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# The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan

The Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir ethnic movements

Farhan Hanif Siddiqi



# The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan

In order to understand the Pakistani state and government's treatment of non-dominant ethnic groups after the failure of the military operation in East Pakistan and the independence of Bangladesh, this book looks at the ethnic movements that were subject to a military operation after 1971: the Baloch in the 1970s, the Sindhis in the 1980s and the Mohajirs in the 1990s.

The book critically evaluates the literature on ethnicity and nationalism by taking nationalist ideology and the political divisions which it generates within ethnic groups as essential in estimating ethnic movements. It goes on to challenge the modernist argument that nationalism is only relevant to modern industrialised socio-economic settings. The available evidence from Pakistan makes clear that ethnic movements emanate from three distinct socio-economic realms: tribal (Baloch), rural (Sindh) and urban (Mohajir), and the book looks at the implications that this has, as well as how further arguments could be advanced about the relevance of ethnic movements and politics in the Third World.

It provides academics and researchers with background knowledge of how the Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir ethnic conflicts in Pakistan took shape in a historical context as well as probable future scenarios of the relationship between the Pakistani state and government, and ethnic groups and movements.

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# **The Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan**

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**Farhan Hanif Siddiqi**

First published 2012  
by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada  
by Routledge  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Siddiqi, Farhan Hanif.

The politics of ethnicity in Pakistan : the Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir ethnic movements / Farhan Hanif Siddiqi.

p. cm. – (Routledge contemporary South Asia series ; 57)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-415-68614-3 (hardback) – ISBN 978-0-203-12308-9 (ebook)

1. Pakistan–Politics and government–1971-1988. 2. Pakistan–Politics and government–1988- 3. Pakistan–Ethnic relations.

4. Pakistan–History–Autonomy and independence movements. 5. Ethnic groups–Political activity–Pakistan. 6. Ethnic conflict–Pakistan.

7. Ethnicity–Pakistan. 8. Nationalism–Pakistan. I. Title.

DS384.S46274 2012

305.80095491–dc23

2011040537

ISBN: 978-0-415-68614-3 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-203-12308-9 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman  
by Taylor & Francis Books

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# Acknowledgements

The present book is a product of my doctoral thesis which I completed at the University of Karachi. As with the doctorate, a lot of hard work, perseverance and patience have gone into the completion of the book. It would have been utterly impossible for me to sustain the hard work and perseverance without the active support, encouragement and love of the people around me.

First of all, thanks are due to my supervisor, Prof. Dr Moonis Ahmar, who has taught me the virtues of hard work and professionalism in both teaching and research. His support to the present project and my work is commendable as well as the fact that he stood by me and guided me throughout.

Special thanks are also due to former students, Agha Abdul Sattar, Mushtaq Rajpar and Fahim Raza for arranging interviews with Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir nationalists as well as providing relevant source material. The staff at Routledge, in particular, Dorothea Schaefer and Jillian Morrison have been most helpful in guiding me throughout the publication process as well as agreeing to an extension in the submission of the final manuscript. Thanks also to the two anonymous reviewers who provided excellent feedback on the chapters and suggestions on how to improve the draft further.

The book is dedicated to my wife Sabeen and son Faris. Despite coming from a completely different academic background, Sabeen took active interest in my subject on the Baloch, Sindhis and Mohajirs and saw to it that I stuck to deadlines and finished the work in time. To her, I am most thankful for all the love and emotional support as well as her propensity to talk me through tough times, when I found it hard to concentrate. This book would not have seen the light of the day without her presence in my life.

Farhan Hanif Siddiqi  
Karachi  
6 August 2011

# 1 Introduction

The political history of Pakistan since independence can be neatly divided into its pre-1971 and post-1971 phases. The year 1971 is an important watershed in Pakistan's political history, for it was in this year that Pakistan earned the distinction of being the first state in the post-war era to experience disintegration. The story of East Pakistan is well researched and documented, signifying the plight of the Bengali populace and the political, economic, social and cultural policies that the Pakistani state instituted in denying power and participation to its own people. The present work seeks to move beyond 1971, to critically evaluate the new Pakistan's treatment of its non-dominant ethnic groups. The story of post-1971 Pakistan, as will be seen, is not markedly different from pre-1971 Pakistan. In more ways than one, the Pakistani state and its despotic powers continued to manifest themselves with the same force and intensity in the post-1971 era. In this important phase, the range of ethnopolitical actors increased with the addition of an assertive Sindhi and Mohajir ethnic movement, while the Baloch ethnic movement remained potent, as was the case before the separation of East Pakistan.<sup>1</sup>

In moving towards the post-1971 phase of the state of ethnic politics and movements in Pakistan, two preliminary thoughts informed my interest in the subject:

- 1 What lessons, if any, had the Pakistani state learned in the aftermath of the secession of East Pakistan where an army-led military action against the Awami League resulted in disintegration of the Pakistani nation(s) state?
- 2 An initial review of post-1971 Pakistan revealed a picture of increased ethnic conflict highlighted by military action against the Baloch in the 1970s, against the Sindhis in the 1980s and Mohajirs in the 1990s. Ethnic conflict and ethnic movements in post-1971 Pakistan had certainly not abated but had shown a remarkable tendency to rise.

Before moving further, it is prudent to designate the key features of the post-1971 state as distinct from the pre-1971 Pakistani state:

- 1 In terms of territory and geography, the post-1971 Pakistani state was distinct from the pre-1971 state as the province of East Pakistan had

## 2 *Introduction*

now separated, after a successful secessionist movement, and emerged as the independent state of Bangladesh. The post-1971 Pakistani state was thus a dismembered and fractured polity in which ironically the majority had seceded from the minority.

- 2 The post-1971 Pakistani state was distinct from the pre-1971 Pakistani state in terms that the former now professed an avowedly democratic ideal as opposed to the latter which was overwhelmed with bureaucratic and military centralised authoritarianism. Bhutto and the Pakistan People's Party had won elections in West Pakistan after Pakistan experimented with universal adult franchise for the first time in its political history in 1970. The post-1971 state thus ushered in a new era of democracy and ascendancy of a popularly elected democratic government.
- 3 The post-1971 Pakistani state formalised the dilemma of the pre-1971 Pakistani state where politically dominant ethnic group(s), yet numerically in a minority, ruled over the majority group (the Bengalis). After the secession of East Pakistan, the political dominance of the Punjabis came in consonance with their numerical majority in the new state of affairs. Thus, the Punjabis were now both politically and numerically dominant while before 1971 they were only dominant politically.

Theoretically, the focus of the present work is on three major concepts, the 'state', 'nationalism' and 'politics of ethnicity'. All three concepts are elaborately dealt with and key works from international relations, political science, comparative politics, sociology as well as nationalism and ethnic studies are studied and analysed. With regards to the state, I bring forth the work of three major theoreticians, Anthony Giddens, Michael Mann and Joel Migdal. By combining these three perspectives together, the notion of the state as a 'bordered power container' (Anthony Giddens) emerges which has at its disposal both 'infrastructural and despotic powers' (Michael Mann) which all manifest themselves inwards, with respect to a state's relation with its society (Joel Migdal) and outwards, with respect to foreign policy and international relations.

As far as the state is concerned, I argue that the state needs to be understood both as an autonomous entity wielding power over society as well as a non-neutral apparatus whose policies and power have the effect of privileging some groups over others. The latter part of the statement is often invoked when estimating the emergence of ethnic movements on the part of non-dominant ethnic groups for such groups claim that the state merely serves to protect the interests of dominant ethnic groups. Though undoubtedly correct, too much concentration on such an argument leads one to obliterate the autonomous power that states invoke which make the state, at times, independent of the social forces (ethnic groups) that constitute it. Moreover, the term 'state' itself needs to be carefully qualified and set apart from the 'government'. In post-1971 Pakistan, the oscillation from a statist (army and bureaucracy-led) rule to a government (politicians led) rule needs to be put into proper perspective

because the role of the latter is as indispensable in the emergence of ethnic conflict as is that of the former.

Furthermore, nationalism is taken as a discourse which has the great merit of being copied in diverse social and economic settings. In arguing such a line, I go beyond and critique modernist theories of nationalism, specifically Ernest Gellner, and his predilection that nationalism is a product of the advent of the mass-based industrialised society. Looking at the case studies, one is compelled to question such a judgement because of the diverse socio-economic formations within Pakistan which experienced the rising tide of nationalism after 1971. In theoretical terms, the three instances of ethnic conflict were interesting as they emerged from three distinctive socio-economic settings. The Baloch society was predominantly *tribal*, the Sindhis *rural* while the Mohajirs were based in *urban* areas. However, all three communities utilised the language of ethnonationalism in order to rally their members against a domineering and hegemonic Pakistani state. Thus, nationalism as understood was being replicated in diverse settings by peoples whose rights were being abrogated. What did this mean in the context of the theory of nationalism? Did this imply that modernist theories of nationalism were at fault in implying that the phenomenon was only relevant to the modern developed and industrialised world? Or had nationalism theorists largely failed to appreciate the discursive power of nationalism in the colonial and post-colonial worlds in the twentieth century?

The third major concept in the present work is that of 'politics of ethnicity'. The politics of ethnicity perspective is essential, in that, it helps to identify the politics of ethnic groups and the consequent ethnic movement which is generated as a result. A politics of ethnicity perspective, most importantly, helps us identify that though ethnonationalist movements claim to speak for and represent the whole nation, they, in reality, speak for and represent only some members of the nation. Members of one nation feeling exploited and powerless might also contain members who thrive on the support of the state and may be rightly labelled as lackeys of the state. The perceived discrimination that members of a nation grieve about might only relate to those members of the nation that feel such a grievance. Other members of the same community might find it convenient to ally themselves with the state despite protests to the contrary by their co-ethnics who espouse the same culture and speak the same language but are different in terms of their political goals and strategies.<sup>2</sup>

This analysis leads us to a manifest phenomenon in the politics of ethnicity perspective and that is to see ethnic groups not as holistic entities members of which are bound together in a bond of solidarity permeating the rank and file of the ethnic group. Rather, ethnic groups are internally stratified on the basis of the political choices that they make by allying themselves with the state or standing in opposition to it. Political and ideological divisions stratify ethnic groups into distinct political parties to the extent that conflict not only exists between communities but most crucially inheres within them.<sup>3</sup> It is often the conflict with the 'Other' which dominates national and international news

#### 4 Introduction

headlines: Bosnian Muslims versus Bosnian Serbs, Hutus versus Tutsis, Mohajirs versus Pashtuns. However, the conflict within communities hardly gets the same news, attention and publicity, despite this fact being an embedded reality of ethnic groups and movements.<sup>4</sup> A sentiment or emotion towards a people, language, culture or race might make one *feel* as part of a larger nation. However, this does not automatically translate into common political action where each and every member of the nation stands united under the banner of a single political party representing their ethnic interests. Moreover, and equally important, the perceived injustice of the ethnic group might be real or imagined only for some or the majority members of the community, but not all.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, the mere presence of ethnic heterogeneity within a polity is not necessarily correlated with ethnic conflict and violence. Ethnic conflict and violence, on the other hand, are dependent on the political system which serves to either attenuate or intensify feelings of ethnicity. As Laitin and Fearon demonstrate in a valuable study on ethnic conflict on what they believe are three common errors which academics, policy-makers and journalists often commit.

First, Laitin and Fearon discredit the conventional wisdom that ethnic conflict suddenly resurfaced in the post-Cold War era specifically with the changes in the international system. In fact, civil wars began to accumulate in the immediate aftermath of the post-war era as witnessed in the numbers of deaths which totalled 16.2 million as compared to 3.33 million deaths in interstate wars between 1945 and 1999.<sup>6</sup> Second, greater degree of ethnic and/or religious diversity does not necessarily lead to conflict and civil wars. Thus, ethnic and/or religious differences do not in themselves determine whether a particular polity will experience conflict or civil wars. And this by extension leads to the third point, that is, conflict is not a function of differences rather conditions that favour insurgency. Laitin and Fearon hypothesise that 'financially, organisationally, and politically weak central governments render insurgency more feasible and attractive due to weak local policing or inept and corrupt counterinsurgency practices'.<sup>7</sup> Laitin and Fearon's assessment that differences in themselves do not contribute to conflict is a powerful one. The mere presence of ethnic heterogeneity does not in essence produce ethnic conflict between dominant and non-dominant ethnic communities. Ethnic conflict, in societies where it takes place, has to be qualified with an assertion that takes the state (and government) as important actors and their policies contributing either to ethnic amelioration or assertiveness. It does not matter how many ethnic groups inhabit a single society. All that matters is how ruling elites co-opt different ethnic groups into the political structure of the state by empowering them with decision-making in, for example, a consociational and/or federal political system. One may conclude then by estimating that ethnic conflicts are not generated automatically nor are they necessarily related to degrees of ethnic heterogeneity which prevail within a society. Ethnic conflict is a function of political factors and it assumes importance as a response to the state and its policies.

As far as the three case studies are concerned, my purpose is to draw parallels but at the same time look at the specificities of each case study in detail. First, as mentioned above, each case study emanates from a distinct socio-economic and socio-political formation. Also, it is important to note that when military operation was initiated against the Baloch in the 1970s and Mohajirs in the 1990s, both these ethnic groups and their respective political party was in power. This was not the case when it came to the Sindhi nationalists in the 1980s. Second, as opposed to the Baloch and Sindhis, the Mohajirs have generally been very well represented both in the bureaucracy and the Army in pre-1971 Pakistan. The Mohajirs were major stakeholders in the Pakistan Movement in the colonial era and they assumed important positions of power and authority in the newly independent state of Pakistan. In post-1971 Pakistan, however, the Mohajir community experienced a relative decline in their recruitment to the bureaucracy, a phenomenon which is attributed to the implementation of a new quota system by the government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. As will be seen in the case study chapters, a marginal increase in the representation of the Sindhi populace is evident in post-1971 Pakistan, while the Baloch continue to be under-represented and marginalised.

Third, anti-Punjabi sentiment is most evident in the case of Baloch and Sindhi nationalism as opposed to Mohajir nationalism. The Baloch and Sindhis and their fear of ethnic domination of the Pakistani state by the Punjabis manifested itself in the early years of Pakistan's independence. In fact, for the Sindhis, the fear of Punjabi domination of the future Pakistani state made way in the colonial era. For the Mohajirs, it was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a Sindhi, who was most responsible for a change in their fortunes and not the Punjabis, however, it will be seen that a nascent anti-Punjabi sentiment is evident in the early phases of Mohajir nationalism.

Fourth, a common denominator of the three ethnic movements and one which I exclusively focus upon is the variable of intra-ethnic conflict. Intra-ethnic conflict is taken as a key variable in order to comprehend the political divisions that exist within an ethnic group despite their cultural and linguistic commonality. Intra-ethnic conflict is important to analyse for it impacts heavily on ethnic movements experiencing conflict with the state. The state, in such an instance, instrumentalises intra-ethnic conflict in order to divide the power of the ethnic group confronting them. One may be able to hypothesise then that ethnic groups are not homogenous entities rather sites of political contestation and conflict over how best to achieve their political goals vis-à-vis the state.

### **The plan of the book**

The second chapter elucidates the theoretical framework by bordering on important works within the literature of nationalism, state and politics of ethnicity. The three hypothetical statements which it seeks to elucidate are: (a) nationalism is impervious to specific socio-economic dynamics and structures and as a form of ideology and politics is universally applicable and

relevant; (b) the state is an institution of omnipotence in modern societies determining the salience or otherwise of ethnic movements and conflicts. Moreover, the state needs to be undermined as an institution in modern-day socio-political parlance, where appropriate, and adequate attention is required also on the government and its role in shaping ethnic conflict; (c) the politics of ethnicity perspective and its pioneering theme bordering on instrumentalism/constructivism which treats ethnic groups as political actors and allows one to account for intra-ethnic conflict which inheres within ethnic groups.

The third chapter lays out an empirical analysis of the Pakistani state, government and ethnic movements in post-1971 Pakistan. The purpose is to critically engage with important academic works on politics and ethnic movements in post-1971 Pakistan. The state–government distinction is brought forth including the role of the latter in precipitating ethnic conflicts as well as the important disjuncture between the state and government as witnessed in post-1971 Pakistan from the governments of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Mohammad Khan Junejo to Benazir Bhutto and finally to Nawaz Sharif. The conventionally accepted arguments relative to the docility of governments in the face of the army-dominated state is critically re-evaluated to present a more informed and nuanced understanding of politics in Pakistan.

The fourth chapter deals with the case study of Balochistan. It begins with a historical development of Baloch nationalism in the twentieth century and specifically, the rise of the Khanate of Kalat as a bastion of Baloch nationalist aspirations. The Khanate of Kalat and its drive towards achieving independence was a major challenge to the Pakistani state and the situation assumed complexity, especially after Kalat declared independence on 15 August 1947. In the post-colonial era, Balochistan, where nationalist activism has remained most assertive, has been the site of ethnic conflict in 1948, 1958, throughout most of the 1960s and from 1973 until 1977, which is the main subject of the book. In the 1970s, Baloch nationalists were involved in a military conflict with the Pakistani state and a political conflict with the Pakistani government. Inter- and intra-ethnic conflict in Balochistan is also accorded attention as well as the ideological orientation of the Baloch nationalist elite.

**Chapter 5** deals with Sindh and Sindhi nationalism which emerged as a political force only in post-1971 Pakistan although a distinct Sindhi nationalism had started to take shape in the colonial era. Before 1971, Sindhi ethnonationalism was consumed in the political organisation of the National Awami Party and its manifestation in the 1960s was primarily cultural. However, after the formation of Awami Tahreek and Jeay Sindh Mahaz in the 1970s, the political aims and objectives of the Sindhi ethnic movement became more evident. The chapter will focus on the ideology of G. M. Syed and Rasool Bux Palijo, pioneers of Sindhi nationalism and comprehend the reasons for the military operation in Sindh in the 1980s along with the inter- and intra-ethnic dimensions of conflict in Sindh.

**Chapter 6** deals with the rise of Mohajir nationalism in the 1970s and its emergence as a major political force in Pakistan in the 1980s. A major

objective of the chapter is to study the politics of the Mohajir (now Muttahida) Quami Movement (MQM), against which military operation was mainly directed in the 1990s. As with the other case study chapters, intra- and inter-ethnic dimensions of conflict make up a pivotal portion of the chapter. Moreover, the ideology of the MQM's founding leader, Altaf Hussain, along with other relevant ethnic Mohajir parties are also brought into focus.



## 2 Nationalism, politics of ethnicity and the state

Nationalism, ethnicity and the state are essentially contested concepts which have generated, and still generate, much debate and discussion within the social sciences. In the sections that follow, I propose to critically analyse the available literature on nationalism, ethnicity and the state in light of key works undertaken in the social sciences. The theoretical chapter intends to provide a critically nuanced view of the three major hypotheses outlined in the first chapter: (a) that analysis of ethnic conflict requires that the state and government be treated as two autonomous and distinct entities with the latter as much responsible for ethnic conflict as is the former; (b) that nationalism is not intimately connected with the processes of modernisation and that nationalism and ethnonationalist movements may emanate from non-industrialised socio-economic formations and is equally relevant in such social spaces; and (c) that in order to understand ethnic conflict, it is imperative to view ethnic groups not as cultural entities but most crucially as political actors. As political actors, ethnic groups instrumentalise objective cultural markers in order to pursue desired political goals and objectives. I begin the theoretical inquiry by critically evaluating theories of nationalism, moving thereon to the politics of ethnicity perspective and finally, outlining the theoretical debate on the state and the government.

### Theories of nationalism

One of the leading figures in nationalism studies, Miroslav Hroch, regards the term nationalism as controversial and misleading, ‘whether it is understood as an invariable entity of human thought (“a state of mind”), or as an erratic sample of human activities’.<sup>1</sup> Hroch contends that nationalism has been ‘defined in such a controversial fashion that it has almost lost its explicative value’<sup>2</sup> and that opposed to nationalism, the terms, ‘*nation formation*’, ‘*national identity*’, ‘*national consciousness*’ and ‘*patriotism*’ are preferable.<sup>3</sup>

As a first impression, Hroch’s trenchant critique and dismissal of nationalism as a subject of intellectual inquiry puts the reader in a quandary. However, upon further reading, Hroch’s distaste for nationalism becomes explicable. A most important element while undertaking a study of nations and ethnic groups is to see what it is that a particular scholar seeks to explain. Is it the politics of

nations and ethnic groups? Or, is it the historical processes which led to the birth of modern nations? Hroch's major study is related to the latter query, for he is not interested in explaining the *politics* of ethnonational groups; rather, his major preoccupation is with the process whereby nations were formed in European history. Furthermore, Hroch's contention regarding nationalism can be challenged, for there exists a widely accepted definitional framework, as exhibited in the works of Hans Kohn, Ernest Gellner, John Breuilly, Paul Brass and Anthony Smith. All of these scholars take nationalism as a political ideology and movement which seeks to achieve desired political aims and objectives of the nation. In this sense, then, a study of nationalism is not about how nations were formed but about how nations conduct and evolve relevant ideologies, discourses and movements in order to achieve statehood or even provincial autonomy. This is how I wish to proceed in order to understand Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir ethnonationalism. I am not interested when and how the Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir nations were formed; rather, my interest is in how these politically non-dominant nations initiated their own political organisations, movements and ideologies against an authoritarian and authoritative state structure.

An interesting formulation with respect to taking nationalism as an ideology is put forth by Sinisa Malesevic. Malesevic argues that 'despite the obvious success of socialism, conservatism and liberalism, it is nationalism in its many guises that has proved to be the most potent and popular ideology of modernity'.<sup>4</sup> Malesevic divides nationalist ideology into its normative and operative realms. The normative aspect of nationalist ideology takes as important the philosophical texts and/or religious edicts which provide an ethnic community or nation with the moral outlooks on life as well as the goals that are to be achieved for the community as a whole. The normative aspect of nationalist ideology is:

most often deduced from authoritative texts and scriptures such as religious 'holy books' (Bible, Quran, Talmud, Vedas, etc.), the influential publications of mystics, philosophers, prophets, scientists, or documents with powerful legal, ethical or semi-sacred status (Bill of Rights, Declaration of Independence, Magna Carta, Geneva Convention, etc.), the constitutions of sovereign states, political and party manifestoes and so on.<sup>5</sup>

The operative realm of nationalist ideology, on the contrary, relates to the emotional and/or psychological bonds which leaders instrumentalise in order to rally the members of a nation. These include the glorification of the nation and its members through public speeches and statements with the purpose of arousing the public in favour a policy. The operative realm can be understood as the realm of the mundane.<sup>6</sup> The operative realm of nationalist ideology, according to Malesevic, can be discerned through such sources as:

school textbooks, tabloid newspapers, mainstream news programmes on the TV, specific Internet websites, political or commercial adverts, speeches of political leaders, and so on.<sup>7</sup>

What separates the normative from the operative is the former's pristineness as expressed in key religious, political and philosophical texts as opposed to the latter whereby the appeal towards a nation or a common fraternity is refashioned by nationalists to make it not only long-lasting, but also attractive, in the minds of co-nationals. In other words, it is a distinction between the theoretical and the practical. Whereby, theoretically, a nation must be a constitution of moral outlooks on life etc., it is the sphere of everyday existence which determines how a nation or ethnic group endures on a daily basis. Comparing the two forms of ideology, Malesevic labels nationalism as the dominant *operative* ideology of the modern age. It is a truism that in order to understand nationalist ideology one has to go beyond core beliefs and comprehend the vagaries of daily existence where compromises are made for political gains and benefits. Adding further to Malesevic's argument, it is important to note that the substance of nationalism as an *operative* ideology is not determined objectively, but lies squarely in the realm of subjective assessments of individual members of an ethnic group. Since the determining element of the nationalist ideology is subjective, it is of essential concern that how many individuals within the nation own up to the political values as espoused by their respective ethnic elites. Here it is seen, and as will be discussed later, the homogeneity which is often exhibited in terms of objective markers such as culture and language very easily gives way to a heterogeneous political realm where competing political parties exist within a single ethnic group leading to the phenomenon of intra-ethnic conflict within ethnic groups.

Moving onto theories of nationalism, a most seminal and important work is that of Ernest Gellner. According to Gellner, the rise of nationalism is essentially related to the coming of the modern industrialised society in Europe. Gellner's argument may be summarised as follows: modern industrial society has as its functional prerequisite the diffusion of a homogeneous culture which is understood by all. Nationalism provides the homogeneity by binding a community of people together into a national unit for the purpose of economic advancement and achievement, for without it, the industrialised society cannot function. The needs of modern industrialised societies to cater for mass production and consumption makes it imperative that nationalism is instrumentalised for achieving social, political and economic ends. In the industrial society, 'it is assumed that all referential uses of language ultimately refer to one coherent world, and can be used to a unitary idiom; and that it is legitimate to relate them to each other'.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, the blending together of a nation for purposes of mass production and consumption is achieved most powerfully under the institution of the state. The problem of nationalism does not arise of stateless societies.<sup>9</sup> Nationalism did not exist in pre-agrarian and agrarian socio-political contexts where the institution of the state did not exist. The reason for this is a simple one: a pre-agrarian and by extension pre-modern social order is hierarchically structured in which there exist multiple cultures and languages all insular from each other, coupled with an absence of common bonds which bind these

myriad autonomous communities into one single national whole. Nationalism, according to Gellner's model is the 'consequence of a new form of social organisation, based on deeply internalised, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state'.<sup>10</sup>

Nationalism, thus, is essentially a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.<sup>11</sup> Summarising Gellner, it may be stated that nations do not and did not exist in antiquity but were the product of social forces relevant to the modern world. The most pertinent social force in the modern context was that of industrialisation which required for its successful operation a social homogeneity and collective effort. This homogeneity and collective effort, in other words, unity, was provided for by the doctrine of nationalism. Nationalism engendered the formation of nations leading to a congruity between the national unit and its political organisation. The political principle can be summarised as: a nation should rule itself and should not allow itself to be ruled by others, nor should it rule over non-nationals.

Treating Gellner's thesis critically and applying it to post-colonial societies, one is bound to question his essentially modernist predilection which sees nationalism as emerging from the socio-economic context of industrialisation. Industrialisation, it may be argued, is not the *sine qua non* of the development of nationalism, as the example of post-colonial societies demonstrates. In post-colonial societies, nationalism has emerged in contexts where levels of industrialisation have been very low. As the example of ethnonational movements in Pakistan demonstrates, feelings of nationalism can emerge in tribal and rural socio-economic contexts as well. Gellner's account is essentially rooted in a Western context where pre-agrarian structures of feudalism gave way to modern industrialised societies based on high mass consumption. The model is not applicable to developing countries which have not passed through the same stages of development as the developed ones. However, the feelings and sentiments related to nationalism have been copied in the developing countries and this explains that, as a political principle and ideology, nationalism can be adopted in different socio-political and economic contexts.

With respect to feelings and sentiments of nationalism and how it affects both developed and developing states, an interesting work is that of Walker Connor. Connor cites a number of cases including the rivalry between the Walloon and Flemish peoples in Belgium, the problems of the Basques and Catalans in Spain, the resurgence of Scottish and Welsh nationalism and the South Tyroleans' dissatisfaction with Italian rule as vivid examples of the rise of ethnonationalism in the developed Western world.<sup>12</sup> The key variable in understanding the rise of ethnonationalist movements, according to Connor, is their emotive appeal. The essence of the nation is not tangible. It is psychological, a matter of attitude rather than of fact.<sup>13</sup> Thus, explanations of the rise of nationalism bordering on tangible attributes such as political discrimination, economic deprivation and the like do not do justice to a phenomenon which more than anything is about feelings and emotions. Ethnonationalism has psychological and emotional trappings which most theorists ignore.

In support of his argument, Connor cites a number of examples where the feelings of ethnonationalism have not been associated with economically underprivileged groups rather privileged ones, for example, the Basques and Catalans in Spain.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, arguments such as cultural deprivation are also not seen as germane to the rise of feelings of ethnonationalism. Connor asserts that the Basques who espouse a fierce nationalism are also the least interested in using their own language in everyday conversation.<sup>15</sup> Since, according to Connor, ethnonationalism is a subjective feeling, it can assert itself in all kinds of socio-political milieux. As long as an ethnic community believes in essentialist blood and other common ties, a nation is deemed to exist. For the outside observer, an ethnic group might be an amalgam of variegated offsprings with multiple sources of kinship and origin as in the case of the Pashtuns. The important fact, however, is that the Pashtuns themselves are convinced that all Pashtuns are evolved from a single source and have remained essentially unadulterated.<sup>16</sup>

The empirical cases that Connor provides in order to situate the rise of ethnonationalism in both developed and developing states is an interesting read. For a start, it assists one in moving beyond Gellner who hypothesised that the dawning of nationalism was intimately connected with the onset of industrialisation. Connor, by highlighting diverse empirical case studies of ethnic groups from both privileged and underprivileged socio-economic backgrounds as well as First and Third World states transposes Gellner's thesis. Surely, the prevalence of nationalism in pre-capitalist socio-economic structures in developing countries is a conundrum which needs careful explanation. However, it is not mere feelings and sentiments that make the Flemish, Walloons, Pashtuns, Basques or Catalans a major social force. For Connor, the answer to increased ethnic activism lies in the emotive appeal of ethnicity, as expressed in common blood ties and descent. This, I do not believe to be the case.

First, emotions or emotive appeal are context dependent. Political mobilisation within an ethnic group is not a function of emotions as emotions are not a cause but an effect. The cause of heightened emotions are related to conditions of domination, neglect and isolation which an ethnic group perceives subjectively (which Connor ignores) and then embarks upon creating a political voice in response to such conditions. When the political voice gains momentum, emotions related to group feelings of unity based on common descent, kinship and blood ties etc., are consequently aroused. Thus, it is not emotions which dictate political mobilisation, it is the political conditions which intensify emotions and lead to the creation of an ethnopolitical movement. It is safe to assume that as citizens of the modern nation-state, all ethnic groups are affected by decisions of the central decision-making authority and that such decisions have a significant effect in both attenuating as well as intensifying the feelings of ethnonationalism.

Second, a more powerful and persuasive explanation of the rise of nationalism in both the developed and developing world has to do not with the emotive

appeal of ethnonationalism, but rather its ideological prowess as a doctrine of resistance authenticated and legitimated by the international community and exemplified in President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points.<sup>17</sup> In the twentieth century, and especially since the First World War, the idea of nationalism and national self-determination spread into every nook and cranny of the world engendering an incipient basis of anti-colonial nationalism which brought down colonial powers and their rule.<sup>18</sup> Nationalism, according to such an interpretation, then qualifies as an ideology of resistance or as a legitimate organising principle of politics which nations and ethnic groups espouse in order to claim rights and thwart oppression. In the words of Benedict Anderson:

The reality is quite plain: the 'end of the era of nationalism,' so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time.<sup>19</sup>

Nationalism as an ideology and political principle in the developing world came primarily through the colonial state. This subject is an important part, yet unfortunately, an understated strand of a brilliant work on nationalism by Benedict Anderson. The most profound and the most commented on, debated and analysed bit concerns Anderson's emphasis on the rise of modern industrial technology (capitalism), its associated industry relating to vernacular press (print-capitalism) and through the latter the eradication of communication barriers between people living within a territory. The Enlightenment, according to Anderson, played a key role in the development of nationalism, as ecclesiastical authority lost its hegemony which signalled the collapse not only of religion but also of its associated language, Latin. The Latin language was now replaced with a vernacular language and coupled with the rise of print-capitalism it heralded the rise of nationalism as communication barriers broke down and people began to 'imagine' themselves as a nation. According to Anderson, the driving classes behind nationalism were the educated bourgeoisie who 'were the first classes to achieve solidarities on an essentially imagined basis'.<sup>20</sup> In the meantime, with the spread of print-capitalism and most importantly literacy (any form of print-capitalism without a consequent increase in literacy is bound to be problematic) ensured that popular support of the masses was now available.

This is how the nation was imagined and nationalism emerged in Europe. On the contrary, when it comes to an analysis of the rise of nationalism in colonial territories, it was the colonial state which engendered nationalism, according to Anderson, not print-capitalism or the emergence of a vernacular press. The engendering of nationalism by the colonial state had an instrumental purpose for the colonisers: the spread of education was meant to inculcate a class of natives in order to work the colonial bureaucracy as well as the Army. The native men, non-European in outlook but European in taste and mannerisms, as much as they served the colonial power also contradictorily adopted the

ideational ammunition in the form of nationalism against the colonial power. Exposure to modern Western culture influenced native colonies and models of nationalism, nation-ness and nation-state were produced by local intelligentsia for their own benefit.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, this did not only occur in British colonies but also the French and Dutch colonies in Indo-China and Indonesia respectively. What, then, can one hypothesise in terms of the spread of nationalism in former colonies? The modernist emphasis on modernisation and social disruption, though largely true for the Western world, does not hold true for the colonies. If any modernisation afflicted the former colonies, it was in the form of its ideational force unconnected with modernisation as construed by Gellner.<sup>22</sup>

Taking this strand of Anderson's thought further, one can indeed argue that in a globalised, interdependent and transnational world, an ideology can pervade any social formation existing in the world, whether modern or otherwise. Modernists such as Gellner emphasise that industrialisation fostered the development of nationalism as a functional prerequisite in an age which required a collective effort on the part of the masses. However, a history of the development of nationalism across the globe has taught us that nationalism has affected both modern and pre-modern settings, in societies which have experienced large-scale industrialisation and societies that have not, in countries where the majority of the population is still based in the rural as opposed to the modern, urban sector.

To conclude, then, it may be stated that the ideational force of national self-determination as a doctrine of resistance and liberty coupled with the role of the state heralded the rise of nationalism in both colonial and post-colonial contexts. In many ways, the rise of nationalism in post-colonial states was unconnected with the onset of industrialisation and capitalism. Once human communities started to imagine themselves as nations, nationalism gained ground as an ideological framework outlining the nation's respective socio-political and socio-economic goals and objectives irrespective of the fact whether a nation was modern and developed or otherwise. The next section outlines a politics of ethnicity perspective with the following key arguments: (a) the political context is fundamental in intensifying feelings of ethnonationalism; (b) a politics of ethnicity perspective is mainly a study of the ethno-political movement, its ideology and politics; (c) a politics of ethnicity perspective helps us to explain not only inter-ethnic conflict but also inter-ethnic accommodation and most crucially, the perseverance of intra-ethnic conflicts.

### **Politics of ethnicity perspective**

The politics of ethnicity perspective treats ethnic groups not as cultural-linguistic entities but rather as political actors. Ethnic groups function in order to attain desired political rights and objectives which they believe they are being consciously denied. These rights would include, for example, increased representation in the federal/provincial bureaucracy and the armed forces; an increased share in the federal divisible financial pool of resources; control

over local natural resources and sharing of river waters and calls for the use of local language in schools and public offices. In order to give voice to such demands, ethnic groups more often than not create political organisations of their own and it is precisely at such moments that ethnicity is politicised. Furthermore, for some ethnic groups political demands, such as those mentioned above, might be accompanied with a further demand for outright secession and independence, while other ethnic groups might simply argue for increased provincial autonomy or application of the principle of federalism in letter and spirit.

An important theoretical interlocutor of the politics of ethnicity perspective is Paul Brass. Brass's work is commendable because he details the intricacies of the political context which give rise to ethnic groups as important challenges to the authority of the state. Brass terms himself as an instrumentalist, the main contours of which are based on the following arguments: (a) that cultural givens and traditions do not constitute the basis of conflict between ethnic groups and communities; (b) that the political and economic conditions determine the salience of ethnicity at specific junctures in time; (c) that ethnic elites have an *instrumental* role to play in altering culture and tradition to voice their political demands vis-à-vis the state; however, their political demands are tempered by the beliefs and values held by the community on a whole.<sup>23</sup> In stating the last proposition, Brass sets himself apart from what he labels the extreme instrumentalists who negate culture, tradition and values and see them as a function of politics rather than as independent variables which inhere within ethnic communities and are their defining characteristics.<sup>24</sup>

Brass's primary emphasis while analysing ethnicity is on the political context which determines 'the ebb and flow of nationalism in an ethnic community, the intensity of its drive for power, and the particular form that its demands take'. The political context has three distinguishing features: the possibilities for realignment of political and social forces and organisations, the willingness of elites from dominant ethnic groups to share power with aspirant ethnic group leaders, and the potential availability of alternative political arenas.<sup>25</sup>

The realignment of political and social forces and organisations, Brass contends, occurs in contexts where societies experience a prior shift in the elite and occupational structure of the society. Political realignment then occurs where 'existing political organisations fail to keep in tune with social changes that erode their support bases or in times of revolutionary upheaval. A general political realignment presents new opportunities for nationalist political organisations to arise and to present an effective blend of cultural and economic appeals.'<sup>26</sup> A good example is that of the former Soviet Union where reforms under Gorbachev were associated with widespread manifestations of inter-ethnic conflict and nationalist demands.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, political realignment as attempted by Gorbachev put a serious question mark over the coercive capabilities of the Soviet state leading to widespread perception of its relative weakness, hence triggering nationalist demands on the part of ethnic groups. However, what if, political realignment does not have a consequent effect on



the coercive capabilities of the state? This was indeed the case in post-1971 Pakistan, where even after experiencing disintegration, political realignment did not significantly alter the coercive potential of the Pakistani state which continued to repress non-dominant ethnic groups through the use of force. Hence, to modify Brass's theoretical proposition, political realignment does create opportunities for greater ethnic mobilisation. However, the key issue here is not the realignment of political and social forces, but whether realignment weakens the coercive capabilities of the state. In the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s political and social realignment was accompanied by a consequent diminution of the state's coercive powers while in the case of post-1971 Pakistan, the coercive capabilities of the state were, and are, still widely manifest.

The second aspect of the political context concerns the willingness of elites to share power. According to Brass, 'No regime, even the most authoritarian, can avoid confronting the issues of power-sharing and pluralism in modernizing multi-ethnic societies.'<sup>28</sup> Certainly, it most crucially depends on the willingness of political elites at the apex of the state structure which determines whether power-sharing as a principle of political life in a system is followed or otherwise.<sup>29</sup> Put simply, ethnic groups will remain at a disadvantage as long as elites at the top continue to disregard them. This continued denial of power is often the primary cause of violent ethnic conflict between the state and the non-dominant group. Consider the case of Bengalis who faced continued discrimination and denial of power from the central government leading to the secession of East Pakistan. It is imperative that elites learn from such mistakes. But, then, they hardly do so. The secession of East Pakistan in 1971 was followed by civil war in Balochistan in the 1970s, in Sindh in the 1980s and 1990s, and at present in Balochistan again since 2001.

In situations where elites and the political system are non-responsive to the demands of non-dominant ethnic groups, ethnic groups clamour for an alternative political arena. In other words, and this is the third aspect of Brass's general political context, ethnic movements shape their respective policy positions in accordance with the political system that they inhabit. A good example here is of the United Kingdom where a centralised, unitary system not satisfying the political demands of minorities led to increased calls for political and administrative decentralisation of power.<sup>30</sup> However, Brass notes that in states, where a relatively open system of political competition and bargaining does not exist, political strategies such as decentralisation and federalism may fail resulting in civil war or secession.<sup>31</sup> It is imperative then that not only do states employ strategies such as federalism but that they are also democratic. Democracy and federalism complement each other with one work hypothesising that 'if federalism does not conform to the rules of liberal democracy it fails'.<sup>32</sup>

In all, the salience of ethnic mobilisation is dependent on what Milton Esman terms the 'political opportunity structure'. According to Esman, there are two dimensions to the political opportunity structure:

(a) the rules and practices that enable or limit the ability of the ethnic movement and its component organisations to mobilise, to propagandise, and to assert claims for access, participation, redress, or benefits; and (b) the propensity of the political establishment to consider such claims as legitimate and subject to possible accommodation. In general, the more open and accommodative the political environment, the more ethnic movements will be inclined to employ legal strategies; the more closed and repressive the opportunity structure, the more they will resort to extralegal and violent methods.<sup>33</sup>

The argument then is a relatively simple one: the more democratic the system, the less violent an ethnic movement; while the more repressive the system, the more violent the ethnic movement. However, such simple formulations require a more thorough, nuanced and critical thinking. For example, is it possible for a political system to be democratic yet repressive? And, on the contrary, is it possible for a repressive political system to be more accommodative towards its minorities and non-dominant groups? Pakistan approximates the example of the former, where even democratic systems bred repressive structures of governance as evidenced in the political conditions which led to the Baloch insurgency in 1973. On the other hand, the United Arab Emirates furnishes us with an example of a working federation, albeit non-democratic.<sup>34</sup>

A politics of ethnicity perspective, moreover, takes the ethnic movement as the referent point of analysis. Without an analysis of the ethnic movement and its political and ideological dimensions, any study of ethnic conflict is at best partial. According to Esman:

*An ethnic political movement* represents the conversion of an ethnic community into a political competitor that seeks to combat ethnic antagonists or to impress ethnically defined interests on the agenda of the state. An ethnic political movement purports to reflect the collective consciousness and aspirations of the entire community, though in fact the latter may be split into several tendencies or concrete organisations, each competing for the allegiance of the community and for the right to be its exclusive representative.<sup>35</sup>

Esman's definition underscores the important attributes of an ethnic political movement which includes an ideological focus and helps to establish the fact of the divisiveness of an ethnic group into competing political organisations, all harbouring grievances from each other and trying to outdo one another through their respective politics and policy programme. Only if one concentrates on the *politics*, as opposed to other objective criteria such as language, culture, race, blood ties, etc., of ethnic groups is then one open to such an analysis. It is essential to note that though objective cultural markers symbolise the homogeneity of ethnic groups, an analysis of the politics within ethnic groups

portrays the exact opposite, that is, heterogeneity of ethnic groups. It is only when members of an ethnic group express solidarity on political issues (not likely in most circumstances) can the solidary basis of ethnic groups exist as a force to be reckoned with.

An important work in the intellectual tradition of instrumentalism which contests the notions of homogeneity and boundedness in the study of ethnicity is that of Rogers Brubaker. Brubaker is an avowed critic of an intellectual tendency prevalent in studies of ethnicity and ethnic conflict that he labels as groupism. Groupism, according to Brubaker, is 'the tendency to take bounded groups as fundamental units of analysis (and basic constituents of the social world)'.<sup>36</sup> Treating ethnic groups as 'groups' carries the risk of reifying ethnic groups and communities 'as if they were internally homogenous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with common purposes'.<sup>37</sup> Ethnicity should be conceptualised in 'relational, processual, dynamic, eventful, and disaggregated terms. This means thinking of ethnicity, race, and nation not in terms of substantial groups or entities but in terms of practical categories, situated actions, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organisational routines, institutional forms, political projects, and contingent events.'<sup>38</sup>

The contested nature of political goals and objectives within an ethnic group leads one to assume that 'groupness' is not something essential and fixed but rather contingent and variable. Such a perspective allows one to both appreciate the conditions where groupness might be manifest and important as opposed to other situations where 'groupness may *not* happen, that high levels of groupness may *fail* to crystallise, despite the group-making efforts of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, and even in situations of intense elite-level ethnopolitical conflict'.<sup>39</sup> Since ethnic groups seldom function as 'groups', it is prudent to speak of ethnic 'organisations' rather than ethnic groups. It is not ethnic groups that are involved in ethnic conflict; rather, it is the ethnic organisation that claims to speak in the name of the nation and is involved in conflict with the state. Brubaker claims 'that the relationship between organisations and the groups they claim to represent is often deeply ambiguous'.<sup>40</sup> The ambiguity is manifest in terms of who represents the political aspirations of a said ethnic group. The politicisation of ethnicity, at whatever time it takes place, leads to the creation of ethnic parties, who then make their respective political, social, economic and cultural claims on the state. This politicisation, as Brubaker rightly claims, is woven more with issues relative to a disaggregated heterogeneity, rather than a consensual homogeneity.

To conclude then, intra-ethnic conflict is an essential reality of ethnic politics and it is prudent to view ethnic politics not from the paradigm of an ethnic group in conflict but different organisations of a single ethnic group in conflict with each other, at least one of whom is also involved in a conflict with the state. The section has also established the vitality of the political context as an independent variable which intensifies ethnic conflict. However, terms such as 'political context' and 'political opportunity structure' are still vague if one is

to come up with a meaningful generalisation of ethnic conflict. To move into a more theoretically nuanced realm of socio-political inquiry and provide concrete shape to the two terms, it is imperative to bring into focus seminal political actors in society, that is, the state and government. The next section outlines the important theoretical assumptions relative to the state and government as independent actors influencing the politicisation of ethnicity.

