

Studies on Karachi

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*Papers Presented at the
Karachi Conference 2013*

Edited by

Sabiah Askari

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Studies on Karachi: Papers Presented at the Karachi Conference 2013

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INTRODUCTION TO THE KARACHI CONFERENCE FOUNDATION

The Karachi Conference Foundation was established in 2011 by a group of professionals, scholars, and activists belonging to Karachi. They first met in the same year as the Executive Committee of the Karachi Conference Foundation, which subsequently held the first Karachi Conference at the Arts Council, Karachi, in 2013.

The Foundation aims to provide a platform for generating discourse, presenting research, and holding events on issues related to the city of Karachi, partnering with relevant scholars, activists, and institutions. The main event of the Foundation will be an annual conference, with an expanding scope and international participation, focusing on the study of Karachi through the lens of diverse disciplines and media.

The Foundation is grateful for the support of our partners in this venture. These include: Karachi Youth Initiative; Habib University; The Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi; the Avari Group Pakistan; the American Institute of Pakistan Studies; and the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture.

PREFACE

RUMANA HUSAIN

Having been born here and having lived all my life in Karachi—Pakistan’s largest city—I still am bewildered at the pace and extent of its growth and the consequent changes that have come about over the past sixty years and which continue unabated. Except perhaps for the battered and abused remnants of a fair number of colonial-era buildings still visible behind a tangle of wires and signboards in the relatively small, old-city areas, just about everything has changed—mostly for the worse, as far as my generation laments in its nostalgia.

Karachi caught the eye of the British in the early 1800s at a time when they were at war with Afghanistan and needed this city with its natural harbour to bring in troops as well as supplies. The British therefore put the city on the map, although it was a thriving place under the Talpurs of Sindh earlier. In 1843, General Charles Napier annexed Sindh and sent out his famous message; “*Peccavi*” (I have sinned [Sindh]). Karachi owes much to its former Governor, Charles Napier, and to its Commissioner, Henry Bartle Edward Frere, who was appointed in 1850.

Napier introduced several firsts in the city which served it well for more than a century. The population of Karachi has grown from around 400,000 in 1947 to over 20 million today, and is predicted to increase by over five million by 2025, which puts it on the list of the ten fastest growing cities of tomorrow. Researchers also say that no other city in the world has grown so much in such a short time span.

The port city of Karachi became the first capital of the new country in 1947, until a new capital, Islamabad, was created in the early 1960s. Karachi also became the country’s economic hub, which it continues to be. It has a rich heritage, with archaeological remains stretching back to the Neolithic period. The metropolitan area of the city contains ancient Hindu temples, Sufi shrines dating back to the ninth century, Jewish graveyards, and Christian churches of the colonial period. And then there are Pakistan’s post-independence buildings, designed by local architects or built by developers.

Over sixty per cent of the city's poorer population lives in unplanned settlements, as the government has failed to provide them with adequate facilities. Architect and planner Arif Hasan, in an article ("The Anti-Poor Bias in Planning and Policy", 18 November 2012) cites the example of the government's failure to provide housing for the poor at an affordable price, and the displacement of 30,000 families from within Karachi city to its periphery, as the houses built by them were bulldozed. "As a result, they have become much poorer, socially-stressed, and their access to employment (especially for women), health facilities, education, recreation, and entertainment has been drastically curtailed," he says in his article.

However, it is also true that, despite all its problems, the city continues to function, and attracts domestic migrants. The presence and contribution of people of different backgrounds makes Karachi Pakistan's most cosmopolitan city—the only microcosm of the whole country. These numerous different communities tend to retain their distinct lifestyle characteristics, but they have also blended with and borrowed from each other and, in the process, they have begun to forge a new identity as citizens of today's Karachi.

The ancestors of the original fishing folk are, arguably, some of the oldest inhabitants of this city. Their average annual catch is said to be about 600,000 metric tons of fish from around the Karachi harbour in the Arabian Sea. This may sound like a large quantity, but the fishermen remain poor as they only get a small percentage of the haul.

Many of the Parsi families of Karachi also trace their ancestry to the first settlers in the city who here came in the 1800s; these include the Golwala, Cowasjee, Dubash, Ghadiyali, Kandawala families, and others. The contribution of the Parsi, Hindu, and Christian communities to Karachi's welfare has been significant.

The city has been defined by the continuous inflow of migrants: in colonial times, Gujarati speakers such as the Parsis, various Hindu groups, the Bohras, as also the Konkani and English-speaking Goans, Kutchchis, Memons, and the Baloch established trade and commerce and obtained jobs in the expanding and affluent city. In 1947, after Partition, speakers of several other languages were added to the city, including a very large Urdu-speaking group which marginalized its original Sindhi-speaking population.

