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Evolution of *Muhajir* (Migrant) Sentiments in Karachi and the Emergence of Alternate Ethnic Identities in Intizar Husain's *The Sea Lies Ahead* and Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography*

Soumyadeep Neogi

Abstract

The wave of mass migrations and human displacement following the Partition of the Indian Subcontinent engendered the emergence of a new ethnic identity for migrant Muslims who were struggling to set roots in their new homeland – Pakistan. Once depicted as the most self-sacrificing people who ensured the successful creation of Pakistan, these migrants were, gradually, perceived as unwanted refugees and outsiders. Political and ethnic tensions between natives and migrants were violent in the city of Karachi, where most of the migrants had been shifted. These volatile and hostile conditions complicated the notion of ‘homeland’ for the migrants who found no sense of security or belonging in Pakistan and had to organize themselves under a new and distinct ethnic label: the *Muhajir*. Intizar Husain and Kamila Shamsie address this issue about the idea of the homeland for the post-Partition Muslim migrants in Pakistan in *The Sea Lies Ahead* and *Kartography*, respectively. This paper traces the evolution of the *Muhajir* ethnic identity by studying the portrayal of the migrants’ experiences in these two texts and presents the argument that the post-Partition Muslim migrants in Pakistan gradually prioritized a national consciousness over a diasporic consciousness to situate themselves in Pakistan.

Keywords: Diaspora, Migration, Placeness, Partition of India, Identity Politics, New Ethnicities

The Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 displaced millions of people who had to leave their hometowns and migrate to their new homelands: the new nation-states of India and Pakistan. While millions of Hindus and Sikhs migrated from Pakistan to India, a similar number of Muslims made the journey in the opposite direction to Pakistan. These Muslim migrants employed different strategies to place themselves in their new homeland, where they faced varied responses from the



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government establishment. Initially, they were looked upon as people who sacrificed their former homes for the sake of their religion and were instrumental in making the Pakistan movement a success. They were collectively described as “*Muhajir*,” alluding to the first migration of Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina. This religious connotation added zest to the native Sindhis and Punjabis of Pakistan who considered themselves as the “*Ansar*” – the local people of Medina who welcomed and took care of the Prophet and his followers - and assumed it to be their religious duty to help the migrants from India.¹ While the Punjabi Muslim migrants settled in the Pakistani part of Punjab, the Urdu-speaking migrants from the northern and central Indian provinces were forced to go to Sindh where most of them settled in and around the city of Karachi – which was both the provincial and the national capital at the time.² However, resources were limited in Karachi; hence as the number of migrants started increasing,³ the attitude of the native Sindhis changed and they regarded the migrants to be a threat to their existence.⁴ The ensuing rivalry between the two parties compelled the migrants to identify themselves as a distinct ethnic group, and they sought to organize themselves politically to secure their rights and acquire greater representation.⁵

The meaning of the term “*Muhajir*” also transformed from being an “an all-embracing term for migrants to a pejorative word” which referred to their tainted “Indian past” and presented them as refugees in a “negative sense as someone who is a passive object of charity” (Kumar and Kothari, 781-82). Oskar Verkaaik observes that the term “*Muhajir*” had become “just another abusive word” that no longer served to “overcome boundaries between people,” instead it only accentuated their existing differences. Thus the term, which had once meant “welcome,” now signified “you are not from here” (Verkaaik, 13). This transformation of the term “*Muhajir*” placed the migrants as outsiders and implied that they were essentially foreigners who were taking undue advantage of the resources of Pakistan. Although, the migrants had no desire to be categorized as a distinct ethnic group and preferred their primary identity to be that of a Pakistani; however, the political situation ascribed an “ethnic label” to the term “*Muhajir*” which the migrants finally acknowledged (Verkaaik, 13). Critical questions about the act of migration emerge from this sequence of events vis-à-vis the notions of a homeland, the consequences of uprootment and displacement, and how



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one's identity can get affected by the place of one's residence. This paper seeks to address these concerns and interrogate the evolution of the *Muhajir* migrants' relationship with their new homeland – Pakistan, from the moment immediately after Partition in 1947 to the decade of the 1990s. By analyzing the portrayal of the migrants' experiences in two novels: Intizar Husain's *The Sea Lies Ahead* and Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography*, this paper illustrates how a strong diasporic consciousness was evident in the first generation Muhajirs who felt out of place in Pakistan, but this sense of alienation is eventually addressed by the third generation Muhajirs who accept Pakistan as their home and identify themselves as Pakistanis despite the underlying tensions.