## **The state**

In modern political parlance, no analysis can proceed without taking the state into consideration. The omnipotence and omnipresence of the state in almost every walk of social life is a befitting conclusion with which many academics would not disagree. Social and political organisation in developed and post-colonial societies is built around the state and its institutions. In terms of the present work, the role of the state (and government) is directly related to the rise in ethnic conflicts, their solution or even their persistence and perseverance. I begin this section by outlining what a state is, moving then to delineating theories of the state and, finally, assessing how the government may be construed as an independent institution in distinction to the state and what essential differences exist between the two.

Definitions of the state in the tradition of Max Weber conceptualise the state in terms of its propensity to inflict violence. According to Weber, 'a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory'.<sup>41</sup> According to Anthony Giddens, 'A state can be defined as a political organisation whose rule is territorially ordered and which is able to mobilise the means of violence to sustain that rule.'<sup>42</sup> Moreover, according to John Hall and G. John Ikenberry, a composite definition of the state would include three elements:

First, the state is a set of institutions; these are manned by the state's own personnel. The state's most important institution is that of the means of violence and coercion. Second, these institutions are at the centre of a geographically-bounded territory, usually referred to as a society. Crucially, the state looks inwards to its national society and outwards to larger societies in which it must make its way; its behaviour in one area can often only be explained by its activities in the other. Third, the state monopolizes rule making within its territory. This tends towards the creation of a common political culture shared by all citizens.<sup>43</sup>

The three cited definitions offer a somewhat vague and weak conceptualisation of the institutional features of the state. Weber uses the term 'human community', Giddens speaks of the state as a 'political organisation', while Hall and Ikenberry identify the state's institutions as that 'of the means of violence and coercion'. But the question remains as to which institutions form part of the state structure. Theda Skocpol, in this sense, posits a more concerted

conception of the state as, 'a set of administrative, policing and military organisations headed, and more or less co-ordinated, by an executive authority. Any state first and foremost extracts resources from society and deploys these to create and support coercive and administrative organisations.'<sup>44</sup> This definition of the state is most apt, for it not only identifies force and violence as essential properties of the state but also points towards the institutions that make up the state, that is, the bureaucracy and military. If the bureaucracy, military and policing organisations make up the state, what then of the government? Is the government part of the state structure 'manned by the state's own personnel' as Hall and Ikenberry contend, or are governmental personnel different from the personnel who make up the state? I will take up this distinction later and will focus now on the theories of the state.

### *Theories of the state*

In this section, I propose to critically evaluate the works of Anthony Giddens, Michael Mann and Joel Migdal. All three works have distinctive explanatory and descriptive potential: Giddens for his estimation of the modern nation-state as a 'bordered power container' setting it apart from the traditional or pre-modern state; Mann for his useful categories in order to describe the functional powers of the state, namely, infrastructural and despotic; and Migdal for his state-in-society approach which sees states and societies as mutually constituting each other.

Anthony Giddens distinguishes modern nation-states from traditional states by seeing the former as repositories of colossal power and authority which the latter lacked. At an abstract level, we are prone to thinking of pre-modern or traditional states as brute and despotic institutions of power and authority, as opposed to modern states where power and authority are more circumscribed. However, Giddens challenges this notion by laying bare the fact that modern states are more centralised in terms of their functions and their penetrative powers over society are far advanced and extensive as opposed to pre-modern states. Giddens shatters the myth of the powerful traditional state by his representation of the dominant modern nation-state as a 'bordered power container'.

Giddens, moreover, attributes to the modern nation-state a higher and more specialised form of political and economic organisation as opposed to traditional states where such organisation is lacking. According to Giddens:

Ruling groups in traditional states ... lack the means of regularly influencing the day-to-day lives of their subject populations. One of the major characteristics of the modern state, by contrast, is a vast expansion of the capability of state administrators to influence even the most intimate features of daily activity.<sup>45</sup>

Politics has a broader definition in modern societies (that is, nation-states), encompassing the mass of the population.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, in traditional states, ideological consensus is not a functional necessity which involves the mass of the population. What matters are the ideological hegemony of the ruler and the higher circles of the state apparatus over the remainder of the dominant class and administrative officialdom.<sup>47</sup> Thus, traditional states compared with modern states are incapable of universal reach and their power is in many ways circumscribed and more easily challenged than what is generally thought to be the case. The modern nation-state, on the other hand, has its repressive mechanisms and institutions spread throughout society. The state instrumentalises its coercive power within its specific territorial and geographic domain to keep its subjects under control both through legal measures and through utilisation of force. According to Giddens:

The coupling of direct and indirect surveillance (customs officials and frontier guards, plus the central co-ordination of passport information) is one of the distinctive features of the nation-state. A nation-state, is, therefore, a bordered power container ... the pre-eminent power container of the modern era.<sup>48</sup>

Giddens's analysis is interesting and profound, but then it is highly mired in the context of European state-making and state-building. The main emphasis of Giddens's work, as he himself suggests, 'is upon providing an interpretation of the development of the nation-state in its original, i.e. "Western" habitat'.<sup>49</sup> If this is the case, how then rightly Giddens's conceptualisation of the state be adopted in Third World socio-political contexts? It took more than two centuries, for example, after the Treaty of Westphalia before Germany and Italy emerged as nation-states. In the Third World, on the other hand, the process of state-building and consolidation was immediate, not historical, as colonial powers collapsed and granted independence to colonies after the Second World War. Furthermore the process of state-building was not indigenous and the entire state-building process and apparatus in post-colonial politics was heavily modelled on the European experience. Putting this notion into perspective, can we characterise Third World states 'bordered power containers' as their European progenitors?

The answer is both yes and no. Third World states are *not* 'bordered power containers' because of the challenges that they face from ethnic groups who indulge in violence. One is bound to assume then that the state's monopoly of violence is weak or has not penetrated peripheral regions and spaces. In such regions, the state's ideology has failed to create the unity of purpose required for the state to function as a 'bordered power container'. However, at the same time, the repeated failings of ethnic movements evidenced in the far fewer instances and creation of new nation-states in the post-war era points in another direction. The failings of ethnic movements have mainly to do with the capacity of the state to indulge in violence and act as a 'bordered power

container'. A state's use of violence in order to quell, what it feels, as challenges to its authority is a major feature of post-war history, and Pakistan is no exception, as the empirical chapters are bound to demonstrate.

It is interesting to note that Giddens sees the challenges which come to the modern nation-state from armed groups and insurgent movements as manifestation of the power and authority of the state rather than its weakness.<sup>50</sup> The power of the state is best outlined by Giddens with respect to the allocative and authoritative resources that they have under their command. Allocative resources refer to dominion over material facilities, including material goods and the natural forces that may be harnessed in their production, while authoritative resources refer to the means of dominion over the activities of human beings themselves.<sup>51</sup> Though both concepts relative to allocative and authoritative resources have much to offer in helping us understand the state and its functions, the question remains as to how the state comes to apportion the power that it holds over civil society and based on the power that individual states command, how can one comparatively evaluate and distinguish First World from Third World states. Answers to these questions are most clearly discernible in the work of Michael Mann.

Mann argues on the same lines as Giddens that modern nation-states command much wider power than did traditional states and that this power has much to do with the territorial centralisation of the modern state. However, Michael Mann goes further than Giddens by imputing two critical forms of power to the state, namely, infrastructural power and despotic power. The despotic power of the state elite concerns 'the range of actions which the elite is empowered to undertake without routine, institutionalized negotiation with civil society groups'.<sup>52</sup> Despotic power is most evident with respect to traditional states and empires as well as modern states which utilise their military power relative to their own populations. Many developing states would fit easily into this category as the state has more often than not resisted the political drives of peoples (ethnic groups) living within societies by condemning them to military-led operations.

Besides despotic power, the state also makes use of its infrastructural power. Infrastructural power denotes 'the capacity of the state actually to penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm'.<sup>53</sup> In an excellent passage, Michael Mann explicates the infrastructural power of the state as follows:

The state can assess and tax our income and wealth at source, without our consent or that of our neighbours or kin (which states before about 1850 were never able to do); it stores and can recall immediately a massive amount of information about all of us; it can enforce its will within the day almost anywhere in its domains; its influence on the overall economy is enormous; it even directly provides the subsistence of most of us (in state employment, in pensions, in family allowances, etc.). The state penetrates everyday life more than did any historical state. Its infrastructural power has increased enormously.<sup>54</sup>

Based on the distinction between infrastructural and despotic powers, Mann comes up with four ideal-types of states: feudal, imperial, bureaucratic and authoritarian. Of the four, the feudal states are the weakest in terms of their despotic and infrastructural power as opposed to authoritarian states which are high on both dimensions. Imperial states are characterised by high despotic power and low infrastructural power, while the opposite is true for bureaucratic states. Contemporary capitalist democracies are designated by Mann as bureaucratic states as is the future state hoped for by most radicals and socialists.<sup>55</sup> Mann's fourfold typology is interesting as it helps in identifying the state both from a theoretical and comparative perspective. Keeping Mann's distinction in perspective, Third World states are the exact opposite of their First World contemporaries in that the former have both high despotic as well as infrastructural power (authoritarian states) as opposed to the latter where despotic power is weak while infrastructural power is strong (bureaucratic states). Mann contends that 'when people in the West complain of the growing power of the West, they cannot be referring sensibly to the despotic powers of the state elite itself, for if anything these are still declining'.<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, Mann instrumentalises both despotic and infrastructural power as functional categories in order to establish that the state is an autonomous actor. The notion of state autonomy begs a critical and important question: does state autonomy imply that the state is a neutral institution independent of the power and influence of civil society groups, or, alternatively that the state is a captive of dominant classes or ethnic groups? If it is assumed that states work in conjunction with civil society groups, then state autonomy is severely compromised and one is hard pressed to note that states are no more than the sum of civil society groups. This would be running counter to Mann's central thesis. If, on the other hand, states are seen as mere autonomous entities and hence not the captive of any single class or group, one would not be able to come up with an adequate theory of social conflict. It is a truism that most social conflicts, including ethnic conflicts, are generated when the state is perceived as nothing more than a protector of the interests of particular groups or classes. Mann concedes that states work in the interests of specific groups and classes 'but if they appeared merely to do this they would lose all claim to distinctiveness and to legitimacy. States thus appropriate what Eisenstadt calls "free-floating resources", not tied to any particular interest group, able to float throughout the territorially defined society.'<sup>57</sup>

Eisenstadt's contention which Mann puts forward cannot be applied uniformly over a historical period on a consistent basis. States act autonomously but then they are also captive of dominant groups and classes. In the Third World, where the state is the captive of particular ethnic groups (Sinhalese in Sri Lanka) and religious denominations (Sunnis in Iraq under Saddam Hussein), states do work in the interests of such groups which then becomes a rallying cry for resentment on behalf of non-dominant ethnic groups. The same may be imputed for the Pakistani state which functions to perpetuate the hegemony of the dominant ethnic group, the Punjabis. However, to concentrate



only on this variable (ethnic domination) blinds one to the institutional mechanisms of the state as outlined in the above-mentioned theoretical works. In the course of the present research, one question which came up as a critical response to ethnic domination thesis was that not all Punjabis have benefited from the real or imagined Pakistani (Punjabi) state and the reality for many Punjabis is similar to the conditions in which non-dominant ethnic groups find themselves in other provinces of Pakistan. That is, many Punjabis claim that the state does not work to their advantage. If this is deemed to be true, which the assertion no doubt is, then state autonomy is established as a result, for the powers of the Pakistani (Punjabi) state have been detrimental to the Punjabis themselves. It is, thus, analytically wise that the ethnic domination thesis (valid as it is) needs to be supplemented with analysis of the autonomous power of the state as well as the government.

The ethnic domination thesis brings into focus a critical aspect of the state, that is, its embeddedness in society. Both Giddens and Mann eschew an important perspective by seeing the state as an institution which exists only to perpetuate its hegemony and domination over society, rather than seeing the state as a constitutive part of society. They, thus, invoke a *state-versus-society* relationship with the state and its institutions being the determining factor in policy-making as well as conflict. The utility of both theoretical accounts is immense and I do not wish to challenge the primacy accorded to the state by both Giddens and Mann. However, one is tempted to go beyond such a generalisation to include another theoretically vibrant account which sees states as embedded in societies.

Joel Migdal criticises statist theorists such as Weber, Hall and Mann who reify the concept of the state by assigning it the character of an all-powerful entity which exists to sustain its domination over society. Migdal criticises such theorists for concentrating only on one dimension of the state, that is, its bureaucratic (or rule-enforcing) character.<sup>58</sup> The state, on the other hand, should be understood as a disaggregated and differentiated unit which does not function according to a unitary logic; rather, the state and its institutions are dispersed entities. There are different responses with respect to a particular issue from within the state which means that 'we cannot simply assume that as a whole it acts in a rational and coherent fashion, or strategically follows a defined set of interests'.<sup>59</sup>

Migdal points to the relationship between the state and society in terms of 'the dynamics of the struggles for domination in societies'.<sup>60</sup> The relationship between the state and society is not static, but dynamic and in flux, involving in the main a struggle for each unit to preserve its authority vis-à-vis the other. Moreover, and most importantly, the relationship between state and society involves both conflict and cooperation. This implies that mutual interactions may be mutually empowering or mutually enfeebling. Thus, one can start hypothesising as to what kinds of responses are generated from the state with respect to ethnic groups specifically during times of ethnic conflict. The state, in order to preserve its power and authority, not only employs

coercive force but also encourages collaboration with members of the same ethnic group resisting it.<sup>61</sup> And this is where the vitality of the state-in-society perspective establishes itself. Struggles between states and societies (ethnic groups) not only engender conflict but also possible alliances. These alliances are utilised by the state in order to transform the nature of ethnic conflict in ways which are beneficial to the domination and hegemony of the state.

In other words, what is being argued here relates directly to the phenomenon of intra-ethnic conflict where conflicts within ethnic groups are exploited by the state for their own benefits and purposes. The state, when it comes to military action, stands to destroy the challenges to its authority from resistant ethnic groups. However, at the same time, members of the same ethnic group are instrumentalised for collaboration. It is in this sense that a state-in-society perspective is most apt in understanding the role of the state in ethnic conflict. To concentrate only on domination and repression blinds one to the possible alliances that the state generates. Conversely, it should be understood that a state's alliance with ethnic groups is a two-way traffic which means that members of an ethnic group are as forthcoming in engineering an alliance with the state for their own perceived benefit and are not passive actors who are simply manipulated by the state and its institutions.

### **The state and government**

Giddens, Mann and Migdal's interesting insights into the state and its functions highlight how a state is an embodiment of force and how it perpetuates its domination over society. Though Giddens and Mann concentrate specifically on a state's capacity to use force, Migdal through his understanding of the state as a differentiated and disaggregated entity allows one to open up the black box of the state for critical inquiry and put forth the conception of 'government'. If states are the bureaucratic, military and policing organisations combined, then how may one define the government? Are the state and the government one and the same thing?

Conceptually, both state and government are two different institutional mechanisms, and in terms of political analysis, it is prudent that the distinction be kept as it is. The reason for this has to do with the fact that the state may function without governments in power, and that governments may exist, as some anthropological works on stateless societies tends to argue, without an effective state authority in place.<sup>62</sup> An excellent commentary on the distinction between state and government may be initiated if one keeps the behaviouralist methodology in perspective; specifically, its focus on 'individuals' as the referent of socio-political analysis. Concentrating on individuals, it is seen that individuals who constitute the state and government are distinct from each other in terms of their roles, functions and powers.

Individuals who form the state are indirectly elected, while individuals who are part of the government are directly elected by the people. In the former category, individuals become part of the institutions of the state by undertaking

competitive civil service, or military recruitment examinations. Hence, once successfully passing through with their meritorious performance as expressed in such examinations, such individuals become part of the ruling establishment. This ruling establishment which is responsible for running the day-to-day affairs of the country is radically different from the individuals who form part of the government. In the governmental category, individuals are directly elected by the citizens of the state, hence their term in power is dependent on the wishes of the people. In the state category, individuals cannot be thrown out of power unless they retire at a specific age. Thus, compared to 'statist' individuals, 'governmental' elites are prone to be just as quickly thrown out of power as they are elected into such institutions.

Besides individuals, the distinction between the state and government is also manifest when it comes to the issue of governance. The question is: who governs? Is it the state or the government? The answer to the question is easily juxtaposed through a simplified abstraction. Since the government is elected by the people on a policy programme which it presents to the general public and is also directly answerable to the people, it is the government which makes policies, while the state is supposed to execute them. To put it in explicit terms: the government *proclaims* policy and the state (bureaucratic-administrative and military organisations) *implements* it. A government may come out with a major socio-economic programme, say, removing illiteracy, poverty or inequality. However, to implement such a policy, it is imperative that the government and the ruling party establish close coordination with the administrative arm of the state in order to ensure the success of its political programme. Both the government and the state, in other words, are responsible for the successes and failure of a particular policy. However, more often than not, it is the government and politicians who are in front of the public eye, while individuals within the bureaucratic-military establishment are effectively shielded, as they are not visible in the media. They do not answer our questions, the politicians do.

A third important distinction between the state and government relates to where power lies in a political system. In most Third World states, when one speaks about the power of the state, one is alluding to the power of the state and its institutions, the bureaucracy, military and the police, not the power of the government. In many post-colonial contexts, the balance of power between the state and government is heavily tilted in the favour of the former. This means that states have overthrown governments, disrupted political processes and constitutions, created engineered political processes which protect the interests of the state and its institutions and keeps the government and its policies under scrutiny. However, on the contrary, there have been periods where the government under a charismatic leadership has instituted changes in the state and its institutions. In the context of Pakistan, the prime example is that of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who in the 1970s single-handedly reformed the bureaucracy and military, highlighting and establishing the power of the civilian set-up over the military establishment.

What relevance does the state–government distinction have in terms of ethnic identity and ethnic conflict? Ethnic identity is prone to intensify in political contexts where state rules, governs and make policies (such as military dictatorships). Ethnic amelioration is possible if a government exists and functions on principles of consociationalism and power-sharing. In other words, the role of the government may be seminal in determining whether feelings related to discrimination and deprivation within an ethnic group intensify or otherwise. This, however, does not preclude the possibility of the government acting as authoritatively as military dictatorships in denying power and privilege to non-dominant ethnic groups. It is not always the state and its use of its coercive capabilities which ignites ethnic conflict – the same too can be done by the government. This was the case especially in the 1970s when Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was most responsible for the outbreak of the Baloch insurgency. The next chapter outlines the intricacies of the Pakistani state, government and ethnic politics in post-1971 Pakistan.

### **3 The state and politics of ethnicity in post-1971 Pakistan**

In the present chapter, I intend to outline an empirical analysis of the state, government and ethnic conflict in post-1971 Pakistan. I begin with an academic inquiry into the notion of the Pakistani identity as enunciated in Aitzaz Ahsan's *The Indus Saga* (2005). Ahsan's work is interesting as it lays claim to a new identity paradigm based on the authenticity of the Indus and the Indus person. The next section then details the political context in which both the state and government have been predominant actors. The purpose of this section is to bring into focus the functions of government as an independent and autonomous institution, if not the most powerful one, and its strained and conflictual relationship with the state in post-1971 Pakistan. The last section outlines peculiar features of ethnopolitics in post-1971 Pakistan and a critical analysis of the works of Mehtab Ali Shah, Adeel Khan, Tahir Amin and Iftikhar Malik. In building on Shah, Amin, Khan and Malik, I intend to focus on those works on Pakistan which have ethnicity, ethnic movements and ethnic conflict as a central focus.<sup>1</sup>

#### **The identity of Pakistan**

For Aitzaz Ahsan, the Pakistani is still in search of his/her identity and is suffering from an identity crisis. The crisis manifests itself since independence because Pakistanis have been socialised into believing that 'their very identity was their "un-Indianness": banish this thought from the mind and Pakistan will collapse'.<sup>2</sup> This Ahsan believes to be an improper characterisation of Pakistani identity, since being un-Indian still does not resolve the question of who the Pakistani actually is. So, where does Pakistani identity flow from and what are its major characteristics?

Ahsan very carefully dissects and deconstructs the concept of oneness and indivisibility of the Indian subcontinent from ancient times and presents the argument that the subcontinent was not a united but a fragmented entity. Ahsan challenges historical Indian accounts of Shankacharya, Vivekananda and even Nehru which present India as a unified whole as untrue. The Indian subcontinent was not a unitary geographical and cultural whole, but was rather divided between the Indus and India. The former, that is, Indus is what

constitutes the present-day Pakistan and hence is the cornerstone of modern Pakistani identity. In the words of the author:

from prehistory to the nineteenth century, Indus has been Pakistan. 1947 was only a reassertion of that reality. It was the reuniting of the various units – the Frontier, the Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Kashmir – once again in a primordial federation. The Mohajirs, who reverted to the Indus in 1947 and thereafter, were the sons and daughters returning to the mother. As such, ‘Pakistan’ preceded even the advent of Islam in the subcontinent. It has deeper, more ancient foundations.<sup>3</sup>

The author further adds that:

The subcontinent has itself always been at least two distinct worlds: the truly ‘Indic region’, comprising the Gangetic plains and peninsular India, on the one hand, and the ‘Indus region’, consisting of the basin of the Indus and its tributaries (i.e., Pakistan) on the other. In fact, the twain have seldom, if ever, truly met.<sup>4</sup>

The two quoted passages outline the major arguments of Aitzaz Ahsan’s primary thesis. First, the Pakistani identity is constructed on a strict primordial basis and linked to the identity of the Indus in which ‘the Indus region has maintained a rare individuality and distinctness ... In other words ... there always has been and always will be a Pakistan’.<sup>5</sup> Second, and most importantly, the identity of Pakistan is not associated with that of Islam or Muslims. It is the *culture* of the Indus which has shaped modern Pakistani identity rather than religious force of Islam. In negating the Islamic component of Pakistani identity and invoking a cultural one, Ahsan asserts the autonomous identity of the Indus person as distinct from that of the Arabs:

Barring a few coincidental, fleeting contacts, the story of the Pakistani peoples share little *cultural* commonality with the Arab. Despite their intense reverence for Islam, the fact remains that racially, ethnically, linguistically, and, above all, culturally, the peoples of Pakistan are more closely linked to the peoples of Central Asia and Iran than to the peoples of the Arab world. The Arabian Sea and the monsoons separated Indus and the Arabian peninsula and maintained a civilisational distance between them.<sup>6</sup> [emphasis in original]

Thus, the Indus or Pakistani identity was shaped by neither India nor Arabia; rather, the identity of the modern Pakistani is indigenous, which developed in close transnational ties with peoples of Central Asia and Iran. In delinking the Pakistani identity from that of the Arabs and Mughals, Ahsan challenges traditional accounts of Pakistan’s identity and history which celebrate such a linkage in order to establish the religious aspects of Pakistani identity.<sup>7</sup> However,

as novel as Ahsan's cultural identity-based interpretation is in postulating a secular basis of Pakistani identity, it is tarred with the same brush as religious-based interpretations. Both interpretations (religious and cultural) have a similar conclusive effect of overriding and obfuscating ethnic identity at the cost of celebrating the Pakistani identity.

In imputing the identity of the Indus as the identity of the modern-day Pakistani with its attendant autonomous and independent manifestations, Ahsan denies the identity of local ethnic groups crucial to the sustenance of multi-ethnic states such as Pakistan. Thus, the Indus identity translated as the Pakistani identity negates the identity of the Baloch, Sindhi, Mohajirs, Pashtuns and even the Punjabis. Most crucially, Ahsan completely ignores the majority half of Pakistan from 1947 until 1971 that is, East Pakistan and the Bengalis. Taking Aitzaz Ahsan's analysis at face value, one is forced to pre-judge that the Bengali identity was inconsequential to the making of the Pakistani state and its eventual separation was bound to happen, considering the fact that the *Bengali* person was different to the *Indus* person. Reading Ahsan, one cannot but conclude that Pakistan derived mainly from Indus and its heroes, while the Bengalis were mere objects with no significant role to play in either colonial history or post-colonial politics of Pakistan.

Besides ignoring East Pakistan, Ahsan's identity discourse is marred by a homogenising tendency in which the power of culture reigns supreme. This homogenising tendency is most manifest in his identification of heroes of the Indus. Ahsan mentions Rasalu, Sheikh, Jasrat Ghakkar, Sarang, Arjun, Dullah, Shah Inayat, Chakar Khan, Khushal, Ahmed Khan Kharal and Bhagat Singh as Indus heroes who in their own ways displayed valour and strength as well as showed resistance to authority. In establishing Rasalu, Chakar Khan, Bhagat Singh and the rest as Indus heroes, Ahsan categorically dismisses the fact that they were not heroes of the Indus but rather local heroes. Take for example, Chakar Khan, under whom the Baloch emerged as a powerful and united nation. Nowhere across the Indus (for the Punjabis, Pathans, Mohajirs and Sindhis) does the personality of Chakar Khan arouse any passion or emotive sentiment as it does for the Baloch.

Ahsan, it seems, is mainly concerned with a novel construction of a traditionally oriented discourse on Pakistan's identity which fails to look beyond and appreciate the heterogeneous basis of the region comprising Pakistan. The author, in one sense, is sensitive to local peoples and cultures; but then by absorbing all such folk heroes into an overarching Indus (Pakistani) identity, he at once refutes their 'local' identification and indigenous existence. Furthermore, by excluding the Bengalis entirely, Ahsan's identity discourse assumes the characteristic of being politically incorrect; the consequences of such an argument lead to the justification of both their eventual separation from the Indus as well as a cultural arrogance in which the Bengalis were seen, by the people of the Indus, as culturally closer to India rather than themselves.<sup>8</sup> By reinforcing and elevating the identity of the Indus (Pakistani) person, Ahsan's main arguments thus negate local identities and peoples.

## **Political history of the Pakistani state and government (1971–99)**

A recent work on Pakistan's political history utilising the theoretical framework of path dependency concludes that once the influence of the military is embedded within the political system, it is difficult to roll it back. According to Mazhar Aziz, 'path dependency generates patterns making it appreciably difficult for polities to change direction. This approach then makes it possible to argue why the transition from a military to a civilian form of government in Pakistan remains problematic and incomplete.'<sup>9</sup> Aziz further hypothesises that:

military regimes in Pakistan have tended to introduce deep fissures in the politics of the country while leaving the succeeding political governments with legacies with which the latter are not equipped to cope ... a transition from military rule to an elected form of government in Pakistan is likely to produce weak civilian governments due to the presence of a strongly institutionalized military.<sup>10</sup>

The first part of the above quotation relative to military regimes introducing deep fissures in Pakistan's polity is undoubtedly true, but the contention with respect to civilian governments and a strongly institutionalised military needs careful explication. If the author's statement is taken at face value, then the military is the final arbiter, mover and shaper of Pakistan's political history. Period. However, a study of Pakistan's political history in the post-1971 phase has certainly much more to offer than a simple path-dependent formulation. Rather than framing the relationship between the government and the military in such terms, I argue that it is prudent to view the relationship as dynamic, which involves contestation, conflict and even a pragmatic co-option. Such a perspective allows one to move beyond simplistic characterisations such as 'domination' and 'dependence' to more fruitful inquiries in which the power and functions of the government are critically evaluated.

The state is the most powerful institution in Pakistan but to concentrate only on the state blinds one to the autonomous power which the government displays. The state may have won on more than one occasion by dismissing democratically elected governments or establishing constitutional mechanisms through which political control of governments is asserted, but this does not disqualify the government as an unimportant actor. It is my contention that the dismissal of elected governments in as much as it displays the power of the state also correspondingly manifests the fear on the part of state officials relative to the strengthening of political and democratic processes. The military probably fears that the continued sustenance of civilian governments in power has the propensity to conflict with its vested interests and hence the continued interference in the political process. Hasan Askari Rizvi contends that the military is prepared to accommodate the civilian government 'but what is not acceptable to them is a frontal attack on their institutional and corporate interests, as they define them, or a deliberate campaign to malign the military,



or unilateral decision-making by the civilian leaders on matters which directly concern them'.<sup>11</sup> Thus, contrary to Aziz, it may be argued that rather than simple domination, the history of the Pakistan polity exhibits an inexorable and incessant tension between the elected (government) and unelected (bureaucracy–military) institutions of power and authority.

The view, then, that I carry forth in order to elucidate politics in post-1971 Pakistan has to do with highlighting the independent and autonomous power that governments have displayed with respect to the military. In one sense, one could indeed argue that government, politicians and political processes are indispensable and an essential component of Pakistani politics even in times of military rule. In fact, military rulers from Ayub Khan to Pervez Musharraf have relied on the support of political leaders and parties for their sustenance and survival. This phenomenon labelled as the *civilianisation of military rule*<sup>12</sup> by Hasan-Askari Rizvi implies that the 'military rulers create "beneficiaries" through their political and economic policies and prop up the political elite who are willing to join them and play politics within their game-plan'.<sup>13</sup> The military requires the support of political actors in order to rule the country; most importantly, to establish their legitimacy and support via such politicians and political parties.

What I propose to do next is to outline the strains which defined the nexus of relations between the government and the military in the post-1971 period. What emerges from this narration of Pakistan's political history is that governments have never been completely docile before the military. The military has defined the parameters of the political processes in Pakistan realising maybe that if political processes are allowed to run their natural course, this necessarily puts them on a collision course with the bureaucratic–military establishment. In this vein, the argument is closer to Ayesha Jalal's hypothesis that 'state construction and consolidation in Pakistan has largely been on a collision course with the social dynamics underlying political processes'.<sup>14</sup> What emerges from the below-mentioned narrative is a picture of Pakistan's political history in which governments have been influential, if not out rightly powerful, in the face of the institutions of the state, except for Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's period in power, where the government reigned supreme.

### *Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the militarisation of civilian rule (1972–7)*

Inverting Hasan Askari Rizvi's characterisation of co-option of political elites during times of military rule as 'civilianization of military rule', Bhutto's time in power may well be labelled the 'militarisation of civilian rule'. The 'militarisation of civilian rule' implies most succinctly Bhutto's authoritarian style of political governance as well as his critical role in instigating ethnic conflict in Balochistan in 1973. In more ways than one, it was more circumstance which propelled Bhutto to the top of Pakistan's political hierarchy. The Army's embarrassing and humiliating defeat in East Pakistan served to engender a novel polity in post-1971 Pakistan, of which Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a civilian, was the

spearhead and unchallenged supremo. Bhutto enjoyed more freedom than any other civilian leader before or since and set about implementing his own version of the idea and the state of Pakistan.<sup>15</sup>

The civilian supremacy under Bhutto was manifest in the widespread changes that he instituted within the bureaucracy–military. By authorising such changes, Bhutto proved that the state was indeed subservient to the government and incapable of resisting the government and its diktat. Take for example the bureaucracy where Bhutto broke the power of the elite corps of bureaucrats, the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP). The powerful CSP constituted only 0.07 per cent of the country's total bureaucratic population and had grown enormously both in power and prestige.<sup>16</sup> In August 1973, the new administrative reforms of Bhutto's government envisaged a system of lateral entry and gradations merging all services and cadres into a unified grading structure with twenty-two pay scales (a special pay scale, the twenty-third, was meant for special appointments, i.e. secretary general of a ministry).<sup>17</sup>

Besides the civil service, Bhutto also brought about major changes within the Pakistan Army. That Bhutto was now in a predominant position vis-à-vis the military is demonstrated by the following acts: Bhutto forced the resignations of Lt. General Gul Hassan, Chief of Army Staff since 20 December 1971, and Air Marshal Rahim Khan, Chief of Air Staff, after they failed to make their support available to the government during a police strike.<sup>18</sup> Bhutto also made changes in the command structure of the military by changing the designation of the Commander-in-Chief to Chief of Staff in March 1972 and also reduced their tenure of service from four to three years.<sup>19</sup> All in all, within four months of assuming office of the president, Bhutto purged forty-three senior officers from the Army, Navy, and Air Force.<sup>20</sup> Also, individual autonomy of each service was diluted by establishing a permanent post of Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) in March 1976.<sup>21</sup> Bhutto, however, was careful enough to not entirely displease the Army as evidenced in the defence expenditure which showed a rise of about 218 per cent between 1971 and 1977, although the worldwide inflation and devaluation of the Pakistani rupee in 1972 neutralised some of its benefits.<sup>22</sup> The military, on the other hand, was content in not involving itself in the political affairs of the government. General Tikka Khan, Chief of Army Staff, from March 1972 to February 1976, worked towards strengthening the professional character of the Army and urged his officers and men to be loyal to the Constitution and the civilian authority established thereunder.<sup>23</sup>

Besides reforms in the bureaucracy–military, Bhutto also engineered social and economic reforms in the country by turning upside-down Ayub Khan's growth-led philosophy of economic development. The economic development and growth model as practiced by Ayub and his regime had failed, in the sense that wealth did not trickle down to the masses.<sup>24</sup> Bhutto and his Pakistan People's Party (PPP) sought actively to reverse this capitalist trend of 'wealth accumulation' by embarking on a socialist philosophy of 'wealth distribution'. Bhutto's experiment with socialism was designed to even out the widespread

socio-economic inequalities that Ayub's economic system had generated. He made famous the slogan of *Roti, Kapra aur Makaan* (Food, Cloth and Shelter) and linked his socialist philosophy to that of Islam. In the words of Bhutto himself:

The introduction of the democratic process is being accompanied by measures aimed at the establishment of an egalitarian society. These spring not from any abstract doctrine or ideological dogma but from the imperatives of progress. It was a mass movement which led to the creation of Pakistan. The nation's sense of identity and purpose could not, therefore, but be mutilated by an iniquitous system that widened the gulf between the rich and the poor. A native system of privileges and exploitation is as odious as one instituted by alien rule. It was, therefore, essential to try to translate the egalitarian spirit of Islam, which continues to inspire our people, into concrete terms of Socialist organization.<sup>25</sup>

In continuation of his socialist philosophy, Bhutto passed the Economic Reform Order, taking over thirty-two firms with a net worth of Pakistan Rs. 1.4 billion, the first act of mass nationalisation of industry in Pakistan.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, in January 1972, the emerald mines in Swat and ten basic industries were nationalised, which included iron and steel, basic metals, heavy engineering, heavy electrical, motor vehicle, tractor manufacturing, heavy and basic chemicals, petrochemicals, cement, and gas and oil.<sup>27</sup>

This still begs the question, then, why if Bhutto's government was all-powerful and the military subservient to the government, was the government ultimately overthrown and a military dictatorship proclaimed in 1977? Does it prove the ascendancy of the military in the political system of Pakistan in the sense that it can take over power, if and when it chooses to do so? Saeed Shafqat, for example states that, 'despite the break up of Pakistani nation-state, the military was the strongest political institution in the country'.<sup>28</sup> Was it the case that Bhutto's reforms in the bureaucracy–military mean nothing? Shafqat's analysis, like that of Mazhar Aziz, leads one to look only at the military as the foremost institution of Pakistan. Not denying the validity of such a claim, the claim, however, denies the agency of the government as an important political institution and actor and completely ignores the power of the PPP-dominated government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Bhutto did co-opt the Army, for there was no way that he could do away with the entrenched interests of the military establishment in a short span of five years. The co-option of the Army was most manifest in Balochistan, where a civil war raged between the Baloch nationalists and the Pakistani state for four years, 1973–7. However, Bhutto and the political, social and economic changes that he instituted in the fabric of the Pakistani state and society cannot be conveniently dismissed or ignored by focusing myopically on the Army. Bhutto and the militarisation of civilian rule which was a feature of his political reign had telling effects with respect to instigating ethnic conflict in Balochistan. This fact warrants that

the government may be as consequential in the shaping of ethnic conflict as is the state and hence the treatment of the two as independent actors.

***The Zia dictatorship, civilianisation of military rule and the experiment with democracy (1977–88)***

Zia-ul-Haq overthrew the democratically elected government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on 5 July 1977 and from there onwards until his death on 17 August 1988, Zia was the undisputed ruler of the Pakistani state. Zia overturned most political and economic decisions taken by Bhutto's regime and reconstituted Pakistan's polity on Islamic lines. The rhetoric of Islamic socialism was now replaced with the rhetoric of Islam and the shariah. Zia proposed to Islamise Pakistan's politics and society and thereby move it closer to what he believed were the ideals for which the Pakistani state had been formed in the first place.

Zia developed a 'saviour' or 'messiah' complex and ruled the country with an aura of a God-ordained mission to transform Pakistan society on Islamic lines.<sup>29</sup> One of the first acts adopted as part of the drive for Islamisation was Martial Law Order No. 5 which introduced for the first time the Islamic punishment of amputation of the right hand from the wrist for theft, robbery and dacoity.<sup>30</sup> In addition to this, three major Islamisation laws introduced by Zia's regime included first, the Hudood Ordinances issued in February 1979 in order to enforce Islamic punishments for a number of crimes; second, an interest-free banking system, described as a profit and loss sharing (PLS) system initiated in January 1981 and a Federal Shariat Court established in 1980 which was incorporated in the constitution as a separate chapter.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to Islamisation, Zia had promised elections within ninety days of his assuming power in July 1977. However, the promised elections were never held and instead Zia embarked on civilianising his military rule. The civilianisation process was naturally restrictive and open to politicians and political parties supportive of Zia and his regime. The Pakistan Muslim League–Pagara faction was one of the first parties to be inducted in Zia's cabinet and this was followed soon after by other Pakistan National Alliance (PNA)<sup>32</sup> parties taking important cabinet positions. That political elites and parties were required for the successful running of the martial law administration was evident in the martial law regime's close cooperation with the Jamaat-i-Islami. Mian Tufail Muhammad, leader of Jamaat-i-Islami met Zia just before Bhutto's execution; the meeting was ostensibly held to take care of probable protests emerging out of Bhutto's planned execution. After the meeting, Mian Tufail asserted that 'Bhutto deserved to be hanged and that his execution would not lead to any deterioration of the political situation. If that happened he was confident that his party would take care of that.'<sup>33</sup> This proves that the period of military hegemony (as Saeed Shafqat puts it) did not alienate the political elites entirely; rather, the regime through a careful and clever policy of co-option was able to woo like-minded political elites and political parties to its side.

The co-optation of political elites and the civilianisation measures adopted, however, were not enough to prevent a mass political movement against Zia's dictatorship in the shape of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD). It was owing to such domestic pressure that Zia finally allowed for further political participation and national elections for a new government were held in 1985. Politicians contesting elections were presumed to be loyal to the Zia regime as well as the new government which was formed under the Prime Ministership of Mohammad Khan Junejo. In order to prevent the government from becoming all-powerful, Zia introduced sweeping changes in the 1973 Constitution including the insertion of Article 41(7) that allowed him to hold the office of the president as well as the Chief of Army Staff (COAS).<sup>34</sup>

Zia also reserved for himself the power to dismiss the elected government as president by Article 58 (2) (b), if he were of the firm view that the federal government could not be carried on in accordance with the constitution and an appeal to the electorate was necessary.<sup>35</sup> It is interesting to note that despite such political and constitutional safeguards including a supposedly weak and docile government and prime minister, Zia, as subsequent events and performance of the government proved, was not entirely dominant within the new political set-up. The government under the new Prime Minister, Mohammad Khan Junejo, challenged some of the important precepts of not only Zia's domestic but also his foreign policy. The political process was undoubtedly on a collision course with the bureaucratic-military establishment. Stated below are some of the points of conflict between the state (headed by Zia) and government (headed by Junejo):

- 1 In July 1986, Prime Minister Junejo after his successful visit to the United States, replaced Major General Naik Mohammad as Director, Intelligence Bureau without informing Zia and appointed a civilian Aslam Hayat as his successor.<sup>36</sup>
- 2 During the same year, 1986, Prime Minister Junejo removed Dr Mahboob-ul-Haq, Dr Asad and Dr Attiya Inayatullah (Zia protégés) from their cabinet posts and appointed Yasin Wattoo, a former PPP leader and minister as Finance Minister. The Prime Minister also refused to allow extensions of tenure to General K. M. Arif and General Rahimuddin, close associates of Zia and played a key role in the selection of Mirza Aslam Beg as Vice COAS.<sup>37</sup>
- 3 In November 1987, Junejo unceremoniously removed Lt. (Retd.) General Sahibzada Yaqoob as Foreign Minister (another Zia protégé) and appointed Zain Noorani as Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. Junejo appointed Lt. General (Retd.) Majeed Malik, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of the parliament to head the Federal Anti Corruption Committee and also spoke enthusiastically about reducing defence expenditure.<sup>38</sup>
- 4 Lastly, and most importantly, Prime Minister Junejo called an All Parties Conference on the Afghanistan issue to garner support for his stated objective of ending the war in Afghanistan and also to pursue the Geneva

peace process. The Prime Minister sent Zain Noorani, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs to sign the Geneva Accords, apparently without the consent of the President. Zia believed that it amounted to trivialising the sacrifices of the Afghan Mujahideen.<sup>39</sup>

In instituting changes within the command structure of the intelligence agencies as well as removing ministers, loyal to Zia, Junejo proved that the government was a whole lot more than a mere puppet of the military establishment. The government was proactive and vibrant enough to dictate to Zia its stance on the Geneva Peace Accords and its eventual dismissal in May 1988 proves that Zia feared that if the political process was allowed to run its course, it could well prove disastrous to his military-dominated regime.

It took an unexplained plane crash on 17 August 1988 to bring Zia's reign to an end and from then until 1999, when another dictator usurped power, Pakistan passed through a phase of democracy. In this interesting phase of Pakistan's history, the military took a backseat and allowed participatory politics; however, the former's constant interference within the political process undermined the prospects of democracy in Pakistan. The military's interference in the political process in the post-Zia period should not be seen, however, as an example simply of military's dominance. The dominance of the military only came as a response to the challenges that were posed to it by the respective governments of the time.

### *The phase of democracy and the role of the military (1988–99)*

After the death of Zia in a plane crash in August 1988, the subsequent elections in November 1988 resulted in the formation of a PPP government with Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister. Both Benazir Bhutto and the military proceeded with caution, the former realising the preponderance of the latter in Pakistan's political system, retained Sahibzada Yaqoob Khan, Zia's protégé, as Foreign Minister, and Article 58(2)(b) also remained in place. However, despite such accommodation, the political process led by the government came into conflict with the state as evident in the following key facts:

- 1 In May 1989, against the advice of the COAS, Benazir replaced the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)'s powerful chief Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, and posted him as corps commander in Multan.<sup>40</sup> Hamid Gul was a key strategist for the Afghan War during the Zia years, and his replacement with retired Lieutenant General Shams ur Rahman Kallu clearly displeased the military.
- 2 Benazir's politics also brought her into conflict with the President and the military over the issue of the retirement of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Admiral Sarohi. The President, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, asserted that the Constitution as amended by General Zia-ul-Haq in 1985 authorised the President to appoint and retire the Chairman, Joint Chiefs

of Staff Committee as well as the three service chiefs. After the conflict gained momentum, Benazir had to backtrack and 'her assertion annoyed and antagonized the President and the military, and both grew suspicious of Benazir Bhutto's intentions, reinforcing the perception among the military elite that the prime minister was deviating from her commitment not to interfere in military affairs'.<sup>41</sup>

- 3 In June 1990, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto also tried to influence the working of the Army's selection board, seeking to extend the term of Lieutenant General Alam Jan Mehsud, corps commander in Lahore. The board did not agree and upon completion of the corps commander's term, the COAS named Lieutenant General Ashraf Janjua to the post.<sup>42</sup>

The three incidents clearly indicate that the government was on a collision course with the state and despite Benazir's assurance not to interfere in the affairs of the military, the government found it hard not to intervene. The growing incidence of the government intervening in the affairs of the military was not to the latter's liking, resulting eventually in the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto's government on 6 August 1990. The dismissal paved the way for new elections which brought the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI), a conglomerate of various political parties, into power, with Nawaz Sharif as the Prime Minister. Though one would have thought that Nawaz Sharif, a Punjabi and a Zia protégé, would have sided well with the military establishment, he found the going tough. The political process under Sharif was beset with tensions with the state:

- 1 Nawaz Sharif's government and the military diverged on the issue of sending Pakistani forces as part of the collective security action against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The government and the military were clearly on a different wavelength, with the government supporting the sending of forces and the COAS, General Mirza Aslam Beg, propounding 'his "strategic defence" thesis, arguing that an act of defiance (i.e. Iraq's refusal to bow to Western pressures) was a prerequisite for making deterrence effective and credible'.<sup>43</sup>
- 2 The government and the Army Chief diverged again when, in July 1991, General Beg issued a statement on the growing threat of war with India. The government publicly disagreed with the statement by suggesting that there was no imminent threat of war.<sup>44</sup>
- 3 The new COAS, General Asif Nawaz Janjua was also unhappy with Nawaz Sharif's decision to appoint Lt. General Javed Nasir, known for strong Islamic orientations, as Director General of the ISI.<sup>45</sup>
- 4 Relations between the government and the Army also suffered due to the Operation Clean Up launched in the rural, and later urban, areas of Sindh by the Army against dacoits and other antisocial elements. Particularly in the urban areas, the government had to face a tricky situation as the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) was its ally. Nawaz Sharif admitted in

1995 (when he was no longer in power) that on occasions the Army authorities disregarded the instruction of the civilian government while conducting the security operation in Sindh.<sup>46</sup>

These facts along with strained relations between the Prime Minister and the President, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, brought matters to a head, and the government of Nawaz Sharif was ultimately dissolved by the President using his discretionary powers under the infamous Article 58(2)(b). The caretaker government formed after the dismissal of the government was led by a former World Bank employee, Moeen Qureshi and the general elections again brought a PPP government into power with Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister in 1993. The second Benazir administration was now more circumspect in its dealings with the military establishment. The government displayed political shrewdness in not intervening in military affairs, a cause for the dismissal of PPP's first government in August 1990. However, it was not too long before Benazir's government was dismissed by President Farooq Leghari on charges of corruption and maladministration.