In the aftermath of 9/11, terrorism on the one hand and ethno-political, sectarian, militant, and criminal violence, including muggings, kidnappings, and killings for extortion, and the consequent fortification of the city on the other, have had Karachi spinning. Rather than diminishing

the dread, the over-militarized city and surveillance mechanism only aggravate the feeling of endangerment of its generally peaceful citizens. The widespread possession of weapons, ugly rows of concrete bollards, high concrete walls, gigantic containers, piles of sand bags, revolting barbed wire fences, razor wire meshes, surveillance cameras, sniffer dogs, and checkpoints have moved the symbols of war and violence into the domain of the urban, albeit more for the protection of the Police or Rangers' own vehicles, parked at strategic locations, than for the common man.

Economic disparity, poor policy-making, lack of planning, inadequate policing, and a somewhat flawed judicial system, however, serve to perpetuate violence, conflict, and environmental deterioration.

The Karachi Conference is an endeavour in the continuing effort to understand, reflect upon, and resolve much that is urgently needed in Karachi, so that the city can become more liveable and achieve greater significance. It is still not too late to recognize what made Charles Napier say: "You will yet be the glory of the East; would that I could come again, Karachi, to see you in your grandeur".

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE KARACHI CONFERENCE 2013

ARIF HASAN

If the 2011 pre-census house count is to be believed, then Karachi is the fastest growing city in the world. Between 1998 and 2011, its population more than doubled from about 10 million to over 20 million.¹ No city in history has grown so much in so short a time. Given this demographic change, it is difficult to talk about the city's fascinating past, conflict-ridden present, and, without doubt, a prosperous future, and bring it all together. However, I will try and link the three.

To begin with, I will try and question some commonly-held views regarding the city's origins and identify some aspects of its evolution that need to be further studied. I will then come to the causes for its present turmoil and then to a possible future.

It is generally believed that Karachi was a small fishing village before the British conquest and that its name has been derived from Kolachi, a Baloch tribe. Settlements of the name "Kolachi" exist all over Pakistan with different pre- and suffixes. If we take Karachi as the district, then it has Stone Age, Neolithic, and Indus valley sites. But some may say that is not Karachi. So, I will restrict myself to talking about the area consisting of the colonial city, its suburbs, and the port.

Karachi was established as a fortified trading settlement in 1729 on 35 acres. This fact is well-known and documented in great detail in Naomal Hotchand's autobiography.² The site for the settlement was carefully chosen for its strategic location. To the north of the fortification was the Lyari River, to the south, mangrove marshes, and to the west was the sea. Thus, the fort could only be attacked successfully from the sea and for

¹. Cox. W., "World Urban Areas Population and Density: A 2012 update", *New Geography* (5 March 2012).

². *Memoirs of Seth Naomal Hotchand 1804-1878* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1982).

that, gun boats were required. According to Naomal Hotchand, the site chosen was called Dibro and it had a few huts on it. To its north-west was a pool of water known as *Kolachi jo kun*. It should not be difficult to identify the location of this pool.

At the time of the British conquest, Karachi contained 34 temples, 21 mosques, 13 shrines, and 30 sea-going ships and more than a 100 other big boats. It also contained gambling dens, a custom house, and a well-established system of taxation and governance. Its economy was dependent on trade, most of it export-related and, in 1842, this export was over Rs 2.5 million. This trade was with Africa, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula, and with the ports on the western coast of India. The population at the time of the British Conquest was about 15,000 and this does not include the population of its “extensive suburbs”.³ Thus, Karachi was not a small fishing village by any accepted standards of categorizing settlements.

The settlement was created in 1729. But within what is today its “metropolitan area”, there were already important places of Hindu and Muslim worship and pilgrimage. According to folklore, the Maha Dev Temple in Clifton is mentioned in the Mahabharat; the Punjmukhi Hanuman Maharaj Mandir in Soldier Bazaar was built in the 7th century; and we are told that the Krishna Mandir in Manora was built in 1665.

There are also a number of pre-1729 Muslim shrines within the Karachi metropolitan area. These include those of Syed Noor Ali Shah at Teen Hatti (8th century); Abdullah Shah Ghazi and Yousuf Shah Ghazi at Clifton and Manora respectively (9th century); Pir Hasan Ghazi Shah at Jodia Bazaar (10th century); Noor Ali Shah Ghazi at Bombay Bazaar (10th century); and Haji Sukhi Sultan Manghopir at Manghopir (13th century).⁴

Many of these pre-1729 temples and shrines are located on the periphery of the old city and many of them are on mounds. The old city is also on a mound. Given the geology of the areas around these mounds, one can easily conclude that they are artificial. Given the proximity of places of worship and pilgrimage to the old city, it has been my belief that older settlements lie under the Karachi Fort or the old city quarters as the fort area is currently referred to.

³. Baillie A. F.; *Kurrachee: Past, Present and Future* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1975).

⁴. Damohi, Usman: *Karachi Tareekh kay Aaeena Mein* (2014 edition) (Karachi: Welcome Book Port Private, 2012).

