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## Social Structure and Flows

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In this chapter, we will examine aspects of the changing social structure and values of the various groups that constitute Pakistani society today.

We will use a more accurate method than merely classifying Pakistani society as comprised of Punjabis, Sindhis, Pukhtuns and Baluch'. We will classify and name categories as defined by social structure with characteristic behaviour and values: (A) tribal, (B) peasant-agricultural, (C) urban, and (D) refugee. Each is distinguished by its characteristic social structure, organization, norms, mores and values. But the ethnic groups we place in a category do not remain static in that category. Their social structure and values are influenced by education, economic prosperity, politics and other factors. The opposition, sometimes synthesis, between these categories provides the dynamics of Pakistani society and helps explain it.

The categories suggested are broad and simplified. Each is identified by characteristic leadership, networks and organizations, and social and economic activity. Thus the Baluchi in Sind and the Pukhtun in Punjab will be placed in appropriate categories, and not according to their simple ethnic classifications. Similarly, an

ethnic group may be divided into more than one category. Pukhtuns, for example, are found as 'unspoiled' tribesmen living in traditional manner in the administrative freedom of the Tribal Areas of the NWFP, as energetic peasant-farmers in the Punjab, and as successful businessmen in Karachi. Are they Pukhtun in the first example, Punjabi in the second and Sindhi in the third? Our categories will assist in such cases. We will place them in terms of their social structure and the behaviour associated with the category: tribesmen, small farmers, or urban dwellers.

Our categories are of course simplified; it is easier to speak of ethnic identity corresponding to geographically and administratively defined limits. But by underlining the characteristics of the categories and their changing nature we may succeed in introducing a degree of accuracy.

### TRIBAL SOCIETY

Tribal society, consists of almost all of Baluchi and Pukhtun society living mainly in Baluchistan and the NWFP, though parts of Punjabi and Sindhi society also reflect a tribal past<sup>2</sup>. In 1947, Baluch and Pukhtun groups were dominated by an ethos of ancient tribal codes. They lived in demarcated areas corresponding to clans and segments. Members of the tribe were related on the genealogical charter, usually tracing their descent from an eponymous ancestor (e.g. Yusufzai from Yusuf). Honour, revenge and hospitality were the main values. Small populations living in low production zones characterized them. Material life was elementary, and electricity, water, roads, schools and health services were generally not available. Tribes like the Mohmand in the NWFP or Bugti in Baluchistan had not seen a light bulb or school in their areas until 1947.

It is important to distinguish two kinds of tribal political organization. The first consisted of states—Swat, Dir, Chitral and Amb in the NWFP; Kalat, Las Bela, Makran and Kharan in Baluchistan. A variety of rulers administered these tribal societies. Some, like Swat, were centralized and ruled by powerful rulers like the Wali. Others, like Makran, were nominally under a Nawab. Tribal groups



living outside the states formed a second kind of society. These remained profoundly tribal, their customs and behaviour unchanged for centuries. This was especially true of the designated Tribal Areas of the NWFP and Baluchistan. In some tribes, petty chiefs vied for power in a social order in which each household head claimed he was the chief, Khan or Sardar. In others, powerful Sardars led and symbolized the tribe, as among the Bugti in Baluchistan. Society existed in a state of what anthropologists term 'ordered anarchy'.

However different these two kinds of social structure, the idiom for their values remained uniform and common. Over the decades, and especially in recent years, these societies changed as the states were absorbed and the Sardars officially 'abolished'. In some areas they began to resemble and assume some of the values of Category *B*. In time, there would be little difference in the social structure and values of the peasant-farmer in the Peshawar valley and one outside Lahore.

The tribesman defined himself in tribal or ethnic terms. It was nationality that was difficult for him to reconcile with in 1947. The very concept of Pakistan was recent and ill-defined. It caused numerous problems as protests often grew into movements for autonomy and even independence: first among the Pukhtun, later the Baluch in the mid-1970s and finally, in the mid-1980s, among the Sindhis.

Islam to the tribesman was a set of rituals concerning the rites of passage, some prayers and feasts. Village mullahs supervised rites and the mosque but had little say in political life and social custom. If ignorance and illiteracy prevented a deeper understanding of Islam, there remained a passionate, emotional attachment to it; thousands of Pukhtun tribesmen moved to Kashmir in 1947-48 to rally round the cry that Islam was in danger.

The relationship between ethnicity, religion and nationality continued to be awkward and unresolved. It was a relationship to which may be traced the roots of many social and political problems. Wali Khan, the champion and living symbol of Pukhtun ethnicity, illustrated this when he said: 'I have been a Pukhtun for thousands of years, a Muslim for 1300 years and a Pakistani for 40 years'. The statement sums up the chronological sequences of his identity. Does Islam take second place and Pakistan third in the Pukhtun's

loyalties? Are the three in opposition or conflict? Can they be resolved and, if so, how?

