



## The Role of Muhajir Qoumi Movement (MQM) in the Politics of Sindh

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### Abstract

In Sindh politics, the MQM has played a significant role, especially in advancing the interests of the Muhajir community in Hyderabad and Karachi. Ethnic identity became a significant political factor as a result of its rise, changing the urban political landscape. MQM's journey has been characterised by disagreement, racial divisions, and internal fragmentation, even though it raised awareness of issues related to urban governance and political representation. Various MQM factions have arisen, such as MQM-Pakistan, which has distanced itself about Altaf Hussain, who additionally now resides in exile. MQM continues to be a significant political force in Sindh's cities in spite of these obstacles. Though its influence has diminished since its height, the MQM is still active in Sindh politics. The party's ability to bring its factions together and adapt to shifting urban areas demographic information and political demands will determine its future role.

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### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Apmso as initial phase of mqm:

At the University of Karachi (KU), Altaf Hussain and Azeem Ahmed Tariq created APMSO in 1978. Tariq and Husain were KU students. While Hussain supported the Islami Jamiat Taleba (IJT) until 1977 and actively participated in the uprising against the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto government, which was organized by the Jamat-i-Islami-led Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) in 1977, Tariq had taken part with a number of progressive student organizations, such as the Liberal Students Federation (LSF), which was led by Raza Rabbani, a current PPP senator, at the KU in 1974. The most common reason given for the establishment of the Muttahida (previously Mohajir) Qaumi Movement (MQM) and the APMSO, which gave rise to the MQM, is that the military rule of General Ziaul Haq created the party to balance out the power of some political forces in Sindh. On the other hand, the political historians who support this theory are not clear. When the MQM arrived, it was more than just a Mohajir-focused student organization (APMSO) turning into an establishment political party as a result of Mohajirs' political and financial discomfort. Although the Jamat-i-Islami (JI) publicly supported Zia from 1977 to 1984, the JI was the first group to claim that the Zia dictatorship had "created MQM" in order to destroy JI's dominance in Karachi. Considering the way Sindhi nationalists demonstrated during the brutal anti-Zia Movement for Restoration for Democracy (MRD) movement in Sindh in 1983, Sindhi nationalist parties believed that the MQM was created at the behest of the Zia regime. In contrast, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) maintained in the late 1980s that the MQM was created by Pakistan's security forces to put down the PPP in Sindh. The MQM (from APMSO) was formed with some assistance from Zia's agencies, according to Muhammad Wasim, Laurent Gayer, and Oskar Vaarkaik. However, this experiment quickly backfired as the MQM swiftly broke out of the agencies' orbit and turned into a totally autonomous entity.

Military dictatorships because they were part of Pakistan's original ruling and economic elite. The Marxist wing of the National Awami Party (NAP), which aimed at avoiding ethnic politics and go after a socialist revolutionary movement led by the upper class, included those who were Mohajirs and Punjabis which joined groups led by Sindhi, Pashtun, Bengali, and Baloch nationalists. Many non-Punjabi and non-Mohajir nationalists, however, grew increasingly exclusivist by the late 1960s as the PPP, which had emerged at that time, absorbed most of the nation's leftist impulses. As a result, an influential group within the left-wing National Students Federation (NSF) connected with the NAP actually made the first ever call to separate Karachi from Sindh and acknowledge the Mohajirs as a separate ethnic group. among the primary political leader to advocate for Mohajir nationalism was Amir H. Kazmi, who led his own branch of the Marxist NSF in 1969. However, because they were still deeply rooted in the idea of federalism and rejected ethnic nationalism (like Punjabis), few Mohajirs accepted the idea seriously. The majority of the left-leaning intellectuals in Punjab and Sindh, as well as members of the working class and peasantry, backed the federalist PPP, while Mohajirs continued to support the federalist views Islamic parties. When the devoted Pashtuns were gradually brought into the cherished fold by the dictator Ayub-Khan, the Mohajirs had already started to be ousted among the Punjab-dominated governing and economic elite by the late 1960s. The emergence of the PPP under Z.A. Bhutto contributed to the growing fear among Mohajirs. Mohajirs perceived the Bhutto regime's reintroduction of Sindhi in educational organizations as "an attack on Urdu," which led to the 'language riots' in Karachi in 1972. A city government movement (CGM) was formed in the wake of the riots. It once more demanded that Karachi be kept apart from Sindh and was filled with Mohajir academics, previous Marxist student leaders from Karachi, and a few businessmen. Until Altaf Hussain's APMSO was established in 1978, this movement too unable to gain popularity. The APMSO was launched outside Karachi University's Arts Lobby in June 1978. Former IJT members along with political independent students (all Mohajir) made up a small portion of APMSO's initial membership. APMSO chose to join the United Students Movement (USM) in 1981. The USM is an anti-IJT/anti-Zia coalition of progressive and left-wing ethnic-nationalist student organizations at KU, including the Jeey Sindh Students Federation (JSSF), Punjabi Students Association (PSA), Pakhtun Students Federation (PkSF), And Baloch Students Organization (BSO). At KU, a second left-wing anti-Zia/IJT student alliance also emerged during that time. The National Students Federation (NSF) and the Peoples Students Federation (PSF), the student arm of the Pakistan Peoples Party, came together to establish what was known as the Taleba Ittihad (Student Alliance). Although APMSO did not do well in the 1980 KU student union elections, it was able to increase its vote total in the 1981 union elections as a weak partner party of USM. Altaf and Azeem's speech shifted closer to the left with their arrival of previous NSF members. Hussain defined APMSO as a progressive, secular student organization that opposes the "mullah-feudal nexus" and "Punjab's hegemony in Pakistan's politics and economics" in a speech from 1981<sup>[1]</sup>. The origins of Altaf Hussain's party are still unknown because Mohajir political analysts have found the MQM to