There is also some controversy regarding the origin of the name of the city. It is generally believed that it is derived from Kolachi. Folklore also supports this view. In *Sur Ghato*, Shah Abdul Lateef uses the name of Kolachi for the area where the Moroereo legend was enacted in the creeks and bays of Karachi. Moroereo is buried in Manghopir and his brothers in Gul Bai. Their descendants live in the coastal villages of Karachi where, every year, the protagonists of the legend are remembered through festivities and by the rendering of *Sur Ghato* in different forms.⁵

The earliest mention of the Moroereo legend in literature is in a Persian text of the 11th century.⁶ The incident occurred at the time of Raja Diborai whose capital, according to local folklore, was at Bath Island. British texts of the 19th century mention extensive remains of a settlement at Bath Island. This is probably now buried under the government officers' residences.

Folklore has to be respected. However, the name Karachi and its variants have been used since ancient times for the Bay of Karachi. In Pehlavi texts (230 BC), it is mentioned as Kharachhi;⁷ in the 16th century Arabic and Turkish texts, the name of the Bay has been mentioned as Karazi, Rasal Karazi, and Kaurashi. In Kalhora records, it is mentioned as Kharachar, and in the records of the Khan of Kalat as Kalati Bunder.⁸

The term "Ramaia" has also been used in British and Greek texts for the area that constitutes Karachi today. There are reasons for the use of this term. Again, according to local folklore, Rama and Sita visited Hinglarj after Sita had been rescued from Ravan. On their way to Hinglarj, they spent a night on the site of what eventually became Ram Bagh. Today, the name has been changed to Aram Bagh. There is a need for more research on the origins of the name and its meaning. Such research will add to the history of Karachi and open up many more avenues for further research.

There are other events on which much further research is required. One such event is the rebellion against British rule in 1857. This rebellion was led by Ramdin Pandey, a subedar in the East India Company army. He was from Bareilly and he, along with his comrades, was blown from the

⁵. Hasan, A., *Evaluation of the Community Development Work in Rehri*. (Carried out by the Coastal Ecosystem Unit, IUCN, 1994).

⁶. Baluch, N. A., "Sindh", in *Cultural Studies* (Hyderabad: Pakistan Study Centre, 2004).

⁷. Damohi, Usman, *Karachi Tareek kay Aaeena Mein* (Reprint, 2014).

⁸. Khuhro, H. and Mooraj, Anwar, *Karachi the Megacity of Our Times* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010).

mouth of cannons. These executions took place where the High Court and the Empress Market stand today. A large number of the rebels were exiled to Kala Pani, where the vast majority of them died and are buried there. Members of the Hindu community living in Chanesar Goth were among those who were sent to Kala Pani.⁹ There is a legend among them that where the rebels were executed, flowers would miraculously appear every morning at Empress Market, much to the embarrassment of the British rulers. Subsequently, the Empress Market was built over the site and the flowers stopped appearing. Very little has been written about this rebellion, except for news items in the newspaper *Sindh Qasid* of that time and a new book in Urdu written by Khawaja Aslam.¹⁰ However, I have been informed that there is considerable material, including the names of the martyrs and of the persons sent to Kala Pani.

A number of things came together to create the post-British conquest Karachi. One was physical infrastructure: the Port, the Railways, and the Punjab and Sindh irrigation systems. The story of the Port lies concealed in the Karachi and Bombay Port Trust archives and awaits a book. The story of the Railways lies in the British library, out of reach of most local scholars. The story of the canal colonies has been told by Imran Ali¹¹ and Syed Ali Naqvi¹² in their books. However, more focus on how the perennial irrigation systems affected Karachi is needed, along with their link with the development of the Port and Railways.

There are other important events that have impacted on the development of the city. One of these was the American Civil War (1861-1865). Before the war, American cotton was used in the textile industry in Europe. Due to the war, it was no longer available and so the British promoted the cultivation of cotton in the Punjab and Sindh. This cotton was exported from Karachi and made the city the largest exporter of this material by 1868. Thanks to the development of perennial irrigation in Sindh and Punjab and the Railways linking Karachi with its hinterland, the city also became the largest exporter of wheat in India by 1870.¹³

⁹. Told to the author by Chanesar Goth elders in 1983.

¹⁰. Khawaja A., *1857 ki Jang-i-Azadi* (Karachi: Almi Printers, 2011).

¹¹. Aslam I., *Punjab under Imperialism 1885-1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹². Naqvi S. A., *Indus Waters and Social Change* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹³. Feldman, H.; *Karachi through a Hundred Years (1860-1960)* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1970).

Another major event was the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Before this, the ships from Europe had to circumvent the Cape of Good Hope to reach India. In this process, they bypassed Karachi. With the opening of the Canal, Karachi became the first port of call for ships coming through the Suez Canal to India.

