⁴ Joe Eyerman, –Terrorism and democratic states: Soft targets or accessible systems, *International Interactions*, Vo.24, No.2, (1998), pp.151-170.

¹⁵ K. Gaibullov & T. Sandler, –An empirical analysis of alternative ways that terrorist groups end, *Public Choice* 160, (2014), pp. 25–44.

4. SAMPLING & MEASUREMENTS:

This study was based on sample random sampling, because the author is interested in perceptions⁴ of students about the relationship between terrorism and type of regime. The aim of the study was to capture the perception of all students including their ethnic, political and religious affiliations. Therefore simple random sampling technique was selected for survey. In this quantitative study, a questionnaire was developed that consists of dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable was students⁴ perceptions. The independent variable was the relationship between terrorism and type of regime in Pakistan. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire is ensured through secondary data. Before collecting the data, the author developed questionnaire with the help of literature review and surveys in other part of the country. They were asked about their opinion on;

1. Democracy helps to defeat terrorism, because it brings transparency in the system.
2. Democracy is effective against terrorism because it wins the war of narratives.
3. Democracy is effective against terrorism, because it addresses local people grievances.
4. Democracy is effective against terrorism, because it brings local solution to local problems.
5. Democracy is effective, because it has greater level of commitment than dictatorship to defeat terrorism.

Students opinions were taken on a Likert scale ranging from agree, neutral and disagree. This study was random in order to remove biasness and give equal chances of selection to each unit from the population. Questionnaires were randomly distributed among students through research agents. It was made sure that data was not collected from one department or group of students in order to ensure participation of all groups and make the data real representative of the population. For example, the questionnaires were not distributed during a class, or a circle of a particular political party, or among girls group, because it would have been dominated by just one group at the expense of fairness of the survey.

The questionnaire was developed after extensive literature review on the effectiveness of democracy in the war against terrorism. The author had also observed some of the similar studies conducted in other parts of the country and learned sophisticated techniques from the survey of Sustainable Development Policy Institute Islamabad (SDPI) conducted in Malakund division. The key purpose of the questionnaire was to illustrate people perception of the regime effectiveness in the war against terrorism. There are two established groups of literature on the subject of democracy effectiveness. One group of scholars, as discussed in the literature review section, believes that democracy basically

increases the effectiveness of war against terror, because it improves governance, protects minorities, increases transparency, defeats terrorist narratives and enhances people’s participation. On the other hand, there are scholars who believe that democracy basically increases space for terrorists to operate with greater freedom, because they cannot implement strict measures due to people backlash. They are also of the opinion that democracies strict adherence to peace time mechanism at the time of war against terror allow terrorists to organize properly and target places of their choices due to weak security measures. The objective of this study was to determine whether university students in Balochistan agree with the first school of thought or the second one.

5. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:

The development of various statistical models and sophisticated software developments over the period of time brought revolution in the field of data analysis. The amount of information to be analyzed and describe today was never possible in the history of human life. These developments have not made data analysis only more precise and accurate, but easy and accessible. After collection data from the University of Balochistan, the data was entered into Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS), which is one of the best statistical programs for analysis of social phenomenon like terrorism, ethnic violence, and public opinions. There are 4 continues variables in the data, which are age, education, sect, and ethnicity. Each student responding to the questionnaire has provided bio-metric information before giving an opinion on relationship between regime type and democracy.

6. RESULTS:

In order to determine students’ perception of regime type and terrorism, they were asked to give their opinion on the following five statements. The first variable was democracy brings transparency to defeat terrorism. The purpose of this statement was whether transparency in democracy helps to defeat terrorism or not. Overwhelming number of Pashtun (78%) and Baloch (69.7%) students supported the above statement that transparency helps democracy to defeat terrorism. The P value, which denotes statistical significance, is 0.000%, which is very high.

Table 1: Democracy increases transparency to defeat terrorism

		TRANSPERANCY			Total
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
Ethnicity	PUNJABI	11	11	4	26
	PASHTUN	115 (78%)	19	12(8.12%)	146

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BALOCH	69 (69.7%)	14	16 (16.1%)	99
SINDHI	4	0	2	6
MAHAJIR	5	4	7	16
PERCIAN	2	0	5	7
Total	206	48	46	300

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	53.806	10	.000

Surprisingly, there is not any support for the proposition that democracy wins the war of narratives to defeat terrorists. The purpose of this statement was that in the war against terrorism, narrative plays extremely important role, because it determines the popularity and notoriousness of a terrorist organization. 63% Pashtuns and 71% Baloch opposed the above statements. They do not believe that democracy plays any role in the war of narratives. The P value of the relationship is 0.013, which is highly significant.

