



Intra Ethnic Fragmentation in the Sindhi Nationalist Movement: A Case Study (1988–2018)

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Abstract

This study explores the phenomenon of intra ethnic fragmentation within the Sindhi nationalist movement in Pakistan between 1988 and 2018. Since a plethora of scholarly insights is available on ethnic politics in Pakistan with particular focus on inter-ethnic tensions and state minority relations, this paper examines the internal fissures and fragmentations that has articulated the political path of Sindhi nationalism. Digging through primary and secondary sources, including party documents, and academic literature, the research investigates the ideological, organizational, and leadership based divisions have emerged among key Sindhi nationalist actors. The analysis reveals that while the movement has maintained a shared ethno linguistic identity, the internal rifts were pervasive and persistent. The nature of fissures was ideological, Political, structural, marked by contrary personalist leadership styles, and divergent strategic priorities that manifested per se as variant un natural alliances, mass contacts, electoral struggles and results. These intra ethnic cleavages have weakened the political effectiveness of Sindhi nationalist parties and diluted their ability to influence mainstream politics or extract meaningful concessions from the state. According to the study, ethnic organizations should be viewed as places where different opinions and conflicting aims reshape ongoing events. Studying this case enhances discussions on ethnic issues, nationalistic sentiments and the impact of political breakup in countries that gained independence after being ruled by another nation.

Keywords: Sindhi Nationalism, Intra Ethnic Fragmentation, Ethnic Politics, Jeay Sindh Movement, Factionalism

Introduction

Ever since Pakistan was created in 1947, ethnic politics has consistently played a challenging role in its political history. Ethnicity has been always a distinct and inherent feature of Pakistani Society. Because Pakistan is home to various ethnicities, languages, cultures and regions, its government has regularly faced disputes about what the country should look like. The relationship between different ethnicities and politics in Pakistan has led to complicated situations with many ethnic groups trying to change how leadership, representation and culture are recognized by the government (Shaikh, 2018). After gaining independence, those in charge worked to put power in their hands and to make sure everyone was the same by giving importance to Urdu and Islam. Still, these steps went against the country's ethnic diversity. Since

the Bengalis separated from Pakistan in 1971 and to this day, Baloch, Pashtun, Sindhi and Mohajir groups have fought for their rights; marginalization has led to the rise of ethnic nationalism. Most often, ethnic conflicts are analyzed by focusing on disputes and the state's forceful reactions when ethnic communities seek autonomy. Such analyses usually assume that all people within an ethnic group are highly united in both society and politics. This assumption overlooks the intra ethnic segmentations (the divisions within ethnic movements themselves) that shape not only internal group dynamics but also influence how these movements interact with the state, civil society, and rival ethnic constituencies. Intra ethnic fragmentation has thus become a significant yet underexplored factor in understanding the limits and contradictions of ethnic mobilization in Pakistan (Siddiqi, 2012)

This paper aims to address this gap by examining intra ethnic fragmentation within the Sindhi nationalist movement, focusing on the period between 1988 and 2018. The Sindhi nationalist movement, rooted in a strong sense of linguistic, cultural, and historical identity, has long articulated grievances against perceived Punjabi dominance, centralization, and resource exploitation. In the past, the movement looked to G.M. Syed for leadership, but soon split into several different political groups. This means that those involved include separatist parties seeking "Sindhudesh," reformist groups calling for increased provincial power within the federal system and political groups like the PPP which have incorporated and channeled Sindhi desires into the political process through elections ((Kennedy, 1991).

Once democracy was restored in 1988 following General Zia ul Haq's rule, Sindhi politics began to shift. The 1990s witnessed a proliferation of Sindhi nationalist factions, most notably the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) and its various offshoots. Disagreements over leadership legitimacy, ideological purity, political strategies (e.g., armed struggle vs. peaceful activism), and engagement with state institutions led to recurrent splits and rivalries. The ideological spectrum widened from radical separatism to center left federalism while the practical terrain was complicated by the PPP's electoral dominance in Sindh, the growing influence of religious parties, and the changing dynamics of Karachi's urban politics dominated by Mohajir interests (Mubariz et al, 2020).