Benazir's appreciation of the autonomy of the military and her resolve not to intervene in its internal affairs was evident when the government offered a one-year extension of service to General Abdul Waheed Kakar, which he declined.<sup>47</sup> General Abdul Waheed Kakar was replaced by General Jahangir Karamat, and although Benazir was disinclined to support his candidature, a consensus was finally reached on his appointment. Moreover, Benazir appeased the military by working hard towards the passage of the Brown Amendment in the US Congress (which released military equipment and weapons withheld in the US since October 1990). The US also agreed in principle to return the money that Pakistan had paid for the purchase of F-16 aircraft by selling these to some other country.<sup>48</sup>

The second Benazir administration despite its smooth sailing faced a barrage of criticism from civil society on charges of corruption in which it was alleged that the Prime Minister's husband Asif Ali Zardari was directly involved. The President presumably taking notice of such allegations spoke against the government bringing relations between the Presidency and the government to a virtual halt. The situation was interesting because the President, Farooq Leghari, formerly belonged to the PPP. However, it was President Leghari who invoked Article 58(2)(b) to dismiss the PPP government on 5 November 1996. The events which followed the dismissal were proof of where the President was taking his orders from. According to Rizvi,

The Army took control of the Prime Minister's house and secretariat, and Benazir Bhutto was not allowed any communication with her colleagues for several hours ... For the first time, all airports were closed and mobile phones were shut off. In Lahore, the Army cordoned off the Governor's official residence where Asif Ali Zardari was staying.<sup>49</sup>

Pakistan's experiment with democracy was once again brought to a halt by the military establishment and the ensuing elections once again brought



Nawaz Sharif to power. Sharif, like Benazir during her second term, was careful in not antagonising the military but the power of his government was manifest in some of his political decisions. The power mainly flowed from Nawaz Sharif's overwhelming majority in the National Assembly as well as three provincial assemblies excluding Sindh. This emboldened Nawaz Sharif's government and it sought to protect itself from arbitrary dismissal by way of the 13th Constitutional Amendment approved by the parliament in a couple of hours on 1 April 1997. The Amendment withdrew the power of the President to dismiss the government and to dissolve the National Assembly at his discretion.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the President's power to appoint the chiefs of the three services and some other key government functionaries was also curtailed; he could no longer set aside the recommendations of the Prime Minister for such appointments.<sup>51</sup> Also, the power to appoint the Chief Accountability Commissioner shifted from the President to the Prime Minister and the latter's secretariat was given a key role in initiating and investigating the charges of corruption against political leaders and senior civil servants.<sup>52</sup> In making such changes, Nawaz Sharif cordoned himself off from the machinations of the powerful bureaucratic–military establishment and also consolidated his own powerbase.

Assuming an unassailable position in the political system of Pakistan and emerging as the most powerful Prime Minister in the country after 1977, Nawaz Sharif's overtures in going ahead with nuclear tests in Balochistan in May 1998 in the wake of Indian nuclear explosions strengthened the institutional linkage between the government and the state. However, the government and the state fell out with each other after Nawaz Sharif's peace overtures to India. Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Pakistan in February 1999 labelled 'bus diplomacy' irked the military establishment leading to war in the Kargil sector of Kashmir in the summer of 1999. Nawaz Sharif rushed to Washington to pacify matters with the United States which again caused outrage in the military ranks, and the Prime Minister was now blamed for the retreat and for compromising on Pakistani national interests. Nawaz Sharif, it must be noted, had become wary of the Army and differences started to develop with the military after the nuclear tests. It was perhaps taking such apprehensions into consideration that Nawaz Sharif appointed General Pervez Musharraf (a junior-rank general) as the COAS who superseded two senior Pakhtoon and Punjabi generals.<sup>53</sup> After Nawaz Sharif's visit to Washington in July 1999, relations between Sharif and the Army nosedived further, leading to Musharraf's military coup on 12 October 1999. Since Article 58(2)(b) stood defunct, there was only one possible route to dismiss the elected government and that was through a military takeover.

As far as ethnic conflict and the state–government distinction is concerned, during Zia's period, the predominant institution in shaping ethnic conflict was the state. As the empirical chapter on Sindh ([Chapter 5](#)) will make clear, it was Zia who on the pretext of crushing the political opposition to his regime in Sindh fostered an aggressive Sindhi nationalism against the Pakistani state. The government, since it was not in place, was inconsequential to the

dynamics of ethnic conflict in Sindh. On the other hand, ethnic conflict during the phase of democracy (1988–99) was concentrated primarily in the urban centres of Sindh and was directed mainly against the MQM. The decision to launch the military operation against the MQM was taken at the Army General Headquarters and was announced as a joint strategy of the political and military leadership of the country to handle the critical law and order situation in Sindh, with a major crackdown on ‘anti-social and anti-state elements’.<sup>54</sup> There are reasons to suggest that the Army, at least during the initial phase, was the driving force behind the Operation Clean-Up while the government was primarily a spectator. However, after the withdrawal of the Army from Karachi in 1994, the second government of Benazir Bhutto was instrumental in speeding up the military operation against the MQM under the Interior Minister, Naseerullah Babar, with the aid of paramilitary forces and the police.

What does the state–government conflict in post-1971 Pakistan teach us? The fact is that the state–government relationship should be viewed in more dynamic rather than static terms. Though the state (famously referred to as the Establishment in Pakistan) has been a powerful entity with the capability to usurp and exercise power, the government and its power cannot be conveniently sidestepped and ignored, as Aziz, Saeed and Rizvi do in their respective analyses. The government and political processes are viewed by the Establishment as anathema, for if the political processes are allowed to run their natural course, the more such processes become institutionalised. The brakes applied on the political process in Pakistan can have no other reason other than if allowed to function smoothly and independently, it has the propensity to strike at the very centre of Pakistan’s political jugular vein, that is, the bureaucratic–military nexus. Furthermore, from the point of view of ethnic conflict, the state–government distinction is once again seminal. Most of the studies in the following section fail to put this distinction into an analytical frame, placing emphasis merely on the variable of Pakistan’s ethnic imbalance in state institutions or the centralised–interventionist nature of governance as contributing to ethnic conflict. As will be made clear in the next section, the analysis pertaining to the ethnic make-up of the Pakistani state needs to be supplemented by the Pakistani state’s autonomous powers; and analysis of the centralised nature of Pakistan’s political system needs to be qualified with an assertion of the state–government distinction.

### **Academic works on ethnic politics in Pakistan: Mehtab Ali Shah, Tahir Amin, Adeel Khan and Iftikhar Malik**

The works on ethnic politics in Pakistan which I critically evaluate include: Mehtab Ali Shah’s *The Foreign Policy of Pakistan: Ethnic Impacts on Diplomacy* (1997); Tahir Amin’s *Ethno-National Movements of Pakistan: Domestic and International Factors* (1993); Adeel Khan’s *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan* (2005); and Iftikhar Malik’s *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology and Ethnicity* (1997).

Of the four works, Tahir Amin's and Mehtab Ali Shah's work have a direct bearing on the present work, as they deal with ethnic politics in the post-1971 period. Tahir Amin's exclusive focus is on power-sharing and how it influences the decline or rise of ethnic movements; Mehtab Ali Shah brings into light the ethnic domination of the Pakistani state by the Punjabis causing an increase in ethnic conflicts; Adeel Khan and Iftikhar Malik focus on the centralised-interventionist nature of the Pakistani state and its role in accentuating ethnic conflicts.

Beginning with Mehtab Ali Shah's analysis of the post-1971 Pakistan state and ethnic movements, the author's analysis is centred on providing an ethnic interpretation of the Pakistani state and then deriving its domestic and external policy from its explicit and peculiar ethnic character. In this scheme of things, Shah finds the Punjabis as the primary community which has shaped the destiny of the Pakistani state. Moreover, the state controlled by the Punjabi ethnic group has tended to deny the existence and identity of peripheral groups such as the Baloch and Sindhis. The Pakistani state is dominated by the Punjabis and functions according to their worldview. According to the author:

The entire foreign policy apparatus is almost wholly dominated by Punjabis and this means that a Punjabi view of the world is projected as Pakistan's position on international affairs. And they persistently attempt to use foreign policy as an input into domestic politics ... any challenge to it [Punjabi domination] and to the corresponding status quo has been taken by the Punjabis as a challenge to the security of the Pakistani state. Thus, 'Punjabi interests' are being projected as the 'national interests of Pakistan'.<sup>55</sup>

Shah very carefully dissects the Punjabi province into its three linguistic components and finds political power concentrated in central Punjab which includes Lahore, Shaikhupura, Faisalabad, Wazirabad and Sialkot districts.<sup>56</sup> The other two regions are northern and southern Punjab respectively. The upper or northern Punjab region comprises Rawalpindi, Jhelum and Chakwal districts where the spoken language is Pothowari while southern Punjab bordering Sindh and Balochistan up to the Multan district comprises the Siraiki-speaking districts.<sup>57</sup> Out of the three linguistic zones, central Punjab has the largest stake in the country's agricultural and industrial output, as well as in its military and civilian establishments, while the Pothowar and Siraiki regions are peripheral and largely marginalised from Pakistan's decision-making processes.<sup>58</sup>

Taking Shah's analysis at face value, one is bound to see the Pakistani state as a Punjabi state which works to augment the power of the Punjabi ethnic group vis-à-vis non-dominant ethnic groups. The domestic and foreign policy of the Pakistani state, according to Shah's account, is an extension and expression of the Punjabi interest which negates the interests as well as identities of non-dominant ethnic groups. Such an analysis needs to be qualified,

as it completely negates and ignores the institutional interests of the bureaucratic–military nexus as well as the government by elevating the variable of ethnicity as the sole determinant of Pakistan's domestic and foreign policy. It is a truism that Punjabis dominate the institutions of the state as well as the government, but then the interests of institutions are such that they may, at times, be larger than that of ethnic affiliation prompting retaliatory measures or actions against personnel belonging to their own ethnic group.

For example, Shah mentions the episode of the dismissal of the Punjabi Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, but only in passing. This is logical considering the fact that Shah's hypothesis does not allow him to look beyond his primary dictum that the 'Pakistani state is a Punjabi state'. Moreover, on both occasions, Nawaz Sharif was dismissed after conflict with a non-Punjabi head of state and Chief of Army Staff respectively. In the first instance of his dismissal in 1993, the head of the state was a Pashtun, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, while in the second instance when a military coup took place in October 1999, the then reigning Chief of Army Staff was General Pervez Musharraf, a Mohajir. Ignoring such subtleties, Shah concludes that after Benazir Bhutto took over the country in 1993, 'the Punjab still wielded enormous influence over the country's decision making processes'.<sup>59</sup> Commenting further on the grip of the Punjab on the Pakistani nation-state, he states:

It could be said that in the mid-1990s the Punjab's writ ran from Toorkhom (the border post between Pakistan and Afghanistan) to the coasts of the Arabian Sea in Sindh and Balochistan. Pakistan appears to be a greater Punjab, as big as Ranjit Singh or Allama Iqbal dreamed.<sup>60</sup>

However, the dismissal of Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister in 1993 and 1999 attests to the fact that the institutional interests of the Pakistani state overpowered considerations of ethnicity in order to overthrow and dismiss a fellow Punjabi Prime Minister from power. If one is to proceed with Shah's said analysis, the dismissal of Nawaz Sharif is an example of a grave paradox whereby a Pashtun and Mohajir were responsible for dismissing a Punjabi head of government. Moreover, even if one configures that it was not the personalities of Ghulam Ishaq Khan or Pervez Musharraf, which were responsible for Nawaz Sharif's dismissal and that the Punjabi dominated bureaucratic–military nexus was behind his removal, then another grave paradox is generated. How and why did the Punjabi-dominated state remove a Punjabi head of government? The paradox is easily resolved if one, for a moment, overlooks ethnicity and takes the institutional interests of the bureaucracy and military as the major causal variable. Nawaz Sharif as head of the government found himself on a collision course with the bureaucracy–military and hence was removed from power by the latter without due regard

to the fact that Nawaz Sharif was a Punjabi. It is not that the state is not dominated by the Punjabis and that it does not work to their respective advantage; however, to place too much emphasis on ethnicity undermines the autonomous role of the state and its powers.

Besides Shah, Tahir Amin also focuses on the post-1971 period but his primary purpose is to study ethnic movements. Tahir Amin's work is based on a study of three ethnonational movements of Pakistan: (a) the Pushtunistan movement; (b) the Jeay Sind movement; and (c) the Baloch movement.<sup>61</sup> Amin's primary motive is to understand the rise and decline of ethnic movements and his central hypothesis is:

that the political policy of the state elite, intendedly or unintendedly has led to an increasing power-sharing with the Pushtun elite which in turn has led to the decline of the Pushtunistan movement, but the Sindhi Baluch elites' exclusion from the power-sharing arrangements has led to the upsurge of the Jeeya Sind and the Baluch movements among their respective ethnic groups.<sup>62</sup>

At the outset, Amin's major hypothesis may be construed as overly simplistic and straightforward. Moreover, what precisely Amin means by 'decline' or 'upsurge' is not quite clear. Does decline of the Pashtunistan movement also mean and imply that Pashtun nationalism as an ideological and emotional force has also declined? Have the Pashtuns stopped thinking in terms of their own identity and now invoke a Pakistani identity? Moreover, does the upsurge of the Sindh and Baloch movements imply that they stand to pose a steady challenge to the power of the Pakistani state? After the insurgency in the 1970s, the Baloch movement experienced a decline (not an upsurge) as far its political movement was concerned. The Baloch sense of grievance remained, for their political demands were not satisfied (mainly relating to local autonomy and control over their own resources) but their political force was weakened after a military encounter with the state from 1973 to 1977. Thus, Amin's invocation of 'upsurge' is confusing, as from 1977 to 2001 the Baloch nationalist movement remained a passive force both politically and militarily.

Similarly, the Sindhi nationalist movement after a military confrontation with the state in the 1980s up until present times has not manifested itself as a political and military force as it did during Zia-ul-Haq's reign. Most importantly, the Sindhi nationalist party most responsible for confronting the state in the 1980s was Rasool Bux Palijo's Awami Tahreek and not G. M. Syed's Jeay Sindh. Amin very incorrectly posits the Jeay Sindh movement as the primary Sindhi nationalist movement with Awami Tahreek and even the Sindh branch of the PPP led by Mumtaz Bhutto as its offshoot.<sup>63</sup> G. M. Syed's Jeay Sindh Mahaz was certainly not the mother organisation which gave birth to or was responsible, in any way, for the formation of other Sindhi nationalist parties. Palijo's Awami Tahreek was in fact formed two years before the

formation of Jeay Sindh Mahaz. Furthermore, Amin fails to distinguish between the ideological positions of Syed who proclaimed a separatist political agenda as opposed to Palijo who argues for a reconstituted federal Pakistani polity. In a similar vein, Amin does not account for differences between Syed and Mumtaz Bhutto for the former considered the latter and his cousin Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as a stooge of the Punjab.

As an example of how power-sharing leads to the diminution of ethnic movements, Amin further notes that 'in the two brief phases of the Pakistani history (1947–1953) and (1971–1973) when the democratic system was in operation and the state elite shared power with the regional elites, the ethnonational movements either remained dormant or immediately began to decline'.<sup>64</sup>

Amin's temporal configuration of the years of democracy in Pakistan is incorrect and in many ways misleading. In the first such democratic phase (1947–53), the Pakistani state had to wrestle with the force of Bengali ethnonationalism and nowhere was power-sharing adopted as the major principle of Pakistani political life. The 1952 Bengali Language Movement which resulted in the deaths of four students in East Bengal heightened feelings of Bengali ethnonationalism. Moreover, the forced incorporation of the Khanate of Kalat into Pakistan in March 1948 generated the first Baloch nationalist movement against the Pakistani state led by Prince Abdul Karim, the Khan of Kalat's younger brother. Furthermore, in the second identified phase (1971–3), the Baloch nationalist movement intensified after it became evident that Bhutto was not interested in sharing power with the National Awami Party (NAP) provincial governments in Balochistan and the NWFP (North West Frontier Province – now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). The important question when considering the timeline is not when the ruling elites decided to share power and when not; the crucial question is why did the ruling elites decide to abandon power-sharing when they had implemented the principle in the first place. If Bhutto was willing to share power from 1971–3 (which he certainly was not in favour of) why did he abandon it after 1973? Thus, Amin's temporal configuration regarding the phase of democracy in Pakistan needs to be critically qualified and assessed.

A third major work is that of Adeel Khan's *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan*. It may be stated that, East Pakistan notwithstanding, Adeel Khan's book is the first comprehensive analysis of the four ethnic movements that have presented a challenge to the Pakistani state since independence. By including the Pashtuns, Baloch, Sindhis and Mohajirs, the book is a step further than the work of Tahir Amin, which did not deal with the Mohajirs. The theoretical element of the book is highly interesting and lucid, offering a fresh approach to theories of the state and nationalism. Moreover, Khan provides a cogent critique of academic works on Pakistan; his two main criticisms being that they border on 'untheorised history', and that there is an 'overestimation of the importance of individuals'.<sup>65</sup> In contrast, Khan puts forwards an analysis of the Pakistani state and ethnic conflict that is rooted in the socio-economic context.

Khan's central thesis borders and focuses on 'the role of the interventionist modern state in creating, hardening and radicalizing national sentiment'.<sup>66</sup> In addition, Khan also treats the ill representation of the non-dominant ethnic groups in the state structure as an independent variable causing the rise of ethnic movements. In the empirical chapters, both arguments (relative to the power of the state and ethnic representation) vary, for example, when it comes to Balochistan, the argument relative to the interventionist state receives more attention than ethnic representation, the latter being a major focus of the empirical sections on Sindhis and Mohajirs. Thus, the interventionist state, according to such an understanding fuelled ethnic resentment in Balochistan but not in Sindh. Moreover, the argument on the interventionist state loses relevance while discussing Pashtun ethnic nationalism, especially when the Pashtuns became part of the state structure. The outstanding research question then is why the interventionist and ethnically exclusive Pakistani state transformed itself into an accommodative state when it came to the Pashtuns, and not the Baloch, Sindhis and Mohajirs where feelings of ethnic nationalism intensified?

Another interesting work which seeks to unravel both the authoritarian and centralised features of the Pakistani state along with concentration on ethnicity as a major focus is that of Iftikhar Malik. Malik's major hypothesis establishes that Pakistan's dilemma in being unable to establish good governance despite successive efforts, has largely revolved around a continuous disequilibrium between state and civil society.<sup>67</sup> The thesis seeks to elaborate the argument that though the state has developed since independence, civil society has not. And the moot point is that the development of the state has come at the expense of vital civil institutions 'including the constitution, political parties, pluralism, an independent judiciary, a free press and other think-tanks and activist groups outside the public sector'.<sup>68</sup>

The unbridled power of the Pakistani state including the bureaucracy–military have fomented a polity where a common political culture has not taken roots. Malik contends that Punjab is the nerve centre of the Pakistani state and its domination of state institutions has put other ethnic groups at peril. However, at the same time that Punjab and its domination are relevant factors in estimating the politicisation of ethnicity in Pakistan; Malik proceeds with caution and comes up with a more qualified position as compared to Mehtab Ali Shah. Malik notes that 'while not absolving Punjabis from their domination of national affairs, it is the case that diversity and unevenness within the Punjab has been overlooked by its critics'.<sup>69</sup> Unfortunately, this strand of the argument is grossly understated in Malik's work. Rather than taking up the argument and analysing what the diversity and unevenness in Punjab is and how it impacts on the overall relationship between the state and non-dominant ethnic groups in Pakistan, the author's engagement with the analysis is feeble and virtually non-existent. It seems that what Malik intends to convey through such a characterisation is the argument that similar problems of governance and underdevelopment effect Punjab as it does in

other provinces. But then how does Punjab compare with other provinces? And what exactly the grievances of the Punjabi people are from their very own real or imagined Pakistani state is entirely absent from Malik's schema.

Besides the argument on the dominance of the Punjab, there are two major analyses which Malik invokes in order to explain both the rise of ethnic movements and the politicisation of ethnicity in Pakistan. As far as ethnic movements are concerned, Malik contends that 'regional/territorial identification, provincialisation, historical and cultural postulations, lingual commonalities and economic denominators have, with variations, continued to play a major role in the formation and transformation of ethno-nationalist movements in the country'.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, Malik points out the following factors as important in the politicisation of ethnicity in Pakistan: 'particularistic state structure, authoritarianism and inter-regional imbalances together with uneven development in line with major demographic changes caused by immigration'.<sup>71</sup>

By imputing two distinct causal variables responsible for the rise of ethnic movements and politicisation of ethnicity, Malik treats the two phenomena as if they are mutually exclusive. It may be contested, with some authority, that they are not and that the formation of ethnic political parties or, in more general terms, ethnic movements, is the seminal point where one could empirically verify that ethnicity has become politicised. Malik when assessing the formation of ethnic movements points towards regional identification, provincialisation, culture and language as important variables. However, such objective criteria are ones through which essential features of ethnic groups are identified, not movements. In order to explicate ethnic movements, objective criteria need to be supplemented (and in cases even overlooked) with subjective ideas and ideologies of ethnic elites. As Brubaker (2005) contends, ethnic organisations or movements need to be kept analytically distinct from ethnic groups, because it is not ethnic groups which are in conflict with the state (and government); rather, it is the political organisation representing (some, not all) members of the ethnic group which are involved in ethnic conflicts. Moreover, language, culture, regional identification are not objective criteria spawning ethnic movements claiming political, social, economic and cultural rights for their respective group, rather it is the political context which instrumentalises ethnicity as a force to be reckoned with.

Besides ethnicity, all cited works take the state as an important variable in understanding the rise of ethnic movements in Pakistan; however, all of them ignore the subtleties of keeping the state and government distinct from each other in both political and academic analysis. Mehtab Ali Shah, Tahir Amin, Adeel Khan and Iftikhar Malik fail to recognise that the state and government are two distinct entities, and that the latter can have an important role to play in ethnic conflict. This was typically the case in Balochistan in the 1970s where the government was most responsible for the ensuing civil war, not the state. Moreover, all these works place central emphasis on the rise of ethnic movements, politics and ensuing conflict with the state, but understate the dynamics of politics which inhere within ethnic groups. With the



exception of Tahir Amin, none of the works bring into play the dynamics of intra-ethnic conflict as essential to the study of ethnic conflicts. Intra-ethnic conflict is ably exploited by the state, as well as consciously engineered, in order to weaken the resistance of ethnic groups. Keeping this element in perspective, the Punjabi state as much as it browbeats the Baloch, Sindhi or Mohajir also generates allies and alliances within the same ethnic group involved in conflict with the state. Thus, in order to study ethnic conflict, the present work contends that intra-ethnic conflict needs to be analytically put into perspective along with arguments on the power of the state. Intra-ethnic conflict, as will be seen, played an instrumental role in causing ethnic movements to decline, ensuring victory to the state and proving that conflicts *within* ethnic groups are as essential to the study of ethnic politics as are conflicts *between* ethnic groups.

### **Ethnic movements in post-1971 Pakistan: the Baloch, Sindhis and Mohajirs**

An examination of ethnic movements in post-1971 Pakistan from the vantage point of theory brings into light an interesting counter-factual. Theories of nationalism bordering on modernism (including Gellner and Hroch) put emphasis on how industrialisation and the development of a class structure typical of capitalist society are important historical processes influencing the rise of ethnonational movements. However, ethnonational movements in Pakistan, specifically the Baloch and Sindhi emanated historically from tribal and rural socio-economic structures respectively. These traditional structures have not in any way inhibited the rise of Baloch and Sindhi ethnonational movements, presenting an interesting conundrum to the pioneering works of Gellner and Hroch. A quick glance at the rural–urban divide in Sindh and Balochistan will make the overall argument clearer.

According to the 1998 population census in Pakistan, the Baloch and Sindhis comprise 3.57 per cent and 14.1 per cent of the total population of Pakistan respectively. In the province of Balochistan, the Baloch make up 54.76 per cent of the population followed by Pashto speakers who comprise 29.64 per cent of the province's population.<sup>72</sup> With respect to the urban–rural divide, 57.55 per cent of the Baloch are concentrated in rural areas, while 45.84 per cent live in urban areas.<sup>73</sup> It must be stated here that Balochistan represents a rugged, mountainous terrain where rural areas are more tribal hinterlands dominated by the tribal chieftain (Sardar), while the urban areas are no more than little towns, with the exception of Quetta, which is a major trading and urban centre. The major districts of Balochistan display the urban–rural divide characteristics as detailed in [Table 3.1](#).

Figures from all four corners of Balochistan's districts prove that in almost all districts with the exception of Quetta, the percentages of people residing in rural areas are significantly higher than in urban centres. In fact, in Kohlu, Kech, Mastung, Khuzdar and Kalat which both historically and in contemporary times have been the political nerve centre of the Baloch national movement, the percentage of people living in rural areas is remarkably high.

Table 3.1 Urban–rural divisions in the districts of Balochistan<sup>74</sup>

<i>Name of district</i>	<i>Rural population (%)</i>	<i>Urban population (%)</i>
Quetta	25.64	74.36
Chagai	82.28	17.72
Sibi	67.95	32.05
Nasirabad	84.37	15.63
Kohlu	90.32	9.68
Khuzdar	71.68	28.32
Mastung	85.34	14.66
Kech	83.40	16.60
Kalat	85.79	14.21
Gwadar	46.00	54.00
Lasbela	63.08	36.92

As far as the urban–rural divide in the province of Sindh is concerned, the following data reveals that a majority of Sindhi speakers reside in the rural as opposed to urban areas. According to the 1998 Provincial Census Report of Sindh, the following are percentages of the major linguistic groups in the province of Sindh: Urdu speakers, 21.05 per cent, Punjabi speakers 6.99 per cent, Sindhi speakers, 59.73 per cent, Pashto speakers 4.19 per cent and Balochi, 2.11 per cent.<sup>75</sup> It is interesting to note that the ethnic group comprising the majority in terms of their presence in the urban centres of Sindh are the Urdu speakers, not Sindhis. Urdu speakers comprise 41.48 per cent of the total population of Sindh residing in urban areas, while the Sindhis are 25.79 per cent.<sup>76</sup> Alternatively, Sindhis comprise an absolute majority of people living in rural areas where their percentage share is 92.02 per cent while that of the Mohajirs is a mere 1.62 per cent. The larger presence of the Urdu speakers in Sindh has to do with their overwhelming majority in the capital city of Sindh, Karachi, which is also the largest city of Pakistan as well as the business, finance and industrial capital of the Pakistani state. Within Karachi, it is interesting to note that out of a total population of approximately 9.8 million, according to the 1998 census, Urdu speakers comprise 48.5 per cent of the population while the Sindhis are a paltry, 7.22 per cent.<sup>77</sup> The urban–rural divide for major districts of Sindh are as detailed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Urban–rural divisions in the districts of Sindh<sup>78</sup>

<i>Name of district</i>	<i>Rural population (%)</i>	<i>Urban population (%)</i>
Karachi	5.25	94.75
Hyderabad	49.19	50.81
Dadu	78.64	21.36
Thatta	88.79	11.20
Khairpur	76.38	23.61

With these figures in perspective, it may be assessed that Sindh is comparatively more urbanised than comparable socio-economic development in Balochistan. As noted, however, Urdu speakers rather than Sindhis make up the majority of the ethnic group residing in urban centres. This does not mean though that a Sindhi national consciousness or national movement has not emerged or is inconsequential. Similarly, in Quetta, the premier urban centre in Balochistan, it is the Pashtuns who are the largest single group with 30 per cent followed closely by the Baloch who make up around 27.6 per cent of the population.<sup>79</sup> The Pashtuns also control most of the trade and commercial activities in the city as opposed to the non-industrial Baloch.<sup>80</sup>

Despite the comparatively lesser levels of socio-economic development, as evident in Balochistan and Sindh, the ethnonational movement still remained pertinent and a focal point of political mobilisation and activity. The resounding electoral success of the NAP in Balochistan in 1970 signalled the force of ethnonationalism as relevant in traditional, hierarchical tribal societies which had not experienced modernisation. Balochistan became the centre of nationalist activity after the central government ruled by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his PPP instigated a local revolt with the aid of Baloch Sardars against the NAP government. The NAP government formed in Balochistan in 1972 hardly survived ten months in power and was eventually dismissed after it was alleged that Baloch nationalists were conspiring for independence and preparing themselves for a civil war with the Pakistani state.

Bhutto immediately engaged the Pakistan Army and for four years a civil war between the Army and Baloch nationalists ensued. During this time, Baloch nationalist leaders were put behind bars by Bhutto, including Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo, Khair Bakhsh Marri and Attaullah Mengal. However, as much as Balochistan was burning supposedly under the flame of Baloch nationalism, there were important Baloch leaders who were happy to side with the government. In the 1970s, Bhutto was able to elicit the all-important political support of Nawab Akbar Bugti who developed differences with Baloch nationalists belonging to the NAP mainly over the issue of the Governorship of Balochistan. Bugti was clearly unhappy with the appointment of Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo and with the emerging differences between him and the NAP leadership, Bugti decided to lend his support to Bhutto and work actively against the NAP. After Bhutto dismissed the NAP provincial government in February 1973, it was Nawab Akbar Bugti who assumed the position of the Governor of Balochistan.

After the Balochistan conflict in the 1970s, the Zia regime had to contend with the force of Sindhi nationalism in the 1980s. Sindhi nationalism in the 1980s was inextricably linked with the pro-democracy protest movement, the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), which came into prominence in 1983. Zia launched a military operation in rural Sindh mainly to suppress the political support of the PPP but the military operation had the effect of intensifying Sindhi nationalism. The beacon light of Sindhi nationalism during this time was Rasool Bux Palijo's Awami Tahreek.

It is interesting to note that, as was the case in Balochistan in the 1970s, the state found it prudent to indulge in divide-and-rule tactics to curtail the force of Sindhi nationalism. With this purpose, mutual accommodation was reached between Zia-ul-Haq and G. M. Syed, the father of Sindhi nationalism. Tahir Amin fails to appreciate the mutual accommodation between Syed and the state, instead arguing that non-sharing of power had led to an upsurge in the Jeay Sindh movement. The Jeay Sindh movement, on the other hand, did not experience an upsurge; rather, Zia very carefully brought Syed onto his side and was successful in neutralising Syed and his Jeay Sindh Mahaz. Moreover, not only Zia engineered a mutual accommodation between Syed and his regime but also between Syed and the newly emerging MQM led by Altaf Hussain. The purpose was simple: both Syed in rural Sindh and MQM in urban Sindh could be utilised to counter the PPP and the MRD.

After the Sindhis in the 1980s, it was the Mohajirs in the 1990s who were engaged in a civil war with the state. The MQM had emerged as a powerful and popular ethnic party in the urban areas of Sindh, mainly, Karachi and Hyderabad in the mid-1980s. It also won impressive electoral victories in the national and provincial elections in 1988 and 1990 respectively. However, the state started to view the MQM with suspicion mainly because it was alleged to be involved in criminal activities such as ransom for kidnapping, extortion, car thefts, etc. In May 1992, the military launched an operation in rural Sindh against dacoits and armed robbers but within a month, the military moved into the urban areas mainly Karachi and Hyderabad and the MQM became a victim of the state's oppression.

The MQM, at the time, was part of the ruling coalition and the ruling party, IJI, voiced its concern against the military operation. Some members of the government, including the Chief Minister of the Punjab, Ghulam Hyder Wyne, expressed displeasure at the army operation.<sup>81</sup> The Army, however, did not pay much heed to such statements and continued with its military operation after which it withdrew by the end of 1994. Even after its withdrawal, the military operation continued unabated with powers now assumed by the Rangers and the police. The second Benazir administration gave political support to the operation, ostensibly to appease the military and her Sindhi constituency at the same time, and by 1996 most of the MQM die-hard activists had either been killed, gone underground or had left the country. The MQM leader, Altaf Hussain, had left Pakistan for the United Kingdom almost six months before the military operation in January 1992 and up until today continues to reside there.

As in the case of Baloch and Sindhis, the state's divide-and-rule tactics were equally evident in the case of the Mohajirs. The state's support to the breakaway leaders and faction of the MQM, the MQM (Haqiqi) led by Afaq Ahmed and Amir Khan, was instrumental in ensuring success to the military operation and the eventual liquidation of the MQM and its party members.

The next three chapters present in specific detail the dynamics of ethnic conflict, ethnic politics and ethnic movements in post-1971 Pakistan with respect to the Baloch, Sindhis and Mohajirs.

## 4 Balochistan

### Ethnic politics in a tribal setting

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan but the least developed economically. According to the 1998 census, Balochistan comprises only 4.96 per cent of the total population of Pakistan and stands fourth among provinces according to population size.<sup>1</sup> In terms of area, though, it is the largest province covering about 44 per cent of Pakistan's territory. It borders Iran and Afghanistan where the Baloch population also resides and has a long sea coast with access to the Middle Eastern and Gulf states. Linguistically, Balochi, Pashto and Brahui are the three major languages of the province.<sup>2</sup>

The Brahuies have played an influential role in propagating nationalist goals and ideals. For many years, the Khan of Kalat, a Brahui, was the central figure in the nationalist politics of Balochistan. In addition, nationalist leaders such as Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd and Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo were of Brahui origin. On the other hand, the Pashtuns of Balochistan have sided with the Baloch on questions relating to provincial autonomy. The Baloch and Pashtuns remained active political allies under the banner of the National Awami Party (NAP). However, as will be seen, not all Pashtuns supported the Baloch, nor did all of the Brahuies. In fact, the same can be said of the Baloch themselves. This may be construed as the vantage point for looking into the inter- and intra-ethnic processes at work in Balochistan and the way they impacted on the Baloch nationalist movement in the post-colonial politics of Pakistan and specifically in the 1970s when Baloch nationalists were engaged in an armed conflict with the Pakistani state.

The Baloch social structure represents a historical development over more than a thousand years in which several tribal groupings united to form a Baloch confederacy (Khanate of Kalat) which existed in a tributary status to the Persian, Afghan and later the British Empire. These tribal groupings are the mainstay of Baloch society with the most powerful being the Marris, Mengals and Bugtis.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in its socio-structural context, the Baloch differ from the more feudal and rural Sindhi and the urban Mohajir ethnic movements.

The tribal structure in Balochistan, however, has not impeded the growth of ethnonationalism. In fact, many tribal Sardars have been in the forefront in invoking the rights and prerogatives of the Baloch nation. Moreover, the Sardars have been aided by the Baloch middle class who played an influential

role in nationalist politics in the first half of the twentieth century and in the post-colonial period as well. As laid out in the theoretical framework, the Baloch case study will be analysed from the perspective that takes ethnonationalism as a form of 'ideological' politics espousing a political programme proportionate to that aim. Thus, ethnic movements are not solely about the acquisition of power, as Breuilly<sup>4</sup> contends, nor are they philosophically impoverished, as Anderson<sup>5</sup> claims. As will be seen later in the chapter, Baloch nationalists were engaged in a normative debate on Baloch society and politics.

The chapter begins with a brief history of the Khanate of Kalat and moves then to the development of nationalist politics in Balochistan in the twentieth century. Furthermore, the role of Mohammad Ali Jinnah with respect to the Khanate of Kalat before independence and after is carefully examined with a view to elucidating the rise of Baloch nationalism. The insurgency of 1973–7 is the main focus of the chapter and is analysed with respect to the variable of intra- as well as inter-ethnic conflict and competition, which hampered the resistance of the Baloch nationalists. As will be seen the main instigator of the ethnic conflict in Balochistan in the 1970s was not the state but the government of the time led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

### **The Khanate of Kalat**

The Brahui Khanate of Kalat sits at the apex of Baloch nationalist struggle.<sup>6</sup> The Khanate was established in 1666 by Mir Ahmad but his domain comprised only Sarawan and Jhalawan.<sup>7</sup> However, it was under the leadership of Mir Nasir Khan in the eighteenth century that the Khanate evolved into a centralised institution of power and authority. Nasir Khan is credited with uniting the disperse tribes and their leaders under one kingdom.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Nasir Khan I is credited with providing a democratic and constitutional facade to his reign. After nominating Sardars from each tribe through their respective elders and councils, he laid the basis for a Majlis-e-Masahibeen, or an Upper House and a Majlis-e-Mashawarat, or Lower House. Both these houses were responsible for advising Khan during times of war and peace.<sup>9</sup>

Mir Nasir Khan ascended to the throne of Kalat after he recognised Afghan paramountcy in the affairs of Balochistan. However, in 1758, he declared independence which resulted in the Afghan–Baloch war. Though the Baloch were successful in the initial stages of the conflict, Ahmad Shah Abdali and his forces were able to subdue the Khan by invading Kalat. However, recognising the strategic importance of Balochistan, Ahmad Shah offered a treaty which is known as the Kalat Treaty, or the treaty of non-interference.

According to the terms of the treaty signed in 1758, the annual tribute, which Nasir Khan paid to Ahmad Shah, was revoked with Shah also guaranteeing the non-interference in the internal affairs of the Baloch. In response, Nasir Khan was to provide Ahmad Shah with his forces if he was at war against external enemies.<sup>10</sup> The importance of this last term of the treaty can be understood from the fact that Mir Nasir Khan contributed his troops in the Third Battle of Panipat where

Ahmad Shah Abdali fought against the Marhattas and was victorious. During the reign of Nasir Khan, the borders of Balochistan stretched as far as Punjab including Dera Ghazi Khan in the East. In the north, it included the south-west limits of the Helmand River in Afghanistan. On the western front, it included Sistan, Kirman and Bandar Abbas in Iran while in the south; it included land on the coast of the Arabian Sea stretching from Karachi to Bandar Abbas.<sup>11</sup>

The power of the Khanate of Kalat declined after Nasir Khan I and the nineteenth century brought the British into Balochistan. British involvement in Balochistan was in lieu of its imperial rivalry with the Russian Empire. Balochistan bordered Afghanistan, the latter being susceptible to Russians because of its geographical proximity to the Central Asian region, where the Russians were now slowly and gradually expanding.<sup>12</sup> The British sensing this threat engaged in the First Afghan War (1839–42) and for this purpose elicited the support of the Khan of Kalat. The Khan was disinclined to support the British which ultimately resulted in a defeat for the latter. On 13 November 1839, the British, exacting revenge on the Khan of Kalat, invaded his state and killed the Khan and his followers.<sup>13</sup> Thus, began a new era in Balochistan's history where the British gained paramountcy in its internal affairs which was to last for a little over hundred years.

The British, despite being militarily victorious had to contend with warring tribes and their internal squabbles. More often than not the warring tribes would disrupt British trade access to neighbouring Afghanistan through the Bolan Pass. In one such incident in 1869, the Bolan Pass was closed owing to disputes between the Khan and Brahui Sardars. The Brahui Sardars were aided by the Marris who had easy access to the Pass by four of five different routes.<sup>14</sup> This state of affairs was not acceptable to the British who provided a subsidy of Rs. 50,000 to the Khan of Kalat on condition of keeping the Bolan Pass open.<sup>15</sup> The British sent for Captain Robert Sandeman with the intention to mediate between the Khan and the Sardars and to open up the Bolan. Robert Sandeman in his ventures into Balochistan did not only negotiate the opening up of the Bolan Pass but laid the basis of a lasting tribal settlement between the Khan of Kalat and the warring tribes. After arduous negotiations and extensive tours of the area, Sandeman orchestrated a treaty in 1876 by terms of which peace was established and the Pass opened for trade. The treaty was significant for two reasons: in the first instance, the treaty called upon the Khan and the Sardars that if a dispute arose between them 'they were to refer it to the British officer appointed to see the agreement in question carried out, and they would have to abide by his decision'.<sup>16</sup> Second, Captain Sandeman preserved and strengthened the status quo by according more powers to the Sardars over his subjects. According to R. J. Bruce:

The keystone of the radical change which was introduced by Captain Sandeman was the recognition of the hereditary chiefs and headmen, and supporting and working through them, and exacting their responsibilities, and, no matter at what cost or labor, allowing no crime to go unpunished.<sup>17</sup>

Baloch nationalist historians view the new system brought on by Sandeman as corrupting the tribal system which historically was based on equality not hierarchy. Sandeman introduced the system of a Shahi jirga where only Sardars and aristocrats could sit. The Sandeman system, thus, broke up the traditional pattern and accorded immense authority to the Sardars over their subjects.<sup>18</sup> According to one such historian deliberating on the tribal structure during the reign of Nasir Khan:

The Baloch tribal society had the characteristics of equality, freedom of thought and expression. The society consequently demanded reciprocal behaviour from every Baloch individual so as to play a lively role in his tribal affairs. Keeping in view the nature of responsibility, every tribesman participated actively in the discussions of the Diwan (gathering or assembly) which was open and welcome to everyone.<sup>19</sup>

Not only did the British restore their authority through the now pliant Sardars, but major administrative changes were also made with respect to Balochistan. Administratively, the British divided Balochistan as follows: (a) Dera Ghazi Khan, which was purely a Baloch area, was amalgamated into Punjab; (b) Khangarh and its adjoining areas were given the name of Jacobabad and made a part of Sindh; (c) the areas of Marri, Bugti, Khetran and Chaghi were declared as Tribal Areas. The Tribal Areas along with Nasirabad, Bolan, Quetta, Noshki and other Afghan areas acquired from Afghanistan were adjoined together to form a province of Balochistan, which was under the supervision and control of the Agent to the Governor General (the British-administered province was called British Balochistan); (d) Lasbela and Kharan were declared as Special Areas with a different political system and placed under the supervision of the Political Agent of Kalat; (e) the remaining areas Sarawan, Jhalawan, Kachhi and Makran were piecemealed together as Kalat under the suzerainty of Mir Mahmood Khan who was declared as Khan-e-Kalat.<sup>20</sup> Kalat was the largest state in British India with respect to its size and second in political importance only to Hyderabad.<sup>21</sup>

These state of affairs and the particular political, social and administrative set-up introduced by the British held sway until the eventual independence of Kalat in August 1947, with every single Khan of Kalat paying lip-service to the British. The British, who viewed Balochistan more from a politico-strategic perspective, did not introduce necessary political, economic and social reforms in the region as it did in other parts of India. For example in 1947, when the British left, Balochistan had no degree college and only six government high schools.<sup>22</sup> However, this did not preclude the development of a nascent Baloch middle class in Kalat which in the 1920s and 1930s organised itself on nationalist lines. Second, with the success of the Communist revolution in Russia and the Forward Policy of the Russians to liberate the bonded and subjugated peoples of the world, the Baloch educated elite harboured hopes of an independent nationalist struggle which could liberate



them from the British. Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, the Khan of Kalat in the 1930s states that:

the people of Balochistan in general were favourably inclined towards the Russian 'Forward Policy' ... and the educated class of Baloch youths, inspired by nationalistic urges, were staunch advocates of this Russian policy in their time.<sup>23</sup>

### **The development of Baloch nationalism**

The Baloch nationalist struggle in the early part of the twentieth century was led by both by middle-class nationalists as well as Sardars. The middle-class nationalists whom Inayatullah Baloch terms 'constitutionalists' were educated in British educational institutions and followed the style of Indian nationalists.<sup>24</sup> In 1920, a political movement was launched by the name of 'Young Baloch' by Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd who was the son of a civil servant of Kalat.<sup>25</sup> In November 1929, one of the leading members of the movement, Mir Yusuf Ali Magsi (soon to become the Sardar of the Magsi tribe in 1931), wrote an article 'Faryad-e-Balochistan' ('Plea of Balochistan') which was published in a newspaper from Lahore.<sup>26</sup> In the article, Magsi called upon the Baloch to let go of their petty conflicts and to unite as one nation.<sup>27</sup> Magsi was arrested on the charge of provoking 'rebellion in the Kalat State' and arrested in June 1930.<sup>28</sup> During his captivity, the Young Baloch group approached Magsi and announced the formation of a political party, the Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Balochistan (Organisation for the Unity of Balochistan). The aim of the Anjuman was to work for a united independent Balochistan as well as to demand reforms which would ensure a representative form of government.<sup>29</sup>

The Anjuman began to work openly in 1931 and one of its first objectives was to form a movement against the Prime Minister of Kalat, Sir Shams Shah, a Punjabi from Gujarat.<sup>30</sup> Shams Shah was interested in making his own son, the Khan of Kalat, while the Anjuman was working in favour of Mohammad Azam Jan. Magsi as leader and President of the Anjuman started an agitation against Sir Shams Shah which became famous as the 'Magsi Agitation'.<sup>31</sup> To rally support for their cause, the Anjuman published a pamphlet on 20 November 1931 entitled, 'Shams Gardi' ('Tyranny of Shams'). In the preface, Mir Yusuf Magsi wrote that this was the tale of a nation and its eventual reawakening.<sup>32</sup> The Anjuman was successful in their cause and Mohammad Azam Jan was made the Khan of Kalat in December 1931.