Recent studies on Partition have explored the idea of “belonging” and “notions of nation, state and democracy” (Manchanda, 23). These studies argue that displaced migrants were not only victims of violence, but they were also transformed into a “new kind of political subject” who “shaped the process of post-colonial state formation” (Robinson 68). Authors like Yasmin Khan and Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar assert that the “the political disagreements and social conflicts that developed around the status and treatment” of the migrants had a “formative impact on the development” of both India and Pakistan as “post-colonial states.” Both these authors “approach the Partition as a prolonged process (rather than as an event), which took place within the boundaries of the states of India and Pakistan and not just on their borders” (Robinson, 69). Yasmin Khan, in *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* describes Partition as the “beginning of a process of [constructing] new national citizens, rather than the end point of national struggles” (5).

Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, similarly, has argued in *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia* that Partition was a long-term process that eluded any simple “closure” immediately after 1947; instead it put “the very process of making modern nation-states to trial and scrutiny (13). She insists that the Partition should not be regarded as a single and isolated event, as she posits the concept of a long partition – “1947 was only the beginning of what was necessarily a long, drawn-out process of dividing a territory and its people into two distinct nation-states” and the “historical process of partitioning itself” was not limited to 1947 (Zamindar), as several mass displacements took place in the following years that were caused by both physical



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violence and bureaucratic apathy. The long partition ensured that migrants, on either side of the border, go through bureaucratic hurdles of “dividing” and “categorizing” as people bound for specific nation-states to avoid being “stateless” or “undefined” (Zamindar, 226). Zamindar observes that for the Muslim migrants, the process of becoming absorbed into the new nation and become Pakistani citizens was neither immediate nor “straightforward,” instead it was much “debated and contested” (7). In Karachi, the problem was acute as Sarah Ansari, *in Life after Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh, 1947 - 1962*, notes that the large influx of migrants in the city affected Pakistani politics for decades. The lack of adequate rehabilitative measures frustrated the migrants, and they turned towards militancy to fight the local Sindhis for a higher share of resources. These issues were as “intractable” as the ones which the Partition had “intended to solve” (Chatterji, 217).

Intizar Husain and Kamila Shamsie, both, portray in their novels the hardships which the migrants had to face in Karachi after Partition, and a close reading of these two texts offers us a way to understand how Zamindar’s notion of the long partition unfolds in the gradual process through which Muhajirs assimilate themselves in Pakistani society over a period of several generations. Husain’s characters in *The Sea Lies Ahead* represent the first generation Muhajirs who physically uprooted themselves from India, while Shamsie’s characters in *Kartography* embody the second and third generation Muhajirs who were either too young at the time of migration or were born and brought up in Pakistan. The texts reveal that the first generation Muhajirs found it challenging to get accustomed to their new Pakistani surroundings, and they experienced an intense yearning for their former homes in India. However, this yearning is steadily dissipated in the second and third generation Muhajirs who regarded Karachi and Pakistan as their home. Both these narratives have the ethnopolitical rivalries and violent riots of Karachi in their backgrounds. However, while Husain’s first-generation Muhajirs oscillate between hope, despair, nostalgia, and confusion with some even wishing to leave Pakistan altogether because it is unsafe for them (166); Shamsie’s second and third-generation Muhajirs express no such desire to leave Karachi despite the social tensions (111).



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In the novel *The Sea Lies Ahead* (translated into English by Rakhshanda Jalil from the original Urdu *Aage Samandar Hai*), Intizar Husain captures the emotional anxiety and insecurity of the Muslim migrants who had migrated to Karachi after Partition. Husain hints at their disillusionment and helplessness with the very title, “The Sea Lies Ahead,” which is an allusion to the threats that the Pakistani General Ayub Khan had given to the Muhajirs to warn them against voting for his political opponent Fatima Jinnah.⁶ The text has a large number of *Muhajir* characters from diverse cultural backgrounds, who have all migrated from various Indian cities like Lucknow, Meerut, and Delhi. The narrator is a young man named Jawad, who had migrated from Vyaspur, and the novel is, primarily, centered around his persistent struggles to root himself successfully in Pakistan. Stretching over a period of several decades, the narrative often refers to the ethnopolitical upheavals in post-Partition Karachi, which affect the lives of Muhajirs, who feel that the incessant lawlessness subverts their idea of Pakistan as a haven (263). This lack of security is a crucial factor which prevents the first-generation Muhajirs from being able to root themselves in Pakistan successfully.