be more appealing than the APMSO. This is unfortunate due to the fact that the early half of the 1980s was a pivotal time for Sindh, when politics on campus influenced both national and provincial politics before having an impact on the province-center relationship. Its campuses became battlefields as a result of the Afghan jihad's massive flood of weaponry into the region. Kalachins first appeared at University of Karachi in August 1979 under Husain's Haqqani's control private security forces. During the ensuing years, the IJT prepared groups of armed terrorists who would quickly establish themselves at key locations on campus in the event of an incident. Till the start of Left-wing organizations like the Punjabi Students Federation were the militants' brutal rivals in the 1980s. Over fifty students were hurt in the riots of September 1988, arising from a series of incidents between APMSO and IJT activists in 1982 that created a fresh conflict on the city's campuses. The goal of the APMSO's enormous weaponry at that point was to combat Sindhi nationalist organizations like the Jama'atis in Karachi. Following the riots in April 1985, MQM activists began giving out weapons to its followers at public gatherings in exchange for "a donation to the party"; five rupees was the price of ammunition. A piece, and to hide their purchase, the purchasers received an ajrak, or Sindhi shawl. Referred to throughout the province by the term Jiye Sindh Students Force (JSSF). A former MQM activist claims that Altaf Hussain and his friends first met Kalashnikovs at Sindh University in 1986. While the MQM developed a portion of its armament by exchanging cars for weapons with the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the APMSO purchased its first weaponry through the IJT and the National Students Federation (NSF)<sup>[2]</sup>. In order to meet with attackers from the Sindhi separatist student organization, the JSSF, MQM sent a group of APMSO members to Hyderabad in response to the greater weapons brought in by Afghan immigrants. Even though Sindhi nationalists had been attacking the Mohajirs since the 1950s, claiming that they treated the Sindhis as "Red Indians," Altaf started to *get along* with JSSF's mentor and leader, Sindhi scholar GM Syed.

When the first (of many) significant conflicts between the Mohajir and Pushtun groups in Karachi occurred in 1985–86, APMSO became hardened. The Pushtun-speaking Afghan refugees who flooded into Pakistan as part of the US-Saudi-sponsored Islamic Muhajideen conflict against Afghan and Soviet troops in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan provided support to the Pushtuns. In Karachi, many those refugees brought drugs and advanced weapons. The abrupt increase in Karachi's population caused the city's infrastructure to be severely strained, and it also caused the crime rate to double. A Mohajir college student named Bushra Zaidi was crushed by a speeding minibus driven by a Pushtun, igniting the long-simmering resentment within the Mohajir community and the Pushtuns into widespread violence. School children and college students gathered to the streets to show their support. Soon after, the demonstrations turned into disagreements between youngsters and the police, and then between the Pushtuns and the Mohajirs.

MQM won the 1988 Karachi elections and formed a government partnership with the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Sindh and the center following the deadly fall of the Ziaul Haq dictatorship. However, the student units of both parties were about to battle. The conflict started as a territory battle in Karachi's colleges and universities, where IJT's

influence was decreasing and both APMSO and the PPP's student organization, the Peoples Students Federation (PSF), occupied the territory left by an IJT that was withdrawing. Under the first Benazir government, student unions that Zia had made illegal in 1984 were allowed again. While the fact that elections were held at a few Karachi colleges, student union elections restricted themselves to the Punjab and were primarily won by APMSO and PSF candidates. However, because there was no opportunity to resolve political disagreements through voting, conflicts between APMSO and PSF arose in the city's main colleges. Due to the violent battles involving the two student organizations, the APMSO established the Black Tigers and Nadeem Commandos as special militant units. Originally, the Black Tigers were established to quell dissidents within the MQM. In retaliation, the PSF organized militant cells within its Karachi headquarters under the leadership of KU student Najeeb Ahmed. He was the President of the PSF Karachi, speaking during a PSF meeting in a Karachi college in 1988. After numerous of students via both parties died, the PPP-MQM partnership finally started to feel the pressure of the fighting in 1990. MQM left Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's administration and joined the opposition. When a young member of an armed group supposedly from the Black Tigers killed PSF chief of Karachi Najeeb Ahmed in late 1989, the fighting rudely stopped, and by the early 1990s, Benazir Bhutto's first government was overthrown (by the president). During the early years of the first Nawaz Sharif government (1991–1993), APMSO and MQM dominated Karachi. However, the military launched a "clean-up operation" in Sindh (1992) after APMSO boys committed violent crimes against certain army soldiers stationed in Karachi. The primary focus of the operation was always MQM/APMSO's militancy and suspected "criminality," despite claims by military officials and Prime Minister Sharif that it was supposed to focus on Sindh's dacoits, or highway robbers. A newspaper image from 1992 showing a number of APMSO activists shot dead by police, reportedly after a "fake encounter" where police arrested APMSO youths, requested them to flee, and then shot them in the back. The military had turned over control of the current mission to the Karachi police and paramilitary forces (the Rangers) by the time Benazir won her second term in 1993. The operation was aggressively led by Benazir's interior minister, Naseerullah Babar, nasty acts of violence were committed by both the sides and the regime also used extra-judicial ways to eliminate the militant backbone of the MQM. Dozens of policemen were slaughtered by MQM/APMSO militants, but hundreds of MQM/APMSO activists were also put to death in the most brutal manner. In 1992-93, when an anti-Altaf faction of MQM (MQM-Haqiqi) emerged (backed by the military intelligence), Altaf Husain escaped to London and Azeem Ahmed Tariq was assassinated. By 1996, Black Tigers and Nadeem Commandos leaders had also been killed. The operation only ended in October 1999 when General Pervez Musharraf overthrew Nawaz Sharif's second government in a military coup. The Musharraf dictatorship gained support from MQM in 2002, and a new generation of leaders in both MQM and APMSO started the process of reviving the two groups. Altaf just ruled over both the organizations as chief (from London). When Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Iftikhar Chaudhry, who had been fired by Musharraf, came to hold a lawyers' demonstration in Karachi,