The opening of the Canal and the increased production of cotton and wheat for international markets created investment and job opportunities in the city's expanding economy. As a result, Gujarati-speaking businessmen; Parsi investors; Memon shopkeepers; Goan educationalists and white-collar workers; Kutchi potters and fishermen; and Salwati masons migrated to the city in large numbers. This changed the demography of Karachi, pushing the older residents such as the Kalmatis, Jolhios, Numaris, and Lassis of the rural areas of the city into the background.

The story of Karachi's strategic importance has, however, been written about and discussed in considerable detail; but how this strategic importance and the city's role in the British–Afghan wars and in the First and Second World Wars impacted on its physical and social development is still an untold story.

The demographic, cultural, and political impact of Partition on the city has been discussed in detail and from different points of view. However, the social and demographic repercussions of Karachi's separation from Sindh from 1948 to 1969 have not been discussed. If Karachi had remained the capital of Sindh, instead of its being shifted to Hyderabad, I feel we would be living in a different city today and most of the younger Urdu speakers would also be speaking Sindhi. I often wonder what I and my family, and those of my close Sindhi friends, would be like today if this separation had not taken place.

There is also, especially in my generation, nostalgia for the pre-1977 Karachi of night clubs, cabarets, discos, and bars. Many people say that I am responsible for promoting this nostalgia by documenting what existed before Islamization transformed Karachi. I am willing to take the blame. However, it has to be understood that this culture was one of a colonial port city, governed by a colonial-created elite who were the custodians of this culture. In my view, it could not possibly have lasted, given the emergence of populist politics.

Neighbourhoods under the Empire were ethnic and clan-based and the province and the city was governed by a powerful neutral umpire. Hence, there was peace. With freedom movements came politics and with politics, ethnic and class conflicts emerged, along with battles for turf. All freedom movements have had a strong element of radicalism, progressive thinking,

and activism. The same is true for Karachi. The migrant intellectuals who came to Karachi at Partition from India were progressives. They had no problem with debating descent and enjoying the colonial port culture. Karachi's social and entertainment functions, along with its intellectual debates, were enhanced because of them and fed into the city's political discourse.

Diversity is very often the first casualty of democracy. Under colonial rule, different communities could live together since there were no political interests apart from freedom from colonial rule. With politics, different interests clash and cannot be accommodated unless there is institutional space for consensus-building. Such space was not available in Karachi due to constitutional deviations and military interventions.

The conflict against the port city colonial culture in Karachi began soon after partition. It gained strength over time. It surfaced in a big way in the PPP-PNA divide of 1977, leading to the end of Karachi's night life, entertainment industry, bars, and the culture of dance and music. It also led to the establishment of Zia's dictatorship.

In Karachi in the Zia era, dictatorship and its ideology suppressed all other forms of thinking and living. This story has not been told, either from the point of view of the elite or from that of the working classes. I will talk about it, for it is important in understanding the Karachi of today.

My research shows that it is more than possible that, if the democratic process had continued, then through a process of negotiation and pragmatic give-and-take, a new culture, the synthesis between the cultures of the two political opponents, could have evolved, though less liberal than before. Discussions between the operators of the banned entertainment facilities, political opponents of the Bhutto regime, and the Karachi establishment, were already taking place before Ziaul Haq's military coup of July 1977 made any such compromises impossible.

Here, it is important to look at how the policies of the Zia government, aided by the Afghan War, have shaped the Karachi of today. Soon after coming to power, the Zia government began the process of consolidating the hold of the religious parties on the Pakistani state and society. The majority of his cabinet was composed of members of the religious parties who had led the anti-*fahashi* (vulgarity) and *ayashi* (corruption) movement against the Bhutto government.

To "Islamize" society and introduce piety, *zohr* prayers were made compulsory in government institutions and space was provided for them. This was also adopted by many non-government and private organizations, to seek favour with the government in power, and also to satisfy the demands of their newly-empowered "religious" members. In

addition, *zakat* and *ushr* were made compulsory. This was resisted by the Shia community in whose *fiqh zakat* is voluntary. A major Shia–Sunni disagreement took place over this issue and finally it was decided that the Shia community would not pay compulsory *zakat*. Through the *zohr* prayers and *zakat* enactment, Pakistanis working together came to recognize each other as Shia, Sunni, Ahmedi, Christian, or Hindu. This set in motion a process of discrimination and fragmentation.