An acute sense of alienation and separation plague the first-generation Muhajirs, in the novel, who cannot overcome the dislocation from their homelands. These characters often lapse into moments of nostalgia for their old homes (50, 56), and rue their present condition in Karachi where “kidnappings, murders, bombings” were regular occurrences (34). Jawad is haunted by his memories of Vyaspur and the wounds of his displacement, as a first-generation *Muhajir*, did not heal in even decades after his migration. Husain’s Muhajirs struggle to deal with the loss of their old homes and the ethnic violence of Karachi only exacerbated their woes. Making sense of the turmoil was particularly complicated for the older Muhajirs; for instance, the character of Saiyad Aqa Hasan laments how people protested against any form of crime in Lucknow, but people in Karachi seemed indifferent (50). For him, Karachi is an alien land where both the land and the sky are “different” (52). The political problems which the Muhajirs faced, which ultimately gave rise to a migrant-centric political party like the M.Q.M., are reflected when Hasan asks a friend of the narrator, Majju Bhai, “who should we go for justice? What do these people here know about the sorrows we have faced ... what lies ahead?” Majju’s solemn reply: “The sea,” suggests the vulnerability of the Muhajirs who could go nowhere else (51).⁷ An elderly character, Mirza *sahab*, feels like “a leaf that



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was snapped from its branch” (56). He confesses that he avoids mentioning Delhi anymore in order to suppress the memories of his former home (57). Similarly, Karbalai *sahab* reminisces about his life in Shikarpur, which was peaceful compared to the insecurity of Karachi. For him, unlike Mirza *sahab*, memories were a mode of emancipation from the chaos. His children who live in America always urge him to move there – which signifies another migration, this time from Pakistan to America to find the same tranquility and security for which Muhajirs had come to Pakistan (70).

The social anarchy of Karachi makes the city “unrecognizable” to Jawad also, yet he is shocked when Majju Bhai suggests him to either accept the situation or leave the city. For Muhajirs, the thought of leaving Karachi was akin to an existential threat as it meant undergoing another uprootment, when they ought to try and make the city their new home (36). But even years later, the ethnic violence of Karachi continued to play a pivotal role in preventing the first-generation Muhajirs from feeling at home in Pakistan, and brazen criminal activities transformed the city into a strange place for Jawad who could not find any peace or security there (187). Unfortunately, he becomes a victim of the violence when he is accidentally shot by unknown miscreants (257). While recuperating, Jawad remembers the moment he had arrived in Pakistan years ago; ironically, everyone was hopeful that they had left behind the “land of fear,” and no one will “point a gun” at them in Pakistan (263).

The first-generation Muhajirs are unable to anchor themselves firmly in Karachi, and this is reflected in Jawad’s constant references to trees: “once I get started on ... trees, all other subjects get left behind” (1). Trees symbolize rootedness, being firmly rooted in the ground and in complete harmony with the surroundings, something which the Muhajirs are unable to do. He refers to a date palm tree which was planted by the Emir of Cordoba, after being taken away from its original home in the “sands of Arabia.” But it had successfully taken “root and flourished in Andalusia” and lived for more than a hundred years with other trees growing around it (1). This contrasts Husain’s first-generation Muhajirs, who were similarly uprooted, but whether they too can successfully re-root themselves and flourish in Pakistan is uncertain. Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali in “A Rite of Passage” asserts that being “rooted” signifies “drawing nurture and meaning,” the Muhajirs are uprooted in



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the sense that they were displaced from their land of origin – the place which was the source of their “meaning” (186).