anti-Musharraf groups and the media accused MQM and APMSO of inciting violence on the city's streets. Armed men from the Pakistan Peoples Party, Jamat-i-Islami, and Awami National Party youth wings engaged in intense gunfights with APMSO terrorists in Karachi's streets in May 2007. The violence allegedly started when pro-CJP and anti-Musharraf rallies headed towards the airport to welcome the ousted CJP were fired upon by MQM/APMSO gunmen. The rioting and gunfights that followed claimed the lives of dozens of people. Additionally, the militant wing of APMSO started to change. The MQM, a Musharraf ally, opposed the 2007 anti-Musharraf Lawyers Movement, which is when this wing entered the argument. A mixture of three distinct but connected events that occurred on May 12, 2007. On top an APMSO activist in Karachi throws a stone at a pro-CJP rally as a bus burns in the background; on bottom left, former military ruler General Musharraf waves to a 'hired' crowd at a rally in Islamabad; and on bottom right, Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry (who was fired by Musharraf on corruption charges), arrives at the Karachi airport. The city's violence compelled him to go back to Islamabad. However, at Karachi's state-owned schools and universities, the APMSO remains the most prominent political student organization<sup>[3]</sup>.

### 1.2. Ethnic identity of muhajirs:

During the British control in 1839, Karachi in Sindh has expanded in both population and significance. As millions of people moved from India to Pakistan during the 1947 Partition, the city was a crucial transit hub and offered better economic opportunities. As a result, Karachi's population increased quickly. The vast majority of Muslims throughout the eastern part of India moved to Sindh, although many Punjabi Muslims moved west to live in the Punjab state of Pakistan. As a result, Karachi's ethnic, cultural, and demographic makeup completely shifted, setting it apart from the other parts of Pakistan. Due to cultural connections, the Punjabi migrants merged with the state's main groups, although the migrants who arrived in Sindh were from many regions of India, such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bombay, Rajasthan, and Delhi, and they came from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds. Their common origins of immigration from India, which was decided their Muslim identities, and their emotional and physical distance from the Sindhi host community were what united them. In order to mobilize and assert their demand for cultural, economic, and political legitimacy within Pakistan, these people became to be designated as the Mohajirs. Latter then, Pashtuns, Punjabis, and migrants via Afghanistan and East Pakistan (Bangladesh) have all made Karachi their home over the years. Due to rivalry for resources brought on by the city's growing population, the Mohajirs frequently found themselves at odds with the Pashtuns, Sindhis, and Punjabis. Restlessness between the Mohajirs and Pashtuns, as well as among the Sindhis and Mohajirs, started to occur in Karachi in the 1950s and 1960s. Religious parties like Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and Jamiat-i-Ulema-Pakistan (JUP) served as the political representatives of the Mohajirs, while other groups supported a variety of parties until the 1960s, when the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was established. In Karachi, there was no distinction made between political parties and ethnic parties until the 1970s. Because of this, the JI and JUP prioritized political-religious manifestos, which the Mohajirs endorsed, even though they were not founded on any specific

ethnic nationalism. The relative collapse of the Mohajirs began with Ayub Khan's arrival in 1958, particularly after Islamabad replaced Karachi as Pakistan's capital. The community was enraged by Khan's administrative structure policies, which caused them to endorse Fatima Jinnah over Khan in the 1964 first presidential election. As a result, the group felt alienated after Khan's win and the ensuing conflicts in Karachi between the Mohajirs and Pashtuns. Over the years, the Mohajirs' status among Pakistan's other ethnic groups declined, despite their early status as an affluent, educated, and aristocratic society. Early in the 1970s, government policies that adversely impacted their access to school and work possibilities in Sindh sparked the beginnings of a Mohajir consciousness. The Mohajirs' perception of their position in Pakistani society has been influenced over time by a variety of factors, including demographic shifts, ethno-political disputes, militant and sectarian organizations, and deep interest in political groups. During Zia-ul-Haq's rule from 1978 to 1988, the Mohajirs stepped up their identity quest and organized their followers along ethnic lines. The phrase "Mohajir Nationalism," which advocated for the Mohajirs' unification under a single leader and party, was often uttered when their sense of political and economic deprivation peaked.

The APMSO changed its name and became the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM) in 1983, six days after Zia restored the quota system for an additional ten years. The MQM's goals were to challenge Punjabi predominance and get a fair share of positions for Mohajirs in the government sector and in educational institutions. One factor in the MQM's appeal was its violent stance. In order to contribute to political crises that seriously put at risk the legitimacy of the state, the party funded a militancy that "managed to successfully weave illegal urban youth culture, with its elements of gender, recreation, and global youth cultural backgrounds, into an ethnic-religious mentality of protest and revolt. Young men were encouraged to hate Punjabis while showcasing their manhood and strength during MQM gatherings. Because of his aggressiveness and smoothness, Hussein was a born leader, and his followers saw him as their "saint," elevating him to cult status. The validity of the Mohajir cause was undermined when the MQM, a party that purported to represent Mohajir issues, quickly turned into a criminal organization. The situation in Karachi has been presented by the Pakistani establishment as a law-and-order disaster resulting from a lack of authority. However, in order to maintain control over civilian organizations, institutions, and movements, political groups and state law enforcement agencies have been in the front of brutal and criminalized politics, at times lending support to terrorists, militants, and criminal organizations. Therefore, the establishment's unwillingness to address the complaints of numerous ethnic populations in Pakistan, including the Pashtuns, Baloch, Siraikis, and Mohajirs, is directly responsible for the state of law and order. The Mohajirs are still an enormous group; they are nearly exclusively urban and belong to the working middle class, which is unaffected by feudal elites and tribal chiefs. They still have trouble defining who they are, though. whichever direction the military establishment's preference at the time, it is now up to the people to determine whether they should trust mainstream parties that support their cause or ethno-political groups like the MQM, given the party's widespread militarization and

separation. From a nationalist organization to an ethno-nationalist party and then towards an ethno-militant political, social, and economic identity, Mohajir mobilization has constantly changed. It is unclear if the community will continue to identify as Mohajir (as descendants of Indian migrants) or start to identify as Pakistanis and integrate into the nation-state as the definition of Mohajir identity continues to develop. Furthermore, it is too soon to predict whether the nation's current political climate is going to give rise to a MQM 2.0, which may prove harsher, more demanding, as well as challenging than Altaf's MQM. 4 Hussain, who came from a low-income household, struggled to gain accepted into medical school to pursue a degree in pharmacology. When he approached Karachi's industrial firms to obtain the money required to run the APMSO, he was met with contempt from the mohajir business elite, representing a glaring sign of his social marginalization. "Mohajirs should be given with an autonomous territory of their own which they can freely engage in and practice their culture," according to the first APMSO platform in 1978. This is what those before them, especially Jinnah, had hoped to achieve by establishing Pakistan. Hussain and other APMSO officials founded the Mohajir Quami Mahaz, the original MQM, in 1984. The party used a large number of skilled activists to crisscross the city, particularly in Karachi.5