However, the most serious repercussions of the policies of the Zia government were related to education. Extra-curricular activities in public sector high schools, colleges, and universities were banned and so were the students' unions that had produced Pakistan's most radical and democratic leadership, outstanding journalists, literary figures, and sportsmen and women. As a result, music, drama, film, and political and cultural events vanished (even sports) completely from Karachi's educational institutions. Debates were permitted, but their subjects had to be approved by the areas' deputy commissioner and later by the institution's administration. Over time, the subjects of the debates became increasingly related to Islamic ritual and theology, rather than Islamic history and current social and political issues. The private sector institutions (except some elite ones), under pressure from the government and its supporters, also discontinued all extra-curricular activities. A case in point is the Pakistan cricket team. Previously, it was drawn from the universities and colleges of the country, but due to the banning of extra-curricular activities, it is today drawn from the street. This is not to denigrate the present cricket team, which is in many ways superior to that of the pre-Zia eras.

School and college curriculums were also revised. At the high school level, the teaching of international history and geography were discontinued. Pakistan Studies and Islamiat courses were restructured and considered sufficient for an understanding of global issues. An evaluation of the curriculum of these subjects identifies that it was insensitive to the religious diversity of Pakistan, that it incited the students to militancy and violence, and encouraged bigotry and discrimination towards fellow citizens (especially women and religious minorities), and towards other nations. It also glorified war and the use of force.¹⁴

Budgets for cultural activity and related institutions were drastically reduced and important institutions like the PIA Arts Academy, NAFDEC,

¹⁴. Nayyar, A. H. and Salim, A., *The Subtle Subversion* (Islamabad: Sustainable Development Policy Institute, 2004).

and Lok Virsa simply became paper organizations. State patronage of the *urs* of *Sufi* saints and folk heroes (in vogue since pre-British time) was withdrawn and banning music at these festivals was unsuccessfully attempted. Under the new media policy, classical music and dance were banned on radio and television, and folk music was discouraged. Meanwhile, a long list of prominent writers and thinkers was drawn up and their appearance on television and radio, along with the poetry and songs of progressive poets and musicians, was also banned. Suleman Shah was a famous Sindhi folk singer. He sang with *ghunghroos* on his wrists which he played while he sang and danced. He was not allowed to wear the *ghunghroos* on television, since they were not considered appropriate for a man. However, he continued to sing without them. I encountered him at an airport lounge. I did not know him but I went up to him and said that I missed his *ghunghroos*. He put his arms around me and wept and said, “I have to put up with this disgrace for the sake of my stomach”. I also wept with him.

At the neighbourhood level, a system of *Nazim-e-Salaat* was introduced. The *nazim* was an individual appointed by the local mosque. He roamed the neighbourhood at dawn, informing people through a microphone that it was time for prayer and that they should come to the mosque. People who did not come were contacted politely in the evening and requested to attend prayers. Again, as a result, the *fiqh* of different households was identified and the distances between neighbours of different religious systems increased, especially in low and lower-middle income settlements.

Political parties in the Zia era could not hand out patronage since the politics of the era was all about the “restoration of democracy”. In the absence of politics, people turned to their ethnic and clan relationships for patronage. Since power lay with the religious establishment, the clan and ethnic organizations had to seek its support. This strengthened the religious establishment further.

Due to the enactments of the Zia era, the religious establishment became the custodian of public morality. In lower and lower-middle income neighbourhoods and in the city’s public space and institutions, they were able to impose their will. Schools of music and dance, which were common before the Zia era, closed down (4 in Saddar). All left to work abroad except for notable exceptions, such as the Tehreek-i-Niswan. Theatre performances vanished or could only be held for the elite and upper middle classes in the cultural centres of foreign missions such as the Goethe Institute and the Pak American Cultural Centre. The new culture created enormous problems for working women (since working was

discouraged by state-supported neighbourhood communities), and they disappeared as waitresses, chambermaids in hotels, and as entertainers. In 1977 Karachi had 123 cinemas; they were reduced to 22 by 1989.¹⁵

Pakistan's elite and upper middle classes are "westernized", but because of their enmity to Bhutto's "socialist" populism, they supported the Zia government. However, they could not approve of the changes that were taking place in the institutions where their children studied. Consequently, they stopped sending their children to public sector universities and colleges as a result of which these institutions ceased to be multi-class. They also stopped participating in public life and visiting museums, zoos, and multi-class public spaces. They created their own world, separate from the rest of Karachi, and depoliticized themselves. The removal of the elite from the public sphere resulted in a decline in standards of education and in the maintenance and growth of public sector real estate and recreational facilities. In the process, Karachi was deprived of the possibility of acquiring an elite that was aware and interested, which is an enormous asset for an expanding and developing metropolis. The elite as a class are no longer elite, they have become just rich people, uninterested in and uninformed about the rest of the city.

The Zia era coincided with the period of urban consolidation for many cities, similar in many ways to Karachi, in South and South-East Asia. These cities, during the Zia era, developed effective state institutions that have been able to cater to the needs of a young population (living increasingly in a cosmopolitan world) as an alternative to the system of patronage by clan and religion-based groups. They have been able to support the evolution of new social values and freedoms for their societies that were in the process of freeing themselves from feudal influences and retrogressive traditions. Karachi too in 1977 was in a similar position. However, due to Zia's religious populism and the politics of the Afghan War, this did not happen in Karachi. New institutions were not created, but the old ones were destroyed. Emerging social values were suppressed and monolithic and retrogressive norms were imposed on the city, destroying its diversity, leading to its fragmentation and to suspicion and conflict between its different religious and ethnic groups. These trends were, and still are, promoted by the politics and culture of the Afghan War and the left-over policies of the Zia era. The progressives, meanwhile, have not only been hounded out but replaced.