This, however, did not augur well for the Anjuman and their politics. The strain between the middle-class nationalists and the Sardar, Khan of Kalat, manifested itself as the new Khan turned a blind eye and was not even willing to stand the Anjuman's presence in Kalat. This was in stark contrast to the situation during the 'Magsi Agitation' when the Anjuman had established contacts with Azam Jan and extracted a promise from him to establish a

constitutional government in Kalat, once he was on the throne.<sup>33</sup> The basic reason why the Khan turned his back on the nationalists was the Sardari system (which the Khan was a product and protector of) and any formation of a constitutional and responsible government would have reduced the Khan and the Sardars to rulers in name only.<sup>34</sup>

The real impetus to the working of the Anjuman came with the ascendancy of Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, son of Azam Jan, as the Khan of Kalat in September 1933. Ahmad Yar Khan was sympathetic to the cause of the Anjuman in his initial days in power. He was disappointed with the state of affairs in the Kalat state as established by the British but at the same time he was wary of the nationalists and their politics. In all, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan wanted to consolidate his seat of authority and secure independence for his Kalat state by using and supporting the nationalists against the British. However, at the same time, he was conciliatory to the British and did not intend to invoke their ire. This strategy to secure independence was certainly not feasible for the Khan, for at the end of the day, he lost the support of both the Baloch nationalists and the departing British, leaving him and his state at the mercy of the Pakistani state.

The young educated Baloch middle class leading the Anjuman with the blessing of Mir Ahmad Yar Khan announced the formation of the Kalat State National Party (KSNP) in Sibi on 5 February 1937.<sup>35</sup> In the beginning, the KSNP mainly campaigned against the non-Baloch officers in the Balochistan political set-up, however, later on, the Party acquired a more nationalistic and progressive party programme based on the fact that the Kalat state was not a part of Hindustan but an independent, self-governing entity.<sup>36</sup> The basic objectives of the party called for establishing a constitutional government in the Kalat state, reforming the tribal jirga system (the system as created by Sandeman), joining all Baloch territories with Kalat and a constitutional struggle for the educational, social and economic rights of the Baloch nation.<sup>37</sup> In recognition of the Khan of Kalat's cooperation with the party's radical programme, the National Party awarded him the title, 'Khan-e-Muazzim' ('The Great Khan'), in 1938.<sup>38</sup>

At the same time that the Khan supported the Kalat State Party he was increasingly becoming wary of its radical socio-political programme which was primarily directed against the Sardari system. With increasing pressure from the British and the administrative machinery in the Kalat state as well as the Sardars, the KSNP was declared as illegal by the Prime Minister of Kalat on 20 July 1939.<sup>39</sup> The declaration confirmed the Khan's apprehensions about the KSNP and its political programme and that the Khan had failed to stand up to the British with the active support of the Baloch nationalists. On the contrary, the Khan was an integral part of the political machinations which banned the party for he had come to anticipate threat from the party to his legitimacy of rule.<sup>40</sup> After the banning of the KSNP, its active leaders, Malik Abdul Rahim Khwaja Khel, Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, Abdul Karim Shorish, Mir Gul Khan Naseer and numerous other activists, were exiled from the Kalat state.<sup>41</sup> The KSNP continued to work from Quetta after

its exile from Kalat. With the onset of the Second World War, political activities were banned in British India by the Defence of India Act and thus the KSNP remained underground.

It requires mentioning here that KSNP was not the only political party in Balochistan in the inter-war years. In fact, Balochistan was also affected by politics at the All-India level and there was the formation of Balochistan Muslim League in June 1939 as well as the Anjuman-i-Watan. The latter was founded by a Pathan, Abdus Samad Achakzai, who also ran the *Istiqlal* newspaper.<sup>42</sup> The Anjuman-i-Watan virtually functioned as the Balochistan branch of the Congress.<sup>43</sup> The Balochistan Muslim League, on the other hand, was also founded by a Pathan, Quetta-based lawyer, Qazi Muhammad Isa.<sup>44</sup> The Balochistan Muslim League and its activities were generously funded by the Khan of Kalat. This transpired after the Khan acquired the services of Mohammad Ali Jinnah as the Legal Adviser to the Kalat state in his quest to achieve independence for his princely state.<sup>45</sup> This courtship between Jinnah and the Khan of Kalat was bound to be paradoxical for Jinnah, the Legal Adviser to Kalat, was advocating independence for the princely state while Jinnah, the future head of the Pakistani state, would not have agreed to anything less than the integration of Kalat within the territorial confines of the future Pakistani state. The Khan's poor political foresight and inability to see through unfolding events probably left him under the impression that his services for the Balochistan Muslim League would be reciprocated in the guise of an independent Balochistan under the Khan's suzerainty. The Khan provided all possible assistance by way of money and material to finance and organise conferences, public meetings and processions by the Balochistan Muslim League in Kalat.<sup>46</sup> The Khan's financial help was not restricted to the provincial League but also to the Central Office of the All-India Muslim League.<sup>47</sup>

### **Baloch nationalism and accession to Pakistan (1947–70)**

According to the memorandum, which was presented to the Cabinet Mission by Mohammad Ali Jinnah in 1946, acting as a legal adviser to the Khan of Kalat, it was maintained:

(a) that the Kalat State is an independent sovereign State whose relations with the British Government are governed by the Treaty of 1876; (b) that its Indian associations are merely due to its connections with the British Government; (c) that Kalat being an independent State, the Khan, his Government, and his people can never agree to Kalat being included in any form of Indian Union; and (d) that with the termination of the treaty with British Government, the Kalat State will revert to its pre-treaty position of complete independence, and will be free to choose its own course for the future.<sup>48</sup>

On 4 August 1947 in a Round Table Conference, an agreement was reached between the British Empire, Kalat and the future government of Pakistan represented by Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan. It was agreed that the 'Kalat State will be independent on 5th August, 1947, enjoying the same status as it originally held in 1838, having friendly relations with its neighbours'.<sup>49</sup> As a corollary to the Round Table Conference, another agreement was signed between Kalat and Pakistan on the same day. This agreement is significant in that it calls for the independence of the Kalat state but at the same time calls for Pakistan to be the legal heir to the British with respect to Kalat. Article I of the Agreement stated that, 'The Government of Pakistan agrees that Kalat is an independent State, being quite different in status from other States of India; and commits to its relations with the British Government as manifested in several agreements.'<sup>50</sup> All works of Baloch nationalist historians quoted in this chapter mention Article I to deduce that the independence of Kalat state was agreed by the British and the Pakistan government and that in the post-independence period, the government of Pakistan reneged on its promise. However, Baloch nationalist historians fail to quote Article IV which stated that,

a standstill agreement will be made between Pakistan and Kalat by which Pakistan shall stand committed to all the responsibilities and agreements signed by Kalat and the British Government from 1839 to 1947 and by this, Pakistan shall be the legal, constitutional and political successor of the British.<sup>51</sup>

According to Martin Axmann:

Article 1 could be read as a great achievement on side of Ahmad Yar. He finally had his Khanate recognised as an independent state, being quite different in status from other state of India ... At the same time, Article 4 of the agreement ... translated as effectively keeping the *status quo* and putting the future existence of the Khanate of Kalat at the mercy of Pakistan, just as it previously existed only because the British deemed it expedient. The paramountcy that had been exercised by the British was transferred to Pakistan and it was done with the Khan's eager consent!<sup>52</sup>

During this time, when the fate of Kalat hung in the balance, the future of British Balochistan had already been decided. Jinnah was able to settle matters in British Balochistan by rallying the Muslim League and visiting the province in October 1945. With the Khan of Kalat firmly on his side and aiding the Balochistan Muslim League, the League now persuaded Nawab Jogezei, the scion of a former ruling family of Balochistan, to place himself as head of the Shahi Jirga.<sup>53</sup> In June 1947, the Shahi Jirga, and the Quetta municipal council voted to join Pakistan.<sup>54</sup> The Khan of Kalat, on the other hand, after the signing of the agreement, declared the independence of Kalat on 15 August 1947, one day after the independence of Pakistan and the same day as the independence of India.

In the months that followed the post-independence period, negotiations on the future of relations between Kalat and Pakistan on the basis of agreement

that was signed between the two on 4 August took place. Article V of the agreement stated that, 'In order to discuss finally the relations between Kalat and Pakistan on matters of Defence, Foreign Relations and Communications, deliberations will be held in the near future in Karachi.'<sup>55</sup> Negotiations between Pakistan and Kalat fell into trouble as the former now demanded the integration and merger of the latter as part of Pakistan. The reason for the change in Pakistan's policy was the advice of the British government. The United Kingdom's High Commissioner in Pakistan had warned the government of Pakistan of the dangers of recognising the Khanate as a sovereign independent state.<sup>56</sup> The feelings, on the Baloch side, were ably summed up by Ghous Bakhsh Bizenjo. He made a fiery speech in December 1947 and said:

Pakistan officials say that Balochistan should join Pakistan as it would not be able to sustain itself economically. We have minerals, we have petroleum and ports. The question is where would Pakistan be without us?<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, the government of Pakistan started exploiting the Sardari system, a game which the British had played so effectively in order to keep Balochistan under control. Pakistan pressured the two states of the Kalat confederacy, Kharan and Lasbela and the district of Makran, to join Pakistan. The rulers of the states of Kharan, Makran and Lasbela announced their decision to join the Pakistan dominion on 21 March 1948 and their respective rulers signed the official documents.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, Sardar Bakhsh Khan Marri, Sardar Akbar Khan Bugti and Sardar Akbar Sanjrani had already signed the papers for aligning with Pakistan.<sup>59</sup> Historically, both the Marri and Bugti were claimed by the Khan as his subjects but 'they paid no revenue and maintained a more or less distinct form of independence in their rocky fastnesses'.<sup>60</sup> The Marri–Bugti area tribes were famous for their marauding and looting activities against the Khanate as well as the British in the eighteenth century.

The situation in Kalat became further compounded when the All-India Radio broadcast a news bulletin on 27 March 1948 stating that, 'two months ago, the Kalat Government had applied to the Government of India for merger; but the Indian Government rejected their request on the ground of its geographical position'.<sup>61</sup> Although, Nehru later apologised for the false broadcast in an address to the Indian legislature, the damage had been done. The Kalat state was now viewed as collaborating with the hostile enemy with whom problems over Kashmir were already brewing. The statement provided a pretext for the Pakistan government for military action and put the Khan of Kalat in a very precarious situation. Sensing military action against the Khanate, the Khan aligned himself with Pakistan on 30 March 1948. This act of the Khan has been described as a great disservice to the Baloch people which has 'no parallel in the three and a half thousand years of Baloch history'.<sup>62</sup>

With the merger, Pakistan deployed its heavy-handed tactics in dealing with the Kalat state. It was announced on 15 April 1948 that a status quo ante

would be maintained in Kalat, that is, the position of Kalat state would revert back to what it was during the preceding British rule. A Political Agent – an officer subordinate to the Agent to the Governor General – was appointed to look after the administration of the state and guide the Chief Minister in all internal affairs.<sup>63</sup> This brought to an end the legal authority of the Khan of Kalat in administering affairs in his territory.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, leaders of the KSNP such as Ghouse Bakhsh Bizenjo, Mir Gul Khan Naseer and Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd were arrested.<sup>65</sup> Also, by orders of the central government in Karachi, the KSNP was declared an outlawed party throughout Pakistan.<sup>66</sup>

Such state of affairs gave rise to the first encounter between the Pakistan Army and Baloch nationalists. Prince Abdul Karim, the younger brother of the Khan of Kalat, declared a revolt against Pakistan. After leading some 700 followers across the border into Afghanistan, Abdul Karim issued a manifesto in the name of the Baloch National Liberation Committee disavowing the unconditional accession agreement signed by the Khan, proclaiming the independence of Kalat, and demanding fresh negotiations with Pakistan.<sup>67</sup> This adventure of Abdul Karim failed to achieve its purpose mainly for two reasons. First, the Afghans could not assure them of the requisite support because Kabul favoured the inclusion of Balochistan in an Afghan-controlled 'Pashtunistan' and was opposed to an independent Balochistan.<sup>68</sup> Second, the rebels had neither the organisation nor the wherewithal for sustained action against an army equipped for highland operations.<sup>69</sup>

Prince Abdul Karim in a letter that he wrote to the Khan from his sanctuary in Afghanistan is important in the way that it points to how feelings had started to shape against the dominant ethnic group, the Punjabis and the Army. The letter stated:

From whatever angle we look at the present Government of Pakistan, we will see nothing but Punjabi Fascism. The people have no say in it. It is the army and arms that rule ... There is no place for any other community in this government, be it the Baloch, the Sindhis, the Afghans or the Bengalis, unless they make themselves equally powerful.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, it may be stated, that the feeling of ethnic domination and control of a majority over a minority was evident by April 1948, that is, roughly eight months after the creation of Pakistan. These feelings were further strengthened in the years to come with the Punjabis and Mohajirs dominating the Pakistani state structure while non-dominant ethnic groups were denied power and participation. Furthermore, the lack of democracy and federalism contributed in alienating the Baloch nationalists even further as new administrative changes were introduced, which were widely despised, for they were done arbitrarily without the consent of the Baloch.

In a surprise move, the government of Pakistan in 1952 decided to form the Balochistan States Union by merging the states of Lasbela, Makran and Kharan with Kalat.<sup>71</sup> However, no legal authority was vested with the Khan

of Kalat because the Prime Minister of Kalat was to be a nominee of the government of Pakistan. As a consequence of this arrangement, the Pakistan government appointed Agha Abdul Hamid, a civil servant and a non-Baloch, as the Prime Minister of the Balochistan States Union in April 1952.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, on 30 September 1954, the government of Pakistan declared the 'States' as special areas of the Balochistan province.<sup>73</sup> The administrative arrangement was resisted by Ahmad Yar Khan who had earlier advised that all areas of Balochistan should be grouped together under the Kalat state with the Khan as the constitutional head and that the Pashto-speaking areas should be united with the North West Frontier Province.<sup>74</sup> However, before the particular administrative order could be put into action, Pakistan's fragile political history took a turn once again when Governor General Ghulam Mohammad, by way of a special ordinance, abolished the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in 1954. Moreover, the Balochistan States Union arrangement came to an abrupt end in 1955 when the One Unit scheme was promulgated which amalgamated all provinces of West Pakistan into a single province to be known by the same name.

The Baloch reacted against One Unit by organising an open opposition in defiance of a ban on political activity. In 1955, Abdul Karim, who had completed his prison term, formed the Ustoman Gal (People's Party), which opposed One Unit and demanded the formation of a unified Balochistan province.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, the Khan of Kalat was also very vocal in his criticism of the One Unit plan. Reviving his 1947 demand for independence and for the restoration to Kalat of other Baloch areas taken away by the British, the Khan mobilised widespread demonstrations against the One Unit through the tribal chieftains in his former domain.<sup>76</sup> However, in other nationalist accounts, the Khan is criticised for his dubious role in bringing Balochistan under the One Unit. According to Janmahmad, 'He (Khan of Kalat) had signed an agreement with the then Governor General of Pakistan on 1st January 1955 for accession of territories of Balochistan States Union and the leased areas of Kalat into the proposed One Unit of Pakistan.'<sup>77</sup>

In 1957–8, Kalat once again became the centre of attention. Iskandar Mirza in his Machiavellian plot to usurp power for the Army sent signals to the Khan of Kalat regarding the restoration of the Khanate. Mirza asked the Khan to ascertain the legal advice of Lord MacNair in London and seek his advice regarding the withdrawal of Kalat state from One Unit.<sup>78</sup> The Khan whose lack of political foresight and judgement were very well known to Mirza and his advisers was easily duped by this gesture and proceeded to London without estimating that this conspiracy would lead to the imposition of the first martial law in Pakistan. On his return, the Khan was astounded when the Pakistan Army moved into Kalat on 6 October 1958. It was charged by the central government that the Khan had assembled a force of 80,000 tribesmen in the fortress in order to revolt against the government.<sup>79</sup> The fact is that the Khan was not involved in any such activities nor did such a force exist. The Khan's arrest had immediate consequences which were

evident in the Jhalawan region where Nawab Nauroz Khan, the tribal chief, led a revolt against the Pakistan Army in 1958.

Aroused by the bombing and confiscation of his house and property, Nauroz Khan, who was then 90 years old, led guerrilla activities against the Army in Jhalawan and surrounding districts for more than a year, proclaiming that he would fight on until the Khan was returned to power and the One Unit plan was abandoned.<sup>80</sup> The Army responded by bombing neighbouring villages but with no end in sight to the resistance, the Pakistan Army decided to negotiate with Nauroz Khan. However, what unfolded was more an act of deception than a negotiated settlement, which made Nauroz Khan, a national hero in Baloch history. The representatives of the rebel leader met government envoys in which an oath was taken on the Quran by both sides, so that the fighting could be brought to an end. Nauroz Khan came down from the mountains with the intention to negotiate but as soon as he did, he was arrested and removed to Quli Camp in Quetta.<sup>81</sup> Nauroz Khan and his colleagues were tried in Hyderabad on charges of rebellion and his son and five others were hanged on treason charges in July 1960. Mir Nauroz died in Kohlu prison in 1964 and is regarded a true martyr to the Baloch cause.

During the early 1960s, Baloch nationalism gradually expanded to the Baloch tribal areas, specifically, the Kohlu region which was inhabited by the Marris. Since the 1930s, the torch of Baloch nationalism was carried forth by the Kalat state and politically centred in the majority Brahui-speaking areas of Sarawan and Jhalawan. The Marris and Bugtis were minor players in nationalist politics during this time. However, in the 1960s, the Marris in particular became increasingly radicalised and organised themselves into a militaristic fighting unit. The Bugtis, on the other hand, and especially their tribal leader Akbar Bugti was still not inclined towards nationalism. However, the government feared their power which resulted in Akbar Bugti spending most of the 1960s in prison on what was a trumped-up murder charge.<sup>82</sup> Akbar Bugti lost the Chieftainship of his tribe. The same fate befell the Marri and Mengal tribes. In 1963, Ataullah Mengal, another emerging Baloch nationalist from Wadh, was removed from the Sardari by his uncle, who was murdered within ten days and as a result Ataullah along with his father went to jail.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, in November 1965, Khair Bakhsh Marri was deprived of his ruling powers and the government appointed his uncle, Doda Khan Tumandar in Khair Bakhsh's place.<sup>84</sup> A few weeks later Doda Khan was murdered by Marri tribesmen and the tribe was put under the administration of a panel of government officials such as the Political Agent and Extra Assistant Commissioner. The Bugtis too were administered by a similar panel.<sup>85</sup> The government found it expedient to interfere in the internal affairs of the Marris and Mengals because both Khair Bakhsh Marri and Ataullah Mengal were elected to the National Assembly in April 1962 and had made strong speeches against the government.<sup>86</sup>

The growing nationalism within the Marri and Mengal tribes resulted in the development and founding of the Parari<sup>87</sup> guerrilla movement which later



on became a precursor to the Baloch People's Liberation Front. The leader of the Parari movement was Sher Mohammad Marri who was a close ally of Khair Bakhsh Marri. The Pararis, slowly and gradually, increased their numbers and were involved in hit-and-run operations against the Pakistan Army. By July 1963, the Pararis had established twenty-two base camps of varying sizes spread over 45,000 square miles, from the Mengal tribal areas of Jhalawan in the south, where Ali Mohammad Mengal was in command, to the Marri and Bugti areas in the north. Manned by what they called a 'command force' of 400 full-time volunteers, each camp could call on hundreds of loosely organised, part-time reservists.<sup>88</sup> There were skirmishes between the Marris and government in the mid-1960s but the situation came to a halt after the government announced a general amnesty in 1967 after which Ataullah Mengal and Akbar Bugti were released from prison.<sup>89</sup>

Of the three prominent Sardars during this time, Akbar Bugti was the least inclined to nationalist ideals. His imprisonment during the 1960s was more down to the fact that he was powerful and could threaten the government's interest in exploiting gas from his region. Bugti had not been won over by nationalist slogans and was fighting his own battle against the government. In late August 1967, Bugti tribesmen showed their displeasure towards the Centre's policy of awarding irrigated lands to Punjabi army officials by opening a major breach in the Pat Feeder Canal of Guddu Barrage, after which armed forces were sent in to curb the spread of lawlessness, and in May 1968 Bugti was detained under the Defence of Pakistan Rules.<sup>90</sup> This incident did not accrue to a nationalist uprising rather a tussle between the central government and a local Baloch Sardar.

Moreover, Bugti did not join the NAP, while on the other hand, both Mengal and Marri did. Bugti for some time remained a behind-the-scenes supporter and sympathiser of the party. However, the egoistic Bugti soon developed differences with the NAP leadership and worked against the nationalists during the 1973–7 phase of conflict with the Pakistani state. This was a serious blow to the Baloch nationalists and a personal victory for the government, which exploited intra-Baloch differences to its advantage in quelling the rebellion. The next section details the factors which led to the uprising.

### **Factors leading to the Baloch insurgency (1973–7)**

It is interesting to note that the factors leading to the Baloch insurgency of 1973–7 were rooted in the politics of a democratically elected government at the helm of affairs rather than a military dictatorship. Though the Baloch suffered much during Ayub's reign and the decade after partition where the bureaucratic–military axis shaped Pakistan's destiny, there was no appreciable change in fortunes for Baloch nationalists during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's time in power. In fact, Bhutto was responsible for a civil war in Balochistan which lasted four years. Thus, it was a civilian rather than a military dictator

who laid the basis for Baloch disaffection in the 1970s. Before one moves further on, it is prudent to mention the results of the elections that took place in Balochistan in 1970.

In the national and provincial assembly elections in Balochistan, the electoral alliance of the NAP, a regional party campaigning for the rights of ethnic minorities in both East and West Pakistan, along with the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, a party which was linked to 'the Deobandi school of "nationalist" Muslims in pre-independence India'<sup>91</sup> claimed electoral victory. Of the twenty seats allocated to the Balochistan provincial assembly, the NAP-JUI coalition won 10 with 5 seats going to independents and the rest to Pakistan Muslim League (Qayyum Khan) and smaller parties. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) which emerged as the largest party in the country failed to win a single seat in Balochistan and East Pakistan.<sup>92</sup>

Bhutto, who was wary of his electoral defeat in Balochistan, showed restraint in constituting the new political set-up in the province specifically when it came to the naming of the governor.<sup>93</sup> Initially, Bhutto appointed Ghaus Bakhsh Raisani, who had been elected on an independent ticket as Balochistan Governor but this elicited a strong disapproval from the NAP-JUI coalition.<sup>94</sup> Talks between the PPP and the NAP-JUI coalition resulted in the appointment of Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo as the Governor and Sardar Attaullah Mengal as the Chief Minister of Balochistan. However, with respect to the Governor's office, Bhutto made it very clear from the outset that the governor would remain in office as long as he retained the president's confidence. President Bhutto's letter to Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo on 26 April 1972 preceding his appointment as Governor of Balochistan stated:

This is the first time that the Head of the State is appointing a Governor who is neither a non-party man nor a member of the ruling Party at the Centre. I am making this experiment in good faith and in the quest to achieve national purpose and unity which is my supreme object. The Governor will, of course, hold office during the pleasure of the President, as provided in the Constitution.<sup>95</sup>

This statement, more than anything, goes to show that Bhutto was wary of Balochistan under the provincial administration of the nationalists. Immediately after the formation of the NAP government, Balochistan was engulfed in an environment of conspiracy, deceit and lawlessness. In September 1972, there were reports about a London Plan in which the opposition politicians in Pakistan were alleged by the central government to be colluding with Shaikh Mujib-ur-Rahman in order to overthrow the government of Bhutto.<sup>96</sup> The London Plan, as it turned out, was a fabricated lie in order to cause trouble and destabilise the provincial government of Balochistan.<sup>97</sup> In fact, President Bhutto himself later expressed ignorance about the 'London Plan' and said that it had been unnecessarily overplayed by the national press, radio and the TV.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, Governor Bizenjo announced in September 1972 that the

first batch of 100 government employees belonging to other provinces were to leave under the repatriation scheme,<sup>99</sup> and that by the end of the financial year over 5,500 such government servants would be repatriated to their provinces of domicile.<sup>100</sup> This indigenisation of the provincial administration, which was done in accordance with a national directive, was later criticised when the NAP inducted Baloch officers in the law enforcement agencies in Balochistan.

Some important events related to the political tussle between the provincial and central government which later on proved decisive in the overthrow of the Balochistan provincial government were as follows:

- 1 In November 1972, there were reports of disturbances in the Pat Feeder Canal area. The government alleged in its White Paper that a thousand Marri tribesmen armed with automatic weapons, attacked Punjabi settlers in the Pat Feeder Canal area of the Kachhi district.<sup>101</sup> The reality, however, was different as the conflict was not between the Punjabis and Baloch (Marris) rather the Kahloies, tenants of Punjabi settlers, and the Marris.<sup>102</sup>
- 2 The government claimed that the Mengal Ministry 'tampered with the strength, structure and striking ability of the law enforcement agencies in Balochistan'.<sup>103</sup> Of these three elements, the structure and specifically the ethnic structure of the force was main sticking point as Baloch officers were now being inducted in the police force. The Mengal Ministry dislocated 60 per cent of the non-Baloch officers of the Balochistan Reserve Police and instituted a new police structure called as the Balochistan Dehi Muhafiz (BDM). The White Paper alleged that about 1,100 men were recruited, mostly the supporters of the NAP.<sup>104</sup>
- 3 Fighting broke out in the Lasbela district between the provincial government and the Jamotes of Lasbela, which according to Ghaus Bux Bizenjo, was orchestrated by the Pakistan government in order to destabilise the provincial government of Balochistan and impose Governor Rule. Bizenjo made this clear in a speech which he delivered in the National Assembly of Pakistan in March 1973. He stated:

The Lasbela incident is there for everyone to see. In Lasbela, the Muslim Leaguers led by Qayyum Khan paid the Jamote tribe money and provided weapons so that they could rise against the Baloch government and Governor Rule could be imposed in the province. I issued warrants against the miscreants but they were not implemented. When we asked the provincial militia to apprehend the miscreants, the Centre did not allow the militia to do so. Thus, the only option left for us was to call upon our people to suppress the rebellion. The people were successful but even then the democratic government of Balochistan was dismissed.<sup>105</sup>

The government's White Paper, on the other hand, stated that, 'He [Attaullah Mengal] led into the field *lashkars* from Mengal, Bizenjo and

nine other tribes, describing them as volunteers. These private armies of tribal chiefs freely indulged in looting and attacking Jamotes, 42 of whom were killed. Loss of property, amounting to about Rs. 2.6 million, was caused. Nearly, 8000 Jamotes were forced to take refuge in the adjoining hills where they were surrounded and besieged by the tribal *lashkars* and the BDM forces'.<sup>106</sup> Thus, on this pretext, the Federal Government ordered the Pakistan Army to take full control over the district of Lasbela on 9 February 1973.

- 4 Finally, on 10 February 1973, one day after the Army was deployed in Lasbela, the Pakistan government announced the discovery of a large cache of arms and ammunition at the residence of Nasir al Saud, Iraqi Military Attaché in Islamabad, which the government maintained were destined for the secessionist forces in Balochistan. The cache included 300 Soviet sub-machine guns and 48,000 rounds of ammunition.<sup>107</sup> These arms were shown to journalists and diplomats but there was simply no proof from the government side that these weapons were indeed destined for Balochistan. Baghdad, explained later that 'the weapons were not destined for Pakistani Balochistan but rather for Iranian Balochistan, where Iraq was then openly supporting Baloch guerrilla activity in retaliation against the Shah's support of Kurdish rebels'.<sup>108</sup> Interestingly, the White Paper does not mention the episode of arms seizure or the Baloch nationalists actively courting the support of Iraq in their nationalist struggle against the Federal Government.

After the discovery of weapons which the government alleged were destined for Baloch nationalists, Bhutto removed the Governor of Balochistan from office and dissolved the NAP provincial government on 14 February 1973, less than a year before it was installed in power. Bhutto appointed Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti as the new Governor of Balochistan while G. M. Barozai, a Pathan, was sworn in as the Chief Minister.<sup>109</sup> The next section details the ideology of Baloch nationalists before moving on to the actual phase of insurgency where Baloch nationalists fought against the Pakistan Army.

### **Ethnopolitics as ideological politics: Baloch nationalist leaders and their political beliefs**

The stridently anti-Sardar and pro-reform nature of the nationalist leadership imbued it with a radical programme of socio-economic restructuring of the Baloch society. The nationalist leadership mainly consisted of the Sardars. However, there was a young and educated middle class which expressed itself in the form of the Baloch Students Organization (BSO).<sup>110</sup> The tensions within the BSO over the hereditary rights and privileges of Sardars came to boiling point after the central government restored the Marri, Bugti and Mengal Sardars as heads of their respective tribes in the late 1960s. The BSO split up into two camps, as a result, and the BSO (Awami) came into

existence as a splinter group. The BSO (Awami) favoured a radical restructuring of Baloch society with an emphasis on the abolition of the Sardari system. Ideologically, this group was close to Bhutto's PPP and many of the group activists became members of Bhutto's party after it came to power in 1971.<sup>111</sup> The BSO played an important role in nationalist politics and this was apparent when one of its leaders, Dr Abdul Hayee Baloch, a non-Sardar, was nominated to contest the National Assembly elections in 1970. Dr Hayee Baloch defeated Prince Yahya, the son of Mir Ahmad Yar Khan.<sup>112</sup>

The student mobilisation was buttressed by the philosophy of Sardars fighting the government. These were the 'progressive Sardars', Attaullah Mengal and Khair Bakhsh Marri in the main as opposed to reactionary and pro-government Sardars. Both Marri and Mengal harboured socialist ideals and although their socialism varied in intensity,<sup>113</sup> they took some key decisions in line with their beliefs. Marri abolished many of the taxes imposed on his tribe by previous Chiefs.<sup>114</sup> Bizenjo, who was not a Sardar, was known for his Communist activities during his time at Aligarh.<sup>115</sup> Similarly, Mengal divested himself of nearly half of his inherited lands, parcelling them out among his tenants.<sup>116</sup> Together, Marri, Mengal and Bizenjo passed a historic resolution in June 1972 which called for the end of the Sardari system in Balochistan.

Commenting on the resolution, Attaullah Mengal, the Chief Minister, said that the Sardari system was abolished in the best interests of the poor and oppressed people of Balochistan.<sup>117</sup> However, before the said resolution could be put into effective practice and its results quantified, Balochistan found itself in a state of insurgency yet again, which gripped the province for four long years.

### **The Baloch insurgency (1973–7)**

Baloch insurgency in post-colonial Pakistan has been a direct result of the machinations of the state and government. In 1948 and 1958, Abdul Karim and Nauroz Khan took on the Pakistan Army because of the threats that it posed to the autonomy and independence of the Kalat state. The same situation occurred in 1973 when the heavy-handedness of the Bhutto government and its conspiratorial politics and the consequent deployment of the Army left no choice for the Baloch nationalists but to indulge in military conflict. The insurgency of 1973, however, differed from earlier revolts in 1948 and 1958 because two powerful tribal Sardars were involved, mainly the Marris and Mengals, which was previously not the case. The insurgency itself was mainly restricted as an organised warfare to the territorial domain of the Marris and Mengals. At the height of the insurgency from May 1973 to September 1974, the two main areas of army operation were the Jhalawan subdivision of Kalat district where Mengals were operating and the Marri area of Sibi district.<sup>118</sup>

A probable impetus to Baloch resistance was the perceived weakness of the Pakistan Armed Forces, especially after the debacle in East Pakistan. After the separation of East Pakistan, the Army was completely demoralised with

90,000 Pakistan soldiers taken as prisoners of war by the Indian government.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, the organisation of the Pararis, in the Marri areas since the early 1960s and their limited military operations during that time gave an impression to the Baloch leaders that a war could be fought with the Pakistan Army. According to Selig S. Harrison:

The authority of the guerrillas was largely unchallenged in the Marri area, where they enjoyed the active, albeit covert, support of the tribal *sardar* and received food and other necessities from the Baloch populace. Here, in particular, the Pararis hoped to establish a 'liberated' zone or base area, comparable to Mao's Yanan, in the event that the Baloch embarked on a full-scale struggle for independence from Pakistan.<sup>120</sup>

Skirmishes between the guerrillas and the Pakistan Army were first reported in April 1973 when Baloch guerrillas began to ambush army convoys.<sup>121</sup> The major purpose of such concerted attacks was the disruption of the lines of communications and the movement of supplies into and within Balochistan. On 18 May 1973 a serious incident took place in the Marri area at Tandoori. In it some Marri tribesmen ambushed a posse of eight Dir Scouts on a routine patrol and shot them down with automatic weapons, and took away the Scouts' weapons.<sup>122</sup> The Balochistan government stated that Marri guerrillas were armed and equipped with modern sophisticated weapons given by foreign enemies who have been pouring in arms and money for the last couple of years.<sup>123</sup> Moreover, on the same day that the Tandoori incident took place, the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Kalat and his party were ambushed by the Mengal guerrillas.<sup>124</sup> Meanwhile, in August 1973, Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo, Khair Bakhsh Marri and Attaullah Mengal who had been instrumental in forging the military struggle against the Pakistan Army were taken into custody and put behind bars.<sup>125</sup>

In order to counter the growing Baloch militancy especially in the mountainous regions, the Pakistan Army called in the Air Force in order to conduct combat operations.<sup>126</sup> In addition, the Baloch insurgency provoked the Iranians who feared the rise of Baloch nationalism among the Baloch residing in their territory. In mid-1974, Iran sent thirty US-supplied Huey Cobra helicopters, many of them manned by Iranian pilots.<sup>127</sup> However, the turning point in the war came in September 1974 when the Pakistan Army launched Operation Chamalang in the Marri region. The only estimates for the losses during the Operation are those provided by Harrison. The Army claimed that 125 guerrillas were killed while the Baloch claimed to have killed 446 Pakistani soldiers while minimising their own losses.<sup>128</sup> It was evident though that Operation Chamalang was damaging to the Baloch nationalists, something from which they did not recover.

This was indeed the case with respect to the armed struggle against the Pakistani state. And after the Chamalang debacle, Baloch armed struggle revolved mainly around local skirmishes and hit-and-run operations against

the Army. The superior firearms of the Pakistan Army coupled with political-military support from Iran dealt a severe blow to the whole organised Baloch fighting unit. Simply put, the Baloch were not so well armed or prepared to take on the Pakistan Army.<sup>129</sup> In July 1977, after Bhutto was overthrown by Zia, the new military regime in a gesture of goodwill and sympathy with the Baloch released Baloch leaders, Bizenjo, Mengal and Marri who responded in kind and called off the insurgency. Marri and Mengal went into exile while Bizenjo modified his political stance and argued for a politics of conciliation with the state authorities and an outright conformism with the status quo. This dented the nationalist movement, which then lost much of its unity, and the momentum of the movement was crushed.

### **Intra-ethnic conflict and divisiveness in Balochistan: Baloch versus Baloch**

Balochistan's history since the very beginning has been marred by constant intra-ethnic warfare between various tribes. This fratricidal warfare has done much to dent Baloch history in finding a common platform to combat its enemies. The Khan of Kalat and his authority has tended to preside mainly in the central and southern areas of Balochistan while in the tribal areas (mainly Marri and Bugti areas) concentrated in the north-east, power is centralised in the hands of the all-powerful Marri and Bugti Sardar. Within Kalat itself, the Khan has had to face much hostility from the hands of the Brahui tribes such as the Zehris and Mengals. In 1876, Sandeman's entry in Balochistan was primarily due to the tribal warfare between the Khan and other tribes in his domain. The conflict was so severe that the Bolan Pass remained closed to business and trade for months and the British had to intervene not only to ensure its opening but also to impose a peace treaty on the tribes which among other things guaranteed a permanent British representative on Baloch soil.

In the early twentieth century, when Baloch nationalism appeared as a force in Kalat, its influence and programme was mainly restricted within the Kalat state itself. The tribal areas remained oblivious to this emerging trend and had a minimal role to play in this regard. Abdul Aziz Kurd, Gul Khan Naseer and Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo were active in the Kalat state and they saw the Khanate as the guarantor of Baloch pride and sovereignty. However, the same feelings towards the Brahui Khanate of Kalat are not easily replicated when one looks at the Rinds from which the Bugtis and Marris claim descent from. Talking about the Great Nasir Khan who is credited with establishing the first Baloch kingdom by uniting all tribes under his domain, Akbar Bugti writes:

Mir Nasir Khan (Nuri) set up a loose tribal confederacy on some parts of Baluchistan. Most Baluchi speaking people were never a part of this confederacy. For example: The Marri, Bugti, Buledi, Khosa, Bijarani, Sundrani, Mazari ... and a number of other smaller clans never owed allegiance to the Khans of Kalat.<sup>130</sup>

It is thus, not surprising, that when it came to the question of joining Pakistan, the Marris and Bugtis did not side with the Khan of Kalat who was vying for independence and instead opted for union with the Pakistani state. The tribal leaders, it must be said, were not subservient to the Khan in anyway and they ran the administration of their areas according to their own laws and customs. These internal divisions within the Baloch were thus ably exploited by the Pakistani state to isolate the Khanate. This was evident further when Pakistan was able to persuade the three princely states of Kharan, Makran and Lasbela to amalgamate their respective principalities with the new state. This they did in March 1948 and thus left the Khan with no choice but to accept the writing on the wall. It must be stated that rulers of Kharan, Makran and Lasbela have remained loyal to the Pakistani state ever since and have never supported the Baloch nationalists in their struggle for provincial autonomy.

Similarly, when it came to challenging the Pakistani state in 1948, Prince Abdul Karim fought a lone battle and thus, in the end, was largely unsuccessful. In 1959, when Nauroz Khan took up arms against the state, he too, was fighting a lone battle. There was no support coming from the Marris or Bugtis or for that matter from the rest of Balochistan. His insurgency was mainly confined to Jhalawan and its surroundings with tribesmen and arms not adequate enough to fight the might of the Pakistan Army.

Shifting the focus to the 1973–7 insurgency, it is evident that intra-Baloch conflict and divisiveness played a major role not only in the downfall of the NAP government but also during the phase of militancy. At the time when the NAP government was ruling Balochistan, the Pat Feeder incident brought much bad press to the provincial government. What was primarily a conflict between two Baloch tribes was played out by the central government as a conflict between the Baloch and Punjabis. It is surprising to note that the charge was levelled by a Baloch, Sardar Ghaus Bakhsh Raisani, who was the Central Minister for Food and Agriculture in Bhutto's cabinet.<sup>131</sup> Moreover, some of NAP's policies alienated influential tribesmen such as the Zehris and Zarakzais. The former found their vast mining interests under threat which was combined with the fact that they belonged to the Opposition.<sup>132</sup> Doda Khan Zarakzai set up a parallel administration in his tribal area in Jhalawan. He started levying taxes, issuing warrants of arrest and deciding cases.<sup>133</sup> Thus, Governor Bizenjo issued a warrant against Nabi Bakhsh Zehri and levelled a charge of supplying arms and ammunition to Doda Khan Zarakzai for armed revolt in Balochistan.<sup>134</sup>

However, the most serious threat to the NAP came not from the Zehri brothers or Jam of Lasbela, but from the all-powerful Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti. Akbar Bugti had played an influential role in resisting the state in the 1960s but none of his actions suggested that it was Baloch 'national rights' he was fighting for. However, during the 1970 elections, he came to the fold of the NAP but ironically never became the party's member.<sup>135</sup> Bugti after the 1970 elections developed differences with the NAP leadership. The dispute between Bugti and the rest of the NAP leadership related to two matters. First,



Bugti wanted an armed struggle against the Pakistani state at the time when the Army was involved in the civil war in East Pakistan in 1971. To this, Marri, Mengal and Bizenjo disagreed and called for a parliamentary struggle in the wake of NAP's victory in the 1970 elections. Second, Bugti harboured ambition for the post of Governor of Balochistan. He was dissatisfied with the nomination of Bizenjo and thus withdrew his support for the NAP.<sup>136</sup> In a fit of rage, Bugti joined Bhutto's camp who invited him as part of the Pakistani delegation to the Soviet Union. From there Akbar Bugti went to London in March 1972 and remained there for a while returning to Pakistan in December of the same year.

At the time, when the Pat Feeder Canal crisis took place the NAP government had to find its way through another crisis. Ahmad Nawaz Bugti, brother of Akbar Bugti and the then Finance Minister in the Balochistan government had to resist pressures from his brother to resign and disassociate himself from the NAP fold. The situation took a violent turn when Bugti tribesmen led by Saleem Bugti, elder son of Akbar, raided Quetta in a bid to intimidate and harass the provincial government.<sup>137</sup> After two weeks, Akbar Bugti returned from his self-imposed exile in London and immediately went on a rampage against the NAP. He charged the NAP government with colluding with foreign governments and that there had been a huge influx of arms and funds into the province.<sup>138</sup> These arms and funds, Bugti clarified, were not for any national purpose but to serve the ends of the foreign power that supplied them.<sup>139</sup>

After the NAP government was dismissed in February 1973, Bugti became the Governor of the province with the blessing of Bhutto. Here it may be stated that it was not only Bugti who was courting the support of Bhutto. Mir Ahmad Yar Khan also offered his services and wholehearted cooperation to President Bhutto as news of the London Plan broke out in September 1972.<sup>140</sup> Bhutto reposed the trust in the Khan when he made him the Governor of Balochistan after Bugti resigned in December 1973.

During the civil war, 1973–7, the fact that most of the fighting was mainly restricted to territories where the Mengals and Marris predominated suggests that not *all* Baloch Sardars, nor for that matter the Baloch middle class, were involved in the war against the Pakistan Army. This had important consequences for the Baloch ethnic movement because Bhutto and the Army were able to neutralise the Baloch and hence restrict the power and influence of the Baloch nationalists. Important Baloch tribal Sardars such as Nawab Akbar Bugti and the differences that existed between him and the NAP leadership were ably exploited by Bhutto in order to divide the Baloch resistance and eventually defeat it.

### **Inter-ethnic conflict and discord in Balochistan: Baloch, Pashtuns and Brahuis**

The Brahuis and Pashtuns form a sizeable minority, both numerically and politically, in Balochistan. In terms of geographical concentration, the Pashtuns inhabit the northern part of the province which borders the North West

Frontier Province (NWFP) and Afghanistan. They are based in the districts of Quetta, Pishin and Loralai. The Brahuīs reside in the central part of Balochistan and are concentrated in Kalat, Sarawan and Jhalawan.

In terms of ethnicity, the origins of the Brahuīs are ‘an enigma of history’.<sup>141</sup> However, many historians believe the Brahuīs to be the descendants of Dravidians as the Brahui language contains Dravidian elements within it.<sup>142</sup> Though there are cultural differences with the Brahuīs speaking a different language, these have not automatically translated into political rivalry or conflict with the Baloch. The Khanate of Kalat, a Brahui stronghold, was for years the centre of nationalist struggle against the Pakistani state and held reverence in the eyes of the majority of Baloch people. Moreover, in all meetings of the NAP, both Balochi and Brahui were freely used.<sup>143</sup> The political homogeneity in thought expressed by the two ethnic groups has resulted in a common framework of political action.