Table 2: Democracy wins war of narratives to defeat terrorism

	NARRATIVE			Total
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
PUNJABI	1	2	23	26
PASHTUN	25	29	92	146
BALOCH	6	22	71	99
SINDHI	2	0	4	6
MAHAJIR	3	4	9	16
PERCIAN	0	4	3	7

Total	37	61	202	300
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Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Square Chi-Square	22.551	10	.013

Similarly, there is not enough support for the proposition that democracy shows greater commitment in the war against terrorism. 73% Pashtuns and 62% Baloch disagree with the above statements. The statistical significance of the above proposition is 0.033.

Table 3: Democracy increases commitment of the government to defeat terrorism

	COMMITMENT			Total
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
PUNJABI	1	4	21	26
PASHTUN	16	22	108	146
BALOCH	19	18	62	99
SINDHI	2	0	4	6
MAHAJIR	3	2	11	16
PERCIAN	4	0	3	7
Total	45	46	209	300

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Square Chi-Square	19.581	10	.033

There is again not significant support among Pashtun and Baloch for the proposition that democracy brings local solution to local problems. 46% Pashtun and 74 Baloch opposed the following statement. The P value is 0.000.

Table 4: Democracy gives local solution of the local problems to defeat terrorism

		LOCAL_SOLUTION			Total
		Strongly agree/agree	Neutral	Disagree/strongly disagree	
Ethnicity	PUNJABI	5	0	21	26
	PASHTUN	48	30	68	146
	BALOCH	18	7	74	99
	SINDHI	2	0	4	6
	MAHAJIR	7	5	4	16
	PERCIAN	3	2	2	7
	Total	83	44	173	300

Chi-Square Tests

		Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Square	Chi-	38.026	10	.000

Last but not the least proposition was democracy addresses people's grievances that help to defeat terrorism. 47% Pashtuns and 28% Baloch have supported the following proposition. The Chi-Square value is 0.005.

Table 5: Democracy addresses grievances of the people to defeat terrorism

		ADDRESS_GRIEVANCES			Total
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
Ethnicity	PUNJABI	4	11	11	26
	PASHTUN	70	35	41	146
	BALOCH	28	32	39	99
	SINDHI	2	0	4	6
	MAHAJIR	5	4	7	16

PERCIAN		0	4	3	7
Total		109	86	105	300

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.175	10	.005

7. DISCUSSION:

There are different kinds of literature on the relationship between terrorism and regime type. First, it is necessary to mention one point here that there are various kinds of terrorism and different forms of regime types. For example state terrorism, domestic terrorism, international terrorism, religious terrorism and nationalist terrorism. Similarly, there are different forms of governments, liberal democracy, illiberal democracy, autocracy, dictatorship and military dictatorship etc. This study is focused on the binominal distribution between democracy and terrorism only in Pakistani context. It is difficult to precisely define Pakistani democracy, but broadly speaking there have been two kinds of political systems transitional democracy and military dictatorship. The students in universities in Quetta have been asked about the option between military dictatorship and Pakistani democracy that is still in its transitional phase under control of military establishment and intelligence agencies.

As discussed above, there are two kinds of established literature on the influence of democracy on terrorism; strategic influence and political access. The school of thought that believes that democracy is positively associated with terrorism is called –strategic influence. The other school of thought that believes that democracy is negatively associated with terrorism is called –political access. According to Eyerman’s –Strategic influence democracies are weak on terrorism and do not inflict strategic cost on the perpetrator of terrorism, because of freedom of expression, freedom of association, civil liberties access to potential target and right to due process of law¹⁶. Freedom of press even provides them enough public space to present their narrative to the masses that help them to create sympathizers and facilitators¹⁷. Owing to these strategic influences, democracies are weak on terrorism and are the worst victim of terrorism. They do not include those

¹⁶ Joe Eyerman, –Terrorism and democratic states: Soft targets or accessible systems,|| *International Interactions*: Vol 24, No.2, (2008), pp.151-170.

¹⁷ Alex P. Schmid, –Terrorism and democracy,|| *Terrorism and Political Violence*: Vol. 4, No. 4, (1992), pp.14-25.

established democracies that give priorities to protection of their citizens especially the liberal democracies of the west.