¹⁵. "Cinemas in Karachi" :www.mazhar.dk

The movement against Zia was for the restoration of democracy (for the vote) and not against the culture of his regime. As such, the governments following him and society at large have remained hostage to the state culture and its formal and informal institutions that he created.

The institutions created by Zia have grown with the regional conflicts that surround us and Karachi's pivotal role in them. The war economy, NATO, contraband, heroine, the Afghan transit trade, its operators and clients, and the proxies of various regional and international interests control the city. Their businesses determine the shape of the city. These are issues that are well-known and openly discussed. Much of my research revolves around this and I have spoken so often about it. So, I will not elaborate on them except to say that they have undermined the institutions of governance, leading to the condition we face on a daily basis.

But, meanwhile, what has happened to the city? It is now four distinct cities. One is the central business district and its working class (mainly Baloch and Kutchi neighbourhoods), dominated by Gujarati-speaking businessmen and shopkeepers. Second, there is the inner crescent, consisting of Urdu speakers, with increasing middle class migrants from Sindh. Third is the outer crescent, consisting of working class settlements, separated from each other on the basis of ethnicity and religion and consisting of a large and increasing minority of Pushto speakers. Finally, there are the elite areas of co-operative societies, Defence, and Clifton. Sindhi goths are scattered all over these four "cities" and are being absorbed into them through various forms of coercion.

These really are different cities, with different modes of transport arrangements, different types of educational institutions, houses, commercial centres, and even economies. They do not interact and share common public spaces, apart from the beach and a few parks far away from where most low-income groups live. Even voting patterns are different as shown by the work of Haris Gazdar.¹⁶

This absence of interaction is a major constraint for the development of an appropriate professional curriculum and practice and, as a result, there is major gap between the reality of the city and the perception and work of its academics and professional institutions. Because of this, there is a strong though unwitting anti-poor bias in policy and planning.

Government and NGO-developed statistics also define the physical and social situation of the city. For instance, eighty per cent of Karachiites live

¹⁶. Gazdar, H. and Mullah, H. B., "Informality and Political Violence in Karachi"; in *Urban Studies* (November 2013).

on plots of 120 square yards or less. Houses on plots of 400 to 2,000 square yards account for only 2 per cent of the housing stock. However, they occupy 20 per cent of Karachi's residential area. In addition, 36.7 per cent of Karachi's land is utilized for residential purposes. 27 per cent has been developed formally and 8.1 per cent informally. 62 per cent of Karachi's population lives on the 8.1 per cent informally developed land.¹⁷ These figures show the level of inequity and discrimination in policy and planning against the poorer sections of the population and this is an important cause of Karachi's conflicts and violence.

Yet, Karachi is a rich city. It contains 32 per cent of the total industrial establishment of Pakistan; generates 15 per cent of the country's GDP; 25 per cent of federal revenues; and 62 per cent of income tax. 74.8 per cent of Sindh's total industrial output is produced in Karachi and it generates 78 per cent of formal private sector jobs in the province. The conflict between the MQM and the PPP on the local government structure for Karachi is really a conflict over the control of the city's enormous resources. The MQM wants a decentralized form of governance, because this is the only way it can control the city, where the Urdu speakers whom it represents are the largest group. The PPP, on the other hand, cannot win a majority of seats from Karachi, but can control the province, where it is in a majority. Hence, it prefers a centralized system, since it is the only way that it can control Karachi's land, jobs, and revenues.

However, neither the old system and nor Musharraf's decentralized system can solve the problems of common Karachiites. These problems are related to getting an ID card made; getting a birth certificate; getting a death certificate; getting a child into school; getting a parent into hospital; getting a friend released from police custody; getting a place for a grave; solving conflicts related to renting, family conflicts, and property matters; acquiring utility connections; and/or getting a piece of land or a loan to build a house. For all these, the disadvantaged (who are the majority) contact their ethnic or religious organizations and this in turn strengthens them, gives them votes in the elections, and further promotes fragmentation and conflict.

I will not touch upon issues related to physical infrastructure because I think they are well-known, though not the causes for them. These include housing, transport, health, and education. But the important question is: where is the city going?

¹⁷. *Karachi Strategic Development Plan 2020*, City District Government (Karachi: 2006).