### 1.3. Sindhi- muhajir relationship:

Ethnic groups of Sindh province have become increasingly polarized in the decades since 1947. The migration of Urdu-speaking refugees, or Muhajirs, drastically changed Sindh's political landscape in the years following independence. Punjabis and the Muhajirs have controlled Pakistan's political system since 1947, however in more recent times, Punjabis have assumed control of the country's politics. These dominances led to an imbalance of political power among different ethnic groups, which sparked a number of uprisings and freedom movements, including the Baluch movements, the 1948 separation of Karachi and Bengal, and the movement against General ZIA UL Haq's martial law regime. Whenever the muhajir leaders took control of Sindh's political scene, the conflict started to escalate. By giving their ethnic group employment possibilities, land ownership, and communal recognition as a distinct ethnic group, they exploited their legal authority to their advantage. Sindhis contend that Muhajirs were given preferential treatment by the government. Sindhis assert that they make up the bulk of the population in Karachi and several other municipalities, despite the urban Muhajir population's increase. They contend that a highly instructed Sindhi Muslim majority dominated provincial politics prior to partition, but that since 1947, authorities have closed or converted Sindhi-language schools to Urdu-medium, and that Karachi University, once a prominent Sindhi school of thought, is now under the control of the Muhajir provincial administration, alongside Sindhi students being denied admission. But the Muhajir perspective holds that Muhajirs, whose name means "immigrants," left the Indian provinces to assist in the establishment of the State of Pakistan in 1947. Muslims, on the other hand, were originally a minority in the fresh nation they had fought to establish. They assert that they swiftly ascended to prominent positions in government and business and contributed a significant amount of knowledge, expertise, and talents to the new State. Primarily a party of the Urdu-

speaking upper classes of the Indian subcontinent, the Muslim League was controlled by Muslims from the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh (UP)). The Muslims, who turned up education after the tireless work of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, became the solid foundation of the Mughal bureaucracy. These Muslims shaped the fight for Pakistan's independence by concentrating in the Muslim minority provinces rather than the Muslim majority regions in northwest India (modern-day Pakistan). The Muhajirs enjoyed the status of the "might" from 1947 to 1970, while the Sindhis were considered "followers." The Muhajir held the majority of governmental authority, which they carelessly used to advance their ethnic supporters while ignoring the Sindhis. The Sindhi watched assiduously as the Muhajirs were fed their meals by government officials and political offices. All natural resources were administered to the Muhajirs, and alone they were subject to this administration. The only thing Sindhis could do was complain about their repression. The concept of nepotism in Sindh's governance and politics was sown by Muhajirs. Here are a few areas where Sindhis were disregarded and excluded from positions of authority. Muslims in unified India were only represented by the Muslim League. Muhajirs were close to the leaders of the Muslim League. Throughout the post-independence era, the Muhajir had politically engaged and intelligent leaders. Liaquat Ali Khan, Ahmad Noorani Ziddiqi, Azeem Ahmad Tariq, Ismael Ibrahim Chundrigar, Pakistan's sixth prime minister, who was appointed in 1957, and numerous other politicians. Because of their vibrant political culture, and because it was essentially responsive, Muhajirs had greater political education at the grassroots level. Because of their strong ties to the leadership, Muhajirs served as the head of state, the head of government, and the head of the party that was in control. They were successful in obtaining three of the Federal Government's six ministries. They had held the bureaucracy for several years. Ikramullah, a member of the Muhajir community, served as Pakistan's first foreign secretary. Sahabzada Yaqub Khan served as Pakistan's previous foreign minister. Despite being the majority, the 1973 civilian bureaucracy study found that the Sindhi, or indigenous people, barely made up 2.5% of the civilian bureaucracy. As a minority, the Muhajirs held 30.20 percent of the military bureaucracy in 1973. The political and societal power of the Muhajirs from 1947 until the 1970s, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was in power, is easily imaginable. During their period of governmental dominance, the Sindhi ethnic group was marginalized as the Muhajirs utilized all available resources for their community development. In 1948, Karachi and Sindh were split apart in an undemocratic manner without Sindhi consultation because of their political hegemony. Because Karachi was home to the sole administrative offices, important educational institutions, and museums, Sindhi's complaints grew. An 'One Unit Plan' based on 'administrative efficiency, improved economy and as a foil against provincialism' was presented by the political lobby led by the Punjabi-Muhajir and subsequently adopted in 1955. The One Unit Plan and direct federation rule over Karachi were two suggestions that Sindhi vehemently rejected. The federal government, meanwhile, enforced the One Unit Plan and chose a Sindhi, Pirzada Abdus Sattar, as chief minister. The situation deteriorated as a result of this decision since the Sindhi were denied political rights and advancement. Prior to Sindh's agricultural development, the