### PEASANT-AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

Peasant-agricultural society, or Category *B* has come to be symbolized by Punjabi society in recent years. But in 1947 it included Bengalis, Sindhis and Kashmiris. In sheer numbers they formed the majority population of Pakistan, who depended on agriculture for their livelihood. They were usually organized in isolated, self-sufficient villages and often exploited by powerful landlords or state representatives like the police or revenue officials<sup>1</sup>. Self-reliance, hard-work, pragmatic realism, and a quest for material, physical and educational betterment were the main values of Category *B*. This category was caught between its drive for material acquisitiveness and inferior social situation below the landed gentry and the exploiting state apparatus. Ambition created an obsession to succeed. Category *B* was practical and pragmatic to the point of opportunism. Its aims were immediate and narrow: at the core of the work ethic was the vision of material betterment. A grand vision of life or sweeping philosophy were not included.

We may identify two linked social structures with distinct values in Category *B*, both supplementing each other. One was represented by the feudal families of the Punjab and the other by the peasant-farmer.<sup>4</sup> In 1947 landlords who owned vast estates held sway in the Punjab. Families like the Noons, Tiwanas and Hayats provided the political leadership. For these feudal lords concepts of family honour, name and prestige were central to their behaviour and social actions. Polo, shikar and trips abroad kept them busy. But after 1971 their power and influence withered. Selling their lands to pay debts or to keep up high living standards, they drifted to the cities. Bits and pieces of their land were bought in the districts by the traditionally less important groups, the small farmers. Many of the younger generation of the feudal families acquired the work ethic in order to survive. Category *B* is thus dominated by the social structure and values of the small farmer in



the district or his cousin and counterpart, the low-middle income group, the trader or shop-owner, in the urban areas. It also flourished as petty traders, transforming sleepy district towns into lively markets.

From land to trade to service were small and inevitable steps for Category *B*. Members of this category moved early to join the civil and defence services of the Government of Pakistan. Competitive and hard-working, they had an edge over Category *A*. Service meant a connection between the district where their farms were placed and the state. Their presence and domination would be most pronounced in the third phase of Pakistan's history, when they would inject their values into the politics and administration of Pakistan.

However in 1947 they had neither identified themselves as a group nor formed a strategy. Seen from the vantage point village, questions of nationality and the creation of Pakistan were distant and somewhat irrelevant developments. In most cases they were abruptly thrust upon them. Lacking education and official contacts, this category could not envisage influence in the civil and military apparatus of the new state.

The influences of Islam, too, were restricted. Islam was relegated to a form of worship, a set of rituals largely at the mosque. The peasant viewed religion with a level head. Omnipotent deities, cosmic beings and divine spirits, were powerful but distant forces. He paid for the upkeep of the mosque and the mullah, contributed to charity, kept some fasts and said some of the prayers. His busy agricultural schedule left little time for much else. The missionary activity and zeal of Muslim clerics, which in the 1980s became a feature of life in this category, was then not developed.

Although the village and its boundaries define the peasant-farmer, we must not overlook the wider tribal links. The more traditional tribal attachments did not entirely cease to exist when this category occurred. These sometimes provide another network relating the individual to people in distant villages. In some cases the tribal network is of paramount importance in self-definition. The great Punjab tribes, Rajputs, Jats and Arains, thus provide an alternative definition of self to the peasant-farmer. It translates as 'baradari' or 'qawm'. An influential person is expected to patronize baradari members up to the point of indulging in favouritism and nepotism. More often than not these expectations create jealousy

and frustration in both patron and client. This is inevitable as the system is flawed. It thus works alongside the other system spawned in this category and based on competition and merit.

### URBAN SOCIETY AND MUHAJIRS

Urban society, or Category *C*, largely undeveloped in 1947, was mainly restricted to the provincial headquarters. Max Weber pointed to two important features of the city: the active participation of its inhabitants in the economic, political and social spheres, and its focus as a centre of social and cultural creativity. In 1947, both were under-developed or missing in Pakistan's urban society. This category thus presents problems in analysis; it is an amalgam, an untidy bag.

Pakistan did not inherit any of the great metropolitan cities of India like Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi. Its biggest city, Karachi, was only a large town, with a 1946 population of only half-a-million. Lahore was swollen by refugees, but like Peshawar and Quetta it was little more than a provincial headquarters. Except for Karachi, the growth and emergence of the cities would take place later. In time, almost one out of 10 Pakistanis would live in Karachi, with a population estimated at over 10 million, and about 30 per cent of the entire population of Pakistan would live in cities.

Although the majority were refugees from India, the others who came to live and work in Karachi from Categories *A* and *B* were also now in some respects refugees. Some characteristics of the refugees like insecurity, frustration, and a desire for the material life, could also be recognized in them.

Karachi found itself in the centre of social and political events. Its civic and physical amenities were stretched to the limit. Education, industry, an active press and social services, some of the features of city life which create the values of an established city, were therefore not developed. Their growth would take decades and remain imperfect and imbalanced. For the urban citizen priorities rested on the mundane and daily: the shortage of water, breakdown of electricity and the transport system. The rhetoric of politicians talking of nationalism and Islam appeared empty and



hypocritical. Cynicism marred and marked those living in the big cities.

The growth of cities has been striking. The cities attract for education, business, pleasure and intellectual stimulation those of Categories *A* and *B* who are often confronted with values and style of life which clash with their own. In time, their own life-styles are mutated.