On the other hand there are scholars, who believe that democracies are best able to assuage grievances by fostering greater political participation by a wide segment of society. Because they are politically inclusive, democracies will experience fewer terrorist attacks by giving all viewpoints a voice and fostering nonviolent modes of political activism. Consequently, political access predicts that democracy is a negative influence on terrorist attacks in a country by limiting terrorists' derived marginal utility¹⁸. They also argue that voter accountability is also a very powerful factor in democracy that forces regime to be strict on terrorism. The key argument of the political access club is that in democracies due to availability of various windows for addresses of grievance, problems do not spill into terrorism¹⁹. Therefore, they are called political access, which means everybody could access the authorities to share their problems through free and fair election, electronic media, civil society and independent judiciary. Most of studies support a positive relationship between democracy and terrorism, which means they belong to the strategic view club²⁰. A lesser number of studies explored a negative relationship between democracy and terrorism, in line with the political access argument²¹.

According to Amichai Magen article in journal of democracy, terrorism has increased in the west since the emergence of ISSI in 2014, but it is significantly lower than non-democratic countries. –Not only are liberal democracies and polyarchies less prone to terrorist attacks than all other regime types, but the rate of increase in the number of attacks among these democracies is substantially lower in comparison to other regime types, and they are significantly better at minimizing casualties²². She further says that , ‖Meanwhile, data from a longer term—going back nearly two decades rather than just a handful of years—show that when it comes to terrorism, reasonably high-quality democracies enjoy a vital, and seemingly growing, –triple democracy advantage.‖ That is, such democracies suffer

¹⁸ Eli Berman; Jacob N. Shapiro and Joseph H. Felter, –Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq,‖ *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 119, No.4, (2011), pp.766 – 819.

¹⁹ Joe Eyerman, –Terrorism and democratic states: Soft targets or accessible systems,‖ *International Interactions*: Vol 24, No.2, (2008), pp.151-170.

²⁰ Quan Li, –Does Democracy Promote or Reduce Transnational Terrorist Incidents?‖ *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.49, No.2, (2005), pp. 278–297.

²¹ E. Chenoweth, –Democratic Competition and Terrorist Activity,‖ *The Journal of Politics*, Vol 72, No.1. (2010).pp 16-30.

²² Amichai Magen, –Fighting Terrorism: The Democracy Advantage,‖ *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2018, pp. 111–125.

fewer attacks than do other regime types, with a lower rate of increase, and fewer fatalities²³.

The finding of this study is in line with the —Strategic Influence school of thought. Students in Balochistan have a very discouraging opinion of democracy when it comes to terrorism. They are overwhelmingly opposing four key variables related to the core principle of democracy like winning war of narratives, showing greater commitment, providing local solutions to local problems and addressing genuine grievances of the people. They only supported the proposition that democracy brings transparency to defeat terrorism. It shows that Pashtun and Baloch students do not have a high opinion of democracy in Pakistan generally and Balochistan particularly, especially in the war against terrorism. They do not support democracy when it comes to war against terrorism, in other words, they believe that military dictatorship is better in defeating terrorism than democracy, because democracy does not show high commitment, does not provide local solution to local problems, does not win the narrative war, and does not address people's grievances.

8. CONCLUSION:

The objective of the study was basically to determine students' perception of regime effectiveness in the war against terrorism. The effectiveness of the regime especially democracy was decided on the basis of few indicators; transparency, commitment, winning war of narratives, providing local solution to local problems and addressing people's grievances. These indicators were selected from existing literature and political campaign for restoration of democracy. On the other hand, military dictatorship is always accused of all five issues like running counter-terrorism policy without proper transparency, low level of commitment, not good in war of narratives, believing in one size fit all solution, relying on force to address political grievances. It is generally assumed that military leaders do not contest election and do not rely on people's consent to rule; therefore they are less inclined to keep people's security, lives, property and interest as top priority. They are accused of protecting their institutional interest at the expense of common people in Balochistan.

This study has different findings. There is a general perception in Balochistan that students' are front-line soldiers of democracy. They have been at the forefront of various civil society movements like women March, lawyers movement for the restoration of Chief Justice, and political struggles for the restoration of democracy in 2001 and 2007 against Musharraf. This study finds the opposite result of general perception and support the established literature that democracies are not good in addressing the issue of terrorism according to the perception of students' in Balochistan. There are overwhelming number of Pashtun and Baloch students, who rejected four key claims of the democracy; winning war of narrative, showing high level of commitment, providing local solution of the local problems, and addressing people's grievances. The only indicator which secured support from the students' of

²³ Amichai Magen, —Fighting Terrorism: The Democracy Advantage. | *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2018, pp. 111–125.

Balochistan is transparency in the conduct of counter-terrorism. These findings support the inverted U shaped theory regarding the relationship between democracy and terrorism. The concept of inverted U-Shaped is discussed in detail in literature review section.