Jawad understands that the lives of the Muhajirs had changed after migration and what was “left behind ... had to be cut off” (10). However, Husain’s Muhajirs try to keep the memories of their past alive in various ways, which reflects the diasporic consciousness that was present in them. Interestingly, the Muhajirs in Karachi originated from various Indian cities and hence, were not a homogenous ethnic group like the Sindhis. Husain’s Muhajirs frequently compete with each other to assert their regional superiority; Urdu-speaking characters from Lucknow, *Khari-boli* speakers from Meerut, poets from Amrohvi are seen discussing the fairs of Nauchandi and its *paranths*, all vying to show who comes from a more refined and cultured background (38,62). Majju Bhai likens them to different rivers that were all going towards the sea, where “Every river says: “I am the sea”” (36). The characters’ fondness for food from their former hometowns and the culinary practices which they attempt to recreate, reveal that they still nurture a sense of belonging to their original homelands – an emotion which was also prevalent in the non-Muslim migrants who had come to India after Partition (58).⁸

Jawad’s sense of alienation in Karachi continues for several years; he questions himself: “Who am I ... What am I doing in their midst?” (68). Despite his best efforts to suppress his old memories, he is often reminded about his life in India; although he cannot remember anything in its entirety, shifting between “remembering and forgetfulness” (88). As a first-generation *Muhajir*, Jawad is unable to set firm roots in Pakistan and subconsciously clings onto his past heritage. The other characters find different ways to deal with such emotions like by dreaming nostalgically about their former lives or contemplate leaving Pakistan altogether, but Jawad can do neither; he is “completely empty” (90). In such an anguished mental state, Jawad visits Vyaspur in India decades after Partition; there he still finds the sky “familiar” as he locates his “own surroundings” and feels “together and whole” again (126). After returning to Karachi, he feels like he is in a “state of trance” and the whole visit was like a dream (164); one of the characters in the text, Rafiq *sahab*, notes that such a condition was common among many Muhajirs who had visited India, it is as if their bodies



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have only made the physical journey back to Pakistan, but their minds stayed back in India (177). In contrast, the younger Muhajirs show little emotional attachment for their former Indian homes; for instance, a young *Muhajir* character, Tausif, admits that he felt “bored ... in just two days” when he visited his former home in Meerut (211). Similarly, the younger relatives of the Muhajirs, like Jawad’s nephew Shakur, who stay in India, display no affection for Pakistan and identify themselves firmly as Indians (161).

The Sea Lies Ahead highlights the conflicting emotions, vis-à-vis Pakistan, which agitated the first-generation Muhajirs, especially the elderly, for over thirty years after Partition. By using several mythological allusions in the text, Husain insists that Muhajirs ought to accept Karachi as their home and not think of fleeing from there (284). However, the migrant-generation Muhajirs suffer from a melancholic nostalgia and show, what Lawrence Buell describes as, “place connectedness” for their home towns in India (Buell 66). Tausif feels that everyone had to “carve out” their “own philosophy” to survive in the turmoil of Karachi (45). The Muhajirs’ repeated attempts of recreating specific aspects of their Indian past, like organizing *kebab-parantha* parties or *mushairas* (poetry recitals), reflect not just their diasporic consciousness, but also their inability to accept Karachi as their new home. For the Muhajirs, Pakistan was like a cherished dream before Partition (156); but once that dream was realized, they are unable to move forward and participate in the nation-building process. The ethnopolitical tensions in Karachi also hindered their assimilation into Pakistani society.

In *Kartography*, Kamila Shamsie addresses this issue concerning the societal integration of Muhajirs in Pakistan, by illustrating the ethnopolitical dilemmas which second and third-generation Muhajirs had to face in Karachi. The text revolves around the narrator, Raheen’s friendship with her friend Karim, and the complicated relationship of their parents who were once engaged to each other. Although the text posits several crucial questions about the effect of the Bangladesh Liberation War on later generations of Pakistanis, but this paper will focus on how the ethnic problems the Karachi during the 1980s and 1990s affected the Muhajirs’ situation in Pakistan. Unlike Husain’s novel, where the Muhajirs were from diverse socioeconomic and regional



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backgrounds, Shamsie's characters are from various ethnicities and belong to an upper-class background. However, despite their elite status, Zafar and his daughter, Raheen, who are second and third-generation Muhajirs, are not immune to the ethnic bigotry and violence of Karachi.

