

From Mohallah to Mainstream:  
The MQM's Transformation from an Ethnic to a Catch-All Party

By

Noman Baig  
B.A., University of Central Oklahoma, 2005

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Department of Political Science

© Noman Baig, 2008

University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

**Supervisory Committee**

Dr. Radhika Desai, Professor, Department of Political Science  
Supervisor

Dr. Feng Xu, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science  
Departmental Member

Dr. Guoguang Wu, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science  
Departmental Member

Dr. Gregory Blue, Associate Professor, Department of History  
External Member

## Abstract

### Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Radhika Desai, Professor, Department of Political Science  
Supervisor

Dr. Feng Xu, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science  
Departmental Member

Dr. Guoguang Wu, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science  
Departmental Member

Dr. Gregory Blue, Associate Professor, Department of History  
External Member

This thesis asks how the *Mohajir Quami Mahaz* (MQM), transformed itself from an ethnic to a catch-all party. Existing literature heavily emphasizes the MQM's militancy, while this thesis explores the journey of the party, formed in 1984 to represent Urdu-speakers in Pakistan, through each phase of its development down to its transformation into the *Muttahida Qaumi Mahaz* (United National Movement) in 1997. The MQM's process of transformation can be explained theoretically through Kirchheimer's catch-all party theory. My findings note a shift from an ethno-militant agenda of Mohajir interests to one stressing the need for "national unity" and modernization. It is argued that the party shifted from making choices based on ideology to a strategy-based politics. The MQM, therefore, sought voters outside its traditional constituent base in an effort to gain national appeal. As an urban-based middle-class party, it provides an ideal example of how a party adapts to a changing social environment fractured by military administration, modernity, and political Islam. Therefore, this thesis is the story of the MQM's journey from mohallah to mainstream.

## Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	iv
List of Tables .....	vi
List of Abbreviations .....	vii
Heads of State and Government.....	viii
Glossary .....	ix
Chronology of the MQM .....	x
Preface and Acknowledgements .....	xiii
Dedication .....	xxiv
Epigraph.....	xxv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Thesis Question and Hypothesis.....	5
Synopsis .....	5
Definition of Mohajir .....	6
Literature Review .....	8
Critique of Previous Explanations of the MQM’s Change .....	13
Rationale and Significance of the Study .....	15
Methodology.....	16
CHAPTER ONE .....	19
Evolution of Political Parties in Pakistan .....	19
CHAPTER TWO.....	42
Theorizing the MQM’s Change .....	42
Defining “Party” .....	43
Conceptualizing the Development of Parties .....	45
The Catch-All Theory .....	48
Growth of Political Parties in Pakistan .....	55
Factors Contributing to the MQM’s Transformation.....	58
CHAPTER THREE.....	65
Urdu Speakers’ Dominance and Decline.....	65
Arrival and Settlement of Migrants .....	66

Urdu Speakers' Dominance in Pakistan's Early Years, 1947-58.....	69
Urdu Speakers' Supremacy Declines.....	75
Ayub Khan's Reforms, 1958-1969.....	76
Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Reforms, 1970-1977.....	78
Zia ul-Haq Bolsters Punjabi Hegemony, 1977-1988.....	81
Urbanization and Underdevelopment .....	83
Underdevelopment.....	86
CHAPTER FOUR.....	89
Emergence of Agitational Mohajir Politics and the MQM.....	89
The MQM's Rise to Popularity and Power.....	95
Assertion of the 'Mohajir' Identity.....	97
Organizational Structure of the MQM.....	101
Mode of Operation.....	102
Politics of Alliance Making.....	106
Political Islam Challenges the MQM.....	121
CHAPTER FIVE.....	126
The MQM's Transformation.....	126
Changing the Party Name .....	127
Changing the Party Structure.....	129
Manufacturing a Soft Image for the Party.....	132
Altaf Hussain Broadens His Vision .....	133
Ideology versus Strategy: From Protest to Acquiescence.....	136
CHAPTER SIX.....	151
Conclusion .....	151
Appendices.....	154
Bibliography.....	156

### List of Tables

Table 1. Political Parties' Electoral Position in Sindh National Assembly Elections.....	2
Table 2. Comparison of MQM's Goals and Objectives in Pre- and Post-1997 Periods.....	3
Table 3. Party Electoral Positions in the 1970 National Assembly Elections .....	34
Table 4. Settlement Location of 1947 Migrants to Pakistan According to Their Zone of Origin in India <sup>a</sup> .....	67
Table 5. Ethnic Representation in Federal Bureaucracy, 1973-86.....	82
Table 6. Intercensal Increase in Karachi's Population Size (1951-1981) .....	85
Table 7. Statistics from Karachi Riots.....	94
Table 8. The MQM's 1988 Charter of Resolution .....	110
Table 9. Party Positions in National Assembly Elections: 1988-1997.....	115
Table 10. Party Positions in Sindh Provincial Assembly: 1988-1997.....	115
Table 11. Voter Turnout (1988-2002) by Percentage.....	119
Table 12 Results: 2002 National Assembly Election .....	147
Table 13. Party Performance - Sindh Assembly: 1997 .....	147
Table 14. Party Performance in Sindh Assembly - 2002.....	148

### List of Abbreviations

AL	Awami League	Ethnic
ANP	Awami National Party	Ethnic
APMSO	All Pakistan Mohajir Student Organization	Student
APPWA	All-Pakistan Progressive Writers Association	Communist
BI	Baloch Ittehad	Ethnic
BLA	Baloch Liberation Army	Ethnic
COP	Combined Opposition Party	National
CPI	Communist Party of India	Communist
CPP	Communist Party of Pakistan	Communist
IJI	Islami Jamhoori Ittehad	Islamic
IJT	Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba	Student
JI	Jamat-e-Islami	Islamic
JSQM	Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz	Ethnic
JUI	Jamat-ulma-e-Islam	Islamic
JUP	Jamat-ulma-e-Pakistan	Islamic
JWP	Jamhoori Watan Party	Ethnic
KSP	Krishak Sramik Party	Communist
MIT	Mohajir Ittehad Tehreek	Ethnic
ML	Muslim League	National
MMA	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal	Islamic
MQM	Muttahida Qaumi Mahaz	National
MQM (H)	Mohajir Qaumi Mahaz	Ethnic
MRD	Movement for the Restoration of Democracy	National
NAP	National Awami Party	National
PML(N)	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)	National
PML(Q)	Pakistan Muslims League (Quaid-e-Azam)	National
PNA	Pakistan National Alliance	National
PNP	Pakistan National Party	National
PPI	Punjabi Pakthun Ittehad	Ethnic
PPP	Pakistan People's Party	National
SSP	Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan	Islamic
ST	Sunni Tehreek	Islamic
TNM	Tehreek-e-Nizam-e-Mustafa	Islamic

### Heads of State and Government

Leader	Position	Dates	Affiliate
Muhammad Ali Jinnah	Governor General	08/1947- 09/1948	ML
Liaquat Ali Khan	Prime Minister	08/1947-10/1951	ML
Khawaja Nazimuddin	Governor General	09/1948-10/1951	ML
Muhammad Ali Bogra	Prime Minister	04/1953-08/1955	ML
Iskander Mirza	Governor General/ President	08/1955-10/1958	ML
Chaudhry Muhammad Ali	Prime Minister	08/1955-09/1956	ML
H.S. Suhrawardy	Prime Minister	09/1956-10/1957	ML
I.I. Chundrigar	Prime Minister	10/1957-12/1957	ML
Firoz Khan Noon	Prime Minister	12/1957-10/1958	ML
Muhammad Ayub Khan	Chief Martial Law Adm./ President	10/1958-03/1969	Military
Muhammad Yahya Khan	President	03/1969-12/1971	Military
Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto	President/ Prime Minister	12/1971-07/1977	PPP
Zia ul Haq	Chief Martial Law Adm. President	07/1977-12/1988	Military
Mohammad Ali Junejo	Prime Minister	03/1985-05/1988	PML
Benazir Bhutto	Prime Minister	12/1988-08/1990	PPP
Ghulam Ishaq Khan	President	08/1988-07/1993	PPP
Nawaz Sharif	Prime Minister	10/1990-07/1993	PML
Benazir Bhutto	Prime Minister	10/1993-11/1996	PPP
Sardar Farooq Leghari	President	11/1993-12/1997	PML
Nawaz Sharif	Prime Minister	02/1997-10/1999	PML
Mohammad Rafiq Tarar	President	01/1998-06/2001	PML
Pervez Musharraf	Chief Martial Law Adm./ President	10/1999-present	Military

### Glossary

<i>Mahaz</i>	Movement
<i>Mohallah</i>	Neighborhood
<i>Nazar</i>	Gaze
<i>Bhai</i>	Brother
<i>Shaheed</i>	Martyr
<i>Chowk</i>	Street Intersection
<i>Fikri Nishist</i>	Thoughtful Session
<i>Tarbiati Nishist</i>	Training Session
<i>Tehreek</i>	Movement
<i>Ittehad</i>	Unity
<i>Muttahida</i>	United
<i>Lalukhet</i>	A term used for residents of Liaquatabad, Karachi
<i>Golimar</i>	Mohajir dominated lower-class town in Karachi
<i>Hungamay</i>	Riots
<i>Dars-e-Quran</i>	Quranic Teachings
<i>Naat Khawani</i>	Chanting in praise of Mohammad
<i>Milad</i>	Celebrating Mohammad
<i>Hijra</i>	Arabic for migration
<i>Qaum</i>	Nation
<i>Ajrak</i>	Sindhi shawl
<i>Orangi</i>	Mohajir dominated lower-class town
<i>Jihad</i>	Holy war
<i>Bhatta</i>	Protection money (extortion)
<i>Lathi</i>	Stick
<i>Goths</i>	Ethnic enclaves
<i>Pir Elahi Buksh Colony</i>	A Mohajir town made for civil servants in Karachi
<i>Mujahideen</i>	Islamic fighters
<i>Gharib</i>	Poor
<i>Muzloom</i>	Oppressed
<i>Qarardad-i-Maqasid</i>	Charter of Resolution
<i>Qurbani</i>	Sacrifice
<i>Ishq</i>	Love
<i>Hosla</i>	Confidence
<i>Pir</i>	Saint
<i>Quaid</i>	Leader
<i>Gulshan-e-Iqbal</i>	Upper middle-class Mohajir town in Karachi
<i>Masjid</i>	Mosque
<i>Eid Miladun Nabi</i>	Muslim's celebration of Prophet Mohammad's birthday
<i>Fatwa</i>	Edict
<i>Khitab</i>	Speech
<i>Yakjehti</i>	Unity
<i>Pakthunistan</i>	Name for a Pakthun homeland

## **Chronology of the MQM**

### **Phase 1: Mohajir ethno-nationalist 1984-1997**

June 11, 1978	Altaf Hussain forms the All Pakistan Mohajir Student Organization (APMSO) in Karachi University to demand rights for Urdu-speaking students in educational institutions.
March 18, 1984	The APMSO leaders form the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) to champion Mohajir grievances against unfair treatment in civil service and education.
April 15, 1985	Bushra Zaidi, an Urdu-speaking student, is run over and killed by a Pathan bus driver. This leads to widespread Mohajir-Pathan clashes in Karachi which were successfully capitalized on by the MQM to serve its political agenda.
August 8, 1986	The MQM holds its first public meeting in Nishtar Park. The party also aligns with the Sindhi nationalist organization, the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM)
November 1987	The MQM wins the local municipal elections in Karachi and Hyderabad, marking its formal entry into Pakistan's political scene.
November 16, 1988	The MQM wins thirteen seats in the National Assembly Election and becomes the third largest political party in Pakistan. The party then joins the PPP-led government at the national level and in Sindh province.
October 31, 1988	Armed militants from another Sindhi nationalist party, the Sindhi Tarraqi Passand Party, massacre dozens of people in an MQM public congregation held in Pakka Qila in Hyderabad. The MQM retaliates by killing Sindhis in Karachi.
October 1989	The Hyderabad massacre forces the MQM to quit the PPP government and join the opposition led by Nawaz Sharif's Islami Jamhoori Ittehad.
August 6, 1990	Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government is dismissed by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan.

- October 24, 1990 The MQM wins National and Provincial Assembly [general elections] and becomes a coalition partner of Nawaz Sharif's IJI government.
- January, 1991 The MQM decides to change party name from Mohajir Qaumi Movement to Muttahida Qaumi Movement. The several senior party members dissented and thus the MQM delayed its decision of changing party's nomenclature.
- January 1, 1992 Altaf Hussain leaves for London for medical treatment and remains there. Since that time he has successfully controlled the party from his London outpost.
- June 19, 1992 The army launches Operation Clean-up. The army takes over Sindh to fight urban "terrorism" and rural "banditry." The operation leads to the split in the MQM with the creation of the MQM (Haqiqi). MQM leaders and cadres go underground while party's offices are sealed.
- October 6, 1993 After the dismissal of Nawaz Sharif's government, new elections are held and the MQM boycotts the national assembly elections. However, the MQM secures a landslide victory in provincial elections and joins the PPP in Sindh government for the second time.

### **Phase 2: Catch-all 1997-present**

- February 3, 1997 Benazir Bhutto's government is dissolved on the charges of extra-judicial killings of MQM workers in fake encounters by law-enforcement personnel. The MQM wins the national and provincial assembly elections with low margins and joins Nawaz Sharif's PML government for the second time.
- July 26, 1997 The MQM changes its name from Mohajir Qaumi Movement to Muttahida Qaumi Movement.
- October 17, 1998 Murder of Hakim Mohammad Sayeed, a famous Pakistani philanthropist, allegedly by an MQM activist, leads to the suspension of the provincial assembly in Sindh and the imposition of Governor rule (suspension of provincial government) in Sindh province. The MQM-Sharif partnership was finally over.

- October 19, 1999      Pervez Musharraf overthrows Nawaz Sharif's government in a military coup and dissolves assemblies for an unspecified period.
- September 11, 2001      Attack on America and Pakistan becomes the frontline state in the US' War on Terror. Pakistan's military establishment withdraws its support from jihadist organizations.
- October 10, 2002      The MQM became a coalition partner of its arch nemesis, the military government, after winning rigged national and provincial assembly elections.

### **Preface and Acknowledgements**

Having lived in the most politicized and violent part of Karachi, known as *Liaquatabad* (named after Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's first Prime Minister), I have witnessed at close quarters the forces that undermine the existence of civil society and state. Today, when I try, in retrospect, to decipher my experiences – such as attending a local madrassah (Islamic religious school) or witnessing street violence – I find myself inclined to examine how the struggles among political forces in my neighborhood were shaped, determined, and framed by politics at the national and international levels. Therefore, my motivation for writing and conducting this study is twofold. First, I harbor deep curiosity about how the forces of change from the 1980s through the 1990s necessitated the diversification of the MQM. Second, I aim to fill the gap in the hitherto published literature that emphasizes the MQM's militant politics and ignores the party's process of transformation.

Much to the dismay of my mother, I was more curious than others in my family about the violent street activities of the 1990s when the MQM clashed with the government. I took any chance available to observe street battles by peeking from windows or ventilators and, whenever afforded the opportunity, I left the house to obtain a close-up view of burning vehicles and taunting youths. I never grew tired of watching hundreds of youths from my neighborhood gather on the main street and provoke law enforcement forces to approach, only to disappear into our narrow and twisted alleys. I suppose I remain uncured of my deep curiosity about these forces of change in Karachi and about how ethnicity and religion fueled conflict. In addition, perhaps obtaining a

more accurate understanding of why these changes occurred brings some reconciliation to a mind burdened by haunting memories.

Liaquatabad, with a population of more than six hundred thousand, lies at the geographical and political heart of Pakistan's commercial capital, Karachi. The neighborhood's predominantly lower class and rebellious Urdu-speaking population is critical to understanding the history of the MQM, and consequently, of Pakistan in general. Since 1985, this town has been the center of riots and acts of militancy carried out by mobs of youths. The famous Pakistani comedian, Omar Sharif, humorously valorized the people of Liaquatabad in his stage shows, popularizing the town as *Lalukhet* and its residents as *Lalukheti*. In Karachi, the term *Lalukheti*, especially when used by the "cultured" elite symbolizes people with "uncivilized" and "uncultured" social behavior. Given Liaquatabad's strategic political, geographical, and social significance, the area was targeted by the MQM as a center for the party's militant activities. In other words, Liaquatabad became a centre for MQM because it was important, largely due to the large Urdu-speaking population. The neighborhood provided the party with hundreds of eager youthful recruits who were used to perpetuate the MQM's politically-motivated violence. For example, in 1995, when more than two thousand people were killed in Karachi during MQM clashes with police, Liaquatabad's death toll of 185 ranked the second highest in the city. In fact, while more MQM militants came from Liaquatabad than any other locality in Karachi, none of the party's top leaders called this neighborhood home. Most MQM leaders were from middle-class areas of Karachi.

As I grew up in the midst of this volatile environment, riots (*hungamay*), inevitably, were an integral part of my earliest political experiences. The following

recollections of some major incidents from the 1985 riots deeply affected me as a child, and even today resonate in my mind. I still remember, though I was only five at the time, the day police shot my grandmother when she was caught amid rioting on her way to a local bazaar. The police shot her in the legs as they opened fire on nearby rioters. On the one hand, this incident generated resentment against the state in my Urdu-speaking family, who as Indian migrants – as Mohajirin – took pride that the sacrifices we made in the struggle for Pakistan were greater than those of any other ethnic group in the country. On the other, this event caused my grandmother to lament the loss of her idyllic birthplace, Meerut, India, and initiated long family discussions on the partition, Hindu-Muslim relationships in pre-partition India, Jinnah and Gandhi, and everything that led to their migration to Pakistan from north India. The MQM successfully capitalized on this frustration and resentment against the state, typical among Urdu-speakers of urban Sindh, to promote its militant and ethnic agendas. After 1985, I witnessed numerous other scenes that still haunt me. One such episode from 1987 brings to mind the blood-covered shirts and swollen faces of my uncle and cousin, who were shot and brutally tortured by the police while returning from work amidst rioting.

As riots spiraled out of control in the late 1980s, the state relied on a most punishing mechanism of control, unduly long curfews, which always failed to subdue the frenzied mobs in Liaquatabad. One day, while we were playing cricket outside my house during curfew hours, the army rolled in and indiscriminately opened fire on us. As we scrambled to hide, several people were gunned down and nearly died. I recall that horrific scene, more often than I would like, the blood-splattered streets and shoes scattered about, evidence of our frenzied race to safety. Nobody had the courage to leave our

homes to pick up those who had not escaped the gunfire. I could hear one man, just outside my house, shrieking in pain and begging someone to come get him, but no one came. We were afraid that if we left our homes, we too would be shot. These ghastly scenes and many more, plague my childhood memories from Liaquatabad.

The MQM's electoral success in 1988 in national and provincial elections ushered in a new era of Mohajir ethno-nationalism. The MQM's attainment of political representation brought a strong voice to Urdu speakers' grievances and their demand for recognition as an ethnic group: the Mohajirin. Although my family had lived in Liaquatabad since the partition, we never truly embraced sub-national Mohajir politics. Perhaps that was because my maternal grandfather, a committed Muslim Leaguer all his life, and the Federal Minister of Religious Affairs from 1986-1988, loathed the MQM for threatening the unity of Pakistan. However, my neighbors in Liaquatabad were quickly seduced into this militant nationalism, jubilating in the electoral victory of the MQM, and feeling proud of their identity as Mohajirin. Even women mobilized in large numbers, which was quite unusual in Pakistan's conservative patriarchal society, where middle-class women, at least, usually stayed home without considering political activism. Women came out on the streets wearing colorful bangles and scarves displaying the MQM flag's colors to demonstrate their enthusiastic support of the party. In short, Mohajirin shared feelings of joy, celebration, and achievement; feelings that were, perhaps, reminiscent of those their ancestors shared during their pursuit of their own state, Pakistan, in 1947. Although I lived in the midst of this exciting street nationalism, which was of course appealing and alluring to me throughout my childhood and adolescence, my parents' strict rules prevented me from becoming involved in any

*mohallah* (neighborhood) gatherings related to the MQM. Although I endured mild teasing for abstaining from these MQM-related neighborhood gatherings, my relationships with my more activist peers remained strong, continuing to inform my investigations today.

The majority of my friends never went to school, while my parents could afford to send my brothers and me to a private Jesuit school in Karachi after my father's business began to thrive in 1987. As a schoolboy, I paid little attention to differences between myself and my friends; yet with the passage of time, I became aware of growing contrasts in our sense of enjoyment and worth. These dissimilarities were much more recognizable by the mid 1990s, when clashes with law enforcement officers became lengthier and more brutal, yet my friends and other neighborhood youths continued to take part in riots with pride. Puzzlingly, their violent activities were a source of great enjoyment for them. As my friends continued to participate in the escalating situation, I remained on the sidelines, mostly involved in my studies.

From 1992-1996 the state undertook a more aggressive approach to curtail the MQM's militancy and reduce its power (Operation Cleanup). The well-armed party resisted, leading to more violence. I remember cowering in a room with my family on several occasions of dangerously close and continuous firing. During Operation Cleanup, the cemetery just behind my home became one of the most dangerous places in Karachi. MQM militants used the cover of the cemetery to kill kidnapped policeman, army personnel, and spies. In return, the so-called law-enforcement personnel would openly assassinate arrested MQM activists in the same graveyard; all this gunfire occurred within earshot of my home. The situation was worse in my maternal grandmother's

neighborhood. She lived in the lower-class district of *Gulbahar*, also known as *Golimar* (gunfire). MQM fighters dug trenches on every side of this neighborhood to resist army invasion. Here MQM activists from all over Karachi congregated, planned future operations, kept a vigilant eye on residents, and distributed weapons to other localities. They brought kidnapped law-enforcement officers there to hang them from the soccer posts in the *Khajji* ground, where I had fond memories of playing cricket. During the violence, which lasted four months, we were able to visit my grandmother, who lived near the *Khajji* ground, only once due to the danger and stress of passing through the MQM security checkpoint and crossing the trench to enter. In 1996, after successfully resisting an army invasion for three months, the MQM opened *Gulbahar* and dispersed to other towns. Shortly thereafter, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, along with foreign diplomats, visited the *Khajji* ground to display MQM atrocities to the media and to reassert the writ of the state. Finally, when I was able to visit my grandmother's home again, I witnessed the destruction in the neighborhood which communicated the severity of the MQM-government showdown that had taken place there.

Growing up in the midst of the violence, I became conscious of state and police brutality from an early age. The police, army, and rangers inspired deep fear in our minds. The police's and army's indiscriminate firing on people, especially rioters, as well as the several-day sieges, the random searches of our houses, and the constant threat of arrest and killing, all generated feelings of revulsion towards our government. I remember one morning in 1996, I woke up to an announcement from the mosques warning us to stay in our homes because law enforcement personnel had laid siege to our entire neighborhood to search houses for weapons and MQM terrorists. Inevitably, the

police and army soon came to my home, asking for weapons and questioning us about possible involvement with the MQM. Although that siege lasted for only two days and nights, the incident generated deep hatred for the government. Stories of interrogation and people's experiences and anecdotes resonated for a long time. This was the reason my grandfather, who never liked the MQM and its militant politics, risked his and his family's safety to give a safe refuge in his house for more than a year to the innocent cousin of one of the most notorious of the MQM terrorists. In some sense, the state fuelled the MQM's popularity by being more violent and corrupt than they were, so that even those who opposed the MQM were inclined to aid their cause in protest against the state.

The state's suppressive reaction and the MQM's violent behavior resulted in the deaths of numerous people with whom I had grown up playing cricket and flying kites. Further, conflicts and rivalries among so-called political parties for more power and control over localities caused mayhem in an already bloody situation. All the MQM and other groups did for their dead workers was to call them *shaheed* (martyrs), put up commemorative plaques in their names at *chowks* (street intersections) and snatch the Pakistani flag from such locations. Ironically, the MQM's leader, Altaf Hussain, enjoyed a peaceful life in his London apartment all the while. And as far as the state was concerned, they referred to these people merely as criminals and gave them derogatory epithets such as Rehan "Kaana" (one-eyed), Faheem "Kan Kata" (one who had lost an ear), Tariq "Commando", and Imran "Khal Nayak" (villain). Although I grew up with many of these "famous" militants, I did not know about their colorful aliases or the government-issued bounties on their heads until I read about them in the newspapers. I

saw them roaming and patrolling streets with Kalashnikovs in their hands. I remember the days when the MQM issued strike-calls and these militants opened fire on the police, burnt their vehicles, and forced people to close their shops and schools. I have never witnessed them killing people, but the government referred to them as “terrorists” and accused them of committing mass murders. As widespread arrest was common in Liaquatabad, the police would often arrest absconders’ families. Often relatives of those arrested asked my father to use his social and political contacts with prominent people in order to have their sons released. Over time, however, more radical and militant groups from other localities replaced the local groups which had been active in the neighborhood and showed a more assertive attitude. During this time I recall that some MQM militants who had run out of money came on motorbikes with Kalashnikovs to ask my father ‘politely’ for a donation. He of course refused.

In the mid-1990s, as the state suppressed the MQM, and the party’s cause became more dangerous and less successful, I observed a change in the identity of the people of Liaquatabad. People began to identify with Islam rather than on ethnic grounds. I noticed people shifting away from the Mohajir ethno-nationalism that for so long had been the center of identity in my neighborhood. People who enthusiastically supported the MQM and the youths who were at the forefront of the MQM’s Mohajir movement began to find their inspiration in the religious ideologies of the Barelvi and the Deobandi Islamic schools. They began to transfer their energies to celebrating religious festivities and occasions, rather than propagating their Mohajir identity and the MQM’s political agenda. Similarly, whereas in the past Mohajir youth would spend their time debating and arguing about ethnic issues, the government’s unjust ethnic quota system, and

discrimination against the Mohajirin, they were now involved in theological debates over Quranic interpretation and the lifestyle of Prophet Mohammad. In fact, people in my neighborhood even invented new festivities and revived old rituals to observe a new and fervent religiosity. Curiously, by the late 1990s, the same people, who in the past had celebrated the MQM supremo Altaf Hussain's birthday with great fanfare, now devoted themselves passionately to commemorating the Prophet Mohammad's birthday.

Unlike in the 1980s, when people gathered by the hundreds of thousands for MQM political meetings, they now traveled hundreds of miles to Multan and Raiwand to hear religious preaching. Frequent *Dars-e-Quran* (Quran lessons) congregations at chowks replaced the MQM's "Corner Meetings," held in mohallahs to inform and mobilize its workers. The MQM's unit offices, set up all over Karachi, where youths previously met to be part of the organization and its political activities were no longer a 'fun' place to hang out. In fact, by the mid-1990s, madrassahs and mosques became the new places of attraction for the youth in my and other Urdu-speaking neighborhoods in Karachi. Three new madrassahs appeared in my small alley alone, with hundreds established throughout Karachi. In the same place where once I had witnessed the development of Mohajir ethnic chauvinism, Islamic gatherings, festivities, rituals, practices, and symbols became the dominant part of people's everyday life.

While conducting this study, my friends and relatives, fearful of the MQM, and of course concerned about me, warned me of the sensitivity of my topic and cautioned me not to criticize the MQM, or asked me to change my topic altogether. While I listened to their advice respectfully, the comments made me feel even more committed to applying myself to the scholarly study of this political party and to reveal the MQM's true essence.

Some related indelible memories of my research in Karachi remain with me. When I visited the MQM office, I could not avoid noticing the huge Altaf Hussain posters adorning almost every wall, which served to remind people of their distant leader. While gathering information in Karachi, I also became keenly aware of how personalized the world of politics is in Pakistan. One can only conduct research through personal contacts. Without such, research may be impossible, or at least would constitute a very frustrating experience. Certainly, my research efforts were colored by my identity as a native Urdu-speaker. MQM members accepted me enthusiastically saying, “*apna bacha hai*” (He is our kid). I was allowed to access large amounts of information in rich detail and was, of course, plied with cups of tea. During my conversations with MQM politicians, including a member of provincial assembly, I was instructed not to write anything regarding MQM’s militancy.

This project would have not been possible without the guidance and unstinting patience of my supervisor, Dr. Radhika Desai. Dr Desai instructed me in polishing my prose, provided contextual and historical analysis of the subject matter, and guided me towards valid arguments. I am also indebted to Drs. Feng Xu, Guoguang Wu, and Gregory Blue for kindly agreeing to serve on my thesis committee, and offering useful and formative comments on the project. Dr. Blue meticulously read my draft and gave each chapter a painstaking reading that was thoughtful and immensely helpful. I am profoundly grateful to my family, whose encouragement and loving support throughout this study, and my education in general, have enabled me to realize my dreams. My greatest debt is to my wife, Elizabeth, who provided inspirations in every moment,

critically engaged with me on this topic, challenged my arguments, and scrupulously proofread many drafts without any hesitation.

**Dedication**

**To**

**Ammi and Abbu**

## Epigraph

The history will have to be written of a particular mass of men who have followed the founders of the party, sustained them with their trust, loyalty and discipline, or criticized them “realistically” by dispersing or remaining passive before certain initiatives. But will this mass be made up solely of members of the party? Will it be sufficient to follow the congresses, the votes etc., that is to say the whole nexus of activities and modes of existence through which the mass following of a party manifests its will? Clearly it will be necessary to take account of the social group of which the party in question is the expression and most advanced element. The history of a party, in other words, can only be a history of a particular social group. But this group is not isolated: it has friends, kindred groups, opponents, enemies. The history of any given party can only emerge from the complex portrayal of the totality of society and State (often with international ramifications too). *Hence it may be said that to write the history of a party means nothing less than to write the general history of a country from a monographic viewpoint, in order to highlight a particular aspect of it.*

Antonio Gramsci in *The Modern Prince*  
[emphasis added]

## INTRODUCTION

The MQM's relatively sudden popularity and Urdu speakers' mobilization under the ethno-militant agenda of Mohajir nationalism in urban Sindh in the 1980s and 1990s came as a surprise to people in the country. The politically inexperienced leadership of the MQM combined with the immature and militant behavior of its young members generated a series of violent conflicts with the state and non-Mohajir ethnic groups. The party's militant nature soon gave rise to an organizational structure incomparable to that of any other political party in the country. In fact, the party's mechanism of control, both physical and ideological, was so powerful that it could, for a time at least, prevail over the state's inefficient surveillance and policing system, which was suffering from lack of financial resources, nepotism, and bureaucratic corruption. The notion, 'state within the state,' definitely fits the MQM's style of politics and its existence. The party began contesting national and provincial elections in 1988 and has participated in almost all elections since then. However, the party's brief moment with a high degree of street power, 1988-1992, soon ended as the state launched the infamous Operation Cleanup to curtail the MQM's power. The state action against the MQM from 1992-1996 weakened the MQM's most appealing factor, its street power, and thus reduced the party's capacity to function as a strong militant-ethnic group. The weakened MQM provided space to extremist and orthodox religious groups to emerge and to recruit youths. This phenomenon introduced new players, religious-sectarian organizations, into an already bloody situation marred by ethnic political parties and the state. However, despite the army operation against the party, the MQM continued to contest and win national and provincial seats from the urban Sindh, albeit with decreasing popularity. Table 1 presents

the parties' electoral position in the Sindh National Assembly Elections between 1988 and 1997, demonstrating that the party lost voters in 1997.

Table 1. Political Parties' Electoral Position in Sindh National Assembly Elections

Party	Election Year							
	1988		1990		1993		1997	
	% of Votes	Seats	% of Votes	Seats	% of Votes	Seats	% of Votes	Seats
MQM	<b>25.5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>27.09</b>	<b>15</b>	-	-	<b>17.91</b>	<b>12</b>
PPP	46.54	31	41.81	24	51.68	33	32.08	18
PML(N)/IJI	12.8	0	8.82	3	30.4	10	18.56	9
IND/Others	15.15	2	22.28	4	17.92	3	31.45	7
Total	100	45	100	46	100	46	100	46

Source: Ali Hassan, "Split Mandate," *The Herald*, March 1997, 54

On July 26, 1997, the MQM made official its transformation from an ethno-militant party to a national catch-all party by reorienting its goals and objectives and expanding its appeal to non-Mohajir communities living across Pakistan. The MQM also changed its name from Mohajir Qaumi Movement to Muttahida (National) Qaumi Movement and claimed to represent a rather vaguely defined stratum of the population, the 'oppressed classes.' Political party theorists generally agree that electoral decline is the primary motivation for a party to change. Table 1 indicates that the MQM lost three seats in the Sindh National Assembly Elections held in February 1997 just four months before the party's transformation in July 1997. The party's electoral seats decreased from 15 seats in 1990 to 12 in 1997. More importantly, the percentage of votes received by the MQM fell from 27.09% to 17.91%, a difference of 10%. The voter turnout was also very low with just over 28% in Karachi indicating a "reduction in the MQM's vote bank."<sup>1</sup> Although a loss of three seats seems a minor defeat, a 10% decrease in votes translates into a major challenge for a small party like the MQM that relied on a narrow social base,

<sup>1</sup> Ali Hassan, "Split Mandate," *The Herald*, March 1997, 56.

the Urdu-speaking population in urban Sindh. Operation Cleanup may appear to have forced the MQM change out of an act of desperation; however, it is important to note that the MQM had decided to change its name prior to the state assault.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the transformation can be viewed as a combination of strategy/calculation and reaction to defeat by the army. Despite the electoral loss, it is difficult to establish a singular cause of the MQM's change. A lack of official party information and data contributes to this difficulty, as does the complicated nature of Pakistani politics and the near impossibility of establishing causal relations. Hence, this thesis explores, with the aid of relevant theories, the MQM's journey from an ethnic-militant group to a mainstream national party. This process includes mapping the steps taken in the party's transformation and how they relate to theories and Pakistan's social milieu.

The thesis notes that the newly reoriented MQM de-emphasized Mohajir ethnicity in favor of mainstream goals such as modernization and uplifting oppressed classes from the brutal and medieval rule of feudalism. Table 2 compares the MQM's goals before and after the party's change.

Table 2. Comparison of MQM's Goals and Objectives in Pre- and Post-1997 Periods

1984-1997	Post-1997
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Greater share of employment in civil services for Mohajirin.</li> <li>➤ Separate Mohajir identity and a status of a fifth nationality.</li> <li>➤ Arms license for Mohajirin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Greater provincial autonomy and decentralization of power</li> <li>➤ Constitutional amendments in line with the 1940 Lahore Resolution to provide more power to provinces.</li> <li>➤ Fair share of revenue to the provinces.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Aaser Husain, "The Battle Within," *The Herald*, March 1991.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Repatriation of stranded Biharis to Pakistan from refugee camps in Bangladesh.</li> <li>➤ Restrictions on migration to Karachi.</li> <li>➤ Improvement of education, transportation, and housing facilities in Karachi.</li> <li>➤ Elimination of discrimination against Mohajir students in educational institutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Eradication of defunct feudal system</li> <li>➤ Human development throughout Pakistan.</li> <li>➤ An end to gender discrimination.</li> <li>➤ Formulation of comprehensive strategy to accelerate economic growth.</li> </ul>
--	--

Source: Hussain, Altaf, and Khalid Athar. *Safar-i Zindagi : Em. Kiyu. Em. Ki Kahani, Altaf Husain Ki Zabani* [Life Journey: The MQM's Story in Altaf Hussain's Words]. Isha'at 1 ed. Lahaur: Jang Pabliharz, 1988; Hussain, Altaf. *Pakistan Ki Azadi Ke Pacas Bars: Kiya Khoya Kiya Paya* [Fifty Years of Pakistan's Independence: What We Lost and Gained]. Isha'at 1 ed. Karaci: Taqsimkar, Velkam Buk Port, 2004.

Table 2 compares the MQM's goals and objectives in two periods; 1984-1997 and the post-1997 period. As is clear from the pre-1997 goals, the MQM was initially formed as a party to represent Mohajir interests. The pre-1997 goals represent Urdu-speakers' demands, including the demand for a recognized separate nationality and greater share of employment in the civil services for Mohajirin. These demands became a primary source of contention between Urdu-speakers and non-Mohajir groups, especially Sindhis who accused the MQM of fostering hatred in the country. In the post-1997 era, the MQM emerged as a de-ethnicized organization with greater goals of modernization, development, and provincial autonomy. The MQM deployed several strategies to appeal to non-Mohajir groups such as changing its nomenclature, organizational structure, and leader's persona in order to become a national catch-all party.

## **Thesis Question and Hypothesis**

This thesis asks how the MQM transformed itself from an ethnic to a catch-all party. The MQM's process of transformation can be explained theoretically through Kirchheimer's catch-all party theory. My findings note a shift from an ethno-militant agenda to one stressing the need for "national unity" and modernization. I argue that the party shifted from making choices based on ideology to a politics based on strategy. The process of the MQM's transformation coincides with Kirchheimer's description of party change, which includes, but is not limited to, a loss of votes as a catalyst for party re-orientation. As an urban-based middle-class party, the MQM provides an ideal example of how a party adapts to a changing social environment fractured by military administration, modernity, and political Islam.

## **Synopsis**

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter covers the evolution of political parties in Pakistan and describes the political climate of the country that gave birth to the MQM. Chapter 2 is particularly significant as it places the study within a theoretical framework. It conceptualizes the MQM's change by delineating the party's transformation from cadre-party to a catch-all party. Chapter 3 contains a detailed historical account of the Mohajirin rise and decline as a force that generated Urdu-speakers' political consciousness. Chapter 4 explores the emergence of agitational Mohajir politics and the MQM with a focus on the party's rise to power through militant ethno-nationalism, driven by Mohajir youth, who became the vehicle of the party's power. This chapter also offers analysis of the MQM's demand of identity, its

organizational structure, its mode of operation, and its strategy of alliance making. Further, the chapter describes the spread of religious fundamentalism and its impact on ethnic nationalism in urban Sindh. Chapter 5 maps the MQM's transformation, from an ethnic to a catch-all party including the steps taken to de-ethnicize the party's image and discusses how the party has adapted to a new style of politics based on strategy rather than ethnic ideology. This chapter provides analyses of the largely unexplored "post-ethnic" period of the MQM, during which the party launched efforts to become a mainstream political organization. Chapter 6 provides concluding thoughts in light of this study's findings. This chapter also offers suggestions for further research.