The Baloch–Pashtun relationship, on the other hand, has courted much controversy. The Baloch–Pashtun friction caused much harm to the provincial NAP government in 1972. The Pashtuns were in the forefront in criticising the NAP government for not representing the interests of the Pashtuns in Balochistan. Culturally, the Baloch and Pashtun speak a different language. Their social organisation also differs with Pashtuns being more ‘egalitarian’ as opposed to the ‘hierarchical’ Baloch.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, the Pashtuns are economically well-off compared to the Baloch. Pashtuns replaced the Hindus and Sikh traders who controlled trade in Balochistan before partition.<sup>145</sup>

The Pashtuns formed the majority in British Balochistan and played an influential role in the creation of Pakistan. Qazi Isa, a Pashtun, and President of the Balochistan Muslim League worked along with Nasim Hijazi, a Punjabi journalist, to make Balochistan an integral part of Pakistan. With the efforts of Qazi Isa, the Baloch provincial Muslim League held its first Annual Session under the presidency of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan at Quetta.<sup>146</sup> Isa and the provincial Muslim League were instrumental in British Balochistan where they credited themselves with a famous win in the referendum in June 1947. The efforts of the Pashtun community were seminal in British Balochistan joining the new state of Pakistan. The majority of the Baloch tribes, however, were reluctant and the only wholehearted support for the Muslim League came from the Baloch Jamali tribe.<sup>147</sup>

After 1947, the most important development in Pashtun-speaking areas was the formation of Wrore Pashtun or Pashtun Brotherhood in 1954 by Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai.<sup>148</sup> The organisation aimed to create a Pashtun province incorporating all Pashtun-speaking areas. In 1970, Achakzai who had joined forces with NAP for provincial autonomy decided to leave the party and formed his own Pashtunkhwa NAP. The reason for his disaffection lay in the fact that NAP did not fight for a separate Pashtun province after the dissolution of One Unit.<sup>149</sup>

It is interesting to note that the NAP–JUI coalition at the provincial centre in Quetta was primarily a Baloch–Pashtun alliance as the JUI representatives

were from Pashtun speaking areas.<sup>150</sup> Moreover, NAP itself was headed by a Pashtun, Abdul Wali Khan and it seemed that the Baloch and Pashtun had joined forces together to make their demands heard at the Centre. However, Achakzai did not fit comfortably with this Pashtun–Baloch alliance. He demanded an equal share in the services for the Pashtuns and demanded that one of the two top posts in the province, the Governor or the Chief Minister, should go to a Pashtun.<sup>151</sup> During months preceding the dissolution of the NAP–JUI government, Achakzai vehemently criticised the provincial administration for failing to maintain law and order in Balochistan. He said that the central government should not hesitate to introduce ‘presidential rule’ in the province.<sup>152</sup>

The Baloch within the NAP sensed a growing disharmony and treaded a cautious path. They reluctantly decided to declare Urdu as the official language of the province, despite protestations to the contrary.<sup>153</sup> This was done precisely because Balochi as the official language would have been severely opposed by the Pashtuns who would have demanded that Pashto should also be given official status.<sup>154</sup> On the question of Pashtuns in Balochistan, the Baloch have never claimed the Pashtun areas as an integral part of Balochistan. Rather, they are comfortable with the Pashtuns forming their own province of Pashtunistan.<sup>155</sup> As stated earlier, at the time of the establishment of the Balochistan States Union, Mir Ahmad Yar Khan had called for the Pashto-speaking areas to be amalgamated with the NWFP.

What the above narrative makes clear is the fact that political divisions between the Baloch representing the NAP and Pashtuns (belonging to Pashtunkhwa NAP) were instrumental in the divide-and-rule strategy of the Pakistani state and government. Achakzai’s demand that the central government should not hesitate in introducing ‘presidential rule’ in Balochistan is reflective of the discord that had developed between him and the NAP leadership in Balochistan. Pashtunkhwa NAP with its close ties to President Bhutto became instrumental in the latter’s scheme to divide the Baloch ethnic movement in the 1970s. Though no untoward incident between the Baloch and Pashtun community took place, in terms of one ethnic group targeting the other, Pashtun disaffection with the NAP in Balochistan was manifest and was exploited by the central government to its relative advantage.

## 5 Sindh

### Ethnic politics in a rural setting

Sindh, unlike Balochistan, was a province with no complex set of administrative units.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, unlike Kalat which opposed the overtures of the Pakistani state and resisted for eight months before joining the new state, Sindh was the first province to opt for Pakistan. On 26 June 1947, the Sindh Legislative Assembly decided at a special sitting that Sindh should join the new Pakistan Constitutional Assembly.<sup>2</sup> However, soon after joining Pakistan, Sindh became embroiled in a conflict with the state, which led to the development of Sindhi ethnonational parties. The strains of Sindhi ethnonationalism, it must be stated, had started to appear in the 1940s before Sindh became a part of Pakistan.

Sindh, with its capital city of Karachi, poses a volatile ethnic mix which has seen gruesome violence in recent history. The Sindh province comprises 23 per cent of the total area of Pakistan while its population, according to the 1998 census, is about 22.9 per cent of Pakistan's total population.<sup>3</sup> The social structure of Sindh is predominantly agrarian. Sindhi ethnonationalism is based in rural areas and thus differs from the tribal Baloch in this respect. Another striking feature of Sindhi ethnonationalism is that the ethnic parties in Sindh are at the margins of the electoral process. As compared to Balochistan in the 1970s, where the provincial government was dominated by Baloch nationalists, the Sindhi ethnic parties failed in the 1970 elections to score impressive electoral victories. In rural Sindh, the predominant electoral force is that of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The Party clinched the majority of seats in the national and provincial assembly elections in 1970 while key ethnonationalist leaders lost.<sup>4</sup>

The Sindhis are set apart from the Mohajirs who are based in urban areas. Historically, the inter-ethnic rivalry between these two ethnic communities since 1947 has had important ramifications for Sindhi ethnopolitics. This rivalry led to bloody violence on the streets in the 1970s and 1980s, but, at the same time, it has seen a phase of active alliance and friendship. This is the primary reason for analysing ethnonationalism from a political rather than a primordial perspective, the latter approach taking ethnonational groups and their cultural and linguistic characteristics as 'givens' beyond which it is impossible to comprehend inter-ethnic collaboration as well as intra-ethnic conflict.

Moreover, ethnonationalism in Sindh displays a stringent ideological basis. An important strand within Sindhi nationalism which makes it distinct both from Baloch nationalism in the 1970s and Mohajir nationalism in the 1990s is its avowedly separatist nature. G. M. Syed, considered by many to be the father of Sindhi nationalism, called for the creation of a separate state for Sindhis, *Sindhu Desh*. Besides G. M. Syed, another important political actor is Rasool Bux Palijo and his *Awami Tahreek*. Palijo combines Sindhi ethnonationalism with a philosophy of the left which calls for the abolition of feudalism in Sindh. Unlike Syed, Palijo does not advocate separatism and calls for a reconstituted Pakistani polity in which autonomy is accorded to the provinces. The ideological and political differences between Syed and Palijo were instrumentalised by the Pakistani state, playing its divide-and-rule politics, in order to curb the power and influence of Sindhi ethnonationalism in the 1980s. Intra-ethnic conflict, thus, had a decisive role to play in Sindhi ethnic politics and in this way it shares a commonality with both Baloch and Mohajir nationalism.

This chapter will begin by highlighting the politics of Sindh in the first half of the twentieth century (1900–47). The main purpose of such a task is to understand the development of a nascent Sindhi ethnonationalism in the colonial period. Sindh was infected with communal politics in the late 1930s which proved decisive in the popularity of the Muslim League in the 1940s. However, this soon gave way to a distinct Sindhi ethnonationalism in the mid-1940s. Second, the chapter will enunciate the policies implemented by the state as well as the issues which gave rise to Sindhi nationalism in the post-colonial era. Third, the chapter will bring forth the ideas of G. M. Syed, the so-called father of Sindhi nationalism by way of Syed's writings on Sindh and *Sindhu Desh* as well as Rasool Bux Palijo. Fourth, the chapter will deliberate on the military operation in Sindh and its peculiarities. Fifth, intra-ethnic conflict in Sindhi nationalism will be highlighted, to show how such conflict serves the interests of the state which then indulges in divide-and-rule politics. Sixth, the chapter will deliberate on inter-ethnic conflict between the Sindhis and Mohajirs in the 1970s and 1980s.

### **The development of Sindhi nationalism**

The most interesting social development in Sindh during the years, 1940–7, was the growth of communal feelings which pitted the Hindus against the Muslims. These communal feelings had a definite bearing on the rise of the All-India Muslim League in Sindh which played upon such feelings in order to increase its political strength in the province. Communal tensions in pre-partition Sindh were intimately connected with a peculiar socio-economic order in which Hindus dominated while the Muslims were marginalised.

Though Muslims made up 70 per cent of the total population of Sindh, they had a bare majority (thirty-four of sixty) in the Assembly.<sup>5</sup> The Hindu community with its high socio-economic status and wealth as well as favourable

weighting in terms of seats in the Sindh Assembly dominated the socio-economic life of Sindh. The increased wealth gave them considerable leverage in terms of politics and they were able to assure at least one seat in every cabinet.<sup>6</sup> The Sindhi Hindus had come to occupy important positions in Sindh especially after the British conquered the province in 1843. When the British took over, the Hindus did not hold any land but in a century of their rule, the Hindus came to acquire about 40 per cent of the land, while another 20 per cent was believed to have been mortgaged to them.<sup>7</sup> One of the factors for increased Hindu landownership, which Malkani posits, was the fact that Hindus were more industrious and entrepreneurial in spirit while the Muslims were backwards in the field of business.<sup>8</sup>

The socio-political mobilisation of the Muslims of Sindh came about as a result of the Khilafat Movement and on the issue of Sindh's separation from Bombay. The Khilafat campaign aroused local sentiments in Sindh mainly due to the support of Pirs and a branch of the All-India Khilafat Conference was established in Sindh in October 1919.<sup>9</sup> The Khilafat Movement also provided future leaders for the Sindh Muslim League such as Abdullah Haroon. The issue of Sindh's separation from Bombay had similar effects on the Muslim community in Sindh with the rise of new leaders who were to play a determinative role in the struggle for Pakistan. Mohammad Ayub Khuhro and G. M. Syed both emerged as important political figures during the key years of the separation demand (1926–7).<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note that it was a prominent Sindhi Hindu, Harchandrai Vishindas Bharwani, who initially made the demand for Sindh's separation from Bombay at the Congress's annual session in Karachi in 1913.<sup>11</sup> The demand based its claim on the grounds of Sindh's distinctive cultural and geographical character as well as a need to disentangle the Sindh province from the powerful financial interests in Bombay.<sup>12</sup>

However, in the 1920s, the demand for Sindh's separation from Bombay was now revived again by the Muslim elite. Their concerns were based on the fact that Hindus exercised influence and control in the administrative affairs of the province as well as the countryside. Thus, as a result, an informal organisation, the Sindh Azad Conference, was formed to bring together the landed aristocracy and the emergent Muslim middle classes, the two groups who felt their positions to be most fragile.<sup>13</sup> The advocates of Sindh's separation 'continued the old arguments of Sindh's cultural discreteness and the unjust Bombay connection, but they also evolved new arguments to counter the thrusts of the Hindus'.<sup>14</sup> They were ultimately successful and Sindh's separation from Bombay took place in April 1936. During the agitation both for the Khilafat and Sindh's separation from Bombay, the religious component of Sindhi identity acquired prominence in which Muslims were seen as distinct from Hindus. The prevalence of such an identity among the rising class of Sindhi Muslim politicians was to prove consequential in the success of the Muslim League in Sindh starting the late 1930s.

The Muslim League in this novel social milieu of rising Sindhi Muslim political activism remained a shadowy organisation marked by its very minor

involvement in the otherwise intensified politics of Sindh's separation from Bombay. Ian Talbot reasons that the Muslim League's attitude had to do with the fact that the All-India Muslim League's Central Council was dominated by minority area members.<sup>15</sup> In the 1937 elections, Muslim League in Sindh could only secure 4.6 per cent of the vote; one or, at the most, two Muslim League candidates who were elected soon deserted the Muslim League.<sup>16</sup> The 1937 elections were won by the Sindh United Party, which was a non-communal, agrarian-oriented party. The party comprised pro-British Sindhi elite which was led by Sir Abdullah Haroon with Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah and Miran Shah as his deputies.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the 1937 election results revealed the dominance of the rural elite of large landholders, clan leaders and religious saints. They had secured twenty-seven of the thirty-four Muslim seats.<sup>18</sup>

Jinnah realising the gravity of Muslim League's position in a Muslim majority province began a process of reorganising the party by eliciting the support of influential Muslim leaders. As a result, the first Sindh Provincial Muslim League Conference was held at Karachi in October 1938 and at this meeting, the League for the first time expressed the need for a separate homeland for the Muslims. The 1938 Muslim League resolution was clearly a precursor to the historic Lahore Resolution of 1940 which firmly established a separate state for the Muslims as the League's decisive objective. Consequently, with political manoeuvrings within the provincial assembly, the Muslim League Assembly Party was formed with Sir Hidayatullah as leader and Mir Bandeh Ali as the deputy leader.<sup>19</sup> Sir Abdullah Haroon, on the other hand, was made President of the Sindh Muslim League.<sup>20</sup> The League's strategy of attracting influential Sindhis as party members was indeed successful. The next stage for the League was to build mass support and the Masjid Manzilgah issue provided the perfect opportunity in this regard.

Masjid Manzilgah was the name popularly given to a complex of buildings on the banks of the Indus at Sukkur dating from the time of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, consisting of a serai (inn) and a mosque, reputedly built by Syed Masoom Shah, Governor of Sindh during Akbar's reign.<sup>21</sup> The issue was important because a few years earlier Hindus had built their temples which were directly opposite the Manzilgah buildings and it had become a much avowed pilgrimage place for them. The issue was raised in the 1920s by Muslims and also in 1936, when the separation struggle for the province was taking place. However, the issue gained prominence when the Muslim League championed the Manzilgah cause, mainly to increase its popular support among the Sindhi Muslims.<sup>22</sup> In early 1939 the Sukkur district Muslim League passed a resolution asking the Provincial Muslim League to take up the question of Manzilgah with the government.<sup>23</sup> The League popularised the issue with the help of the Pirs,<sup>24</sup> in particular members of the Rashdi and Sirhindi families. The political outcome of the issue was the collapse of the pro-Congress Allah Bakhsh ministry and its replacement by one led by Mir Bandeh Ali Talpur which included a number of 'Muslim Leaguers' such as M. A. Khuhro, G. M. Syed and Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindhi.<sup>25</sup>

Although the League Ministry was formed, internal divisions once again impacted on the consolidation of the Muslim bloc in the Assembly. The League Ministry was duly removed from power which once again allowed Allah Bakhsh Soomro to form his ministry in November 1941. The League was able to exert its authority only after Jinnah personally intervened and ensured that all concerned Muslim members of the Assembly would act in unison with each other. Allah Bakhsh's ministry was dismissed by the Governor for it was deemed that he no longer enjoyed the support of the Assembly and Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah formed a second Muslim League ministry in October 1942.<sup>26</sup> With the Muslim League firmly in control of the Assembly, the members now pressed forth with League's demand for separate states for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. It is ironic that it was G. M. Syed, the grand old man of Sindhi nationalism and the founding father of the idea of Sindhu Desh who presented the League's case. The resolution stated that the Muslims 'are justly entitled to the right as a single separate nation, to have independent national states of their own, carved out in the zones where they are in a majority in the subcontinent of India'.<sup>27</sup>

Buoyed by the spirit of Islam and championing the cause of the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent in line with the core ideology of the All-India Muslim League, Syed in his speech on the floor of the Assembly stated that the 'demand for Pakistan is based on the theory that Muslims are a separate nation as distinct from Hindus, and that what is known as India is and was never one geographical unit'.<sup>28</sup> Syed who was known to his contemporaries as an emotionally charged personality took to the Muslim League cause with such intensity (and Syed supporters may add sincerity, for they deemed him to be a principled politician) that he failed to calculate the probable repercussions on Sindh and its future in Pakistan. In his defence, Syed in 1946, after parting ways with the Muslim League<sup>29</sup> stated that there was only one difference between his standpoint and that of the Muslim League. He was for complete autonomy for the Muslim majority provinces.<sup>30</sup>

During this time (1940–7) it is interesting to note that opposed to a religious sentiment in which Pakistan, Islam and Muslims were the driving force, a distinct and nascent Sindhi ethnonationalist discourse had also started to take shape expressing displeasure and resentment against the Punjabis. It seemed that besides a Hindu threat, the Sindhis were also coming to imagine a Punjabi threat in an independent Pakistan. The resentment and threat was borne out of an increasing acquisition of agricultural land of Sindh by the Punjabis, a process which had been unfolding since the 1890s.<sup>31</sup> The phenomenon received considerable attention and controversy when in 1932, the Sukkur Barrage irrigation scheme, the largest of its kind in the world, brought 7 million additional acres in Sindh under cultivation.<sup>32</sup> This increased the number of Punjabi 'settlers' in Sindh aided by their former British masters, who regarded Punjabis as skilled and industrious cultivators, while Sindhi zamindars and haris were considered lazy.<sup>33</sup>

It was possibly with such developments in mind that Allah Bux Soomro quipped to G. M. Syed in 1940



you still think that the creation of Pakistan will solve all problems facing Sindh? This is wrong and far removed from facts. You will get to know that our real difficulties will begin after Pakistan has come into being ... At present, the Hindu trader and moneylender's plunder is worrying you but later you will have to face the Punjab bureaucracy and soldiery and the mind of UP.<sup>34</sup>

The Sindh Legislative Assembly became an active forum in the 1940s where politicians vigorously played out the distinction between Sindhis and non-Sindhis. The debate revolved around 'who is a Sindhi' especially when it came to taking up employment in the province. For some of the politicians involved in these debates, the suggestion of a qualifying criterion of three years' residence in Sind was not sufficient; instead, they insisted on a prospective employee being someone 'who is born and resides in Sind'.<sup>35</sup> Regards the spectre of Punjabi domination, Sayed Noor Muhammad Shah, a Muslim League member of the Sindh Legislative Assembly stated the following on the floor of the Assembly on 13 March 1947:

The Musalman members of this Honourable House would be astounded to hear that when the Punjabee Musalmans manage to buy our lands here, they at once start even demolishing the humble huts of the Sindhi Musalmans. Not only that, but even the mosques and graves of the Sindhee Musalmans do not escape their attention. For this they even look for the support of the police. They have such land grabbing instincts that in their vicinity the Sindhee Musalmans cannot find even an inch of land for burying their dead.<sup>36</sup>

The sentiment relating to Punjabi domination as well as the independence of Sindh as a political and economic entity was given full expression by the noted Sindhi intellectual, Mohammed Ibrahim Joyo. He wrote a political treatise entitled *Save Sindh, Save the Continent* in June 1947 which in its entirety proclaimed the impending dangers which Sindh would face after becoming a part of Pakistan. In the preface to his treatise, he prophesises along the same lines as Allah Bux Soomro:

Whether in the proposed set-up for Pakistan or in that for Hindustan we, more than four and a half millions in all, are promised to be treated merely as so many individuals with our collective homogeneity and corporate existence as a people absolutely unrecognised. That would mean that, in either case, we stand to be completely overwhelmed by numbers; and, as the matters seems shaping themselves at present, our scanty economic resources and the key positions in our governmental machinery are, virtually, going to be made a monopoly of others.<sup>37</sup>

The growing ethnnonationalism within Sindh was further strengthened after 1947. On the eve of the independence of Pakistan, Sindh braced itself for the arrival of Muslim refugees (Mohajirs) from India. This was the defining moment in the history of Sindh as their fear of being dominated was further

advanced with the urban, literate and well-educated Mohajir taking up jobs, lands and control of their province. Thus an anti-Punjabi sentiment combined with an anti-Mohajir one to produce a Sindhi ethnonationalism carried on by the likes of G. M. Syed and Palijo. The next section looks at issues which led to the development of Sindhi ethnonationalism in the post-colonial politics of Pakistan.

### **Sindhi nationalism in the post-colonial era: Mohajirs, Sindhi language, Karachi and One Unit**

The four pressing issues for the Sindhis immediately after independence of Pakistan in 1947 related to the influx of Mohajirs from northern India into Sindh, the naming of Karachi as the capital of Pakistan and its eventual separation from Sindh, the adoption of Urdu as the national language of Pakistan and finally the proclamation of One Unit in 1955 which dissolved the status of Sindh as a separate province and brought it under the umbrella of what came to be known as the 'West Pakistan' province.

With respect to the Mohajirs, the Sindhis buoyed by the spirit of Islam and Muslim Brotherhood opened their arms to the refugees from India. However, slowly and gradually, the Mohajirs with their entrepreneurial, managerial and educational skills made inroads into the political and economic life of the province. The Mohajirs filled the administrative positions left by the Hindus. This caused increasing resentment among the middle-class Sindhis vying for such jobs and the issue was further complicated with the adoption of the Mohajirs' language, Urdu, as the national language of the country. The language issue became the first stumbling block in relations between the two communities.

The founder of the nation, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, proclaimed Urdu to be the national language of the country in 1948. This act alienated the Sindhis as they revered their language and were placed at a disadvantage, as they had to learn a new language in order to apply for government jobs and positions.<sup>38</sup> Sindhi was thus placed at a crucial disadvantage. The imposition of Urdu upon the Sindhis was naturally disliked by the latter as they were proud of their history, culture and language. Sindh, according to the nationalists, had encountered waves of migrations since time immemorial but invading armies had been assimilated into the culture of the land. Commenting upon the cultural assimilationist tendency of Sindh, Feroz Ahmed states:

Sindh had received immigrants from its adjoining territories throughout its history. The Balochis, the Brahuīs, the Punjabis and the Rajasthanis had settled there in large numbers. But all of them had accepted their new land and had assimilated into Sindh's culture. One Baloch tribe, the Talpur, went on to become the ruling family of Sindh, but was not considered alien because it adopted the culture of Sindh.<sup>39</sup>

This particular feeling developed in reaction to the way in which the Mohajirs were creating an autonomous public space for themselves in Karachi and

other urban centres in Sindh. They distanced themselves from the Sindhis whom they construed as culturally inferior, illiterate and backwards. Sindhi ethnonationalist intellectuals give reference to Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan and a Mohajir, who had characterised Sindh's culture as 'camel-cart and donkey-cart culture'.<sup>40</sup> Another derogatory popular perception on the part of Mohajirs was to decry someone wearing Shalwar Kameez as a Sindhi dacoit.<sup>41</sup> This culturally superior attitude of the Mohajirs vis-à-vis the Sindhis and the geographical separation was characterised by referring to the Sindhi's place of abode as the interior<sup>42</sup> of Sindh. Moreover, the manner in which the demographic balance in Karachi had changed in favour of the Mohajirs was well captured by the late M. H. Panhwar. In a personal interview, he reiterated that, 'Until 1947–48, we (Sindhis) had a feeling that Karachi is our city, however, a couple of years later, I realised that I had in fact become a Mohajir in my own city.'<sup>43</sup> Thus, it was not surprising that with the Punjabi–Mohajir domination of the Pakistani state, Karachi, now the city of the Mohajirs was declared as the capital of Pakistan.

On 22 May 1948, the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan proclaimed Karachi as the country's permanent capital as well as a centrally administered area.<sup>44</sup> Before the proclamation, Sindhi politicians had argued against making Karachi the capital of Sindh and this was most manifest in the debates in the Sindh Assembly. Assembly members argued that depriving Sindh of Karachi would bring the province down to the level of a state such as Khairpur, and they blamed the proposal on the wishes of certain Punjabis 'to establish a Punjab wherever they went'.<sup>45</sup> Mohammad Hashim Gazdar, one of the four Sindhi members of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan read out the resolution of the Sindh Legislative Assembly, unanimously passed by it on 2 February 1948:

This Assembly records its apprehension and alarm ... resolves that such a step [naming of Karachi as the federal capital of Pakistan] ... would constitute a flagrant contravention of the Pakistan Resolution passed by All-India Muslim League at Lahore in 1940 which emphasises the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the autonomous units constituting Pakistan.<sup>46</sup>

Sindhi nationalists such as G. M. Syed along with the then Chief Minister, Ayub Khuhro detested the move. Khuhro in particular used his ownership of the newspaper *Sindh Observer* to argue against making Karachi the federal capital while *Daily Dawn*, which was sympathetic to the newly arriving refugees heeded the line taken by the central government. This interesting discourse formation in the nationalist politics of Sindh reviled both Mohajirs and Punjabis for usurping Sindhi land for their own benefit. This was in stark contrast to the pre-partition era where only the Punjabis were seen as the enemies of Sindh and its people. According to Sarah Ansari:

Despite the influx of Urdu-speaking Mohajirs into the province's towns and cities, to many Sindhis in the countryside the terms 'refugee' and

‘Punjabi’ were becoming ‘virtually synonymous’, striking a chord with those who had already grown to resent the steadily increasing influx of ‘outsiders’, including large numbers of Punjabis, over the decades before partition.<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, another interesting phenomenon in the initial years of Pakistan’s independence related to political developments in Sindh which highlighted the growing centralisation of political power within the country. The central government and its role in the making and unmaking of provincial governments in Sindh caused increased consternation in ethnonationalist circles. It was abundantly clear from such machinations that power in Sindh would only be transferred to Sindhi politicians who were on good terms with the central government and were willing to accommodate the latter’s concerns.

To begin with, the central government, ignoring the Sindh Assembly support for Mohammad Ayub Khuhro, appointed Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah as Chief Minister of Sindh. Then it made Hidayatullah as Governor and appointed Khuhro as Chief Minister.<sup>48</sup> Khuhro, however, was dismissed soon after he took a stringent line with respect to the settlement of Mohajirs in Sindh as well as naming Karachi as the capital of Pakistan. After Khuhro, Pir Illahi Bux assumed the Chief Ministership of Sindh who then complied with the central government’s directive to make Karachi, the federal capital. After Illahi Bux, Yusuf Haroon was named as Chief Minister, who was not even a member of the Assembly. Soon he was replaced by Qazi Fazlullah. Then Khuhro was brought back again and dismissed soon after.<sup>49</sup> The centre then imposed governor’s rule in Sindh under a Punjabi lawyer, Din Mohammad. It then decided to do away with governor rule and appointed Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur as the Chief Minister. After Talpur, the central government chose Pirzada Abdul Sattar but his rule brought increased consternation for the centre.

Under Pirzada’s leadership the Sindh Assembly passed bills and resolutions which demanded the return of Karachi to Sindh and the protection of Sindhi national rights, resisted attempts to award Sindh lands to military officers, approved projects to build two irrigation works in Sindh, appropriated money for institutions engaged in research on the literary and cultural heritage of Sindh and opposed the idea of One Unit.<sup>50</sup> One Unit was the last nail in the coffin of Sindh’s provincial government. The plan was put through by Ayub Khuhro in the Sindh Assembly after Pirzada was dismissed by the centre. Khuhro, a now reformed character in the art of political gamesmanship decided to support the Centre and indulged in strong-arm tactics to persuade Sindhi politicians to pass the One Unit proposal through the Sindh Assembly.

The One Unit plan was promulgated in 1955 and was an ingenious scheme introduced by the Pakistan government in order to augment parity between the two wings of the country. The One Unit plan divided the Sindhi elites with Khuhro, the Chief Minister, siding with the central government while G M. Syed along with Pirzada, Ghulam Ali Talpur and others opposed to the idea. The main cause of concern for the anti-One Unit protestors was the fear

of Punjabi domination under the One Unit and ‘the fact that future legislation affecting Sindh could not be blocked, if necessary, by Sindhi legislative representatives’.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the Sindh Muslim League declared itself against any kind of zonal merger, while the Sindh Awami Mahaz, led by G. M. Syed, insisted on constitutional changes recognising the maximum autonomy of the existing provinces of Pakistan.<sup>52</sup>

The role of Syed was instructive during the One Unit phase. He organised meetings in the towns and villages of rural Sindh against the proposal but was powerless, as the central government, engaging in divide-and-rule politics, instrumentalised Ayub Khuhro for the purpose of passing the One Unit proposal in the Sindh Assembly. The Sindh Legislative Assembly eventually voted by 100 to 4 in favour of One Unit on 11 December 1954.<sup>53</sup> This calls for a word regarding the impact of One Unit on relations between Sindhis on the one hand and Punjabis and Mohajirs on the other.

According to one Sindhi political commentator, ‘The One Unit period of 1954–1970 was a terrible time for Sindh and its people, reminiscent of the time when the British colonial masters ruled Sindh from Bombay.’<sup>54</sup> Sindhi nationalists regard the One Unit period as one of the darkest epochs in the history of Sindh for it was during this time that Sindh came under the whole-hearted influence of the dominant Punjab and their junior partners, the Mohajirs. G. M. Syed commenting on why the establishment of One Unit was wrong stated as follows:

- 1 One Unit ended the separate national identity of Sindh, and thus its right of self-determination was violated.
- 2 One Unit’s establishment was against the spirit of the Lahore Resolution of 1940, which recognised the principle of the independent status of all component units of Pakistan.
- 3 One Unit was against the Sindh Assembly Resolution of 3 March 1943, which had recommended autonomous status for the province.
- 4 One Unit, it was feared, would slow down the pace of economic development in Sindh.
5. Intellectuals in Sindh, Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan feared that the Punjabi–Mohajir imperialists would conspire to distort and then destroy their distinct entities.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, some of the damage done to Sindh by the creation of One Unit was summarised by Syed as follows:

- 1 Valuable and fertile land commanded by the Kotri and Guddu Barrages constructed at huge cost, as indeed elsewhere, was allotted to civil and military officers most of whom were Punjabis and Pathans.
- 2 Many senior Sindhi officers’ rights were usurped while junior Punjabi and Mohajir officials were promoted. The latter were appointed deputy commissioners and superintendents of police. They were used to suppress any voice raised in favour of Sindhi interests.

- 3 Reducing the grants to the Sindhi Adabi Board and the Shah Latif Cultural Centre thwarted cultural activities which were put under bureaucratic control.
- 4 The 1945 Punjab–Sindh water accord was rejected and new barrages and dams were constructed upstream for the benefit of the Punjab.
- 5 Institutions such as the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC), etc., were set up under non-Sindhis to plunder the economic resources of Sindh.
- 6 Of the Rs. 2,000 million spent by the PIDC on development schemes, Sindh's share was just Rs. 200 million.
- 7 Urdu was made the national language and Sindhi was banished from the Karachi Municipal Corporation and the University of Karachi under iniquitous conditions for the Sindhis.
- 8 The state machinery was used to suppress and subvert the distinct cultures of Sindh, Balochistan and Pakhtunkhwa, so as to get them overwhelmed by the imperialist Punjabi–Mohajir culture.<sup>56</sup>

The period of One Unit lasted until 1970 when Yahya Khan, the President of Pakistan, announced its abolition as well as general elections in the country. The elections ultimately divided the two halves of the country with Shaikh Mujib-ur-Rahman's Awami League in the eastern wing and Zulfikar Bhutto's PPP in the western wing. After the 1970 elections and the break-up of the country in December 1971, G. M. Syed came forward and announced the creation of the Jeay Sindh Mahaz on 18 June 1972 at his residence in Karachi.<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, it was at the time when Z. A. Bhutto, a Sindhi, assumed the leadership of the country that G. M. Syed announced the formation of Jeay Sindh Mahaz. Moreover, it was not only Syed who espoused ethnonationalism rather there was the Awami Tahreek of Rasool Bux Palijo which was formed two years earlier on 5 March 1970 in Hyderabad. The next section details the ideological basis of Sindhi ethnonationalism with reference to both Syed and Palijo.

### **Ethnopolitics as ideological politics: G. M. Syed and Rasool Bux Palijo**

Of all ethnic movements in Pakistan, the Jeay Sindh Mahaz formed by the late G. M. Syed is openly separatist, calling for the outright independence of Sindh and the creation of a Sindhu Desh. Syed elaborated his views in the 1970s when he wrote his famous book *A Nation in Chains: Sindhu Desh* in 1974. Furthermore, he penned a number of books and pamphlets mostly in the Sindhi language, which were later translated into English. Syed's beliefs were detested by the state and the ample proof of it is the fact that he spent about thirty years of his life in detention.<sup>58</sup> Following is a brief outline of his main political views, goals and objectives.

To begin with Syed's political analysis can be divided into three streams of thought: (a) Sindh as a discrete political, religious and cultural entity with its

own indigenous customs and conventions; (b) a rhetorical outburst against the Punjabi and Mohajir communities especially their acquisition of political power, wealth and land in Sindh; and (c) a call for an independent Sindhu Desh.

### *Sindh as a discrete political and cultural entity*

According to Syed, 'Sindhu Desh was born with the birth of Mother Earth. Our attachment with it, too, is as old and ancient as that.'<sup>59</sup> In his influential book *A Case for Sindhu Desh*, Syed provides a distinct account of the evolution of Sindh, as a primordial political entity with a history, culture and religious thought of its own. The book is a scathing critique of the Punjabi-dominated Pakistan as well as of the official Islam which is celebrated and venerated by the ruling ethnic elite of the country. In this context, Syed is highly critical of Muhammad Bin Qasim, the Arab invader of Sindh regarded as a national hero for introducing Islam in the subcontinent. Syed labels him as a looter and plunderer while Raja Dahir, the Hindu ruler of Sindh at the time of Bin Qasim's invasion is regarded as a hero and true patriot of Sindh. According to Syed, 'Raja Dahir's tolerance and liberal mindedness was a well known fact, on account of which people of various religions lived peacefully in Sindh, where Hindus had their temples and Parsis had their fire temples, Buddhists had their pagodas, Muslims had their mosques.'<sup>60</sup> The real reason for Bin Qasim's invasion of Sindh, Syed contends, was Raja Dahir's refusal to return Muhammad Bin Alafi, who had taken asylum under his government.<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, Syed presents a heretical account of Islamic history and states that:

Some of the historians go to the extent to say that even Ka'aba of Mecca was originally Shiv's temple. In its corner 'Hajre-Aswad' (Black Stone) was Shiv's Lingum. Going around the Ka'aba had also originated in those ancient times. Ahram was also originated from the Hindu Saniasies. Even the very name of Arabia has come from the Sanskrit name 'Horse', which meant that Arabia was the country of horses.<sup>62</sup>

On the other hand, Sindh's religious thought is embodied in the influence that Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism and Islam had on the Sindh region as a whole. Syed's writings on these religions are interspersed with the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, whose philosophical and mystical approach to these religions are deemed praiseworthy. Moreover, Islam in Sindh is presented as a peaceful religion mainly on account of the peaceful nature of the Sindhi people, as opposed to the Arabs who are condemned as illiterate and warrior like. Sindh had a history of peaceful coexistence of various religions, and Sindhis selected good points from every religion and presented them to the people in what is known as Sufism.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the Arab interpretation of Islam which is imperial in nature and which the Punjabis also allude to talks about the unity of Muslims, which Sindhis consider as fraudulent and

misleading. Sindhis consider that universal unity can only be achieved through the unity of the accepted nations of the world.<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, Sindh's distinct cultural heritage is enunciated with respect to the Dravidian civilisation which existed about 5,500 years ago. The Dravidian civilisation was undone by the Aryan invasion about 2,500 years ago and was then followed by various invasions which Syed labels as the mixed civilisation for 1,500 years in which Persians, Arabs, Pathans, Moguls, Europeans, (especially the British) and current Mohajir and Punjabi domination can be counted.<sup>65</sup> The Punjabi and Mohajir invasions is what Syed feels has destroyed the national culture of Sindh as a separate entity. On the other hand, the Dravidian and Aryan civilisations are hailed as exemplars of evolution of Sindhi identity. While discussing Sindh's cultural heritage, Syed places much emphasis on the indigenous nature of the Sindhi language. Syed likens the Sindhi language to what was spoken during the time when the Dravidian civilisation flourished. According to Syed, Sindhi is the elder sister of Sanskrit as the Aryans went to the east of India and their Indus valley language combined with the local languages in Magad and Bihar to develop the Sanskrit language.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Syed provides a detailed account of the separate culture of Sindh by pointing to its music, architecture, dance, dress and above all poetry. The last element is prevalent throughout the book with verses from Shah Latif, Sachal Sarmast and Sami quoted in detail in order to illuminate the philosophy of Sindh and its distinct understanding of religion, politics and social issues, which is steeped in Sufism.

### *Sindhis versus Punjabis and Mohajirs*

The two ruling ethnic communities that Syed blames for the torment of Sindh in the post-independence era are the Mohajirs and Punjabis. Arguing against the establishment of Pakistan, Syed states that 'It [Pakistan] was born out of conspiracy of the Mohajir [immigrants from India] and Punjab Muslims vested interests to establish a haven of protection in which they could set up their exclusive base of political power and economic exploitation.'<sup>67</sup> No doubt Syed's assertion was based on the workings of the Muslim League during the pre-independence era in which Muslims from the minority provinces of India predominated. After independence the Mohajirs who migrated in large numbers from India played an important part in detaching Karachi from the rest of Sindh. Moreover, with the implementation of Urdu as the national language of the country, the Sindhis were further sidelined as they had to learn the new language in order to be considered for jobs at the national and provincial levels. On the other hand, the Punjabis were detested by Syed for perpetrating a reign of terror and authoritarianism in which the rights of Sindhis were denied. Moreover, with increased land allocation to military and bureaucratic personnel from the Punjab during the British period and also during Ayub's era made Sindhis wary of the Punjabis and their rule.



Furthermore Syed makes a strong case against the prevalent discourse of Pakistan as enunciated by the Mohajirs and Punjabis. According to such a discourse, Pakistan is the land of the Muslims who are a separate nation because of their religion.<sup>68</sup> On the contrary, the argument put forward by Syed, questions this assumption by stating that Pakistan is not a land of Muslims, but of different nationalities. Thus, the discourse of religion on the part of the empowered is matched by a discourse of nationalism and ethnicity on the part of the powerless. Arguing that Muslim states in the Middle East survive as independent entities under different sovereign governments such as Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, etc., Syed poses the following question: 'How then can the Sindhis, the Balochis and the Pakhtoons, each with their separate homeland, language, history, culture, and traditions and distinct political and economic interests be forced, in the name of Islam, to live as subject people under Mohajir–Punjabi imperialism in Pakistan?'<sup>69</sup>

### *Sindhu Desh*

G. M. Syed projected the idea of an independent nation-state for the Sindhis by the name of Sindhu Desh in 1972. In advocating such a policy posture, Syed was one of the first nationalist politicians to call for the independence of his land in post-1971 Pakistan. Whether borne out of the recent independence of Bangladesh and the relative weakness of the Pakistan Army, Syed's contention was interesting as it came at a time when a Sindhi, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was head of state. Syed detested Bhutto, whom he regarded as a stooge of the Punjabi–Mohajir axis. Though Syed came from an influential family of Pirs and Sajjada Nashins, his political following was miniscule compared to Bhutto's PPP. Syed and his party's failure to compete with the PPP at the electoral level was reminiscent of the fact that his nationalist constituency was dispersed and that his following was limited within the Sindhi rural populace. In addition, despite the prevalence of ethnonationalist feelings at the time of partition, the fact of the matter was that Sindhis were won over by the slogans of Pakistan Zindabad and identified with the Muslim League and Jinnah. This fact is acknowledged by Syed who laments the state of Sindhis during the time. In fact Syed himself was won over by the slogans of Islam in Danger. During the Masjid Manzilgah incident in 1939, Syed said on the floor of the Assembly that the Hindus would be driven out of Sindh as were the Jews from Germany.<sup>70</sup>

However, after seeing the machinations of the Pakistani state in the post-colonial period, Syed was convinced that Sindhis would be marginalised in the new set-up. The elite class of Sindhi landowners had formed an alliance with political elites at the centre to condemn Sindh to a state of political apathy and misery. The idea of Sindhu Desh as propounded by Syed called for the liberation and freedom of Sindhis from the yoke of Punjabi–Mohajir imperialism. Some of the benefits that would accrue to Sindhis as a result of Sindhu Desh are outlined by Syed as follows:

- 1 With freedom, the part of the national produce of Sindh, which now goes in bulk to the Centre in the form of taxes, serving the purposes of the Mohajir–Punjabi vested interests, shall be utilised for the good of Sindh, turning Sindh into a well developed modern country.
- 2 With freedom, Sindhi shall be the sole national and official language of Sindh. Anyone who would not know the language will not be given right of citizenship. Thus the Sindhi people shall be permanently free from the domination of Urdu.
- 3 With freedom, education shall be made free from the start to the University stage.
- 4 With freedom, an imposing large statue of Raja Dahir Sen shall be installed at the port now under construction near Karachi and that port shall be named Port Dahir instead of Port Qasim.
- 5 The State of Sindhu Desh shall be established on the basis of Secularism, Socialism, Democracy and Nationalism.<sup>71</sup>

The last point relating to secularism, socialism, democracy and nationalism are the hallmarks of the Awami Tahreek of Rasool Bux Palijo. The party was formed on 5 March 1970 in a meeting of leading writers, activists and intellectuals in Hyderabad, and Rasool Bux Palijo was elected as the first General Secretary.<sup>72</sup> The party's ideology is more pervasive and compelling than that of Jeay Sindh. It does not base itself on a separatist agenda, but points to the main ills of Sindhi society, that is, feudalism and propagates a leftist philosophy, with an emphasis on peasants and their rights.

According to the Party's website, the Awami Tahreek is 'devoted to non-violence in its democratic struggle to attain freedom of People through the scientific and revolutionary tenets of Marxism–Leninism–Maoism. It is committed to people's democracy, economic and social justice and establishment of a welfare state in a country where people can have equity, political freedom, economic opportunity and genuine provincial autonomy.'<sup>73</sup> In Palijo's own words, the ideology of Awami Tahreek combines proletarian internationalism with the nationalist question.<sup>74</sup> The element which sets the Awami Tahreek apart from the Jeay Sindh is the former's emphasis on abolition of feudalism. The Tahreek is geared towards what it calls as 'the elimination of feudalism in accordance with the established principles of socialism to protect and advance the interests of the peasantry'.<sup>75</sup> In an interview in 2003, Palijo explained his aversion to feudalism and the idea of Sindhu Desh in the following manner: 'Our first struggle is basically against the feudal lords of Sindh. Why am I against Sindhu Desh? Because I fear that if Sindhu Desh is created, these feudal lords will kill us. Our first struggle is against autocracy.'<sup>76</sup>

The Jeay Sindh, on other hand, in its proclamation of Sindhu Desh does not explicitly proclaim the elimination of feudalism and instead points to socialism and democracy as the basis of Sindhu Desh. What this entails in actual practice is unclear. Moreover, there is a vivid contrast in political styles with Syed's politics not geared to mass politics while Palijo's politics entails a

people's movement which is anti-feudal and anti-military. Nowhere was this more visible than in the 1980s when the Awami Tahreek took to the streets and allied itself with the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) while Syed was an uninterested spectator. Palijo blames G. M. Syed and Bhutto as the two people who have committed the greatest crimes against Sindh. Syed is blamed for allying with the Mohajirs at a time when the Awami Tahreek was involved in a civil war with the Pakistani state while Bhutto is characterised as a *wadera* and fascist who revered Bonaparte, the destroyer and saboteur of the principles of the French Revolution.<sup>77</sup> The next section details the military operation in Sindh in the 1980s.