The greatest impact on Karachi came as a result of the arrival of the refugees from India in 1947. About eight million refugees (who came to be called 'muhajirs') migrated from India. Whether they were tribal, peasant-agricultural or urban dwellers in India, after 1947 they formed the new Category, *D*.<sup>5</sup> By flooding into the urban areas they converted towns into cities overnight. With them came characteristic values and high expectations from a promised land which, in view of the immense sacrifices they had made, led to uncertainty and neurosis. Their impact on the other categories through their language, Urdu, which would develop and dominate Pakistan over the next decades, was out of proportion to their population. In particular, the Bengalis in East Pakistan, who constituted the majority of the population of Pakistan, resented the imposition of Urdu as the national language. With Urdu and its developed literature came notions of cultural superiority. In the early days, refugees were not only prominent in high-profile civil and political positions; 11 of the 18 richest family-owned business houses belonged to migrants.<sup>6</sup>

Although refugees are discussed as one entity, the social differences between them were great, and they included both nawabs and peasant-farmers. The majority of them who arrived from East Punjab, quickly, and with minimum cultural friction, settled in the Punjab Province and became identified with Category *B*. They were mostly small, Punjabi-speaking farmers. Many integrated with their own ethnic group already living in the Punjab, like the Arains:<sup>7</sup> a visible example of successful integration among them is provided by the small Burki tribe.

The diverse ethnic, political and intellectual backgrounds and the disintegration of their lives in the act of migration added to the complexity of their interaction with the other categories. Mainly settled in Sind and Punjab, their intrusion into tribal society or Category *A* was minimal. Princes and paupers, writers and entrepreneurs, they had to forget the past, start anew, redefine themselves in the perspective of their plight as muhajirs.

In the baggage of those in Category *D* who came from India were few material belongings but in their minds they had great expectations. Their values oscillated from one extreme to the other, from high ideals to the need simply to survive, from strength in their traditions to insecurity in their situation. The first decades for refugees would be spent in a search for identity and survival.

The tension and insecurity of re-creating their lives forced Category *D* to split into distinct types with associated behaviour patterns and values. One was broken in spirit, lost between a world that had disintegrated and a new one that would not form. Many of the richer refugees fell into this type. Another type, also groping for a new world, lived and dreamt of an ideal Muslim state. An Islamic yearning explains the success of Islamic parties, like the Jammat-i-Islami in Karachi. Only after the muhajir ethnic creation of the Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz (MQM) in the late 1980s were the Islamic parties rejected. Yet another type was opportunistic, manipulating social networks and cutting corners, its only aim being to make money and establish a business or economic base. At one stage some of these values merged and fused with those we have identified in Category *B*. The behaviour and values of the different types in Category *D* may be traced to their situation as refugees. Although we are discussing Indian refugees, other important refugee groups were to arrive in Pakistan. After the break of East Pakistan from Pakistan in 1971, thousands of 'Biharis' came to Karachi. From 1979 onwards the Afghans arrived to escape the turmoil in their country, eventually reaching a total of about three million. Our category is restricted to the Indian refugees and, to an extent, the Biharis who identified with and supported them.

### **SOCIAL FLOWS 1947 TO 1971**

The time of Ayub Khan, 1958 to 1969, was one of creation and consolidation. Pakistanis described themselves in superlatives, claiming to be the largest Muslim nation in the world, the best hockey players in the world, builders of the largest dam in the world, to possess the best airline, and the most modernized armoured division of any Asian army, etc. Some of this was indeed



true. Pakistan in the 1960s was cited as a model developing nation, and was emerging on the world map as a stable nation led by a stable government. Islam and ethnicity remained dormant during this phase; most of the second phase of Pakistan's history saw the dominance of 'nationalism'.

Tribal society began to merge gradually with the larger society. Tribesmen, notably from the NWFP, rose to senior positions. Soon Pukhtuns, especially from the Peshawar valley, formed part of the power elite of Pakistan. They shared values and perceptions with the Punjabis, who remained the main partners of the elite. The Pukhtuns, behaving like and imitating the Punjabis, are an example of Category *A* moving to Category *B*. Other tribesmen wished to remain isolated and refused government schemes, such as those in the upper Mohmand in the NWFP, and Marri areas in Baluchistan. In contrast to the Pukhtun, the Baluchistan leaders, the Sardars, spent a lot of their time in jail for resisting the advances of the central government. Notions of tribal honour still dominate social and political life. Among tribes like the Mengal and Marri, government-appointed sardars are shot dead. Other tribesmen are willing to accept government schools and schemes. The tension in tribal society faced with changing social structure and values is apparent.

Category *B*, rooted in rural society, lacked a sophisticated vision of life. As the political influence of this category, rapidly emerging in the 1950s, to dominate West Pakistan grew, this became more pronounced. Its competitive drive ignored the insecurities and sensitivities of less influential groups. Within 10 years of the creation of Pakistan the imbalance between the two, East and West Pakistan, was noticeable."

By 1970, of 20 Secretaries of the Government of Pakistan, only three acting Secretaries were East Pakistanis. The figures for the military were even worse. Only one of the senior 35 Generals was East Pakistani. Yet in the first decades of Pakistan, East Pakistan had a favourable trade balance while West Pakistan ran a deficit trade balance. Before 1965 East Pakistan earned about 60 per cent of the country's foreign currency but received less than 30 per cent of imports. Little wonder then, that East Pakistanis, conscious that they formed the majority population of Pakistan, felt humiliated and cheated.