people there would rent their property to wealthy individuals who would apply contemporary farming methods that were too expensive for the typical middle-class Sindhi. Prior to independence, Hindus and other non-Muslims borrowed the majority of the land. The Muhajirs, the new immigrants, were given the borrowed land as a result of the non-Muslim influx. When provincial assemblies in Punjab and Sindh sent a bill of land relocation to their rightful owners, the federal government took the most illegitimate, undemocratic, and unconstitutional move possible: denying the land to its rightful owners. The government only approved Punjab's bill after considering Sindh's. Sindhis were enraged by the Muhajirs' strong lobby's undemocratic practices, and they were compelled to rebel for their constitutional and political rights. Because of the Muhajir democratic lobby's indifferent stance, the Sindhi community began to feel angry. Sindhi pupils were directly impacted when Urdu was authorized as the official language of instruction throughout Pakistan in 1957. They needed to learn more about Urdu grammar and pronunciation because Sindhi had never been very interested in it. The Sindhi community was the primary target of the widespread disruption to the continuing educational activities. The imposition of Urdu led to the marginalization of the Sindhi language, which is an integral element of Sindhi culture. Furthermore, the government believed that Muhajirs had quit their employment in India, so they hired them for emotional conciliation as well. They must therefore have had a prior job. The powerful lawmakers who surrounded Muhajir and had stronger ties to stakeholders further backed this. Karachi, Pakistan's capital, offered greater employment options and was primarily protected by Muhajir. The industrial development brought forth by the Korean War prompted the Muhajirs to bring highly educated relatives to obtain jobs. When Ayyub Khan's reign came to an end, the Pakistan People's Party became the most powerful political party in Pakistan. The prime minister was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a native Sindhi. In Sindh province, wherein Mumtaz Ali Bhutto was appointed chief minister, the Pakistan People's Party likewise succeeded in gaining the majority of seats. Sindhi was deemed the official language at the first session of the provincial assembly, and all government officials and officeholders were encouraged to study the language because it was at the moment of Sindhi's improvement. Being a native Sindhi, Zulfikar Ali began working for their community, which had previously been disadvantaged by the Muhajirs, the settled group. The population structure of Karachi were changed by Zia's policies, which allowed Punjabis and Pathans to move here. Later then, The founder of the APMSO and MQM, Altaf Hussain, was born in Karachi and comes from a lower middle class family. Altaf Hussain served as the chairman of the newly established All Pakistan Muhajir Students Organization (APMSO) at the University of Karachi on June 11, 1978. 32 APMSO Vice Chairman Azim Ahmad Tariq presented the organization's political demands in a pamphlet titled "Pakistani The ideology of nationalism and the Philosophy of Patriotism in the World." The two most intriguing demands made by Azim Tariq are as follows:

1. A province where Muhajirs can freely perform and practice their culture need to be made available to them.
2. Harsh legislation regarding domicile and the quota system must be removed.

The middle- and lower-middle-class Muhajirs voiced their complaints not just against the non-Muhajirs but also against the Muhajir elite class in this newly developing Muhajir nationalist rhetoric. In the first ten years of the twenty-first century, the MQM and native Sindhi organizations' disputes made Karachi the most violent city. The 2010 floods in Pakistan and the violence in Northwest Pakistan caused several thousand Pashtun refugees to escape again. Karachi's high rates of violent crime, which typically involve criminal activities, gang fighting, religious conflict, and extrajudicial assassinations, had gained widespread recognition by this time. The Pakistan Rangers launched a contentious takedown operation targeting criminals, the MQM party, and Islamist extremists in 2013, which resulted in a dramatic drop in recorded crimes. The campaign caused Karachi to drop from the sixth most dangerous city in the world for crime in 2014 to the 93rd place by the beginning of 2020. 6

#### 1.4. Downfall of mqm and decline of apmsso:

Beginning in the early 1970s, student politics became more militant; opponents were frequently humiliated, threatened, or even physically assaulted. As a result, student organizations became crucial for both protection and access to student facilities. But because APMSO was a tiny organization, it was unable to effectively counter the influence of the bigger student organizations. APMSO students were ejected from the Karachi University campus in 1981 by Islami Jamiat-i-Tulabah members. 7 Realism and practicalism are the core values of the APMSO and Muttahida Qaumi Movement. 8 By 1991, the APMSO had thousands of members, according to Syed Aminul Haque, the federal minister for information technology and telecommunication and a member of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P). Haque, who was also the APMSO Nigraan-e-Aala when he was a student, claimed that "we were the most popular party and student organization in the urban centers of Sindh, especially Karachi and Hyderabad, and even non-Urdu speakers became part of us." The MQM eventually altered the M in its symbol from Muhajir to Muttahida (unified) to accommodate the party's non-Urdu-speaking members and pledged to fight for the rights of all marginalized groups in society. But then followed the Musharraf time period, when the MQM, according to its detractors, had unrestricted power and began to corrupt both the APMSO and itself. Even before Musharraf's time, the student organization was accused by its enemies of encouraging violence in the city's educational institutions. Some dissatisfied APMSO activists claim that when nepotism and favoritism began to enter the organization's operations, it began to decline. According to Iftikhar, a former APMSO activist, "you could be made sector organizer or member if you were relatives of an MNA, MPA, or coordination committee member, whatever how much you had that ability." Altaf spoke from London to the activists of APMSO who had assembled at the Lal Qila Ground in Azizabad on the organization's 38th founding day. There were a few dozen ladies among the mostly male gathering. A lot of them had been dressed in white. The founder of MQM informed the audience that the majority of them would be in the 25–30 age range and that he wanted to talk to them about a crucial topic: the generation gap, as most of them would not be familiar with the APMSO's past. Following the flaming speech on August 22, 2016, Altaf was