### **Definition of Mohajir**

The term "*Mohajir*" is rich with Islamic connotations, dating back to a determining event in Islamic history, an event of such significance that it marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. The word *Mohajir* (plural *Mohajirin*) is the Arabic word for "migrant." It was first employed in reference to the Prophet Mohammad and his followers who fled from Makkah to Medina in 622 A.D. This event is known as the *Hijra* (Arabic for "migration") and these migrants are referred to as *Mohajirin* (The Emigrants) in Islamic history. After arriving in Medina, the Prophet urged fellow Muslims of Medina, to be good *Ansars* (Islamic term for host), by treating the *Mohajirin* as brothers and sisters and helping the migrants establish themselves. Throughout Islamic history, the term "Mohajir" has been applied to various groups of Muslim refugees and immigrants.

After the British partition of India, the Pakistani state applied the word *Mohajirin* to Indian migrants who came to Pakistan. This bestowed a sense of holiness on these migrants and an obligation upon locals to be good 'hosts' to the millions arriving on their

land. Obviously, the state was unaware that it was creating a new ethnicity that, forty years later, would emerge as a major and disruptive political force. Seventy percent of migrants from India settled in the Punjabi region of West Pakistan, and as they shared the Punjabi ethnic background with those already living there; they successfully assimilated into the area, ceasing to identify themselves as Mohajirin. In contrast, Urdu-speaking migrants, originating from India's North, West, and Central zones, comprising only 7% of total migrants to Pakistan, settled mostly in the Sindh province and refused to assimilate with Sindhis and accept their culture.<sup>3</sup> Assimilating in Sindh was not plausible because "To many Muhajirs hailing from the former heartlands of the Mughal Empire, Sindh was a peripheral backwater of the subcontinent, a culturally barren outskirt..."<sup>4</sup> In contemporary usage, the word Mohajir refers to these unassimilated Urdu-speakers mostly residing in Sindh. Mohajirin were exceedingly proud of their cultural heritage, especially their role in the struggle for Pakistan; and, after settling in Sindh in 1947, began to refer to themselves as Pakistanis, rather than Mohajirin, to clarify their separateness from the indigenous ethnic group (Sindhis) who they regarded as having sacrificed little or nothing for the cause of Pakistan. This identification as Pakistanis also served to justify Urdu-speakers' settlement on Sindhis' land and their ensuing dominance in state structures. So the term "Mohajir" lay dormant until the 1980s, when one group revived it, including only a specific group as rightful members. Necessarily inclusion involves exclusion, and this is where the MQM's story begins.

---

<sup>3</sup> Zones of India: North (Utter Pradesh); East (Assam, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Nepal, and Sikkim); South (Coorg, Madras, Mysore and Andamans and Nicobar Islands); West (Bombay, Baroda, Junagadh, Manavadar, Portuguese India); Central (Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Bhopal, and Hyderabad); Northwest (Punjab, Patiala, Ajmer, Delhi and Rajputana States, Jammu and Kashmir); Other (French India, Bhutan, and any other Indian state)

<sup>4</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 43.

The MQM revived the term “Mohajir” when it formed in 1984. By revitalizing the term, the MQM sought to create a sense of community among Urdu-speaking descendants of migrants from India’s North zone or Uttar Pradesh Province, the Central Zone, and those from the Bihar Province in the East Zone. These people lived primarily in urban Sindh, concentrated in cities such as Karachi, Hyderabad, and Sukker. Therefore, “Mohajir” no longer referred to all Indian migrants to Pakistan, but to a specific descent and linguistic identity. Hence, Mohajir ethnicity became synonymous with the new political identity of the descendants of Urdu-speaking Indian migrants who settled in urban Sindh.<sup>5</sup> Clearly, this new generation of Mohajirin, who were the party’s protagonists and supporters, were born in Pakistan and did not participate in the migration from India. Critics of the MQM argued that to refer to a second generation Urdu-speakers living in Sindh as Mohajirin was absurd. Nevertheless, their objections were too late: an ethnicity was created. This study will employ the MQM’s terminology, using the terms Mohajir and Mohajirin in reference to the ethno-political identity of Urdu-speaking migrants to Sindh and their descendants.

## **Literature Review**

Although Urdu-speaking people have played a major role in Pakistan since the formation of the state, literature regarding them was scant until the MQM arrived on Pakistan’s political map in the mid-1980s. The MQM’s sudden emergence as a powerful political force in urban Sindh attracted scholars from a wide range of fields such as

---

<sup>5</sup> As a bid to attract financial support from wealthy Gujarati entrepreneurs, the MQM also included the Gujarati-speakers of Sindh, who migrated to Pakistan before the partition, in this new application of the term “Mohajir.”<sup>5</sup> However, as Gujaratis were largely uninvolved in urban politics, they are not considered part of the group “Mohajir” for the purposes of this study. But should not be completely excluded from the story as they provided funding and intermittent support for this group, especially in later years during the MQM battle against Punjabi hegemony.

politics, anthropology, history, literature, and sociology. These researchers explore the Mohajir phenomenon through the lenses of economy, ethnography, identity consciousness, urbanization and development, and imbalances in the state-civil society relationship. Therefore, the following paragraphs provide a thematic survey of the literature on the Urdu-speaking population of Pakistan, later called Mohajirin.

Marxist scholar, Hamza Alavi, explains the mobilization of Urdu-speaking people in urban Sindh through the lens of economy, more specifically, civil service employment. Alavi argues that the Mohajirin are the same salariat class from North India who occupied a large chunk of positions in the Indian Civil Service in United Province (UP) and Bihar under British colonialism and later became a dominant group, along with Punjabis, in the bureaucracy of the newly formed Pakistan.<sup>6</sup> Alavi asserts that the mobilization of Urdu-speaking people was merely a demand for more government jobs, and he refers to them as the salariat, which he defines as a “section of urban middle class, those with educational qualifications and aspirations for jobs in the state apparatus, the civil bureaucracy and the military.”<sup>7</sup> Similar opinions are echoed by other writers who believe that the Mohajirin’s decline in state employment was the driving factor for the mobilization of the Urdu-speaking people under the banner of the Mohajir Qaumi Mahaz (MQM).<sup>8</sup> Given the significance of civil service jobs in the Mohajir community, Alavi’s argument is a widely held view among a large number of scholars.

---

<sup>6</sup> Hamza Alavi, “Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 8, 1989.

<sup>7</sup> Hamza Alavi, “Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 8, 1989, 1532; Hamza Alavi, “Politics of Ethnicity in India and Pakistan,” Hamza Alavi and John Harris, *Sociology of “Developing Societies”: South Asia*, (Macmillan, 1989), 225.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Kennedy, “The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh,” *Asian Survey* 31, no. 10 (1991); Moonis Ahmar, “Ethnicity and State Power in Pakistan: The Karachi Crisis,” *Asian Survey* 36, no. 10 (1996): 1031-1048; Adeel Khan, *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan*. (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005); Farhat Haq, “The Rise of MQM in Pakistan: Politics of Ethnic Mobilization,” *Asian*

Historian, Sarah Ansari, takes a different view on the emergence of Mohajir politics. Instead of focusing on Mohajir representation in the civil service, Ansari, focusing on identity consciousness, revisits the Mohajirin's arrival in Sindh in the aftermath of the 1947 partition and traces Urdu-speakers' sense of identity and community. Historical analyses of Mohajirin, according to Ansari, show Partition and migration memories as the underpinning element of Urdu-speakers' identity construction, which generated a sense of "borders, real as well as symbolic, between the communities who were brought together as a result of the demographic adjustment that resulted from Partition."<sup>9</sup> Ansari further concedes that

The spatial distribution of community identity under these circumstances, and, hence, the re-creation of known 'cultural spaces' or 'private universes' played a large part in helping to preserve identities, and thus in creating the complex, so-called 'ethnic' map which still characterizes Pakistan's urban reality at the beginning of the twenty-first century.<sup>10</sup>

Equally important is the explanation of urbanization and underdevelopment as a determining factor of societal cleavage, which then promoted the formation of the MQM. The MQM's xenophobic politics and its emphasis on civic amenities such as transportation, water, and housing in the party's first Charter of Resolution in 1988 lead scholars to evaluate the government's mismanagement of Karachi's resources and infrastructure to explain Mohajir nationalism. This societal cleavage approach provides new insights on the significance of local politics and local resource management and allocation in determining the material bases of community mobilization under the MQM.

---

*Survey* 35, no. 11 (1995): 990-1004; Soofia Mumtaz, Jean-Luc Racine, and Imran Ali. *Pakistan: The Contours of State and Society* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Sarah Ansari, *Life After Partition: Migration, Community, and Strife in Sindh: 1947-1962* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Sarah Ansari, *Life After Partition: Migration, Community, and Strife in Sindh: 1947-1962* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 11.

This particular body of literature argues that the rise and success of the MQM was the result of Mohajir frustration against the state and in-coming ethnic and national groups; Pakthun, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Afghani, caused by the burgeoning municipal and demographic crises of urbanization and underdevelopment. The arrival of millions of Afghan refugees to Pakistan is one widely cited example. In the early 1980s, millions of Afghan refugees arrived in Pakistan (and Karachi in particular) and the subsequent effects on the already over-populated Mohajir city had a profound impact on Urdu-speaking people. For example, this new group's settlement in urban Sindh brought demographic pressures on already strained civic amenities. Further, Mohajirin perceived that this population's arrival opened the floodgates of the weapons and drug trade, setting the stage for the emergence of militant counter-forces such as the MQM. In this context, the MQM claimed to "protect" Mohajirin from this alien invasion by means of militant street politics, thereby becoming the political representative of Urdu-speaking people in Pakistan.<sup>11</sup>

Although general in argument, the military-bureaucratic nature of the Pakistani state further explains the mobilization of the MQM. Ayesha Jalal and Iftikhar H. Malik fall into a category of scholars who emphasize the significance of the disequilibrium between the state and the civil society in Pakistan as the primary factor for regional and ethnic polarization.<sup>12</sup> According to Jalal and Malik, long and repressive military rule in Pakistan marginalized less powerful ethnic groups which exacerbated antagonisms

---

<sup>11</sup> Yunus Samad, "In and Out of Power but Not Down and Out: Mohajir Identity Politics," in *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?* ed., Christophe Jaffrelot, 63-83 (London: Zed Books, 2002); Laurent Gayer, "Guns, Slums, and 'Yellow-Devils,' A Genealogy of Urban Conflict in Karachi, Pakistan," *Modern Asian Studies* 41, 3 (2007): 515-544.

<sup>12</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Contemporary Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Iftikhar H. Malik, *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology, and Ethnicity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

among communities. Interestingly, Theodore P. Wright observes the relationship between the state and ethnic polarization in a reverse order. Wright claims that it is not the state that has caused ethnic polarization; in fact, it is ethnicity that forced the bureaucratization or militarization of the state. In the early 1950s, according to Wright, the Mohajirin rulers, afraid of losing, delayed the elections and amended the constitution to centralize the state power in a strong federal unit. This move antagonized the local population and subsequently engendered instability in Pakistan.<sup>13</sup> Thus, “the existence of a political elite in part made up of refugees has contributed to the instability of Pakistani politics.”<sup>14</sup> Following along the same line, J. Rehman states that the Mohajirin-manufactured constitution (ratified in 1956) not only neglected regional demands and aspirations, but also forced Urdu on other linguistic groups, in an attempt to marginalize indigenous people and their cultures, and through the supremacy of Urdu, further enhanced the Mohajirin position in civil services.<sup>15</sup>

Anthropologist Oskar Verkaaik’s ethnographic study of Mohajir nationalism combines a modernist explanation of the “state as the main promoter of ethnic and religious categories,” with crowd theory (developed by Gustav Le Bon, Emile Durkheim, and Sigmund Freud), which “focuses on social and cultural processes within groups of perpetrators of violence.”<sup>16</sup> Verkaaik demonstrates “how groups of perpetrators of ethnic or religious violence relate to dominant discourses on ethnic and religious nationalism.”

---

<sup>13</sup> Theodore P. Wright, Jr., "Indian Muslim Refugees in the Politics of Pakistan," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 13 (July 1974): 189-205.

<sup>14</sup> Theodore P. Wright, Jr., "Indian Muslim Refugees in the Politics of Pakistan," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 13 (July 1974): 189-205, 200.

<sup>15</sup> J. Rehman, "Self-Determination, State-Building and the Muhajirs: An International Legal Perspective of the Role of Indian Muslim Refugees in the Constitutional Development of Pakistan," *Contemporary South Asia* 3, no. 2 (1994): 111-129.

<sup>16</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 10-11.

He argues that “very often these groups are bound together by a “street culture” in which key values such as masculinity, physicality, and lack of respect for dominant discourses are expressed in explicitly plebian, transgressive, and ludic practices. The fun of these practices is often self-consciously contrasted to the seriousness of state nationalism.”<sup>17</sup> In light of this explanation, Verkaaik then argues that Mohajir nationalism was driven by the “street culture” of youth who found the MQM’s militant tactics and political gatherings enthralling and exciting avenues through which they could express their “masculinity and competitive physicality” and thus undermine the state’s authority.<sup>18</sup> Verkaaik’s conclusions are formative to the approach of this thesis, especially his conclusion that militant Mohajir nationalism was not simply the result of Urdu-speakers’ emergence of identity or their grievances about their decline in the state ruling structure; rather street nationalism was an equal contributor to Mohajirin’s mobilization. The MQM capitalized on all of these to promote its political agenda. The MQM, according to Verkaaik, successfully wove the youth culture, promoted by gyms, street humor, social clubs, and leisure activities, into a political struggle and thus produced ethnic and religious violence. In short, street nationalism mobilized Mohajirin in urban Sindh under the leadership of the MQM.

### **Critique of Previous Explanations of the MQM’s Change**

The literature reviewed explains aspects of the MQM and Urdu-speaking people through various perspectives such as; the state and civil society relationship, the

---

<sup>17</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 11.

<sup>18</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 10-11.

centrality of the ‘salarial’ classes to their politics, demographics, anthropology, and their representation in state institutions, and urbanization and development. The existing studies heavily emphasize the MQM’s militancy; in fact, each of the aforementioned themes serves as an entry point to underscore the causes of the MQM’s formation and participation in violence. While the MQM’s emergence and militancy attract a wide range of authors, the party’s transformation from an ethnic to a catch-all party has been ignored. Scholars treat as mere rhetoric the party’s reorientation, which according to Altaf Hussein, the leader of the MQM, brought a new spirit and championed the cause of “national development and a nation-wide campaign against feudal domination.”<sup>19</sup> Malik argues that the MQM’s name change in 1997 to Muttahida merely was a “tactical ploy since the MQM in all its incarnations remains confined to urban Sindh.”<sup>20</sup> The MQM’s critics cite a motivation for power in federal and provincial assemblies as the main reason for the party’s efforts to appeal to a larger (non-Mohajir) constituency.<sup>21</sup> Khan holds ethnic conflicts between Mohajirin and the other ethnic groups in the early 1980s responsible for the shift in MQM policies and the change in its “rhetoric and nomenclature.”<sup>22</sup> Also, the fissures created in MQM politics among senior party members, when some accused Altaf Hussein of lust for power, come in for comment. It is widely noted that the military prompted the MQM’s 1991 split. The MQM (Haqiqi) charged Altaf Hussein and the senior leadership with becoming “ambitious and greedy”

---

<sup>19</sup> Muttahida Qaumi Movement, [http:// www.mqm.com](http://www.mqm.com) (Accessed July, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Iftikhar H. Malik, *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology and Ethnicity* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd: 1997), 230

<sup>21</sup> “Altaf Hussein’s Shrewd Machinations,” *Daily Times*, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006; Askari-Hasan Rizvi, “Regional Issues and Challenges,” *Daily Times*, January 22, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Adeel Khan, *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Sage 2005) 182.

and for thinking “they thought they could reach Islamabad.”<sup>23</sup> Yunus Samad cites the MQM’s motivation to expand its influence to other provinces and to be acceptable to the military as primary reasons for the change in party’s nomenclature.<sup>24</sup> The above explanations only speculated about factors behind the MQM’s change and do not take into account the social milieu of Karachi, the 1997 election results, or the actual changes as the party reorganized from an ethno-militant party to a catch-all party. The previous studies, which dismiss the MQM’s transformation as mere electoral opportunism or assume that the MQM still represents only the Mohajirin, do not adequately explore the context in which the MQM launched efforts to create a national appeal, nor do they evaluate the efforts themselves. This project, therefore, examines a little explored but crucial subject of the MQM’s change and then analyzes how the party transformed itself by scrutinizing the steps that the MQM employed to reorganize along more mainstream lines.

### **Rationale and Significance of the Study**

As mentioned earlier, the existing literature emphasizes the MQM’s militancy and ignores the party’s recent reorientation due to oversimplified assumptions. My contribution on this topic lies in my clear identification of the ways and processes through which the MQM became a national catch-all political party. This is the only study that employs party change theory to describe a party’s transformation in Pakistan. This project aims to provide a fresh perspective on how the MQM’s reorganization has helped the party to abandon its Mohajir ideology and embrace strategy. In short, it traces

---

<sup>23</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan*, 84.

<sup>24</sup> Yunus Samad, “In and Out of Power but nit Down and Out: Mohajir Identity Politics,” 76.

the MQM's journey from an ethno-militant to a mainstream/catch-all party. Moreover, this thesis also attempts to initiate conceptual discussion on Pakistan's political parties that have been ignored at the expense of rudimentary journalistic accounts on Islamic militant groups by so-called area/policy studies scholars.

## **Methodology**

The thesis question was addressed after surveying several party theories that explore party growth, transformation, and decline. Institutional, societal cleavage, and crowd theory each illuminate a separate aspect of the development of political parties in Pakistan in general, and the MQM in particular. Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan's theory of the societal cleavages proves helpful in exploring the evolution of political parties in Pakistan. Party change theories explore the causes of party transformation from several angles such as those of endogenous and exogenous factors. They also outline the general concern of the decline of political parties in liberal democracies. Finally, Otto Kirchheimer's catch-all theory proves crucial in exploring the MQM's change as the model identifies important steps usually employed during the process of reorientation, including; shedding ideology, expanding the social base, and strengthening the leadership. Thus, Chapter two theoretically maps the development of the MQM and then its eventual change to a catch-all party.

I conducted a portion of my research for this thesis during a visit to Karachi, Pakistan in December 2006, where I gathered primary sources in English and Urdu. I collected all relevant articles from *The Herald*, for 1984-2007 in the *Dawn* newspaper's library, as they are the former's sister publisher. During my stay in Karachi, I visited the MQM's headquarters where I gathered party literature in Urdu, met with senior party

leaders, and attended an MQM convention. The office workers at the MQM headquarters informed me that most of the documents in their archive, including party literature and documents were destroyed during the 1992 army operation. However, I collected a few remaining pieces of MQM literature consisting of official MQM documents such as charters, policies, books written by senior party members, and speeches. Since MQM literature is only available in Urdu, the author has translated the items where necessary for citation. It is important to note that the primary sources used for this thesis, namely original party literature and newspaper articles, form the basis on which this thesis is able to make fresh assertions about the MQM. For example, *The Herald* articles, especially from 1985-1988, the MQM's formative years, proved invaluable in analyzing how the party capitalized on riots and mob frustrations to propagate its militant agenda. The new insights this thesis offers into the MQM's post 1997 period are derived entirely from primary sources. For example, copies of Altaf Hussain's speeches were surveyed to track his persona transformation over several years. The MQM's booklets published after the party reorientation also shed new light on the inner workings of the organization. For example, the analyses highlight the party's techniques for disciplining militant cadres and retraining them into professional roles. As mentioned earlier, the MQM's change has never been studied systemically; therefore, the conclusion drawn from this thesis contributes to the scant body of literature on political parties in Pakistan in general and the MQM in particular.

The University of Victoria's library served as a valuable source for secondary information on Pakistan. The historical and theoretical chapters in the thesis benefitted from the rich texts in the library. The library's databases were useful in gathering articles

from major Pakistani English-medium newspapers and magazines such as *The Nation* and *Business Recorder*. The weekly magazine *The Friday Times* published from Lahore also enriched the collection. All government documents were obtained through interlibrary loan from the University of Washington. The government documents collected provided important quantitative information such as officially published elections results, census demographic reports, and the socio-economic surveys of Sindh published by various government agencies (see Bibliography for a complete list of government documents).

## CHAPTER ONE

### Evolution of Political Parties in Pakistan

Conceived in a hurry and delivered prematurely – a last-minute Caesarean by doctors tending the British empire – Pakistan emerged in August 1947, accompanied by a massive loss of blood.<sup>1</sup>

Tariq Ali succinctly summarizes Pakistan's creation. The country's premature creation was followed by the consolidation of state power under a strong center run by a single ethnic group or military-bureaucracy, by the marginalization of ethnic and linguistic minorities in the periphery and provinces, by uneven economic development, a rhetoric of land reforms, and by the imposition of state ideology. This phenomenon was not unique to Pakistan: many post-colonial countries suffered under a similar style of politics. Indeed, these crises of modernity arose from colonialism, which channeled local wealth to the capitalist metropolis by forcibly connecting colonies to the international market in a way that subsequently caused a break-down of traditional communities and their methods of sustenance, imposed bureaucratized rule in a centralized state, and created political parties as the people's representative in a government. The Muslim League, the self-proclaimed political representative of the Muslim masses in British India, was the product of this selective modernization. Both the party's rich and British educated leaders and its Urdu-speaking urban middle-class social base benefitted to some extent from colonialism in Muslim minority provinces in colonial India.<sup>2</sup> It was not until the prospect

---

<sup>1</sup> Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London: Verso, 2002), 166.

<sup>2</sup> The British colonial officers strengthened tribal and landowning classes of northern India for their own imperial interest. The threat of Soviet invasion from the north of Pakistan was greater. Khalid B. Sayeed, *Politics in Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change* (New York: Praeger, 1980), 8. Hamza Alavi, "Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan," *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 8, 1989, 1532;

of loosing power under the future Hindu government after the British withdrawal that the Muslim League raised as a strong voice against colonialism. After the partition, the Muslim League, a party of elite big property owners from India, inherited control of Pakistan, becoming the sole caretaker of the country's administrative structure. The party also inherited the practices of fractured modernity such as economic industrialization from their colonial master and selectively implemented them in the new state. The Muslim League's lack of organic links with the populace in Pakistan, however, proved to be the biggest obstacle to nation-building. The Muslim League's lack of organic links with the populace in Pakistan, however, proved to be the biggest obstacle to nation-building. The Muslim League was detached from the sensibilities of the population of Pakistan and, therefore, failed to incorporate citizen's rights and aspirations into the party's agenda and thus fell short of weaving them into the "modern" state. However, this party went to great lengths to maintain its grip on power in the country by making alliances with the US and exerting great efforts to crush other political parties. The political parties that emerged despite the stifling dominance of the Muslim League suffered from factionalism. The Muslim League's reactions to threats against its control colors the history of politics in Pakistan's early years, along with opposition from and divisions within emerging parties. This chapter, therefore, delineates the historical evolution of political parties in Pakistan and their resistance to, and challenges to, the dominant ruling elite and its ill-thought nation-building program.

While foreseeing a long rule in the newly formed country, the Muslim League, despite its ideology of so-called Pakistani nationalism, soon faced ongoing challenges from new

emerging political parties. Given its geographical distance from the federal center and proximity with Calcutta, East Pakistan was the first region to voice antagonism toward the Muslim League by supporting and spreading communist and leftist ideas and politics. Indeed communists in India heavily influenced the politics in East Pakistan and, initially, the communist activities in East Pakistan were orchestrated from Calcutta. However, rising tensions between India and Pakistan forced the communists to abandon their organizing activities from India, and the second Calcutta Congress of the Communist Party of India (CPI) in 1948 decided to establish the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP).<sup>3</sup> Sajjad Zaheer, a member of the CPI and general secretary of the All-India Progressive Writers Association (a literary front of the CPI), was named the secretary-general of the CPP. Although East Pakistan was actively engaged in communist and leftist politics, West Pakistan showed little interest in supporting the CPP. However, the CPP in West Pakistan soon managed to attract and bring together leading literary personalities from West Pakistan including the famous Urdu poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Ahmad Nadim Qasmi to form the All-Pakistan Progressive Writers Association (APPWA) in 1948.<sup>4</sup>

During the same period, the Pakistan-US relationship opened a new chapter in geopolitical, regional, and domestic politics. Pakistan and the US signed their first international credit agreement on May 25, 1948, when the Ministry of Finance accepted a \$10 million loan provided under the US War Assets Administration.<sup>5</sup> Hungry for military hardware to fight India in Kashmir, Pakistan brushed away its old colonial ruler, the

---

<sup>3</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh," in *Radical Politics in South Asia*, eds., Paul R. Brass and Marcus F. Franda (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), 226.

<sup>4</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh," in *Radical Politics in South Asia*, eds., Paul R. Brass and Marcus F. Franda (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), 226-227.

<sup>5</sup> Jamil Rashid and Hassan N. Gardezi, "Independent Pakistan: Its Political Economy," in *Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship* (London: Zed Press, 1983), 7.

United Kingdom, and approached the US to sponsor a new strategy for the region. The ruling elite framed secular-democratic forces in the country as communists thus making the case for US aid to urgently implement America's Cold War containment policy. Thus, at least for the time being, the elite retained their grip on power under the guise of fighting communism. Yet, while the Muslim League fostered a partnership with their new colonial master abroad, the party started to feel the heat at home.

The Muslim League received help from the US for squelching challenges from emerging political parties disguised as a policy of containment, but the party continually faced opposition from within its ranks. By 1949, only two years after Pakistan's independence, fissures appeared in the ruling Muslim League. In the same year the socialist leader and a former member of the Punjab Muslim League (a provincial branch of the Muslim League), Mian Iftikharuddin, split from the Muslim League to form a new organization, the Azad Pakistan Party in 1949.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, in East Pakistan, leftist tendencies were quickly gaining ground among peasants. For instance, Bengali politician, Fazlul Huq who had previously championed the Muslim League's cause in East Pakistan, formed a new party: the *Krishak Sramik Party* (the Peasants and Workers Party, KSP).<sup>7</sup> Huq then led a campaign for regional autonomy that influenced several prominent political leaders who were associated with the peasant struggle in East Pakistan. In 1950 another Bengali politician, H. S. Suhrawardy founded another party in East Pakistan, the *Awami League* (the People's League), and included politicians such as Maulana Bhashani and Mujibur Rehman who later led the Bengali mobilization for independence from West Pakistan in 1971. In 1951, further factionalism within the Punjab Muslim League led to

---

<sup>6</sup> Philip E. Jones, *The Pakistan People's Party: Rise to Power* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), 16-17.

<sup>7</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *A History Of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthen Press, 2002), 71.

another split and the creation of the Jinnah Awami Muslim League headed by Nawab Iftikhar Hussain.<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, in order to root out these rapidly spreading new party initiatives and to assert the power of the ruling class, the Muslim League took full advantage of US containment policy. Ayesha Jalal concludes that “Not only had Karachi [then the country’s capital] shown no willingness to allow opposition groups to develop freely at the expense of the Muslim League, it was ready to resort to coercion if the ruling party’s position in the province was even remotely endangered.”<sup>9</sup> In early March 1951, for instance, the newly appointed Chief of General Staff, Akbar Khan, was arrested with senior officers for allegedly planning a coup d’état in order to install a communist government. The government seized the opportunity arising from this event, known as the Rawalpindi Conspiracy, to hunt down trade union members, laborers, politicians, and CPP members under accusations that they were communists.<sup>10</sup> The authorities arrested and imprisoned senior members of the CPP, including Faiz Ahmad Faiz, while Sajjad Zaheer (CPP Secretary General) left for India. This marked the end of the CPP in West Pakistan; however, the APPWA continued to radicalize the masses through its revolutionary poetry.

The Muslim League was not the only political party that was resuscitated after quelling leftist radicals. Several religious parties such as Allama Mashriqi’s *Khaksar Movement*, *Majlis-i-Ahrar*, the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam* (JUI), the *Jamait-ul-Ulema-i-Pakistan* (JUP), and the well-organized and ultra-orthodox *Jamat-e-Islami* (JI), found a

---

<sup>8</sup> Philip E. Jones, *The Pakistan People’s Party: Rise to Power* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), 16-17.

<sup>9</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan’s Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 145.

<sup>10</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan’s Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 119.

vacuum in which they could propagate their religious dogma.<sup>11</sup> Ironically, religious parties, especially the JI, had previously been the most vocal critics of the Pakistan Movement in pre-partition India. This also shows that the “Muslim’s interpretations of nationalism were by no means monolithic since they were divided in their allegiance between several political parties. For convenience, the Muslims can be divided into two broad categories – Nationalist Muslims and Muslim Nationalists.”<sup>12</sup> Jinnah was considered a nationalist Muslim, whereas leaders of religious parties, such as the founder of the JI, Maulana Maududi, was a Muslim nationalist. Aijaz Ahmad describes the JI as follows:

The Jamat is a peculiar imperialist construct, and the method in its madness is indeed extraordinary. Prior to 1947, it had opposed all anti colonial movements: the Communist because they were communist, the Indian National Congress because it was predominantly Hindu, and the Muslim League...because of its non-theocratic programme; objectively, the Jamat was at that time a tool, though a rather blunt and ineffective tool, of the British.<sup>13</sup>

True to their past, religious parties found new patronage after Partition in the form of the American government which was eager to support any so-called anti-communist forces. It is not surprising then that the JUI in East Pakistan asked the US to fund its propaganda activities. The JUI requested “a sum of Rs 10,000 to help meet their cost in promulgating the anti-communist line.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it was the beginning of the US “partnership” with

---

<sup>11</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan’s Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 143.

<sup>12</sup> Hafeez Malik, “Nationalism and the Quest of Ideology in Pakistan,” in *Pakistan: The Long View*, eds., Lawrence Ziring, Ralph Braibanti, and W. Howard Wriggins (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1977), 275.

<sup>13</sup> Aijaz Ahmad, “Democracy and Dictatorship,” in *Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship*, eds. Jamil Rashid and Hassan N. Gardezi (London: Zed Press, 1983), 121.

<sup>14</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan’s Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 291.

Islamic fundamentalists which, despite their increasing Islamic rhetoric, received and relied on generous American funds in the years to follow.

An important dimension in relation to the aforementioned religious parties is the support they received from Mohajirin before the MQM's existence. Indeed, Urdu-speaking leaders from North India founded the JI, and the party had no support in rural Pakistan. Urdu-speakers gave their allegiance to the JI for five reasons, in addition to the fact that Mohajirin were its founders. First, the JI was actively involved in rehabilitating Indian refugees in Pakistan. Second, the JI's "virulent anti-Hindu rhetoric also found a receptive ear among the Muhajirs, whose harrowing experiences from the partition had made them particularly sensitive to the Indian threat."<sup>15</sup> The JI's proclamation that they were Islamizing Pakistan was the third factor contributing to Mohajirin's support. Mohajirin also supported the JI and the JUI because of their propaganda that being anti-communist was a service to protect Islam from atheism. Finally, Mohajirin support for the JI also came from the later allegiance to Urdu as "an article of faith" and the party's opposition to giving Bengalis equal status with Urdu-speakers in Pakistan between 1947 and 1971.<sup>16</sup> In fact, after independence the JI and JUI were a threat neither to the Muslim League nor to the status-quo of Urdu-speakers' rule.

Although the Muslim League went to great lengths to dominate Pakistan's politics with the help of US aid and, to some extent that of religious parties, the regional parties in East Pakistan were nevertheless successful in gaining support from the Bengali population based on demands for provincial and linguistic Bengali autonomy. In the 1954

---

<sup>15</sup> Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 88.

<sup>16</sup> Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 85.

East Pakistan election, Fazlul Huq's KSP and H. S. Suhrawardy's Awami League formed a coalition, the United Front, and won a handsome victory (300 seats out of 310).<sup>17</sup> This victory marked the end of the Muslim League in East Pakistan. Huq formed a regional Cabinet providing greater leverage to East Pakistan in the central government. Following this disastrous defeat in East Pakistan, the Muslim League suffered another blow when party dissidents headed by the Chief Minister of the North West Frontier Province, Dr. Khan Sahib, formed the Republican Party in 1955. The Republican Party was a "misnomer for a collection of [Muslim] League dissidents and other[s] attracted by the magnetic pull of power and promises of land grants, route permits, licenses and other such nostrums."<sup>18</sup> This was the third split in the ruling Muslim League; the first and second, as mentioned earlier, were the breakup into Iftikharuddin's Azad Pakistan Party and Mamdot's Jinnah Awami Muslim League. The factionalism within and the electoral defeat of the Muslim League, the party that a few years earlier claimed to represent all Muslims in India, demonstrated the inherent weakness of the party due to a lack of linkages with the country's people. All this proved the ideological incompetency of Pakistani nationalism. According to Ayesha Jalal, "Neither religious dogma, nor the adopted language and cultural pretensions of the ruling alliance were sufficient to paper over the permutations of Islamic belief and linguistic affinities in Pakistan."<sup>19</sup> However, the ongoing Pakistan-US relationship, the founding of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in May 1954 and of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in

---

<sup>17</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 71.

<sup>18</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 231.

<sup>19</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 290.

February 1955 – Pakistan was party to both– further strengthened the ruling elite enabling them to assert the writ on any opposition, at least for the moment.

As anti-communist propaganda, undergirded by the US' containment policy, ran out of its energy, and regional political parties increased in strength, the Muslim League engaged in a last desperate maneuver to maintain its grip on power. On September 30, 1955, the Muslim League merged West Pakistan's four provinces, Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, and the North West Frontier Province, into a single province, the One Unit. The inherently flawed One Unit plan, was a last ditch attempt at domination by the ruling class who decided that consolidating state power into a strong center was the only way they could maintain their rule. In fact, the One Unit's establishment activated the hitherto dormant ethno-linguistic and anti-feudal regional parties of West Pakistan. As a result, the Pakistan National Party (PNP) surfaced in West Pakistan in August 1956. The PNP fused several existing parties; the *Asthman Gal* of Prince Agha Abdul Karim, the *Wrore Pukhtoon* of Abdus Samad Achakzai from Balochistan, the *Khudai Khidmatgar* (Red Shirt) Movement of Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), the *Sindh Awami Mahaz* of G. M. Syed, the *Sindh Hari Committee* of Haider Bux Jatoi in Sindh, and the Azad Pakistan Party of Mian Iftikharuddin in the Punjab.<sup>20</sup> The PNP was the first broad political alliance in Pakistan's history that demanded agrarian reforms and the abolition of the One Unit in West Pakistan. Thus, the Muslim League's move not only proved ineffective in strengthening its dwindling grip on power but the One Unit plan also inspired deeper provincial solidarity against the Mohajir-focused center.

---

<sup>20</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 257.

Nor did the Muslim's League's actions contain the growth of existing oppositional political parties which had been gathering strength over the previous nine years. After the promulgation of the Constitution on March 23, 1956, the governor general of Pakistan, Iskander Khan, chose the Awami League's leader, Suhrawardy to be the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Although Suhrawardy was not in the Muslim League, Khan chose him because he was a staunch supporter of the US-Pakistan relationship and the One Unit. His "anti-Bengali" and pro-West politics caused internal fissures within the Awami League. Maulana Bhashani, a member of the Awami League, emerged as a strong critic of Suhrawardy himself as well as of West Pakistan's rulers and of US imperialism in the region. The leftist members in the already simmering Awami League were quick to join Bhashani to lead a new campaign against the dominant Muslim League rulers and their Western partners. In 1957, the faction of the Awami League finally decided to formulate new party strategy, and Bhashani became a vocal critic of the West Pakistani elite. As the Muslim League forged a partnership with the US to squelch regional aspirations under the pretext of a containment policy, political parties were also forming alliances to resist the dominant party, the Muslim League, and by extension the US.<sup>21</sup> By 1956, life under the shadow of this geopolitical strategy, and his resistance to state-building, led Bhashani to join hands with West Pakistan's PNP to form the National Awami Party (NAP). The NAP was intended to consolidate efforts in the common struggle against imperial forces and the oppressive federal government. The NAP demanded a radical program to restructure the country in line with provincial stipulations

---

<sup>21</sup> Curiously, US containment policy and its implications for domestic politics, especially in relation to political parties, is a rarely studied subject. Hitherto, the US Cold War machinations have been analyzed largely in terms of military and economic aid to Pakistan or of America's hegemonic role in the region against the Soviets. The implications of US Cold War policies on political parties in Pakistan are still awaiting exploration.

such as agrarian reforms, greater autonomy from the center, equal status for indigenous languages and cultures, and a strong stance against US imperialism.<sup>22</sup>

Before the Muslim League could react against the radical NAP, as it had done against previous challenges with anti-communist propaganda and the One Unit scheme, and before the NAP could succeed in the upcoming general elections, the chief of the army staff, Ayub Khan overthrew the government in a coup d'état on October 27, 1958. In the words of Ayesha Jalal, "Factional in-fighting among politicians far from impeding the exercise of state authority by the center appeared, at each step, to be facilitating its consolidation under bureaucratic and military direction."<sup>23</sup> Although the ineffectiveness of political parties became a hurdle in the democratic process, the repressive martial law of the military junta further undermined any prospects of self-government by banning all sorts of political activities. Khan justified his military rule by commenting on the fate of politicians, "No one knew any longer who belonged to which political party; it was all a question of swapping labels: a Muslim Leaguer today, a Republican tomorrow; and yesterday's traitors were tomorrow's Chief Ministers, indistinguishable as tweedledum and tweedledee!" Khan passed a Basic Democracy program aimed at decentralizing power from the center to the local level and empowering groups that had been excluded from the political decision-making process. Khan, citing his implementation of Basic Democracy as another justification of his martial rule, argued that martial law was "not an instrument of tyranny or punishment; it was an arrangement under which government had acquired certain unusual powers to implement a programme of basic reforms."<sup>24</sup> In

---

<sup>22</sup> Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends not Masters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 54-55.