Some of the same insensitivities which triggered East Pakistani resentment plagued the relations of a Category *B*-dominated Pakistan with its smaller provinces in the 1970s and 1980s. Ethnic and secessionist movements remained as much a failure in political imagination as cultural arrogance on the part of Category *B*.

With the emergence of *B* came a dramatic decline in the fortunes of *D*. When Ayub Khan (a good example of Category *B*, son of a small farmer, living in a small village in the rural areas of Hazara) became President, he screened out a large number of senior officers in Category *D*. Refugees began to peer into their genealogical charter for Pukhtun or Punjabi ancestry in order to create links with them. Ayub Khan then shifted the capital of the country from Karachi, where Category *D* was concentrated, to Islamabad, in the middle of Category *B*. Both acts deprived Category *D* of power as they symbolized the end of their influence. It was no coincidence that the movement against Ayub Khan, which would topple him, began in Karachi. Categories *C* and *D* had merged to a large extent in this phase.

By the late 1960s the tensions and disjunctions between the four categories were becoming severe. These were exacerbated by the early and visible signs of the success of the 'Green Revolution' in the Punjab. Having recovered from the disruption of 1947, Punjab was forging ahead of the other provinces in agricultural development.

Category *B* was becoming increasingly and incorrectly identified with Punjabis. Incorrectly because, although the social structure and values of Category *B* were primarily located in the Punjab and identified with Punjabis, they were not exclusively Punjabi. Similar structures and values were increasingly to be found in the NWFP and Sind, a process which was to be accelerated in the next phase of Pakistan's history. In identifying Category *B* with Punjab, the other provinces were beginning to feel deprived and frustrated.

Ethnic resentment among non-Punjabis thus translated easily into political demands. A number of such movements—Pukhtunistan, Azad Baluchistan, Sindhudesh and Bangladesh—demanded to be heard. Of these, the movement for Bangladesh was the most serious and led to the breaking away of East Pakistan in 1971. It succeeded because of the determination of the Bengalis to create their own state, the large distance involved between East and West Pakistan, the economic disparity between them, and general,



widespread, international support for the Bengali cause. From Dacca the war was clearly seen through ethnic glasses, as a war between a Punjabi army and Bengali population. Not finding a balance between the categories and further frustrated by long periods of Martial Law, the second phase of Pakistan's history ended in disillusionment and disintegration.

### **SOCIAL FLOWS 1971 TO 1991**

This period is divided into the period of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, 1971-77; Zia ul-Haq, 1977-88; and the present. Underneath the rhetoric and disruption in 1977 and 1988, our categories remained largely untouched. Indeed, if there is a theme, it is the consolidation by Category *B* of its social structure and political strength.

1971 is an important turning point. What dominates Pakistani history from 1971 to the present is the attempt to define and come to grips with the relationship between Islam, nationality and ethnicity. Definitions of these three features of society have become important, spilling into the streets, where lives are lost. Political strategy, social values and economic development in this phase may be understood in terms of this interaction.

The shock of 1971 and the humiliation of defeat numbed Pakistanis. Ethnic pride was badly hurt. The 'martial race' thesis nurtured for a century in north India by the British was finally laid to rest. The trauma of picking up the pieces in many cases eroded permanently traditional social structures and values. Notions of fixed, unchanging social structures, boundaries and values were abandoned. But with the defeat and trauma, something positive also happened.

The suppressed energy and vitality in Pakistani society were released. The lower and middle classes, the movers and shakers in Category *B*, were able to emerge and come to the top. Sons of traditionally lower classes, such as carpenters and barbers, competed successfully with the sons of landlords. This was reflected as much in business and commerce as in the civil service and military examinations. Family, ethnic group and service background were now not the only criteria; the individual and his qualities also

mattered. Reflecting this energy and vitality on the international stage, Pakistanis in this phase made their mark as outstanding individuals in various fields.

It is tribalism which was beset with problems in this phase. The vitality was sapped from the tribal system. Lost were its élan and the vision of life based on honour. Their place was taken by indolence and fatalism. The indolence prevented resistance to corruption, the fatalism ensured its triumph.

Social order in tribal Category *A* was perhaps the most rent by this interaction. The problem with Category *A* is that it does not transfer from one category to another without being damaged in transition. Nothing disintegrates tribalism like the arrival of the first electric pole or school. With both come an invasion of ideas from the outside world (through radio or television in the first and books and lectures in the second). Tribalism tends to exist as a whole or not at all, either as Category *A* or changed beyond recognition; so it must cling to ethnicity.

Thus, while the chief's son, whether he was an ideal leader or a psychopath, would be voted in by the tribe as the easy way out, the challenges to tribal chiefs from within the tribe became pronounced. These were led by individuals on the basis of education or new-found employment and relative wealth. Usually these contenders belonged to the junior lineages of the tribes.

Material progress also changed life in this phase. Tube-wells, schools and roads acted as catalysts. In Baluchistan in the 1960s, the drive from Quetta to Karachi through Kalat was lonely and dangerous. Desolate mountains and vast empty stretches met the eye. Electricity, arriving in the 1980s, changed all that. Green orchards and vegetable patches became clearly visible, as did Suzuki vans carrying fruit and vegetables, busily plying the trade to the larger towns. The prosperity is even more noticeable in the Pukhtun areas of Baluchistan like Pishin. The closer ties with the larger economy and society of the region are also worthy of note.