### **The military operation in Sindh in the 1980s**

An interesting conundrum regarding the military operation in Sindh in the 1980s relates to the fact that it was directed primarily against the constituency of PPP supporters and the MRD. The emergence of Sindhi nationalism, during this time, was an appendage of the larger political conflict in Pakistan in which the forces of democracy stood in stark opposition to a military dictatorship. This being the case, incidents of nationalist violence and conflict in Sindh during this time are few as compared to Balochistan in the 1970s and Mohajirs in the 1990s. It was not the collective force of Sindhi nationalism that the Pakistani state was facing, but, rather pockets of Sindhi nationalism which had emerged as anti-Zia protests took shape. Sindhi nationalism did assume legitimacy during this time and in this context it is indeed important to put it into its proper perspective. According to one news analysis, 'in some areas the protest has taken on a Sind nationalist tinge rather than focusing on the restoration of democracy'.<sup>78</sup> In another news analysis, it was reiterated that:

Sindhi nationalist feeling has clearly played an important part, particularly the undercurrent of resentment about what is seen as Punjabi dominance of the provincial government, the armed forces and other areas – including the railways where the vast majority of workers are Punjabi. These feelings find political expression in organisations like the Jiye Sind Students Federation, and the more radical left-wing Sind Awami Tehreek of Rasul Bux Palejo, who draws much of his inspiration from Mao.<sup>79</sup>

Although most of the state action was directed against the supporters of the PPP and their democratic allies, there were isolated incidents of violence directed against Sindhi nationalists such as the Thori Phattak incident. On 17 October 1984, a Jeay Sindh convoy was fired upon at Thori Phattak, Dadu district. About seven workers lost their lives, and many others were injured in shootings by military forces. The attack, later to be known as the Thori Phattak incident, occurred only 25 kilometres from G. M. Syed's hometown.<sup>80</sup> According to Mehtab Ali Shah, the incident occurred due to a disinformation provided by the then Additional Registrar of Sindh University who

allegedly reported to the Army that some armed thugs disguised as students had hijacked buses and should be intercepted.<sup>81</sup> Probably the University administration used the Army to intimidate and subjugate the student wing of Jeay Sindh Mahaz, the Jeay Sindh Students Federation (JSSF). Moreover, the incident also proves the efficacy of instrumental explanations which interpret ethnic violence in terms of 'coding' and 'framing'. The Thori Phattak incident was certainly not the intentional target of Sindhi nationalists, but the armed forces were apparently misinformed and were presumably attacking dacoits (as they were told by the Sindh University authorities) rather than nationalists.

Though the Thori Phattak incident received much publicity, it was not the Jeay Sindh Mahaz, but Rasool Bux Palijo's Awami Tehreek which played the most influential role in putting its weight behind the MRD in 1981.<sup>82</sup> They led the attack on the official buildings, disrupted the means of communication throughout Sindh and engaged in firing incidents with the police and the Army.<sup>83</sup> According to an analysis of the arrests made in 1983, the Sindh Awami Tehreek stood behind the PPP, with 13.45 per cent of its party members behind bars.<sup>84</sup>

### **Intra-ethnic conflict and divisiveness in Sindh: Sindhis versus Sindhis**

As discussed earlier in the section on ethnopoltics as ideological politics, the philosophy of Syed and Palijo were radically opposed to each other. Both men had different political objectives with Palijo also criticising Syed for destroying a generation of young Sindhi students by leading them astray with the utopia of a Sindhu Desh. Palijo blames Syed for weaning Sindhi students away from education and indulging them in violence while important socio-economic problems were never addressed by Syed and his followers either intellectually or politically.<sup>85</sup>

This intra-ethnic divide within Sindhi ethnonationalism was most magnificently played out during the military operation in Sindh in the 1980s. In the pre-1971 politics of Sindhi ethnonationalism, both Syed and Palijo were in a joint alliance. In the 1960s, both Syed and Palijo joined hands in Hyder Bakhsh Jatoi's Sindh Hari Committee which campaigned for the rights of the poor and landless peasants of Sindh. Palijo and Syed were also part of the Bazm-e-Soofia-e-Sindh which the latter established in 1966. The Bazm was primarily a cultural organisation which through its activities intended to resuscitate the Sindhi culture.<sup>86</sup>

Palijo, however, and his style of mass politics were different from Syed resulting in Palijo forming the Awami Tahreek in 1970. During the 1970s and especially after the implementation of Zia's martial law, Awami Tahreek as opposed to Jeay Sindh announced that it would resist martial law. In 1978, Palijo went further than the anti-Bhutto Syed by constituting Bhutto Bachayo Tahreek ('Save Bhutto Movement') indicating that he preferred the democratic Bhutto over Zia's military dictatorship while Syed could not look

beyond his petty differences with Bhutto and his PPP. It was precisely this nonchalance that Syed harboured towards Bhutto which led him to disassociate himself and his party from the MRD. Completely abandoning the PPP, Syed now sided with Zia and the martial law regime. Palijo and his Awami Tahreek, on the other hand, immediately joined the MRD and led the Sindhi nationalist revolt against the Pakistani state.

G. M. Syed did not join the MRD as he did not 'consider it of any use for Sindh's interests'.<sup>87</sup> Radically opposed to the PPP and Bhutto, Syed expected though that the non-involvement of Punjab in the present struggle against the military dictatorship was a good omen. This way the PPP would be forced to become a regional party, he reasoned. A new impetus would then be given to Sindhi nationalism and pride.<sup>88</sup> Nowhere in his assessment was an alliance with Awami Tahreek thought of or appreciated against a Punjabi-dominated army and state which had now involved itself in a military operation against the native Sindhi population. From 1984 onwards, in order to divide the Sindhis, Zia started associating with Sindhi separatists with the intention of pitting them against PPP supporters in rural areas.<sup>89</sup> It was Zia who cajoled G. M. Syed, paid him a visit and encouraged an active alliance between Syed and the fast emerging Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) led by Altaf Hussain.

In January 1984, the Urdu-speaking community celebrated the eighty-first birthday of G. M. Syed in Karachi.<sup>90</sup> The reasons for such an alliance were related to the fact of political manipulation on the part of the Zia regime in order to combat the influence of PPP in Sindh.<sup>91</sup> According to Adeel Khan:

Apart from the two groups' links with the regime, there were some other commonalities in their interests. The reason for the nationalists' support to the MQM was the realisation after the abortive Sindhi agitation that unless the major towns of the province, which are predominantly Mohajir, are mobilised in favour of Sindh's case, there is little hope for positive results. The MQM flirtation with Sindhi nationalists too was based on some pragmatic thinking – it neither considered Sindhis as serious a threat as it perceived Punjabis to be, nor did it want a Bangladesh-like situation, where Mohajirs had antagonised Bengalis by siding with the Pakistani establishment and later suffered.<sup>92</sup>

### **Inter-ethnic conflict and discord in Sindh: Sindhis versus Mohajirs**

In the immediate aftermath of the separation of East Pakistan in December 1971, post-1971 Pakistan witnessed ethnic riots in Karachi and Hyderabad between the Sindhis and Mohajirs over the issue of the introduction of Sindhi as the official language of the Sindh province. What follows is a brief analysis of the 1972 Language Riots, their causes and consequences.

The Sindhi language bill known as the Sindh (teaching, promotion and use of the Sindhi language) Bill of 1972 was put forward in the Sindh Assembly.

Its controversial provisions pertaining to education and employment stipulated in Clause 4:

- (1) Sindhi and Urdu shall be compulsory subjects for study in classes IV to XII in all institutions in which such classes are held;
- (2) The introduction of Sindhi as compulsory subject shall commence at the lowest level, namely class IV, and by stages to be prescribed, be introduced in higher classes up to class XII;

And in Clause 6:

Subject to the provisions of the Constitution, Government may make arrangements for progressive use of Sindhi language in offices and departments of Government including courts and Assembly.<sup>93</sup>

The Opposition in the Sindh Assembly comprising Urdu-speaking members wanted to amend Clause 6 to read it as: 'Government may make arrangements for progressive use of Sindhi language in offices and departments of Government including courts and Assembly, in addition to a national language.'<sup>94</sup> By this insertion, they wanted to make sure that in the courts, Assembly and offices, Urdu would also be used along with Sindhi. However, the Bill was passed in the Assembly after the Opposition had staged a walkout in protest against the ruling of the Speaker declaring all their amendments out of order.<sup>95</sup> On July 8 an Urdu newspaper carried a headline proclaiming the death of the Urdu language and soon Karachi and Hyderabad were in a grip of bloody violence between the Urdu speakers and police which continued for three days. On the other hand, the Sindhi Marxist intellectual Feroz Ahmed hailed the provincial government of Sindh for passing the Language Bill, which he labelled as 'the most sensible decision on the language question ever taken in Pakistan's history'.<sup>96</sup>

After rioting between the two ethnic communities erupted, the students of Karachi University set the records and furniture of the Sindhi Department on fire in the campus.<sup>97</sup> It was only when Z. A. Bhutto announced a formula for reconciliation and went on a tour to Sindh that the violence came to an end.<sup>98</sup> Z. A. Bhutto passed an Ordinance which provided for non-discrimination in the appointment or promotions in Civil Service on the basis of the knowledge of Sindhi or Urdu language. In order to placate the grievances of the Urdu-speaking community, the Ordinance provided for a grace period of twelve years.<sup>99</sup> This meant that Urdu speakers would not have to learn Sindhi for employment purposes. The grace period expired in July 1984, when the Zia regime decided not to enforce the language requirement.<sup>100</sup>

In the 1980s, with the formation of the MQM, relations between the two communities again nosedived. Although there was a brief period of rapprochement between Syed and the MQM, ethnic conflict between the two communities

resurfaced in 1988 mainly as a result of the formation of the Sindhi National Alliance. The Alliance was mainly a work of G. M. Syed, who interestingly was able to woo Palijo and his Awami Tahreek on his side and present an eight-point charter which was released at the meeting, and pledged to start a peaceful struggle against the settlement of the 'gangs of outsiders' in Sindh; prevent construction of military cantonments in certain areas in Sindh; recognise Sindhi as a national language; and to secure the release of political prisoners.<sup>101</sup> The formation of a distinctly Sindhi bloc was probably seen as threatening by the Mohajirs in Sindh, and Hyderabad became the scene of conflict between the two communities.

Relations between the two communities came to a standstill after an MQM councillor decided to have a monument of a Sindhi poet demolished in Hyder Chowk, one of the central roundabouts of Hyderabad, and replaced by portraits of several heroes of the Pakistan Movement such as Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the founder of Aligarh University and Liaquat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan.<sup>102</sup> Interestingly, Altaf Hussain, who was courting a Sindhi–Mohajir alliance at the time with G. M. Syed, intervened from Karachi and ordered that the pictures of Sir Syed and Liaquat Ali be white-washed, and evoked the sanctity of the Sindhi poet.<sup>103</sup> Matters worsened on 30 September 1988 when Sindhi militants riding in a car sprayed bullets in the residential areas and shopping markets of Hyderabad. What transpired was described in a news item as follows:

Gunmen riding in cars sped through the streets ... in a 3-hour shooting rampage that left at least 70 people dead and more than 250 injured ... the unidentified assailants, armed with submachine guns and assault rifles drove around ... firing indiscriminately ... the attackers fired on markets, movie theatres, homes and passerby. One group entered Hyderabad's main rail station and loosed a hail of bullets at a train standing at the platform.<sup>104</sup>

The attacks were specifically targeted in Mohajir localities. After the Hyderabad massacre, Altaf Hussain criticised the Sindh government for failing 'to provide security to its citizens beginning from the 1986 holocaust at Aligarh, Qasba colonies, and thus the Mohajirs should be given arms licences freely for self defence'.<sup>105</sup> In retaliation, the Mohajirs in Karachi attacked Sindhi-speaking areas resulting in the death of 58 people. In two days of carnage, the death toll in the twin cities mounted to more than 200 dead.<sup>106</sup> The Mohajirs set up roadblocks and fired on vehicles travelling from Sindhi neighbourhoods. In one case, Mohajir gunmen sprayed gunfire through the windows and doors of a bus carrying Sindhi fish merchants, killing 12 of about 20 on-board.<sup>107</sup> The next chapter details the formation of a Mohajir ethnonationalism in the 1970s in which the MQM was the principal actor and the military operation that was launched against the MQM in the 1990s.

## 6 The Mohajirs

### Ethnic politics in an urban setting

The Mohajirs were and still are one of the most affluent political and economic ethnic groups in Pakistan. Compared to the tribal Baloch and rural Sindhis, Mohajirs have always boasted a very vibrant and well-educated urban middle class, which was in the forefront of the demand for an independent Pakistan in the early half of the twentieth century. The Muslim League, which was dominated by Muslims of the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh (UP)), was primarily a party of the Urdu-speaking nobles of the Indian subcontinent. The Muslims, who took to education after the efforts of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan formed the backbone of the Imperial bureaucracy. These Muslims concentrated in the Muslim minority provinces as opposed to the Muslim majority provinces in north-west India (present-day Pakistan), shaped the struggle for the independence of Pakistan.

After partition, the Muslims of the minority provinces, albeit not all, migrated to Pakistan and made their homes in the urban centres of the Sindh province, namely Karachi and Hyderabad. Before embarking on a critical analysis of the rise of Mohajir nationalism, it is prudent to deliberate on two popular interpretations of nationalism within the Muslim community of the Indian subcontinent. The first interpretation voiced by A. R. Siddiqi borders on a primordial approach, which views 'the nation as an organism of fixed and indelible character which was stamped on its members at birth and from which they could never free themselves'.<sup>1</sup> The second interpretation takes instrumentalism as its starting point and details the role of elites and material factors playing an important role in the politics of ethnicity of Muslims of the minority provinces in India, especially UP and Bihar.

According to A. R. Siddiqi, the Muslims of Indian subcontinent were always strangers in their own land. Though independence and migration brought them the title of 'refugees' in Pakistan, they were refugees for centuries. According to such an interpretation, the Muslims despite ruling India for hundreds of years never made this country their own and instead their eyes were fixed on Samarkand, Bukhara, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the holy lands.<sup>2</sup> Siddiqi goes to the extent of likening the last Mughal Emperor of India as a refugee in his own land with his poetry and life bearing such symbols.<sup>3</sup> Thus, after the 1857 War of Independence against the British, which led to



the end of the Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent, the Muslims became strangers; and the works of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the political activism of the Ali Brothers in the Khilafat Movement, the poetry of Allama Iqbal and the constitutional struggle of Quaid-e-Azam were all signposts to end this state of 'refugee-ness'.<sup>4</sup> Arguing further, he states that the status of Muslims in India was akin to those of the 'landed aliens' in the United States or Canada who despite living there, remain strangers.<sup>5</sup> However, it is interesting to note that Siddiqi's explanation of this Muslim dilemma remains geographically confined to the Muslims of UP, especially Delhi. This is particularly the case because the Muslims of Delhi had suffered the most as a result of the British arrival in the subcontinent and were most aggrieved because of the loss of their power and privileges.

On the other hand, Hamza Alavi argues from a 'politics of ethnicity' perspective which disregards primordialism and instead sees ethnicity as contextual, class based and thus intimately tied to political and economic factors. Being a neo-Marxist, Alavi rejects explanations of ethnicity as a social category, and argues that 'with shifts in interests or circumstances, ethnic re-alignments take place and identities change'.<sup>6</sup> The ethnic realignments and change in identities is a result of one class, which is the most vocal, and stands at the base of ethnic competition and conflict. This class, which was a product of British imperialism mainly, comprised educated people who were employed in the state apparatus. According to Alavi:

For want of a better term I call them the 'salarariat', for the term 'middle class' is too wide, the term intelligentsia unwarranted and the term 'petty bourgeoisie' has connotations, specially in Marxist political discourse, that would not refer to this class. For our purposes we shall include within the term 'salarariat' not only those who are actually in white collar employment, notably in the state apparatus, but also those, namely students, who aspire to such jobs and seek to acquire the requisite credentials, if not the actual education itself, that entitle them to the jobs.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the salariat according to Alavi was instrumental in projecting and carrying forward the demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. In particular, the salariat of the Muslim minority provinces such as UP and Bihar feared a loss of their privileges as more and more members of other ethnic communities were recruited in the imperial bureaucracy. In the UP, the share of the Muslims in the highest ranks of government service declined from 64 per cent in 1857 to about 35 per cent by 1913, a remarkable decline of privilege, for Muslims were only about 13 to 15 per cent of the total population of the UP in that period. That provided the major thrust of Muslim nationalism in India.<sup>8</sup> As will be seen later, the same dilemma afflicted the Mohajir community in the 1970s, when their

representation in the federal bureaucracy started to decline. Most importantly, it was the middle- and lower-middle-class Mohajir based in Karachi and Hyderabad who found recruitment to government jobs and services difficult. The next section details the emergence of Mohajir nationalism in post-1971 Pakistan.

### **The development of Mohajir nationalism in post-1971 Pakistan**

In the post-independence period, the Urdu speakers who were now referred to as 'Muhajireen' or 'Panahguzeer' or even 'Hindustani' made their way into the urban centres of Sindh, mainly Karachi and Hyderabad.<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that 73 per cent of the new migrants to Pakistan were Punjabis who settled in Punjab while a small number also consisted of the Urdu speakers who amalgamated into the Punjabi culture.<sup>10</sup> However, the situation in Sindh (which received 20 per cent of the Indian migrants) was different because Mohajirs were able to form an independent identity of their own in Karachi. The city was dominated by the non-Muslims before partition and after most of them had migrated to India after 1947, there was no assimilationist pressure on Mohajirs in contrast to their brethren who had settled in Punjab.<sup>11</sup> The Mohajirs were free to practise their culture and language in Karachi and Hyderabad. On the political plane, the Mohajirs were well represented and formed the backbone of the new state. The refugees represented a more advanced urban capitalist culture which they had brought with them from the towns and cities of India. Not only did they have a relatively large entrepreneurial class along with an administrative and educated petty bourgeois service class, they also had a large and well-trained working class.<sup>12</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan, a Mohajir, became the first Prime Minister of the Pakistani state. Moreover, measures such as adoption of Urdu as the national language of Pakistan and the naming of Karachi as the capital of Pakistan, all pointed to the fact that Mohajirs were now the junior partners along with the Punjabis in the Pakistani state structure. The ascendancy of the Mohajir in the national mainstream alienated the Sindhis and the Bengalis who found their culture and language denigrated.

During protestations by the Sindhis and Bengalis, the response of the Mohajirs was to invoke the policy of the state. Mohajirs obviously did not fit any of the existing local ethnic groups, and of all 'communities' in Pakistan they had most strongly adhered to the 'Islamic Nation' theory that justified the state's existence.<sup>13</sup> As a corollary, the Mohajirs were hostile towards regional ethnic movements and backed the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami or the traditionalist Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Pakistan.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, the Mohajirs were not only politically influential but their business and trade interests far exceeded those of other ethnic communities including the Punjabis. Some of the most powerful industrial families such as the Haroons, Dadabhoys,<sup>15</sup> etc. were based in Karachi and Karachi itself became the hub of financial and industrial activity. Yuri Gankovsky who

refers to the Mohajirs as 'aliens' because their origin was different than the peoples inhabiting Pakistan states that:

The key positions were held by businessmen who settled in Karachi and big towns of West Punjab only after the partition of India ... They hailed from Bombay, Kathiawar, Delhi and other parts of India, which had not been incorporated in Pakistan because the bulk of their population were Hindus.<sup>16</sup>

The relative shift in the power structure of the Mohajir community within the state structure started with the rise of Ayub Khan in power, a Pathan. After his *coup d'état*, he shifted the capital of Pakistan to Islamabad and this infuriated the Mohajirs. Moreover, changes in the bureaucracy brought about by Ayub Khan further hurt them. According to Siddiqi, many Mohajir bureaucrats had to move to Islamabad where the weather was cold in contrast to the temperate climate of Karachi. He relates this phenomenon as the second migration of Mohajirs after 1947.<sup>17</sup> During the presidential elections of 1964, the Mohajirs aligned themselves with Fatima Jinnah, the sister of the founder of nation, and favoured her candidacy against Ayub Khan. Throughout the elections, the Mohajir masses actively participated against Ayub Khan. After Ayub's victory, a large victory procession took place in Karachi, led in the main by Pathans, and some riots were witnessed. This was probably the first time in Karachi's history that the Mohajirs found themselves in conflict with another ethnic community.<sup>18</sup>

The gradual shift in the state structure, which was evidenced during the days of Ayub Khan, reached a peak with the coming into power of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a Sindhi, as the Prime Minister. Bhutto brought about changes within the Pakistani state structure which hurt the interests of the Mohajir within the bureaucracy. Two changes in particular merit attention. First, the adoption of Sindhi alongside Urdu as the official language of the Sindh province, which culminated in widespread violence between the Mohajirs and Sindhis in Karachi in 1972.<sup>19</sup> Second, the introduction of the new quota system, which made a distinction between rural and urban Sindhis for recruitment in the bureaucracy.

The quota system was not something novel but was in fact first introduced by Liaquat Ali Khan in September 1948 in order to achieve parity between the eastern and western wings of the country. This system was favourable to the Mohajirs: for example, Karachi, received a 2 per cent share, though its population was 1.5 per cent. Furthermore, an additional 15 per cent allocation was made exclusively for potential migrants from India.<sup>20</sup> Bhutto amended and reintroduced a regional quota system for recruitment to the federal bureaucracy. Introduced in 1971, the quota mandated that 10 per cent of the vacancies in government be filled on the basis of all-Pakistan merit, 50 per cent allocated to the Punjab, 11.5 per cent to the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), 7.6 per cent to 'urban Sindh', 11.4 per cent to 'rural Sindh'

and 3.5 per cent to Balochistan.<sup>21</sup> The most displeasing aspect of the quota system, which had been in operation since the creation of Pakistan, was the distinction in recruitment between urban and rural Sindhis. The Mohajirs felt that the Sindhis were gaining ground with a Sindhi Prime Minister in power and Mohajir resentment increased as a result.

The new quota system had its intended effect which may be witnessed in the following statistics relative to recruitment in the civil service. The Mohajirs of urban Sindh experienced a fall in their recruitment percentages from 30.1 in 1973 to 20.2 in 1983, while the Sindhi share in the federal bureaucracy increased from 3.1 per cent in 1973 to 5.1 per cent in 1983.<sup>22</sup> However, it should also be noted that despite the relative fall in numbers, the Mohajirs continued to be overrepresented in the bureaucracy, with respect to their population.<sup>23</sup> However, one particular class of Mohajirs (the middle and lower-middle class) was beginning to feel the strains of the system as they found increasing competition for jobs and employment in both the federal and provincial services from not only the Sindhis but the Punjabis and Pathans as well. The situation in Karachi was further compounded because increasing numbers of non-Mohajirs had settled in the city. These non-Mohajirs contesting for civil service exams and included in the urban Sindh quota provided a further challenge to the Urdu-speaking Mohajir.

Thus, the relative decline in bureaucratic recruitment and the quota system hurt the middle- and lower-middle-class Mohajirs.<sup>24</sup> Deliberating on the rise of the MQM, Kennedy states that the movement was led by those most adversely affected by the decline in Mohajir fortunes, youths seeking employment.<sup>25</sup> Theodore P. Wright explains this development in terms of the 'peripheralisation' of the Mohajirs, which was led by the youth, particularly those from the lower-middle class.<sup>26</sup> The main vote bank of the MQM is excessively if not exclusively middle- and lower-middle class and this is where it draws its main support. The next section details the ideological basis of Mohajir nationalism as provided for by Altaf Hussain and the MQM, the MQM (Haqiqi), Mohajir Ittehad Tehrik (MIT) and Mohajir Rabita Council (MRC).

### **Ethnopolitics as ideological politics: Altaf Hussain and MQM, MQM (Haqiqi), Mohajir Ittehad Tehrik (MIT) and Mohajir Rabita Council (MRC)**

Altaf Hussain, the founder of the APMSO and MQM, came from a lower-middle-class background and was born in Karachi on 17 September 1953.<sup>27</sup> He underwent military training for a year in the National Cadet Corps, a college-based training programme for civilian youths in Pakistan. It was here that Altaf Hussain experienced ethnic hatred against the Urdu speakers. Once he was ridiculed by his superior for belonging to Karachi and experienced ethnic prejudice against the Mohajirs in such diatribes as Mohajirs drink lots of tea, wear tight-fitting trousers and are incapable and unfit for military service.<sup>28</sup> This infuriated the young Altaf and led him to believe that other ethnic

communities did not like his particular community, while he himself had joined the military training programme with the belief that Pakistan was one nation.<sup>29</sup>

After this initial experience of ethnic hatred, Altaf Hussain encountered problems while gaining admission to the Pharmacy Department at the University of Karachi.<sup>30</sup> His non-admission was based on the fact that admission to the Pharmacy Department had already taken place before the results for Altaf Hussain's batch were announced. This was a function largely of the mismanagement and pathetic state of affairs of higher education in the country. Immediately, Altaf Hussain led a group of disaffected students and after persistent campaigning was able to gain admission to the Pharmacy Department.<sup>31</sup> The admission campaign and subsequent events in the University of Karachi made clear to Altaf that Mohajirs were indeed a separate ethnic group and were being discriminated against by the Pakistani state. He started work immediately on an organisation for the Mohajirs, which could help them, recognise their existence as a separate ethnic group as well as gain them their legitimate rights.

Thus on 11 June 1978, the All Pakistan Mohajir Students Organisation (APMSO) was formed at the University of Karachi with Altaf Hussain as Chairman.<sup>32</sup> The political demands of APMSO were put forward in a document by Azim Ahmad Tariq, Vice Chairman of APMSO, entitled 'Pakistani Nationalism and the Concept of Nationalism in the World'. In this pamphlet, Azim Ahmed Tariq takes issue with the fact that in 1954 Pakistan closed its borders to migrants from India and thus Pakistan became the state for Muslims of the majority province of north-western India in which Muslims from the minority provinces of India were sidelined.<sup>33</sup> In this new emerging Mohajir nationalist discourse, Pakistan was seen as the preserve of the Punjabis and a state-centred nationalism was now shunned in favour of a Mohajir ethnic nationalism. Without naming the Punjab province directly, Tariq makes clear the fact of how provincial and federal secretaries in Sindh belong to the dominant province. The Karachi Development Authority, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation and Karachi Electric Supply Corporation are run by personnel from this province.<sup>34</sup> Even the police is recruited from the same province and the NWFP which is primarily responsible for atrocities committed against the Karachi populace.<sup>35</sup> Regarding the Sindhis, Azim Tariq criticised the argument that Mohajirs should become part of the Sindhi culture, and put forward the argument that Sindhi society represents a feudal and agricultural society whose customs and culture are radically different from the urban, literate and more developed Mohajirs.<sup>36</sup> At the end of the essay, Azim Tariq set down several demands, the two most interesting of which are:

Mohajirs should be provided with a province of their own where they can freely practice and exercise their culture.

Draconian laws relating to the quota system and domicile should be abolished.<sup>37</sup>

In this new emerging Mohajir nationalist discourse, the middle- and lower-middle-class Mohajirs did not only express their grievances against the non-Mohajirs but also against the elite class of Mohajirs.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, the APMSO on campus was treated with disrespect and totally disregarded by other student parties, namely the Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba (IJT).<sup>39</sup> Matters came to a boiling point when IJT members attacked APMSO workers in February 1981 during the admission campaign in the University of Karachi. After this incident, APMSO and their leaders including Altaf Hussain were barred from entering the university by the IJT for a number of years.<sup>40</sup> In obscurity, Altaf Hussain and his colleagues preached the Mohajir cause in their respective localities and started a magazine called *Al-Mohajir* in May 1982. Together with left-wing and ethnically based student groups it took part in the United Students Movement that opposed the Islami Jamiat-e-Tulaba.<sup>41</sup>

Their hard work ultimately transpired with the formation of MQM in March 1984. However, there has been much controversy and talk of Zia-ul-Haq and the military establishment orchestrating the rise of MQM as a bulwark against the MRD.<sup>42</sup> At a time, when all students' organisations were banned by Zia, Altaf Hussain found it convenient to expand his to a wider stage.<sup>43</sup> The MQM, it may be stated, was an instant hit. Suddenly, Mohajirs started deserting the rank and file of Jamaat-e-Islami and the MQM membership soared. The prevalent thought among the Mohajirs was that they were discriminated against and that they should have their rights as other nationalities in Pakistan. The discourse on Mohajir ethnic nationalism now took the shape of them being victims of state policy, with the discourse now in the hands of the lower-middle classes which had been most affected by changes in the Pakistani state structure since the 1970s. The MQM phenomenon was spectacular and Altaf Hussain took pride in the fact that the MQM was the first political party, which was composed and representative of the lower-middle classes. Moreover, the MQM distinguished itself from mainstream political parties such as the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League, which mainly comprised feudal landlords.<sup>44</sup>

In August 1986, when plans were afoot for the launch of the second phase of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy, the MQM organised its first public gathering at Nishtar Park, Karachi. According to *Daily Dawn*:

The gathering could be compared to any big public meeting held previously at Nishtar Park by the MRD and other political parties ... Even when it started raining, the people did not move, and listened to the speech of their leader, Mr. Altaf Hussain, who was himself rain-soaked.<sup>45</sup>

In some of the more important matters detailed in the public gathering by Altaf Hussain, there were calls for accepting Mohajirs as a fifth nationality of Pakistan and that they be given employment in government services on the basis of their population and not the quota system.<sup>46</sup> Moreover in a direct affront to the Punjabi and Pathan bus drivers and conductors who were in

control of the Karachi transport, he stated that the bus conductors should behave properly with the passengers and that the rickshaw drivers should operate with honesty, as the rickshaw meters were tampered, resulting in their charging more money than the correct fare.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, there were calls for the Governor of Sindh province as well as the Inspector General to be nominated from the Mohajir community.<sup>48</sup> With respect to elite Mohajirs, there were references to MQM being a party of the oppressed Mohajirs and that the affluent and rich Mohajirs represented the vested interests and as such were excluded from the MQM.<sup>49</sup>

In early 1987, Altaf Hussain issued the MQM's Charter of Resolutions,<sup>50</sup> which included the following points:

- 1 Sindh's domicile certificate should be given to such locals who have been resident in Sindh along with their families for the last twenty years.
- 2 Only locals should be recruited into the police and intelligence agencies.<sup>51</sup>
- 3 Mohajirs and Sindhis should be allowed to have weapons licences and that their acquirement should be as easy as a radio or TV licence.<sup>52</sup>
- 4 No illiterate person should be given licence for commercial transport and the minimum qualification for such applicants should be matriculation with local people being preferred.
- 5 For all government and semi-government posts, locals should be preferred and all non-locals should be transferred back to their own provinces.<sup>53</sup>
- 6 Afghan refugees should be sent back to their respective camps on the Pakistan–Afghan border and they should not be allowed to own property and run business in Karachi.
- 7 Only locals should have the right to vote.
- 8 For recruitment into the federal government, the 10 per cent merit quota should be abolished in favour of recruitment on the basis of population.<sup>54</sup>
- 9 Stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh (Biharis) should be accepted as Pakistani nationals and repatriated back to the country.
- 10 Locals should be given preference in admission to educational institutions.
- 11 Liaquat Ali Khan's and Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai's death anniversaries should be proclaimed as national holidays.

Besides Altaf Hussain and the MQM, other Mohajir parties include the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (Haqiqi),<sup>55</sup> the Mohajir Ittehad Tehrik (MIT) and Mohajir Rabita Council (MRC). Haqiqi was formed in 1991 after differences developed within the MQM, while the other two parties were formed in the mid-1980s after the formation of the MQM in 1984. It is interesting to note that these three parties have remained at the periphery of electoral politics in Karachi and Hyderabad and as such have not mounted a major challenge to the dominance of MQM and Altaf Hussain.

The formation of Haqiqi was a direct consequence of intra-ethnic conflict within the MQM. The conflict related to a personality clash within the MQM which also included a Bihari–non-Bihari disjuncture. Another conflict was

more symptomatic of an ideological conflict within the MQM over the issue of transforming the 'Mohajir' slogan into 'Muttahida' (United). It may be stated that both factors were not mutually exclusive.

The idea of changing the name of the party from Mohajir to Muttahida was floated in 1991 by Altaf Hussain and this invited serious criticism from certain quarters within the party. The rebellious group was led by Afaq Ahmed and Amir Khan who later on formed Haqiqi.<sup>56</sup> Afaq Ahmed and Amir Khan were of the opinion that the objectives of the Mohajirs for which the MQM had been formed should be resolved first and only then the foray into national politics be considered.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, both Afaq and Amir Khan, who were non-Biharis, were not pleased with the domination of Biharis within MQM. Dr Saleem Shahzad, the Vice Chairman of the MQM, a Bihari, was disliked by Afaq Ahmed and Amir Khan as he was very close to Altaf Hussain and was known for the misappropriation of money for personal gains.<sup>58</sup> In the summer of 1991, the breakaway Haqiqi was formed after Afaq Ahmed and Amir Khan were expelled from the party on charges of corruption and conspiracy to kill Altaf Hussain.<sup>59</sup> Fearing for their lives, the leadership of Haqiqi exiled in the United States. They were to return later at the start of Operation Clean Up against the MQM.

Mohajir Ittehad Tehrik (MIT), on the other hand, came into being on 13 March 1984 about a week before the formation of MQM. Its founding Chairman, Dr Salim Haider who hailed from Hyderabad, was one of the founding members of the APMSO in 1978. It is to the credit of Dr Haider that he laid the foundation of the first Mohajir students' organisation, the Mohajir Medicos Association at the Sindh Medical College in May 1978.<sup>60</sup> However Dr Haider developed differences with Altaf Hussain over his soft stance towards the Sindhis and his rapprochement with G. M. Syed. Dr Haider did not consider Sindhis as worthy allies and considered Syed as having no favourable disposition towards the Mohajirs.<sup>61</sup>

For Dr Haider, the Mohajir identity stems from their language Urdu, which he considers to be their strength. The most distinctive feature of MIT's politics and which distinguishes them from MQM, Haqiqi and MRC is their demand for a separate province for the Mohajirs. Dr Haider contends that a separate province would enable the Mohajirs to enjoy political power but such a province would not necessarily exclude other nationalities in its domain.<sup>62</sup> He wrote a book *Ab Sindh Taqseem Hona Chahiyye* ('Sindh Should Now Be Divided'), for which the Sindh provincial government brought a case against him, and the book being subsequently banned.<sup>63</sup>

Moreover, another crucial difference with the MQM, relates to the fact that MIT's powerbase laid in the smaller urban and rural centres of Sindh, while the MQM vote bank was primarily in Karachi and Hyderabad. Especially during the years 1986–88, MIT was popular among the Mohajirs in such urban centres because the MQM was allied with Syed's Jeay Sindh, and the MIT was able to tap into this Mohajir constituency, outside Karachi and Hyderabad, who lived in fear of being surrounded and dominated by Sindhis.<sup>64</sup> MIT



prides itself on the fact of organising one of the biggest Mohajir public rallies in February 1987 in Sukkur. However, MQM's political dominance in Karachi and Hyderabad spread further to other centres of Sindh especially after increasing conflict with Sindhis in 1988 and 1990 and this is where the MIT found itself marginalised and isolated. Its political organisation was no match to that of the MQM.

The Mohajir Rabita Council (MRC) was formed on 26 March 1988 with Maulana Wasi Mazhar Nadvi as its President. Despite the presence of MQM, MRC was formed because the former was representative of the second generation of Mohajirs. MRC comprised the Mohajir elders who had played an important role in Pakistan's history for the last forty years.<sup>65</sup> The political leadership, however, soon developed differences with the MQM, and Maulana Nadvi resigned. Differences developed within the MRC as well and the General Secretary, Nusrat Mirza, formed his own Pakistan Mohajir Rabita Council.<sup>66</sup> Nusrat Mirza now is the most important spokesperson for the MRC, but the organisation has faded into oblivion in recent years.

The MRC according to its leader Nusrat Mirza is against the notion of 'nationality' and instead evokes the term 'community'. The difference is that the former is exclusive to a certain group or nation, while the latter is inclusive of more than one nationality. According to Mirza,

If we accept the Mohajirs as a nationality, then it will lead to the creation of another state. We want to live within one state and that is why the notion of community can stem the tide of Mohajir nationalism by including the Sindhis, Baloch, Punjabis and Pathans.<sup>67</sup>

### **The military operation and the MQM (1992–6)**

The reasons for the military operation against the MQM were markedly different from the Baloch and Sindhi case studies. In Balochistan and Sindh, the military operation was a consequence of a political problem which then generated a fierce and militant Baloch and Sindhi ethnic movement resisting the state. In the case of the Mohajirs, however, the military operation was not a consequence of a political struggle between an ethnic community and the state (or government) but was rather a response to widespread criminal activities in the rural and urban centres of Sindh. During the late 1980s, the MQM had gained notoriety for using its street power to terrorise journalists, street vendors, industrialists and the like. The object was to extort money from such organisations and individuals and channel funds for the party. According to Adeel Khan, 'It [the MQM] introduced the bhatha (forced contribution) system to which Mohajir shopkeepers, businessmen and industrialists were obliged to contribute. Refusal to pay, or a sign of dissent in the MQM strongholds, could result in torture, loss of property and even loss of life.'<sup>68</sup> Criticism against the MQM leadership, particularly against Altaf Hussain, was considered unpardonable and the whole organisation was run on the style of the Nazi and Fascist parties of Germany and Italy.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, there

was a significant rise in the personality of Altaf Hussain. From Altaf Bhai, he was known as the Quaid-e-Tehreek and later as Pir Sahab.<sup>70</sup>

Operation Clean Up began in May 1992 ostensibly to root out dacoits in the interior of Sindh. However, soon after, the Army moved into Karachi against the MQM in June 1992. Though the purpose was to root out terror and violence from the streets of Karachi, the Army Operation in Karachi and Hyderabad took on a shape and life of its own and was mainly directed against the MQM. Hundreds of MQM activists were killed in an extra-judicial manner, while the lives of innocent civilians were not spared. Random house searches were conducted by law enforcement personnel, often resulting in families paying money to the Army in order to release their sons and relatives from being persecuted. Karachi during the 1990s became notorious for its security operation as the Army and MQM fought pitched battles on the streets of Karachi.

In an interesting development in October 1992, the Army accused the MQM of trying to create a state of their own with the name 'Jinnahpur' or 'Urdudesh'.<sup>71</sup> The news was astonishing, because the MQM had not displayed any secessionist or separatist tendencies, unlike G. M. Syed who openly advocated Sindhu Desh for the Sindhis. The plan according to the Army envisaged Karachi, Hyderabad, Thatta, Badin and the oil-rich areas of Upper Sindh becoming part of Jinnahpur. Once the state was established, the Army alleged that the MQM would pass on the Tharparkar region to Indian sovereignty and control.<sup>72</sup> The plan was rebuked vehemently by the MQM and Altaf Hussain accused Brigadier Asif Haroon of hatching a conspiracy.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, the Army exposed a number of torture cells in Karachi, which was widely publicised in the media. Thirty cases were registered in Karachi police stations against MQM chief Altaf Hussain and his subordinates including kidnapping and torture, attempted murder, looting, arson and violence. It was also revealed that the MQM even operated its own summary courts which were presided over by party chief Altaf Hussain.<sup>74</sup>

In the 1993 general elections, the Army in an effort to further subdue the MQM, threatened Altaf Hussain that the MQM should contest from only 4 out of the 13 constituencies in Karachi and the rest of the seats should be left for Haqiqi and other candidates.<sup>75</sup> Altaf Hussain said that the MQM was not prepared to accept *khairat* (charity), as this was absolutely illegal, undemocratic and unconstitutional.<sup>76</sup> Thus, there were clear signs that the state authorities, especially the Army, wanted to cut the MQM down to size during the National Assembly elections. Furthermore, the Army supported the Haqiqi faction which laid siege to Landhi, Korangi, Malir, Shah Faisal Colony, Liaquatabad, Mahmoodabad where MQM candidates were not allowed to enter in campaigning for the provincial assembly elections.<sup>77</sup> The only plausible reason for the Army's action relates to the fact that it did not want the MQM to have a role in coalitional politics at the centre, as political bargaining might give them leverage in the same way as after the 1988 and 1990 elections. This was indeed a gross violation of the right of a community

to representation; a community which was being persecuted by the state authorities. On the other hand, the MQM demanded the removal of some senior officers of the Army and intelligence agencies, whom they felt were on a personal vendetta against the party as a precondition to withdrawal of its decision to boycott the general elections.<sup>78</sup>

The fear of the Army was eventually realised in the provincial assembly elections where the MQM emerged as the second largest party in Sindh after the PPP. It won 27 seats compared to the PPP's 56. Voter turnout in the National Assembly polls in Karachi was about 8 per cent, while in the provincial election it was more than 70 per cent.<sup>79</sup> This showed more than anything that the MQM ruled the hearts and minds of the Mohajir masses.