<sup>23</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 194.

<sup>24</sup> Mohammad Ayub Khan, *Friends not Masters* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 82.

reality, however, Basic Democracy was intended to sideline the well-entrenched political parties of the provinces and “co-opt[ed] local notables who would form a link with government.”<sup>25</sup> On June 8, 1962, President Khan addressed the National Assembly and finally announced the “termination” of martial law. In fact, on September 4, 1962, he provided a civilian guise to his military rule by gathering old remnants of the Muslim League to form the Pakistan Muslim League (PML). Ironically, the military dictator, who previously criticized politicians for being incompetent, was now using the same politicians to legitimize his rule.

In following with the constant party splits within Pakistan by 1962, two camps had started to take shape within the NAP, one pro-Peking and the other pro-Moscow, though both remained within the party for the moment. The crack in the NAP appeared for two reasons: “One was the split in the international Communist movement; others were related to the foreign policy of the Pakistan government and the internal political movement of East Pakistan for full provincial autonomy.”<sup>26</sup> The pro-Peking group, headed by Bhashani, championed a revolutionary Maoist strategy to overthrow the government, and demanded provincial autonomy and an end to imperialism. The pro-Moscow camp, led by the Pakthun politician, Wali Khan, argued for a “national democratic government” that could “ultimately pave the way for socialism in Pakistan.”<sup>27</sup> The fissure widened further after the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, in which the US and UK governments supported India against China; this led Ayub Khan’s government to

---

<sup>25</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 71.

<sup>26</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, “Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh,” in *Radical Politics in South Asia*, eds., Paul R. Brass and Marcus F. Franda (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), 234.

<sup>27</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, “Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh,” in *Radical Politics in South Asia*, eds., Paul R. Brass and Marcus F. Franda (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), 239.

foster close ties with the pro-Peking leftist led by Bhashani.<sup>28</sup> In return, the pro-Peking section of the NAP, upon direction from Peking, ceased opposition to Ayub's regime, and leftists "began to extol Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Ayub's foreign minister and the architect of the new 'anti-imperialist pro-Chinese' foreign policy."<sup>29</sup> Bhutto gained wide support from leftists, labor unions, and students. Ayub's favorable attitude towards the pro-Peking group and to Bhashani widened the rift in the NAP. The 1964 general elections proved crucial for the NAP when Bhashani, breaking with the party's view, supported Ayub Khan's PML against Fatima Jinnah's Combined Opposition Party (COP), the six party opposition alliance including the NAP mainstream and the JI. The JI's support of a woman leader, Fatima Jinnah, was a surprise as it contradicted the orthodox Islamic beliefs that denied females the opportunity for leadership. The reason that JI backed Fatima Jinnah was related to its social base among the Mohajirin, who disliked the PML's Pakthun leader, Ayub Khan. Khan's bureaucratic reforms, described in Chapter 3, which shook Urdu-speakers' dominance in the civil services were another reason for Mohajir support for Fatimah Jinnah. Khan's victory in the so-called election came as no surprise; however, his government received a big shock from the Bengali nationalists.

In March 1965, East Pakistan's Awami League, led by Mujibur Rehman, "dropped a bombshell in the form of its famous Six-Point plan for regional autonomy along with other provincial programs."<sup>30</sup> Khan responded by arresting Rehman and

---

<sup>28</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh," in *Radical Politics in South Asia*, eds., Paul R. Brass and Marcus F. Franda (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), 236.

<sup>29</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, "Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh," in *Radical Politics in South Asia*, eds., Paul R. Brass and Marcus F. Franda (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), 236-237.

<sup>30</sup> Tariq Ali, "Bangla Desh: Results and Prospects," *New Left Review*, Issue 68 (July-August, 1971), 29.

accusing the Bengali nationalists of “threatening the integrity of Pakistan.”<sup>31</sup> This invigorated Bengali nationalism to such an extent that finally in 1967, the fissures in the NAP materialized in a split into two separate political parties. The West Pakistan-led pro-Moscow party, headed by Wali Khan, inherited the NAP, whereas the other half, the pro-Peking camp, revived the Awami League along the lines of the Bengali nationalism. The leftist movement in East Pakistan thrived through “techniques used by the leftist in all underdeveloped countries – cultural subversion, infiltration of popular political organizations, manipulation of sensitive issues like language, autonomy, and economic distress, and anti-imperialist agitation.”<sup>32</sup> However, the same techniques also became obstacles in attempts to unite varied ethnic and linguistic communities into a solid resistance against the dominant nation-builders and US imperialism. After Rehman declared the Six Point Plan, other ethnic groups decided to stand up for themselves as well.

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who had already garnered support from radical elements in the NAP, as well as from prominent socialists such as J. A. Rahim and Dr. Mubashir Hussain, seized this opportune moment of ethnic fervor and on September 16, 1967, formed the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP).<sup>33</sup> Bhutto criticized the Awami League and Rehman’s Six-Point Program as an attempt to break apart the country. Bhutto’s accusation was later confirmed when Khan’s government, on January 7, 1968, announced

---

<sup>31</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 24.

<sup>32</sup> Talukder Maniruzzaman, “Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh,” in *Radical Politics in South Asia*, eds., Paul R. Brass and Marcus F. Franda (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), 251.

<sup>33</sup> Philip E. Jones, *The Pakistan People’s Party: Rise to Power* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), 113.

that it had uncovered a conspiracy to make East Pakistan an independent state.”<sup>34</sup> This event, known as the Agartala Conspiracy, was reminiscent of the Rawalpindi Conspiracy in 1951, which the government had seized as an excuse to silence communists. In the same way as in 1951, the government used the Agartala Conspiracy as a pretext to hunt down Awami League members and crush opposition. Yet, these efforts backfired and actually fueled Bengali nationalism in East Pakistan. Meanwhile, political forces in West Pakistan were channeling all their energy into an unsuccessful overthrow of Khan’s military government.

In the absence of a unified political party, radical student movements emerged as a strong force whose loyal camaraderie and commitment to democratic ideals put the country’s bickering political organizations to shame. Similar to other revolutionary movements of the 1960s that were challenging military dictatorships across Africa, Asia, and Latin America like decks of cards, Pakistani students staged the “longest sustained political movement in recent South Asian history” (138 days between November 7 1968 and March 25 1969) and eventually forced Ayub Khan to resign.<sup>35</sup> Bhutto’s PPP, still in the early stages of its development, mobilized an organizational machinery to capture the country-wide revolutionary surge of students. Indeed, Bhutto’s genius lies in a successful weaving of the 1960s leftist radicalism into his agenda of “Islamic socialism” through his anti-imperial rhetoric and oratory. Bhutto, despite his socialist propaganda, had nothing more than a populist appeal. Both Bhutto and Rehman were “opportunistic right-wing social-democrat[s], wrote Tariq Ali at the time, “but both have mass followings in the

---

<sup>34</sup> Philip E. Jones, *The Pakistan People’s Party: Rise to Power* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), 153.

<sup>35</sup> Philip E. Jones, *The Pakistan People’s Party: Rise to Power* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), 138.

urban-centres of West and East Pakistan respectively.”<sup>36</sup> Rehman’s Awami League in East Pakistan and the Bhutto’s PPP in West Pakistan thus emerged as the biggest contenders in the 1970 General Elections.

Table 3. Party Electoral Positions in the 1970 National Assembly Elections

Party	East Pakistan	West Pakistan				Total
		Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Baluchistan	
AL	160	-	-	-	-	160
PPP	-	62	18	1	-	81
CML	-	7	-	-	-	7
CVML	-	2	-	-	-	2
QML	-	1	1	7	-	9
PDP	1	-	-	-	-	1
JUI	-	-	-	6	-	7
JUP	-	4	3	-	1	7
JI	-	1	2	1	-	4
NAP	-	-	-	3	3	6
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indep	1	5	3	7	-	16
Total	162	82	27	25	4	300

Source: Philip E. Jones, *The Pakistan People’s Party: Rise to Power* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), 313.

The 1970 General Elections, the only free and fair election to date, proved disastrous for the country. As Table 3 shows, Rehman’s Awami League won 160 out of 162 seats allotted to East Pakistan in the National Assembly, whereas Bhutto’s PPP only managed to capture 81 out 138 seats allotted to West Pakistan (table 3).<sup>37</sup> The religious right, the JUP, and the Mohajir supported JUI and JI received 7, 7, and 4 National Assembly seats respectively (table 3).<sup>38</sup> The NAP that revolutionized the Pakistani politics before its factionalism only received four seats from Balochistan. West Pakistan’s

<sup>36</sup> Tariq Ali, “Revolutionary Perspective for Pakistan,” *New Left Review*, Issue 63 (September-October 1970), 54.

<sup>37</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 53-54.

<sup>38</sup> Philip E. Jones, *The Pakistan People’s Party: Rise to Power* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), 313.

military-bureaucracy, afraid of losing its dominant position in the state, denied victory to the Awami League. The military generals, in consultation with Bhutto, launched Operation Searchlight to attack Awami League members and root out popular agitation.<sup>39</sup> Rehman was arrested and imprisoned in West Pakistan while the army committed genocide in East Pakistan massacring one to three million Bengalis.<sup>40</sup> By 1971, however, West Pakistan was clearly unable to quell the Bengali resistance, and therefore, with the assistance of India, East Pakistan emerged as an independent country, Bangladesh.

The success of Bengali nationalism invigorated similar ethno-linguistic aspirations in West Pakistan's periphery provinces, especially Balochistan and the NWFP. While the PPP led the central government, the nationalist leaders united under the NAP then joined hands with the JUI in both Baluchistan and the NWFP to form coalition provincial governments. The secessionist movements that were galvanized by Bengali nationalism were rapidly gaining ground in both the provinces. Prime Minister Bhutto, despite the coalition government partnership with the NAP and JUI, ordered the army to use force to stop Baloch and Pakthun nationalists from instigating provincial separation in February 1973.<sup>41</sup> Bhutto also forged a conspiracy to trap the leader of the NAP, Wali Khan, and ordered security forces to arrest him.<sup>42</sup> In February 1973, therefore, Bhutto dismissed the NAP-JUI government in Balochistan. The NAP-JUI government in the NWFP resigned in protest. The dissolution of the NAP-JUI governments weakened the PPP central government. Moreover, Bhutto's empty rhetoric of land reforms (he was

---

<sup>39</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 56.

<sup>40</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 56.

<sup>41</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 29.

<sup>42</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 83.

one of the largest landowners in Pakistan), his recruitment of loyal party members in the civil service, the nepotism and the corruption of his government, and its dependence on coercive state apparatuses such as the Federal Security Force all contributed to the PPP's degeneration. After winning the 1977 general elections, Bhutto was challenged by a hurriedly formed nine-party opposition alliance known as the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), whose only aim was to overthrow the PPP government.<sup>43</sup> The PNA accused the PPP of election-rigging and corruption, and Bhutto was finally overthrown in a 1977 coup d'état by General Zia ul-Haq. Like previous dictators, Zia-ul-Haq banned all political parties and imprisoned politicians. Two years later, on April 04, 1979, Bhutto was finally executed on charges of ordering the assassinations of political rivals. This was the second coup in Pakistan's turbulent thirty-year political history. International events such as the Islamic (Shiite) revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan contributed to the country's further complicated future.

Zia's coup, the Iranian revolution, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan marked the emergence of political Islam onto the global stage. Pakistan's strategic location bordering Iran and Afghanistan and the Sunni background of the country's dictator and population proved crucial to US interests in both situations. The US armed the Sunni regime in Pakistan to counter the Shiite revolution in Iran and to recruit *Mujahideen* (Islamic fighters) to fight Soviets in Afghanistan. US military aid poured into Pakistan with a large chunk invested in modernizing the country's armed forces and building *madrassahs* (religious seminaries). Consequently, Islamic organizations enjoyed massive

---

<sup>43</sup> The nine party alliance included: JI, JUP, Muslim League, Tehrik-i-Istiqlal, the Pakistan Democratic Party, the National Democratic Party, the Khaksar Tehrik, and the Muslim Conference. Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 318.

state and international support from the US and Saudi Arabia. In this new relationship, the JI emerged as a junior partner to the military regime in what was popularly known as a mullah-military alliance. US involvement in Pakistan once again undermined secular-democratic political parties and bolstered the military-bureaucracy along with Islamic fundamentalists.

In 1981 political parties, including the PPP, started a country-wide agitation against the military junta under the banner of an alliance called the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD). Since the PPP was leading the movement, the MRD was stronger in rural Sindh where “Pamphlets circulated clandestinely to promote the cause of the ‘*Sindi Desh*’ (Sindi Nation).”<sup>44</sup> One of the leaders of the MRD was Mumtaz Bhutto, the former governor of Sindh and the cousin of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who formulated a programme similar to Rehman’s Six-Point Programme.<sup>45</sup> The army replied to the MRD’s demands with the same oppressive mechanisms it had used against Bengali nationalists in the 1960s. Zia deployed 45,000 soldiers to Sindh, causing 300 fatalities over a six-month period.<sup>46</sup>

The JI, true to its past decisions, sided with Zia in full support of suppressing the MRD and any other ethnic group under the guise of Islamic dogma. Although the JI enjoyed some power as a partner of the military and fellow oppressor of democratic forces like the MRD, by 1981 the party’s popularity began to decline among Urdu-speakers in urban Sindh. Under military patronage, however, the JI recruited new party members from Punjab, thus shifting the organization’s social base away from Mohajirin,

---

<sup>44</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 27.

<sup>45</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 27.

<sup>46</sup> Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *A History of Pakistan and its Origins* (London: Anthem Press, 2002), 27.

who were already resentful of their relative decline in state bureaucracy. The Mohajir members of the JI therefore started to express reservations about Punjabi dominance in the JI and thus gradually distanced themselves from the party. This, perhaps, marked the beginning of a separate ethnic Mohajir identity, which is explained in chapter four.

Seyyed Vali Nasr argues that the JI's attitude of "denying membership to its own group of voters has kept it from consolidating this same base of support, and therefore it cannot benefit from the fruits of its own toil."<sup>47</sup> Another factor that contributed JI's decrease in popularity was rapid social change due to urbanization, changing demographic pressure, increasing ethnic heterogeneity in cities, and the generational gap within the Mohajir community in urban Sindh, all in the context of underdevelopment. Mohajir grievances against the state and the lack of amenities for them bred frustration and a sense of alienation which the JI failed to address as it was so focused on religious dogma. This societal change, according to Verkaaik, gave rise to subversive attitudes on the part of Mohajir youth who undermined traditional Islamic political parties and the legitimacy of the state. The suppression of minorities during Zia's rule, supported by the US, and the gradual Mohajir withdrawal from the JI set the stage for the Mohajir Qaumi Movement. The MQM, formed on March 23, 1984 to represent Mohajirin, carefully captured the youth's frustration, caused by the Punjabi dominance in the JI, a lack of jobs and civic amenities, and general underdevelopment. The MQM wove these concerns into the party's militant agenda. The emergence and popularity of the MQM is described in detail in Chapter four. In fact, the MQM was not the only new party that formed during this time. The relatively representative ethno-linguistic political parties that had been at the

---

<sup>47</sup> Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 99

forefront of politics since Pakistan's inception, within political alliances such as the PNP and the NAP, disintegrated further into smaller factions. These new militant groups and parties arising all over Pakistan thus marked the decades of the 1970s and 1980s with ethnic chauvinism and hatred.

The above discussion on political parties highlights ethno-linguistic nationalism, political Islam, and the military-bureaucracy supported by the US as three important political actors in Pakistan. Several observations thus emerge that revolve around the above-mentioned political actors. First, the rise and evolution of political parties was the direct result of a resistance against nation-building. Regional and provincial political parties challenged the Muslim League and its consolidation of the state's power in the central government. The Muslim League eventually crumbled in the face of this strengthening resistance. The second observation highlights the detrimental effects of the military-bureaucracy's dominance over the country's political process. Despite its disastrous and disgraceful defeat in East Pakistan in 1970, the military maintained an ideological grip over the population, with a condescending attitude towards politicians. The military also successfully tied its fate with the general national interest by over-emphasizing a threat from India. The military institution thus emerged as sacrosanct and pristine in relation to the emerging political parties. Pakistan's involvement in the Cold War as a US ally also contributed to undermining the democratic process, especially the working of political parties. The US' support of succeeding military dictators marginalized secular-democratic forces in the country. Initially, the state used anti-communist propaganda as a justification to hunt down leftists, student activists, and labor unions; then later, jihad in Afghanistan served as a tool to root out "anti-religious" elements. Thus, in addition to the society's inherent organizational weaknesses, the

impact of international forces, and particularly US involvement in the region, greatly damaged any prospects of democracy for Pakistan.

The third observation that emerges is the political parties' failure to foster conditions for parliamentary government and, in general, for a competitive democracy that would have put in place channels through which the people could represent themselves. Ethnic and linguistic differences within political parties, including religious organizations, were the primary contributing factors in this failure. Ethno-linguistic chauvinism led to factionalism in political parties and in oppositional alliances that usually surfaced against military dictators. Factionalism not only failed to bring people from diverse backgrounds onto the same platform, in fact, it intensified ethnic cleavages. The militant wings of political parties thus started to dominate bureaucratic sections of the organizations. This resulted in reducing political parties to mere militant groups and caused violence and tremendous damage to parliamentary governance. The 1970s and 1980s were an era of ethnic nationalism and militancy across Pakistan. The loosening of the ideological and physical grip of hegemonic rulers on the state apparatuses allowed regional parties to emerge and compete with each other. In the absence of a strong central enemy, the regional parties clashed with each other. Thus, Sindhi, Baloch, Pakthun, Seraiki, and Mohajir chauvinism gripped the entire period. Only the military-bureaucracy, which not only instigated ethnic hatreds among communities but also manipulated the people's expression for its own military-bureaucratic cause, benefited from the in fighting.

The final observation that emerged is the Urdu-speakers' changing political allegiance. In Pakistan's early years, Urdu-speakers supported the Muslim League, which tried to maintain its grip on power but failed to do so due to rising centrifugal forces and Punjabi hegemony. After the demise of the Muslim League as Urdu-speakers' strong political

representative, Urdu-speakers shifted their allegiance to religious parties such as the JI and JUP. Both the parties appealed Urdu-speakers through preaching orthodox Islam and propaganda against leftist organizations. However, Urdu-speakers gradually moved away from the JI and JUP, as Punjabis gradually dominated them, and they failed to express Mohajir grievances. The ethno-militant party, the MQM, thus emerged as a sole representative of Urdu-speakers and capitalized on Urdu-speakers' frustrations. The MQM gave a new political identity to Urdu-speakers and continued to garner support from Mohajir in urban Sindh.

Why is an understanding of the development of political parties in Pakistan relevant to exploring the formation and transformation of the MQM? This chapter provides a historical evolution of political parties, the challenges they faced from within and from the outside, in the form of deep ethno-linguistic cleavages, Islamic fundamentalism, and the dominant military-bureaucracy. At the same time, the analysis sets the background for studying the MQM in a larger contextual environment. This is crucial because the MQM's development and the key change in its evolution revolve around these constellations of ethnicity, Islam, and the military-bureaucracy. The following chapter aims to provide a conceptual understanding of the development of the parties in Pakistan.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Theorizing the MQM's Change

The previous chapter explained the growth of political parties in Pakistan from a historical point of view. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to explore the development of parties in Pakistan in a theoretical sense. The following pages map the MQM's emergence, development, and transformation in light of specific theories that coincide with the party's journey. It aims to engage critically with societal cleavage and crowd theory to analyze how each of these models helps to shed light on the political scene in Pakistan. Each theory considers how political party growth and decline lead to organizational change and seeks to explain it by several related factors. The literature on party transformation and demise identifies an important topic, the life of political parties. In doing so, this body of literature relates parties to larger societal changes resulting from neoliberalism, political apathy, social movements, the technological and communication revolution, and the crisis of liberal democracy. The erosion of relations between political parties and society is an underlying theme of party change theories. Finally, this chapter situates the MQM's change in terms of party-change theory and reveals societal conditions that led to the MQM's reorientation from an ethnic to a catch-all party. Despite limitations, explained later in this chapter, the party-growth and party-change theories are useful for mapping the MQM's journey from its emergence in the 1980s as an ethno-militant mass party with a parochial Mohajir agenda, through the party's transformation in the 1990s to a catch-all party equipped with a modernization discourse. Otto Kirchheimer's catch-all theory in particular identifies specific steps that a party employs to modify goals, organizational structure, social bases, and policies. His theory also highlights the problems associated with catch-all parties such as the breakdown of

the voter-party linkage and, most importantly, the de-ideologization that leads them into being easily co-opted by a state.

### **Defining “Party”**

Before the term “party,” etymologically derived from ‘part,’ became a common description, the word faction was used for a political organization.<sup>1</sup> Edmund Burke described a party as a “body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed.”<sup>2</sup> James Madison criticized Burke’s definition vehemently as simplistic and based on the assumption that parties promote national interests, as is evident from the Federalist Paper No. 10, which became the foundation of the US constitution. Madison describes a faction as “a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.”<sup>3</sup> A faction, in this formulation, was perceived as detrimental to the polity. Maurice Duverger in his influential work on political parties states that a “party is not a community but a collection of communities, a union of small groups dispersed throughout the country (branches, caucuses, local associations, etc.) and linked by coordinating institutions.”<sup>4</sup> Duverger provides a complex view of the organizational structure of a party rather than defining the function of a political party. Interestingly,

---

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Ware, *Political Parties and Party Systems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 5.

<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey L. Prewitt, ed., *The Dilemma of American Political Thought* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996), 57.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Duverger, Barbara and Robert North, trans., *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (London: Methuen & Co. LTD, 1954), 17.

Duverger never expounds on the function of a party.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, he identifies various important organizational elements of political parties such as caucus, branch, and cell. Political sociologists, Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan, combine the definitions of a party and a faction in order to describe a political party. Thus, they associate “double fascination,” which is a conflict-integration dialectic, with parties.<sup>6</sup> Following a conflict-integration dialectic, parties are therefore defined as entities which “help to crystallize and make explicit social structure, and they force subjects and citizens to ally themselves across structural cleavages lines and to set up priorities among their commitments to established or prospective roles in the system.”<sup>7</sup> Once a cleavage is translated into a party, then a party constitutes three functions: expressive (using rhetoric to demand and pressure), instrumental (striking bargains and staggering demands), and representative (constructing aggregate pressures).<sup>8</sup>

The above discussion clarifies the origin and evolution of the definition of a political party and demonstrates the varied functions associated with political parties. Each party is part of whole. It is a consensual solidified unit of divergent views and people, yet has the potential to include rivalries and factions. Further, it is generally agreed that a party’s functions are expressive, representative, and instrumental. This analysis is preliminary to my theoretical discussion of the development of political parties and the party system in Pakistan.

---

<sup>5</sup> Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 58.

<sup>6</sup> Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 5.

<sup>8</sup> Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 5.

## Conceptualizing the Development of Parties

There are numerous theoretical views on the evolution of parties. The most widely held views are sociological and institutional. Crowd theory suggests critical insights into the growth of fascist and militant parties. The early literature concerning party politics focuses on four types of institutional and competitive conditions that gave rise to political parties and party systems:

1. The emergence of parliamentary opposition and a free press;
2. The extension of the franchise;
3. The consequences of the electoral system;
4. The structure of the decision-making arena.<sup>9</sup>

Duverger, in keeping with his institutional view, believes that the “development of parties seems bound up with that of democracy, that is to say with the extension of popular suffrage and parliamentary prerogatives.”<sup>10</sup> For him the institutional structure is a critical variable but alone cannot explain party formation. “The difficulty is that institutions interact with party systems, and their impact on minority group representation is heavily contingent upon the dispersion or concentration of the minority population. For example, geographically concentrated minority populations benefit from single-member district system (SMD) where districts coincide with ethnic boundaries, but dispersed minorities benefit more from proportional representation.”<sup>11</sup>

Lipset and Rokkan, in keeping with their sociological view, offer a most compelling argument explaining the growth of political parties and party systems. Instead of looking

---

<sup>9</sup> Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 4.

<sup>10</sup> Maurice Duverger, Barbara and Robert North, trans., *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (London: Methuen & Co. LTD, 1954), xxiii

<sup>11</sup> Donna Lee Van Cott, *From Movements to Parties in Latin America: The Evolution of Ethnic Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 23.

at conventional explanations of party development, such as those listed above, Lipset and Rokkan provide a sociological account of “conflicts and their translation into party systems.”<sup>12</sup> In their view, *societal cleavages* produce political parties. In fact, there is a “hierarchy of cleavage bases” associated with religion, ethnicity, class, language, etc.<sup>13</sup> Lipset and Rokkan, employ a fourfold schema for the “classification of the function of a social system,” to explain how these cleavages transform into political parties.<sup>14</sup> By using the fourfold model of a society, they identify four critical cleavages that arise from conflicts between:

1. Central nation-building culture and the increasing resistance of the ethno-linguistic communities in provinces and the peripheries.
2. Centralizing nation-state and “historically established corporate privileges of the Church.”
3. Landed interests and the rising class of industrial entrepreneurs.
4. Owners and employers on one side and tenants, laborers, and workers on the other.<sup>15</sup>

The first two cleavages are products of a nation-building culture that gives rise to “local oppositions to encroachments of the aspiring or the dominant national elites and their bureaucracies: the typical reactions of peripheral regions, linguistic minorities, and culturally threatened populations to the pressures of the centralizing, standardizing, and “rationalizing” machinery of the nation-state.”<sup>16</sup> The last two emerge from the effects of

---

<sup>12</sup> Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 4.

<sup>13</sup> Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, ed., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 14.

<sup>16</sup> Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 10.

the Industrial Revolution.<sup>17</sup> “These cleavages do not translate themselves into party oppositions as a matter of course: there are considerations of organizational and electoral strategy; there is the weighing of payoffs of alliances against losses through split-offs; and there is the successive narrowing of the “mobilization market” through the time sequences of organizational efforts.”<sup>18</sup> This theory is important as the MQM was born out of societal cleavage, and societal cleavages shaped the party’s early politics.

While there exists an abundance of theories explaining the growth of political parties in terms of institutions, cleavages, and crowds, there is also an emerging literature on party change. Scholars use terms such as catch-all party, state-party cartel, electoral professional party, and business firm party to label party transformations in Western democracies. The occurrence of party growth or decline is usually associated with one or more of the following societal characteristics; economic affluence, technological revolution, shifting electoral allegiance, electoral defeat, factionalism within the party, proliferation of social movements and non-governmental organizations, and bureaucratization and corruption within the party. Interestingly, it was the early 1950s when the decline of political party, resulting from economic affluence and social consensus, was first specifically addressed.

---

<sup>17</sup> Lipset and Rokkan go further to describe another cleavage that emerged in “fully mobilized nation states” and the “new elites,” emerged from this cleavage, control media and mass movements that led to “anti-system” political parties.<sup>17</sup> For instance, Fascism in Italy, National Socialism in Germany, Poujadism in France, and “radical rightism” in the United States. Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 23.

<sup>18</sup> Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, eds. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 26.

## The Catch-All Theory

In Europe, party change was first observed when cadre-parties – “loosely structured, elite centered, parties with minimal organization outside of the legislature” – transformed themselves into highly developed mass parties which “aspire[d] to enlist a large percentage of their voters as party members.”<sup>19</sup> Such change was particularly apparent with the rise of working class parties that demanded, among other things, a fair distribution of income and wealth. However, it was not long before another transformation took place. World War II brought unprecedented changes in European societies, the most fundamental of which were economic affluence and the stabilization of democracy, a period which Eric Hobsbawm called the ‘Golden Age.’ While observing socio-economic and political changes in post war Europe, the German-American scholar Otto Kirchheimer developed his “catch-all party” thesis in 1954.<sup>20</sup> The catch-all thesis outlines four general features. The first of these is the “erosion of parliamentary democracy and the vanishing of political opposition.”<sup>21</sup> Kirchheimer’s second trait was the development of a state-party cartel, while the third was the “professionalization of party organisations and the personalisation of the party-voter link.”<sup>22</sup> “Vanishing

---

<sup>19</sup> Steven B. Wolinetz, “Beyond the Catch-All Party: Approaches to the Study of Parties and Party Organization in Contemporary Democracies,” *Political Parties* 31 (March 2002): 140.

<sup>20</sup> Kirchheimer, born in a Jewish middle class family in Germany, migrated to United States after Hitler took over his native country. In US, Kirchheimer work in the State Department on issues of de-nazification of Germany and democratization of Europe in general. However, McCarthy negative attitude towards communism forced him to go back to Germany. Andre Krouwel, “Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party,” *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 25-26.

<sup>21</sup> Andre Krouwel, “Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party,” *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 25-26, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Andre Krouwel, “Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party,” *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 25-26, 24

opposition, cartelization, and professionalization then all lead to the fourth feature: depoliticization, political apathy...”<sup>23</sup>

After WWII, argues Kirchheimer, mass parties were transformed into catch-all “people’s” parties as they abandoned “attempts at the intellectual and moral encadrement of the masses” and turned more fully to the electoral scene for “a wider audience and more immediate electoral success.”<sup>24</sup> These new catch-all parties no longer adhered to a specific class or set of issues for electoral support. Their agenda, if there was any, was to be all-encompassing, at least rhetorically. Most importantly, catch-all parties struggled to incorporate all economic classes, from workers to the bourgeoisie, under a unified de-ideologized party. Conversely, catch-all parties no longer adhered to societal cleavages of class difference that had hitherto been central in party politics, and they de-emphasized ‘antiquated’ political issues and ‘inappropriate’ traditional lines of conflict.”<sup>25</sup> Instead, they relied on policy preferences that transgressed boundaries of ethnicity, class, and religion. The causes for this transformation, according to Kirchheimer, were “economic affluence and redistribution through the welfare state.”<sup>26</sup> He believed that growing economic prosperity in Western Europe is rapidly blurring class-based politics. Nonetheless, the “catch-all party” became a widely-used notion to designate a party as a “mass-consumer good in that it mobilizes voters on policy preferences” rather than on

---

<sup>23</sup> Andre Krouwel, “Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party,” *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 25-26, 24.

<sup>24</sup> Otto Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems,” in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner. Ed., *Political Parties and Political Development*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), 184.

<sup>25</sup> Andre Krouwel, “Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party,” *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 23-40.

<sup>26</sup> Andre Krouwel, “Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party,” *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2(April 2003): 31.

ideology.<sup>27</sup> As Kirchheimer saw it, this transformation became a major factor in the success of political parties in post-WWII Europe. He proposed five elements of the catch-all party:

1. Drastic reduction of the party's ideological baggage.
2. Further strengthening of top leadership groups, whose action and omissions are now judged from the viewpoint of their contribution to the efficiency of the entire social system rather than identification with the goals of their particular organization.
3. Downgrading of the role of the individual party member, a role considered a historical relic which may obscure the newly built-up catch-all party image.
4. De-emphasis of the class-gardée, specific social-class or denominational clientele in favor of recruiting voters among the population at large.
5. Access to a variety of interest groups for financial and electoral reasons.<sup>28</sup>

While all the above points are significant elements in a party's transformation to catch-all status, abandoning "ideological baggage" is the first crucial step. According to Kirchheimer, "de-ideologization in the political field involves the transfer of ideology from partnership in a clearly visible political goal structure into one of many sufficient but by no means necessary motivational forces operative in the voters' choice."<sup>29</sup> This de-emphasizing of ideology leads to further changes such as broadening the party's appeal and decreasing its hierarchical organizational structure. Kirchheimer regarded the "downgrading of the role of party members as a multifaceted process, including stagnation in the size of a party's membership, and a transformation towards a more

---

<sup>27</sup> Andre Krouwel, "Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party," *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 29.

<sup>28</sup> Otto Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems," in *Political Parties and Political Development* eds., Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, 177-200 (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), 190.

<sup>29</sup> Otto Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems," in *Political Parties and Political Development*, eds. Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, 177-200 (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), 187.

balanced social profile in terms of party membership.”<sup>30</sup> It is this which helps the catch-all party to secure access to finance from different interest groups and even from the state and its functional power-bearers such as the military and bureaucracy. In fact, “release from their previous unnecessary fears as to the ideological propensities and future intentions of class-mass party, functional power-holders have come to recognize the catch-all party’s role as consensus purveyor.”<sup>31</sup> The catch-all party acts, in this conception, as an “agent for the personal political ambition of elites, rather than as mass organization oriented towards the mobilization of citizens and towards a fundamental transformation of society.”<sup>32</sup>

Although able to mobilize and appeal to larger electorates, catch-all parties, because of their de-ideologization, experience difficulties in their performance and function. Unlike mass-parties, which have strong electorates and active members on whom they rely for its electoral performance, catch-all parties do not have solid support from members and thus have trouble forecasting electoral support. “Competing for votes on the basis of their leaders and the effectiveness of their policies, catch-all parties find themselves increasingly vulnerable to the vagaries of the electorates who have detached themselves from previous political moorings.”<sup>33</sup> Consequently, this makes catch-all parties rely heavily on media-driven election campaigns and depend on opinion polls and surveys in order to predict their success or failure. The decision to transform into a

---

<sup>30</sup> Andre Krouwel, “Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party,” *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 28.

<sup>31</sup> Otto Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems,” in *Political Parties and Political Development*, eds., Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, 177-200 (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), 197.

<sup>32</sup> Andre Krouwel, “Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party,” *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 34.

<sup>33</sup> Steven B. Wolinetz, “Beyond the Catch-All Party: Approaches to the Study of Parties and Party Organization in Contemporary Democracies,” *Political Parties* 31 (March 2002): 148.

catch-all party can also lead to dissension or even break-up of the party. Such splits are typically the outcomes of the inability of ardent party members, who still believe in the ideology as a principle vehicle for pursuit of party's goals, to accept catch-all strategies. Hence, the typical break-away group accuses the parent party of lust for power as the main driving force behind the catch-all agenda. For example, in 1992, when the MQM leaders de-ideologized the party to appeal to a larger support base by removing the word Mohajir from the party's name, replacing it with Muttahida (national), the party's ideological faction lead by Amir Khan and Afaq Ahmad dissented from the re-organization and accused Altaf Hussain of a lust for power and putting aside Mohajir agenda.

The de-ideologized and multifaceted character of catch-all parties and their dependence on people and resources from diverse backgrounds creates a unique relationship between a catch-all party and the state. Catch-all parties and their states share a view that utility maximization rather than engaging in oppositional politics is a way to avoid confrontation. They share a sense of commitment to maintaining a status quo that sustains hegemonic structures of power in society and avoids stirring potential resistance and opposition. This situation can be described as a the consolidation of state-party cartel, "where parties disconnect themselves from their social foundations and become amalgamated with the state, reducing politics to mere 'state management' by professional politicians who will abuse legal means for their individual political ends."<sup>34</sup> The party-

---

<sup>34</sup> Andre Krouwel, "Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party," *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 31.

state “amalgamation” also results in a decline in the political activism of social classes identified as such.<sup>35</sup>

Although Kirchheimer highlighted the decline of the political parties in the developed world, he exaggerated the demise of ideology as occasioned by rising economic affluence that gave rise to social consensus in society. The radicalization of the masses, the rise of feminist movements, the upsurge of student revolts, and the anti-war marches on the streets in the 1960s renders contrary to Kirchheimer’s analysis. The political situation in the post-1970s era, however, fits Kirchheimer’s argument of the depoliticization and apathy among the masses. The rise of neo-conservatism in the persons of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan and the neoliberal assault on social services did indeed bring a relative decline of political parties. Political parties’ failure from the 1970s to represent and express people’s aspiration in the government thus ushered in the era of social movements in industrial countries. While issue-based social movements mobilized grass-roots support, political parties tended to be gradually co-opted into the state-bureaucracy. It was not until the end of the Cold War in 1991 that political parties especially communist organizations suffered a drastic shock. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the assault of a neoliberal market economy displaced utopian ideology of formerly communist parties. Thus, they shifted to more moderate social agendas shedding their communist ideology. The newly transformed parties abandoned their ideological agenda and embraced issue-based politics. They resurfaced as new parties, projected new goals and aspirations and appeared, at least on the surface, to be playing a politics of centrality in a depoliticized world undergirded by the neoliberal

---

<sup>35</sup> Andre Krouwel, “Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party,” *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 33.

‘New World Order.’ Chantal Mouffe relates this depoliticization to the crisis of liberal democracy, which relegates “pluralism and dissent to the private sphere in order to secure consensus in the public realm... as a result the realm of politics becomes merely the terrain where individuals are stripped of their ‘disruptive’ passions and beliefs.”<sup>36</sup>

Political parties’ mass transformation, nonetheless, attracted scholars to analyze the party changes brought by the end of the Cold War.<sup>37</sup> As the literature on party change proliferated, it brought to light several theoretical perspectives and models that identify the causes and effects of organization transformations.