The less ethnic tribal society became, the more 'Pakistanised', speaking Urdu or joining the central services, the greater the tension within society. The dilemmas created as a result have not been resolved. An example is the Baluch Students Organization, which speaks for Baluch nationalists and students, and which sees a simple conflict between an exploited Category *A* and an exploiting Category *B*. Islam is equated with the mullah, who is seen as



an agent of the policies of Islamabad, which, in turn, is a lackey of American imperialism. This chain stands for exploitation and corruption. Opposing them are supposed to be Baluch values and socialism, the former representing ethnicity, and the latter education and progress. The simplistic equation is the basis for serious analysis in much of Category A.

The chiefs and elders of Category A do not see Islam and ethnicity as incompatible. Indeed, for them the two reinforce each other. Ethnicity presupposes Islam. A Baluch or Pukhtun—the typical Category A tribesman—is by definition a Muslim. He can be nothing else. For these tribesmen, the fuss and publicity about Islam in the 1980s were artificial. Leaders of Category A such as Nawab Akbar or Wali Khan would say: 'We were Muslims centuries before the Pakistan press and radio discovered Islam'. They feared Islam was being used for political purposes: 'It appears these people (in Islamabad) have just discovered Islam'.

The clash between the values of Categories A and B was translated into the politics of Pakistan. Although elements of Category B are evident in the social structure and values of Category A in the third phase of Pakistani history, the fundamental opposition between the two remains. The opposition leaders of Category A (Bizenjo and Mengal in Baluchistan, or Wali Khan in the NWFP) speak of tribal honour and izzat being destroyed by the forces of Category B. But Category B cannot comprehend these charges and voices. Nawab Bugti, in a well-known gesture, refused to speak Urdu, the language of Pakistan which Category B champions. By rejecting Urdu, Nawab Bugti symbolically rejected the values of Category B. 'We wish to be left alone with our tribal customs and traditions. We do not want to be ruled by small shop-keepers and petty officials.' But this is wishful thinking. Although such Category A leaders accuse Category B leaders of lacking vision and being opportunistic, and, in turn, are accused of being obscurantists by Category B, they are being attacked by Category B values in their own homes.

It is significant that other tribesmen, especially in the NWFP, began to join Category B. Once isolated, their sons now compete for civil service positions through examinations. As English, Urdu, Pakistani history and Islam featured centrally, the examinations assisted candidates from Lahore and Karachi. But by the 1980s, it was common occurrence to find Pukhtun candidates coming near

the top. The values of Category B are like a tidal wave from which there appears to be little escape for Category A.

In contrast, peasant-agricultural base, of Category B appears to reconcile notions of ethnicity, nationality and Islam quite comfortably. The tensions between them are apparently resolved. Not given to dancing girls and drunken evenings, their business-earnestness fits in well with their religious-earnestness. Their conversion from puritanical agricultural practice to moralistic nationalism is thus smooth and easy.

Under Zia, Category B visibly appropriated Urdu, Pakistani nationality and Islam in its quest for legitimation and leadership. These merged into an amalgam loosely referred to as the 'ideology of Pakistan'. It is important to point out that both Bhutto and Zia, with their respective supporters, identified with these features. In fact they out-did each other in their attempts to gain legitimacy through this identification: both used these features as political strategy to serve political ends. Both looked as much to Category B for support as the category did to them for leadership.

From what social organization and behaviour do Category B values emanate? Which groups constitute the core of this category? Where do the values of hard work and simplicity originate? The answer largely rests on the sturdy shoulders of the ordinary soldier or 'jawan' and the peasant-farmer.

The jawan is located in what is recognized as the 'Army belt', stretching from Peshawar to Jhelum (i.e., the districts of Kohat, Peshawar, Hazara in the NWFP, and Attock, Rawalpindi and Jhelum in the Punjab). This area produces a hardy people. Lack of rain and irrigated lands have forced them to partly surrender farming and join the army. A jawan earns about Rs. 550 a month and is entitled to two months leave annually. Isolated in distant parts of Pakistan (Makran at one end or Gilgit at the other), life is physically and socially hard. The Jawan spends about Rs. 100 a month on himself, saving the rest for his family. He has lived in similar circumstances for three or four generations, providing soldiers to the British Indian Army and now the Pakistan Army. Frugality and discipline define and form his ethos.

The second pillar of Category B is formed by the agricultural peasant-farmer and his rural community. It took a century of colonial initiative and enterprise to shape this community. The British in the last century created the successful canal colonies of



the Punjab. Land was brought under cultivation and water from the Indus and its tributaries provided to farms. These were peopled by loyal citizens of the Crown, irrespective of religion or ethnicity. Some of these farms were large estates owned or managed by the feudal lords of the Punjab, the Tiwanas and Noons. The majority, and those who made the enterprise worthwhile, were the small, independent farmers. They farmed what were called 'squares' (chaks, 25 acres on average). The prosperity of the farms earned the Punjab the name of 'bread basket of India'.