Raheen is only thirteen when she gets exposed to the subtle ethnic discriminations in Pakistani society as she overhears a conversation, about land reforms in Sindh, between her father and his friends, Asif and Laila, who were both from a Sindhi feudal background. Asif declares that Muhajirs do not have any "ties to a place" or any emotional connection with their land as they had left behind their homes during Partition; hence they could easily demand sweeping land reforms. Raheen knew that Zafar favoured reforms because of economic necessities, which would benefit everyone and not just Muhajirs, but she understands that all these arguments were "dismissed ... with one word: muhajir. Immigrant" (26-7). Laila laments that the "bloody" Muhajirs had got political power and could make unnecessary demands as they were a majority in Karachi; she confesses that Sindhis resented Muhajirs for migrating to Pakistan and questions how Muhajirs like Zafar could claim Karachi as theirs when her family had been living "there for generations" – "Who the hell are these Muhajirs to pretend it's their city!" Raheen ponders whether her identity was still that of an "immigrant's daughter" and if she would be seen as "another Muhajir. Immigrant," since her family "had crossed the border nearly four decades ago," and both she and her father had spent their whole lives in Karachi. As a third-generation migrant, Raheen has no conflict in asserting Karachi as her home "just as much as it was anyone else's" (27).

Ethnic riots are regular occurrences when Raheen grows up during the 1980s, but she does not feel insecure in Karachi; instead, she describes it as "the only place" where she "felt utterly safe" (39). Even after narrowly escaping getting shot at (52), she still cannot contemplate leaving the city. Similarly, Zafar is also dismissive of any thoughts of leaving Karachi – "I can't imagine growing old anywhere but here" (60). The affection that Raheen has for Karachi is reflected when, after several deadly clashes as the city was slowly coming back to normalcy, she poignantly observes that Karachi was "getting back to its feet, as it had always been able to do, and that didn't just mean getting back to work, but getting back to play: friendship, *chai*, cricket on the street, conversation."



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She imagines that the city was winking at her and saying, “I am a breeding ground for monsters, but don’t think that is the full measure of what I am” (148). Raheen feels that it would be an “abomination to pretend” to be unaffected and unaware of the violence in Karachi (179), and even though she feels that hostilities had transformed Karachi into an “ugly, polluted, overpopulated, heartbreaking place,” yet she still refers to it as “my city” (180). Raheen confesses that she finds a remarkable sense of “familiarity” and “belonging” in “every set of directions” in Karachi – “a city invested in storytelling” (189). In the final section of the novel, Raheen reveals her unrestrained love for Karachi in a letter to Karim in which she implores him to return to the city; she emphasizes on the ‘dual’ nature of Karachi – a city that can be extremely violent but also ‘intimate,’ beautiful and helpful:

But Karachi is always dual. Houses are alleys; car thieves are the people to help you when your car won’t start; pollution simultaneously chokes you and makes you gasp at the beauty of unnatural sunsets ... No simple answers in Karachi ... a man at the airport turns round and gives us his car-keys, a motia seller calls us ‘sister’ and adorns our wrists with flowers, families fling open their doors and avert their eyes and help us make our way to places of worship; at its best, Karachi, Karachi is intimate with strangers ... I love this place, Karachi, for all its madness and complications. (190)

As a third-generation Muhajir, Raheen’s feelings about Karachi are similar to the nostalgic yearning, which the first-generation Muhajirs had for their old, Indian hometowns. This indicates that the third-generation migrants can, finally, root themselves in Pakistan and find meaning there; they no longer have the necessity or desire to look back at their Indian past.

Zafar and Raheen accept the term *Muhajir* as an ethnic label that distinguishes them from the native Pakistani ethnic groups like Sindhis and Punjabis (106); however, they object to the connotation that the term carries – which designates them as “immigrants” and places them as outsiders in Pakistani society. Zafar reminds Asif that the Muhajirs had left behind their homes in India to become Pakistanis and not be categorized as “Immigrants” (130). Thus, the second and third-generation Muhajirs can construct themselves as a distinct ethnic group of Pakistan who were



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not, initially, native to the land but are still able to find a sense of belonging there and hence, regard themselves as Pakistani citizens. Both Zafar and Raheen are sympathetic towards the plight of the middle-class Muhajirs, who are victims of the government's discriminatory policies. Shamsie highlights the effects of such policies, which engender ethnic rivalries, through the distressing episode of the car thief, who had once aspired to join the civil services, whom Raheen meets at Mehmoodabad. Despite having an excellent academic record, the man could not secure a job because he was a *Muhajir*, and out of frustration, he resorted to a life of crime and violence. Despite her privileged upper-class background, Raheen understands how thousands of Muhajir youth are affected by this quota system which "discriminated against Karachiites, particularly Muhajirs who had no family domicile outside the city" by allocating jobs "according to an absurd urban—rural divide" (105, 130). Zafar also asserts that when Muhajirs first came to Pakistan, they were indeed better qualified academically and hence had got all the top jobs in Pakistan. But, he is worried that the existing "political marginalization," "police brutality" and the quota system are "wreaking such havoc" on the educated and ambitious Muhajirs that they may get driven "to the point when they'll pick up guns and detonate bombs" (130).