During the Operation, which continued after the 1993 elections, most of the MQM leadership went underground or exile to London. Operation Clean Up continued until November 1994, when the Army decided to withdraw from the city – apparently it did not want to be seen as fighting a civil war against the Muhajireen.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, Operation Clean Up was seen as less successful as the MQM's arms and ammunition were not recovered as was portrayed in the media coupled with the political failure of the Haqiqi faction to make inroads into the constituencies of its rival Altaf group.<sup>81</sup>

However, after the withdrawal of the Army, the security situation in Karachi worsened further. As a result, the government of Benazir Bhutto, which had come to power in the summer of 1993 after the downfall of the Nawaz Sharif government, decided to take matters into its own hand. With the active support of General Naseerullah Khan Babar, the Federal Interior Minister, a reign of terror was let loose in the streets of Karachi. During 1995 and 1996, under the direct supervision of General Naseerullah Babar, the Karachi city witnessed some of the worst excesses of state authority. In 1994, in Karachi alone 1,113 people were killed by snipers. By 1995, Karachi had become the most dangerous city in Asia and was termed the 'city of death', when the number of people killed shot up to 2,095.<sup>82</sup> From July 1995 to January 1996, as many as 70 police encounters took place in the city, in which over 120 'terrorists' were killed. Of these, 11 encounters took place in January 1996 alone, resulting in the death of 23 MQM activists or sympathisers.<sup>83</sup> In addition, police officials were not spared by MQM youths. Out of the many killed, more than 90 policemen were shot dead in the first six months of 1995 with police stations in the troubled areas coming under rocket launcher attacks.<sup>84</sup>

After such a state of affairs and with increasing pressure from the military establishment, the MQM finally decided to change the official name of the party from Mohajir Qaumi Movement to Muttahida Qaumi Movement in July 1997. Elaborating on the change, the party spokesman said that the party wanted to include people from all over Pakistan in its fold since the MQM was not against any nationality or institution but against the 'exploitative forces' which comprised feudal lords, waderas, corrupt government officials and bureaucrats and some corrupt generals.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, he clarified that 'with

a new name the MQM would still not give up speaking for the rights of Mohajirs'.<sup>86</sup> This assertion does not seem entirely true and the military action has had decisive effects on the structure and workings of the Party.<sup>87</sup> According to Yunus Samad:

The suddenness of the announcement [the change to Muttahida] suggests that the party was concerned that it needed to blunt criticism, mainly in the intelligence agencies, that it was an anti-state organisation ... In this sense, it appears that the MQM was trying to make itself, in appearance at least, more acceptable to the military.<sup>88</sup>

### **Intra-ethnic conflict in the Mohajir community: Mohajir versus Mohajir**

The ideological basis of Mohajir nationalism makes clear that the MQM was not the sole voice of the Mohajirs; it was certainly the predominant one as evidenced in the huge electoral success that came to the MQM from the urban centres of Sindh. Moreover, it was the MQM and not the other Mohajir parties which was subject to the military operation. In fact, the intra-ethnic divisions within the Mohajir community were used intelligently by the state in order to divide and defeat the MQM. It is highly interesting to note that at the height of the military operation when their supposed Mohajir brothers were suffering, the other Mohajir parties distanced themselves from the politics of the MQM and even criticised the party for its wrongdoing. In fact, one Mohajir party, the Haqiqi courted an active alliance with the military in order to flush out the MQM and its supporters from key areas in Karachi. According to Rashid Jamal, during Operation Clean Up:

Mohajir youths were hunted like animals, over powered and tortured before their family members and taken to jails or interrogation centres, specially established for them. And ironically enough, all these acts were carried out with the help of a group of MQM renegades who were earlier ousted from the party for their criminal activities, and who had chosen to call themselves with the brand name-Haqiqis, whatever it means to them and others.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, with the help of the Army, the Haqiqi moved into areas of Karachi such as Liaquatabad, Landhi, Malir, Korangi and Lines Area and carried out their militant activities against the supporters of MQM. Some of these areas such as Korangi and Landhi were referred to by MQM as 'No-Go Areas' where the Haqiqi bandits, according to them, ruled the roost.<sup>90</sup>

Moreover, the state encouraged an alliance of convenience between Haqiqi and Sipah-e-Sahaba (SSP) in order to combat the MQM on the street. SSP's Azam Tariq and Haqiqi's Amir Khan met in early 1993 and decided that they

could work together. In many of the subsequent attacks on mosques, Haqiqi activists fought alongside SSP activists and SSP people targeted Altaf group activists to show their solidarity with the Haqiqi.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, Haqiqi was involved in criminal activities such as extortion and it was accused of harassing industrialists for money. Nowhere else was this fact more evident than in the case of Farooq Sumar, owner of Mohammed Farooq Textile Mills who fled Pakistan in fear of his life in May 1995.<sup>92</sup> He revealed that the Haqiqi was behind the 4.3 million rupee armed heist that had taken place at his factory. Moreover, the police's refusal to add MQM Haqiqi Chairman Afaq Ahmed's name to the original First Information Report (FIR) was a clear indication of the official patronage extended to the Haqiqi.<sup>93</sup>

Besides the Haqiqi, Dr Salim Haider of the MIT supported the Army action and bitterly criticised the MQM leadership for receiving a mandate from the Mohajirs twice in 1988 and 1990 polls but failing to solve the lingering problems of Mohajirs.<sup>94</sup> Dr Haider criticised the MQM for harbouring criminals and running itself on the lines of a Mafia rather than a political party. On the other hand, MIT comprised educated professionals who believe in the Mohajir ideology and practise it with all sincerity.<sup>95</sup> The MRC, akin to the MIT, welcomed the Army Operation against the MQM and praised the Army for its role, stating that the Operation was indeed to the benefit of the Mohajirs.<sup>96</sup> Criticising the MQM, Mirza stated that what the MQM lacked was intellectual content and that it made itself famous among the youth of Karachi by indulging in violence.<sup>97</sup>

### **Inter-ethnic conflict between Mohajirs and non-Mohajirs: Pathans, Sindhis and Pakka Qila**

The rise of the MQM as a political force in August 1986 brought it into major conflict with the Pathans and later on with the Sindhis. The Mohajir–Pathan discord was one of the most gruesome acts of violence witnessed in Karachi for a number of years. The ethnic conflict between the Mohajirs and Pathans developed in October 1986 when MQM supporters were on the way to Hyderabad for a public party meeting. The clash took place at Sohrab Goth which is the name of a locality on the outskirts of Karachi where the drug market is located and which is dominated by Pathans.<sup>98</sup> The flaring up of violence was a result of two different accounts, which were reported, in the local newspaper at the time. According to *Daily Dawn*:

The trouble started around 11.00 am ... when some of the passengers refused to pay the fare to bus operators. The MQM had announced that it would provide free transport to all those persons willing to attend its public meeting in Hyderabad ... another eyewitness claimed that the buses stopped near the Sohrab Goth to permit the passengers to drink water ... When some of the passengers got down, they were fired upon from a nearby hut on the western side of the highway.<sup>99</sup>

The MQM for its part refused to blame the Pathans for any wrongdoing and instead criticised the government for creating 'ribe between sections of society'.<sup>100</sup> It did this ostensibly to ward off further riots. However the situation between the two communities deteriorated further after the Pakistan Army decided to launch Operation Clean Up at Sohrab Goth in December 1986, as there was growing fear of the rise in power of the local Pathan drug dealers. On 12 December 1986, the security forces moved in and destroyed Pathan homes in search of weapons and drugs. By the evening the authorities recovered only a token amount of drugs and guns, 150 kg of heroin, five pistols and two rifles. The drug operators had reportedly been tipped off about this operation in time for them to remove their stocks to safer storage points.<sup>101</sup> However, any even-handedness that the state intended to portray did not work long, as the Pathans decided to take their anger out on the Mohajirs. They went on a rampage and attacked the Biharis in Orangi Town.<sup>102</sup> Handbills were distributed claiming that the attack on the home of the Pathans in Sohrab Goth was launched at the behest of the Mohajirs, and that this was part of a conspiracy to evict Pathans from Karachi.<sup>103</sup> The Orangi Town debacle is described as follows by Akmal Hussain:

Early on 13 December there were scattered incidents of rioting ... Then, just after 10.00 a.m., in response to a call from the Pirabad Masjid, several hundred Pathans armed with Kalashnikovs charged down the hills overlooking the Mohajir residential areas of Qasba, Aligarh and Sector I-D ... Under the cover of a hail of machinegun fire the invaders, using kerosene tanks, set the houses of Qasba and Sector I-D afire ... The police and army failed to intervene for five hours, during which the carnage continued unabated. By 4.30 p.m. hundreds of homes were burnt to the ground. According to official estimates the death toll was forty; it was hundreds by unofficial accounts.<sup>104</sup>

After the Pathan raid on Orangi Town, Karachi was gripped in a frenzy of violence between the Pathans and Mohajirs which continued until 17 December 1986. The massacre in Orangi Town further intensified the feelings of the Mohajir youth against the Pakistani state. The state was certainly not a neutral arbiter in the Pathan–Mohajir conflict, according to the perception of the Mohajirs. The MQM slated the government for its apathy and disregard for human life and said that preventive measures should have been taken as a sequel to the Sohrab Goth Operation.<sup>105</sup>

After the Pathans, Mohajir found themselves embroiled in a bloody conflict with the Sindhis in Hyderabad in 1988 (see [Chapter 5](#), for more on this). The 1988 carnage between the Sindhis and Mohajirs, however, did not stop the MQM from forging an alliance with the Sindhi-dominated PPP. This again makes clear the primacy of 'politics' as opposed to 'culture' as a central variable in explaining ethnic conflict. In the elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies in November 1988, the MQM emerged as the third

largest party in the country, thanks mainly to its strong presence in Karachi and Hyderabad.<sup>106</sup> The MQM won thirteen seats in Karachi and two from Hyderabad in the elections to the National Assembly. In the provincial assembly elections, the MQM won twenty-four seats.<sup>107</sup> The PPP's slim majority in the elections forced it to seek a coalition with the MQM in order to form its government at the centre.

The result was an accord between the PPP and the MQM based on a twenty-five point MQM's 'Charter of Resolutions'. Of the twenty-five points, the ones which caused increasing consternation between the Mohajirs and Sindhis related to the twelfth: 'Mohajirs should be constitutionally declared a separate nationality in Pakistan'; and the fifteenth 'Pakistanis stranded in Bangladesh should be accepted and repatriated as Pakistanis'.<sup>108</sup> It appeared that Benazir Bhutto accepted these terms out of political expediency, and, as a result, the accord between the MQM and the PPP broke down in October 1989. What ensued was a bloodbath on the streets of Karachi between the student and criminal gangs of the MQM and PPP. In February 1990 hundreds were killed as heavily armed student groups rampaged in Karachi and Hyderabad.<sup>109</sup>

However, the most bizarre incident during this time took place in the Pakka Qila in Hyderabad in May 1990.<sup>110</sup> The tension in Hyderabad inflamed when due to the increasing violence the government decided to send the police into Pakka Qila in search of MQM militants. The police besieged the area, closing off all exits. As a result of the siege, the water supply from the water tower in the citadel was cut off, disrupting the water supply in large sections of Hyderabad.<sup>111</sup> As a result, thousands of women and men took to the streets in defiance of the curfew which had been enforced for over 275 hours and to protest against the virtual imprisonment of the residents of Pucca Qila [sic] who had been besieged by the police for the previous twenty-four hours.<sup>112</sup> As the protestors marched towards the Pakka Qila, the police opened fire and used teargas. According to eyewitness accounts, the protestors chanted slogans of Allah-o-Akbar and a large number of them carried the national flag and pictures of General Zia-ul-Haq. Finally the Army moved in, greeted by the people chanting slogans of Pakistan Zindabad.<sup>113</sup> According to A. R. Siddiqi, who visited Pakka Qila after the massacre:

Slogans of death and damnation to the administration, from the President and Prime Minister down to the lowest minion of law, the policeman, pierced the air as I elbowed my way through a crowd of hapless Hyderabadis—screaming women, slogan raising and swearing men, in the walled Pucca Qila [sic] (plots 1 & 2) area the day after the black weekend, Saturday (the 26th) and Sunday (the 27th of May, 1990) — claiming no less than 150 (200 on the higher side) killed in cold blood.<sup>114</sup>

MQM Chairman Azim Ahmad Tariq condemned the Sindh government for launching 'its bloody operation' in Hyderabad, which he said was reminiscent of the Jallianwala Bagh (Amritsar) tragedy.<sup>115</sup> It is interesting to note here

that it was not the state, but the government led by the PPP which was responsible for the Pakka Qila tragedy. This is the reason why the Mohajirs of Pakka Qila embraced the Army with open arms. At Pakka Qila and the Bhitai Hospital there was a welcome cry of 'Hamari Fauj Zindabad' and 'We Welcome Our Fauj as Saviour'.<sup>116</sup>

Thus, by 1990, through the strength of its popular slogans and the Orangi Town and Pakka Qila tragedies, the MQM had come to acquire the wholehearted support and sympathy of the Mohajir masses. It had achieved the political homogenisation of a particular section of the Mohajirs, which presumably were the majority. However, there were voices of dissent within the Mohajir camp, which came from political platforms other than that of the MQM.



## 7 Conclusion

The book has put forth the following arguments in order to elucidate the politics of ethnicity in post-1971 Pakistan: (a) both the state and the government are responsible for the germination of ethnic conflicts in Pakistan; (b) intra-ethnic conflict is an essential reality of ethnic groups which is often instrumentalised by the state and government in order to divide and weaken the resistance which ethnic groups pose to their rule and authority; and, lastly (c) nationalism and ethnonationalist movements may arise in myriad socio-economic settings (not particularly tied to conditions of modernisation/industrialisation) and that it is useful to view the phenomena as a form of ideology and politics.

In conclusion, I would like to summarise general characteristics about the Pakistani state and ethnic conflict, the contemporary trends evident in the Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir ethnic movements specifically since 1999 and reconfiguring the thesis about the Pakistan–Punjab nexus in light of the autonomous power of the Pakistani state. Ian Talbot, the celebrated South Asian historian, sums up his study about Pakistan with the following conclusion:

Pakistan's best hope for the future lies not in taking out the begging bowl to international governments and organisations, nor in sham populist or Islamic sloganeering, nor in successive bouts of authoritarianism designed to keep the lid on popular unrest. The way forward can only lie in the genuine political participation of previously marginalised groups such as women, the minorities and the rural and urban poor. This would not only redeem the 'failed promise' of 1947, but also provide hope that Pakistan can effectively tackle the immense economic, social and environmental challenges of the next century.<sup>1</sup>

Ian Talbot's attention to the variable of 'political participation' as Pakistan's way forward is undoubtedly correct. It points to how the twin projects of state- and nation-building are still incomplete and that socio-political stability requires the amalgamation of disempowered groups into a community of social solidarity. It is interesting to note that critical assessments on the part of experts on Pakistan on this very issue have a careful mixture of both optimism and pessimism. For example, writing in 2002, Christophe Jaffrelot, signifying

the optimistic trend concluded that national integration had made significant progress in Pakistan compared to the early 1970s when Bengalis, Sindhis, Baluchis and Pathans were attracted to separatist movements.<sup>2</sup> In an interesting argument, Jaffrelot posits this success with the Pakistani state's capacity to allow non-dominant ethnic groups with access to power (both socio-economic as well as political) despite the absence of a culture of democracy and federalism.<sup>3</sup> This analysis makes for an interesting debate, for if it is assumed that democracy and federalism are inconsequential in the attenuation of ethnonationalist feelings and that power-sharing arrangements (as Tahir Amin also contends) make ethnic groups pliant over the longer term, then the question of the efficacy of democracy and federalism in regulating ethnic conflict is seriously challenged. Pakistan, according to such an interpretation then, offers an excellent example of co-optation of ethnic groups as the political prowess of its non-dominant ethnic groups has been successfully dealt with in a political system characterised by centralised authoritarianism.

On a partly more pessimistic note, Stephen Cohen in his book, *The Idea of Pakistan* suggests that although ethnonationalist movements will not cause the break-up of Pakistan in the future, Pakistan will continue to be plagued by such movements. In a more recent study, Cohen is more direct and states that though the break-up of Pakistan is unlikely at the moment 'but the breakup of the Soviet Union was also unexpected and unpredicted by most Soviet experts.'<sup>4</sup> Projections and talk of Pakistan as a failed or failing state<sup>5</sup> have gained credence in the war on terror as the Pakistani state wrestles with a plethora of dire challenges to its social cohesion and stability. These include: two separate domestic insurgencies, one secular (Baloch nationalism) and the other religious (Al-Qaeda and the Taliban); resurrecting its still fragile political system by ensuring democratisation, the primacy of the Constitution and striking an amicable balance between the civilian and military institutions something which the ruling elites have failed miserably at since 1947; a weak economy dependent on aid flows from the United States and Western financial institutions; a general dissipation of state authority as witnessed in bouts of dacoity, gang warfare, kidnapping for ransom as well as people taking the law into their own hands in both the rural and urban centres of the country; reworking the relations between the centre and provinces and laying the basis of a genuine federal system of governance which empowers the non-dominant ethnic groups and attends to their grievances.

Considering that the present work has its starting point the period when Pakistan disintegrated (1971), does it make sense to speak about *another* break-up? Stephen Cohen while prophesising that the country is unlikely to disintegrate also directs attention to the general health of the Pakistani state by suggesting that most of its institutions, including the Army, are weaker now to what they were ten, twenty or thirty years ago.<sup>6</sup> The break-up of Pakistan and the success of ethnonationalist movements are interconnected with variables such as the despotic power of the Pakistani state and the ethnic movement's political ability to mount a united front against the state and keeping

intra-ethnic conflict at a minimum. As present trends indicate both the variables show no signs of dissipation, hence, the break-up of Pakistan seems unlikely in the near future.

At the level of the state, when one configures about break-up, it is of utmost importance to factor into perspective the infrastructural and despotic powers of the Pakistani state. In general terms, it seems that the infrastructural powers of the Pakistani state are in decline, as witnessed in low levels of taxation, a stagnating economy, weak institutionalisation and political processes, poor governance and democracy, declining standards of education as well as rising poverty and incapacity of state institutions to deliver public goods to the masses. However, on the other hand, the despotic powers of the Pakistani state remain constant (and actually show a marked tendency to increase over a period of time with international military aid and financing) and have been used with frequency to crush ethnic movements in post-1971 Pakistan including the present insurgency in Balochistan since 2001. The Pakistani state, thus, ranks low in terms of infrastructural powers but high with respect to despotic powers.

Ranking low on infrastructural power and high on despotic powers has a significant impact on the consequent amelioration or intensification of ethnic conflict in a state and the argument may be generally applied to other potential case studies. The history of ethnic conflict in post-1971 Pakistan amply proves that despotic powers have been most readily applied in order to resolve ethnic conflicts than have political strategies of accommodation and compromise. Even when accommodation and compromise have been applied, they have been largely symptomatic of the state's contrivance in co-opting radical ethnic elites and their respective ethnic organisations without attending to the larger political, social and economic problems that non-dominant ethnic groups face. This state of affairs and the employment of despotic powers carry the disadvantage of leaving ethnic groups aggrieved in post-conflict situations with the added possibility of further radicalisation on the part of a younger generation of ethnic activists in the future.

However, the reassertion of ethnic movements or further radicalisation of the ethnic agenda does not imply automatically that the state will break up. For such a possibility to present itself in the future, it is necessary that a consequent decrease in the despotic powers of the state also come about. Only if the despotic power of the state is weakened or is presumed to be weakened, will the forces of ethnic separatism then have the possibility to succeed with their respective political goals and objectives. However, it should be remembered that despotic power alone has never been entirely successful in sustaining or engendering socio-political cohesion. Despotic power, for example, was not able to prevent the disintegration of the Pakistani state in 1971. In order to avert such a possibility in the future, it is imperative that the carrot figure as much as the stick in the Pakistani state and government's treatment of ethnic groups and movements. Furthermore, the carrot-stick analogy needs to be qualified with analysis which also takes as important the size of the carrot, or

whether the carrot is offered in full or doled out in little pieces with no meaningful effect on ameliorating ethnic conflict. One may simply conjecture that as long as the carrot is not offered in full and with the local participation of aggrieved non-dominant ethnic groups, the spectre of ethnicity will continue to haunt the Pakistani socio-political landscape.

As far as ethnic movements in post-1999 Pakistan and the break-up of the Pakistani state is concerned, the Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir case studies provide for an interesting analysis. Of the three, the most politically assertive and radical is the Baloch nationalist movement which has been involved in an armed conflict with the Pakistani state since 2001. It was during this year that an incipient Baloch movement reasserted itself in the Kohlu region after receding into a phase of dormancy since 1977 leading to the formation of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) in March 2002.<sup>7</sup> The specific demands of the BLA, the most militant of Baloch nationalist groups adhering to a separatist agenda, have to do with the expropriation of the natural and mineral resources of Balochistan by the Pakistani state. Since the formation of the BLA in March 2002, ethnic conflict in Balochistan has gained pace and added momentum with the induction of a younger, more hard-line group of activists both from the tribal domain and the urban middle class. The inclusion, for example, of Nawab Akbar Bugti in the nationalist bandwagon was most surprising considering his more conciliatory approach towards the Pakistani state since 1947.

What was a dispute in the gas-rich Dera Bugti district between the Nawab and the government over the employment of locals in the state-owned gas enterprise soon turned out to be a civil war and catastrophe pitting the Nawab and his tribe against the Pakistani state. After the rape of a lady doctor on the premises of Pakistan Petroleum Limited in Dera Bugti in January 2005, relations between the Nawab and Pakistani state further nosedived, forcing the former to flee into the mountains. Akbar Bugti was killed one year later in August 2006, after an army operation, with the cave in which he was hiding allegedly collapsing after heavy bombardment and gunfire. His death left a deep scar on the nationalist movement in Balochistan, although there is nothing to suggest radically that Akbar Bugti was fighting a nationalist fight or had independent Balochistan as a political goal. Since 2006, Baloch nationalists have endured a spate of political assassinations and in all likelihood it seems that the despotic power of the Pakistani state and government will once again triumph over the small force of Baloch nationalists.

Since the 1980s there has been no persuasive assertion of a Sindhi nationalism with G. M. Syed's Jeay Sindh Mahaz splintering into a number of different factions with each proclaiming its own legitimate agenda of loyalty to G. M. Syed and Sindhu Desh. In an event organised to mark the fifteenth death anniversary of G. M. Syed, the following factions held their own respective functions including Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (Bashir group), Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (Arisar group), Jeay Sindh Tehrik (Karnani group), Jeay Sindh Tehrik (Sarki group), Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz, Jeay Sindh Mahaz and Sindh

United Party.<sup>8</sup> The strains between these different factions along with other Sindh nationalist parties such as Mumtaz Bhutto's Sindh National Front and Dr Qadir Magasi's Sindh Taraqqi Pasand Party relate from their moderate/extremist stance towards the federation of Pakistan, relations with the Mohajirs to mere personality clashes and differences. On the other hand, the Mohajirs are still seen as a threat and ethnic rivals to be dealt with.<sup>9</sup> At a rally held in May 2006 against anti-Sindh projects of which Awami Tahreek and Sindh Taraqqi Pasand Party were a part to the exclusion of other nationalist parties, the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) was criticised for terrorising Sindhis and bulldozing Sindh localities in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur to convert Sindhis into a minority.<sup>10</sup> In recent times, there has been a minor upsurge in nationalist activities of a militant nature in Sindh led by Shafi Burfat and his Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM).<sup>11</sup> The JSMM was accused of blowing up railway tracks in Karachi, Hyderabad and Nawabshah on a single day in February 2011.<sup>12</sup> Soon after, three Sindh nationalist leaders belonging to the JSMM were killed in a shooting incident in the Sanghar District, prompting suggestions that the state utilised its despotic power in order to browbeat and check the emergence of a nascent militant Sindh nationalism.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, Mohajir nationalism has seen a radical transformation in its ideological nomenclature and now forms part of the Pakistani political mainstream. The slogans of Mohajir nationalism do not reverberate through the corridors of MQM's official ideology but is now tainted with talk of a Pakistan-wide revolution where the downtrodden and deprived are accorded necessary political, social and economic rights. The MQM represents one of the most interesting phenomenon in the political history of Pakistan. As a nationalist movement advocating the rights of the Mohajirs, the MQM originated from Karachi and soon became a major factor in both the national and provincial politics of the country. With changes in the state structure brought about by Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq, the Mohajirs felt alienated and reimagined and reinvented their ethnic identity on the lines of a repressed community which had sacrificed their lot for the creation of Pakistan. The Mohajirs still continue to be one of the most affluent and well-educated ethnic communities of Pakistan in contrast to the Sindhis and Baloch. However, the MQM phenomenon is *not* related to such elite Mohajirs, but to the lower- and middle-class Mohajirs. The lower- and middle-class Mohajirs felt that there was an ascriptive bar which debarred them from climbing the social ladder. This ascriptive bar, more interestingly, was not only perpetuated by the Punjabis and Sindhis but the elite Mohajirs were a part of it as well. This fuelled feelings of resentment against the state and moved them further towards the goal of a 'Mohajir' identity. However, since 1997, when the Mohajir Qaumi Movement was rechristened the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, the revolutionary 'Mohajir' slogans have receded into the background. The Army action in the 1990s had a decisive effect not only on the organisational structure of the party but also on its ideological basis. The MQM of today is a 'national' rather than an 'ethnic' party of the Mohajirs in more ways than one. This basic fact is that

the MQM does not solely represent the Mohajirs. It has among its ranks Sindhis, Punjabis, Pathans, Baloch and even Kashmiris.

Summing up the three case studies in light of present-day realities, it seems that the break-up of Pakistan does not seem imminent, although increased ethnic activism is still possible in the future if conciliatory political mechanisms and guarantees are not accorded to non-dominant ethnic groups. Moreover, increased ethnic assertiveness has to be measured and qualified by inculcating the variable of intra-ethnic conflict. For example, in contemporary Balochistan, though separatist political parties, groups and leaders have proliferated, the province still includes nationalist leaders whose solution for the present impasse is ingrained in remaining part of Pakistan rather than outright secession. On a theoretical plane, the internal division and stratification within the Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir ethnic movements point to the inherent paucity of primordial explanations which take cultural givens as the focal point of analysis into ethnic groups and nations. As the present work has argued and contended, cultural homogeneity in a group does not necessarily translate into common political goals and objectives. Nations and ethnic groups are not composite, homogeneous communities of solidarities but are sites of active contestation and protest, and are at best disaggregated and divided.

Intra-ethnic conflict is essential to comprehend because such a conflict plays an important role in weakening the resistance of ethnic groups fighting against the state. As the case studies ably demonstrate, during the Balochistan crisis in the 1970s, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was able to divide the Baloch resistance by co-opting Nawab Akbar Bugti, who then played a malicious role in maligning the National Awami Party (NAP). Similarly, with respect to Sindhi nationalism during the 1980s, the Sindhi nationalist party most responsible for aligning itself with the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) was Rasool Bux Palijo's Awami Tahreek. As noted in the chapter on Sindh (Chapter 5), during the military operation in the 1980s, an interesting conundrum emerged where the most openly secessionist national party, the Jeay Sindh Mahaz, expressed reservations about its participation in the patriotic agitation and made an alliance with the Pakistani state. On the other hand, it was Palijo's Awami Tahreek (a party advocating provincial autonomy and power-sharing) which led the nationalist resistance against the Pakistani state. In this specific instance, G. M. Syed (the separatist) became accommodative towards the Pakistani state while Palijo (the accommodationist) assumed the mantle of an anti-state nationalist. In the case of the Mohajirs in the 1990s, the Haqiqi group was instrumentalised by the state against the MQM during the military operation. Haqiqi was able to infiltrate key areas of Karachi with the help of first the Army and then the Rangers in order to liquidate the MQM.

Besides intra-ethnic conflict, it is equally important to keep in perspective the analytical distinction between the state and government. The state is a set of institutions most commonly associated with the bureaucracy–military, while the government functions as an institution, where representatives of the people are chosen directly by the people themselves. The interdependence of

the relationship between state and government is manifest and the balance between the two institutions is fundamental in newly emerging democracies. However, in polities where the role of the military is overwhelming, one should guard against understating the role of elected governments.

The role of governments in ethnic conflicts is a manifest phenomenon as evidenced from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government in precipitating the civil war in Balochistan in the 1970s to Benazir Bhutto's second administration which put its weight behind the military operation against the MQM in the 1990s. Moreover, the ascendancy of military rule in Pakistan does not preclude the fact that politicians and political parties are key players in the Pakistani political system. Military regimes have always found it useful to rely on the support of politicians and political parties and every military regime in Pakistan has tended to do so. Consider for example, the role of the Pakistan Muslim League and Jamaat-i-Islami in providing support to the military-dominated regime of Zia-ul-Haq and the Pakistan Muslim League (Q)'s support to the military regime of Pervez Musharraf. Thus, to isolate the politicians and political parties from the political picture and issues of governance is to commit a fundamental error in analysis.

Finally, it is imperative to keep in perspective the autonomous power of the state as distinct from its ethnic composition. In the case of Pakistan, the argument on the Pakistani state as a Punjabi state resonates with much alacrity; however, it needs to be carefully qualified. It is no doubt true that the Pakistani state is dominated by the Punjabis and that states are captive of particular ethnic groups as the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka or the Malays in Malaysia. However, it is important to view the inherent fault lines which exist in the Punjabi socio-political landscape as well as the incipient origin of a Punjabi nationalism in the late 1980s and 1990s. With regards to the fault lines, Ian Talbot problematises the notion of a monolithic Punjabi interest (and even, identity) by pointing to differences within Punjab on class and regional lines.<sup>14</sup> According to such an interpretation, the Punjab is divided into four distinct regions: north, central, south-west and western Punjab, in which power predominantly lies in the central areas of Lahore, Faisalabad and Gujranwala. The northern region which comprises the Rawalpindi Division is a major area for military recruitment while the poorest region of the Punjab remains its western districts including Jhang district and Sargodha and Dera Ghazi Khan Divisions, whose agrarian society is organised on a feudal basis.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, in a brilliant study of the Punjabi cultural movement, Alyssa Ayres demonstrates the reinvigoration of a Punjabi culture in the heartland of Pakistan. The resurgence of a cultural nationalism in Punjab leads Ayres to discredit and lay bare the poverty of functionalist and instrumentalist explanations for Punjab is the epicentre of the political, social and economic power of the Pakistani state. For this reason, the case of Punjab offers compelling real-world data that underscores the importance of symbolic capital as a motivating force in contexts where this force simply cannot be dismissed as epiphenomenal.<sup>16</sup> This cultural renaissance in Punjab proves that even the

Punjabi intelligentsia, or a section of it, feels that the state's approval, approbation and privileging of Urdu has served to undermine the Punjabi language and culture. In more essential terms, Ayres's analysis points to the autonomous power of the Pakistani state and that even the Punjabis, who constitute the bulk of Pakistan's state institutions, feel that their culture and language has been denigrated by the Pakistani state itself.

It is true that Punjabis dominate the Pakistani Army and bureaucracy, but to keep the Pakistani and Punjabi interest as one and the same is to misunderstand the dynamics of power that modern states (and governments) display. Surely not all Punjabis, keeping the varying distinctions of regions, class and economic development in perspective, are wont to be satisfied with their co-ethnics in power. A recent example is that of the Okara military farms where a large number of Punjabi farmers were displaced by the supposedly Punjabi-dominated Army.<sup>17</sup> Here, it is not ethnicity or ethnic affiliation, but the institutional interests of the Army which dictated the logic of the action taken. The fact that members of the same ethnic group have been overpowered and dominated proves that even the Punjabis have suffered (and in many ways continue to suffer) from their very own real or imagined Pakistani (Punjabi) state.



# Notes

## 1 Introduction

- 1 I only look at ethnic movements which were subject to a military operation in post-1971 Pakistan. Hence, Pashtun and Siraiki nationalism are not part of the present book because the Pashtun community in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Siraiki community in Southern Punjab did not experience armed conflict with the Pakistani state. Moreover, also excluded from the purview of the book are conflicts based on religious grounds such as between Shias and Sunnis or intra-Sunni cleavages involving Deobandis and Bareilvis.
- 2 This, as we shall see, happened with respect to all three case studies.
- 3 Paul Brass makes an important claim when he states that people might belong to the same religion, speak the same language, wear the same kind of clothes, eat the same foods and sing the same songs, however, internal divisions and contradictions exist within all groups (P. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1991), p. 16).
- 4 In highlighting intra-ethnic conflict, I do not wish to completely ignore inter-ethnic conflict, which is also deliberated upon in the three case study chapters.
- 5 This final assessment figures prominently when the state indulges in divide-and-rule politics. All three ethnic groups which form part of the book threw up important ethnic collaborators who formed an alliance with the state and worked to the detriment of their own ethnic group. This generates an interesting paradox with respect to both the state and politics of ethnicity theories. The state is not only responsible for suppressing non-dominant ethnic groups but also at the same time encourages alliance with members of the same ethnic group in order to weaken their collective resistance against the state. Members of the ethnic group, on the other hand, come forth in enabling an alliance with the state so as to weaken their internal political rivals.
- 6 J. D. Fearon and D. Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War', *American Political Science Review*, 97(1) (February 2003), 75.
- 7 *Ibid.*: 75–6.

## 2 Nationalism, politics of ethnicity and the state

- 1 M. Hroch, 'Modernisation and Communication as Factors of Nation Formation', in G. Delanty and K. Kumar (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), p. 21.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 *Ibid.*

- 4 S. Malesevic, 'Nationalism and the Power of Ideology', in G. Delanty and K. Kumar, *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), p. 308.
- 5 *Ibid.*: p. 309.
- 6 *Ibid.*: p. 310.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 21.
- 9 *Ibid.*: p. 4.
- 10 *Ibid.*: p. 46.
- 11 *Ibid.*: p. 1. This congruence does not imply that every nation or ethnic group demands a separate state of its own. Ethnic groups might also be satisfied (barring independence) as long as their rights are protected within the state they inhabit. Most interestingly, both separatist and non-separatist strategies for political emancipation may be pursued within an ethnic group. For example in Sindh, Jeay Sindh Mahaz founded by G. M. Syed is outrightly separatist and calls for the establishment of a Sindhu Desh, while Rasool Bux Palijo's Awami Tahreek argues for a federally reconstituted Pakistani polity, in which the Sindhis should be accorded provincial autonomy.
- 12 W. Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 35.
- 13 *Ibid.*: p. 42.
- 14 *Ibid.*: p. 148.
- 15 *Ibid.*: p. 177.
- 16 *Ibid.*: p. 94.
- 17 Woodrow Wilson's Fourteenth Point alluded to the principle of national self-determination as follows:

An evident principle runs through the whole program I have outlined. It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak. Unless this principle be made its foundation no part of the structure of international justice can stand. The people of the United States could act upon no other principle; and to the vindication of this principle they are ready to devote their lives, their honor, and everything that they possess. The moral climax of this the culminating and final war for human liberty has come, and they are ready to put their own strength, their own highest purpose, their own integrity and devotion to the test.

(W. Wilson, 'Fourteen Points', in P. Williams, D. Goldstein and J. M. Shafritz (eds.), *Classic Readings of International Relations* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1994), pp. 18–20.)

- 18 One account of the post-First World War era captures well the argument that is being set out here: 'In Italy and in Russia, in Ireland, Czecho-Slovakia, and Arabia, and in China and the Philippines, the flames of [nationalism] burn brightly' (S. G. Lowrie, 'Nationalism', *International Journal of Ethics*, 4(1) (October 1930), 35).
- 19 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd edn (London: Verso Books, 1991), p. 3.
- 20 *Ibid.*: p. 77.
- 21 *Ibid.*: p. 116.
- 22 An ideology to prevail need not depend on specific social and economic circumstances as outlined in its theoretical scheme. Take for example, the spread of Communism in a largely agrarian setting in China and Vietnam, despite the predilection of its author, Karl Marx, that the most industrialised of societies will experience a Communist revolution. What does this prove? Communism, as an

ideology of the oppressed and poor, was able to make headway in a far more efficient manner than the social and economic conditions necessary to bring about Communism. The ideology of Communism had spread, and even been adopted, in many parts of the world without no experience of prior industrialisation. And the same is the case with nationalism!

- 23 P. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1991), pp. 13–17.
- 24 For an interesting debate on this point, see the exchange between Paul Brass and Francis Robinson in D. Taylor and M. Yapp (eds.), *Political Identity in South Asia* (London: Curzon, 1979).
- 25 Brass, *Ethnicity*, p. 55.
- 26 *Ibid.*: p. 57.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 *Ibid.*: p. 58.
- 29 A similar argument can be found in the literature on federalism studies where the role of elites is deemed crucial in the effective functioning of federal polities. T. Franck, 'Why Federations Fail', in T. Franck (ed.), *Why Federations Fail* (New York: New York University Press, 1968), p. 169.
- 30 Brass, *Ethnicity*, p. 58.
- 31 *Ibid.*: pp. 60–1.
- 32 E. Kavalski and M. Zolkos, 'Approaching the Phenomenon of Federal Failure', in E. Kavalski and M. Zolkos (eds.), *Defunct Federalisms: Critical Perspectives on Federal Failure* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), p. 8.
- 33 M. Esman, *Ethnic Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 31–2.
- 34 K. Adeney, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict Regulation in India and Pakistan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 13.
- 35 Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, p. 27.
- 36 R. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 2.
- 37 *Ibid.*: p. 8.
- 38 *Ibid.*: p. 11.
- 39 *Ibid.*: p. 12.
- 40 *Ibid.*: p. 16.
- 41 H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 78.
- 42 A. Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence: Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (Cambridge: Polity, 1985), p. 20.
- 43 J. Hall and G. Ikenberry, *The State* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1989), pp. 1–2.
- 44 T. Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 29.
- 45 Giddens, *Nation-State*, p. 10.
- 46 *Ibid.*: p. 68.
- 47 *Ibid.*: p. 76.
- 48 *Ibid.*: p. 120.
- 49 *Ibid.*: p. 5.
- 50 Giddens argues that 'the very existence of "civil war" presumes a norm of a monopolistic state authority' and that

armed groups or movements today are almost always oriented to the assumption of state power, either by taking over an existing territory or by dividing up a territory and establishing a separate state. Such organizations do not and cannot 'opt out' from involvement in state power one way or another as frequently happened in traditional states

(*ibid.*: p. 120)

- 51 *Ibid.*: p. 7.
- 52 M. Mann, 'The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results,' in J. A. Hall, *State in History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 113.
- 53 *Ibid.*
- 54 *Ibid.*: p. 114.
- 55 *Ibid.*: p. 115.
- 56 *Ibid.*: p. 113.
- 57 *Ibid.*: p. 129.
- 58 J. S. Migdal, 'The State in Society: An Approach to Struggles for Domination', in J. S. Migdal *et al.* (eds.), *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 12.
- 59 *Ibid.*: p. 9.
- 60 *Ibid.*: p. 17.
- 61 My contention here differs from Migdal's, as he is interested in interactions which mutually empower states and societies and vice versa. Relative to ethnic conflict, mutual empowerment if and when it occurs only stands to benefit the state and members of ethnic groups allied with the state. In other words, a state's encouragement of cooperation with members of an ethnic group, during times of ethnic conflict, has a more Machiavellian content designed to counter the challenges that it faces from rival ethnic groups by engaging in the politics of divide and rule.
- 62 See J. Hoffman, *Beyond the State: An Introductory Critique* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).

### 3 The state and politics of ethnicity in post-1971 Pakistan

- 1 Though Katharine Adeney (2007) has written on ethnic conflict in Pakistan, she does so primarily from the perspective of federalism and institutional design, while other writers such as Stephen Cohen (2005) and Ian Talbot (1998) treat ethnicity as an appendage of their respective overarching analyses of the Pakistani state and politics.
- 2 A. Ahsan, *The Indus Saga: From Pataliputra to Partition* (New Delhi: Roli Books, 2005), p. xii.
- 3 *Ibid.*: pp. 11–12.
- 4 *Ibid.*: p. 12.
- 5 *Ibid.*: p. 32.
- 6 *Ibid.*: p. 15.
- 7 An excellent book illustrative of a traditional account of Pakistan's identity and history is: I. H. Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent* (The Hague: Mouton, 1962).
- 8 President Ayub Khan remarked several times that Bengalis should be free from the evil influence of Hindu culture. F. Ahmed, *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 26.
- 9 M. Aziz, *Military Control in Pakistan: The Parallel State* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 23.
- 10 *Ibid.*: p. 7.
- 11 H. A. Rizvi, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 12.
- 12 *Ibid.*: pp. 10–11. As a testament to the military's reliance on politicians and political forces, consider the following examples in the pre-1971 and post-1971 periods in Pakistan: Ayub Khan engineered the creation of the Conference Muslim League consisting of politicians loyal to his rule; Zia, after eight years of martial law, finally gave way to a democratic set-up where the Pakistan Muslim League under Mohammad Khan Junejo with the official blessings of Zia was created; and,

finally, Pervez Musharraf engineered the creation of the Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-e-Azam) again comprising politicians and political cronies loyal to the Musharraf regime.

13 *Ibid.*: p. 31.

14 A. Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1999), p. 1.

15 S. P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 78.

16 S. J. Burki, 'Twenty Years of the Civil Service of Pakistan', *Asian Survey*, 9(4) (April 1969), 239.

17 Rizvi, *Military*, p. 153.

18 *Ibid.*: p. 144.

19 *Ibid.*: pp. 144–5.

20 S. Shafqat, *Civil–Military Relations in Pakistan: From Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Benazir Bhutto* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), p. 167.

21 Rizvi, *Military*, p. 145.

22 *Ibid.*: p. 147.

23 *Ibid.*: p. 150.

24 According to Mubashir Hasan, Bhutto's Finance Minister

A study conducted by an American economist had revealed that eighty per cent of the industrial and banking assets of Pakistan were owned by members of twenty-two families. So the twenty-two families became a prime political target. The Central Board of Revenue supplied their list and their assets. The total wealth owned by the twenty-two families was 852,242,080 rupees

(M. Hasan, *The Mirage of Power: An Inquiry into the Bhutto Years, 1971–1977* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 33)

25 Z. A. Bhutto, 'Pakistan Builds Anew', *Foreign Affairs*, 51(3) (April 1973), 543.

26 Hasan, *Mirage of Power*, p. 81.

27 Rizvi, *Military*, p. 151.

28 Shafqat, *Civil–Military Relations*, p. 171.

29 Rizvi, *Military*, p. 166.

30 *Ibid.*: p. 170.

31 *Ibid.*: pp. 170–1.

32 The PNA was a nine-party alliance which formed an electoral coalition to counter the PPP in the 1977 elections. The PNA included within its fold: Tehrik-i-Istiqlal, Pakistan Muslim League–Pagara Group (PML–PG), Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP), Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam (JUI), National Democratic Party (NDP), Pakistan Democratic Party (PDP), Khaksar Tehrik (KT) and Azad Kashmir Muslim Conference (AKMC).

33 Quoted in Rizvi, *Military*, p. 176.

34 Shafqat, *Civil–Military Relations*, p. 213.

35 Rizvi, *Military*, p. 186.

36 Shafqat, *Civil–Military Relations*, p. 216.

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Ibid.*: pp. 216–17.

39 *Ibid.*: p. 217.

40 Shafqat, *Civil–Military Relations*, p. 228.

41 *Ibid.*: p. 229.

42 *Ibid.*: p. 230.

43 Rizvi, pp. 210–11.

44 *Ibid.*: p. 211.

45 *Ibid.*

46 *Ibid.*: p. 212.

47 *Ibid.*: p. 220.

- 48 *Ibid.*: p. 221.
- 49 *Ibid.*: p. 225.
- 50 *Ibid.*: p. 227.
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 *Ibid.*: p. 232. Rizvi notes that 'Nawaz Sharif hoped that a *mohajir* Army chief presiding over a predominantly Punjabi–Pakhtoon high command would not build pressure on him'. Sharif probably failed to appreciate the structural qualities that drive institutions. The agency of Musharraf, a Mohajir, would not have thwarted the military takeover, nor kept it within bounds. On the unity of the armed forces in Pakistan causing a military takeover in October 1999 as opposed to the Army's relative disunity in the case of Venezuela and Ecuador resulting in failed military coups, the following article is instructive: S. Barracca, 'Military Coups in the Post-Cold War Era: Pakistan, Ecuador and Venezuela', *Third World Quarterly*, 28(1), (2007), 137–54.
- 54 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi) 20 May 1992.
- 55 M. A. Shah, *The Foreign Policy of Pakistan: Ethnic Impacts on Diplomacy, 1971–1994* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997), p. 141.
- 56 *Ibid.*: p. 124.
- 57 *Ibid.*: pp. 123–4.
- 58 *Ibid.*: p. 126.
- 59 *Ibid.*: p. 140.
- 60 *Ibid.*: p. 140.
- 61 T. Amin, *Ethno-National Movements of Pakistan: Domestic and International Factors* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1993), p. 1.
- 62 *Ibid.*: p. 9.
- 63 *Ibid.*: pp. 144–5.
- 64 *Ibid.*: p. 238.
- 65 Adeel Khan, *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005), pp. 16–17.
- 66 *Ibid.*: p. 84.
- 67 I. H. Malik, *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology and Ethnicity* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p. 4.
- 68 *Ibid.*
- 69 *Ibid.*: p. 55.
- 70 *Ibid.*: p. 182.
- 71 *Ibid.*: p. 181.
- 72 Population Census Organisation, Government of Pakistan, *1998 Census Report of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Population Census Organisation, 1998), at: [www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/pop\\_by\\_province/pop\\_by\\_province.html](http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/pop_by_province/pop_by_province.html).
- 73 *Ibid.*
- 74 *Ibid.*
- 75 *Ibid.*
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 *Ibid.*
- 78 *Ibid.*
- 79 The Baloch figures in Quetta are slightly misplaced, as they also include Brahui speakers who were not accounted for in the 1998 population census. Government of Pakistan, *1998 District Census Report of Quetta* (Islamabad: Population Census Organisation 1998).
- 80 For an interesting article on the Baloch and Pashtuns see, P. Titus, 'Honor the Baloch, Buy the Pushtun: Stereotypes, Social Organisation and History in Western Pakistan', *Modern Asian Studies*, 32(3), (July 1998).
- 81 Rizvi, *Military*, p. 212.

#### 4 Balochistan: ethnic politics in a tribal setting

- 1 Population Census Organisation, Government of Pakistan, *1998 Census Report of Pakistan*. (at: [www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pcostatistics/pop\\_by\\_province/pop\\_by\\_province.html](http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pcostatistics/pop_by_province/pop_by_province.html)).
- 2 The Balochi speakers comprise 54.76 per cent and Pashtuns 29.64 per cent of the total population of Balochistan. The 1998 census does not contain comparable figures for the Brahui speakers (at: [www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pcostatistics/other\\_tables/pop\\_by\\_mother\\_tongue.pdf](http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pcostatistics/other_tables/pop_by_mother_tongue.pdf)). However, according to the 1981 census, the Brahui speakers comprised 20.7 per cent of the total population of Balochistan. Population Census Organisation, Government of Pakistan, *1981 Census Report of Pakistan*. (Islamabad: Population Census Organisation, 1984) p. 10.
- 3 M. K. B. M. Baloch, *Searchlights on Baloches and Balochistan* (Karachi: Royal Book Co., 1974). Mir Khuda Bakhsh lists about 56 main Baloch tribes in Pakistan. This number does not include the various clans and sub-clans.
- 4 J. Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).
- 5 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London: Verso Books, 1991).
- 6 The present work does not venture into the historical genesis of the Baloch as a nation because I am interested in analysing the roots and origins of Baloch nationalism not nation.
- 7 Janmahmad, *Essays on Baloch National Struggle in Pakistan: Emergence, Dimensions, Repercussions* (Quetta: Gosha-e-Adab, 1989), p. 162.
- 8 Inayatullah Baloch takes exception from this and regards Mir Abdullah who ruled Kalat in the earlier part of the eighteenth century as the one who laid the foundation of the state of Balochistan with the decline of Mughals in India. I. Baloch, *The Problem of 'Greater Baluchistan': A Study of Baluch Nationalism* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1987), p. 103.
- 9 M. G. K. Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan, Vol. II* (Quetta: Kalat Publishers, 1979), p. 517.
- 10 Baloch, *Problem of 'Greater Baluchistan'*, p. 105.
- 11 Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan*, p. 401.
- 12 F. Scholz, *Nomadism and Colonialism: A Hundred Years of Baluchistan, 1872–1972* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 90.
- 13 M. S. K. Baluch, *History of Baluch Race and Baluchistan* (Karachi, 1958), p. 73.
- 14 H. Ram, *Sandeman in Baluchistan*, trans. Col. C. W. Jacob (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1916), pp. 28–30.
- 15 *Ibid.*: p. 28.
- 16 *Ibid.*: p. 69.
- 17 R. J. Bruce, *History of the Mari-Baluch Tribe and Its relations with the Bugti Tribe* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1884), p. 21.
- 18 Janmahmad, *Essays*, p. 164.
- 19 M. A. Shah, *Sardari, Jirga and Local Government in Balochistan* (Lahore: Educational Publishers, 1994), p. 25.
- 20 Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan*, p. 402.
- 21 I. H. Kausar, *Pakistan Movement in Baluchistan* (Islamabad, 1980), p. 1.
- 22 I. M. Khan, *Baluchistan* (London: Diplomatic Press and Publishing Co., 1950), p. 4.
- 23 M. A. Y. K. Baluch, *Inside Baluchistan: A Political Autobiography of His Highness Baiglar Baigi, Khan-e-Azam-XIII* (Karachi: Royal Book Co., 1975), p. 114.
- 24 Baloch, *Problem of 'Greater Baluchistan'*, p. 147.
- 25 *Ibid.*: p. 150.
- 26 Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan*, p. 404.

- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 Inamul Haq Kausar credits Yusuf Magsi as the originator of the Pakistan Movement in Balochistan. He states that Magsi was influenced by the ideas of Sir Syed, Allama Iqbal, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (*Pakistan*, p. 9). Mir Gul Khan Naseer, on the other hand, asserts that Yusuf Magsi was influenced by the ideas of the Congress Party as he was accused of this, during his trial (Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan*, p. 405).
- 29 Baloch, *Problem of 'Greater Baluchistan'*, pp. 151–4.
- 30 *Ibid.*: p. 151.
- 31 Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan*, p. 420.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 *Ibid.*: p. 422.
- 34 Baloch, *Problem of 'Greater Baluchistan'*, p. 152.
- 35 Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan*, p. 443. Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd was elected as President, Gul Khan Naseer as Vice President and Malik Faiz Muhammad Khan Yusufzai as the General Secretary.
- 36 T. Bizenjo, *Baba-e-Balochistan: Statements, Speeches and Interviews of Mir Ghous Bux Bizenjo* (Quetta: Sales and Services, 1999), p. 41.
- 37 Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan*, p. 443.
- 38 *Ibid.*: p. 457.
- 39 *Ibid.*: p. 466.
- 40 M. A. Kundi, *Balochistan: A Socio-Cultural and Political Analysis*, 2nd edn (Quetta: Qasim Printers, 1994), p. 10.
- 41 Baloch, *Problem of 'Greater Baluchistan'*, p. 156.
- 42 I. Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement: The Growth of the Muslim League in North-West and North-East India, 1937–47* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 117.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 Baluch, *Inside Baluchistan*, p. 130.
- 46 *Ibid.*: p. 135.
- 47 *Ibid.*: p. 136.
- 48 *Ibid.*: p. 268.
- 49 *Ibid.*: p. 147.
- 50 *Ibid.*: p. 148.
- 51 *Ibid.*: pp. 148–9.
- 52 M. Axmann, *Back to the Future: The Khanate of Kalat and the Genesis of Baloch Nationalism, 1915–1955* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 225.
- 53 Talbot, *Provincial Politics*, p. 119.
- 54 S. M. Ali, *The Fearful State: Power, People and Internal War in South Asia* (London: Zed Books, 1993), p. 136.
- 55 Baluch, *Inside Baluchistan*, p. 149.
- 56 Inayatullah Baloch quotes the secret memorandum prepared by the Minister of the State for Commonwealth Relations dated 12 September 1947, in which the dangers of an independent Kalat state whose territory marches with Persia is mentioned and the state itself is regarded as not being in a position to undertake its international responsibilities (Baluch, *Problem of 'Greater Baluchistan'*, p. 257).
- 57 Bizenjo, *Baba-e-Balochistan*, p. 49.
- 58 I. H. Kausar, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan*, p. 58.
- 59 Bizenjo, *Baba-e-Balochistan*, pp. 43–4.
- 60 *Baluchistan District Gazetteer Series*, vol. III, Sibi District (Bombay: Times Press, 1907), p. 286.
- 61 Baluch, *Inside Baluchistan*, p. 159.
- 62 Janmahmad, *Essays*, p. 162.



- 63 Baluch, *Inside Baluchistan*, p. 164.
- 64 The role of Mir Ahmad Yar Khan Baluch is severely criticised by Baloch nationalists. The Khan of Kalat was prone to changing his mind very quickly and agreeing to something in the morning only to repudiate it later that evening. He was easily persuaded, a phenomenon related to the fact that he was addicted to opium. Baloch nationalists tired of the Khan's fragile and weak mind, even plotting to have him killed. Prince Abdul Karim, the Khan's younger brother, was chosen for this purpose but could not perform the task. Presumably, he was addicted to opium as well (interview with Dr Naseer Dashti, 7 July 2006).
- 65 Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan*, p. 522.
- 66 *Ibid.*: p. 523.
- 67 S. Harrison, *In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baloch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1981), p. 26.
- 68 Inayatullah Baloch, 'The Emergence of Baloch Nationalism', *Pakistan Progressive*, New York, December 1980, p. 22 (quoted in Harrison, *Afghanistan's Shadow*, p. 26).
- 69 Ali, *Fearful State*, p. 138.
- 70 Prince Abdul Karim's letter to the Khan of Kalat in 'Prince Abdul Karim versus Pakistan state', unpublished (quoted in Baloch, *Problem of 'Greater Baluchistan'*, p. 193).
- 71 Janmahmad, *Essays*, p. 197.
- 72 *Ibid.*: p. 197.
- 73 Naseer, *Tarikh-i-Balochistan*, p. 541. By linking the Balochistan States Union with the Balochistan province, the central government intended to settle the issue of Kalat's independence. The Balochistan province consisted of the adjoining areas of the Kalat state as well as the tribal areas of both the Baloch and Pashtun.
- 74 *Ibid.*: p. 530.
- 75 Harrison, *Afghanistan's Shadow*, p. 27.
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 Janmahmad, *Essays*, p. 198.
- 78 Baluch, *Inside Baluchistan*, p. 173.
- 79 *Ibid.*: p. 181.
- 80 Harrison, *Afghanistan's Shadow*, p. 28.
- 81 Janmahmad, *Essays*, p. 201.
- 82 Akbar Bugti had risen as high as Pakistan's Minister of State for Defence in 1958. In 1959, he was charged with the murder of Haibat Khan, an elder of his own tribe, and put behind bars. The only motive put forward by the government, during the trial, was the fact that Haibat Khan was trying to create a rift between Akbar Bugti and his brother, Ahmad Nawaz Bugti (S. Matheson, *The Tigers of Baluchistan*, 2nd edn (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 187).
- 83 Janmahmad, *Essays*, p. 229.
- 84 Matheson, *Tigers*, p. 195.
- 85 *Ibid.*: p. 196.
- 86 A. B. Awan, *Baluchistan: Historical and Political Processes* (London: New Century, 1985), p. 229.
- 87 Parari in Balochi is 'used to describe a person or group with grievances that cannot be solved by talks' (Harrison, *Afghanistan's Shadow*, p. 30).
- 88 *Ibid.*
- 89 Awan, *Baluchistan*, p. 230.
- 90 R. G. Wirsing, 'The Balochis and Pathans', *Minority Rights Group*, (48), 1981, 10.
- 91 C. Baxter, 'Pakistan Votes – 1970', *Asian Survey*, 11(3) (March 1971), 206.
- 92 *Ibid.*: p. 211.

- 93 The governor of the provinces in Pakistan is representative of the federal government and the latter has tended to exercise its hegemony and domination through the governor's office.
- 94 Awan, *Baluchistan*, p. 264.
- 95 Government of Pakistan, *White Paper on Baluchistan* (Rawalpindi: Government of Pakistan, October 1974), p. 9.
- 96 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 11 September 1972.
- 97 Interview with Dr Ishaque Baloch, Information Secretary, National Party Balochistan, 7 September 2006.
- 98 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 16 September 1972.
- 99 The repatriation scheme was prepared by the Chief Secretaries of the four provinces and commenced on 1 September 1972. *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 21 September 1972.
- 100 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 17 September 1972.
- 101 *White Paper on Baluchistan*, p. 17.
- 102 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 6 December 1972.
- 103 *White Paper on Baluchistan*, p. 18.
- 104 *Ibid.*: p. 18.
- 105 T. Bizenjo, *Baba-e-Balochistan*, p. 75.
- 106 *White Paper on Baluchistan*, p. 20.
- 107 Janmahmad, *Essays*, p. 302.
- 108 Harrison, *Afghanistan's Shadow*, p. 35.
- 109 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 16 February 1973.
- 110 BSO was formed on 26 November 1967 after a three-day convention in Karachi (Janmahmad, *Essays*, p. 216).
- 111 *Ibid.*: p. 218.
- 112 *Ibid.*: p. 221. Dr Abdul Hayee Baloch presently heads the National Party in Balochistan which favours a middle-class revolution and is stridently anti-Sardar.
- 113 A good analysis is presented in Harrison, *Afghanistan's Shadow*, pp. 41–69.
- 114 *Ibid.*: p. 46.
- 115 *Ibid.*: p. 54.
- 116 *Ibid.*: p. 61.
- 117 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 12 July 1972.
- 118 *White Paper on Baluchistan*, p. 25.
- 119 No such perception on the part of Baloch leaders could be found, however, in any of the works cited mainly because they do not deliberate on the factors leading to a rise in militant warfare in 1973.
- 120 Harrison, *Afghanistan's Shadow*, p. 33.
- 121 *Ibid.*: p. 36.
- 122 *White Paper on Baluchistan*, p. 23.
- 123 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 19 May 1973. It seems plausible to assume that the emphasis on *modern sophisticated weapons* was a deliberate measure in order to construct the image of the Baloch fighting force as magnificent. It is reasonably clear through the research conducted that the Baloch were *not* armed with modern sophisticated weapons.
- 124 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 19 May 1973.
- 125 Janmahmad, *Essays*, p. 304.
- 126 The government denied the use of aircrafts for aerial attacks and stated that, 'Some light aircraft, including a small number of helicopters, are used for aerial reconnaissance but no village, base or band of hostiles has been subjected to an aerial attack' (*White Paper on Baluchistan*, p. 27).
- 127 Harrison, *Afghanistan's Shadow*, p. 37.
- 128 *Ibid.*: pp. 38–9.

- 129 'A Great Tragedy is Unfolding', interview with Nawab Akbar Bugti, *Frontline*, 23 (2) (28 January–2 February 2006) (at: [www.flonnet.com/fl2302/stories/20060210000706200.htm](http://www.flonnet.com/fl2302/stories/20060210000706200.htm)).
- 130 A. M. Bugti, 'Foreword', in A. M. Bugti, *Balochistan: Shakhsiyyat Kay Aainay Mein* (Lahore: Fiction House, 1996), p. 6.
- 131 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 7 December 1972.
- 132 Awan, *Baluchistan*, p. 268.
- 133 *Ibid.*
- 134 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 8 January 1973.
- 135 In an interview in December 1972, Bugti made it clear that he had never been a member of NAP but always remained its supporter and sympathiser (*Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 13 December 1972).
- 136 Interview with Dr Naseer Dashti, 19 February 2007. Bugti's anger was mainly directed towards Governor Bizenjo and Chief Minister Attaullah Mengal. He referred to Mengal's territory in Jhalawan as 'Mengalistan'.
- 137 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 8 December 1972.
- 138 *Ibid.*: 22 December 1972.
- 139 *Ibid.*: 9 January 1973.
- 140 *Ibid.*: 11 September 1972.
- 141 Awan, *Baluchistan*, p. 265.
- 142 *Ibid.*: p. 265–6.
- 143 Janmahmad, *Essays*, p. 260.
- 144 P. Titus, 'Honor the Baloch, Buy the Pushtun: Stereotypes, Social Organization and History in Western Pakistan', *Modern Asian Studies*, 32(3) (1998), 657.
- 145 *Ibid.*: p. 676.
- 146 Other prominent personalities working for the cause of Pakistan included Mir Jaffar Khan Jamali, a Baloch, and Nawab Muhammad Khan Jogezi, a Pashtun, whom Nasim Hijazi calls as the 'two most influential people in Balochistan's history before partition' (N. Hijazi, *Tahrik-e-Pakistan aur Balochistan* (Karachi: Mehran Publications, 1983), p. 5).
- 147 According to one author, 'the main backing for the Muslim League came from the Pushtoon community in Balochistan while the Baloch tribes were never interested in the ideal of the setting up of a large Muslim state in India' (R. Redaelli, *The Father's Bow: The Khanate of Kalat and British India (19th–20th Century)* (Milan: Il Maestrale, 1997), p. 148).
- 148 Janmahmad, *Essays*, p. 289.
- 149 *Ibid.*
- 150 This analysis differs from the one by Janmahmad who says that 'Baloch–Pashtun relations in Balochistan have never been cordial' (*ibid.*: p. 290).
- 151 *Ibid.*: p. 290.
- 152 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 5 December 1972.
- 153 *Ibid.*: 7 May 1972.
- 154 This analysis is presented by Janmahmad. One wonders why both Balochi and Pashto could not have been declared as official languages by the NAP. This would have gone a long way in establishing inter-ethnic harmony.
- 155 Interview with Sanaullah Baloch, 14 June 2006.

## 5 Sindh: ethnic politics in a rural setting

- 1 One major exception in Sindh was the princely state of Khairpur, located in the northern part of Sindh. Its ruler, Mir Ali Murad Khan Talpur II, acceded to Pakistan on 3 October 1947 and the Khairpur state was annexed by the Pakistan Army in 1955 after the imposition of One Unit (at: [www.khairpursindh.org/home.asp?PageType=Home%20Page](http://www.khairpursindh.org/home.asp?PageType=Home%20Page)).

- 2 I. H. Pervez, *The Contribution of Sindhi Muslims in Pakistan Movement* (Hyderabad: Indus Printers, 1984), p. 212.
- 3 Population Census Organisation, Government of Pakistan (at: [www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/pop\\_by\\_province/pop\\_by\\_province.html](http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/pop_by_province/pop_by_province.html)).
- 4 The subsequent elections in the country in the 1980s and 1990s proved the same.
- 5 I. Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement: The Growth of the Muslim League in North-West and North-East India, 1937–47* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 35.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 K. R. Malkani, *The Sindh Story* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1984), p. 154.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 Talbot, *Provincial Politics*, pp. 37–8.
- 10 *Ibid.*: p. 38.
- 11 Malkani, *Sindh*, p. 95.
- 12 S. Ansari, 'Political Legacies of Pre-1947 Sind', in D. A. Low (ed.), *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan* (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 186.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 A. K. Jones, *Politics in Sindh, 1907–1940: Muslim Identity and the Demand for Pakistan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 25.
- 15 Talbot, *Provincial Politics*, p. 39.
- 16 M. Q. Soomro, *Muslim Politics in Sindh (1938–1947)* (Hyderabad: Sindh University Press, 1989), p. 43. According to Talbot, in 1937 the Muslim League had failed to elect a single candidate on its ticket and virtually had no organisation in Sindh (Talbot, *Provincial Politics*, p. 40).
- 17 Personal rivalry between Bhutto and Hidayatullah tended to tear the Sindh United Party apart. After Miran Shah was nominated Deputy Leader, Hidayatullah tendered his resignation, quit the party and formed his own Sindh Muslim Political Party. This intra-ethnic elite conflict over personal issues and power has characterised Sindh profoundly and is evidenced both in the colonial and post-colonial phases of Sindh politics (Jones, *Politics in Sindh*, p. 54).
- 18 D. A. Pirzada, *Growth of Muslim Nationalism in Sindh: Parting of Ways to Pakistan* (Karachi: Mehran, 1995), p. 70.
- 19 Soomro, *Muslim Politics*, p. 49.
- 20 Abdullah Haroon was a prominent *Memon* sugar merchant of Karachi (Jones, *Politics in Sindh*, p. 75).
- 21 H. Khuhro, 'Masjid Manzilgah, 1939–40. Test Case for Hindu–Muslim Relations in Sind', *Modern Asian Studies*, 32(1) (February 1998), 51.
- 22 Sindh during this time was led by the Allah Bakhsh Soomro ministry which relied on the support of the Congress and Sindh Hindus. In order to break the shackles of the Congress and Hindus in Sindh, the Muslim League found it convenient to raise the issue in order to mobilise itself in the province. Furthermore, middle-class Muslims and rural landlords supported the Muslim League as they harboured grievances against the Hindus who were the predominant economic stakeholders in the province.
- 23 Khuhro, 'Masjid Manzilgah', 54.
- 24 In Sindh, *pirs* are religious figures with large landholdings and having an important stake in the religious as well as the political life of the province.
- 25 Ansari, 'Political Legacies', 180–1.
- 26 The clear choice for the Premiership of the Assembly would have been Abdullah Haroon had it not been for his sudden death in May 1942. Abdullah Haroon was an ardent supporter of the Pakistan demand and it was his report on the situation in Sindh which succeeded in getting Jinnah to journey to Karachi in December 1940 and resuscitate the League (Talbot, *Provincial Politics*, p. 43).

- 27 G. M. Syed's, *The Case of Sindh: G. M. Syed's Deposition in Court*, (at: [www.gmsyed.org](http://www.gmsyed.org) 1992). The text of the Resolution, Syed's speech and the interesting debate in the Assembly can be found in Appendix III (at: [www.gmsyed.org](http://www.gmsyed.org)).
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 Syed was elected as President of Sindh Provincial Muslim League in June 1943. In 1945, cracks began to appear in the Muslim League in Sindh after the nomination of candidates for the provincial elections. Syed criticised the then Premier Hidayatullah and his Ministry for nominating feudals and unqualified candidates. This stand was not accepted by Jinnah, as Syed's own candidates were feudals as well. Syed was later expelled from the Muslim League and formed his own Progressive Muslim League in 1946. M. S. Korejo, *G. M. Syed: An Analysis of His Political Perspectives* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 12–24.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 Ansari, 'Political Legacies', 188.
- 32 Jones, *Politics in Sindh*, p. xvi.
- 33 Ansari, 'Political Legacies', 188. The same stereotype was used by the newly arriving Mohajirs to distance themselves from the Sindhis in the post-1947 era.
- 34 Syed, *Case of Sindh*.
- 35 Ansari, 'Political Legacies', 187.
- 36 Quoted in M. I. Joyo, *Save Sindh, Save the Continent: From Feudal Lords, Capitalists and Their Communalisms*, 2nd edn (Hyderabad: Creative Communications, 2000), p. 28.
- 37 *Ibid.*: p. 15.
- 38 The situation worsened when the University of Karachi decided to withdraw Sindhi as a language for answering exam papers in 1957. Writing against the measure, Hyder Baksh Jatoi, President of the Sind Hari Committee stated that:
- the order of the Karachi University to discontinue Sindhi as a medium of answering papers amounts to closing the door of competition to the Sindhis and granting to the Urdu-knowing students not only a superiority but a virtual monopoly. This order of the Karachi University amounts to a call to the Sindhi students: 'Leave Karachi, go to Sind if you want to retain Sindhi; Karachi is none of yours'
- (Hyder Baksh Jatoi, *Shall Sindhi Language Stay in Karachi or Not?* (Hyderabad: Sind Hari Office, 1957), p. 13)
- 39 F. Ahmed, *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 44.
- 40 M. I. Joyo, *The Betrayal – Sindh Bides the Day for Freedom, vol. I* (Hyderabad: Sindh Adeeban Ji Sahkari Sangat, 2005), p. 224.
- 41 Interview with Professor Mushtaq Mirani, 17 September 2006.
- 42 The Mohajir urban populace commonly uses the term *interior* in order to refer to the rural areas of Sindh in contrast to the *centre* which is Karachi. This geographical divide is constructed by the Mohajirs to distance themselves from the Sindhis (interview with Jami Chandio, 17 September 2006).
- 43 Interview with M. H. Panhwar, 26 September 2006.
- 44 S. Ansari, *Life after Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh, 1947–1962* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 62.
- 45 *Ibid.*: p. 61.
- 46 Joyo, *The Betrayal*, p. 222.
- 47 Ansari, *Life after Partition*, p. 68.
- 48 Ahmed, *Ethnicity*, p. 72.
- 49 *Ibid.*: p. 73.

- 50 *Ibid.*
- 51 Ansari, *Life after Partition*, p. 157.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 *Ibid.*: pp. 157–8.
- 54 Korejo, G. M. *Syed*, p. 25.
- 55 Syed, *Case of Sindh*.
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 *Ibid.*
- 58 Korejo, G. M. *Syed*, p. 3. Although this did not stop General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq courting G. M. Syed's favour in the 1980s when the military operation in Sindh was at its height.
- 59 G. M. Syed, *A Case for Sindhu Desh* (London: Sindh International Council, 2000), p. 1.
- 60 G. M. Syed, *Sindhudesh: A Study in Its Separate Identity through the Ages*. Translated from the Sindhi book, *Sindhu Ji Saanjah* (at: [www.sindhudesh.com/gmsyed/sindhudesh](http://www.sindhudesh.com/gmsyed/sindhudesh)).
- 61 Muhammad Bin Alafi, according to Syed, was a devotee of Hazrat Imam Hussein and was provided shelter by Raja Dahir from the rulers of the Sunni Umayyad Dynasty.
- 62 Syed, *Sindhudesh*.
- 63 *Ibid.*
- 64 *Ibid.*
- 65 *Ibid.*
- 66 *Ibid.*
- 67 Syed, *Case for Sindhu Desh*, p. 38.
- 68 *Ibid.*: p. 39.
- 69 *Ibid.*: p. 40.
- 70 Malkani, *Sindh*, p. 121.
- 71 Syed, *Case for Sindhu Desh*. pp. 73–7.
- 72 Awami Tahreek website (at: [www.atsindh.com/index.html](http://www.atsindh.com/index.html)).
- 73 *Ibid.*
- 74 Interview with Rasool Bux Paliyo, 30 September 2006.
- 75 Awami Tahreek website (at: [www.atsindh.com/index.html](http://www.atsindh.com/index.html)).
- 76 'Biggest problem is structural: Paliyo', *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 19 August 2003.
- 77 *Ibid.*
- 78 W. Clairborne, 'Pakistan Arrests two Bhutto Kin', *Washington Post*, 29 August 1983.
- 79 I. Hoare, 'Agitation in Pakistan increases Despite Arrests', *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 4 September 1983.
- 80 K. H. Soomro, *The Path Not Taken: G. M. Syed, Vision and Valour in Politics* (Sehwan Sharif: Sain Publishers, 2004), p. 327.
- 81 M. A. Shah, 'Anti-Sindhi Policies of General Zia-ul-Haq', unpublished paper.
- 82 Awami Tahreek was the first party to sign the MRD declaration which was presented by Begum Nusrat Bhutto (at: [www.atsindh.com/historyat.html](http://www.atsindh.com/historyat.html)).
- 83 T. Amin, *Ethno-National Movements of Pakistan: Domestic and International Factors* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1993), p. 198.
- 84 *Ibid.*
- 85 Interview with Rasool Bux Paliyo, 30 September 2006.
- 86 Syed, *Case of Sindh*, p. 76.
- 87 *Ibid.* Syed refers to the leadership of MRD as 'short-sighted', whose political mobilisation brought villagers onto the streets but which did not achieve desired political goals and objectives for the Sindhis
- 88 M. A. Weaver, 'Pakistan's Protests stir up Ethnic Divisions', *Christian Science Monitor*, 2 September 1983.

- 89 M. A. Shah, 'Ethnic Tensions in Sindh and Their Possible Solution', *Contemporary South Asia*, 6(3) (1997), 262.
- 90 *Ibid.*: p. 327.
- 91 Although no evidence exists to substantiate the claim of Zia engineering solidarity between the Mohajirs and Sindhis, certain authors do make such a claim. According to Korejo, 'To uproot PPP from Sindh, General Zia divided Sindh politics into two separate compartments, namely urban and rural. Altaf Hussain moved in to take possession of the urban turf. G. M. Syed was expected to mobilise rural Sindh to banish Bhuttoism (Konejo, *G. M. Syed*, p. 37).
- 92 A. Khan, *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005), p. 152. Another common and important denominator between the MQM and Jeay Sindh Mahaz was their mutual hatred of Bhutto and the PPP. As explained earlier, Syed's dislike of Bhutto was based on the fact that he considered the latter as a stooge of Punjab. On the other hand, MQM's hatred of Bhutto related to the introduction of a new quota system which discriminated in quota between urban and rural Sindh and thus, privileged Sindhis over Mohajirs. Coincidentally, hatred of Sindhis over the quota system did not stop the MQM from forging an alliance with Jeay Sindh Mahaz. The primacy of *political factors* in assessing ethnic groups is once again radically manifest.
- 93 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 5 July 1972.
- 94 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 8 July 1972.
- 95 *Ibid.*
- 96 Ahmed, *Ethnicity*, p. 53.
- 97 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 9 July 1972. Urdu-speaking students threatened the Sindhi department teaching staff that they would not be allowed to take their classes until Urdu was recognised as one of the official languages of Sindh. They also declared that there would be a complete ban on Sindhi newspapers, journals and periodicals in the campus.
- 98 T. Rahman, 'Language and Politics in a Pakistan Province: The Sindhi Language Movement', *Asian Survey*, 35(11) (November 1995), 1014.
- 99 'Ordinance to protect Urdu promulgated: Governor assents to Language Bill', *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 17 July 1972.
- 100 F. Ahmed, 'Pakistan's Problems of National Integration: The Case of Sind', in S. Akbar Zaidi (ed.), *Regional Imbalances and the National Question in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1992), p. 168.
- 101 'Sindh National Alliance Launched', *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 23 May 1988.
- 102 O. Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 78–9.
- 103 *Ibid.*: p. 79.
- 104 *United Press International*, 30 September 1988.
- 105 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 2 October 1988.
- 106 *Ibid.*
- 107 Iqbal Jaffrey, 'Army Troops Move to Put Down Ethnic Rioting', *Associated Press*, 1 October 1988.

## 6 The Mohajirs: ethnic politics in an urban setting

- 1 A. D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 146.
- 2 A. R. Siddiqi, *Mohajir: Pachas Sala Safar Ki Dastaan* (Lahore: Azad Enterprises, 1997), p. 30.

- 3 *Ibid.*: p. 32.
- 4 *Ibid.*: p. 34.
- 5 *Ibid.*: p. 36.
- 6 H. Alavi, 'Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan', in S. Akbar Zaidi (ed.), *Regional Imbalances and the National Question in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1992), p. 264.
- 7 *Ibid.*: pp. 264–5.
- 8 *Ibid.*: p. 268.
- 9 Mohajirs were also based in other urban centres of Sindh namely Sukkur and Mirpurkhas as well as in rural areas.
- 10 S. P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2005), p. 211.
- 11 *Ibid.*: p. 212.
- 12 S. Akbar Zaidi, 'Sindhi vs Mohajir: Contradiction, Conflict, Compromise', in Zaidi (ed.), *Regional Imbalances*, p. 336.
- 13 S. Ansari, *Life after Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh: 1947–1962* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 212.
- 14 In an interview with the author, Mustafa Azizabadi, Information Secretary MQM, the Mohajir support for the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP) was explained in terms of the Mohajirs' being passionate towards the slogans of Pakistan and Islam for which they had struggled and sacrificed their loved ones. Moreover he stated that Barelvi Mohajirs supported JUP while Deobandi Mohajirs supported JI. His own father, he explained, was a staunch Barelvi and thus a JUP supporter. However, the religious parties were criticised by Mr Azizabadi as they used the Mohajirs for electoral and other purposes but never solved their political, economic and social problems.
- 15 Haroons and Dadabhoys were Memons, not Urdu speakers but were presumably identified with the Mohajir ethnic identity. A prominent leader of the MQM in present times, Dr Farooq Sattar, is also Memon.
- 16 Y. V. Gankovsky and L. R. Gordon-Polonskaya, *A History of Pakistan* (Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of Asia, 1964), p. 115.
- 17 Siddiqi, *Mohajir*, p. 62.
- 18 *Ibid.*: p. 67.
- 19 The language riots in Sindh have already been detailed in the Sindh chapter in this book (see [Chapter 5](#)). Here I will concentrate on the quota system and its ramifications for the Mohajir community.
- 20 M. Waseem, 'Affirmative Action Policies in Pakistan', *Ethnic Studies Report*, 15(2), 227, quoted in A. Khan, *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005), p. 167.
- 21 C. H. Kennedy, *Bureaucracy in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 188.
- 22 *Ibid.*: p. 194.
- 23 The Urdu-speaking Mohajirs comprised about 7.57 per cent of the total population of Pakistan, according to the 1998 census. Population Census Organisation, Government of Pakistan (at: [www.census.gov.pk](http://www.census.gov.pk)).
- 24 This fact is appreciated by almost all writers on MQM, including Siddiqi and Farhat Haq. Haq states, 'though the Mohajir upper and upper-middle classes have continued to do well, it is the middle and lower middle class Mohajir youth who have felt the constraints of the system' (F. Haq, 'Rise of the MQM in Pakistan: Politics of Ethnic Mobilisation', *Asian Survey*, 35(11) (November 1995), 992).
- 25 C. H. Kennedy, 'The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh', *Asian Survey*, 31(10) (October 1991), 947.
- 26 T. P. Wright, Jr., 'Center-Periphery Relations and Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan: Sindhis, Muhajirs, and Punjabis', *Comparative Politics*, 23(3) (April 1991), 305. Charles Kennedy, on the other hand, insists that few Mohajirs or members of the



MQM perceive themselves as part of the 'periphery', as used by Wright. However, he does concede that Mohajir youths were affected by the new quota policies.

- 27 A. Hussain, *Safar-e-Zindagi: MQM ki kahani, Altaf Hussain ki Zabani* (Lahore: Jang, 1988), p. 11.
- 28 *Ibid.*: p. 16.
- 29 *Ibid.*: p. 19.
- 30 Here it may be mentioned that it was not the operation of the quota system which affected the admission of Altaf Hussain to the university, as Iftikhar Malik contends. He states, 'It was the operation of the federal quota which led to his failure to gain admission to the graduate pharmacy program at the University of Karachi' (I. H. Malik, *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology and Ethnicity* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p. 231).
- 31 The University of Karachi in one of its most ironic decisions decided to hold two different classes for two different student batches in one year. The existing admission holders were grouped as Semester I students, while Altaf Hussain and his fellow students were grouped as Semester II students (interview with Tariq Javed, Deputy Convenor, MQM, 1 July 2005).
- 32 Hussain, *Safar-e-Zindagi*, p. 30.
- 33 Azim Ahmad Tariq, *Pakistani Nationalism aur Nationalism ka aalmi Tasawwur*, 1980. Published in Ahmed Saleem (ed.), *Mohajir Qaumi Movement, Tashkeel aur Jaddojahd: Dastawaizi haqiq* (Lahore: Sarang, 1996), p. 44.
- 34 *Ibid.*: p. 46.
- 35 *Ibid.* The recruitment of police personnel remained one of the central demands when MQM was formed later.
- 36 *Ibid.*: p. 52.
- 37 *Ibid.*: pp. 58–9. The demand for a separate province was later dropped.
- 38 Altaf Hussain mentions the fact that he and his party members had to wait for hours to meet Mohajir industrialists in their offices in order to collect funds for APMSO. After waiting for hours, they were told that the person had left and was not available. Altaf reminded his fellow colleagues that this was all a result of their belonging to the lower middle classes (Hussain, *Safar-e-Zindagi*, p. 39).
- 39 Mohajir students during this time were members of Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba and abhorred APMSO. Being in a majority on campus, Mohajir students did not vote for APMSO in the student body elections where Altaf Hussain, standing for president, only received 95 votes (*ibid.*: p. 40).
- 40 Interview with Tariq Javed, Deputy Convenor, MQM, 1 July 2005.
- 41 O. Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 62.
- 42 In an interview with Mir Hasil Bizenjo, a Baloch nationalist and leader of the United Students Movement at the University of Karachi in the 1980s, I was told that Altaf Hussain and his fellow colleagues were supported by the state in their initial years. Bizenjo implicated the then Sindh Chief Minister Syed Ghous Ali Shah for being directly responsible for the rise of MQM. Moreover, it is suggested by writers such as Iftikhar Malik that since MQM arose in the time of military dictatorship of Zia in 1984, there was a conspiracy behind its growth and development. According to one author, 'It is a well-known fact that Zia encouraged the creation of the MQM with the objective of undermining his main political opponent, the PPP' (T. Ghosh, 'Ethnic Conflict in Sindh and its Impact on Pakistan', in R. Ganguly and I. Macduff (eds.), *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South and Southeast Asia: Causes, Dynamics, Solutions* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), p. 118).
- 43 Wright, 'Center-Periphery Relations', 305.
- 44 Altaf Hussain poses the following question: 'Is Altaf Hussain a landlord or son of a landlord? Is Azim Ahmad Tariq an industrialist or son of an industrialist?'

None of us is son of a Nawab, landlord or an industrialist. We belong to the oppressed class and we have completed and paid for our education by way of imparting tuition to primary and high school students' (Hussain, *Safar-e-Zindagi*, p. 71).

- 45 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 9 August 1986.
- 46 *Daily Jang* (Karachi), 9 August 1986. Altaf Hussain and the MQM believed that the operation of the quota system restricted the Mohajirs' entry into the bureaucracy. The quota system, of course, did not stop the Mohajirs from being recruited, a fact which was appreciated by Altaf Hussain (see n. 54). However, Altaf Hussain contended that if recruitment was based on the criterion of population, more Mohajir youths would be inducted into the bureaucracy.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *Nawa-e-Waqt* (Karachi), 9 August 1986.
- 49 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 9 August 1986.
- 50 The Charter of Resolution can be found in Hussain, *Safar-e-Zindagi*, pp. 107–21.
- 51 This clause was in direct reference to ethnic riots between Mohajirs and Pathans in Karachi in December 1986 where the police did not come to the support of Mohajirs who were brutally murdered in Qasba Colony, Aligarh Colony and Orangi Town.
- 52 The MQM gained notoriety for being a party preaching violence by way of this demand. The opponents of MQM still refer to this demand as a sign of MQM's propensity for violence to achieve their goals. The MQM's first public rally at Nishtar Park in August 1986 was probably the first time that a political party had openly displayed arms (interview with Late Abdus Sattar Afghani, former Mayor of Karachi, 27 August 2005).
- 53 In the figures provided for such non-locals, it was stated by the MQM that about 45 per cent of officers in the civilian administration and police did not have the Sindh domicile (Hussain, *Safar-e-Zindagi*, p. 114).
- 54 In an interview which was published in February 1987 in *Nawa-e-Waqt*, Altaf Hussain stated:

We are not against the abolition of the quota system. This is one of the biggest misunderstandings as far as the MQM is concerned because if the quota system is abolished, the three or four Mohajirs who are recruited into the bureaucracy will find it difficult to get in as the relatives of the elites take up most seats. What we ask for is a genuine census and after that has taken place, Mohajirs should be accorded jobs on the basis of their population in all walks of life

(quoted in *Altaf Hussain ke Aza'im aur iraday* (Karachi: Shibil, 1987), p. 41)

- 55 This party will be referred to as Haqiqi for the remainder of this chapter.
- 56 Haqiqi means real. The party was formed in May 1991, a year before the Operation against the MQM was initiated. The central plank of Haqiqi's ideology can be understood from this very position.
- 57 In an interview in June 1995, Afaq Ahmed, while criticising Altaf Hussain and its stand on Muttahida stated:

What I want is the solution of the problems of the Mohajirs first. Only then can we go into the Assemblies and speak for the cause of Punjabis and Pathans ... the ones who voted for you (Mohajirs), their problems need to be resolved first and then one can talk about Muttahida Qaumi Movement

(quoted in Saleem, *Mohajir Qaumi Movement*, p. 545)

- 58 Siddiqi, *Mohajir*, p. 149.
- 59 *Ibid.*: p. 169.
- 60 R. Jamal, *Sindh Do-Rahay Par* (Karachi: Pakistan Adab, 1994), p. 73.

- 61 Interview with Dr Salim Haider, 19 September 2006.
- 62 *Ibid.*
- 63 Jamal, *Sindh Do-Rahay Par*, p. 74.
- 64 Interview with Khalid Mumtaz, 15 September 2006.
- 65 Jamal, *Sindh Do-Rahay Par*, pp. 80–1.
- 66 *Ibid.*: p. 84.
- 67 Nusrat Mirza interview, February 1993, in Saleem, *Mohajir Qaumi Movement*, p. 571.
- 68 Khan, *Politics*, p. 177.
- 69 M. Ahmar, 'Ethnicity and State Power in Pakistan: The Karachi Crisis', *Asian Survey*, 36(10) (October 1996), 1037.
- 70 Pir Sahab denotes a religious and saintly figure. For many of his followers at the time when MQM was at its peak, Altaf Hussain possessed miraculous powers and because of this he was asked to kiss babies. Moreover, once in Karachi, his faced appeared on the leaf of a peepal tree (Verkaaik, *Migrants*, p. 68). However, the present discourse on MQM has returned to *Bhai* (brother) as the favoured title to address party members. In a conversation with an MQM party member in March 2005, I referred to him as Sahab (Mr). I was instantly corrected and reminded that within MQM everyone is a *Bhai*, including Altaf Hussain *Bhai*.
- 71 *Daily Jang* (London), 12 October 1992.
- 72 *Ibid.*
- 73 *Daily Dawn*, 16 October 1992.
- 74 Abu Sarim, 'The MQM charge sheet', *Newsline* (Karachi), August 1992, p. 29.
- 75 *MQM v. Government of Pakistan* (Case in the Supreme Court against the Government) (1994). Published in Saleem, *Mohajir Qaumi Movement*, pp. 345–6.
- 76 *Ibid.*: p. 352.
- 77 N. Nusrat, *Altaf Hussain ke khatoot* (London: MQM International Secretariat, 1995), p. 104. The MQM was given the green light to contest the provincial assembly elections by the Army.
- 78 *MQM v. Government of Pakistan* (see n. 75), p. 354.
- 79 L. Ziring, 'The Second Stage in Pakistani Politics: The 1993 Elections', *Asian Survey*, 33(12) (December 1993), 1180.
- 80 Malik, *State and Civil Society*, p. 250.
- 81 Mohammed Hanif, 'Operation foul-up?', *Newsline* (Karachi), August 1992, p. 45.
- 82 Quoted in Khan, *Politics*, p. 180.
- 83 Ahmar, 'Ethnicity', 1035.
- 84 Mohammed Hanif, 'Dead End?', *Newsline* (Karachi), June 1995, p. 28.
- 85 MQM is now Muttahida Qaumi Movement, *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 27 July 1997.
- 86 *Ibid.*
- 87 In a meeting which was attended by the author to commemorate the eleventh anniversary of the formation of MQM in March 2005, Altaf Hussain did not speak at all about the rights of Mohajirs as a community. Instead the emphasis was on the lower middle classes and lower classes of Pakistan as a whole. On the other hand, the political slogans during the meeting centred on 'Long Live Altaf' and 'Long Live Muttahida' with no reference to Mohajirs at all. Furthermore, the expanded ethnic basis of Muttahida can be gauged from the fact that Sindhis and Baloch comprise their ranks. The meeting was addressed by the Karachi Muzafati (Suburban) Committee Chairman, Khalid Baloch and a Sindhi MQM MNA, Nisar Powar.
- 88 Y. Samad, 'In and Out of Power but not Down and Out: Mohajir Identity in Politics', in Christophe Jaffrelot (ed.), *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?* (London: Zed Books, 2002), p. 76.
- 89 R. Jamal, *Mohajirs of Pakistan: Plight and Struggle for Survival*, vol. 1 (Karachi: Loh-e-Adab, 1998), p. 67.

- 90 Interview with M. Anwar, MQM Central Committee Member, 1 July 2005.
- 91 Mohammad Hanif, 'Young Guns', *Newsline* (Karachi), July 1995, p. 38.
- 92 *Newsline* (Karachi), May 1995, p. 28.
- 93 *Ibid.*
- 94 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 24 June 1992.
- 95 Interview with Dr Salim Haider, 19 September 2006.
- 96 Nusrat Mirza interview, February 1993, published in Saleem, *Mohajir Qaumi Movement*, p. 572.
- 97 *Ibid.*: p. 571.
- 98 A. Hussain, 'The Karachi Riots of December 1986: Crisis of State and Civil Society in Pakistan', in V. Das (ed.), *Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 186.
- 99 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 1 November 1986.
- 100 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 3 November 1986.
- 101 Hussain, 'Karachi Riots', p. 186. What Akmal Hussain fails to note, however, is the fact that the Operation Clean Up was not only restricted to Sohrab Goth but took place in Orangi Town as well where the majority population was Mohajirs. Two brothers were hauled up from Mansoor Nagar, Orangi following recovery of explosive substances from their houses. The BBC correspondent said that the raid on Orangi Town was perhaps a balancing act so that the Pathans did not think they were being discriminated against (*Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 13 December 1986).
- 102 These Biharis mostly comprised of the stranded Pakistanis who had come to Karachi after the fall of East Pakistan in 1971. The Biharis of Orangi Town, which is a shantytown, are ardent supporters of the MQM. On the other hand, Pathan land grabbers controlled most of the shantytowns in Karachi. This explains why Orangi Town became a convenient area for the Pathans to launch their attacks against the Mohajirs (Khan, *Politics*, p. 175).
- 103 Hussain, 'Karachi Riots', p. 187.
- 104 *Ibid.*
- 105 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 16 December 1986.
- 106 It is interesting to note that the MQM contested the elections as 'Haq Parast' ('Rights Seekers'). The party was registered under this name and the word 'Mohajir' was obviously dropped. What prompted the MQM to toe such a policy is open to doubt and contention. The most likely explanation seems that the word 'Mohajir' was anathema to the Punjabi-dominated state structure because it evoked demands of a fifth nationality. There were obvious pressures from the state in this regard, which later culminated in the name of the party being changed to Muttahida.
- 107 Kennedy, 'The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh,' p. 950.
- 108 Wright, p. 307.
- 109 Kennedy, 'Politics of Ethnicity', 952.
- 110 Pakka Qila is a Mohajir-dominated stronghold in Hyderabad which is built within the walls of the eighteenth-century citadel of the former Sindhi kings. In 1843, the kings lost the fort to the British who subsequently used it for military purposes. After independence in 1947, it was used as a reception camp for the refugees arriving from India. At present Pakka Qila houses mainly lower-middle-class Urdu-speaking residents dominated by shoemakers (Verkaaik, *Migrants*, p. 89).
- 111 *Ibid.*: p. 145.
- 112 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 28 May 1990.
- 113 *Ibid.*
- 114 Brig. A. R. Siddiqi, 'To hell (Hyderabad) and back!' *Herald*, June 1990.
- 115 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 27 May 1990.
- 116 Hazoor Ahmed Shah, 'Hyderabad killings: citizens give shocking accounts', *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 29 May 1990.

## Conclusion

- 1 I. Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst and Co., 1998), pp. 373–4.
- 2 C. Jaffrelot, 'Introduction: Nationalism without a Nation: Pakistan Searching for its Identity', in C. Jaffrelot (ed.), *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?* (London: Zed Books, 2002), p. 31.
- 3 *Ibid.*: p. 28.
- 4 S. Cohen, *The Future of Pakistan* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2011), p. 51. See also his other study, 'Coping with a Failing Pakistan', *NOREF Policy Brief*, No. 1, February 2011.
- 5 For a recent study, see Cohen, *Coping*.
- 6 S. P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2005), p. 293.
- 7 A good analysis of the nationalist movement in Balochistan in the war on terror is contained in the International Crisis Group report, 'Pakistan: The Worsening Conflict in Balochistan', *Asia Report*, No. 119, 14 September 2006 (at: [www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/pakistan/119-pakistan-the-worsening-conflict-in-balochistan.aspx](http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/pakistan/119-pakistan-the-worsening-conflict-in-balochistan.aspx)). Also see, Frederic Grare, 'Pakistan: The Resurgence of Baluch Nationalism', *Carnegie Papers*, Number 65, January 2006 (at: [www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CP65.Grare.FINAL.pdf](http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CP65.Grare.FINAL.pdf)).
- 8 *Daily Dawn* (Karachi), 26 April 2010.
- 9 This, however, did not and does not preclude the possibility of inter-ethnic accommodation as witnessed in the alliance between G. M. Syed and Altaf Hussain in the 1980s.
- 10 Shamim Shamsi, 'Rally held against anti-Sindh projects', *Daily Dawn* (internet edition), 6 May 2006.
- 11 Shafi Burfat's Facebook page describes him as a Guevarian leader who struggles for freedom of Sindhudesh from Pakistani occupation (at: [www.facebook.com/pages/Comrade-Shafi-Burfat/213920632499?sk=info](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Comrade-Shafi-Burfat/213920632499?sk=info)).
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