Order, stability and continuity were prerequisites of this society. Two of its aspects have survived to this day: loyalty to authority and sustained hard, and physical work. The governors and ministers in the 1980s came mainly from Category *B*; so did the army and civil service officers.<sup>9</sup> Sons of small farmers, those with one to 10 acres of land, or of junior officials, mainly from the rural areas of the Punjab became the generals and senior public servants ruling Pakistan. Except for a few Pukhtun and fewer muhajirs from Karachi, most of the one hundred senior generals of the Army are from the Punjab. There are no Baluch or Sindhi generals. The picture in the civil service is more or less the same. Most of the 70 key civil executive officers of the Government of Pakistan are Punjabis (about 40 of whom are civil officers in Grade 22, the most senior grade).

So the chances are high of finding a Category *B* Punjabi civil or military officer (especially during Martial Law) heading the administration of the five provincial governments or the important arms of government like the Foreign Office and the Planning Commission. On the other hand, powerless, but high-profile, posts like that of the Vice-Chancellor are pointedly given with an ethnic criterion in mind, the tell-tale 'ethnic' names 'Khattak' or 'Baluch' testifying to this. It is apparent that ethnicity not merit paved the way for many such appointments. With the high stakes involved, ethnic nepotism appeared justified to those who gained from it.

Indeed, Punjab represents the 'ideology' of Pakistan—a combination of Islam as state religion, Urdu as national language, belief in Kashmir as an integral part of Pakistan and strong Defence Services, especially the Army. But the paradoxes of Punjab become the paradoxes of Pakistan: Punjabis espouse the cause of Urdu aggressively but are equally aggressive about their right to speak in Punjabi; talk of the national language but maintain English as the medium of instruction in their best institutions (Government

College, Aitchison College); deride Martial Law but dominate the Army; evolve a society based on competition and merit but still largely operate one with networks and nepotism based on baradari. The strengths of Category *B* (competitiveness, hard work, desire for education and better living) became the strengths of Pakistan, its weaknesses (limited vision and generosity, chauvinism) the weakness of Pakistan. The former provided an impetus to material progress in Pakistan, the latter divided its society.

The ethos of Category *B* dominated all of Pakistan in the 1980s. Trousers gave way to shalwars (Pakistani baggy trousers); shirt to kameez (Pakistani shirt); a visit to the club to drink whiskey in the evening was replaced by a visit to the mohalla masjid (local mosque); speaking in Urdu or the mother tongue, rather than in English; sitting with the family before the television rather than going for shikar. Sons would study to become engineers and doctors rather than join the elite civil and foreign services, daughters would plan to marry young men with technical education preferably with jobs abroad rather than wait for the civil servants or scions of landlords.

Along the way Category *B* became the main spokesmen for Pakistani nationalism and Islamic religion. But Islam and nationalism were adjusted to the way Category *B* looked on the world. Their visible symbols became the officially sponsored Islam (the 'national' religion; 'The meaning of Pakistan is Islam'); the 'national' language, Urdu; 'national' poet, Iqbal; and the knee-length coat (sherwani), the 'national' dress. It is significant that the opponents of Punjabi domination became uncomfortable with these symbols or even rejected them. In turn they risked the label of being 'anti-Pakistan'.

A key to the behaviour of Category *B* and expression of its values was the emphasis on consensus and appearing to 'fit in', with the express desire not to upset or rock the boat. This derived from the general insecurity in Pakistan combined with the ethos of the lower-middle social class.

The general sense of insecurity among senior government employees carried through down to the lowest rungs. This was a result of severe competition for jobs or lands, in terms of the two pillars of society: the soldier and the farmer. Insecurity coupled with high stakes and privileges made people amenable to pressures from those who could post or promote them or terminate their services.

Busy in securing the good life, Category *B*, did not encourage



violent, political expressions. It is significant that, through the political crisis and drama in these years—the deaths of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Zia ul-Haq, and the illegal dissolution of the Junejo Government—social and economic life in Category *B* carried on with the minimum of disruption. Except for the loyal supporters who demonstrated their grief, no large-scale processions disturbed life.

It is Category *B* which eventually dominates political life in Pakistan today. They monopolize—or appear to monopolize—power, influence and authority. But more, their values and culture have come to overshadow the rest of Pakistan. They exude the confidence of a rich provincial culture that dominates and is identified with a larger national one. With its colleges, parks and historical monuments, Lahore is perhaps the most important cultural centre of Pakistan and ideally placed to attract and stimulate the talented in Category *B*.

Aitchison College in Lahore provides an example of how Category *B* absorbs and adapts an institution to its needs. Aitchison was founded as an elite public school by the British in the last century and exclusively restricted to small numbers of rulers and chiefs. But the school gates are now open. In 1947 there were 21 boys at Aitchison: it is now an educational mill, churning out hundreds of boys with a present strength of about 3,000. Almost anyone who can afford its high fees and make donations for the maintenance of its buildings is admitted. The demotic process is thus complete. Son of feudal lord and son of petty shop-keeper sit side by side in class. Although the class composition has changed, the physical buildings and lawns are maintained. In outward appearance it remains the most impressive school in Pakistan spreading over 150 acres in the most exclusive area of Lahore. It is one of Pakistan's most influential schools, its fame resting on the number of important public figures it has produced and their network. Although mostly from Punjab, these included senior members of the well known tribes and families from all over Pakistan, the Jamalis, Magsis and Bugtis from Baluchistan, the Legharis, Tiwanas and Noons from Punjab, and the Hotis and the Mianguls of Swat from the NWFP attended the school. It was estimated that in the mid-1980s, about one hundred members of the National and Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan, totalling about 700, were from Aitchison.