The most important development is the emergence of a bourgeoisie. A large and increasing middle class, fiercely upwardly mobile, education- and recreation-hungry, is increasingly dominating the physical and social space available in the city. Its changing lifestyle and social structures are seeping through to all sections of society, if not yet in reality, then in terms of aspirations. The trends are towards an increasing number of unmarried adolescents; break-up of extended families and clan-based settlements; working women (without whom the kitchen can no longer function); desire for recreation; acquisition of a motorbike for freedom from public transport and for flexibility; the right to marry a person of one's choice (as visible by the enormous increase in court marriages); and the presence of women in public spaces. In short, there is a major conflict between the dictates of tradition and trends and aspirations.¹⁸

Five trends are of considerable importance for the future. One, old low-income settlements are consolidating. They are acquiring middle class values and they are upwardly mobile. Unlike earlier, they contain beauty parlours, cyber cafes, cable TV, marriage halls, schools, colleges, libraries, and community centres. They contain sport clubs and their residents arrange picnics at the beach, and sometimes as far away as the Kinchhar Lake. They also contain singers and performers. Almost all of this activity is arranged by community organizations and local activists. The more conservative elements in the community try to curtail these attempts and often succeed.

Secondly, there is an increasing interest and involvement of educated upper and middle class individuals and groups in the city's social and physical development. If this continues, perhaps a bridge between the different "cities" of Karachi can be created. Thirdly, there is the birth of formal sector entertainment and cultural events. So far, these are for the elite and upper middle classes. One of the reasons for this is the locations where these events are held. For instance, it has been observed that if an event is held at the Expo Centre as opposed to the Arts Council or the FTC, the lower middle and working classes do attend. Fourthly, a rapidly increasing under-class is being created as a result of being forced out of their rural habitat due to social and economic change and also due to natural disasters and conflict-related displacements. And fifthly, the emergence of NGOs, of which Karachiites are very proud. However,

¹⁸. For details see Hasan, A., "Demographic Change and its Social Repercussions: The Case of Karachi", in *International Development Planning Review*, Volume 31, Number 3 (2009).

NGOs are not the solution to Karachi's problems. Their work can develop models and create islands of excellence. What Karachi needs is state involvement in developing social and physical infrastructure, especially related to technical education, which is almost non-existent in a city of 21 million. As such, I feel that NGOs and CBOs should get together to promote major public sector reform.

Given the social and demographic changes that have been described above, Karachi (like the rest of Pakistan) needs the promotion of new societal values that can resolve the conflict between tradition and aspirations. It also needs the promotion of multiclass public space and support to community events related to folklore and culture that are already taking place and making them multiclass and multi-ethnic. Community attempts at setting up libraries, sport clubs, and events also need to be supported by local government, academia, and NGOs. A big social revolution would take place if women-friendly transport could be developed.

But what does the future hold for the city? It is a great city. It feeds and provides jobs to 20 million people directly and supports Pakistan's economy to the tune of 15 per cent of its GDP. Few cities in the world are capable of doing this. In the battle between India, China, and the West for the control of the Indian Ocean trade and economy, it is of immense strategic importance, especially for its land-locked neighbours to the north. It is also the city from where Thar coal, Iranian and Central Asian gas to India and beyond by sea will be controlled and managed, along with that of Balochistan's enormous mineral wealth. As the only port in the vicinity of these resources, it is, and will remain, the best place for investment.

The politics of ideology, the values of the freedom movements are being replaced by those of economic pragmatism and Karachi will benefit from it. But no peace without equity and justice is possible in the world we are heading towards. So, the city needs vision. Not the KSDP 2020 World-Class City one, but maybe that of a commuter- and pedestrian-friendly city.

Justice in a multi-ethnic city is a difficult thing to achieve. Migration into Karachi will continue. Luckily, most of it in the future will be from within the province. The important question for future peace in Karachi depends on how we manage the politics of multi-ethnicity, especially when it is related to access to formal sector jobs, education, and governance.

PART I

HISTORY AND IDENTITY

PREHISTORIC KARACHI

ASMA IBRAHIM

This paper deals with prehistoric Karachi, a topic that is not much researched and written about. My introduction to the Stone Age or prehistoric sites of Karachi started when I met Professor Abdul Rauf Khan, after reading his paper on the prehistoric sites of Karachi, published in *Grassroots*, a research journal published by the Pakistan Studies Centre, Sindh.

When I visited Professor Rauf in his office, he took me to the store where the collection of tools was in tons, packed in bags. He wanted me to classify these and work on their documentation. One thing which struck me at that time—and which I still don't feel comfortable about—is that the whole site had literally been thoroughly washed away, along with any evidence. But when we look at today's Karachi, I think it was a wise thing: at least the physical evidence is still there, and we didn't lose it, like we lost the megalithic structures of prehistoric Karachi, at Gulistan-e-Jauhar, Shahrah-e-Faisal near Nalla, and others.