During the post 2008 democratic period, further decentralization via the 18th Constitutional Amendment and rising disillusionment with mainstream politics reinvigorated nationalist discourse but did little to unite fragmented groups. Leadership disputes, regional turf battles (especially between urban and rural factions), and divergent responses to state repression have continued to hinder any unified Sindhi nationalist agenda. This fragmentation has had tangible consequences: diluted bargaining power, fractured electoral strategies, and weakened ability to mount sustained mobilization or negotiate with the state from a position of strength. This paper primarily builds the argument that the nature and manifestation of Intra ethnic fissures in Sindhi nationalist movement have been nuanced and evident and that left the nationalist movement vulnerable to be exploited by the state apparatus and rival political actors.

This paper explores how these intra ethnic fissures rooted in ideological divergence, organizational rivalry, and leadership competition has affected the course and effectiveness of Sindhi nationalism over three decades. Using a qualitative case study method and drawing from party documents, media reports and academic literature, it analyzes the evolution of factionalism within Sindhi nationalist politics, the cleavages and the nature of these cleavages and its broader

implications for the politics of ethnicity in Pakistan. By centering the internal dynamics of a single ethnic movement, the paper challenges the assumption of ethnic homogeneity and demonstrates how intra ethnic fragmentation can serve both as a weakness and, at times, a survival strategy in a contested political field. This case study not only contributes to literature on Sindhi nationalism but also to broader theoretical debates on ethnic politics, identity, and state society relations in postcolonial multi ethnic states.

This paper seeks to address two core research questions:

- (1) What is the nature of the divisions rampant within the Sindhi ethnic group?
- (2) How has intra ethnic divisions within the Sindhi nationalist movement manifested themselves over time?

By answering these questions, the study aims to examine the internal ideological, organizational, and strategic cleavages that have shaped the path and limitations of Sindhi nationalism in Pakistan between 1988 and 2018.

Literature Review

The politics of ethnicity in Pakistan has drawn substantial scholarly attention, particularly in the aftermath of the 1971 secession of East Pakistan. While the dynamics of inter-ethnic conflict, nationalist assertion, and state response have been thoroughly documented, fewer studies engage with the internal divisions within ethnic groups, especially those that claim a coherent identity and common purpose. This gap is particularly evident in the case of the Sindhi nationalist movement, which, despite its deep cultural and linguistic roots, has witnessed persistent factionalism, ideological divergence, and leadership struggles.

Farhan Hanif Siddiqi's book, *Politics of Ethnicity in Pakistan: The Baloch, Sindhi and Mohajir Ethnic Movements* (2012), deals specifically with this topic. Instead of adhering to the classical notion that ethnic groups are unified by culture alone, Siddiqi proposes that they are organized along political lines. From this perspective, what leads to ethnic division inside a group is often linked to politics, power struggles, and differing stances towards the state. Siddiqi finds that the Sindhi nationalists who followed G.M. Syed's ideas on Sindhudesh differed in the various ways, ranging from breaking away to seeking provincial rights guaranteed by the constitution. According to Siddiqi, inferring that ethnic groups are internally divided provides the basis for this study which focuses on the implications of such fragmentation within ethnic groups for politics.

Although published in 1988, Tahir Amin's (1988) book, *Ethno National Movements of Pakistan*, examines the Jeay Sindh Movement by comparing it to similar groups and political trends at home and abroad. Amin argues that reforms that concentrated power has led to complaints from ethnic groups and, due to the government's fluctuating response to such protests, this has repeatedly opened the door to factionalism. Importantly, Amin notes the presence of intra ethnic fissures, though he does not theorize them in detail, leaving room for further exploration.

In Adeel Khan's *Politics of Identity* (2005), the author presents nationalism as a political project shaped by the modern state's centralizing impulses. He explains how state interventions radicalize ethnic claims, transforming cultural expressions into organized political movements. His analysis of the Sindhi nationalist narrative illustrates how the struggle for identity, recognition, and resources was complicated by internal disagreements over goals, ideology, and strategy particularly after the 1988 return to democracy. This work contextualizes the ideological

divergence within Sindhi nationalist ranks as part of a broader struggle over representation and political legitimacy.

This study also builds on Paul Brass's (1991) theory of "Elite Competition" which holds that individuals can mold and alter ethnic identities to pursue political and material resources. According to Brass, ethnic identities are not fixed or primordial in nature. Thanks to Brass's theory, we can observe how Sindhi nationalist leaders choose certain issues such as language, ideological perceptions, share in power and their land to mobilize their community which in turn lead to splits among the leaders and divisions among the Sindhi ethnic movement. T. Camber Warren and Kevin Troy's study, *Explaining Violent Intra Ethnic Conflict* (2015), offers an approach that can be used to understand why intra group differences can lead to violence and conflict. They explain that the divide often arises due to the interference and intervention by states, contrasting elite aims and objectives and rivalry over leaders. The authors are convinced that the fragmentation results from the interventionist nature of state for manipulation and tactical and contested leadership. While this research looks at the issue globally, the lessons apply to Pakistan, where political leaders and key institutions have been involved in aiding and restricting different Sindhi groups, causing further disagreements within the community.