While the literature on party transformation and neoliberalism has proliferated in the West, the scholarship on ethnic conflicts around the Third World has mushroomed. Former regional political parties have divided further into smaller radical and militant ethno-religious groups, which rarely conform to the definition of political parties, and which undermined the already weakening legitimacy of the state. In the dominant discourse of the New World Order, a “failed state” has become a common description of countries with weak institutions shattered by ethno-linguistic wars, suffering from a corrupted civil-bureaucracy, and ineffective because of parochial cultural and religious values. In order to assist the Third World, therefore, the nongovernment organizations or NGOs appeared on the scene to provide services that were formerly provided by the state and expressed by the political parties. For example, in the Islamic world,

---

<sup>36</sup> Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso Books, 2005), 140.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Harmel and Kenneth Janda, “An Integrated Theory of Party Goals and Party Change,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 6, no. 3 (1994); Wolfgang C. Müller, “Inside the Black Box: A Confrontation of Party Executive Behaviour and Theories of Party Organizational Change,” *Party Politics* 3, no. 3, (1997); Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Steven B. Wolinetz, “Beyond the Catch-All Party: Approaches to the Study of Parties and Party Organization in Contemporary Democracies,” *Political Parties* 31 (March 2002); Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair, *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organization in Western Democracies*, (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1994).

extremist/resistance groups also initiated social services in poor areas and gained support from a large section of the society. *Hamas*, *Hezbollah*, and numerous groups in Pakistan have helped refugees in camps while radicalizing them with Islamic ideology, with the help of new forms of technology.

The 1990s brought “monumental changes in systems of communication and of information storage and exchange” that revolutionized and made “possible the emergence of political parties that are more oriented to gaining and holding power in their own right, as opposed to doing so as representative institutions of some segment of the general public.”<sup>38</sup> For instance, media and the Internet have allowed organizations to reach a large population “without the intervention of traditional party cadres or local party organizations.”<sup>39</sup> The professionalization or corporatization of political parties also contributed to the decline of the conventional definition of a party. This was assisted by the rise of the “electoral specialists, the experts who ‘package’ and ‘market’ political candidates.”<sup>40</sup> All these global changes briefly discussed above reduce political parties to a form of state machinery unable to effectively function any longer.

### **Growth of Political Parties in Pakistan**

This section provides concrete historical examples of how the sociological and crowd theories of party development and change might apply to Pakistan. Western Europe and North America have a long history of political parties; hence, most of the literature that exists on party transformation either theorizes European parties or draws

---

<sup>38</sup> Joseph LaPalombara, “Reflections on Political Parties and Political Development, Four Decades Later,” *Party Politics* 13, no. 2: 141-154, 147.

<sup>39</sup> Joseph LaPalombara, “Reflections on Political Parties and Political Development, Four Decades Later,” *Party Politics* 13, no. 2: 141-154, 148.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph LaPalombara, “Reflections on Political Parties and Political Development, Four Decades Later,” *Party Politics* 13, no. 2: 141-154, 149.

from American examples. Therefore, one encounters difficulty when trying to conceptualize party development and change in the South Asian context, where kinship, tribes, caste, and personality play a significant role in society. Analyzing political parties using existing party change theory becomes further complicated in the case of Pakistan, due to military-bureaucratic control over political actors as demonstrated in Chapter one. This reason alone complicates attempts to apply theories generated in a liberal democratic European context to explain party growth or party change. Despite these limitations, certain elements of party evolution and transformation so provide intriguing insights for explaining the evolution of parties, especially the MQM. Moreover, the application of elements of party development and change theory to the MQM serves to relate the development of the MQM to general trends in party changes that have taken place in South Asia and other parts of the world.

The modern nation-building project was the most determining element of the growth of movements (*tehriks*), political parties, alliances (*ittehad*), and party system in Pakistan. As explained in Chapter one, the Muslim League's modern nation-building program that centralized and bureaucratized state power, imposed the state's ideology on local communities, and institutionalized a singular history over a manifold of narratives that invigorated ethno-linguistic movements in the periphery and provinces. Emerging political groups such as the Awami League in Bangladesh, and the National Awami Party and the PPP in West Pakistan represent the classic examples of provincial forces that challenged the Mohajir-dominated central government. Having evolved from the people, these parties enjoyed popular support from the population in contrast to the Muslim League, which had no organic links with the citizens in Pakistan. They also managed to weave people's demands and aspirations into their organization's agenda. Lipset and

Rokkan's cleavage approach thus proves fruitful in understanding the origins of political parties in the country.

Although societal cleavages played a significant role in determining and shaping parties in Pakistan, crowd theory has further enriched our understanding of the existing material on political parties in the country. This theory focuses on the internal working of groups, such as their social behaviors, practices, and attitudes as well as their collective organization as political parties, movements, or even promoters of violence. Verkaaik's study on the MQM is the only account that falls in this category of a theory that "focuses on social and cultural processes within groups of perpetrators of violence."<sup>41</sup> Verkaaik criticizes the modern approach for "assuming the omnipresence of a modern ideology of identity, while not dealing with how, under which circumstances, and in which social groups these identities become so politicized, polarized, and pressing as to lead people into radical violent action."<sup>42</sup> As he notes, the social cleavage theory "fails to recognize that the perpetrator of violence has a relationship not only with his victim but also with his fellow perpetrators."<sup>43</sup> As described in the literature review, Verkaaik provides a detailed account of the MQM's street nationalism that incorporated youth culture into the party's militant politics. This form of politics undermined the traditional and rather defunct older style of politics, withered away old identities, and ushered in presumptuous behaviors and practices, of masculinity and physicality that produced violence.

How do these theories help to illuminate the MQM's growth? What role has social cleavage, caused by modern nation-building, played in determining and shaping

---

<sup>41</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militant: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 10.

<sup>42</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militant: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 11.

<sup>43</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militant: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 11

the MQM? The social-cleavages, arising from modern nation-building, fit well with the non-Mohajir ethnic groups, except Punjabi, as they threatened the dominance of the Muslim League in the central government. However, the rise of indigenous legislators brought a relative decline to Mohajir supremacy in the state administration. The decline of the civil-bureaucracy forced Mohajirin to mobilize against what they perceived as “discrimination” and to demand rights for Urdu-speaking youth. This trend related directly to the MQM’s evolution. As mentioned in the introduction, Verkaaik’s crowd theory offered unprecedented explanations of Mohajir political manifestation by exploring the MQM’s rise to popularity and power through crowd and violence dynamics. The MQM’s recent change, however, has been ignored in the literature, save for a few passing mentions of the change as a bid for votes. The party’s transformation is a rather interesting phenomenon because of its militant nature and the enormous changes undertaken to transform it into a mainstream catch-all party.

### **Factors Contributing to the MQM’s Transformation**

Three factors contributed to the MQM’s need to transform itself from an ethnic to a catch-all party. These were: electoral loss in the 1997 elections, Operation Cleanup, and the rise of political Islam. The MQM’s electoral loss of three national assembly seats in the 1997 general elections is a sound and plausible contributing factor to the party’s transformation as mentioned above. However, instead of establishing a causal relationship between the electoral loss and the MQM’s change, this section surveys the broader and general social milieu as an exogenous environment, which perhaps caused electoral defeat, and which certainly led to the party’s transformation. The social changes that occurred in the West with their subsequent repercussions on political parties, did not

all transfer to Pakistani society. For instance, the depoliticization caused by economic affluence, as observed by Kirchheimer in 1950s, and by the crisis of liberal democracy in the West, as argued by Mouffe in 1990s, do not match Pakistan's situation. In Pakistan, it was the successive military coups and their forcible suspension of the political process that forced people to become depoliticized and caused general political apathy among the masses. The military's Islamicization program in the 1980s, and its support for and patronage of radical Islamic groups are two recent facets of the demagoguery through which the people's attitude towards political parties were compelled to change. The rise of militant Islamic groups aiming to impose Islamic law undermined the secular-democratic ideals embraced by moderate parties such as the Awami National Party, the Pakistan People's Party, and the Muslim League. Although religious parties failed to manifest their power in the government, these militant groups did indeed break down the social fabric of the society, co-opting youths formerly associated with ethnic-national parties. Chapter four elaborates on the rise of political Islam.

The rapidly changing socio-economic environment in Pakistan notwithstanding, several other factors contributed to the depoliticization of Pakistani society. As mentioned earlier, NGOs have proliferated; they number around 45,000 and vary greatly in size, outreach, and focus; yet they provide services such as education, water, health, and advocacy in both urban and rural areas of the country.<sup>44</sup> According to Aqil Shah, the nonpartisan nature of the NGOs and their willingness to work with the military, has undermined political institutions and parties and thus further assisted in consolidating the

---

<sup>44</sup> Aqil Shah, "Pakistan: Civil Society in the Service of an Authoritarian State," Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 365.

authoritarian role in the country's politics.<sup>45</sup> As Shah states, the NGOs have "sought to redefine the very conception of democracy and accepted, albeit grudgingly at times, the need for collaborating with the military as a way of gradually negotiating democratic space in an embedded authoritarian state."<sup>46</sup> Aasim Sajjad Akhtar also takes a grim view of the enhanced role of NGOs, which is leading the society into a "professionalization of political culture."<sup>47</sup> The incorporation of social activism and the leftist radicals into the state's agenda, the strengthening of the liberal-bourgeoisie as a vanguard of the NGOs, and the support given to military-dictator on programs such as "devolution of power" have all contributed to a professionalization and limited the political imagination.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to military suppression, Islamic extremism, and the depoliticization of civil society, several other factors have contributed to political apathy among the people. Corruption, factionalism, and despotism within the parties have weakened people's ties with those political parties. Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan has had a turbulent and at times gruesome history of electoral politics. This is evident from the country's only free and fair election, that of 1971, when political parties competed only to scramble absolute power in the state rather than to establish genuine democracy in the country. As a result, the country was plunged into a bloody civil war that eventually resulted into the creation of Bangladesh. Since then electoral politics has suffered from incompetent politicians and the corruption of the army, which openly rigged elections, intimidated

---

<sup>45</sup> Aqil Shah, "Pakistan: Civil Society in the Service of an Authoritarian State," Muthiah Alagappa, ed. *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 366.

<sup>46</sup> Aqil Shah, "Pakistan: Civil Society in the Service of an Authoritarian State," Muthiah Alagappa, ed. *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 377.

<sup>47</sup> Aasim Sajjad Akhtar, "Co-opting the Grassroots: The Professionalization of Political Culture," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 17, no. 3 (September 2006), 89.

<sup>48</sup> Aasim Sajjad Akhtar, "Co-opting the Grassroots: The Professionalization of Political Culture," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 17, no. 3 (September 2006), 96

candidates, misused public resources for election campaigns, and derided opponents. Apart from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government, which served the full term in the government, all elected governments have either been overthrown by the military or dissolved by the country's President. Given the ineffectiveness of elections and governments alike, it is hardly surprising that political parties rely and depend on alternative or non-electoral forms of "politics" that do not require public opinions or consensus to govern but rather rely on coercion and control. This type of behavior is more prevalent in ethno-religious political parties and organizations that garner support from a narrow social base and feel threatened with the loss of their electoral constituency in a rapidly changing social environment. In Pakistan, political parties are not only aiming for office in government or merely struggling for vote maximization. Political parties, though few in numbers, aim to solidify their power and control over its constituency. This also means that the number of votes does not necessarily express a party's popularity or failure.

Whatever the conditions that contributed to the MQM's transformation, the party has decided to abandon a militant-ethnic agenda to promote Mohajir interests. The MQM has embraced a 'politics of centrality' and since its transformation has been making choices based a strategy-versus-ideology paradigm. The MQM has avoided ideology and picked up a strategy of promoting the party interests rather than representing any fixed section of a society. The de-ideologized MQM has gradually been merging with the state while detaching itself from the people. Critics, including many who still support the MQM, express their feelings that, in this change, the party committed betrayal. They have pointed out that the "MQM was no longer the ideological and revolutionary movement

that worked for the good of all Muhajirs.”<sup>49</sup> Instead, they have said the MQM has become a corrupt political party with an agenda of gaining quick money and had forgotten its vision of justice and liberation.<sup>50</sup> The name change “contributed to the sense of insecurity, confusion, and disappointment.”<sup>51</sup>

As Kirchheimer’s complex model would lead us to expect, no one variable alone, whether internal or environmental, can provide a complete explanation of the causes that led the MQM to adopt catch-all politics. Most importantly, using causal or determinant relationships tends to simplify complex and intricate experiences of party politics in a way that will only be misleading. Kirchheimer’s catch-all thesis nonetheless contributes significantly to explaining *how* the MQM has changed. The following discussion provides a brief outline of the catch-all theory’s significance for deciphering changing nature of the MQM and further details will be explicated in chapter six. First, the de-ideologization necessary for a catch-all party, as defined by Kirchheimer, relates to the “de-ethnicization” of the MQM. Originally formed as an ethnic party, the MQM now has “shed” its ideological baggage of Mohajir nationalism in order to appeal to non-Mohajir groups. It has embraced Sindhi cultural symbols to project the party’s provincial image, as the party was previously criticized by Sindhis for being alien to Sindh and as rooted in ‘Gang-Jamini’ culture [a reference to the North-Indian land that lies between Ganges and the Jamuna rivers and was the seat of the Mughal empire]. Most importantly, Altaf Hussain with his newly adopted Sindhi image now refers to Mohajirin as ‘Urdu-speaking Sindhis,’ a term hitherto rejected by the MQM as oxymoronic. Second, as the catch-all

---

<sup>49</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 165.

<sup>50</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 165.

<sup>51</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 165.

party's emphasis on strengthening the leader's personality who focuses on broader national issues and policies, the MQM's founder and leader, Altaf Hussain, true to the catch-all thesis, has adopted a new general outlook. Altaf Hussain has abandoned the parochial agenda that demanded a separate Mohajir identity and a fair share of employment in the civil services for Mohajirin. Instead, the leader has expressed great concern for wider issues such as provincial autonomy, modernization, and harmony among ethnic communities. Since the change of orientation, the leader claims to be the one true representative of Pakistan's oppressed classes wherever they live in, including Azad Kashmir. Third, the catch-all party thesis posits a de-emphasizing of the role of particular social-classes or groups and a search for voters from different denominations to diversify party's membership and base. The MQM has struggled to transform its party membership by recruiting non-Mohajirin into its ranks. Its hierarchical organizational structure, once the party's backbone, has also been loosened, though largely due to the army operation in the mid-1990s. To prove its national outlook, the MQM asked Sindhi and Punjabi candidates to contest seats on the party's platform in Mohajir constituencies in 2002 General Elections. In addition, to enhance its organizational capabilities so as to reach non-Mohajir nationalities, the MQM has set up offices in all major cities of Pakistan.

The party has also purged those members who the MQM believes are misnomer to the organization or involved in criminal activities such as extortion. Finally, in Kirchheimer's model, de-ideologized catch-all parties no longer pose any challenge to power-bearers in the country. Rather they gradually get incorporated into the state. Similarly, the de-ideologization and new-found acquiescence of the MQM has pushed the party closer to the state-bureaucracy. After its long battles with the Punjabi-dominated

army and bureaucracy, the MQM has realized that opposing the functional power-bearer is perilous to the party for a long run. The MQM has thus become a model state-party, in fact, the preferred party of the military establishment, and this change is seen as a positive sign by the military-bureaucracy who no longer feels threatened by the MQM. The MQM has dropped its anti-establishment and anti-Punjabi rhetoric that was long central to the party's political discourse. Moreover, after September 11, 2001, the MQM-military partnership reached new heights as the party propagated image as a secular vanguard against Islamic radicalism in urban Sindh.

The trajectory of development drawn in this chapter sheds light on the life-course of political parties in general but also examines the evolution of one major political party in Pakistan through different theoretical lenses. Social cleavage explored the political environment during the early phases of national development and the resistance that arose against the center. Crowd theory brings useful insights into the party dynamics within the MQM. In Pakistan, however, traditional social hierarchies such as those of *biraderi* (kinship), caste, tribe, and personality play a significant role in politics alongside the widely used categories of ethnicity, language, periphery, and provinces. Similarly, international forces have also played a critical role in shaping the party system in Pakistan. As mentioned in Chapter one, US involvement in the region during the Cold War bolstered the military-bureaucracy and various religious groups and thus undermined political parties in the country. The following chapter provides historical analyses of the dominance and decline of Urdu-speakers who later mobilized under the MQM

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Urdu Speakers' Dominance and Decline**

So far, the discussion has focused on historical and theoretical explanations of the development and transformation of political parties in Pakistan. The purpose of this chapter is to underline the doubly fascinating pattern of dominance and decline of the Mohajirin in the country's political, cultural, and economic realms. The Urdu-speakers' supremacy was the direct result of the Muslim League's ruling position, which provided generous support and patronage to Mohajirin in the state and its civil services. This position elevated the Urdu language, spoken by only 7% of the total population, over local vernaculars, and marginalized indigenous histories through imposing a single narrative. The economic modernization also contributed to Urdu-speakers' ascendancy in the early years of Pakistan. The emergence of the regional political parties thus marked the rise of counter-hegemony as they attacked every controlling instance of the ruling class. First, the provincial forces countered the political bulwark of the Mohajirin, the Muslim League, which is explained in Chapter one in detail. Second, in the absence of the Muslim League, Mohajirin suffered challenges from bureaucratic reforms that eventually resulted in a relative decline of Urdu-speakers in the civil services. The nationalization of industries and local recruitment to state employment further challenged the Mohajirin. In the cultural realm, the Urdu and Pakistani ideology came under direct assault by rising local student movements in East Pakistan and Sindh calling for equal status for vernaculars with Urdu. The relative decline of the Mohajirin in turn caused their antagonism against rising local population. As the nation-building program reached the point of exhaustion, the crises of economic modernization started to manifest its

adverse effects across the country, with further challenges for Mohajirin. The erosion of cultivable land, increased rural-urban migration, the proliferation of slums and degradation of the social fabric in inner cities, and burgeoning informal employment posed serious challenges to Pakistan's praetorian state in the 1970s and 1980s. These challenges coalesced with already debilitating civic services of housing, water, transportation, and education, causing a crisis for Mohajirin and the in-coming migrants. This chapter examines the formation of Mohajir consciousness and the MQM in light of the social cleavage theory, documenting the stewing Mohajir frustrations through times of change in Pakistan.

### **Arrival and Settlement of Migrants**

The settlement pattern of Mohajirin in the aftermath of Partition proved formative of their group identity. After British withdrawal in 1947, settlement and rehabilitation of migrants from India was one of the most difficult and vexing tasks for Pakistan's administration. While the promise of Pakistan as the homeland of British India's Muslims was attraction enough, the communal riots that broke out in India and Pakistan around the time of independence and Partition, resulted in increased migration.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The brutal communal violence in East and West Punjab uprooted 7,000,000 people from their land. "Refugees put at 7,000,000," *New York Times*, 30 September 1947.

Table 4. Settlement Location of 1947 Migrants to Pakistan According to Their Zone of Origin in India<sup>a</sup>

Zone of Origin	Settlement Location		
	Karachi	Rest of Sindh	Pakistan
North	197,560	116,899	464,218
East	19,874	4,320	701,317
South	11,107	4,745	18,010
West	119,158	32,064	160,374
Central	49,579	21,046	95,181
North-West	217,649	370,876	5,785,096
Other	1,979	341	2,388
<b>Total Refugees</b>	<b>616,906</b>	<b>550,291</b>	<b>7,226,584</b>

*Source* : Pakistan National Documentation Centre. *The Journey to Pakistan: A Documentation on Refugees of 1947* (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, Cabinet Secretariat, Cabinet Division, National Documentation Centre, 1993), 117-118.

According to Pakistan's 1951 census, 7,226,584 people reported themselves as migrants, and out of these, 616,906 or 8.5% settled in Karachi (table 2). While this may not seem a large proportion of total migrants, the figure looms huge when compared to the original population of Karachi. In spite of the Hindus' evacuation during the same period,<sup>2</sup> the city's population rose from 387,000 in 1941 to 1,068,000 in 1951.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the 616,906 immigrants to Karachi in 1947 outnumbered Karachi's total population at the time (table 4). Urdu-speaking migrants, whose descendents would later comprise the Mohajirin, came from the provinces located in India's North, West, and Central zones. These Urdu-speaking migrants contributed more than 50% or 326,297 of the total 616,906 migrants to Karachi in 1947 (table 4), but only 16.5% of total migrants to Pakistan. This high

<sup>2</sup> 100,000 Hindus evacuated Karachi after the partition. Since, Hindus were involved in commerce; their departure resulted in a collapse of the commercial life of the province. "Karachi, the Capital of Pakistan, is Crippled by Exodus of Hindus," *New York Times*, October 13, 1947.

<sup>3</sup> Population Census Organization, Pakistan. *1998 Census Report of Pakistan*. (Islamabad: Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Govt. of Pakistan, 2001), 117-118.

percentage of Urdu-speaking migrants made Karachi the logical principal base of the MQM in later years.

Only a little over one million of Pakistan's seven million refugees settled in Sindh, with only 536,303 arriving to Sindh from Urdu-speaking zones of India (table 4). Yet, the fact that these migrants did not share a Sindhi background caused great anxiety among Sindhis who perceived their arrival as an invasion. Ironically the Punjab, which settled the majority of migrants, around 5 million of them to be exact, did not experience such ethnic tension (contrary to the claim of the radical Sindhi writer, Feroz Ahmed, who goes so far as to compare the dispossession of Sindhis with that experienced by Palestinians and American Indians).<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it was the attitude of the Urdu-speaking migrants that provoked fears of a threat to the Sindhi ethnicity. As stated above, Punjab accepted the largest number of migrants, yet these people shared the same ethnic background as those in the new settlement location, and this homogeneity prevented ethnic conflict.

This influx of over seven million migrants into Pakistan necessitated the extensive settlement programs that marked the early history of the country. The work of migrant settlement was huge, and the abilities and resources of the fledgling state necessarily fell short. The immediate task was to provide decent living conditions for the migrants living in camps. Initially, migrants received accommodation in Hindu evacuees' houses. Accordingly, the government initiated several housing schemes to address the migrants'

---

<sup>4</sup> Notable anti-immigrant sentiment among Sindhis has been observed at least since the early twentieth century with the settlement of Punjabi farmers in Jamrao Canal colony. These sentiments eventually became the basis for Sindhi nationalism, which perceived any immigration or migration of non-Sindhis to Sindh as a threat to Sindhi identity and culture. Feroz Ahmed, "Pakistan's Problem of National Integration," in *Islam, Politics, and the State: The Pakistan Experience*, ed. Asghar Khan (London: Zed Books, 1985), 34.

demands of rehabilitation.<sup>5</sup> These, however, soon proved insufficient due to the enormous number of migrants. In addition, Pakistan government officials approved the Property Evacuee Act (1951) to reimburse migrants who left immovable goods in India.<sup>6</sup> The process of settlement was difficult for all; however, Urdu-speakers gained access to government benefits more easily than others, especially job opportunities, which softened the hardships of settlement.

### **Urdu Speakers' Dominance in Pakistan's Early Years, 1947-58**

Although they were a small minority in the newly formed country, Urdu-speaking migrants initially emerged as the upper crust of society and enjoyed top positions in Pakistan's administration. This was the result of the fact that the exiting British Empire had transferred power to the Muslim League upon partitioning India. Therefore, the Muslim League became the manager of the dominion's administrative affairs. For example, Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan (1947-1951), was an Urdu-speaker and Muslim League leader. Since most of the leaders of the Muslim League were Urdu speakers, they provided disproportionately generous job opportunities to Urdu-speakers in civil and administrative services. To add to their considerable political advantages, Urdu-speaking migrants were relatively more educated and urban than the indigenous Muslim populations of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, the North West Frontier Province, and East Bengal. This was due to their position of privilege in pre-partition

---

<sup>5</sup> It took more than six years for the central government to complete the first housing scheme and each house cost \$200 with the largest donation of \$50,000 for the project came from Begum Aga Khan, wife of the spiritual leader of the Ismaili sect. John P. Callahan, "Karachi Begins Refugee Housing," *New York Times*, 5 February 1954. The total cost of refugee housing scheme during 1947-55 was Rs 300 million as compared to Rs. 4775 on defence. Pakistan Planning Commission, *First Five Year Plan, 1955-60*, (Karachi: Manager of Publication, 1958), 518.

<sup>6</sup> For more detail analysis see, Joseph B. Schechtman, "Evacuee Property in India and Pakistan," *Pacific Affairs* 24, no. 4 (December 1951): 406-413.

India and their membership in the British-aligned Muslim League. Muslims' share in judicial and executive positions in India's United Province, the place of origin for a large number of Urdu-speaking migrants to Pakistan (including the Prime Minister), naturally equipped them to fill these administrative positions. In 1913, for instance, Muslims comprised 14.11% of the total population of UP but held 41.3% of the executive and 24.8% of the judicial positions. Hindus comprising 85.32% of total population, only held 50.7% executive and 73.9% judicial positions.<sup>7</sup> So even in pre-partition India, in a province where they were a numerical minority, Urdu-speakers held substantial government power. In order to retain their supremacy in Pakistan, the Muslim League government passed discriminatory laws such as the Public and Representative Offices Disqualification Act 1949 (PRODA) that provided the Governor-General with vicegeral power to expel provincial leaders who disagreed with the Urdu-speaking domination of central government.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, this translated into a rather glaring dominance of the administrative and ruling structures, and nowhere was this more obvious than in East Pakistan. Within this province resided a large educated Bengali population, and like the native ethnic groups of West Pakistan Bengalis felt alienated and disadvantaged. For example, as late as 1956 there was no Bengali above the rank of joint secretary in the central secretariat. West Pakistanis held 93 percent of the top jobs in the federal government, with Punjabis and Urdu-speaking migrants occupying the majority of positions.<sup>9</sup> Although they

---

<sup>7</sup> David Page, *Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control, 1902-1932* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), 8.

<sup>8</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister, encouraged the governor-general to use PRODA against Sindh's chief minister Ayub Khorro to dismiss the Sindh government. Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 104-105.

<sup>9</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defense* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 223.

comprised only about three percent of the total population, Urdu-speaking migrants alone held 21% of the jobs in state administration during the first quarter of the century after independence.<sup>10</sup> As a result, the Urdu-speaking settlers in East Pakistan were seen as a “suspect minority” who denied a proper share of government jobs to local Bengalis.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to enjoying favor in job allocations and the exercise of political power, the migrant Urdu-speaking people had a culture that was officially elevated over that of the country’s native ethnic communities, the Bengalis, Balochis, Sindhis, and Pukhtoons. Moreover, Muslim League leaders, proud of their Mughal heritage, were aware that before Urdu-speaking culture could fully dominate the local ethos, it had to become the hegemonic-monolithic “Pakistani” identity. Therefore, in 1950 the government declared Urdu the lingua franca of Pakistan even though only 3% of the population spoke this language.<sup>12</sup> This was obviously unfair in a country where 55.48% of the people spoke Bengali, 29.02% Punjabi, 5.51% Sindhi, 3.7% Pushto, and 1.09% Balochi.<sup>13</sup> The Muslim League publicly assured the country that they were merely trying to unite Pakistan as one nation, but these actions and the campaign to enforce a singular Pakistani identity made any ethnic other a lesser part of Pakistani identity. Clearly, the Muslim League leaders were actually asserting their Urdu-speaking identity as the national “Pakistani” identity, trying to erase the legitimacy of other ethnic groups. Urdu’s promotion by the state at the expense of regional vernaculars played a major role in supporting the glorification of

---

<sup>10</sup> Mohammad Waseem, “Causes of Democratic Downslide,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 2-9, 2002, 5; Ralph Braibanti, “The Higher Bureaucracy of Pakistan,” in *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition*, ed. Ralph Braibanti, 209-354 (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1966), 269.

<sup>11</sup> Hafeez Malik, “Nationalism and the Quest of Ideology in Pakistan,” in *Pakistan: The Long View* eds., Lawrence Ziring, Ralph Braibanti, and W. Howard Wriggins (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1977), 290.

<sup>12</sup> Iftikhar H. Malik, *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology and Ethnicity* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1997), 14.

<sup>13</sup> Iftikhar H. Malik, *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology and Ethnicity* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1997), 14.

Urdu-speaking migrants' history. Certain qualities of Urdu, such as its Persian and Arabic script and its relation to an Islamic-Mughal past, were cited to legitimize the language's consecration as that of the ruling oligarchy and the condescending attitudes adopted towards the local vernaculars. Thus, the state embraced Urdu and institutionalized a national history which was nothing but the history of Urdu-speaking protagonists. This history bestowed primary focus on the achievements of the Muslim League's leaders during the Pakistan movement. This monolithic narrative silenced the pre-Islamic past of the Indus civilization, not to mention the later societies, which had succeeded the Indus civilization; which was a major source of contention for Sindhi intellectuals.<sup>14</sup> Albeit, Urdu offers literary and poetic richness, yet the language's government patronage was the primary reason for its dominance. Without state subsidies, Urdu would not have occupied such a central place in cultural-literary circles in Pakistan. The contrast with the dilapidation of Urdu in India is instructive: Rasheeduddin Khan's lament for the decline of Urdu in India can be quoted at some length:

Urdu language has been the single biggest cultural victim of the partition of the country. In the lifetime of the generation that has seen the effervescences of Urdu as a glorious vehicle of composite culture, philosophical thought, extraordinary imaginative poetry, powerful political literature and religious disputations, as a consummate medium of higher education in practically all branches of learning as a language of law and administration, Urdu is being relegated to an insignificant position in national life and its sources of growth and expansions are allowed to dry at the very roots. It has been, as it were, denationalized and alienated from the expanding stream of the cultural life of contemporary India.<sup>15</sup>

The government also believed that a single "Pakistani" identity would diminish ethnic movements, which were already suspect in the provinces. Alavi categorizes the Pakistani

---

<sup>14</sup> Mubarak Ali, "History, Ideology and Curriculum," *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 2-9, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Rasheeduddin Khan, "Minority Segments in Indian Polity: Muslim Situation and Plight of Urdu," *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 2, 1978, 1515.

government's efforts as falling under Benedict Anderson's concept of "official nationalism." For Anderson official nationalism occurs when a "national identity is not spontaneously generated from below, but is imposed from above by those at the heart of the power structure in the country, in reaction to powerful sub-national movements."<sup>16</sup> For example, only one-fourth of the material in school textbooks reflected indigenous Pakistani cultures and their heroes, while three-fourths articulated a north Indian Muslim narrative.<sup>17</sup> The above examples reflect the efforts of Mohajir elites to foist a single Pakistani identity on the country's diverse ethnic groups during the formative years of the country.

The marginalized ethnic groups reacted with clear resentment to this centralization and to the Urdu-speakers' cultural dominance, as they perceived the hegemonic discourse of the Urdu-speaking elites as alien to their culture. The Bengalis of East Pakistan under the leadership of the Awami League were the first group to reject Urdu's supremacy along with the narratives of nationhood imposed by the Muslim League and the Urdu-speakers.<sup>18</sup> In following with Bengali resistance, Sindhi intellectuals and the regional political parties emerged as ferocious iconoclasts challenging the cherished Urdu-speaking ethos that was used to marginalize them. They criticized the ruling historiography as an effort to silence the long and colorful Sindhi history as rooted in epics and legends of the Indus civilization. Thus, this era was the

---

<sup>16</sup> Hamza Alavi, "Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan," *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 8, 1989, 1527.

<sup>17</sup> Mohammad Waseem, "Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan: The Case of the MQM," *Pakistan Development Review* 35, no. 4, Part 11 (Winter 1996): 622.

<sup>18</sup> Bengalis had vocally objected to Urdu's dominance before, the reason why the government had banned all public meetings and rallies. However, on February 21, 1952, students of The University of Dhaka organized a massive protest, now termed The Bengali Language Movement of 1952. This demonstration and resulting civil unrest was the forerunner to Bengali nationalist movements and the Bengali Liberation war in 1971.

beginning of the sustained effort of the periphery and provinces against the rationalizing machinery of the state-builders.

As a result of their political, bureaucratic, and cultural dominance, Urdu-speakers also enjoyed economic success. The country's ruling class was eager to turn "indigenous merchant capital into industrial capital," and therefore provided tremendous state support to entrepreneurs in urban Sindh.<sup>19</sup> Obviously, this caused resentment among Sindhi and Punjabi farmers who felt marginalized at the expense of industrial production. The Korean War (1950-1955) requiring large amounts of Pakistan's raw materials, invigorated southern Pakistan's industrial boom. Surprisingly, from 1958 to 1963, the industrial production of the newly formed country grew by 72% as compared to 55% in rest of Asia.<sup>20</sup> However, there was a dark side of this economic success. Under the impressive figures of growth, presented by the military government as a sign of success, Pakistan experienced severely uneven economic development. For example, of the total \$1.9 billion invested in industrialization in 1958, \$1.1 billion went to Karachi alone. This patronage expanded the Urdu-speaking labor force in Pakistan's manufacturing industries from 14% in 1950 to 29% in 1961.<sup>21</sup>

These forms of privilege enjoyed by the Urdu-speaking elite naturally generated deep resentment among the indigenous communities. They referred to the Urdu-speakers as "people who had settled in Pakistan but could not emotionally disengage themselves from the *Gang-Jamini* culture."<sup>22</sup> Relations between the Urdu-speakers and the local

---

<sup>19</sup> Hamza Alavi, "The State in Crises," in *Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship. The Political Economy of a Praetorian State*, eds., Hassan Gardezi and Jamil Rashid, 47 (London: Zed Press, 1983).

<sup>20</sup> Omar Noman, *The Political Economy of Pakistan 1947-1985* (London: KPI, 1988), 37.

<sup>21</sup> Asaf Hussain, *Elite Politics in an Ideological State: The Case of Pakistan* (Folkestone: Dawson, 1979), 105.

<sup>22</sup> M.K. Arif, *Khaki Shadows, Pakistan: 1947-1997* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 205.

ethnic groups were further strained over the nine-year delay (1947-1956) in holding general elections and adopting a constitution. Ayesha Jalal attributes these delays to the “massive dislocations following Partition and the very real fears of those entrusted with the task of constructing the state.”<sup>23</sup> However, Jalal’s assertion does not appear to give the full case. Rather, the Urdu-speaking elites were aware of their unpopularity among the locals and afraid that if they held general elections they would lose their seats in the government. The ruling elite were afraid that the elections could place provincial leaders from other ethnic groups in powerful central government positions, which would undoubtedly challenge the smooth and unhindered acceptance of the writ of the Muslim League-focused center.<sup>24</sup> At long last, in 1956, after years of dragging their feet, the rulers finally successfully formulated a centralist constitution vesting extensive powers in the center and neglecting the provinces’ legitimate demands for regional autonomy. As mentioned in Chapter one, the constitution merged the provinces in West Pakistan into a single province known as the One Unit (present day Pakistan) to counter East Pakistan’s Bengali numerical majority in the assembly.<sup>25</sup> The manipulative politics of the rulers caused a deep divide between Urdu speakers and local groups who felt alienated culturally, economically, and politically.

### **Urdu Speakers’ Supremacy Declines**

As discussed above, the Urdu-speakers ascendency in the state structure was the direct result of the Muslim League’s ruling position, which started to decline with the

---

<sup>23</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan’s Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 140.

<sup>24</sup> Mohammad Waseem, “Causes of Democratic Downslide,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 2-9, 2002,

<sup>25</sup> Seats in the assembly were based on provincial population. Since East Pakistan constituted a single province that was highly populated it had a majority of seats in the assembly. These assembly members obviously represented the interests of the Bengali ethnic group.

emergence of the regional political parties in East and West Pakistan alike. The weakening of the Muslim League in terms of its failure to reach out to the local population and to hold on to its ideological hegemony, thus parallels Urdu-speakers' decline in representation in parliament and government. Given the precariousness of their hold on power, it is no surprise in retrospect that from this point in time, the Muslim-League/Urdu-speakers' dominance began to disintegrate, opening the door for other groups and ethnic-polity governments. The Muslim League's loss of power, and the bad governance, urbanization, and underdevelopment occurring under successive rulers were decisive factors in the Urdu-speakers' decline in the economic, political, and cultural sectors of society. That decline fueled their subsequent frustration, which then gave rise to the eventual spread of Mohajir nationalism under the leadership of the MQM in the mid 1980s.

### **Ayub Khan's Reforms, 1958-1969**

General Ayub Khan, who overthrew the constituent assembly in 1958 and ruled until 1969, struck the first blow to the Urdu-speakers' supremacy. Yet some have argued that Ayub Khan's Martial Law government (1958-1969) was actually a "mixed blessing" for the Mohajirin.<sup>26</sup> In spite of its anti-Mohajirin policies, the Ayub administration relied heavily on the Urdu-speaker-dominated bureaucracy since the group's decline had only begun and they still had significant political weight. Ayub also strengthened the One Unit, maintained the status of Urdu as the national language, encouraged private enterprise (which was largely owned by the Gujarati-speaking community in Karachi),

---

<sup>26</sup> Theodore P. Wright, Jr., "Indian Muslim Refugees in the Politics of Pakistan," *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* (July 1974): 189-205.

and settled immigrants' property claims.<sup>27</sup> In fact, Ayub formed a high-powered Rehabilitation Committee, organized under the chairmanship of Lieutenant General Mohammad Azam Khan, to build 40,000 new quarters in and around Karachi in a six-month period.<sup>28</sup> As mentioned previously, the Ayub government also invested money in Karachi during the industrial boom, which provided job opportunities for Urdu-speakers. Finally, his much-debated Pay and Service Commission reforms, which could have eroded the power of traditional bureaucrats, never fully materialized.<sup>29</sup>

The first blow came when the Ayub administration used martial law codes to initiate reforms in the civil-bureaucratic structure, therefore shaking up Urdu-speakers' hegemony. For example, on December 2, 1969, under the terms of the Removal from Services (Special Provisions) Regulation, (popularly known as Martial Law No. 58), over three hundred Class I officers, mostly Urdu-speakers, were removed from their positions.<sup>30</sup> Further, the Pay and Services Commission under the leadership of the Chief Justice of Pakistan, A. R. Cornelius, criticized the civil service for corruption and advised government reforms that would include a greater number of provincial representatives.<sup>31</sup> Urdu-speaking politicians also felt Ayub's reforms. First, via the Electives Bodies Disqualification Order (EBDO) a number of Urdu-speaking politicians were fired on corruption charges. Second, the Basic Democracy system gave new powers to local

---

<sup>27</sup> J. Rehman, "Self Determination, State Building and the Muhajirs: An international Legal Perspective of the Role of Indian Muslim Refugees in the Constitutional Development of Pakistan," *Contemporary South Asia* 3, no. 2 (July 94): 111-130.