The concept of postmemory can serve as a framework through which we can examine how Zafar, as a second-generation *Muhajir*, deals with the ethnic prejudices that his Sindhi friends display and how he is able to relate with other Muhajirs. Marianne Hirsch conceptualizes 'postmemory' as an intergenerational transmission of "traumatic knowledge and embodied experience" from members of the generation that experiences the trauma to the members of the second generation who are born after the traumatic event has passed (6). These experiences are transmitted through the means of stories, oral narratives and behavioral tendencies among which the members of the second-generation grow up. Although, the members of the second generation do not experience the traumatic events themselves, but the experiences of the previous generation affect them so deeply that they appear to create personal memories of those experiences too, and the traumatic events experienced by the first generation experienced continue to affect the second generation. The concept of postmemory reveals that the emotional intensity of displacement and migration that the first generation experienced has not reduced in the second-generation; in essence,



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Zafar has not forgotten the trauma of migration that his parents had to endure during Partition, even though he was born after 1947. When Asif says that immigrants came “streaming across the new border,” to take away the “best jobs from Sindhis,” Zafar reminds him of the difficult choices that Muhajirs had to make during that migration – “the fact that Muhajirs came here [to Pakistan] leaving everything behind. Our homes, our families, our ways of life.” The personal pronoun ‘Our’ also shows that the experience of his parents’ migration is constituted as postmemory in Zafar who considers the experience of the migration as his own even though he had not made that journey himself. Zafar adds, “We can’t be blamed if some...of us came from areas with education systems that made us qualified for office jobs” (130); here, the use of the personal pronoun ‘We’ reflect that he identifies himself with the other Muhajirs, irrespective of their socioeconomic or even regional backgrounds.

Zafar and Raheen are sensitive to the concerns of the Muhajirs who are less privileged than them, which indicates that both of them identify themselves with the broader Muhajir community of Pakistan. This contrasts the first-generation Muhajirs in *The Sea Lies Ahead*, who are always competing with each other over several issues pertaining to their Indian past; a lack of consensus is apparent in them. While Husain’s first-generation Muhajirs are a heterogeneous lot, who lack the cohesion required to function as a group, Shamsie’s second and third-generation Muhajirs consider themselves as part of a wider Muhajir community and are able to emerge as a distinct and homogenous group. The homogeneity lay in their shared sense of history as migrants, and it helps them to come together as a group to secure their rights and resist the oppressive, nativist tendencies of government policies.

The two texts reveal significant generational differences between the Muhajirs in the manner in which they deal with the insecurity of Karachi, and place themselves in Pakistan. Ethnic tensions form a constant backdrop in both novels, and both protagonists get caught in the violence; but while Jawad finds Karachi unbearable and unrecognizable because of these clashes, Raheen finds familiarity and belonging in Karachi despite the riots. Husain’s first-generation Muhajirs feel alienated, unsafe, and are unable to integrate into Pakistani society because of the social turmoil and



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contemplate leaving Karachi. However, Shamsie's Muhajirs have no such desire to leave the city, and Zafar feels "nauseous" to even think about it (111).

The diasporic consciousness of Husain's Muhajirs, which manifested in the form of nostalgic yearnings for India is also no longer present in Shamsie's later generation Muhajirs who were born and brought up in Pakistan and had no "place connectedness" with India. In *Kartography*, Shamsie shows that the Muhajirs can successfully set roots in Karachi and regard it as their home, which the first-generation Muhajirs were unable to do despite their best efforts. In "A Rite of Passage," Fazila-Yacoobali outlines three distinct levels for a migrant to be re-rooted in their new surroundings – separation, transition, and incorporation (187). Unlike Zafar and Raheen, Jawad is caught between the first two levels and hence, is unable to reach the ultimate level of incorporation within Pakistani society. Shamsie shows that the later-generation Muhajirs are acutely aware of their history of migration and the socio-political problems around them, but despite these difficulties, they choose to accept Karachi and Pakistan as their home. Raheen is willing to "deal with the realities" of Karachi and its diverse citizens, and she continually tries to show Karim the beauty of Karachi (106); similarly, Zafar "looked the country in the eye," pointed out its ugly features, and "found a way still to want to stay" (181). The later-generation Muhajirs were, thus, able to incorporate themselves and set up roots in Pakistan.