Many debates in Pakistan about ethnic politics have centered on the Sindhi nationalist movement and its Sindhudesh ideology. In recent years, experts have studied how politicians make use of ethnic identity for their own gain. In their study, Shahid and Qurban (2023) apply the instrumental theory developed by Paul Brass to show how Sindhi elites have used the hardships faced by the Sindhi community, such as being overlooked linguistically, economically disadvantaged, and culturally discriminated against, to push for their political purposes. They claim that political parties often use the Sindhudesh issue to meet their own needs. Examining the past can help explain the reasons behind the relations between different ethnicities.

In Hassan's (2021) view, the increase in Pakistani Urdu speaking migrants into Sindh after independence led to local Sindhis feeling a sense of loss of identity. With demographics changing, ethnicity-based political parties emerged, contributing to increasing conflicts between ethnic groups in the zone. According to Khan (2021), the demands of ethno nationalist movements in Pakistan have ranged from seeking independence to gaining autonomy. Experts use elite competition and relative deprivation theories to understand the reasons behind the success or failure of Sindh's ethnic movements. Overall, recent studies demonstrate that the Sindhi nationalist movement is characterized by various types of intra ethnic fragmentation. Matters such as ethnic identification being managed by elites, a history of clashes between different ethnic groups, rising and falling political pressures and different social and economic levels, play a role in making Sindhi nationalism more complex. They offer details on the many obstacles the movement has encountered and aid in tracing its progress between 1988 and 2018.

Though available literature counters the assumption of ethnic groups as monolithic entities (Brubaker, 2004; Siddiqi, 2012), there remains limited focus on categorizing the types of intra ethnic divisions and explaining how these divisions emerge, evolve and manifest themselves. Collectively, they help us see clearly what role different groups have played in the Sindhi nationalist movement. Nevertheless, most studies either look at intra group division as a less important issue or address it when discussing the Baloch or Mohajir movements. This paper

explores how internal divisions have influenced the course of Sindhi nationalism from 1988 to 2018. This makes it significant for the field of ethnic politics in Pakistan and relevant for debates on identity, division, and political movements in states with many ethnic groups.

Theoretical Framework

Ethnic politics in Pakistan has often been viewed through the lens of inter-group conflict Punjabis vs. Baloch, Sindhis vs. Mohajirs, and so forth. However, such analysis tends to treat ethnic groups as internally cohesive and unified. This paper takes a different approach by exploring intra ethnic fragmentation within the Sindhi nationalist movement, drawing on key theoretical perspectives from the literature on ethnicity, nationalism, and identity. At the core of this analysis is Paul Brass's instrumentalist theory, which emphasizes that ethnicity is not a fixed or primordial identity, but a tool mobilized by elites to gain political, economic, or symbolic advantage. Ethnic identity, according to Brass, is shaped and reshaped through strategic calculations, particularly in multi ethnic and conflict prone states. In the context of Sindhi nationalism, various political factions—including the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM), Awami Tehreek (AT), and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) have invoked Sindhi identity in different ways to consolidate power, build legitimacy, or challenge the center. These competing narratives and objectives have led to ideological fragmentation within the ethnic movement itself. In addition, Rogers Brubaker (2004), points out that "groupism" creates the idea of ethnic groups being sealed off and alike. Alternatively, Brubaker explains that ethnicity may be seen as changing political activities and organizational statements. It explains why Sindhi nationalists divide themselves into factions, presenting themselves as the true leaders, their ideology and approach to the movement. Brubaker believes that instead of regarding the movement as only an expression of ethnic culture, focusing on conflict within the movement and the way it is perceived can be more helpful. T. Camber Warren and Kevin Troy (2015) have also investigated intra ethnic division and argue that it usually develops in the face of state repression, competition from other similar groups and prevailing political conditions. The model explains how after the 1988 constitutional changes, reappearance of authoritarianism affected the decisions of nationalist leaders in Sindh.