<sup>28</sup> Lawrence Ziring, *The Ayub Khan Era: Politics in Pakistan, 1958-1969* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 12.

<sup>29</sup> Tariq Ali, *Can Pakistan Survive? The Death of a State* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983), 67.

<sup>30</sup> Charles H. Kennedy, *Bureaucracy in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 77.

<sup>31</sup> Richard S. Wheeler, *The Politics of Pakistan: A Constitutional Quest* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 132.

legislatures, which had been marginalized by the Urdu-speaking leadership.<sup>32</sup> Finally, the Green Revolution's success during 1960s in Punjab also contributed greatly to the Punjabi salariat's ability to expand and dominate the civil services.<sup>33</sup> The Green Revolution helped to solidify the country's already Punjabi-dominated military. The military in Pakistan was the direct descendant of the colonial armed forces, for which Punjabis were selected by preference, therefore, this ethnic group continued to dominate. Its predominance dated back to the 1857 Mutiny when the British administration recruited people from the politically backward rural areas of Punjab and the North-West Frontier to rule out any future sepoy rebellion.<sup>34</sup> The rift between the Urdu-speaking communities and the center grew wider when the former supported Fatima Jinnah, Ayub Khan's opponent and the leader of the Combined Opposition Party (COP)<sup>35</sup>, in the sham general elections of 1962. Karachi's Urdu-speaking community paid a heavy price for standing up to the Ayub dictatorship.<sup>36</sup>

### **Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Reforms, 1970-1977**

Greater blows to Urdu-speakers' domination came during Sindhi Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's regime (1970-1977). Foremost among them was the irreparable damage done to their supremacy in the civil services by Bhutto's ethnic polarization

---

<sup>32</sup> Kennedy, *Bureaucracy in Pakistan*, 169.

<sup>33</sup> Akbar S. Zaidi, "Regional Imbalances and National Question in Pakistan: Some Indications," *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 11, 1989, 303.

<sup>34</sup> Mohammad Waseem, "Causes of Democratic Downslide," *Economic and Political Weekly* (November 2-9, 2002): 6.

<sup>35</sup> This party was a combination of Muslim League and other religious parties.

<sup>36</sup> Several members of the Urdu-speaking community died when the victory parade led by Gohar Ayub, the former army captain and the son of Ayub Khan, opened fire on people protesting his father's victory on the basis that the election was rigged. Major newspapers and political leaders accused Gohar Ayub of murder. A board of inquiry consisting of three senior civil servants was formed to investigate the charges against Ayub Khan's son. However, the charges against Gohar Ayub were inevitably withdrawn. Jacques Nevard, "Son of President Ayub is Accused of Murder," *New York Times*, 19 January 1965; Jacques Nevard, "Riots in Karachi Bring 23 Deaths," *New York Times*, 5 January 1965.

strategy. The Premier implemented the Removal from Service (Special Provisions) Regulation 1972, under Martial Law No.14, that retired, dismissed, or demoted 1,303 Urdu-speaking officers.<sup>37</sup> Bhutto's administration also introduced an ethnic "quota system" in government job allocations, which Urdu-speakers perceived as another assault on their economic rights and which thus exacerbated their frustration. In 1973, for example, the quota system worked as follows: 10% were recruited on the basis of merit; 50% from Punjab (including Islamabad); 7.6% from urban Sindh (Karachi, Hyderabad, and Sukker); 11.4% from rural Sindh; 11.5% from NWFP; 3.5% from Balochistan; 4% from Northern Areas and Federally Administrated Tribal Areas; and 2% from Azad Kashmir.<sup>38</sup> The Urdu-speaking community believed they deserved a greater share of civil service employment than any other group in the country.<sup>39</sup> However, despite claims of efficiency and of giving a fair share of employment for people, the quota system further widened the rifts between different communities. Hamza Alavi analyzed the quota system and its political implications accurately:

Once a system of ethnic quota is in place, it becomes a self-reinforcing factor in politics. The better-established groups in the name of merit and efficiency attack politics of quotas. But perhaps its more malign aspect is that by fostering narrow communal interpretations of social reality, it sows the seeds of fascist right-wing politics (even if they occasionally employ left-wing rhetoric) and it isolates the truly exploited sections of the community who, all too often, are dominated and oppressed by members of their own community.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Charles H. Kennedy, *Bureaucracy in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 80.

<sup>38</sup> In 1980, a 10% quota was allotted for military personnel in the civil service which further squeezed job availability. As the military was almost completely dominated by Punjabis, the 1980 revision meant 10% more jobs would go to Punjabis, who were already allotted a huge 50% of government positions. Hasan Askari-Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 234.

<sup>39</sup> Umber Khairi, "An Unjust Quota," *The Herald*, January 1988, 85.

<sup>40</sup> Hamza Alavi, "Politics of Ethnicity in India and Pakistan," in *Sociology of 'Developing Societies': South Asia*, eds., Hamza Alavi and John Harris, 222-246 (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1989), 233.

In addition, in 1972, Bhutto curtailed Urdu-speakers' cultural hegemony by passing the Sindhi Language Act, assigning the Sindhi language a status equal to Urdu in the province.<sup>41</sup> Also for the first time in Pakistan's political discourse, Bhutto's constitutional amendments provided legal basis for the recognition of ethnic and indigenous groups.<sup>42</sup> Further, Bhutto's nationalization policies antagonized business communities, particularly affecting Gujarati entrepreneurs who were traditionally aligned with the Urdu-speakers. As a consequence, these formerly private corporations became subjected to quota recruitment policies that would provide a basis for ethnic economic competition, corruption, and political appointments. To ensure strict control of government and the bureaucracy, Bhutto created the lateral entry system, which only allowed appoints for those personnel loyal to the Prime Minister. From 1972-1977, about 2796 lateral entry appointments were made to strategic positions in the federal government. Of these 1,519 were from Punjab, 650 largely from rural Sindh, 451 from NWFP and 60 in Balochistan.<sup>43</sup> The Mohajir dominated JUP and JUI criticized Bhutto for his Sindhi chauvinism and accused him of breaking the country apart in 1971.<sup>44</sup> Both the parties demanded the government repeal the quota system and discrimination against Mohajirin. However, before any of the JUP and JI's demand could be met, the army general, Zia-ul-Haq, overthrew Bhutto's government. As stated above, Pakistan's

---

<sup>41</sup> This Act made Sindhi and Urdu compulsory subjects for class IV to XII. Article 5 of the act stated that the 'Government may constitute and set up Academies and Boards for cultural advancement and promotion of the Sindhi language.' Article 6 of the Act said the 'Government may make arrangements for progressive use of Sindhi language in offices and department including Courts and Assembly. K.M. Arif, *Khaki Shadows, Pakistan: 1947-1997* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 214-215.

<sup>42</sup> Articles 2(a) and (36) of the 1973 Constitution applied the term 'minority' to different groups. Ali. Sardar Shaheen and Javid Rehman, *Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities of Pakistan Constitutional and Legal Perspectives* (Curzon: Surrey, 2001), 21.

<sup>43</sup> Asaf Hussain, *Elite Politics in an Ideological State: The Case of Pakistan* (Folkestone: Dawson, 1979), 149.

<sup>44</sup> Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jamat-I Islami of Pakistan* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 174.

military had long been comprised mostly of Punjabi soldiers, and reforms under the ethnic quota system offered them expansion into civil service jobs as well. Now, with the military rule in the hands of a general from Punjab, the Mohajir suffered further decline in the civil services.

### **Zia ul-Haq Bolsters Punjabi Hegemony, 1977-1988**

General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq overthrew Bhutto in July 1977 and two years later on 4 April 1979 he hung the former Prime Minister of Pakistan on charges of murdering political opponents. Interestingly, this Punjabi leader was just recently appointed as Chief of the Army Staff in 1976. His era as dictator saw the final assault on the remaining role of Urdu-speakers in the van of Pakistan's politics. Naturally, the group began to exhibit deep concern at this time over its exclusion from government jobs and educational institutions. Zia implemented oppressive Islamization policies in an effort to create a monolithic Islamic identity for the country, now based on religious parties and ideas rather than on Urdu and the nationalist history of the Muslim League. The Afghan-Soviet war, funded by the United States and Saudi Arabia, necessitated further the process of Islamicization of a society in order to recruit people for "jihad" in Afghanistan. As the country suffered under brutal authoritarianism, implemented to consolidate Punjabi-dominated military rule under the guise of orthodox Islam, the Urdu-speakers along with the Sindhis and the Baloch experienced marginalization. However, it was not the state's assault alone that erased any remnants of Urdu-speakers' sovereignty. The Green Revolution-based prosperity in Punjab, augmented by overseas remittances, fostered a strong Punjabi salariat that was able to unseat Urdu-speakers from the civil-

bureaucracy.<sup>45</sup> The figures in Table 5 show a rise in Punjabi domination and significant decline of Urdu-speakers in both the army and bureaucracy during the Zia years. For instance, in 1973 Punjabis constituted 49.3% of army officers and 53.5% of senior bureaucrats, which jumped to 55.3% and 57.7% in 1986 (table 5).<sup>46</sup> Over the same time period, Urdu-speaking people constituted 30.1% of army officers and 33.5% of senior bureaucrats, and those numbers dropped to 18.2% and 18.3% respectively (table 5).<sup>47</sup> In fact, Zia announced his intention to extend the quota system for ten more years.

Table 5. Ethnic Representation in Federal Bureaucracy, 1973-86

Ethnic Group	Number of Bureaucrats per Year					
	1973		1983		1986	
	All	Senior	All	Senior	All	Senior
Punjabi	49.3	53.5	54.9	55.8	55.3	57.7
Pathan	10.5	7	13.4	11.6	12.6	12.1
Sindhi	3.1	2.7	5.4	5.1	7.2	6.7
<b>Mohajir</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>18.3</b>
NA	2.6	1.3	3.6	3.4	1.4	1.5
AJK	1.8	0.5	1.9	0.9	1.7	0.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Charles H. Kennedy, "Managing Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Pakistan," *Regional Politics and Policy*, Spring 1993, no. 1, 138

This shift toward Punjabi control fueled resentment and fear among the once powerful Urdu-speaking population. A rift even started to appear in the JUP, which was unable to ease rapidly emerging Mohajir frustration at Punjabi domination and the quota system in the civil services.<sup>48</sup> In an attempt to maintain its grip on the Mohajir population, the JUP made a bid gain ground by calling the quota system unconstitutional

<sup>45</sup> The percentage of migrants coming to Karachi from Punjab was 70% as opposed to 14% from Sindh, 12% from NWFP, and merely 4% from Balochistan. The remittance sent home amounted to \$3.2 billion, which was substantial in relation to the size of the economy. The value of remittances was approximately equal to 8% of the GNP. Omar Noman, *The Political Economy of Pakistan 1947-1985* (London: KPI, 1988), 157.

<sup>46</sup> Mohammad Waseem, "Causes of Democratic Downslide," 12.

<sup>47</sup> Mohammad Waseem, "Causes of Democratic Downslide," 12.

<sup>48</sup> Jalil Ahmed, "Sind: Uneasy Lull," *The Herald*, January 1984, 52.

and in need of reform through parliamentary procedures.<sup>49</sup> As the above paragraphs show, Urdu-speakers' privileged position diminished as the country came under the leadership of non-Urdu-speakers who squeezed the Muslim League and Urdu speakers out of power. Many aspects of the new leaders' policies were unfair to other groups in addition to Urdu-speakers, but it is important to mention the uniquely deep frustration displayed by Urdu-speakers, perhaps due to a sense of entitlement they had developed from their years of dominance. The following paragraphs chronicle other factors that contributed to the difficulties experienced by Urdu-speakers, especially those residing in Karachi in the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s.

### **Urbanization and Underdevelopment**

Urdu-speakers' decline in the economic, political, and cultural sectors were not the only factors contributing to their loss of privileges. In addition, rapid urbanization due to rural-urban migration into hitherto Urdu-speaker dominated Karachi brought unprecedented burdens on the already debilitated urban infrastructure. As two million new workers joined the workforce, Urdu-speakers' frustration came to be directed against the in-migrants and the linguistic variety they brought.

Karachi received huge investments in its industrial boom during Ayub's rule; therefore, people were attracted from other provinces by opportunities in Karachi. The rural-urban migrations initiated by Karachi's industrial boom in the 1960s attracted Punjabi and Pakthun workers who provided cheap labor to the rapidly urbanizing city. The first wave of migration was followed by another in the 1970s that further increased the city's population (table 6). However, it was not an economic boom that brought these

---

<sup>49</sup> Jalil Ahmed, "Shifting Gear," *The Herald*, April 1984, 28.

later migrants to Karachi. The second wave of migration was a direct result of the Green Revolution fall-out and of Pakistani workers returning from the Gulf countries. When celebration of the Green Revolution subsided in the 1970s, its adverse effects such as “erosion of cultivable land through water logging and salinity and the declining profitability of agricultural produce” were said to have “set into motion a trend of proletarianization among those who [had] been working on farms for centuries.”<sup>50</sup> As a result, unskilled farmers flocked to Karachi in large numbers in search of employment opportunities. Similarly, when the Gulf boom of the 1970s stagnated and migrant workers were forced to return to their home countries, Karachi was the logical choice for most returning workers. As a result, between 1961 and 1981, two million migrants came to Karachi (table 6).<sup>51</sup> According to 1981 census data, in-migrants comprised 31.8% of the total population of Karachi. The linguistic breakdown of the city was then as follows; Urdu-speaking 54.3%, Punjabi 13.6%, Pashto 8.7%, Sindhi 6.3%, Balochi 4.4%, Hindko 1.1%, and other 11%.<sup>52</sup> See Table 6 for figures on trends in Karachi’s population increases. Karachi’s population increase was one of the highest in the world.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Asad Sayeed, “The Other Sindh,” *The Herald*, April 1990, 93

<sup>51</sup> Mehtab S. Karim, “Inter-Provincial and Inter-District Migration in Pakistan, with Special Reference to Karachi,” Population Association of Pakistan, Fifth Annual Research Conference Proceedings 14-16 December 2004, Karachi, Pakistan.

<sup>52</sup> Population Census Organization Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, 1981 Census Report of Karachi Division, May 1984.

<sup>53</sup> Alex Marshall, ed., *The State of the World Population*, Chapter 3, United Nations Population Fund <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/1996/ch3.htm> (accessed June 30, 2007).

Table 6. Intercensal Increase in Karachi's Population Size (1951-1981)

Census Year	Total Population	Intercensal Increase	Average annual growth
1951	1,137,667	—	—
1961	2,044,044	79.7%	6.05%
1972	3,606,746	76.5%	5%
1981	5,437,984	50.8%	4.96%

Source: Population Census Organization (Pakistan) and Statistics Division, *1981 Census Report of Karachi Division, May 1984*, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Inevitably, the large influx of people strained the city's civic amenities and job availability. While the stagnation in government jobs and decline in industrial jobs was agitating the Urdu-speaking population, the arrival of millions of foreigners including Bengalis, Burmese, and Afghan refugees in Karachi during the 1980s further taxed the city's employment and civic infrastructure, meaning even fewer jobs for Urdu-speakers. Unlike previous waves of incoming migrants who, in the 1960s and 1970s, confined themselves to the public transportation and the construction industries, these foreigners, especially the Bengalis, provided skilled and cheap labor to the manufacturing sectors of the city. Large numbers of these skilled migrants' even started cottage industries in Urdu-speaking towns throughout the city. For instance, there were over 40,000 micro-enterprise units operating in *Orangi*, a large Urdu-speaking town.<sup>54</sup> In addition, employment in large-scale manufacturing, located mainly in Karachi, fell by nearly 55,000 workers between 1976 and 1981, or by 2.2% per year, almost two-thirds of the decline was in the textile sector alone.<sup>55</sup> Another challenge came not from Punjabi, Pakthun, or even from Bengali migrants, although they did encroach on Urdu-speakers' share in employment, but from the arrival of one million of Afghan refugees during the

<sup>54</sup> Arif Hasan, "What is Karachi Really Fighting For," *The Herald*, September 1995, 62.

<sup>55</sup> Omar Noman, *The Political Economy of Pakistan 1947-1985* (London: KPI, 1988), 162.

Afghan-Soviet war (1979-1989). These refugees, as they were often unskilled, did not challenge Urdu-speakers' economic interests, but were perceived as a dangerous community spreading guns and drugs into a metropolis already bursting with antagonism. The result was that members of various political parties, who had once used conventional means such as *lathi* (stick) fighting during conflicts, were now armed with Kalashnikovs and all manner of firearms. Gun-toting political leaders appeared openly in public, and the widespread use of weapons badly rent the social fabric of Pakistan's society. "Kalashnikov culture" came to be a "euphemism for the gradual destruction of all norms of civilized behavior."<sup>56</sup>

### **Underdevelopment**

Karachi's resources were further drained by the large amounts of state revenue spent on the military. For example, the average percentage of GNP allotted for military expenditures grew from 5.0% in 1969 to 6.3% in 1975.<sup>57</sup> The figures are more appalling under Zia-ul-Haq's rule, and stood at around 9%, whereas development spending rose at a meager rate of 3% per annum.<sup>58</sup> Although, civic institutions suffered from such massive military spending all over the country, Karachi was worst affected. For instance, funding for the city's civic amenities provided by the state increased at merely 1.2% per year.<sup>59</sup> The unemployment figure in the city was even worse. A study conducted by the Applied Economics Research Center (AERC) reveals that the city's overall rate of unemployment

---

<sup>56</sup> Shahid Zahid, "License to Kill," *The Herald*, August 1989, 58.

<sup>57</sup> Omar Noman, *The Political Economy of Pakistan 1947-1985* (London: KPI, 1988), 60.

<sup>58</sup> Parvez Hasan, "Role of the State in Pakistan's Economy: Assessing the Past and Exploring Future Challenges," *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 5, 2007, 1624.

<sup>59</sup> Arif Hasan, "Karachi's Godfathers," *The Herald*, December 1986.

was hovering close to a dangerous 14% of a labor force of 2.1 million in 1987.<sup>60</sup> This lack of basic resources and jobs took a devastating toll on average households. The gap between rich and poor also widened, with a substantial increase in the number of poor people. According to the Karachi Master Plan surveys, “the lower middle income population in Karachi increased from 14% of the total population in 1973 to 31% in 1989.<sup>61</sup> Further, there were over 70,000 lower middle income households in the city in 1973, over 210,000 in 1980 and over 500,000 in 1989.”<sup>62</sup> These figures clearly show that, the urbanization of Karachi was neglected or even deliberately ignored to benefit other “important” issues such as providing funds to the Mujahideen for the Afghan war and other military expenditures. Consequently, the political agendas of emerging political groups in urban Sindh called for improving civic amenities that had been debilitated by haphazard urbanization. In fact, as Ali Reza points out, this sort of urbanization has a

major impact on the realization of political rights and participation in political process, on the relationship of and responsibilities between the citizen and the state and the related institutional structures, on the nature of the breakdown of existing societal structures and forging of new and complex ones, and on the composition of revenue base and the criteria for resource allocation. It has an effect on the nature of poverty, empowerment, gender, governance, culture and marginality.<sup>63</sup>

Massive urbanization and the arrival of migrants in Karachi was not only a challenge to Urdu-speakers’ economic interests but it also created social and cultural problems. Most of these new migrants, except the Punjabis, lived in *goths* (slums) and thus did not integrate with the Urdu-speaking population. These constraints set the stage for Urdu-

---

<sup>60</sup> Hasan Iqbal Jafri, “Where Have All the Jobs Gone,” *The Herald*, December 1994, 59-60.

<sup>61</sup> Arif Hasan, “What is Karachi Really Fighting For,” *The Herald*, September 1995, 60.

<sup>62</sup> Arif Hasan, “What is Karachi Really Fighting For,” *The Herald*, September 1995, 60.

<sup>63</sup> Ali Reza, “Underestimating Urbanization,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 2-9,

speakers to unite in a new kind of politics of Mohajir ethnic-chauvinism under the leadership of the MQM.

In summary, the civil and bureaucratic reforms, implementation of the quota system, Zia's bolstering of Punjabi hegemony, and Karachi's urbanization and underdevelopment fostered deep-seated frustration among the Urdu-speaking population and fed Mohajir ethno-nationalist sentiments. However, these grievances alone were not the catalyst for the MQM's sudden rise to power and popularity. Rather, it was the way that the MQM addressed these grievances, with violent street tactics, that mobilized large numbers of Urdu-speakers for the first time as "Mohajirin" behind the party, catapulting Mohajir ethno-nationalism to the forefront.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Emergence of Agitational Mohajir Politics and the MQM**

The relative decline of the Mohajirin in the state and rapid Punjabization of Pakistan's society, together with underlying processes of urbanization and underdevelopment, generated complex new social cleavages that were soon to manifest their potential in politics. This chapter focuses particularly on how these growing social cleavages supported the new Mohajir political party, the MQM. This party manipulated and capitalized on Mohajir frustration to promote its ethno-militant agenda. It wove the mob frenzy and violence of the 1980s into its radical politics and marshaled the street nationalism that challenged the state and established authorities. Mohajir youth were mobilized in a rigid hierarchical organizational structure and its leader came to hold a supreme position in this hierarchy. Street nationalism combined with the cult-like status of the leader soon translated into electoral success and made the organization the third largest political party in Pakistan. However, this sudden success did not translate into an ability on the part of the MQM to successfully pursue its demands and objectives in the government. In fact, the MQM proved ineffective in delineating a coherent program for the Mohajir population or securing desired improvements for their constituency. The party was gripped by factionalism, came to be at loggerheads with its partners, caused frustrations among party workers, and suffered defeat at the hands of the army in Operation Cleanup. This chapter also examines things like organizational structure, modes of operation, the persona of the leader, and the party's demands that underwent change when the party transformed itself into a catch-all party.

In order to provide a comprehensive explanation of Mohajir nationalism's birth and the MQM's rise to power, it is important to consider the background of Altaf

Hussain, who was a catalyst of Mohajir politics and the co-founder of the MQM. Hussain was born in Karachi on September 17, 1953 to an Urdu-speaking religious family from Agra, India where his grandfather, Maulana Mufti Ramzan Hussain, was an Islamic scholar. Altaf Hussain's father, Nazeer Hussain, was a stationmaster in Agra and after migration to Pakistan; he worked as an office clerk in Karachi. It was a typical employment for north-Indian Urdu-speaking migrants. Following the footsteps of his ancestors by aiming to become a government employee, Hussain went to the Government Secondary School for Boys, located in a middle-class Urdu-speaking area of Karachi known as the *Pir Elahi Bukhsh* Colony, which was built exclusively for civil servants who had migrated from India. He completed high school in 1969. Then, proud of his Pakistani identity, he joined the army to fight with West Pakistan troops against Bengali nationalists and Indian forces in Bangladesh's 1971 liberation war. However, as Pakistan's army failed and Bangladesh gained independence, Hussain's nationalistic fervor temporarily subsided. At that point, he decided to continue his education in the Islamia Science College, where he finished his Bachelor of Science program in 1974.<sup>1</sup> Finally, he went to study for a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree at Karachi University. Given the then standard Mohajirin support for the JI, Hussain became an active member of the *Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba* (Islamic Student Party, IJT), the right wing student organization of the JI. In fact, in 1977 Hussain was the a founder of the JI-led *Tehreek-e-Nizam Mustafa* (Movement for the Establishment of Mohammad's Law) and became the President of the IJT's nationwide Qaumi Ittehad Student Action Committee.<sup>2</sup> His

---

<sup>1</sup> Altaf Hussain, and Khalid Athar. *Safar-i Zindagi : Em. Kiyu. Em. Ki Kahani, Altaf Hussain Ki Zabani* [Life Journey: The MQM's Story in Altaf Hussain's Words], Isha`at 1 ed. Lahaur: Jang Pablishtarz, 1988, 12.

<sup>2</sup> It is no surprise that Altaf was active in religious groups since majority of Urdu-speaking students were influenced by religious parties and were involved with *Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba*, the student

involvement with the JI and IJT soon turned sour, however, when Hussain was demoted from the Presidency to the General Secretary of the Qaumi Ittehad Student Action Committee. Hussain believed that the JI and IJT had become a Punjabi-dominated organization and had thus adopted discriminatory party politics against Urdu-speaking students in Karachi University, which had undermined his Presidency.<sup>3</sup> As mentioned in chapter one, the JI's recruitment of Punjabi cadres repelled Urdu-speaking members from the party.

Shortly thereafter, on June 11, 1978, Hussain founded the All Pakistan Mohajir Student Organization (APMSO) to contest what he perceived to be discrimination against the Mohajirin by the state and the IJT in educational institutions.<sup>4</sup> On August 14, 1979, Pakistan's Independence Day, Hussain presaged the political violence that lay ahead by burning the country's flag at the mausoleum of Pakistan's founder, in protest of the state's apathetic attitude towards stranded Bihari refugees in Bangladesh.<sup>5</sup> He was sent to jail for burning the Pakistani flag, and after his release he went on to finish his pharmacy studies in 1979 at Karachi University. He then became a trainee in a Seventh Day Adventist Hospital in Karachi. At this point Hussain was still largely unknown to the Mohajir community. He went to United States for a year and a half, and in his absence, the APMSO was unsuccessful in appealing to Urdu-speaking students and did not have

---

wing of the ultra right religious group Jamat-e-Islami; and the Muslim Student Federation, the student wing of the Muslim League. Given their ideological inclinations, few Mohajir students joined the progressive or left wing student group known as People's Student Federation (PSF). Altaf Hussain and Khalid Athar, *Safar-i Zindagi: Em. Kiyu. Em. Ki Kahani, Altaf Husain Ki Zabani* [Life Journey: The MQM's Story in Altaf Hussain's Words], Isha`at 1 ed. Lahaur: Jang Pablisharz, 1988, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Altaf Hussain, and Khalid Athar, *Safar-i Zindagi : Em. Kiyu. Em. Ki Kahani, Altaf Husain Ki Zabani* [Life Journey: The MQM's Story in Altaf Hussain's Words], Isha`at 1 ed. Lahaur: Jang Pablisharz, 1988, 24-28.

<sup>4</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004): 60.

<sup>5</sup> Altaf and many Urdu-speakers considered stranded the Biharis, who were living in refugee camps in Bangladesh, as their linguistic kin and as true citizens of Pakistan, as they sidelined with the country against the Bengali majority during the 1971 war for Bangladesh independence.

strong support on campus. For instance, in Karachi University's 1979 elections, the APMSO candidate received only 95 out of 10,000 votes. The next year, however, the APMSO's campaign for Mohajir rights earned the organization 900 votes, the second highest number after the IJT.<sup>6</sup> The relative success of the APMSO in campus politics encouraged the student movement to spread their message to every street and every house in Karachi.<sup>7</sup> From 1980 until 1984, Hussain and other devoted APMSO activist spread anti-Punjabi propaganda to unite Mohajirin under the common struggle. On March 18, 1984, the leaders of the APMSO formed the *Mohajir Qaumi Movement* (MQM) on the platform of countering Punjabi hegemony and advocating a fair share of jobs for Mohajirin in civil service and educational institutions. Equivocally, the MQM started a grass-root campaign for more jobs for Mohajir youth and appealed to the traditional supporters of the JUP and the JI, the Urdu-speakers. Meanwhile, as the newly formed MQM propagated the Mohajir cause, the debilitated civic conditions the city suffering from government neglect caused rising frustrations among Karachi's citizens. However, it was not until April 15, 1985 when a reckless Pakthun bus driver killed a Mohajir college student, Bushra Zaidi, in the Urdu-speaking district of Nazimabad, that the Mohajirin frustration found a rallying point. What was seemingly an isolated incident brought Mohajir frustrations to the boiling point and fed on the already established fault-lines of other antagonisms, causing the violence to spread to other parts of the city. Protests against the death of the Mohajir student turned more violent when the police opened fire on demonstrators killing scores of people. Since Pakthuns owned a large part of Karachi's public transport, these riots soon turned into a Mohajir-Pakthun battle. The

---

<sup>6</sup> Personality Interview, *The Herald*, September 1987, 131.

<sup>7</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 62.

conflict spread to Hyderabad and other cities in Sindh leaving scores of people dead within several days. The Urdu-speakers did not hesitate to seize this opportunity to vent their anger against the state; no one could have predicted in 1985 that this single incident and the ensuing riots would engulf the whole of Sindh and inaugurate a new era in the politics of the region and indeed, the country.

The series of rioting widened the rift between the Mohajirin and the Pakthun community in urban Sindh. As riots became an everyday thing in Karachi, as illustrated in Table 7, an interesting phenomenon emerged on the social scene of urban Pakistan. The riots became so widespread and furious that in one short year “mob politics ha[d] swept aside the cozy drawing room traditions of an older political generation.”<sup>8</sup> As commentator Arif Hasan said at the time, “Today, it is the mob that produces the leader, and it remains cohesive irrespective of changes in leadership.”<sup>9</sup> The mob politics of the period also generated change the relationship between the younger and the older generations of Mohajirin. For instance, youths no longer felt obliged or accountable to community leaders or notables. They were more independent, assertive and aggressive.<sup>10</sup> Hence, according to Verkaaik, the rioting and mob politics started to delineate a subversive youth culture that not only promoted ethnic hatred, but also for the first time, created a sense of apathy towards their ancestors’ dogma of traditional Islam and Pakistani nationhood. The ground beneath the JUP and the JI, the traditional political representative of the Mohajirin became weakened with the rising radical ethnic politics. Table 7 illustrates the number of deaths, injuries, and the damage to public and

---

<sup>8</sup> Ameneh Azam Ali and Arif Hasan, “Sind’s Urban Crisis,” *The Herald*, October 1987, 40.

<sup>9</sup> Arif Hasan, “A Generation Comes of Age,” *The Herald*, October 1987, 52.

<sup>10</sup> Arif Hasan, “A Generation Comes of Age,” *The Herald*, October 1987, 54.

government property as a result of riots from April 1985-May 1988.<sup>11</sup>

Table 7. Statistics from Karachi Riots

Type of Damage	Year				Total
	1985	1986	1987	1988	
Number of Riots	608	917	880	201	2606
Civilians Killed	56	185	56	61	358
Civilians Wounded	114	489	408	344	1355
Police Personnel Killed	—	2	6	4	12
Vehicles Burnt	213	162	156	68	599
Shops Burnt	23	460	261	65	809
Houses Burnt	—	396	62	39	497
Banks Burnt	—	26	7	4	37
Curfew Days	48	47	80	178	353

Source: Zafar Abbas, "The Road to Anarchy," *The Herald*, June 1988.

Table 7 confirms the massive destruction of Karachi's riots from April 1985-May 1988, six months before the MQM became a coalition partner of Benazir Bhutto's PPP-led government. The numbers of dead and wounded and value of destroyed property were high. During those four years riots caused over one thousand civilian injuries and 358 deaths (table 7). During this time of upheaval the government attempted to curtail the bedlam with curfews, the majority of which were imposed in 1988. Karachi was shut down by curfews for a staggering total of 353 days over the four-year period. Obviously, these repeated, but futile, curfews badly damaged business and commerce in Pakistan's financial hub. Karachi's industry, for example, lost an estimated Rs 50 crores a day during the curfew period.<sup>12</sup> The state enforcement of "law and order" further exacerbated people's frustration and their antagonism against the state, which was controlled by the Punjabi-dominated military.

<sup>11</sup> Zafar Abbas, "The Road to Anarchy," *The Herald*, June 1988,

<sup>12</sup> Ameneh Azam Ali, "No Business as Usual," *The Herald*, March 1987, 72.

## The MQM's Rise to Popularity and Power

The MQM that had hitherto failed to gather large-scale Mohajir support soon capitalized on the emotions and anger caused by series of rioting. Hussain exploited these events to emphasize the image of the MQM as a party that protected and struggled for Mohajir interests, and in doing so gained support for the party. Although previously largely unknown among the Mohajir community, Altaf Hussain rose to the limelight during these riots. Hussain was well aware that the militant attitude of this young generation should be matched with an equally militant program in order to capture their interest. Therefore, he “proposed a bullet-for-bullet approach as the only way to establish political authority. His charisma, coupled with the intelligent use of the ethnic card and militant philosophy, proved to be an instant success.”<sup>13</sup> The MQM “touched a raw nerve and capitalized on this feeling of isolation to build its street strength fairly methodically and to great effect,” as Ameneh Azam Ali put it in *The Herald*.<sup>14</sup> The party thus became the political representative of Urdu-speaking people and articulated an identity that stressed their marginalization.

The MQM's demands for increased civil service job allocations for Mohajirin were not altogether new; other parties had voiced the same concerns, but not by militant means. In fact, the demand for employment opportunities for the Mohajirin raised by political parties such as JUP and JUI in the late 1970s had failed to capture support from the Urdu-speaking community. Therefore, the militant approach of the MQM, rather than simply the demands for Mohajir representation in the civil services, was the key to its popularity. Clearly, the party's youth mobilization element was critical to its success, as

---

<sup>13</sup> Zaffar Abbas, “The Fatal Flaw,” *The Herald*, January 1993, 68.

<sup>14</sup> Ameneh Azam Ali, “Taking Stock,” *The Herald*, February 1987, 59.

the party's youth were the primary participants in militant activities. The MQM succeeded because it adopted "increasingly militant positions, to match the mood of the constituency it wished to capture."<sup>15</sup> This element is the centre of Verkaaik's work on the MQM. According to him, the party, promoted a militancy that "managed to successfully weave this latently subversive urban youth culture, with its aspects of gender, leisure, and global youth culture, into an ethnic-religious ideology of protest and revolt, thereby contributing to political crises that seriously undermine the legitimacy of the state."<sup>16</sup> Youth enjoyed participating in the MQM as a pastime. And the MQM's public meetings offered many opportunities for 'fun' and displays of masculinity. These meetings provided the place where young men asserted their strength and identity, "For many, the MQM was the arena of their self discovery or self-making, an arena they themselves helped create."<sup>17</sup> The new youthful party cultivated a "culture of street humor, physicality, and competitive masculinity, which challenged the high cultural, Islamic modernist, formal education-oriented culture of middle class Mohajirin."<sup>18</sup> The MQM was staunchly anti-Punjabi, encouraging Punjabi hatred among its youth. More importantly, the party's assertion that "Mohajir" should be an officially recognized nationality was a major departure from the previously Pakistani-nationalist sentiments of the previous generation of Urdu-speakers.

The MQM thus emerged as a blatant critic of Punjabi domination in the state and orthodox Pakistani nationalism. The party's separatist sentiments attracted political support from G M. Syed who has been leading the Sindhi nationalist organization, Jeay

---

<sup>15</sup> Ameneh Azam Ali, "Taking Stock," *The Herald*, February 1987, 59.

<sup>16</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 8.

<sup>17</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan*, 127.

<sup>18</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 181.

Sindh. Syed's hatred towards the Punjabi establishment was so strong that despite the MQM's being a Mohajir organization, the Jeay Sindh workers at the grass root level provided arms to the MQM.<sup>19</sup> The weaponization of Pakistani society during Soviet-Afghan war, perhaps, contributed to armament of the Jeay Sindh. The MQM-Jeay Sindh political partnership, however, created dissension within the former's ranks, which led to the formation of the *Mohajir Ittehad Tehrik* (Migrant United Movement, MIT) in 1987 led by Saleem Haider. Although he came from an Urdu-speaking family and a staunch supporter of Mohajir "ideology," Haider opposed the quota system and condemned the MQM's alliance with Sindhi nationalists.<sup>20</sup> Other Mohajirin started the alternative *Karachi Subah Tehrik* (Karachi Province Movement) in 1987 to demand a separate province for Mohajirin in Karachi.<sup>21</sup> These groups, however, failed to garner large support from Mohajirin and did not stay long against the Altaf Hussain's mass-mobilized MQM. Syed's attitude towards the MQM was ambiguous as he did not like the fact the MQM demanded government recognition of Mohajirin as a separate nationality. The MQM's demands for an official recognition of Mohajirin as an ethnic group further strained the relationship with moderate Sindh-based political parties like the PPP as described in detail in the section, "Politics of Alliance Making."

### **Assertion of the 'Mohajir' Identity**

As stated above, the MQM demanded that the government give official status to Mohajirin as the country's fifth nation group alongside the Punjabis, Sindhis, Pakthuns, and Balochis. Hamza Alavi voiced concern that "Instead of moving towards an end to

---

<sup>19</sup> Ameneh Azam Ali, "Frontline City," *The Herald*, December 1986, 65.

<sup>20</sup> Ali Hasan, "Multiple Divisions," *The Herald*, May 1987, 30.

<sup>21</sup> Personality Interview, *The Herald*, September 1987, 132.

communalism and to ethnic conflict, the rise of the MQM, in the face of strident Sindhi nationalism, further consolidated the hold of communalism in Pakistani politics.”<sup>22</sup> Oskar Verkaaik attempts to answer what constituted the Mohajirin’s identity and observes the attributes of Urdu-speakers’ distinctiveness in itself and in relation to Other. According to him, Mohajirin’s sense of identity comes from their modern education, experience of migration in the aftermath of the Partition, traditional Islam, and sacrifice for the creation of Pakistan, passion, and revolt. The defining elements of Mohajir identity were as follows: discourse of education and modernity, repudiation of Sindhi’s Sufi Islam, Urdu speakers’ migration after Partition and sacrifices for the sake of Pakistan.