outlawed nationwide two months later. After being instructed to have blind faith in their commander, the APMSO activists became confused and split, giving rise to three factions: APMSO-Pakistan, APMSO-Farooq Sattar, and APMSO-London. The future of this break, according to Rizvi, is dependent on two factors: first, how the MQM leadership handles it, and second, how the Muhajirs, the party's main source of support, handle it. "We have experienced an ideological decline, and we must turn to the future while acknowledging our errors and shortfalls. We shall be further harmed if we continue to divide into groups. If not in the best way, then at least in a positive one, this appears to be a matter of survival. He claimed that they had to learn a lot after the events of August 22, 2016. We have often heard the phrase "Manzil," which means "destination." However, what is it in reality? A distinct province or equality of all the nation's suffering people? He went on to say that the MQM and the APMSO had a center-left political stance and were advocates of an equality system; their future political approach should be founded on this alignment. 9 The MQM, a party founded on the long-standing prejudice and discrimination experienced by Muhajirs, used it as a tool to further its own agenda by continuing the same conflicts and discrimination against all other ethnic groups existence. It could have constructively directed the creativity and vitality of its community. This combative strategy obstructed MQM's attempts to broaden its scope of operations beyond metropolitan Sindh and encompass other marginalized communities. Because of its well-known hostile policy, its good intentions were disregarded in the new areas it attempted to enter. In order to run its party, MQM had to rely on the money and support of its own community because it was not allied with landlords or the wealthy capitalist elite. In addition to gifts, Eid-ul-Fitr fitra, and revenue from the skins of animals used as sacrifices on Eid-ul-Adha were two important sources. This collection was initiated by workers at the unit and sector levels, and as time went on, the collectors began to gather far more than the party required; as a result, they also became personally involved. In fact, such unethical tactics were so commonplace that the party's top figure was accused of money laundering as well. The MQM's promotion of an armed-based political strategy in urban Sindh and Karachi, similar to what the JI had previously done in educational institutions, has been another disadvantage. Bloodshed was the outcome for thirty years. The MQM may claim that it had to move in this guidance, but its leadership ought to have seen when the party was being misguided by the forces it had decided to oppose. 10

#### 1.5. Urban politics of mqm:

In the middle of a sea of national, religious, secular, ethnic, and political organizations and parties operating in Karachi and urban Sindh, MQM decided to pursue a course of confrontation with the other parties. Conflict and rivalry with other ethnic groups (Pakhtuns, Punjabis, Sindhis, and eventually Balochs) were also created. According to the MQM leaders, it was unavoidable that a new organization or party would have to adopt a policy of violence, intolerance, and insecurity in order to gain recognition as separate and, subsequently, to preserve its credibility. The outlines of its internal organization and political style were established by this strategy, which was deemed appropriate for its survival. Later, as MQM gained a piece of the state machinery and its

skill with power-sharing grew, the same tactic was once again proven as essential to its success. Surprisingly, the MQM has been wary of the irregular conduct of its own supporters. If their loyalty to their nationality's identity is not reinforced and their sense of fear is not maintained and heightened, MQM believed that their support is going to end. This was mirrored in MQM's policy of educating its employees through a wide range of sectors and units at the local and lanes levels and bringing the employees' awareness together through training sessions and discussion forums. The large workforce that was trained in this manner developed a remarkable sense of devotion to the leadership. They were tasked with keeping a close check on everyone residing in their lanes, were bound by a special oath, and displayed particular attitudes. Even after thirty years, these traits of MQM employees remained unchanged. The section that follows aims to provide an explanation of MQM's internal democracy and workings. The Mohajirs backed General Zia during his first eight years in power as a dictator, viewing the PPP as a shared foe. However, the Mohajirs believed that all political parties and the army, because of Punjab's supremacy, had their origins outside of Karachi and were therefore not very interested in fixing their problems. When General Zia declared non-party elections in 1985, Karachi's Mohajirs were still confused about how to pick the best candidate to address their problems because it seemed that the independent candidates lacked party support. Voting was therefore seen as useless, although concerns like the removal of the quota system and the return of Biharis from Bangladesh had not become commonplace. Both politicians and voters who speak Urdu exhibited a relatively nonserious attitude toward elections. For example, even though Zain Noorani was appointed Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs within Muhammad Khan Jonejo's cabinet, his image with the Jinnah cap and sherwani was more appealing than that of other candidates and helped determine Landhi's voters' preference. Only a force or entity that could articulate and advocate for people's genuine problems and speaks in their own language could rationally be welcomed in such a political void or chasm. In the end, a political party founded by young students who experienced discrimination in educational institutions filled the gap. In order to address the problems facing their ethnic community, they first established a student organization before forming a political party. They have been irritated by a few minor but enduring problems for decades. These included, among other things, unemployment, the quota system, poverty, mistreatment of Mohajir commuters by non-Mohajir public transportation employees, and the mistreatment of accused individuals at police stations by non-local police. Of these, the quota system difficulty was unique to Sindh, while other issues were also typically present in other provinces. Residents of urban Sindh were granted a two percent quota in government employment. There was widespread poverty and police abuse, but the key question was why these Karachities were responding so angrily. In actuality, their problems differed greatly from those in other regions of the nation. They acquired a notion that Urdu-speaking people were specifically targeted for any issue that took on an ethnic color since the Karachities were moaning about non-Urdu-speaking people. This ethnic difference may have had some influence on the conduct of transporters or police who did not speak Urdu. Instead of calming these tensions, the political and military leaders purposefully stoked them, either out of

caution or to extend their hold on power. Furthermore, the people in power propagated derogatory names about the Mohajirs in addition to their political rivals. The Mohajirs believed that the outbreak of Sindhi-Mohajir violence during the Bhutto administration was encouraging this division. To put it briefly, it can be said that a number of interrelated, both short-term and long-term elements gave rise to MQM. According to Altaf Hussain, the long-term issues included the war between Sindhis and Urdu shortly after independence, the small urban quota in employment, the Biharis' problem after 1971, police abuse, and the tyranny of the authorities. Short-term factors were traffic accidents in Nazimabad that resulted in the death of Bushra Zaidi, a college student, and a minibus-train collision in Quaidabad a few days later that set off a chain of urban violence. Altaf Hussain claims that the police superintendent sent him a message to calm down the public's rage during the Landhi-Korangi clashes. He arrived on the situation and ordered everyone to stop flaming tires and other items. At this point, the authorities realized that if Altaf Hussain could stop the riots, then he might call for further rioting. For years to come, the Karachities carried out his orders in this manner, and until recently, no one was able to effectively stop them. A small number of additional instances also had a triggering impact. The following incidents contributed to the ethnic hatred: the firing and murder of individuals who planned to attend a MQM addressing in Hyderabad on October 31, 1986; the mass murder in Qasba and Aligarh Colony on December 16, 1986; the Katcha Qila Hyderabad operation in 1990; and similar incidents. People began to unite around Altaf Hussain as a result of his stirring statements, which established him as a strong spokesperson for the Mohajir cause along with these violent events. In order to support Mohajirs' cause, a students' organization and eventually a political party were founded as a result of the establishment's and bureaucracy's ongoing bias and unjust attitude. 11