According to constructivist theories, ethnicity and nationalism take shape over time in society, depending on political, cultural and economic situations. Thanks to Benedict Anderson (1983), we see how the Sindhi nationalist movement has grown a common sense of belonging by referring to their language, past and important people such as G.M. Syed. Constructivists claim that identifying as Sindhi is not always clear, as many groups often compete to define the term's meaning. In postcolonial circumstances, nationalism as an ideology should be seen as being both respected and put into practice. Sindhi nationalism is shaped by basic concepts of cultural heritage and a history shared by refugees, but it is promoted daily via speeches, media outlets and political posters. This role makes possible both the positive and negative aspects of the movement. With these theories, we can explain why and how fragmentation among Sindhi groups has become a main aspect of their nationalism. According to the paper, the different identities occurring among the clans are the result of intended strategies in national politics, supported by the actions of leaders as well as state and community reactions. To answer the central questions of this study, these theories must do more than deconstruct group cohesion they must also help identify the driving forces behind internal ethnic division and the mechanisms through which these cleavages materialize. Brass's (1991) emphasis on elite competition provides a lens to understand why multiple factions within the Sindhi movement mobilize

differently, while Brubaker's rejection of "groupism" allows us to ask who claims to represent the group and how. According to Warren and Troy in (2015), intragroup division happens when members of the same ethnic group are treated differently, act differently in response and are affected variously by the state. They are included here to explore and explain the forms and instances of fragmentation in the context of Sindhi nationalism.

Methodology

Within this study, qualitative analysis is used, combined with the case study method, to look at fragmentation happening among Sindhi nationalists from 1988 to 2018. Our aim is to describe and understand the changes in internal divisions and the role they have played in guiding the political direction of the movement. Studying a single phenomenon closely is facilitated with the case study approach which also considers its real life circumstances. Through the Sindhi nationalistic movement, it is possible to study how an ethnic group can be separated by differing views and political organizations. Because of this method, it is possible to study extensively the nature of divisions within Sindhi ethnic movement and can be evaluated and compared with the nature of divisions persisting in other ethnic groups in Pakistan. Furthermore it enables an exploration of how these divisions have manifested the way they have altered the course of Sindhi ethnic movement against the manipulating state machinery of Pakistan.

Data for the study is drawn exclusively from secondary sources, including:

- Scholarly books on nationalism, ethnic politics, and Pakistani political history;
- Peer reviewed journal articles;
- Research papers and analytical essays published by academic institutions and think tanks.

The analysis relies on document based interpretation of these materials, with particular emphasis on discourse, historical framing, and ideological content. This approach facilitates a critical reading of how different Sindhi political actors and organizations articulate identity, define their constituencies, and engage in intra group competition. Given the absence of primary interviews or survey data, the study does not claim empirical generalizability. Rather, it seeks to make a theoretical contribution by linking the specific patterns of fragmentation in the Sindhi nationalist movement to broader frameworks of ethnicity, nationalism, and elite politics.

The selected time frame 1988 to 2018 corresponds with Pakistan's re-entry into democratic rule after Zia ul Haq's dictatorship, extending through major shifts in provincial autonomy (particularly the 18th Amendment) and the rise of new political narratives. This period also saw key developments in Sindhi nationalism, including the splintering of major factions and evolving relationships with mainstream parties like the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Overall, the study adopts a historical interpretive lens, drawing connections between political narratives, institutional responses, and ideological divergence. The focus remains on uncovering how and why intra ethnic fragmentation has persisted within a movement that is otherwise united by a shared ethno linguistic identity.

Analysis and Findings

The following analysis draws directly from the two research questions posed in this study. First, it identifies the nature of internal divisions within the Sindhi nationalist movement by categorizing them into ideological, strategic, generational, and socio economic cleavages. Secondly, the course digs into how these divisions sprang up among political parties, between

party leaders, in gathering policy and in forming alliances. What is clear from the study is that Sindhi nationalist politics is strongly influenced by internal conflicts across different groups.

1. Historical Roots of Intra Ethnic Fragmentation

The movement for Sindhi nationalism was formed due to Britain's colonial land rules, growing marginalization of the language, and changes in Sindh's demographics after Partition. Soon after independence, some Sindhi leaders grew concerned about the strong presence of Punjabis and the arrival of a significant number of Mohajirs to Karachi and Hyderabad (Amin, 1988). Shifts in demographics and politics led people to unite against a common issue, but not everyone responded the same way, which created the foundation for Sindhis to separate into groups.