Hailing from the seat of the Mughal Empire in North India and relatively educated, the Urdu-speakers considered education as a demarcation that served to “explain the perceived difference between the other and the self.”<sup>23</sup> This sense of identity is widely evident among Urdu-speaking intelligentsia who claim that the Mohajir ethos was superior to that of other communities in Pakistan. The comments of Urdu poet and columnist, Rais Amrohi, one of the earliest Mohajirin to raise the issue of identity and nationality in Sindh, offer a useful summary of Urdu-speakers collective identity:

No people in the world feel ashamed of the land of their origin. So why should we? We are proud of the fact that our ancestors gave to the subcontinent one of the greatest civilizations of the world. We are the inheritors of the immortal Indo-Islamic culture. We are proud of the delta land between the Ganga and the Jamna on which flourished the great edifices of the Indo-Islamic civilization. We opted for Pakistan which promised to have Urdu as its national language, Indo-Islamic culture as its ethos, and Pakistan as its sole nationality. Today, however, we are confronted with proposition that Pakistan is the homeland of four nationalities, the Sindhis, the Baluchis, the Pathans, and the Punjabis. But

---

<sup>22</sup> Hamza Alavi, “Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 8, 1989, 1532.

<sup>23</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 44.

no one can ignore the fact that we, the Urdu speaking people, constitute the second largest ethnic and linguistic group next only to Punjabis. There is nothing wrong in the Pak-Indians' demand for recognition as the fifth nationality of Pakistan, and having its own homeland.<sup>24</sup>

Memories of the 'Golden Days' of the Mughal empire were persistent among Urdu intellectuals who saw their North Indian past as more cultivated than that of the local communities of Pakistan. However, with the state-sponsored modernization and industrialization of urban Sindh, Urdu-speakers' perception of Sindhis shifted from cultivated/uncultivated demarcations to an urban/rural divide. The Mohajirin started referring to themselves as urban and rational, as "signifiers of modernity," and to the Sindhis, who are mostly rural and adhere to mystic or Sufi Islam, as backward and traditional.<sup>25</sup>

While the discourse of education and modernity served as a defining element in Mohajir identity and its relationship to Sindhi society, collective memories of the migration after the Partition were another key component of Urdu-speakers' sense of selfhood.<sup>26</sup> Theirs was not perceived as simply a migration, Urdu-speakers' migration from India had a connotations of an Islamic exodus. The Mohajir perception of Sindhis as a mystical and superstitious community provided weight to Urdu-speakers' self-identification as true followers of Islam, in this case, the Barelvi Islam, the reformist Islam of the nineteenth century. Sacrifice (*qurbani*) and passion (*ishq/hosla*), according to Verkaaik, are two other tropes of Mohajir identity. Mohajirin are proud of themselves as the community that has sacrificed the most for Pakistan and has the passion to sacrifice

---

<sup>24</sup> Balraj Puri, "Autonomy and Participation: Dimensions of Indian Muslim Identity," *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 7, 1978, 1707.

<sup>25</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 49.

<sup>26</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 45.

itself again for their leader who they perceive as epitomizing the nation.<sup>27</sup> Although their loyalty to the idea of a Pakistani ‘nation’ waned since Partition, this was cited merely as an excuse to consider themselves better than Sindhis. Finally, the attribute of rebelliousness as a marker of Mohajir personhood arose after the successful mobilization of the MQM. However, Verkaaik argues that in fact the Mohajirin appropriated the “Sindhi passion of revolt” against state modernization and its official discourse of nationalism.<sup>28</sup>

Sindhi intellectuals were well aware that Mohajir demands for an official identity would hamper Sindhi-Mohajir ties and widen rifts between the two communities which had already worsened by the growing rural-urban divide. Therefore, several Sindhi intellectuals and politicians initiated a dialogue on issues of Sindhi identity and ethnicity in an effort to integrate the Urdu-speaking population with the local community. Sindhi intellectuals argued that the Mohajirin were “uprooted by fate and the forces of history from their own soil in India and deposited in Sindh.” In their opinion, if other ethnic groups such as the Baloch and the Cutchis can become Sindhis then the Mohajirin can be Sindhi too. However, nationalist Sindhis rejected the idea of including Urdu-speaking people because the Mohajirin did not have roots in Sindh.<sup>29</sup> The failure of Sindhi nationalists to recognize Urdu-speakers as their kin and the Mohajir aversion to rural-Sindhi identity both fuelled the MQM aim of forging a separate identity.

---

<sup>27</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 50-51.

<sup>28</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 53.

<sup>29</sup> Hamza Alavi, “Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 8, 1989, 1532.

## Organizational Structure of the MQM

The MQM introduced new trends in party politics in Sindh on a variety of counts, chiefly the centrality of the personality of the leader, Altaf Hussain, and the party's mode of operation (which provided the MQM a monopoly on violence, we shall see). Hussain incorporated Islamic notions of sainthood to mystify his personality. Further, the party's grass root networks, the close coordination among its members, and frenetic loyalty to Altaf made the MQM a 'state within the state,' which later brought army action against the MQM in clashes that resulted in thousands of deaths.

Hussain's aggressive oratory made him popular among Mohajir youth, who perceived his words as divine and hailed him as a *pir* (saint) and a *quaid* (leader). While the latter term had hitherto been used only for Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, the notion of *pir* "transgresses the boundary separating the 'big people' from the 'common people' by applying attributes of nobility to a commoner."<sup>30</sup> To augment their leader's claims to sainthood, MQM propaganda featured activists who claimed to see Altaf's personification on leaves and on the floors of mosques. Altaf encouraged his canonization and mystification in many ways. For example, he always wore dark glasses, allegedly to protect his beautiful and magnetic eyes from the *nazar* (evil gaze).<sup>31</sup> He soon became much more than a political leader struggling for the Mohajir cause. In fact, any criticism of Altaf was considered blasphemous. Songs from famous patriotic Indian movies were recorded with new lyrics that euphemized Altaf's bravery and courage. MQM members wrote graffiti and popularized slogans such as "*jo quaid ka ghaddar hai*

---

<sup>30</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 71.

<sup>31</sup> Younis Ahmed, "The Rise and Fall of Altaf Hussain," *The Herald*, January 1993, 64.

*wo maut ka haq daar hai*” (He who betrays the leader deserves only death) all over urban Sindh. In addition to the success of his grandiloquent self-glorification as the leader of a cult, Altaf took pains to identify himself with the Mohajir community. According to his speeches, he *was* the Mohajir community. This mystification of the party leader’s personality and view that Altaf embodied the Mohajir cause is reflected in the party’s structure and membership criteria. The MQM organizational edifice, like other political parties in Pakistan, hinged on the personality of its leaders, and was rigidly hierarchical. However, even by Pakistani standards, the MQM’s demand for absolute obedience to the leader was exceptional in degree: “The MQM phenomenon has baffled political analysts,” notes Idrees Bakhtiar, as it has no parallel in Pakistani political history. No other organization, or as in this case, no other political leader, commands such unquestioning devotion as Altaf Hussein does.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Mode of Operation**

The party modeled itself on a fascist party structure in order to control its constituency and root out any dissidents. The party was organized around party leaders’ goal of penetrating deep into society, especially Urdu-speaking areas. Senior party leaders directly controlled the MQM’s central office, then the organization spread in a hierarchical pattern through regional offices at the district level, zonal-town level, and units in mohallahs (neighborhoods). Although the MQM had 15,000 dedicated workers in 1987, the party’s networking allowed senior leaders to scrutinize local populations so as to have a complete knowledge of each mohallah including people’s occupation, their

---

<sup>32</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, “Boycott Blues,” *The Herald*, December 1993, 44d.

political orientation, and to some extent of their interpersonal relationships.<sup>33</sup> This system allowed the MQM to communicate information effectively and rapidly among its offices in urban Sindh. Later, these techniques and strategies made it difficult for the army to arrest the party's top leaders.<sup>34</sup>

The party's organizational edifice was more sophisticated than the government's system of law enforcement agencies, particularly the police. This is the reason that in case of any mishaps or issues in a town, Mohajirin and sometimes-even non-Mohajirin, found it easier to report to the local MQM member, referred to as the "unit in-charge," than to approach law enforcement agencies. Thus the local unit in-charge came to enjoy more authority and control than the police, who were mostly non-Mohajir and terrorized people through use of torture and extortion.<sup>35</sup> Mohajirs also had access to senior party members at the party's head office, where the Mohajirin brought their concerns ranging from petty crimes in neighborhoods to employment. Such shows of sincerity by the party towards Mohajirin's issues contributed to the MQM's popularity in the Urdu-speaking community. Despite, this close coordination with the Mohajir population, the MQM did not allow people to criticize the party or any of its members.<sup>36</sup>

MQM neighborhood activities were a central aspect of the party's mode of operation. According to Verkaaik, youth from the middle and lower classes joined the MQM not just because of their grievances with other ethnic groups or the state, and not even for reasons of identity consciousness. Indeed, young people embraced the MQM to enjoy involvement in a political party and party gatherings, which they often referred as

---

<sup>33</sup> Personality Interview, *The Herald*, September 1987, 133.

<sup>34</sup> Mazhar Abbas, "State of Siege," *The Herald*, October 1992, 19.

<sup>35</sup> A random survey of any police station will reveal that an overwhelming majority of police in Sindh were Punjabi. "One fairly *thana* in district south has only four Sindhis and Mohajirin to 35 Punjabis." as noted by Idrees Bakhtiar, "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly," *The Herald*, July 1992, 40.

<sup>36</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly," *The Herald*, July 1992, 40.

“exciting.”<sup>37</sup> Party activities, whether neighborhood-cleaning campaigns or riots, provided young activists with a venue for competition where they could show their physicality and masculinity among peers. This show of force also became one of the primary criteria for succeeding in the party’s hierarchical structure. In fact, the more one participated in party activities such as collecting money or rioting, and had a capacity to intimidate crowds, the faster one climbed to the upper echelons of the party and eventually enjoyed power. Consequently, this strong system eroded the state’s legitimacy as a sole bearer of power, and that of its law enforcing institutions.

Educational institutions suffered great damage from the MQM’s mode of operation. For instance, the spread of “sophisticated and business-like methods” of cheating were encouraged and assisted by local “units-in-charge” and student leaders in colleges and universities.<sup>38</sup> Student leaders coerced incoming students to join their groups, intimidated university administrators during the admission process, and forcibly collected donations for party activities all across campus. As Shahid Zahid declared in 1989:

today’s student ‘leader’ is nothing less than an urban guerilla, well trained in the use of modern automatic weapons and strategic warfare. He is more familiar with guns than with books, more often seen firing from rooftops than in the classroom, and more capable in the arts of deceit and blackmail than in debate or discussion.”<sup>39</sup>

The student wings of the JI and the MQM, the IJT and the APMSO, respectively, frequently clashed with each other in a new wave of violence that spread outside

---

<sup>37</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 4.

<sup>38</sup> Asad Sayeed, “The Big Cheat,” *The Herald*, August 1989, 61.

<sup>39</sup> Shahid Zahid, “License to Kill,” *The Herald*, August 1989, 59.

campuses.<sup>40</sup> Although the IJT based its program on the religious dogmas of its parent party, the JI; the group practiced violent student politics on campuses around the country. The APMSO responded with violent tactics of their own, encouraged by the MQM, which further exacerbated the criminalization of educational institutions in Karachi.

The MQM's operational techniques showed great sophistication in terms of propaganda and coordination among members. The party, based in Pakistan's most cosmopolitan region, adopted different forms of urban violence such as extortion, target killings, and kidnapping, even incorporating criminal gangs dealing in petty crimes. Moreover, the party also institutionalized the torture of political opponents and extortion of people in Mohajir neighborhoods. This was known as *bhatta* (protection money) and the practice was notorious throughout Pakistan, "The bhatta system more than anything, exemplifies the manner in which perfectly ordinary people are sucked into whole sale corruption."<sup>41</sup> Verkaaik summarizes the MQM's style of politics as follows:

The practice of forcing people to pay "voluntary donations" (*bhatta*) to party members had spread widely. Within the neighborhood, MQM workers acted as the legislative, executive, and judicial powers all in one. They strongly dissuaded people to consult state institutions such as the city court in case of conflict and advised people to come to them instead. Some people found the MQM way of administrating justice a lot quicker and more just than the way of the state, but others complained that justice continued to be as arbitrary as ever.<sup>42</sup>

Clearly, as the MQM was breaking new ground in urban politics, it was also blazing new trails in the criminalization of politics in Pakistan. It was the only political party that formed a sophisticated organizational network in neighborhoods and towns

---

<sup>40</sup> The spread of gun culture took a heavy toll among students. For instance, from 1982-1988, eighty students were killed on various campuses across Pakistan. Once divided between Left and Right ideologies, now student organizations were divided along ethnic lines. Zahid Hussain, Ali Hasan, and Farrah Khan, "The Campus Mafias," *The Herald*, October 1988, 52.

<sup>41</sup> Talat Aslam, "Police: The Lawless Brigade," *The Herald*, March 1987, 59.

<sup>42</sup> Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004), 167.

intended to control population at proximity and to root out opponents and dissidents. The party also developed the most systematic and brutal system of extortion, torture, and intimidation and thus had a complete monopoly of violence in many areas, usurping it from the state and thus setting the stage for confrontation with its forces. Adulation of the leader, despotism within the party, valorizing, glorifying, and lionizing of the leader's personality by the party's members were so astounding that there was no parallel in Pakistan's already none-too-democratic party politics. While these tactics provided plenty of enjoyment to ardent youths, the MQM decided to contest the 1988 general elections held after the assassination of Zia-ul-Haq.

### **Politics of Alliance Making**

The MQM's capitalization on Mohajir frustrations and their weaving them into the party's militant agenda proved successful in creating a strong organizational structure, garnering support from Urdu-speaking youth, and asserting the Mohajir identity as demonstrated above. The MQM thus decided to translate this success by competing in a 1987 municipal election against the defunct former vanguards of the Urdu-speakers, the JI and JUP. It did not take much for the MQM to win the election, and the new party's complete victory placed the JI and the JUP on the verge of complete collapse in urban Sindh. However, before the MQM could fully release the Mohajirin from the clutches of traditional Islamic politicians, the Mohajir community was shaken by the Hyderabad incident. On October 1, 1988, during an MQM convention in a Mohajir dominated town known as *Pacca Qilla* in Hyderabad, groups of armed Sindhis went on a rampage and killed 185 MQM supporters including women and children.<sup>43</sup> This ignited a brutal

---

<sup>43</sup> "The Blood in Hyderabad is No Cause to Flinch Again," *Economist*, October 8, 1988.

conflict throughout urban Sindh during which, the MQM, not surprisingly, manipulated the event to generate hatred against Sindhis. Inevitably, therefore, the loose MQM-Jeay Sindh partnership was finally over. The Pacca Qilla massacre, which still resonates today in MQM political discourse, provided further support to the MQM's ethnic chauvinism. In fact, the MQM used the event to rally support for the election that took place after a month.

In the November 1988 general elections, the party came into full force. Just four short years since its formation, the MQM completely grabbed the Mohajirin vote in both the national and the provincial assembly elections of 1988 and hence ended the era of the JUP and JI in the Urdu-speakers' psyche. It also challenged the Sindhi nationalists causing more hatred in already shattered social fabric. Although the MQM only secured thirteen seats out of 207 in the national assembly, the party became the country's third largest political organization after the PPP and Nawaz Sharif's *Islami Jamhoori Ittehad* or IJI (Islamic Democratic Alliance), which won ninety-two and fifty-five seats respectively.<sup>44</sup> This judgment about the MQM's performance on the national level may seem puzzling with only a quick glance at the numbers. However, when put into context, the electoral results show that the MQM gained power and experienced success in this election. Although the thirteen seats won in the 1988 election as compared to the PPP party's 92 seats do not seem like a victorious showing, it is important to remember that the MQM was unknown before this and that they beat out other previously popular parties. Leading journalist Zaffar Abbas portrays the MQM's 1988 electoral success as follows, stating that the MQM

---

<sup>44</sup> *Islami Jamhoori Ittehad* was formed in September 1988 to oppose the PPP in elections that year. The alliance comprised of nine parties and the major actors were Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League and the JI.

Swept through the city during the elections, saw many a highly placed idol smashed, with the city being turned into a virtual graveyard of leading politicians. Some of the names that had remained on the political horizons for decades, from both left and right, were completely wiped off the political map of the city and the country. In some cases, entire political parties vanished, speaking volumes of their ideology and the caliber of their work among the masses.<sup>45</sup>

Indeed, the MQM forced the collapse of the JI and JUP. At the same time, it also caused new organizations to emerge, albeit with a more parochial and ethnic agenda. These political parties formed to protect economic interests of their respective communities from Mohajir militancy and the MQM's bhatta system. In fact, these new formations often built alliances with different non-Mohajir political parties under the term *ittehad* (united) to fight together against the MQM. Yet, despite their popularized notion of *ittehad* as formidable opponents of the MQM, these political parties were no more than loosely-knit groupings of non-Mohajir communities and lacked the coherent political agenda of their rival, the MQM. The *Punjabi Pakthun Ittehad* (PPI) was the most reactionary alliance, claiming to represent two million non-Mohajir settlers in urban Sindh and attempting to match the MQM with equal zeal.<sup>46</sup> Communities that had thus been far aloof from politics also started organizing into ethno-political groups. For example, the old Baloch community, a traditional supporter of the PPP in Karachi, formed the *Baloch Ittehad* to protect their economic interests from the ethnic conflicts that had engulfed urban Sindh.<sup>47</sup> Hitherto unknown in the political arena, Dr. Masood Tariq Arain, a councilor of the Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, emerged as a critical opponent of the MQM and announced the formation of a new party known as *Sindhi*

---

<sup>45</sup> Zaffar Abbas, "Karachi's New Guard," *The Herald*, December 1988, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Zaffar Abbas, "Split Personalities," *The Herald*, February 1989, 20.

<sup>47</sup> Siddiq Baluch, "Fighting Back," *The Herald*, February 1989, 25-26.

*Punjabi Ittehad* (SPI) to achieve an independent identity for Punjabi settlers.<sup>48</sup> Not only that, the MQM influenced ethnic movements outside Sindh. Inspired by the MQM, the *Seraiki Quami Mahaz* (Seraiki National Movement) emerged with demands for a separate homeland for their community, carved from the Multan, Bhawalpur, DIG Khan, DI Khan, and Jhang districts of Punjab.<sup>49</sup> The MQM's meteoric success, thus, pushed ethnic groups in urban Sindh to form political parties aiming to protect latter's interests from the former.

Despite the emergence of other political groups and factionalism inside the party, the MQM leadership maintained a grip on urban Sindh and posed a stiff challenge to other ethnic groups in elections as well as on the street. In fact, most, if not all, political groups fell into disarray in the face of continuing MQM militancy and Mohajir nationalism. In addition, lack of organizational structure and a coherent agenda also contributed to other parties' decline. The only serious provincial challenge that the MQM faced was from rural Sindh, where nationalist groups and the PPP maintained a strong presence; however, the MQM continued to enjoy the upper hand at the negotiating table of various provincial issues. This is because, unlike the Sindhi political organizations, none of which could claim to speak on behalf of Sindhis, the MQM could make a credible claim to speak exclusively on behalf of the Mohajir community.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the MQM, as the sole representative of Mohajirin, outlined its demands in the 1988 *Qarardad-i-Maqasid* (Charter of Resolution), the party's foundation document.<sup>51</sup> The

---

<sup>48</sup> Ali Hasan, "Multiple Divisions," *The Herald*, May 1987, 30.

<sup>49</sup> Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 516.

<sup>50</sup> Arif Hasan, "Power and Powerlessness," *The Herald*, February 1988, 70.

<sup>51</sup> Altaf Hussain and Khalid Athar, *Safar-i Zindagi : Em. Kiyu. Em. Ki Kahani, Altaf Husain Ki Zabani* [Life Journey: The MQM's Story in Altaf Hussain's Words], Isha`at 1 ed. Lahaur: Jang Pabliszarz, 1988.

Charter focuses primarily on local resource management, the acquiring of a greater share of civil service employments and of educational opportunities for Mohajir youth, and effective laws to regulate foreign workers. The resolution included the points listed in Table 8.

Table 8. The MQM's 1988 Charter of Resolution

1	Domicile certificate and Identity Card only for local Sindhis and Mohajirin.
2	Recruit local staff in Sindh Police.
3	Ease gun laws for Mohajirin and Sindhi.
4	Resettlement of Afghan refugees from Sindh near Afghan-Pakistan border.
5	Provide employment opportunities to incoming workers in their home provinces.
6	Control illegal land grabbing and regulate <i>katchi abadis</i> (slums) to provide better facilities
7	Better public transportation.
8	Employment opportunities for local.
9	Laws to restrict in-migrants from voting in election.
10	Reduce voting age from 21 to 18.
11	Revision of quota system to provide greater share to Mohajir youth in civil services
12	Only local skill laborers must allow to work in industries in Sindh.
13	Eliminate discrimination against Mohajirin in work place.
14	Repatriate Bihari refugees from Bangladesh to Sindh.
15	Allow rail links to India from Sindh.
16	Greater education opportunities for Mohajir students.
17	Greater share of revenue from the federal government for health facilities in Sindh
18	Housing scheme for low-income families.
19	The charge of Karachi Electric Supply Corporation (KESC) should be given to Sindh government
20	Universalize Fuel Adjustment Charges.
21	Sindh government should collect sales tax.
22	Public holiday for Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai and Liaquat Ali Khan

*Source:* Altaf Hussain and Khalid Athar, *Safar-i Zindagi : Em. Kiyu. Em. Ki Kahani, Altaf Husain Ki Zabani* [Life Journey: The MQM's Story in Altaf Hussain's Words], Isha`at 1 ed. Lahaur: Jang Pabliharz, 1988.

After a colorful victory in the 1988 General Elections, the MQM joined the wining party, the PPP, and on December 2, signed the 59-point agreement referred as the

Karachi Declaration, also dubbed the ‘Charter of Peace,’ which later formed the basis of the MQM-PPP alliance.<sup>52</sup> Shortly thereafter, fissures emerged in the MQM-PPP coalition, however, as both accused the other of ineffectiveness and not upholding the Karachi Declaration. On June 3, 1989, as they were unable to meet goals, the two sides signed another agreement, known as the Memorandum of Understanding, which not only reiterated the earlier pledges, but added a few more commitments from the PPP on certain fresh demands raised by the MQM.<sup>53</sup> The MQM showed genuine sincerity towards “Mohajir” issues such as employment, education, transportation, health, etc. For instance, the MQM demanded an increase in the education budget to 4.5% of the Gross National Product. However, before any of these demands could be implemented the MQM-PPP partnership broke-up. The MQM break-up first with the Jeay Sindh and then with the PPP was a major blow to the party and to any joint struggle that could have protected Sindh’s rights against Punjabi domination. Furthermore, the alliance with the Sindhis could have given the MQM bigger support in the rural Sindh and helped to reconcile differences between Mohajirin and Sindhis. According to Jalal, “realpolitik, not ethnic discord, has been the propelling factor in the alignment of political forces of Sind.”<sup>54</sup>

Nawaz Sharif, a Punjabi entrepreneur, was quick to respond to these emerging political upsets in Sindh. He offered the MQM a new alignment in opposition with his party, the IJI. When the MQM joined the opposition, the PPP-led government suffered a serious blow when Bhutto only narrowly survived a no-confidence motion in the National

---

<sup>52</sup> Zaffar Abbas, “Karachi: A Sitting Target,” *The Herald*, April 1989, 60-62.

<sup>53</sup> Zaffar Abbas, “Sindh: Extreme Reactions,” *The Herald*, November 1989, 50.

<sup>54</sup> Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Assembly in October 1989. Finally, on August 6, 1990, two years after the election, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan (1988-1993) dismissed Bhutto's government. Eventually the MQM-IJI/PML partnership resulted in a new political marriage after the 1990 General Elections. While the "PPP leader had clung to the view that the Sindh-based MQM could ill-afford to break its ties with the dominant party in that province, MQM maneuvers were predicated on maximizing possibilities wherever they could be found for what they deemed a neglected segment of the citizenry."<sup>55</sup> The MQM-IJI signed a 17-point agreement, which raised similar issues to those presented in the Karachi Declaration such as better civic services for Karachi's population, quota system revision, and a new census.<sup>56</sup> The MQM-IJI alliance caused more hatred and widened the rifts between the Sindhis and Mohajirin. The Sindhis asserted that the MQM, representing Mohajirin living in the land of Sindh, had betrayed the cause of provincial autonomy. Instead, Sindhis accused the MQM of being a power-greedy organization that did not share Sindhi interests and could not be trusted for future political strategies. Similarly, the MQM viewed the PPP as a Sindhi organization that was merely interested in Sindhi interests. While the MQM projected itself as a king-maker and dismissed criticisms of opportunism raised against it due to the party's willingness to change partnership without regard for regional-provincial interests, the party faced in-fighting.

The MQM started to feel internal rifts as senior party members competed for power and influence. However, it was not until the early 1990s, according to the MQM leadership, that the party decided to expand its power to the rest of Pakistan in January

---

<sup>55</sup> Shaif's IJI struck a deal with the MQM in September came as a surprise for the PPP government. The 14 MQM MNAs agreed to vote against the PPP government. Lawrence Ziring, "Pakistan in 1989: The Politics of Stalemate," *Asian Survey* 30, no. 2, Part II (February 1990), 132.

<sup>56</sup> Zaffar Abbas, "Sindh: Extreme Reactions," *The Herald*, November 1989, 50.

1991 and proposed to change its name from Mohajir to Muttahida, thought it did not yet implement the change.<sup>57</sup> The leaders of the MQM's militant wing, Afaq Ahmed and Amir Khan, dissented from the decision. Not surprisingly, they came under severe criticism from senior party workers who, among other things, accused them of taking Rs 50 million from the ISI to break the party.<sup>58</sup> Later on February 26, 1991, the MQM decided to sack three of its senior members, Amir Khan, Afaq Ahmad, and Badar Iqbal, who left for the US without any delay. This incident also started a barrage of criticism against the army by the MQM; party leaders accused the military of attempting to create fissures within the party. The MQM-military relationship from the early days was precarious not least because of Altaf's severe criticism of the military as a Punjabi establishment. Altaf's personal experience in the army during the 1971 war reflected in the party's perception of military institutions as key bearers of Punjabi chauvinism. Obviously, the military establishment was not pleased with the MQM's criticisms and militancy or with the abduction of one of its top officers, Major Kaleem. On June 16, 1992, the army initiated the infamous twenty-nine month Operation Clean-up to root out "terrorists" and "anti-state elements" in Sindh.<sup>59</sup> The army supported the sacked MQM members, Amir Khan, Afaq Ahmad, and Badar Iqbal, who had recently returned from the US, and were notorious for their own militant activities, in forming a new party, known as MQM *Haqiqi* (True MQM), which took over all of the MQM's offices in Karachi and Hyderabad. This was a major turning point for the MQM, forcing its leaders and members to go into exile or join the Haqiqi. In fact, during Operation Cleanup the membership of the MQM activists was cut in half by the organization's first and only

---

<sup>57</sup> Hassan Mehdi, "Day of the Dissidents," *The Herald*, January 1991, 119.

<sup>58</sup> Aaser Husain, "The Battle Within," *The Herald*, March 1991, 47.

<sup>59</sup> Ayaz Amir, "The Acid Test," *The Herald*, June 1992, 32.

official split. Interestingly for an organization with a strong party network and a militant wing, the MQM did not resist the operation; instead, the party's leaders and members went underground to avoid arrests as their offices and cells were taken over by the rival Haqiqi faction. Altaf Hussein, who perhaps anticipated the army action, had left a few months earlier for medical surgery in London and requested the American Consulate General in Karachi to provide asylum to his party members. The appeal was bluntly rejected, however.<sup>60</sup> The MQM alleged that Operation Cleanup had directly targeted Mohajirin and accused Sharif's government of betraying their partnership. Although the MQM was technically a part of the government and was in a partnership with Sharif, Operation Cleanup was an initiative of the military, which held much more power than Sharif, forcing him to concede to the operation. Despite being the coalition partner of the Sharif-led IJI government, the MQM suffered a serious blow from the army operation. Consequently, twenty-three MQM members from the Sindh Assembly resigned, including the Speaker, leaving the provincial government to hang by a thread.<sup>61</sup>

The MQM's withdrawal of support weakened Sharif's government; however, the greatest blow to the IJI came from the power struggle between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan over the selection of the new chief of army staff.<sup>62</sup> After dramatic political shenanigans, the army chief, General Abdul Waheed Kakar, finally brokered a deal under which both Ghulam Ishaq and Nawaz Sharif stepped down on July 18, 1993.

---

<sup>60</sup> Ayaz Amir, "MQM: A Fight to the Finish," *The Herald*, July 1992, 26.

<sup>61</sup> Khan, Ahmad Rais. "Pakistan in 1992: Waiting for Change," *Asian Survey* 33, no. 2 (February 1993): 129-140, 131.

<sup>62</sup> Tahir Amin, "Pakistan in 1993: Some Dramatic Changes," *Asian Survey* 34, no. 2 (February, 1994): 191-199, 191.

Table 9. Party Positions in National Assembly Elections: 1988-1997

<b>Party</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1997</b>
MQM	13	15	-	12
PPP	92	45	86	18
PML	55 (IJI)	105 (IJI)	73	137
JUP			6	-
JI				-
JUI				2
ANP	3	6	3	10
Ind.	27	21	15	21
Other	9	9	24	7
Total	207	207	207	207

*Source:* Pakistan Election Commission website. <http://www.ecp.gov.pk> (February 27, 2008)

Table 10. Party Positions in Sindh Provincial Assembly: 1988-1997

<b>Party</b>	<b>1988</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1997</b>
MQM	26	27	27	28
PPP	67	44	56	36
ML	1 (IJI)	7 (IJI)	7	15
JUP			-	-
JUI			-	-
JI			-	-
Ind.	5	18	6	10
Other	1	1	13	20
Total	114	109	109	109

*Source:* Pakistan Election Commission website. <http://www.ecp.gov.pk>. (February 27, 2008)

In just four years, two democratic national governments had been dissolved. Neither regional political parties like the MQM nor the national organizations like the PPP and the IJI benefitted from the so-called democratic governments. On all accounts, this outcome was a depressing sign especially for political leaders and civil society

activists who struggled and fought for almost ten years against the previous military dictator, Zia ul-Haq, to restore democracy. The escalating violence in urban Sindh, caused by the army operation against the MQM, further foreshadowed a bleak future. The army operation in urban Sindh was taking its toll. The MQM initially avoided a clash with the state force; however, party activists soon found themselves on the defensive. Several sprinter groups emerged from the MQM that fought street battles with the armed forces and the MQM Haqiqi. All three sides suffered heavy losses resulting in deaths of thousands of people. One thing that appeared from this low-level civil war was the transformation of violence. In Karachi, where once “violence would remain angry, disorganized and local, it is now cold- blooded and immaculately planned and executed.”<sup>63</sup>

In 1993, another round of general elections took place in the country, with both the PPP and the PML emerging as the two leading parties, capturing 86 and 72 seats respectively of the National Assembly’s 207 seats.<sup>64</sup> However, Bhutto’s PPP once again successfully cobbled together a fragile coalition and formed a government at the center on October 19, 1993.<sup>65</sup> The MQM boycotted the National Assembly elections under the assumption that voters would stay away and turn the process into a farce. Contrary to the MQM’s belief, the turnout was “marginally affected, making the PML and the PPP the major beneficiaries of the boycott.”<sup>66</sup> The MQM contested the provincial elections, however, and won 28 seats proving to the state and especially the army that in spite of

---

<sup>63</sup> Talat Aslam, “Dance of Death,” *The Herald*, June 1995, 32.

<sup>64</sup> Tahir Amin, “Pakistan in 1993: Some Dramatic Changes,” *Asian Survey* 34, no. 2 (February, 1994): 191-199, 195.

<sup>65</sup> Tahir Amin, “Pakistan in 1993: Some Dramatic Changes,” *Asian Survey* 34, no. 2 (February, 1994): 191-199, 196.

<sup>66</sup> Tahir Amin, “Pakistan in 1993: Some Dramatic Changes,” *Asian Survey* 34, no. 2 (February, 1994): 191-199, 195.

government aggression, the party still represented Mohajirin in urban Sindh. The MQM success in provincial elections, however, proved superficial in terms of promoting Urdu-speakers' interests in the newly formed government of Bhutto. The PPP-led government ordered the Interior Minister, who was also the retired army general from NWFP, Naseer ullah Babar, to quell all the violence in the province. Babar's aggressive approach resulted into more chaos and mayhem. For example, in 1995 alone, 2,095 people were killed out of which 243 were MQM members, 180 were MQM Haqiqi, and 226 were law enforcement personnel. "Never before in the history of this country have so many people been mowed down in one city in a single year."<sup>67</sup> The violence continued and the death toll reached new heights, so that in just four years (1992-1996) 5,000 people died in a guerilla type civil war in Karachi.<sup>68</sup> In fact, the so-called law enforcement agencies killed about 200 people, mostly MQM workers in dubious encounters that came to be known as "extra-judicial killings."<sup>69</sup> Between July 1995-February 1996, 70 staged police encounters took place in which over 120 MQM workers were killed. Of these 11 took place in January alone; 23 MQM workers died.<sup>70</sup> Of course the state failed to conduct an inquiry to investigate widespread accusations of "fake encounters." The MQM commemorated its martyrs (*shaheed*) by building plaques in neighborhoods and calling for general strikes. Eqbal Ahmad described the MQM's "insurgency" succinctly:

Where does the MQM belong in this pantheon of failed urban movements? Low down, in my estimation! In the last four months it displayed strategic inadequacy, tactical incompetence, and a ghettoised mentality whereby it hit mostly neighborhood cops, local rivals, and innocent bystanders. Its failing are comprehensible. It is not a revolutionary organization and obviously, unfamiliar with even the

---

<sup>67</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, "Apocalypse Now," *The Herald*, January 1996, 51.

<sup>68</sup> Azhar Abbas, "Future Shock," *The Herald*, March 1996, 46a.

<sup>69</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, "Apocalypse Now," *The Herald*, January 1996, 52.

<sup>70</sup> Mazhar Abbas, "A New Deal for Karachi," *The Herald*, February 1996, 75.

fundamental principles of armed insurgency. Rather, it is a hodge-podge – in parts parliamentary, ethnic, gun-toting bully and extortionist – held together less by well-defined political objectives than by cult of personality and its constituents sense of victimisation.<sup>71</sup>

The MQM was based in Karachi, Pakistan's financial capital, and the group used this to their advantage by issuing calls for violent strikes, forcing people to shut down their business, damaging the city's infrastructure, burning public property such as buses, vehicles, and banks, and generally taking aim at the national economy. In July 1995, the MQM issued 19 strike calls; altogether, Karachi remained closed for about a month.<sup>72</sup> Consequently, the economy was badly hit in Karachi, the largest financial and industrial city in Pakistan, with its effects spreading to the other parts of the country. A research paper submitted by the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry revealed that a "a working day lost due to a strike in Karachi costs 1.3 billion rupees (\$38 million), and in 1995 a total of 34 working days were lost as a result of strikes called by the MQM."<sup>73</sup> Over the years that Sindh was burning; the Punjab government advertised Lahore's peaceful law and order situation to attract foreign and domestic investors who were leaving Karachi.<sup>74</sup> As a result, Karachi's rival city, Lahore, experienced tremendous growth. For instance, sixty major industrial units were established in Lahore district from 1980-89. Further, during the first five year of the 1990s, 75 more units moved into and around Lahore.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Eqbal Ahmed, "Beyond this Battle of Karachi," *Dawn*, August 17, 1995

<sup>72</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, "Apocalypse Now," *The Herald*, January 1996, 52.

<sup>73</sup> Moonis Ahmer, "Ethnicity and State Power in Pakistan: The Karachi Crisis," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 10 (October 1996): 1035.

<sup>74</sup> Azhar Abbas, "Pulling Down the Shutters," *The Herald*, January 1995, 57.

<sup>75</sup> Aamer Ahmed Khan, "The Spillover Effect," *The Herald*, November 1995, 77.

Although Pakistan's level of economic development proved worrisome during Bhutto's rule, the law-and-order situation in urban Sindh was the major cause of the PPP's dismissal. On November 5, 1996, President Farooq Leghari dissolved Bhutto's government on charges of corruption, mismanagement, and most importantly, carrying out extrajudicial killings of MQM workers. A new national and provincial election was held on February 6, 1997. This was the fourth election in 9 years and not surprisingly it evoked little popular enthusiasm.<sup>76</sup>

Table 11. Voter Turnout (1988-2002) by Percentage

Province	Year				
	2002	1997	1993	1990	1988
Sindh	38.17	<b>31.3</b>	28.23	43.3	42.38
Punjab	46.03	<b>39.8</b>	47.07	49.6	46.47
Balochistan	29.67	<b>23.2</b>	24.96	29.2	25.69
NWFP	35.09	<b>27.8</b>	34.59	35.7	33.92
Islamabad	51.28	<b>46.1</b>	57.51	57.3	57.91
FATA	25.48	<b>33.7</b>	61.8	59.7	77.5
Total	41.68	<b>35.4</b>	40.28	45.5	43.07

Source: Mohammad Waseem, *Democratization in Pakistan: A Study of the 2002 Elections* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), 161.

As Table 11 shows, for instance, "fewer than 41% of the eligible voters cast their ballots in Punjab, 31.21% in Sindh, 29.67% in NWFP, and 22.84% in Balochistan."<sup>77</sup> Despite the low voter turnout, Nawaz Sharif won with an overwhelming majority and secured two-third of the seats in the National Assembly.<sup>78</sup> The MQM's share of national assembly seats was reduced from 15 in 1990 to 13 in 1997 as Table 11 demonstrates. The party, however, once again joined Nawaz Sharif to form the coalition government and

<sup>76</sup> Anwar H. Syed, "Pakistan in 1997: Nawaz Sharif's Second Chance to Govern," *Asian Survey* 38, no. 2, (February, 1998): 116-125, 11.