At one level Aitchison may be compared with Aligarh: both produce a Muslim elite. But here the comparison ends. The students of Aligarh were fired by a desire to alter Muslim destiny in India. A great deal of idealism and energy motivated them. Aitchison symbolizes power and privilege, a desire to express and uphold the status quo. Aligarh dreamed of a new world, an idealistic future, Aitchison wishes for the continuity and stability of the present one. Aitchison is an extension of the educational and social philosophy of Category *B*.

To support the argument of a distinct Category *B* society emerging within Pakistan, we cite the example of the Punjabi professionals based in Lahore. Successful, tough, high-profile, relatively young (mid-30s to mid-40s) they are at the top of their profession, symbolizing prosperity and confidence. These people are successful due to personal qualities and drive. Family connections, once so important in society, may have assisted some of them, but are not the determining factor in their success. It is notable that many women are prominent among them. It is also significant that Category *A*, influenced by lineage and age hierarchy, boasts few such figures. Categories *C* and *D* have produced successful professionals in Karachi, but it is in Lahore that they flourish.

However, underneath the surface an uneasy questioning remains in Category *B*. Giving up the mother tongue, Punjabi, and adopting Urdu has created severe cultural strains. The tension between the grand, identified as non-local and extra-ethnic (Islam, Pakistani nationalism, national language, Urdu) and the local and home-grown (folk language and customs) remain unresolved. Society boasted great saints (Data Ganj Baksh, Ali Hujwiri, of Lahore) but they were settlers, great rulers (Ranjit Singh) but they were not Muslims; great monuments (the Fort, the Badshahi mosque), great educational institutions (Government College, Aitchison College) and agricultural canal networks, but these were built by imperial Mughals or the British. Language, the central diacritical feature of an ethnic group, was associated with the Sikhs, and written primarily in Gurmukhi, the script of the Sikhs. Punjabi 'adab' or culture was consciously imitated from the Indian United Provinces (UP) culture—i.e., the upper class of the muhajir Category *D*.

Perhaps the dealings and relations with the smaller provinces and other categories are the most notable failure of Category *B*.



The smaller ethnic groups chafed at and resented what they termed 'Punjabi imperialism' or domination. This took different forms from outright rebellion (as in the mid-1970s in Baluchistan and the 1980s in Sind) to general resentment. Instead of understanding and tolerance, a rigid and unimaginative position was adopted. In place of a grand strategy, and vision, petty intrigue and tactics were employed. Perhaps Category *B* was not at fault. By definition, words like 'vision', 'tolerance', and 'understanding' are not easily located in its vocabulary. Its lack of vision reflects at the highest levels of government. Figures for education expenditures of Pakistan are the lowest in the subcontinent.

Category *C* also emerged in this phase. Its numbers were large and growing, accounting for about 30 per cent of the population. Indeed, about 60 per cent of the urban lived in twelve cities with 200,000 people or more. There were six cities with about one million inhabitants. Most of industry and commerce lay in the cities. This was, of course, because of Karachi. But in the third phase the boom spread to other parts of Pakistan, most notably the belt between Lahore and Gujranwala. Sleepy district headquarters like Sialkot and Faisalabad (once Lyallpur) are now densely populated and thriving centres of commerce and industry. Attracted by better schools and a more stimulating intellectual environment, many youths settled in the city. In this phase the cities also emerged politically. The younger generation of Pakistani leaders was almost entirely city-based, however rural their ancestry and political base. Political figures in this generation are examples of Categories *A* and *B* drifting to the cities and joining Category *C*.

Category *C* society faces a crisis. The cities, with the exceptions of Islamabad and Lahore, are in a mess. Ambitious expansion projects, vast numbers migrating from the villages, the subsequent decline in services and the increasing incidence of crime have made life in the cities difficult.

The two exceptions, Islamabad and Lahore, are the urban expression of Category *B* society. Indeed, in certain civic areas their achievements are impressive. It is also significant that the major cities of the other provinces and areas of Pakistan are in a state of unmitigated filth and anarchy. As those in Category *A* will be quick to point out, this was not always so. Quetta earlier in this century, and Peshawar in the last century, were noted as 'garden cities' by writers and visitors.

The urge to improve the quality of city life has come from within Category *B*. Take, for example, the magnificent main park in Lahore which was converted from the race course, a legacy of the British. Spread over 80 acres, it combines jogging tracks, artificial hills and lakes and flowerbeds. The jogging track is a unique comment on Category *B* society in Pakistan. Men are common but so are women. At sunset they come in large numbers to jog or walk briskly, alone or with a companion. Their activity would be impossible in other cities. The security aspect, the kidnapping and killing, and social taboo preventing women from appearing in public would prevent it. Its activities express the wish of Category *B* to lead a healthier life on the one hand and to change social values where necessary on the other.