2. Urban Rural Divide and Class Based Fault Lines

The gap between those from the city and those from the countryside is a common issue discussed in Sindhi nationalism. Living in cities and dealing with state officials and systems has made Urban Sindhis tend towards working with others. In contrast, the rural communities of Sindhis have felt disempowered and underprivileged, contributing to their support of radical and independent groups. This existing gap was enlarged by the quota system which left unequal opportunities for Sindhis in different places, as well as by conflicts between the rich and poor classes (Khan, 2005).

3. Factionalism within Sindhi Nationalist Parties

The end of G.M. Syed's life shifted how the organization was held together. His group JST split into several factions such as Jeay Sindh Mahaz (JSM) and Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM). Some of these groups turned to boycotting the elections, and others chose to either use force or participate in politics. The factional nature of Sindhi nationalism has led to many different beliefs, causing disagreements and continuing leadership problems within the movement today (Sangi, 2014).

4. Divergent Strategies: Syed vs. Palijo

The sharp ideological and strategic split between G.M. Syed and Rasool Bux Palijo further fragmented the nationalist space. Syed's separatist vision of *Sindhudesh* contrasted with Palijo's socialist, autonomist politics. While Syed formed controversial alliances with Mohajir leaders and maintained a purist stance against electoral participation, Palijo emphasized class struggle, land reform, and participation in democratic coalitions like the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD). Their competing strategies generated competing factions urban vs. rural, separatist vs. autonomist, and idealist vs. pragmatic (Syed, 1992; Sangi, 2014; Hassan, 2021).

5. State Exploitation of Internal Divides

Successive regimes, particularly under Zia ul Haq, strategically exploited intra ethnic rifts within the Sindhi nationalist movement. The state's support for MQM in urban Sindh served to counterbalance Sindhi nationalists, and military operations disproportionately targeted factions like the PPP and AT. These interventions intensified mistrust among nationalist groups, while **selective repression** further segmented the movement between underground militant wings and formally participating parties (Chandio, 2013; Siddiqi, 2012).

6. Electoral Marginalization and Organizational Decay

Despite widespread cultural pride and historic legitimacy, Sindhi nationalist parties have largely failed electorally. The dominance of the PPP, combined with the nationalist factions' inability to unite, has left them marginalized in provincial politics. JSQM, JST, and their splinters consistently underperform in elections, lacking both charismatic leadership and coherent messaging. Even intra party splits—like those between Rasool Bux Palijo and his son Ayaz Latif Palijo reflect a deep crisis of direction and cohesion within the broader movement (Siddiqi, 2012; Shah, 1997).

7. Consequences of Fragmentation

Intra ethnic fragmentation has undermined the Sindhi nationalist movement's ability to present a unified front on key issues such as language policy, resource control, and provincial autonomy. It has led to strategic disarray, weakened negotiating power with the state, and diluted public support. Most importantly, it has confused the electorate, who remains culturally Sindhi but are increasingly alienated from nationalist rhetoric that fails to translate into concrete political gains.

8. Further Segmentation within Jeay Sindh Factions

The Jeay Sindh movement, originally galvanized by the leadership of G.M. Syed, has fractured into multiple competing factions that claim ideological descent from his Sindhudesh vision. These include the Jeay Sindh Mahaz (JSM), Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM), Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM), and Jeay Sindh Tehreek (JST). The proliferation of these groups has been driven by both ideological disputes—such as the debate over peaceful activism versus armed resistance—and personal rivalries among second generation leaders. The JSQM itself split further into JSQM (A) under Bashir Qureshi and JSQM (Arisar) under Abdul Wahid Arisar, highlighting the extent of organizational fragmentation. Each group has struggled to gain political legitimacy and electoral traction, partly due to inconsistent narratives and frequent infighting, which have diluted the Sindhudesh movement's overall coherence and public support (Sangi, 2014)

9. Ideological Realignment in Awami Tehreek

Awami Tehreek (AT), historically associated with Rasool Bux Palijo's leftist, autonomist politics, also witnessed intra party splits, especially after the emergence of his son Ayaz Latif Palijo as a competing political actor. The generational and strategic divide culminated in the formation of Qaumi Awami Tehreek (QAT), which sought to blend Sindhi nationalism with broader progressive politics. However, internal disagreements regarding strategy—such as participation in elections, alliances with national parties, and stances on urban Sindh—undermined AT's once cohesive identity. The father son schism symbolized deeper tensions within AT's support base, particularly over how to balance class struggle with ethnic mobilization (Dawn, 2016).