<sup>77</sup> Anwar H. Syed, "Pakistan in 1997: Nawaz Sharif's Second Chance to Govern," *Asian Survey* 38, no. 2, (February, 1998): 116-125, 117.

<sup>78</sup> Anwar H. Syed, "Pakistan in 1997: Nawaz Sharif's Second Chance to Govern," *Asian Survey* 38, no. 2 (February, 1998): 116-125, 117.

demanded that the government “pay several billion rupees as compensation to families...who had been “unjustly” imprisoned, tortured, or killed during the second Benazir Bhutto regime.”<sup>79</sup> The federal government finally did pay Rs. 100 million in two installments as compensation to families of MQM workers.<sup>80</sup> Despite its relative success in receiving the compensation, the party’s loss of three seats proved crucial to its future organizational strategy. On 26 July, 1997, the MQM finally changed the organization’s name from the Mohajir Qaumi Mahaz to the *Muttahida Qaumi Mahaz* (United National Movement), thereby broadening its appeal from representing only Mohajir interests to championing those of the oppressed classes in general, rejecting the ethnic and linguistic identity which had hitherto been central to it. The party broadened its appeal by de-emphasizing Mohajir ethnicity in its political program and including issues of national concern. This transformation of the MQM will be described in length in the following chapters. Before turning to that, we must address another development of a new kind.

As if the above mentioned political challenges were not threatening enough, the rise of Islamic extremism in the mid-1990s also undermined the MQM’s popularity. In fact, the rapid emergence of new sectarian groups and organizations mushroomed due to military support geared to recruit for jihad in Kashmir, thus challenging the national political parties, civil society associations, journalists, academics, and human rights activists alike. Unlike in the past when Islamic parties had represented a moderate political agenda, in the 1990s, the religious groups advocated a radical and militant program. Their radical politics appealed to youths from lower-class towns in Karachi, and

---

<sup>79</sup> Anwar H. Syed, “Pakistan in 1997: Nawaz Sharif’s Second Chance to Govern,” *Asian Survey* 38, no. 2 (February, 1998): 116-125, 121.

<sup>80</sup> Hasan-Askari Rizvi, “Pakistan in 1998: The Polity Under Pressure,” *Asian Survey*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (February, 1999): 177-184, 178.

since the MQM relied heavily on youth support and participation, the party's street power faced another grave challenge. Although the Islamic groups failed to displace MQM's electorally in national and provincial elections, their religious ideologies co-opted large sections of the Mohajir youth. These well-funded militant organizations built hundreds of mosques and madrassahs all over the province, and especially in Karachi.

### **Political Islam Challenges the MQM**

Although several prevalent forms of Islamic orthodoxy gained ground in urban Sindh in the 1990s, the Indian brand of Islam, Barelvi, had the most appealing religious inspiration for Mohajirin. The Barelvi organization, the *Dawat-e-Islami* (Invitation to Islam) formed in the 1990s to propagate spiritual purification by 'mimicking' the Prophet Mohammad's lifestyle. This group was at the forefront of the growth of Barelvisim in Karachi's Mohajir dominated town. As the popularity of the Dawat-e-Islami spread, so did its prospects of gaining political power in local towns and neighborhoods. Thus, the traditional and apolitical Dawat-e-Islami gave rise to the militant *Sunni Tehreek* (ST), founded by Riaz Hussain Shah in Multan, who claimed to represent the Mohajirin in Karachi.<sup>81</sup> A thirty-two year old Gujarati-Mohajir leader, Saleem Qadri, rose through the ranks very quickly and eventually headed the organization. Under his leadership, the ST's popularity soon increased, and the group flourished due to its "genius of organization and acquisition of funds."<sup>82</sup> The ST aimed to destroy the remaining power of the MQM, which for a long time had resisted the encroachment of ST in urban Sindh. Jihadist and sectarian organizations like the *Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan* (SSP), influenced by Saudi

---

<sup>81</sup> Javed Mansoor, "The New Militant," *The Herald*, January 1992, 74.

<sup>82</sup> Khaled Ahmed, "Sunni Tehreek Suffers another Revenge Killing," *The Friday Times*, Vol. XIII, No. 13 (May 25-31).

Arabia's ultra-conservative Wahabi brand of Islam, also emerged as strong forces in the climate of growing Islamic extremism. Soon radical Islamic organizations gained momentum in reaching local populations, recruited young people for their cause, enhanced their organizational capabilities, collected massive donations, and effectively spread their religious propaganda. Their outreach overshadowed ethnic parties like the MQM which were becoming exhausted by internal factionalism and the recent army operation. Parallel to this militant culture, engendered by the ST and the SSP, other groups struggled to proselytize young people at the grass-root level. The *Tablighi Jamat* (Proselytizing Group) with its roots in the Deobandi school and later influenced by Wahabism, competed with Dawat-e-Islami to win over young people. This gave rise to a new urban culture of religiosity that provided Mohajir youth with a new terminology and thinking for identity construction, and most importantly, a refuge or escape from the ethnic militancy that had previously gripped urban Sindh. On the other hand, it also allowed jihadist groups to "poach MQM activists already under pressure from the establishment."<sup>83</sup> As these religious groups competed with each other to attract youth who had previously been involved in ethnic politics; the ethnic and linguistic divisions and the ethno-nationalistic political parties born in the mid-1980s both started to take a back seat.

Consequently, locals invented new religious practices and revived old rituals and festivities that replaced the MQM's political gatherings as attractive cultural events. Youths decorated Mohajir neighborhoods with colorful lights and oil lamps and hoisted green religious flags in place of the MQM's on neighborhood chowks. Also, the *Eid*

---

<sup>83</sup> "Muhajir Qaumi Movement to Hold Anti-US Rally on October 7," *Business Recorder*, September 30, 2001.

*Miladun Nabi* (Prophet Mohammad's birthday) ceremony replaced Altaf Hussain's birthday celebrations, which had previously been celebrated with great fanfare throughout urban Sindh. Remembrance of Mohammad's birthday had started in India, as a counter to the Shiite commemoration of Imam Hussain's martyrdom and was not previously a popular part of religious festivities in Pakistan. However, after the decline of ethnic fervor in urban Sindh, Eid Miladun Nabi was celebrated to such an extent that it surpassed the observance of the holiest Islamic festivals such as Ramadan and Eid. One of the activities during the Eid Miladun Nabi celebration was a flag procession on the streets. During this parade youth held large flags to express their masculinity and physicality, which, as Oskar Verkaaik notes, had been part of the MQM's political gatherings in the past. Similarly, unlike in the past when Mohajir youth would lionize Altaf's bravery and courage through songs, the now *Naat Khawani /Milad* (chanting in praise of Mohammad) became a widespread practice in Mohajir-dominated neighborhoods. The crowd that once used to gather in large numbers for MQM political meetings now found their way to the annual religious gatherings of the Tablighi Jamat and Dawat-e-Islami. These two events drew hundreds of thousands of people to Karachi each year.

Similarly, street corner gatherings for Quranic teachings (*Dars-e-Quran*) replaced the MQM's corner meetings in which party members received their leader's message and discussed party activities. In *Dars-e-Quran*, people stood on chowks where lessons on religious observance were being given by a preacher, who was often a former MQM activist or leader. One interesting fact about these popular *Dars-e-Quran* meetings is that despite their apolitical message they were not held inside mosques. Rather they took place widely and frequently deep in neighborhoods that were formerly MQM strongholds

in order to de-ethnicize Mohajir youth. The Dawat-e-Islami members showed similar activism when it came to organization. Their enthusiasm and passion for holding Dars-e-Quran was so great that they organized it on every street corner. The preachers' vivid descriptions of heaven and hell and of judgment day aimed to scare youths from irreligious activities, and most importantly, from politics. *Fatwas* were (edicts) against all "non-Islamic" practices such as cricket and gyms, as preachers urged youths to adhere to Prophet Mohammad's life-style.

One of the most interesting facts of this Barelvi religiosity was that the Gujarat-speaking community, especially the Memons, who once supported the MQM for standing up against Punjabi-Chinioti industrialists, now started funding Dawat-e-Islami and Sunni Tehreek. With their well-funded and apolitical nature of organizations, the Barelvi organizations were able to spread easily into Mohajir towns, though that expression had previously been successfully resisted by the MQM. The reason that Islamic groups such as Dawat-e-Islami were successful is that historically the Urdu-speaking community had already been influenced by Barelvi ideology. Most importantly, Dawat-e-Islami provided a similar kind of fun and excitement to that which the MQM had offered to Mohajir youth in the past. When the religious ideology turned violent, it offered an extreme militant culture to Mohajir youth who would fight over the control of mosques. In the midst of this religious zealotry, the significance of mosques became more important than it used to be in the past when they were merely praying spaces. Palatial mosques, constructed in neighborhoods where the majority of people lived in debilitated houses, were a source of competition in Mohajir dominated towns. The taller the minaret, the stronger it symbolized the faith: this kind of thinking dominated the new wave of Islamic fervor. New mosques with high-rise minarets became a common focus of religious

competition. People demolished their old mosques to build new lavish and flamboyant mosques, not to demonstrate piety but to compete with other sects. In fact, mosques were not simply subjects of architectural competition rather, different sects started to take over each other's mosques. In Karachi as in other cities in Pakistan, mosque takeovers turned into violent conflicts among different sects, especially between Barelvi and Deobandi groups. In the past, when the MQM and MQM Haqiqi would have armed battles in alleys and neighborhood in an attempt to take over each other's strongholds and offices; now religious groups fought to take over mosques. Hence, the march for Mohajir nationalism, started in the mid-1980s, became attenuated in favor of religious activities. Most importantly, Mohajir youth did not celebrate religious events to express their religiosity and orthodoxy. Instead, religious festivities offered youth similar excitements and exhilarations as had MQM street nationalism, which as Verkaaik says was produced by the youth culture of humor, masculinity, and leisure activities. The crowd theory explained in chapter two must take into account the changing ideological nature of Mohajir youth, who replaced MQM political and cultural events with religious celebrations. This would take further ethnographic study that correlates collective youth behavior with political activities. However, Kirchheimer's party change theory further explains the MQM's reorientation from an ethnic to a catch-all party analytically. The following chapter delineates the MQM's new catch-all strategy

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The MQM's Transformation

Following the MQM's sudden triumph as an ethno-militant party during the 1980s, the party faced several great challenges in the 1990s. These included: the 1992 Operation Cleanup, rise of political Islam, ill-fated alliances, and a poor showing in the 1997 general elections. As Kirchheimer emphasizes, catch-all parties move away from society and class identities that were hitherto central to them, and instead rely on policy preferences that transcend boundaries of class and ethnicity. Likewise, after 1997, the MQM refined and restructured its political agenda, organizational design, strategies of alliances, and social base. The party's quest to gain national appeal resulted in a downgrading of the Mohajir ideology in favor of broader, more pragmatic politics. The over-arching theme of the MQM's transformation is that the party began making choices on the bases of strategy rather than ideology. In the party's political discourse the terms *muzloom* (oppressed) and *gharib* (poor) substituted for Mohajir ethnicity. The organization's mode of working shed street politics and embraced a professional party mechanism. The party also struggled to expand its social base beyond the confines of the Urdu-speaking community and recruited members from all over Pakistan. The de-ideologized and strategic MQM did not even shy away from making alliances with its arch rival nemesis, the military-bureaucracy. The ardent party members who believed in Mohajir nationalism resented the transformation and this caused internal factionalism in the MQM.

This chapter outlines the transformation of the MQM from an ethnic party to a catch-all party through applying Kirchheimer's party change model. Kirchheimer identifies several important steps that mass parties take to transform to catch-all parties.

The first and the most important step for a mass-party on its way to becoming a catch-all party is to abandon the original ideology that promoted a particular agenda and appealed a specific group of people. Once the mass-party goes through the process of de-ideologization, it is able to attract hitherto excluded political actors and communities.

### **Changing the Party Name**

We do not support anything which does not contain the word Mohajir.<sup>1</sup>

Altaf Hussain declared in 1987. Yet, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the party decided after all to change its name from Mohajir to Muttahida in 1991. According to the MQM, the army operation against the party in 1992 delayed the MQM's plan of transforming its nomenclature, so it was not until 26 July 1997 that the party finally did change its name. The name change corresponds to Kirchheimer's crucial first step, during which the MQM left behind its ideology in hopes of moving toward the next step, appealing to a larger social base. Altaf Hussein claimed that the party's new name and its transformation to a national organization would bring a new spirit to the party.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, he predicted "conversion will remove the ethnic stigma attached to the party and...will drive the MQM into broader direction."<sup>3</sup> The new spirit was the recognition of different linguistic and ethnic groups living alongside the Mohajirin in urban Sindh. Unlike in the past when Hussain demanded a stop to in-migration and promoted xenophobic politics, now he argued, "Karachi is not solely a mohajir city. Instead, all ethnic groups reside in the city."<sup>4</sup> With its new spirit, the MQM also wanted to reach as far as Kashmir to show that their new program of national development did not adhere to

---

<sup>1</sup> Personality Interview, *The Herald*, September 1987, 130.

<sup>2</sup> M. Ziauddin, "Altaf wants early compensation for victims," *Dawn*, 19 April, 1997 (Issue: 03/16).

<sup>3</sup> M. Ziauddin, "Altaf wants early compensation for victims," *Dawn*, 19 April, 1997 (Issue: 03/16).

<sup>4</sup> M. Ziauddin, "Altaf wants early compensation for victims," *Dawn*, 19 April, 1997 (Issue: 03/16).

parochial Mohajir nationalism. Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister and coalition partner of the MQM, welcomed the MQM's decision as a "favorable step" and urged that "other small parties should emulate it... it is time for national politics and small political parties should also join the national mainstream."<sup>5</sup> Hussain went further than merely dropping the word Mohajir from the MQM's political discourse. After 1997 he called the Mohajirin "Urdu-speaking Sindhis,"<sup>6</sup> a label that, until 1997, the party would have considered oxymoron. Similarly, in 2005 Altaf Hussain urged "Urdu-speaking Sindhis" to learn the Sindhi language and encouraged intellectuals to produce literature that created a sense of unity among old and new Sindhis.<sup>7</sup> On 25 April 2006 the MQM also changed the name of its affiliate, the All Pakistan Mohajir Student Organization (APMSO), the student wing of the MQM.<sup>8</sup> Its new name also replaced Mohajir with Muttahida so that the APMSO could attract a non-Mohajir student population in educational institutions. During the 1990s, the APMSO had been criticized for promoting a culture of academic dishonesty, bullying professors, and intimidating student organizations. After the name change became official, Hussain urged student members to adopt attitudes of humility and tolerance.<sup>9</sup> Kirchheimer's theory states, and the MQM's story follows, that the de-emphasizing of ideology leads to further changes such as broadening social bases. The catch-all party seeks a more balanced profile in terms of membership, as the MQM did after the name change.

---

<sup>5</sup> "Pakistan: Sharif welcomes renaming of Mohajir Qaumi Movement" BBC Monitoring Original Source: Radio Pakistan, Islamabad, July 28, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Salman Hussein, "MQM plays Sindhi Card," *The Friday Times*, May 25-31, Vol. XIII, No. 13.

<sup>7</sup> "Altaf Urges Intelligentsia to Promote Unity in Sindh," *The Nation*, December 18, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> "APMSO Renamed," *Business Recorder*, April 25, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> "APMSO Renamed," *Business Recorder*, April 25, 2006

## Changing the Party Structure

Catch-all parties de-emphasize the particular social group on which they were originally based in favor of recruiting voters from a wider population, which helps the catch-all party secure finance from different interest groups and even from the state and its functional power-bearers. Likewise, the MQM decided to expand its social base, by recruiting non-Mohajir voters. However, before it could appeal to non-Mohajir constituencies, the party leaders decided that they needed to discipline their ranks and expel cadres who they considered as giving a bad image to the organization. Given the militant nature of the lower cadres, the party found it challenging to overhaul its entire organizational structure along the lines of a mainstream national party. The biggest shock, therefore, came just two months after the name change, when the MQM sacked its senior member, Ishtiaq Azhar, on corruption charges. The party justified this action by saying that the “MQM is a political movement. It cannot ignore such aberrations. We cannot spare anyone, at any level, found involved in corruption.”<sup>10</sup> It was definitely a surprise move by the party, which was notorious across Pakistan for its highly organized network of extortion and other crimes. Similarly, the party for the first time admitted that the MQM’s gaining of popularity in such a short time had allowed “all kinds of people flock to it.”<sup>11</sup> After the change, the party claimed that it had expelled 200 workers involved in “crime.”<sup>12</sup> Ironically, at the same time, 260 criminal cases, many involving acts of terrorism, were pending/decided in Pakistan against the party’s chief, Altaf

---

<sup>10</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, “Fall from Grace,” *The Herald*, October 1997, 79.

<sup>11</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, “If there was a Solution to the East and West Pakistan Crisis, then there is a Solution to this Problem,” *The Herald*, April 1998, 34.

<sup>12</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, “IF there was a Solution to the East and West Pakistan Crisis, then there is a Solution to this Problem,” *The Herald*, April 1998, 34.

Hussain himself, who became a British citizen under the asylum given by the United Kingdom government.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, the new standards did not apply to everyone. In 1997, Sharif's government instructed the MQM as a coalition partner to "evolve into a more open organisation, one that does not bar dissent being voiced within its ranks."<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Sharif clarified that the MQM must also "structurally adjust the party to bring it in line with other political groups which function from the top down rather than the other way round."<sup>15</sup> After clearing out many militants, the MQM hence went to great effort to re-educate its party members by publishing thousands of leaflets, pamphlets, books, and posters, all of which stressed humility and good behavior in society. While Hussain enjoyed British life, the remaining members underwent *Tarbiati Nishists* (training sessions), during which Hussain, through telephonic speeches from his apartment in London, regularly gave lessons on righteousness and discipline. *Tarbiati Nishists* were a common practice, and each locality in Karachi organized these training sessions to show their sophisticated behavior. The party distributed booklets calling for good behavior and solid character widely among its workers.<sup>16</sup> One of these booklets titled *Altaf Hussain Kay Lectures* (Altaf Hussain's Lectures), published after 1997, contains speeches addressed to MQM workers on topics related to righteousness, piety, loyalty, and education.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Ardeshir Cowasjee, "Homegrown Terrorism," *Dawn*, November 11, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Mazhar Abbas, "Adjustment Problems," *The Herald*, July 1998, 54.

<sup>15</sup> Mazhar Abbas, "Adjustment Problems," *The Herald*, July 1998, 54

<sup>16</sup> *Nazariyati Tehrik mein Bulund Ihklat aur Masbat Qirdar ki Ahmiyat: Fikri Nishist se Quaid-e-Tehreek Altaf Hussain ka Khitab* [Importance of Good Behavior and Character in a Movement], (Karachi: Muttahida Qaumi Movement, 2006); Imran Farooq, *Nazm-o-Zabt Kay Takazay* [Characteristic of Discipline], (Karachi: Muttahida Qaumi Movement, 1998); Imran Farooq, *Huq Parast Karkun Kon* (Who is Just Worker), (Karachi: Muttahida Qaumi Movement, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> *Altaf Hussain Kay Lectures*, (Karachi: Muttahida Qaumi Movement, 2003).

After disposing of the party's ethnic name and its most ardent ethnic militants, Hussein was ready to expand the party's social base beyond the Mohajir community. In 2001, he formed a Sindh Organizing Committee headed by local Balochis to appeal to non-Mohajir voters from rural Sindh.<sup>18</sup> The MQM also admitted a Sindhi senior intellectual, Ali Ahmed Brohi, in its party and attracted Sindhi candidates by promising guaranteed success if they contested elections in Mohajir towns on the MQM ticket.<sup>19</sup> The party thus awarded tickets to Pakthuns, Punjabis, Hazarewals, and even Kashmiris during the local elections of 2005.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the MQM made large financial investments in expanding its social base. The party established twenty-three units in Punjab and numerous other units in rural Sindh. The rent for these offices, which according to the audit report totaled around Rs. 624,000 per annum, made the party the highest paying renter in terms of organizational expenses.<sup>21</sup> This massive networking outside urban Sindh led Altaf to claim, "the MQM is getting popular, and a day will come when everyone will accept us. And I will save the country with the help of my supporters."<sup>22</sup> Although, setting up offices in non-Mohajir towns was not representative of the MQM's popularity, it did signify the party's serious plans to contend elections throughout Pakistan.

---

<sup>18</sup> MQM, <http://www.mqm.org/English-News/Apr-2001/news010408.htm> (Accessed, June 18, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Hasan Mansoor, "MQM Enjoys its Moment in the Sun," *The Friday Times*, April 26-May 02, 2002, Vol. XIV, No. 9

<sup>20</sup> The local election in Karachi was contested from 18 towns comprising 178 union councils each with a population from 19,000 to 70,000. "Opposition Vows to Resist Government Candidates," September 23, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> "PML Richest Political Party," *The Nation*, February 24, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> "MQM will Quit Govt, Says Altaf," *The Nation*, April 9, 2006.

### **Manufacturing a Soft Image for the Party**

We know we must have made mistakes but now we are trying to project a very soft image of the party, and we have been careful to appear whiter than white.<sup>23</sup>

Farooq Sattar, the senior party member

To broaden the party's appeal and obtain a more balanced social profile, the party leader's image also underwent a transformation, at least rhetorically. Since its formation, the MQM had relied on criminal tactics to silence criticism of the party and its leaders. However, after the change, the MQM actively engaged in manufacturing a progressive image for the organization to raise its social and political profile. The party, therefore, promoted charitable works, and cultural shows, and it recruited intellectuals into its ranks. Although its social wing, the Khidmat-e-Khalq Foundation, was previously involved in charity work, its services had been limited to the Mohajir population. However, after 1997, the party spread its social network to far-flung territories, especially disaster-affected areas. The party decided that natural disasters provided an opportunity to reach into areas that had hitherto resisted its influence. Although the MQM's aid brought relief to the affected, the party's motivation was to manipulate these events for their political ends. The MQM displayed great efficiency in sending emergency assistance. For example, the MQM was actively involved in fundraising and collecting emergency supplies for victims of the 2005 South Asia tsunami. Similarly, the MQM also sent a large amount of aid to affected people in the aftermath of the earthquake in Pakistan in 2006. The party made obvious its intentions by popularizing its aid efforts as a service to humanity, free of any ethnic prejudice, by publishing photos and stories of the MQM's assistance.

---

<sup>23</sup> Xari Jalil, "MQM trying to project soft image now: Sattar," *The News*, February 15, 2008.

In addition to expanding its social services outside urban Sindh, the MQM also started to organize frequent cultural shows as a sign of its new ethnic openness. Party leaders invited folk singers and musicians from various ethnic groups, especially Sindhis, to participate in festivities that represented the diverse cultures of Pakistan. One such festive opportunity, Hussain's birthday, which was no longer celebrated with fanfare, featured non-Mohajir artists and musicians to mark his birth. The MQM also invited prominent media personalities to political and cultural events, along with university professors and poets, who would, the MQM calculated, present a soft image for the party and help raise its social profile.

### **Altaf Hussain Broadens His Vision**

If Hussain was drunk on power in the initial years of the MQM, he is showing all signs of sobering up. Despite a radical change in tactics, he has left himself enough room to maneuver himself back into the mainstream.<sup>24</sup>

According to Kirchheimer the catch-all party leader is one who broadens his vision and "whose action and omissions are now judged from the viewpoint of their contribution to the efficiency of the entire social system rather than identification with the goals of their particular organization."<sup>25</sup> Likewise, the MQM's change led to the transformation of the leader's public persona. The most noticeable aspect of this change was the attenuation of the chauvinistic Mohajir elements of his persona as he bid to moderate it. Altaf, who had been revered as a *pir* (saint), now became a *bhai* (brother). In

---

<sup>24</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, "What is Altaf Hussain Up to," *The Herald*, November 2000, 44.

<sup>25</sup> Kirchheimer, Otto. "The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems." In *Political Parties and Political Development*, edited by Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, 177-200 (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), 190.

addition to his brotherly image, Altaf emerged as a ‘philosopher’ who frequently organized ‘philosophical gatherings,’ *Fikri Nishists*, attended by party members. At these gatherings he delivered lessons on morality, religion, ethics, and medicine through telephonic speeches from his London apartment. Some of the titles of his philosophical teachings are: “The Philosophy of Minds and Genetics,” “Life After Death,” “Positive and Negative Desires and Intentions,” and “The True Essence of Genuine Worship and Supplication.”<sup>26</sup> Unlike in the past when Hussain had been outspoken and candid in fact a firebrand, after 1997, he came across as a reflective, even a rather pretentious, character.

In addition to projecting his image as a philosopher and a thinker, Hussain also displayed an ability to contribute to the larger social system by embracing Sindhi cultural symbols in a show of his appreciation of the local ethos. Through his political speeches, he unveiled a new peaceful message toward Sindh. In Hussain’s new vision, Sindh was a land of cultural richness and mystical qualities, and most importantly, Sindh manifested as a land of harmony where different communities, regardless of religious, ethnic, and linguistic differences, could coexist in peace. He enhanced his new depiction of Sindh in his addresses to Sindhis by frequently referencing Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, the most revered poet of Sindh. Before 1997, Hussain was fiercely proud of his Urdu-speaking heritage, which included North Indian poets such as Ghalib and Hali; yet after 1997 he appeared to feel comfortable quoting Latif frequently. In Pakistan, Shah Abdul Latif is famous for spreading teachings of harmony and mysticism through his poetry and is revered by both Muslims and non-Muslims in Sindh. Altaf therefore coalesced Latif’s message of love and peace with his own party’s propaganda, which he then deployed to

---

<sup>26</sup> MQM, <http://www.mqm.org/> (accessed June 3, 2007).

attack Sindh's landlords for depriving farmers of their rights.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the poet's teachings were used to de-stigmatize the MQM's militant image in rural Sindh and simultaneously to endorse Urdu-speakers' attachment to the land. For instance, Altaf said that the MQM never advocated the division of Sindh and stated, "We are the true followers of the philosophy of Shah Abdul Bhitai and true sons of the soil."<sup>28</sup> The name of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai became such a common theme in Hussain's addresses to Sindhi audiences that he started to use it as a political tout to build alliances with Sindhi nationalist parties and denounce religious extremism, which had been a source of competition for the MQM since the late 1990s. For example, the MQM, showing their full support to nationalist groups, denounced the arrest of Jeay Sindh leaders in 2001 and accused jihadist organizations of violence in the land of Shah Latif.<sup>29</sup> He said the "land of Shah Abdul Bhitai is a land of peace and Sindhis don't believe in religious extremism and sectarianism."<sup>30</sup> Similarly, during his addresses to Sindhi journalists and intellectuals in November 2001 Hussain quoted "if one wanted to survive in the world with honour and prestige, one would have to face difficulties and hardships" a couplet from Bhitai's famous anthology, *Shah Jo Risalo* to prove his loyalty to Sindhi culture.<sup>31</sup>

Such political discourses, rich in "Sindhi" values, were not the only step that Hussain took to appeal to Sindhi voters. During his addresses to Sindhi audiences, Hussain adorned the Sindhi *ajrak*, a shawl famous for its 5,000-year-old aesthetic colors and patterns originating in the Indus civilization, to show his appreciation of local culture

---

<sup>27</sup> "Existence of Pakistan because of Sindh: Altaf," *The Nation*, June 11, 2005.

<sup>28</sup> "MQM has Never Talked of Division of Sindh: Altaf," *Business Recorder*, December 24, 2000.

<sup>29</sup> "Muttahida Qaumi Movement Denounces Arrest of Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz Leaders," *Business Recorder*, October 19, 2001.

<sup>30</sup> "Muttahida Backs World in Fight Against Terrorism: Altaf," *Business Recorder*, September 27, 2001.

<sup>31</sup> "Altaf Oppose Shifting of Sindh Dehs," *Dawn*, November 19, 2001.

and to “highlight the party’s ostensibly nationalist identity.”<sup>32</sup> In Pakistan, the ajrak symbolizes Sindhi cultural identity and, despite its apolitical nature, the shawl is worn by politicians and even by army generals who want to appeal to Sindhi sentiments. Hence, Hussain’s decision to don the ajrak did not just represent a fashion statement; in fact, he intended it to represent the MQM’s proximity to Sindhi culture and to be a claim to Sindhi identity. In yet another gesture toward Sindhi voters, and a big shock to the public, on January 30, 2001, Hussain married Faiza Gabol, a member of a Punjabi family, whose last name made her out to be a Sindhi Baloch.<sup>33</sup> Although the wedding was a personal occasion, it was grandiloquently valorized by the MQM as Hussain’s candid move in a direction to build relations between Sindhi and Mohajir communities.<sup>34</sup> Images of the bride and groom, adorned in the ajrak, and official MQM celebrations in different cities in Pakistan served to romanticize the wedding as a Sindhi-Mohajir agreement, and as an endorsement of the idea of ethnic coexistence in general. While performing all these media antics, Hussain also outlined a new party strategy in a book titled *Philosophy of Realism and Practicalism* that emphasized modernization, development, fighting against feudalism, and uplifting the oppressed. The new goals clearly underlined that the party’s decision to make strategy a prominent approach to politics rather than adhering to Mohajir ideology.

### **Ideology versus Strategy: From Protest to Acquiescence**

The changing of the party’s name, organizational structure, and the leader’s persona translated into the MQM’s new style of politics based on strategy rather than

---

<sup>32</sup> Mazhar Abbas, “Bridging the Gap?” *The Herald*, August 1998, 58.

<sup>33</sup> Salman Hussein “Altaf marries the next MQM chairperson?” *The Friday Times*, February 16-22, Vol, XII, No. 51.

<sup>34</sup> Salman Hussein “Altaf marries the next MQM chairperson?” *The Friday Times*, February 16-22, Vol, XII, No. 51.

ideology. The changes aimed at killing three birds; the ethno-nationalists, the ubiquitous military, and the Islamic fundamentalists. The party struggled to foster alliances with one, mend relations with others, and sideline the rest by carefully crafting the party's machinations, while also projecting its new image to people all over Pakistan. According to the catch-all theory, as a catch-all party moves toward a more balanced social profile, the role of activist members will also be downgraded. It is this which helps the catch-all party to secure access to finance from different interest groups and even from the state and its functional power-bearers such as the military and bureaucracy. Likewise, in the MQM's new era, the party demonstrated that it no longer adhered to a Mohajir-centric ideology or to any other ideals including democracy, thus downgrading the role of its members while becoming more appealing to the government and the elite. The party adopted a politics of centrality in the extremely polarized game of Pakistani politics and tried to please Islamic fundamentalists, ethno-nationalists, and the military simultaneously. This was a sign of "maturity" in the party's strategy, a stark contrast to old ways, which had only led the MQM to head-on collisions with the powerful military-bureaucracy, to unsatisfactory coalitions with ruling parties, to loggerheads within loose alliances, or to frustration among party workers. Although the MQM had had a long history of shifting alliances, with no sense of loyalty to its allies, the post 1997 alliances had a different flavor. The MQM no longer made alliances to further Mohajir demands, nor did the party voice any Mohajir demands to allies; rather, the MQM demanded broader goals such as modernization and provincial autonomy rather than propagating the specifically Mohajir cause. Most importantly, the MQM even joined its arch-rival and nemesis, the military. The following paragraphs outline the MQM's role in Pakistan's power struggle in light of catch-all theory and reveal how the party played a politics of

centrality without disturbing the status quo, and finally how it had become increasingly detached from the people.

After its transformation, the MQM published its new philosophy of “realism and practicalism,” to display its new image as a pragmatic political party that addressed broad issues rather than spouting ideology.<sup>35</sup> This new model demanded an “acceptance of reality” and a pragmatic approach to issues “rather than having [an] ideal, moral, religious or romantic approach.”<sup>36</sup> In following pragmatic politics and playing both sides, Punjabi and Sindhi, the MQM, despite being the coalition partner of Nawaz Sharif’s government, formed an alliance again with Jeay Sindh on July 15, 1997. A serious test of the MQM’s new national catch-all image came in August 1998 when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced construction of the controversial Kalabagh Dam in upper Punjab. In the past, the three other provinces, Sindh, Balochistan, and the NWFP had resisted the construction of the Dam as it gave leverage to the richest agrarian province, Punjab, at the expense of less populous provinces. Political parties such as the Awami National Party (formerly NAP), the PPP, the Jeay Sindh, and smaller parties came forward voicing strong resistance against Sharif’s decision. The MQM faced a tough choice as it was the coalition partner of the Sharif’s government in Sindh and was also in alliance with the Jeay Sindh. In order to reap the full benefits of its simultaneous government connection and Sindhi alliance, the MQM could not take a side, so it remained silent, which of course proved beneficial for the party as it continued its relationship with Nawaz Sharif.<sup>37</sup> However, this relationship was short lived, as many of

---

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.mqm.org/English-News/Aug-2003/philosophyofrealismandpracticalism.htm> (Accessed on February 18, 2008)

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.mqm.org/manifesto/manifesto-1998-ideology.htm>. (Accessed on June 3, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, “End of Federation?” *The Herald*, August 1998, 54.

the MQM alliances were. On August 14, 1998, with the killings of ten MQM workers in Karachi, the party blamed government intelligence agencies, and the MQM finally withdrew its support from Sharif's federal government.<sup>38</sup> This was the MQM's third break with a ruling party since 1988. The party's withdrawal pushed the party close to the nationalist camp, and only then did the MQM decide to criticize the Dam project vehemently as the "murder of Sindh." According to senior party leader Nasreen Jalil, "we want to convey very clearly to the people of Sindh that the MQM wants neither the division of the province nor the separation of Karachi. Moreover, after changing [the party's name] from Mohajir to Muttahida, it is now our responsibility to take a stand on national issues."<sup>39</sup> Thus, the MQM started to switch sides but only when the party's interests were at stake.

While no longer in the government, the MQM suffered another blow when alleged party militants killed the famous Pakistani philanthropist and former Governor of Sindh, Hakim Mohammad Saeed, on October 17, 1998 in Karachi.<sup>40</sup> This incident led Sharif to impose Governor's Rule on October 30, thus suspending the provincial assembly in the province. Once again, the MQM's members went underground to avoid arrest. Meanwhile the party's senior leadership continued to attract ethno-nationalist sympathies on issues of water, but most importantly Hussain's criticism of Punjabi hegemony endeared the MQM to Sindhis. In order to prove its new image, the MQM also abandoned its long-standing demand of a greater share of civil service of employment for Mohajir youth. When the bill of extending quota system for another fifteen years was presented in the National Assembly in 1999, the MQM did not criticize it. This marked

---

<sup>38</sup> "Muttahida Quits Federal Cabinet to Protest Killings," *Dawn*, August 15, 1998.

<sup>39</sup> Mazhar Abbas, "Bridging the Gap?" *The Herald*, August 1998, 56.

<sup>40</sup> Zaffar Abbas, "Law and Disorder," *The Herald*, October 1998, 23.

the biggest change in the MQM and clearly demonstrated that the party no longer adhered to the Mohajir cause. More importantly, as one commentator observed, “in a situation where the state sector is clearly shrinking by the day, the MQM’s old battle-cry- the unfair quota system – was becoming irrelevant.”<sup>41</sup>

Two years later on October 12, 1999, the military general, Pervez Musharraf, ousted Sharif’s government in the third military coup of the country’s short and turbulent political history. Musharraf arrested politicians, including members of the government, banned political gatherings and events, and suspended the democratic process. During this time, the MQM organized political gatherings under the guise of religious meetings. “The *Mehfil-e-Zikir-e-Mustafa* [venerating the Prophet Mohammad] which was organized by the party in July this year [2000], is a telling example. Given the ban on political meetings, the party gathered together under the guise of a religious gathering and thereby succeeded in putting on a show of strength on the streets.”<sup>42</sup> This proved beneficial for the MQM as the party capitalized on Islamic sentiments, running high after recent US bombings in Afghanistan and nuclear testing by India and Pakistan. The MQM was also well aware that, with there being no chance of getting back in power at least for a short while, the only way to receive support from the people was to challenge the military-bureaucratic establishment. So the MQM, true to its record forgot at a moment’s notice about Sharif and propagated anti-establishment and anti-Punjabi rhetoric while attracting the sympathies of nationalist parties. Hussain went further and called the partition of India “the greatest blunder of human history.”<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Syed Ali Dayan Hasan, “City of Light,” *The Herald*, September 2000

<sup>42</sup> Hussain Askari, “Refusing to Die,” *The Herald*, November 2000, 49.

<sup>43</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, “The MQM’s New Clothes,” *The Herald*, October 2000, 54

Its silence on the quota system extension and its anti-Punjabi rhetoric certainly provided the MQM some credibility among nationalists in all the provinces and helped to de-stigmatize party's image as an obstacle to centrifugal forces. On September 17, 2000, the party further solidified its new image as a national party by demanding the new constitution with greater provincial autonomy from the center. It stipulated a new constitution in accordance with the 1940 Lahore Resolution that ensured more provincial rights than did the 1973 Constitution.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, the MQM's protest on these important issues represented a radical change in the party, which in the past had never dared to divert itself from the Mohajir agenda let alone voice positions on broader provincial issues. Its demand for a new constitution, a fair share of water and revenue, and greater provincial autonomy from the center naturally brought the MQM still closer to ethno-nationalist groups. Meanwhile, the party continued to capitalize on Islamic sentiments by organizing so-called religious gatherings. In addition to strengthening ties with its Sindhi counterparts, the MQM decided to expand its party's influence and linkages to other parts of the country. Since Balochistan and NWFP have a long history of rebellion against the central government, the MQM forged close ties with Baloch and Pakthun nationalist leaders of the Baloch National Party (BNP) and the Awami National Party (ANP) formerly NAP. Unlike in the past when the party never tried to reach out to non-Mohajir ethnic groups outside urban Sindh, the MQM's forging of ties with Baloch and Pakthun nationalists now became a major step towards centrifugal struggle. It provided a chance to the MQM to move out from its narrow ethnic constituency and to represent broader

---

<sup>44</sup> Idrees Bakhtiar, "The MQM's New Clothes," *The Herald*, October 2000. The 1940 Lahore Resolution promulgates that "...the areas in which Muslims are numerically in a majority...should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign." Idrees Bakhtiar, "The MQM's New Clothes," *The Herald*, October 2000, 54.

population. Moreover, the MQM's favorable attitude towards the Baloch and Pakthun movements silenced its critics in Sindh who had long accused Altaf Hussain of hampering centrifugal movements in the country. The MQM became a harsh critic of army policies in Balochistan and demanded an agenda in line with the demand of Baloch nationalist parties.