#### **1.6. Rights of muhajirs and demands of mqm:**

The Mahajirs searched for the following rights because they saw themselves as Sindh's less fortunate class:

1. The settlement of people from other provinces was causing Sindh's population, particularly Karachi, to grow daily. Mahajirs had serious concerns about it. Therefore, such individuals ought to be submitted to their respective provinces.
2. In the government it is necessary to remove land that the Punjabis and Pashtoons had unlawfully occupied.
3. They believed that they were not receiving their fair share in all spheres of life, including the police department, bureaucracy, and others.
4. They insisted that locals in Sindh should be the only ones granted the right to vote, not immigrants from other provinces.
5. Locals need to be given preference for jobs.
6. The quota system should be followed in accordance with the population ratio.
7. Local students' preferences must be taken into consideration when admissions to educational institutions are made.
8. To ensure that the local population has access to right health facilities, the health department's budget share needs to be raised.
9. People from other provinces shouldn't be given jobs, and

- KESC shouldn't be a part of WAPDA.
10. The Sindh government should be granted the authority to assess sales tax.
  11. Only Mahajirs and Sindhis should be granted licenses to possess firearms. Simple protocols needed to be used for the distribution of arms licenses.
  12. The fastest contemporary transport system (electric trains) ought to be established in Sindh's cities and villages, including Karachi and Hyderabad.
  13. The local government should be in charge of providing official transportation in Sindh cities establishments.
  14. Only Mahajirs and Sindhis should be granted driver's licenses.
  15. Students from Mahajir and Sindhi communities should be granted concessions at transport fairs.
  16. Voters must be at least eighteen years old.
  17. Sindhis and Mahajirs should have easy access to the Khokhra Par way so they can visit their relatives in India.
  18. All regions of Pakistan should have an equal fuel adjustment charge ratio.
  19. Liqat Ali Khan and Shah Latif's deaths ought to be observed as national holidays.
  20. Hyderabad's degree colleges should be connected to postgraduate universities facility.
  21. All of Sindh's major cities should see the opening of universities and colleges.
  22. The refugees deserve to be returned to Afghanistan with the consent of the Afghan government.
  23. Industrial and other business-related organisations must do away with the contract labour system.
  24. Pakistanis who are stranded in Bangladesh should be transferred to Pakistan as soon as possible.

These were the main MQM demands that brought the Mahajir community together and promoted integration.

## 2. Conclusion

It's necessary to initially acknowledge that APMSO is the student branch of the 1978-founded Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). The MQM (Muttahida Qaumi Movement), formerly known as the Muhajir Qaumi Movement, has an ideological foundation and student branch known as APMSO. The APMSO served as the foundation for MQM, which was founded in 1984 and took the movement from universities to national politics. In a contemporary, multiethnic state, formation of identities, political marginalization, and mobilization of races are all powerfully reflected in the sociopolitical route of the Mohajir belonging in Pakistan, especially in Karachi. The development of the Mohajir identity, which culminated in the founding of APMSO and then MQM, reflects the changing power dynamics and ingrained structural injustices throughout the Pakistani state. They began as the educated, urban elite of Pakistan before becoming politically estranged and ultimately radicalized. Karachi is the population and politics have changed by the flood of different types of Muslim migrants that arrived during the 1947 Partition. Although Mohajirs initially supported national and faith-based organizations like Jamaat-e-Islami and JUP in their attempts to become part of Pakistan's federal structure, their subsequent political and economic marginalization—especially following Ayub Khan's rule and the Sindh quota system of the 1970s—sparked a unique Mohajir

consciousness. A political movement centered on claiming rights and pursuing cultural recognition was born as a result. The change from APMSO to MQM was a turning point. The movement swiftly grew from its initial focus on employment and educational rights to become a quantity type political force that combined populist appeal, urban militancy, and ethnic identity. The party gained enormous influence thanks to Altaf Hussain's magnetic leadership and its capacity to bring together alienated urban youth, but it also brought about violence and criminalization. MQM was isolated and stigmatized as something of a criminal-political combination over time because of its violent strategies, armed wings, and conflicts with the government and other organizations. MQM eventually came to represent the hopes and disappointments of the Mohajir community, giving them a political voice while simultaneously entangling them in conflict cycles. Tensions were further increased by the state's extensive use of armed raids and its irregular relationships. The Mohajir identity is still strong—unresolved, changing, and still essential to the political fabric of urban Sindh—even though the MQM's drop, breaking down, and Altaf Hussain's exile have lessened its hold. Mohajirs now have to decide whether they will recover their sense of belonging by means of new ethno-political movements or rewrite their position in politics through mainstream integration. Given the lingering effects of the MQM legacy and the unresolved socio-political exclusion, there is still a chance for a "MQM 2.0" to emerge, one that may be stronger, better organized, and even more dangerous if old complaints are not addressed. Essentially, Pakistan's larger battles with a federal system, ethnicity, and universal governance are reflected in the Mohajir dispute, which is not only about one community's seek for representation. The deeply held ethnic, political, and socioeconomic separations that have shaped the province's post-independence trajectory are reflected in the decades-long struggle between Sindhi natives alongside Muhajirs in Sindh, especially in Karachi. What started in 1947 as a religious and ideological migration evolved into a protracted struggle for representation, identity, and resource control, turning the territory into a battlefield for conflicting ethnic and national storytellers. At first, Muhajirs were viewed as highly intelligent, urbanized immigrants who made important contributions to the establishment of Pakistan's state. In the very first decades, they held an unfair amount of power in relation to their numbers, controlling business, politics, and bureaucracy. But because of their strongly political organization and historical ties to the Muslim League, they were able to maintain their dominance, which infuriated Sindhis who felt that they were routinely shut out of jobs, education, decision-making, and even the arts and entertainment organizations that once defined their identity. Sindhis felt even more marginalized as a result of the One Unit Plan, the administrative division of Karachi coming from Sindh, and the dominance of Urdu over Sindhi. However, Muhajirs saw the 1970s as a turning point of their political fortunes, and their sense of victimization was further heightened by the transfer of political power to Sindhi and Punjabi elites, particularly under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. An important time was marked by the rise of the MQM as well as the collapse of the APMSO: the rebirth of Mohajir complaints into a formal ethno-political movement. Muhajirs from the lower and middle classes were inspired by Altaf Hussain's demands for a distinct province and the elimination