Unfortunately, the chairperson of the Geography Department, Karachi University, did not give me permission to even visit to study or review the collection. Thus, this article deals with the already published material by several scholars, including Professor Rauf and Professor Paolo Biagi. It is basically an attempt to draw attention towards the rapid disappearance of this very important part of Karachi's history, which we need to consider.

An attempt has been made to show the uninterrupted sequence of human occupation in the region of Karachi from the Stone Age, comprising of two stages: the Megalithic (prehistoric tradition of funerary memorials for dead ancestors) and the Bronze Age sites, which were the zenith of civilization in the area of Karachi. So what was Karachi in the Stone Age? The concept of boundaries was different in early times from what it is today. In the absence of maps, there was also an absence of a clearly-drawn cartographic line, marking a boundary.

Because of its peculiar position, this area must have been a meeting place of different pre-historic cultures flourishing around it. In maritime communications between the Indus and the Mesopotamian civilizations,

for which we have enough evidence, the importance of this region is self-evident. Apart from being on the highways of ancient cultures and civilizations, the Karachi region, with its maritime environment, its sources of food from the sea, its mild climate, its terrain with low parallel ridges and flat intervening valleys, watered by numerous springs and perennial and semi-perennial streams, provided very favourable conditions for becoming home to indigenous cultures. From such considerations, one can expect that this region must have played an important role in the drama of human progress from the earliest prehistoric times.

Karachi is situated on the Arabian Sea coastline of Pakistan in Sindh, where a complex group of wetland habitats have developed from what used to be the delta of the Indus River. This includes backwaters with mangroves, reed beds, river estuaries, and mudflats, as well as sandy beaches.¹ In this paper, I would like to propose a survey of the relationship of early man to the environment of Karachi and its environs.

As there are many problems in the study of early humans in this region, an innovative archaeological approach is the need of the time. These studies should be performed in conjunction with other disciplines, highlighting the need for site protection and conservation/preservation as required.

First and foremost is the need to study the Palaeolithic environment. Although Sindh has very little annual rainfall today, if there is a minor shift in the rain pattern, it could attract a lot of hunter-gatherers.

A study of the geology of the area is another important factor that should be given priority.

There are two major Stone Age sites in Sindh: the Rohri Hills in upper Sindh and Milestone 101 in lower Sindh near Jerruck (which used to be part of Karachi). The tool-making in the Rohri hills shows that this art was practised during the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic times, up to the time of the fully urban Mature Indus period and maybe beyond. The huge quantity of stone tools tells us that they were not used only by the people of that area, but that they probably catered to a large area and different communities.

The site Milestone 101 has continuous technical phases of the Stone Age: lower Palaeolithic artefacts are present, which are not frequent in the Potohar and Rohri hills. This makes this site not only very important but

¹ Andrew C. Campbell, *The Indus River: Biodiversity, Resources, Humankind*, A. Meadow and P. S. Meadow (eds.) (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

also unique in the area; other such sites are found either in Las Bela or western Sindh.

The search for prehistoric sites in this area is quite difficult, as the land has risen vertically, relative to the sea, several times since the end of the glacial period. The rising of the land has played a vital role in the processes of erosion and its acceleration, resulting in damage to old surfaces, which have been destroyed to a great extent. Only limited patches remain in the form of old terraces.

Although several archaeological surveys for prehistoric sites in Sindh have been carried out by foreign archaeologists and by the Pakistan Department of Archaeology, the Karachi region remained blank on the archaeological map of Pakistan: prior to the survey carried out by Professor Abdur Rauf, only a few sites were known in this area. Quoting his survey, Professor Rauf claims to have discovered around 250 prehistoric sites, ranging from small camping grounds to fair-sized rural settlements, from trading posts on the ancient highways to fortified outposts guarding the frontiers. These date back to the early Palaeolithic period (2 million years ago [MYA]), making it the place for the oldest cultures of our country after the Soan Valley culture of the Potohar Plateau.

What is meant by the Stone Age? It is a broad prehistoric period during which stone was widely used to make implements with a sharp edge, a point, or a percussion surface. It lasted roughly 3.4 million years, and ended between 6000 BCE and 2000 BCE, with the advent of metal working.

The history and identity of human settlements in Karachi goes back to prehistoric times, when there was a gradual spread from the sporadic settlements of the earlier Stone Age to the more densely distributed habitations of later Stone Ages, followed by the even later societies of a more complex kind.

From the available data, tracks can be traced through the recognized patterns of the settlements and cultures that have been labelled as the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Iron Ages. Archaeological data is in the form of tangible, material remains. This is our main tool for calculating chronology.

Lithic analysis is a major and specialized form of archaeological investigation. Archaeologists hope to combine cultural anthropology and archaeology in such a way that a specific contemporaneous trine can be used to illustrate the way of life and beliefs of the people using a specific Stone Age technology. Stone tools were made from a variety of stone; for example, flint and chert were shaped (or chipped) for use as cutting tools