Then an event that sent shockwaves around the world and forever changed the entire political scene in Pakistan: the 9/11 attacks on the United States by alleged Al-Qaeda-affiliated militants based in Afghanistan once again placed Pakistan in the front line of another American war. As during the Cold War, when the US supported military dictators and undermined democratic aspirations, during the War on Terror the US bolstered Musharraf's authoritarian rule in Pakistan and weakened civil society. Musharraf, who had overthrown the democratic government in October 1999 and lacked domestic legitimacy, now found strong support from these foreign backers. The US political support and monetary aid to Pakistan's military required Musharraf to halt the state's policy of supporting the Taliban and begin providing access to Pakistani military bases for the US planes to bomb Afghanistan. The Western backing of this military dictator ensured the prospects of his long-term authoritarian rule over Pakistan. The MQM realized that Musharraf was not going anywhere because of his US support, so the party decided to capture the moment to align themselves with his pro-US policy. The MQM was the only political party in Pakistan that held a huge peaceful rally in support of the 9/11 victims and in favor of Musharraf's pro-US policies. While addressing protestors in the Mohajir-dominated town of Liaquatabad, with his usual style of praising Sindh's rich heritage and tradition of secularism in his speech, Altaf Hussain called for an end to religious extremism and sectarianism, and proposed that the day be designated a

“*Yakjehti* (Unity) Day.”<sup>45</sup> Despite anti-American sentiment among the population, including among the Mohajirin, the MQM, which had been a vocal critic of the army, began displaying sympathy with Musharraf. While criticizing religious organizations such as the JI, Hussain frequently quoted passages from the Quran on tolerance and peace and appeared as a political leader who held authentic knowledge of Islam, not withstanding the fact that in the past, through his demagoguery and treachery, he had presented himself as a cult figure.

The MQM then initiated a campaign to prove its secular image to the army under the rhetoric of the American War on Terror. In fact, there are interesting correlations between the MQM’s propaganda and the US administration’s discourse on extremism. As the incident of 9/11 provided the Bush administration a guise under which to justify its global hegemony through military means, likewise it opened the door for the MQM to come back in full force at the local level in urban Sindh. Similarly, if the neo-conservative in the White House depicted US imperialism as engaged in a war between good and evil –of course with the US being on the good side– the MQM now termed its struggle against religious groups as the fight between liberal and extremist forces. The US portrayed itself as a great bastion of democracy, while the MQM popularized itself as the vanguard against Islamic extremism in urban Sindh. The MQM in reality was using the same rhetoric to fight religious ideologies in Karachi’s neighborhoods that the US used to justify its fight against Islamic extremism in the global ‘War on Terror.’ The MQM’s attempt to please Musharraf clearly shows the adoption of the narrative that the US manufactured and deployed for its imperial goals.

---

<sup>45</sup> “Muttahida Backs World in Fight Against Terrorism: Altaf,” *Business Recorder*, September 27, 2001.

According to Kirchheimer, as catch-all parties are released from their “previous unnecessary fears as to the ideological propensities and future intentions of class-mass party,” functional power-holders “come to recognize the catch-all party’s role as consensus purveyor.”<sup>46</sup> Catch-all parties act as an “agent for the personal political ambition of elites, rather than as mass organization oriented towards the mobilization of citizens and towards a fundamental transformation of society.”<sup>47</sup> Likewise, the MQM in recent years visibly has catered to those in power, whatever their orientation. Since 2001, it had been the military. Altaf Hussain’s political struggle at the local level moved away from ethno-nationalist camps in favor of the military junta by presenting the MQM as a champion of an enlightened Islam, believing in tolerance and rationality. The MQM’s anti-Islamist stance and its gradual sidelining of ethno-nationalists definitely enlisted the party in the good books of the military establishment. While major nationalist political forces, the PPP and the PML, were forced to leave the political scene, the MQM changed its stance to appeal to disgruntled ultra-right opposition groups such as the JI, JUI, and JUP, while simultaneously cuddling up to the pro-US army. Musharraf, foreseeing a long “political” future, like previous military dictators also needed de-ideologized and de-politicized parties such as the MQM to further sideline the PPP in Sindh. This was the natural next step for a party on its way to becoming a catch-all party, complete with being co-opted into the state. Thus, Musharraf urged the MQM to part ways with the “anti-Pakistani forces [Jeay Sindh]” in order to re-enter in politics.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> Otto Kirchheimer, “The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems,” in *Political Parties and Political Development*, eds., Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, 177-200 (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), 197.

<sup>47</sup> Andre Krouwel, “Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party,” *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 34.

<sup>48</sup> Hasan Mansoor, “Thaw Between Army and MQM,” *The Friday Times*, Vol. XIII, No. 4, December 28, 2001- January 03, 2002.

The MQM's political gambit with the military was more fully realized when Musharraf announced plans to hold referendum on April 29, 2002, to legitimize his rule. Such referenda were a common practice in Pakistan's political landscape. One was held by Ayub Khan in 1960, just two years after his military coup, and Zia-ul-Haq held one in 1984. As a military dictator who was looking for political legitimacy, an oxymoronic idea, Musharraf urged people to vote for his rule. Given the military-bureaucratic tradition in the country, the MQM knew that any support for Musharraf would lead the party to power. The MQM adopted a cautious approach and clarified that it did "not want to antagonize the Jeay Sindh [and other ethno-nationalist parties]. But it would also not want to rub the government the wrong way."<sup>49</sup> The party believed that "Musharraf is here to stay and he will be longer in the saddle than some people think. Taking him on will be a bad strategy."<sup>50</sup> Musharraf not surprisingly "won" the referendum with 95% of favorable votes and was ready to forge a so-called "democratic" government for the upcoming general elections scheduled for October 2002. He cobbled together disloyal politicians from Sharif's Muslim League and formed his own political party, the Pakistan Muslim League or PML(Q). Meanwhile, the same army, that in the past had charged MQM members in military court, withdrew all criminal cases against MQM workers and put the party back in power in urban Sindh on the condition that the latter aligned itself with the military government. In return, the MQM urged Musharraf to seize the offices and arrest the leaders of its rival MQM Haqiqi, which had been placed in power by the military in 1991.

---

<sup>49</sup> Hasan Mansoor, "MQM Enjoys its Moment in the Sun," *The Friday Times*, Vol. XIV, No. 9, (April 26 – May 02, 2002).

<sup>50</sup> Salman Hussein, "MQM may Support Musharraf on Referendum Plan," *The Friday Times*, April 05-11, 2002, Vol. XIV, No. 6.

While the army was willing to have a secular party back in politics, it was careful not to let truly national political parties, especially the PPP, play any role. In the 2002 elections, the MQM-military alliance fully materialized into what is commonly portrayed as the partnership of secular-liberal forces against religious extremism. However, before the MQM could be fully reinstated in politics and given free reign; in fact, allowed to be in action with impunity, the army went to repaint “the MQM in patriotic colors.”<sup>51</sup> With the MQM-military deal finally in full swing, the party supported the controversial military government. In Karachi’s 2002 General Elections, the MQM became the coalition partner of the Musharraf government and occupied several top cabinet positions, despite actually losing four confirmed National Assembly seats to the ultra-right *Muttahida Majlis Amal* (MMA), a six party religious alliance.<sup>52</sup> Musharraf’s party, the PML(Q) formed the central government, while the MMA took power in Balochistan and NWFP because of anti-Americanism there, and the MQM formed the government in Sindh. Table 12 presents the results from the 2002 National Assembly Election in which the MQM maintained its electoral presence with thirteen seats. Musharraf’s party the PML(Q) and the MMA emerged as the winners from Punjab, Balochistan, and the NWFP respectively. Apart from these parties’ performance, the 2002 elections, which were held under army rule, were criticized by international and domestic civil rights organizations. Obviously, the elections’ legitimacy and fairness are questionable.

---

<sup>51</sup> Ayaz Amir, “Spread Despondency: Who’s to Blame?,” Dawn, December 27, 2002.

<sup>52</sup> Hasan Mansoor, “PPP Winds but MMA eats into MQM Vote-Bank,” *The Friday Times*, October 18-24, 2002, Vol. XIV, No. 34.

Table 12 Results: 2002 National Assembly Election

Party	Province						Party Total
	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan	FATA	Islamabad	
<b>MQM</b>	-	<b>13</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>13</b>
PPP	35	27	-	-	-	1	63
PML(N)	14		-	1	-	-	15
PML(Q)	68	4	4	2	-	-	78
MMA	3	6	29	6	-	1	45
NA	7	5	-	1	-	-	13
Independents	15	1	-	1	12	-	29
Other	6	5	2	3	-	-	16
Total general seats	148	61	35	14	12	2	272

Source: Mohammad Waseem, *Democratization in Pakistan: A Study of the 2002 Elections* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 164.

Tables 13 and 14 compare parties' performance in the Sindh Provincial Assembly elections in 1997 and 2002. Although the MQM received seventy thousand more votes in 2002 than in 1997 (table 13 and 14), this fact does not clearly demonstrate that the party's catch-all politics appealed new voters. More importantly, in a situation when the elections are rigged in order to put pro-Musharraf's party in the government, the seventy thousands votes hold little value. The Tables, nonetheless, show that the number of candidates fielded by the MQM rose from 57 in 1997 to 109 in 2002.

Table 13. Party Performance - Sindh Assembly: 1997

	Contesting Candidates	Returning Candidates	Votes	% of Votes
<b>MQM</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>771,609</b>	<b>21.01</b>
PPP	95	34	1,014,962	27.64
PML(N)	82	15	594,692	16.19
MMA	-	-	-	-
PML(F)	-	-	-	-
PML(Q)	-	-	-	-
NA	-	-	-	-
NPP	10	3	101,890	2.77
Independent	717	15	631,436	17.19

Source: Mohammad Waseem, *Democratization in Pakistan: A Study of the 2002 Elections* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 181.

Table 14. Party Performance in Sindh Assembly - 2002

	Contesting Candidates	Returning Candidates	Votes	% of Votes
<b>MQM</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>843,023</b>	<b>13.64</b>
PPP	128	51	1,939,928	31.39
PML(N)	-	-	-	-
MMA	80	8	557,955	9
PML(F)	39	10	383,868	6.2
PML(Q)	17	11	528,716	8.6
NA	76	12	742,073	12
NPP	-	-	-	-
Independent	683	5	576,968	9.3

Source: Mohammad Waseem, *Democratization in Pakistan: A Study of the 2002 Elections* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 181.

While Musharraf created the central government and secured a prolonged political future for a while, he also bolstered a neoliberal economy in Pakistan. Balochistan, with its rich mineral resources and strategic location, came under direct military rule. Its developmentalism then caused an armed insurgency in the province giving rise to the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) led by Nawab Akbar Bugti. Musharraf promptly deployed troops to the region to quiet the resistance. The MQM once again seemed to take an opportunity to project its image as a party that cared for the oppressed and to “mend” ties, at least rhetorically, with its old ethno-nationalist friends. In this vein, the MQM momentarily downplayed its alliances with the military government and threatened to quit Musharraf’s coalition government if the army operation in Balochistan continued. On January 8, 2006, the MQM thus issued an ultimatum that its seventeen national assembly members would retract their support from the coalition government unless the army operations stopped. This would have been a major blow to Musharraf’s government, especially in Sindh, if carried out. However, the MQM’s threat of pulling its

support from Musharraf's government was doubtful of two reasons. First, in addition to the Balochistan issue, the MQM's motivation for issuing the ultimatum was due to the issue of its share in Senate seats.<sup>53</sup> The MQM had been demanding that the federal government raise the party's share of Senate seats if the central government wanted to survive longer. Second, despite MQM criticisms of Musharraf's policy towards Balochistan, the MQM's Federal Minister of Ports and Shipping, Baber Ghauri, was overseeing the construction of the controversial Gawader port in the south of Balochistan.<sup>54</sup> So clearly the welfare of the Baloch people was not at the top of the agenda. Finally, the MQM rescinded its threat of pulling its support from the coalition government and once again adopted its strategy of staying silent on the issue. This was the third time that the MQM employed silence to stay in power. Silence thus was a new MQM strategy as demonstrated on three important issues; the construction of the Kalabagh Dam, the referendum to legitimize Musharraf's rule, and the army operation in Balochistan.

In short, the MQM's transition from ideology to strategy brought many fundamental changes in the party. It dropped the ethnic label from the party's nomenclature, reoriented goals and objectives, changed the leader's persona, and reorganized its structure. All the above machinations thus translated into building the MQM's astute politics of centrality. This allowed the MQM to align with the ethno-nationalists, attract sympathies based on Islamic sentiments, and partner with the military. Its quest of becoming a national party also indicated that the MQM has abandoned its

---

<sup>53</sup> "MQM Flip-Flops on Quit-Govt Ultimatum," *The Nation*, January 8, 2006.

<sup>54</sup> A Chinese funded project, the Gawader port and other "developmental" programs in Balochistan, a classic example of military-neoliberal relationship, has deprived local youths from employments and has displaced indigenous communities from their lands. The large chunk of the jobs in Balochistan goes to Punjabi workers which has invigorating Baloch insurgency. "No More Hush Up," *The Nation*, January 29, 2005.

exclusive Mohajir politics and has learned to cultivate silence. Hence, the MQM's story is a story of a party from protest to acquiescence.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusion

The decline of political parties has been widely observed around the world. Social changes caused by socio-economic and political variables along with the ineffectiveness within organizations have all contributed to their decline. Political parties aside, scholars are also claiming a declining role of the state in the rapidly changing world. In Pakistan, ethno-linguistic feelings, shifting political allegiances, the lack of political imagination, factionalism within organizations, and military coups have caused crises in the two most important party functions, representation and expression. The military-bureaucracy, taking advantage of these crises, then have used the state machinery to co-opt organizations, politicians, and resistance into a hegemonic ruling structure thus undermining democracy. This crisis thus generated apathy among the Pakistani masses in regard to so-called parties. The MQM was born in this context and suffered the same fate.

The story of the MQM is a narrative of the party from protest to acquiescence. The MQM started as an ethno-militant party capitalizing on people's frustrations and then wove them into a political agenda. The party's early success engendered a hierarchical organizational structure, impeccable mode of operation, and the cult of personality of the leader. These "successes" translated into a marvelous street politics previously unheard or unseen in Pakistan where politics had been confined to a "drawing room" space. Street politics, however, also became the biggest obstacle for the MQM because the party undermined the state's legitimacy and caused conflict with non-Mohajir communities in urban Sindh. Its street politics and militancy soon came into direct clash with the strong state's army in early 1990s; resulting in thousands of deaths. The state's assault on the MQM also produced factionalism within the party, which further undermined the MQM's

existence. Despite all these challenges, the MQM maintained its role as the sole electoral representative of the Mohajir cause in Pakistan. However, the party failed to propagate the Mohajir demands at the national level and thus limited itself to urban Sindh.

The transformation of the MQM was a two-fold process. It involved the de-ethnicization of the party's name, goals, leadership, and organizational structure. At the same time, the party also built a catch-all politics; embracing the new party nomenclature, devising new national goals, forming a broader leadership vision, and expanding its social base by recruiting non-Mohajir members. Formed as a militant-ethnic party with a radical agenda, the MQM made a major shift by adopting a strategic approach. It undertook steps to transform its militant party cadres into professional party workers. The organizational base was expanded from the Mohajir constituency to people from all ethnic backgrounds. The party leadership's vision changed its focus from a Mohajir agenda to the broader goals of modernization. Most importantly, the de-ideologized party formed alliances on new terms with the main functional power-bearer of the country, the military-bureaucracy, taking full advantage of this relationship. Yet the MQM simultaneously maintained cordial ties with nationalist political parties and capitalized on people's sentiments and frustrations. Thus, the party's journey from mohallah to mainstream appears to be a classic example of party change.

The thesis concludes by proposing several ideas for future research. It would be fruitful to look at the MQM phenomenon and at politics in Pakistan through different lenses to provide another facet of understanding about this part of the world. One could explore subaltern social histories through the changing nature of subjectivity, arising from the challenges of modernity, urbanity, and post-colonialism in urban Pakistan. The structural changes in the local urban landscapes of streets, alleys, neighborhoods, and

identity in the processes of construction/negotiation in communities have been downplayed under the dominant discourses of Mohajir ethnicity in Karachi. While the intersubjectivity of local groups and the urban poor, fed by rural-urban migration and informal employment, is rarely studied, the state and ethno-religious movements' projects of spatial transformation of localities into modernized, ethnicized, and sacralized spaces pose additional analytical challenges to writing a subaltern social history of Pakistan. In order to understand the above phenomena, one could explore a number of distinct but related questions: How do the urban poor draw on various cultural resources and structures to recast and transform available and organized social positions? How do marginalized local communities construct/negotiate their ethnic and religious identities and their space in everyday life in response to officially determined spaces and identity as expressed in discourses and practices by movements/organizations? Finally, what were some of the national and global forces that framed these micro-level social and political changes? Analytically, the ethnographic approach that draws on post-colonial urban theory would provide interesting insights into marginalized groups affected by the emerging urban constellations such as the rapid growth in social mobility and consumer culture on one hand and by patterns of rural-urban migration, ethnic violence, and political Islam on the other.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Population by Mother Tongue

Administrative Unit	Urdu	Punjabi	Sindhi	Pushto	Balochi	Saraiki	Others
Pakistan	<b>7.57</b>	44.15	14.1	15.42	3.57	10.53	4.66
Rural	<b>1.48</b>	42.51	16.46	18.06	3.99	12.97	4.53
Urban	<b>20.22</b>	47.56	9.2	9.94	2.69	5.46	4.93
NWFP	<b>0.78</b>	0.97	0.04	73.9	0.01	3.86	20.43
Rural	<b>0.24</b>	0.24	0.02	73.98	0.01	3.99	21.52
Urban	<b>3.47</b>	4.58	0.11	73.55	0.03	3.15	15.11
FATA	<b>0.18</b>	0.23	0.01	99.1	0.04	-	0.45
Rural	<b>0.18</b>	0.18	0.01	99.15	0.04	-	0.43
Urban	<b>0.18</b>	1.85	*	97	*	-	0.96
Punjab	<b>4.51</b>	75.23	0.13	1.16	0.66	17.36	0.95
Rural	<b>1.99</b>	73.63	0.15	0.87	0.9	21.44	1.02
Urban	<b>10.05</b>	78.75	0.09	1.81	0.14	8.38	0.78
Sindh	<b>21.05</b>	6.99	59.73	4.19	2.11	1	4.93
Rural	<b>1.62</b>	2.68	92.02	0.61	1.5	0.32	1.25
Urban	<b>41.48</b>	11.52	25.79	7.96	2.74	1.71	8.8
Balochistan	<b>0.97</b>	2.52	5.58	29.64	54.76	2.42	4.11
Rural	<b>0.21</b>	0.43	5.27	32.16	57.55	1.87	2.51
Urban	<b>3.42</b>	9.16	6.57	21.61	45.84	4.16	9.24
Islamabad	<b>10.11</b>	71.66	0.56	9.52	0.06	1.11	6.98
Rural	<b>2.33</b>	83.74	0.08	7.62	0.02	0.3	5.91
Urban	<b>14.18</b>	65.36	0.81	10.51	0.08	1.53	7.53

*Source* : Pakistan. Population Census Organisation. *1998 Census Report of Pakistan*. (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 2001).

### Appendix 2. Linguistic Composition of Karachi

	Urdu	Punjabi	Sindhi	Pashto	Balochi	Saraiki	Others
Karachi Central	73.57	8.63	1.59	4.56	0.77	2.3	8.58
Karachi West	39.64	12.95	6	24.55	5.29	2.05	9.52
Karachi East	60.75	14.72	3.8	5.95	1.64	2.11	11.02
Karachi South	25.65	18.84	11.37	7.95	9.77	1.82	24.6
Malir	15.87	17.46	25.08	20.67	5.23	3.5	10.06

*Source*: Pakistan. Population Census Organisation and Statistics Division. *1998 District Census Report of Karachi East*. (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 2000); Pakistan. Population Census Organisation and Statistics Division. *1998 District Census Report of Karachi West*. (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 2000); Pakistan. Population Census Organisation and Statistics Division. *1998 District Census Report of Karachi Central*. (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 2000);

Pakistan. Population Census Organisation and Statistics Division. *1998 District Census Report of Karachi South*. (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 2000).

Appendix 3. Linguistic Composition of Hyderabad

	Urdu	Punjabi	Sindhi	Pashto	Balochi	Seraiki	Other
All Areas	29.61	4.02	59.6	1.77	0.96	0.96	3.07
Rural	1.85	1.69	92.19	0.52	1.11	0.74	1.91
Urban	56.48	6.28	28.06	2.99	0.82	1.18	4.19

Source: Population Census Organization

Appendix 4. Regional Distribution of Sindh National Assembly Elections: 1988-1997

Party	Year	Rural		Urban	
		% of Votes	No. of Seats	% of Votes	No. of Seats
PPP	1997	41.72	16	13.45	2
	1993	56.82	25	41.11	16
	1990	57.56	22	18.32	2
	1988	67.61	28	17.9	3
PML(N)	1997	17.41	7	20.79	2
	1993	28.36	3	34.43	7
	1990	9.11	3	8.4	0
	1988	14.17	0	10.21	0
MQM	1997	0.24	0	47.82	12
	1993	-	-	-	-
	1990	1.79	1	64.85	14
	1988	2.97	0	56.07	13
IND	1997	19.39	5	4.48	0
	1993	7.63	0	N/A	0
	1990	1.79	1	64.85	14
	1988	2.97	0	56.07	13

Source: Ali Hassan, "Split Mandate," *The Herald*, March 1997, 55.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

#### GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

- National Documentation Centre (Pakistan). *The Journey to Pakistan: A Documentation on Refugees of 1947*. Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, Cabinet Secretariat, Cabinet Division, National Documentation Centre, 1993.
- Pakistan. Election Commission. *Report on the General Elections, 1990*. Islamabad: The Commission, 1991.
- Pakistan. Election Commission. *Report on the General Elections, 1988*. Islamabad: Election Commission of Pakistan, 1990.
- Pakistan Planning Commission. *First Five Year Plan, 1955-60*. Karachi: Manager of Publication, 1958.
- Pakistan. Federal Bureau of Statistics. *50 Years of Pakistan*. Karachi: Manager of Publications, 1998.
- Pakistan. Population Census Organisation and Statistics Division. *1998 District Census Report of Karachi West*. Islamabad: Population Census Organisation, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, 2000.
- Pakistan. Population Census Organisation. *1998 Census Report of Pakistan*. Islamabad: Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, 2001.
- Pakistan. Population Census Organisation and Statistics Division. *1998 District Census Report of Karachi Central*. Islamabad: Population Census Organisation, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, 2000.
- Pakistan. Population Census Organisation and Statistics Division. *1998 District Census Report of Karachi East*. Islamabad: Population Census Organisation, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, 2000.
- Pakistan. Population Census Organisation and Statistics Division. *1998 District Census Report of Karachi South*. Islamabad: Population Census Organisation, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, 2000.

## NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

Business Recorder (Karachi)  
 Daily Times (Lahore)  
 Dawn (Karachi)  
 The Friday Times (Lahore)  
 The Herald (Karachi)  
 New York Times (New York)  
 The Nation (Lahore)

## MQM PUBLICATIONS

Hussain, Altaf. *Pakistan Ki Azadi Ke Pacas Bars: Kiya Khoya Kiya Paya* [Fifty Years of Pakistan's Independence: What We Lost and Gained]. Isha`at 1 ed. Karachi: Taqsimkar, Velkam Buk Port, 2004.

Hussain, Altaf. *Altaf Husain Ki Fikri Nishasten* [Altaf Hussain's Sessions on Thoughts]. Karachi: Muhajir Qaumi Muvmant, 1988.

Hussain, Altaf. *Ham Ne Gharibon Ka Sar Unca Kiya Hai: Altaf Husain Ke do Tafsilii Intarviyu* [We have Uplifted Poor: Altaf Hussain's Two Detail Interviews]. Karachi: Muhajir Ikaidami, 1988.

Hussain, Altaf, and Mustafá `Azizabadi. *Isteblishmint Ki Sih Jahti Hikmat-i `amli: Qa'Id-i Tahrik Altaf Husain Ka Tarikhi Laikcar* [Establishment's Strategy: Altaf Hussain's Historical Letter]. Karachi: Muttahida Quami Movmant, 2000.

Hussain, Altaf, and Khalid Athar. *Safar-i Zindagi : Em. Kiyu. Em. Ki Kahani, Altaf Husain Ki Zabani* [Life Journey: The MQM's Story in Altaf Hussain's Words]. Isha`at 1 ed. Lahaur: Jang Pabliharz, 1988.

Hussain, Altaf, and Nadim Nusrat. *Altaf Husain Ke Khutut* [Altaf Hussain's Letter]. Landan: Em. Kiyu Em. Intarneshnal Sekritariyat, 1995.

*Nazariyati Tehrik mein Bulund Ihklaq aur Masbat Qirdar ki Ahmiyat: Fikri Nishist se Quaid-e-Tehreek Altaf Husain ka Khitab* [Importance of Good Behavior and Character in a Movement], (Karachi: Muttahida Qaumi Movement, 2006).

Imran Farooq, *Nazm-o-Zabt Kay Takazay* [Characteristic of Discipline], (Karachi: Muttahida Qaumi Movement, 1998);

Imran Farooq, *Huq Parast Karkun Kon* [Who is Just Worker], (Karachi: Muttahida Qaumi Movement, 2006)

### Secondary Sources

Ahmad, Aijaz. "Democracy and Dictatorship." In *Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship*. Edited by Jamil Rashid and Hassan N. Gardezi. London: Zed Press, 1983.

Ahmar, Moonis. "Ethnicity and State Power in Pakistan: The Karachi Crisis." *Asian Survey* 36, no. 10 (1996): 1031-1048.

Ahmed, Feroz. *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Ahmed, Feroz. "Pakistan's Problem of National Integration." In *Islam, Politics, and the State: The Pakistan Experience*. Edited by Mohammad Asghar Khan, 229-246. London: Zed Books, 1985.

Akhtar, Sajjad Aasim. "Co-opting the Grassroots: The Professionalization of Political Culture." *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 17, no. 3 (September 2006).

Alavi, Hamza. "Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan." *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 8, 1989, 1532.

Alavi, Hamza. "Politics of Ethnicity in India and Pakistan." In *Sociology of 'Developing Societies': South Asia*. Edited by Hamza Alavi and John Harris, 222-246. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1989.

Alavi, Hamza. "Class and State." In *Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship: The Political Economy of a Praetorian State*. Edited by Hassan Gardezi and Jamil Rashid, 40-93. London: Zed Press, 1983.

Ali, Mubarak. "History, Ideology and Curriculum." *Economic and Political Weekly* 36, no. 44 (November 2-9, 2002), 4530-4532.

Ali, Tariq. "Bangla Desh: Results and Prospects," *New Left Review*, Issue 68 (July-August, 1971).

Ali, Tariq. *Can Pakistan Survive? The Death of a State*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1983.

- Ali, Tariq. *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity*. London: Verso, 2002.
- Amin, Tahir. "Pakistan in 1993: Some Dramatic Changes," *Asian Survey* 34, no. 2 (February, 1994): 191-199.
- Ansari, Sarah F. D. *Life After Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh, 1947-1962*. Karachi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Aqil Shah, "Pakistan: Civil Society in the Service of an Authoritarian State." In *Civil Society and Political Change in Asia: Expanding and Contracting Democratic Space*. Edited by Muthiah Alagappa. 357-389. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- Arif, M. K. *Khaki Shadows: Pakistan: 1947-1997*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Askari-Rizvi, Hasan. *Military, State, and Society in Pakistan*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.
- Bayat, Asef. "Islamism and Social Movement Theory," *Third World Quarterly* 26, No. 6: 891-908.
- Braibanti, Ralph. "The Higher Bureaucracy of Pakistan." In *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition*. Edited by Ralph Braibanti, 209-353. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1966.
- Cott, Lee Van Donna. *From Movements to Parties in Latin America: The Evolution of Ethnic Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Duverger, Maurice. Barbara and Robert North, trans., *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. London: Methuen & Co. LTD, 1954.
- Gayer, Laurent. "Guns, Slums, and 'Yellow-Devils': A Genealogy of Urban Conflict in Karachi, Pakistan." *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 3 (2007): 515-544.
- Hasan, Parvez. "Role of the State in Pakistan's Economy: Assessing the Past and Exploring Future Challenges." *Economic and Political Weekly* (May 5, 2007), 1624.
- Haq, Farhat. "The Rise of MQM in Pakistan: Politics of Ethnic Mobilization." *Asian Survey* 35, no. 11 (1995): 990-1004.
- Harmel, Robert and Kenneth Janda. "An Integrated Theory of Party Goals and Party Change." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 6, no. 3 (1994): 259-287.

- Hussain, Asaf. *Elite Politics in an Ideological State: The Case of Pakistan*. Folkestone: Dawson, 1979.
- Jaffrelot, Christophe, ed. *A History of Pakistan and its Origins*. London: Anthem Press, 2002.
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?* London: Zed Books, 2002.
- Jalal, Ayesha. *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Jalal, Ayesha. *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Janda, Kenneth, Robert Harmel, Christine Edens, and Patricia Goff. "Changes in Party Identity: Evidence from Party Manifestos." *Party Politics* 1, no. 2 (1995): 171-196.
- Katz, Richard S. and Peter Mair. *How Parties Organize: Change and Adaptation in Party Organization in Western Democracies*. London: Sage Publications Limited, 1994.
- Kennedy, Charles H. *Bureaucracy in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Kennedy, Charles H. "Managing Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Pakistan." *Regional Politics and Policy*, Spring 1993, no. 1.
- Kennedy, Charles. "The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh." *Asian Survey* 31, no. 10 (1991): 938-955.
- Khan, Adeel. *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005.
- Khan, Ahmad Rais. "Pakistan in 1992: Waiting for Change." *Asian Survey* 33, no. 2 (February 1993): 129-140.
- Khan, Ayub, Mohammad. *Friends not Masters*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Khan, Rasheeduddin. "Minority Segments in Indian Polity: Muslim Situation and Plight of Urdu." *Economic and Political Weekly* (September 2, 1978).

- Kirchheimer, Otto. "The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems." In *Political Parties and Political Development*. Edited by Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, 177-200. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966.
- Korejo, M. S. *A Testament of Sindh: Ethnic and Religious Extremism a Perspective*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Krouwel, Andre. "Otto Kirchheimer and the Catch-All Party." *Western European Politics* 26, no. 2 (April 2003): 23-40.
- Kukreja, Veena. *Contemporary Pakistan: Political Processes, Conflicts, and Crises*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003.
- Jones, E. Philip. *The Pakistan People's Party: Rise to Power*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- LaPalombara, Joseph. "Reflections on Political Parties and Political Development, Four Decades Later." *Party Politics* 13, no. 2: 141-154.
- Lipset, M. Seymour and Stein Rokkan, eds. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. New York: The Free Press, 1967.
- Malik, Hafeez. "Nationalism and the Quest of Ideology in Pakistan." In *Pakistan: The Long View*. Edited by Lawrence Ziring, Ralph Braibanti, and W. Howard Wriggins, 271-300. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1977.
- Malik, H. Iftikhar. *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology, and Ethnicity*. New York: Macmillan, 1997.
- Malik, H. Iftikhar. "What is Wrong in Karachi." *Economic and Political Weekly*, August 15-22, 1998, 2219.
- Maniruzzaman, Talukder. "Radical Politics and the Emergence of Bangladesh." In *Radical Politics in South Asia*. Edited by Paul R. Brass and Marcus F. Franda. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973.
- Mouffe, Chantal. *The Return of the Political*. London: Verso Books, 2005
- Müller, Wolfgang C. "Inside the Black Box: A Confrontation of Party Executive Behavior and Theories of Party Organizational Change." *Party Politics* 3, no. 3 (1997): 293-313.

- Mumtaz, Soofia, Jean-Luc Racine, and Imran Ali. *Pakistan: The Contours of State and Society*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Nasr, Vali Reza, Seyyed. *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994
- Noman, Omar. *The Political Economy of Pakistan 1947-1985*. London: Keystate Publishers, 1988.
- Page, David. *Prelude to Partition: The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control, 1902-1932*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982.
- Panebianco, Angelo. *Political Parties: Organization and Power*. Cambridge: University Press, 1988.
- Prewitt, L. Jeffrey, ed. *The Dilemma of American Political Thought*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996.
- Puri, Balraj. "Autonomy and Participation: Dimensions of Indian Muslim Identity." *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 7, 1978, 1707.
- Rashid, Jamil and Hassan N. Gardezi, "Independent Pakistan: Its Political Economy." In *Pakistan: The Roots of Dictatorship*. London: Zed Press, 1983.
- Rizvi, Hasan-Askari "Pakistan in 1998: The Polity Under Pressure." *Asian Survey* 39, no. 1 (February, 1999): 177-184.
- Rehman, J. "Self-Determination, State-Building and the Muhajirs: An International Legal Perspective of the Role of Indian Muslim Refugees in the Constitutional Development of Pakistan." *Contemporary South Asia* 3, no. 2 (1994): 111-129.
- Reza, Ali. "Underestimating Urbanization." *Economic and Political Weekly* 37, no. 44 (November 2-9, 2002), 4554-4556.
- Samad, Yunus. *A Nation in Turmoil: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937-1958*. New Delhi: Sage, 1995.
- Samad, Yunus. "In and Out of Power but Not Down and Out: Mohajir Identity Politics." In *Pakistan: Nationalism Without a Nation?* edited by Christophe Jaffrelot, 63-83. London: Zed Books, 2004.

- Sayeed, B. Khalid. *Politics in Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change*. New York: Praeger, 1980.
- Sartori, Giovanni . *Parties and Party Systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Schechtman, Joseph B. "Evacuee Property in India and Pakistan." *Pacific Affairs* 24, no. 4 (December 1951): 406-413.
- Shah, Mehtab Ali. "The Emergence of the Muhajir Quami Movement (MQM) in Pakistan and its Implications for Regional Security." *Round Table* 348 (1998): 505-535.
- Shaheen, Sardar Ali, and Javaid Rehman. *Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities of Pakistan Constitutional and Legal Perspectives*. Curzon Press: Surrey, 2001.
- Spiess, Clemens. "Epilogue: Rethinking Party Theory in the Light of South Asian Experience." In *Political Parties in South Asia*. Edited by Subrata K. Mitra, Mike Enskat, and Clemens Spiess, 329-342 Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishing, 2004.
- Syed, H. Anwar. "Pakistan in 1997: Nawaz Sharif's Second Chance to Govern." *Asian Survey*, 38, no. 2, (February, 1998): 116-125.
- Tambiah, Stanley. *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.
- Verkaaik, Oskar. *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Ware, Alan. *Political Parties and Party Systems*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Waseem, Mohammad. "Causes of Democratic Downslide." *Economic and Political Weekly* 37, no. 44 (2002): 4532-4539.
- Waseem, Mohammad. *Democratization in Pakistan: A Study of the 2002 Elections* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- Waseem, Mohammad. "Ethnic and Religious Nationalism in Pakistan." *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 23, no. 2 (2000): 37-62.

- Waseem, Mohammad. "Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan: The Case of MQM." *Pakistan Development Review* 35, no. 4, Part 11 (Winter 1996): 617-629.
- Weiss, M. Anita. *Culture, Class, and Development in Pakistan: The Emergence of Industrial bourgeoisie in Punjab*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1991.
- Wheeler, S. Richard. *The Politics of Pakistan: A Constitutional Quest*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970.
- Whetten, David A. "Organizational Growth and Decline Processes." *Annual Review of Sociology* 13 (1989): 335-358.
- Wolinetz, Steven B. "Beyond the Catch-All Party: Approaches to the Study of Parties and Party Organization in Contemporary Democracies." *Political Parties* (March 2002): 136-166.
- Wright, Theodore P., Jr. "Center-Periphery Relations and Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan: Sindhis, Muhajirs, and Punjabis." *Comparative Politics* 23, no. 3 (1991): 299.
- Wright, Theodore P., Jr. "Indian Muslim Refugees in the Politics of Pakistan." *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 13 (July 1974): 189-205.
- Zaidi, Akbar S. "Regional Imbalances and National Question in Pakistan: Some Indications." *Economic and Political Weekly* 23 (February 11, 1989), 300-314.
- Ziring, Lawrence. *Pakistan: At the Crosscurrent of History*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2003.
- Ziring, Lawrence. "Pakistan in 1989: The Politics of Stalemate." *Asian Survey* 30, no. 2, Part II (February 1990): 126-135.
- Ziring, Lawrence. *Pakistan in the Twentieth Century: A Political History*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Ziring, Lawrence. *The Ayub Khan Era: Politics in Pakistan, 1958-1969*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1971.