The contrast of the Lahore race course park with the Karachi race course, another British legacy, illustrates the point. The Karachi course still holds races. But stagnant pools of slime, shanty town encroachments and sand mar its once neat grounds—a comment on the inability of Category *C* to organise life effectively. The creation and maintenance of the Lahore park illustrates the distinction between Category *B* society and the rest of Pakistani society. The man responsible for its creation was General Gilani, appointed by General Zia as governor of the Punjab. Gilani set about improving Lahore. Nawaz Sharif, Chief Minister and now Prime Minister, also appointed by Zia, continued this task. But they were not alone. Such standards cannot be created or maintained by official fiat. A wide network of urban professionals have pooled their resources to improve civic standards and create civic awareness. Hard work, a sense of community, a commitment to aim for a better material life are prerequisites of this society. The educational institutions, fountains, parks, roads and the maintenance of public buildings are its testimony. It is significant that those with the values of, and coming from, the social organization of Category *B* can take credit for Lahore. The lordly families of Punjab, once the masters of the Punjab and now living in splendid houses in Gulberg, thought little of sustained hard work and even less of the community.

Category *D* presents an interesting picture of the creation of ethnicity among the muhajirs. The process of reformulating the most basic questions of identity had begun with the events leading to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.<sup>10</sup> The refugees of India in



1947 had abandoned their particular ethnicity in the act of migration. A family from Rampur living in Karachi was no longer Rampuri but in the process of formulating a new ethnicity. Increasing violence based on ethnicity in the 1980s cost many lives in Karachi. This, combined with a general sense of deprivation, resulted in the groping towards the formulation of a distinct sense of identity.<sup>11</sup> In a dramatic ethnic reversal in Karachi, Pukhtun names were dropped by refugees.<sup>12</sup> In Karachi, Pukhtun or Punjabi ethnicity was viewed with hostility. Correspondingly, muhajir ethnicity was emphasized. In keeping with the sociological maxim, the grandson remembers what the grandfather forgets.

The MQM won 13 National Assembly seats mainly from Karachi (where it lost only one) and Hyderabad. Overnight it emerged as a political force in Pakistan. The leadership of the MQM symbolizes the movement. Young, educated, literate and lower middle class;<sup>13</sup> in its determination, it reflects some of the values of Category B. Its unabashed ethnic position was controversial but won it the landslide victory. It identified with Urdu, and fought for redressal of grievances. Its victory signified the consolidation of muhajir ethnicity, a new pride. At their first appearance in the National Assembly the MQM members wore tight (tang) pyjamas and Salim Shahi shoes, neither worn locally, and reminiscent of Delhi and UP. The paradox was compounded by the fact that these members were born after Pakistan and would therefore be too young to remember either of them.

The MQM swept the polls and defied all political pundits. It has united muhajirs whether old and young, rich and poor, irrespective of their language and place of origin. From culturally distant areas of India like Bihar or Hyderabad in southern India, refugees have submerged their particular ethnicity to evolve a general one of muhajir. Once isolated and frustrated as individuals, muhajirs are now employing an ethnic idiom and playing the ethnic game. They have once again begun to feel a sense of identity and security, something they have not felt for two decades. This sense of identity and security that the MQM has fathered is different to the kind felt earlier. The muhajir movement was now generally lower middle class and infused with a spirit of street toughness. It was also stripped of the two themes that had once dominated its consciousness: the romance of the Pakistan movement and, linked to it, the 'glory of Islam'.

We may note two major developments which affected most of Pakistan society: the Pakistani migrant labour (about two million) abroad and the almost three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. A discussion of either is beyond our present scope. The Pakistani labourers were estimated to send home as much as almost three billion dollars in remittances annually. Most of them came from socially lower or suppressed groups in Category A or B. On their return, with money in their pockets and a new confidence, they demanded a place in the sun. Their values based on work and merit reinforced the position of Category B.

The Afghan refugees brought with them guns and drugs. Both nationally and internationally they bolstered General Zia's regime and position, who took an unbending stand which identified with Islam and the return of the refugees with honour. Pakistan's Afghan position was thus a reflection of and supported by Category B. On Zia's death the refugees were sorrowful and disturbed. Some of those who stayed on in Pakistan—in Peshawar or Karachi—exhibit the values and characteristics of Category D. Category B could afford to respond with generosity as few Afghans settled in the Punjab to threaten their satisfactory social order. Both groups created social problems based on material expectations: the high hopes of the families of the Pakistani migrant workers and the wishes of the Afghan refugees to restore normalcy to their shattered lives.

## CONCLUSION

By the end of the 1980s, the desire for change was apparent in society. This is reflected in the general elections of November 1988. Much of the traditional leadership was swept out of office. Familiar names were humiliated at the polls. A younger leadership emerged. Women were prominent and their emergence was symbolized by the appointment of Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister. But it would be incorrect to dramatize the change by reading too much into it. The voting patterns indicated that Category B in the Punjab approved of continuity with appropriate change, even cosmetic. Of the 237 National Assembly seats, the PPP won the



majority. But although only 66 seats in the National Assembly were won by Islami-Jamhuri-Itehad, the votes cast reveal a close fight between the two parties. Broadly, the Itehad stood for Islam and nationalism as represented by Zia ul-Haq. Its leader, Nawaz Sharif, was Zia's choice. And, as shown by the 1988 and 1990 elections and the changes in government, the values of Category *B* remain important in Pakistan even after the death of Zia ul-Haq.