10. Ambiguous Role of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP)

While the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is not a Sindhi nationalist party in doctrinal terms, its deep roots in rural Sindh and consistent electoral dominance have positioned it as a major claimant of Sindhi political representation. However, the PPP's role in the nationalist narrative is complicated. On one hand, it has integrated Sindhi grievances into its federalist rhetoric; on the other hand, their accommodations with the central government and patronage politics have often

led to criticisms of co-optation. In addition, a gap is forming within the PPP between rural feudal elites and new groups of urban professionals. Because of these differences, the PPP is no longer seen as the only group speaking for Sindhis and new nationalist parties, even if scattered, have started gaining attention (Shah, 1997; Shaikh, 2009).

Discussion

What the study reveals is that ethnic politics in Pakistan are complicated, especially due to splits among groups inside a single ethnic movement like Sindhi nationalism. The research does not treat Sindhi nationalism as a united movement; it demonstrates that the movement was marked by many different ideas, fights for leadership and a range of strategies, along with internal disagreements. It is proved that serious divisions among Sindh's nationalists are built in and used as a key strategy. Such differences often stem from disagreements about the future of the country (separatism vs. autonomy), people's approach to elections (either take part or refuse) and the squabbles among leaders. As a result, fragmentation affects both party ideologies and their structure which is expressed through the rise of more parties, frequent message clashes and a disappointed audience. This helps us understand that theories of ethnic politics can be deepened because internal and external issues often encourage movements to split apart.

The analysis points out that disparities in socio economics and politics cause ethnic groups to separate. In this way, it highlights that there are many forms of class and cultural differences among the members of one ethnic group, rather than the primordialist belief that all members of an ethnic group think identically. It is also compatible with constructivist and instrumentalist theories that show how leading figures in politics manipulate and use ethnic groups for their different aims.

It was mainly the opposing ideas of G.M. Syed (who wanted Sindh to split from the rest of Pakistan) and Rasool Bux Palijo (who advocated salvation for Sindh with socialism) that prevented all Sindhis from working together. This demonstrates that ethnic movements can bring together various and occasionally conflicting, ideas about who they are and what they want to achieve. It also points out that competition and rational choices by elites, as Brass explained in his instrumentalist theory, help to split an ethnic community from within. The state is also found to have contributed to deepening dividing aspects of Sindhi nationalism. By using repression, winning over moderates and supporting the Mohajir community and MQM, the state has divided people to control them better. As a result of these tactics, the nationalist movement once again became divided and has remained ignored in the political world.

Electoral statistics and changes within political organizations reflect the outcomes caused by political divisions. Because individual nationalist parties did not form an alliance, the PPP was able to take over the politics of Sindh. It provides evidence for theories that indicate internal conflicts among ethnic groups reduce their influence and ability to act politically. These ideas have significance for learning more about ethnic politics in countries that became independent after colonial rule. It is generally believed that internal challenges in ethnic groups are common and play a key role in politicized ethnicity. At the same time, there are certain limitations in this research. Because this research depends on studies and uses a qualitative approach, it does not include voices from the public or reliable measures on how fragmentation is affecting things. Field research and long period studies might shed more light on the everyday lives related to factional politics. In conclusion, the fragmentation within the Sindhi nationalist movement offers

a compelling case of how ethnic identity and political agency are contested, negotiated, and mobilized internally. This challenges simplistic narratives of ethnic unity and highlights the nuanced, multi layered nature of nationalism in Pakistan.

Conclusion

This study has established that the Sindhi nationalist movement, far from being a unified expression of ethnic identity, is characterized by persistent and complex internal fragmentation. The nature of these divisions is ideological, generational, structural based on alliances, strategic, and class based reflecting not only differing visions of autonomy and nationalism but also competing leadership claims and tactical disagreements. These intra ethnic rifts have manifested through splintered factions, shifting political alignments, electoral marginalization and uneven engagement with the state. By analyzing key political organizations such as the Jeay Sindh factions, Awami Tehreek, and the Pakistan People's Party, particularly from 1988 to 2018, the study demonstrates how internal contestation has diluted collective mobilization and hindered the formation of a cohesive nationalist agenda. These findings not only answer the central research questions but also contribute to broader understandings of ethnicity as a politically constructed and internally contested field. In the context of Pakistan, intra ethnic fragmentation emerges not as an anomaly but as a structural feature of politicized ethnicity. These findings challenge the common assumption that ethnic groups act as monolithic entities, emphasizing instead the dynamic and pluralistic nature of ethnic identity and political agency. Understanding such intra group complexities is essential for scholars, policymakers, and activists engaged in ethnic politics, not only in Pakistan but in comparable multi ethnic, postcolonial contexts.

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