of the allocation of resources because they felt marginalized by both the state and their own elite. However, the MQM's criminalization, internal divisions, and militant strategies weakened its legitimacy and widened ethnic gaps. The increase in racial conflicts, particularly in Karachi, made the city a representation of the urban confusion in Pakistan. Ethnicity was only one factor in the conflict; other factors included access to the state, economic opportunity, identity, and dignity. As luck would have it, some order has been restored by recent military operations; the primary problems that led to this violence have not been addressed. The conflict in Sindh symbolizes Pakistan's difficulties with national integration, ethnic tolerance, and federalism. The cycle of bitterness and retaliation may resurface unless the state truly addresses historical grievances by guaranteeing fair representation, equitable resource distribution, and cultural autonomy. Any multiethnic country that struggles to strike a balance between unity and diversity should take note of Sindh's story, which is more than about Muhajirs and Sindhis. The tragic results of militant behavior, nepotism, and dictatorial rule are depicted in the account involving the APMSO along with its governmental branches, the MQM, as well as the extraordinary political transformation of an unfortunate group of people. From a disadvantaged student organization, the APMSO rapidly rose to popularity as the most powerful political group in urban Sindh, especially in Hyderabad and Karachi. The MQM leveraged collective dissatisfaction and transformed them into a powerful ethno-political movement by adjusting on the socio-political exclusion that the Muhajir community faced after independence. Deep internal conflicts, however, supported this quick rise. An important organizational and ideological change occurred when Altaf Hussain turned the student movement from a grassroots one into a centralized, authoritarian, and militarized political party. Once dedicated to social justice and realism, the party became violent, corrupt, and intolerant of opposition. APMSO's or MQM reliability was further damaged by the beginning of favoritism and nepotism within its ranks, which turned off a generation of activists and future leaders. The MQM made an intentional move to increase its appeal when it decided to change its name from Muhajir to Muttahida, but its heavily ingrained ethnic stance, violent past, and dismal track record of forming alliances with other groups prevented it from spreading outside of urban Sindh. Following Altaf Hussain's divisive 2016 speech and after that ban, the party split into several factions, signifying the demise of a once cohesive political force. In addition to breaking the MQM, that speech also destroyed the hope of those before it that had been raised to hold its leader in the highest regard. Especially, MQM's effectiveness over the long term was eventually weakened by its incapacity to move past a reactionary ethnic agenda. Public trust was damaged by the emphasis on community fundraising strategies, some of which were morally righteous and others that were exploitative, as well as accusations of money laundering. Instead of being a progressive force for minority rights and urban political reform, the movement came to represent intimidation, coercion, and criminality. Reproducing the same discriminatory policies, they had previously opposed was their biggest failure, not fighting the state. Honesty, change, and a sincere return to the social justice principles that initially motivated their founding are necessary to reclaim their legacy. Only in the larger picture

of state neglect, institutionalized racism, and ethnic backgrounds polarization that characterized afterwards. political issues in urban Sindh can the advent and development of the MQM—which is based on the resentments of a discriminated against ethnic group—be comprehended. The MQM was established to fill the political hole created by established parties that continuously neglected to meet the desires of Urdu-speaking migrants, resulting in decades of unresolved dissatisfaction. The MQM's leadership viewed aggressive politics as the only way to gain recognition and survive in a system where they felt institutional channels had failed, so they were not unintentional. The party's organizational model was characterized by tightly organized local cells with devoted and talented cadres, street power, and ethnic violence. But in the end, the MQM's survival strategy—which was based on conflict, fear, and forceful control—turned out to be its biggest weakness. An isolated and insecure party culture resulted from its internal mechanisms, which demanded unwavering loyalty, adored the leader, and discouraged opposing views. This suppressed progressive voices and stifled internal democracy, but it also produced a strong, streetwise political machine that could rally enormous urban support. This eventually resulted in numerous allegations of criminal activity, corruption, and authoritarianism. The rise of the MQM was largely caused by Altaf Hussain's capacity to describe the Mohajir population's economic and emotional separation. His magnetic personality and street credibility were demonstrated early on when he was able to calm down riots and organize crowds. However, as he organized all decision-making and used harsher words, this same dominance turned destructive. Even its own supporters began to fear the party that had once claimed to represent the voiceless. The history of the MQM serves as a warning about how militant identity politics can arise from being politically excluded and how, if unchecked, these politics can reproduce the very oppressions they were designed to combat. The legacy of MQM is still fragmented today; while its name is still heard in Karachi's alleys and neighborhoods, its organizational unity, moral superiority, and ideological clarity have all decreased. Any future rebirth, whether it takes the name of the MQM or a different one, needs to be based on including values, democratic practices, and a readiness to put aside ethnic totalitarianism. Realizing that neglected ethnic grievances, if is disregarded do not go away—rather, they spread—is a challenge not only for the MQM and the Mohajir community, other than for Pakistan as a whole. Institutional justice, tyranny is not the solution. The ghost of MQM's past will persist in haunting Pakistan's urban future in the absence of significant political involvement and social recovery.

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