A major difference that exists between the first and the later-generation Muhajirs is in their perspectives about the city of Karachi as a place, which transforms from an unlivable city to a city that is intimate with strangers. Yi-Fu Tuan, in his essay "Intimate Experiences of Place," says that space gets "transformed into place as it acquires definition in meaning, as it expands to more permanent objects" and shifts from "direct and intimate experiences to more and more symbolic and conceptual apprehension" (136). This shift is discernible in Raheen but is absent in the first-generation Muhajirs of Husain. Both Karachi and Pakistan start to acquire more meaning for the Muhajirs, of later generations, as their home and not just a city where they were forced to move. When Husain's Muhajirs attempt to recreate the experiences of their former homes through their food and poetry, it signifies what Tuan describes as intimate experiences of place lying buried in



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their “innermost being” – these old experiences embedded deep in the psyche of the first-generation Muhajirs prevent the creation of new experiences in Karachi; hence Husain’s Muhajirs display such a strong dislike for Karachi (137). While dissecting the reasons that make an ordinary space an intimate place for someone, Tuan notes that intimate places are “places of nurture where fundamental needs are heeded and cared for” (137). Husain’s Muhajirs could not find the fundamental human requirements of safety and security in Karachi, and hence they found it difficult to root themselves there, but Raheen, in *Kartography*, finds comfort and security in Karachi despite all the violence and hence she does not want to leave the city. Raheen finds values and meanings in the places, objects, and people of Karachi, which Jawed could not. Raheen displays what Lawrence Buell describes as “placeness,” which is constituted when one feels affect to a certain place, and hence Karachi is so vital for her (60); this affectation is lacking in Jawed. Jawed’s attachment was still with Vyaspur; the Muhajirs of Husain were also attached to their Indian past. Tuan describes things and places are “drained off” their meaning if the “right people are absent” and hence living in such an environment will cause “irritation,” and this explains why Husain’s Muhajirs felt so out of place in Karachi even after living there for many years (140). The characters of *Kartography* consider themselves Pakistanis despite the social prejudices they face; when Asif alleges that Muhajirs did not want to get “absorbed” in Pakistani society, Zafar replies: ‘I must have heard my parents say a thousand times “we came here to be Pakistani, not to be Sindhi” (130). This points to Shamsie’s larger argument that one must not try to escape from a situation by distancing oneself from the place of conflict; instead, one must try to build a better future by finding ways to solve the conflict.

Through these generational differences, we see an emerging national consciousness develop within the second and third-generation Muhajirs. This national consciousness functions in the form of a shared idea of Pakistan, which incorporates an understanding and acceptance that the different ethnicities of the country have a shared sense of identity. Shamsie’s Muhajirs are aware of the problems in Karachi, but they do not seek an escape from the city; instead they choose to confront it and build a better future for everyone. Raheen used to be oblivious to the societal tensions around her, but she starts to find a deeper meaning in all the ethnic and political turmoil. By the end of the



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narrative, when Karachi is engulfed in ethnic violence, she realizes that Pakistan is her home, and Muhajirs and Sindhis have to work together for a better future, and running away was no longer an option (189). She stresses that people need to learn from the experience of the Bangladesh Liberation War when ethnic rivalry had devastated Pakistani society so that such anarchy never repeats (181). She sees Karachi as an intimate and familiar place and locates a sense of collective identity with its other citizens.

Thus, we see an evolution in the post-Partition Muslim migrant or *Muhajir*'s sentiments, regarding how they feel about Pakistan and construct their own separate ethnic identity. This evolution highlights the long process through which Muhajirs are able to assimilate in Pakistani society over three generations and illustrates Zamindar's idea of the long partition. A key aspect of this long partition is the emergence of a national consciousness in the later-generation Muhajirs from the diasporic consciousness of the first-generation Muhajirs. This national consciousness brings about the completion of the process of the *Muhajir*'s migration from India – from the immediate aftermath of Partition, when Muhajirs who had made the migration were constantly traumatized by their displacement while trying to set up new roots in Karachi; to the moment, when they have firmly rooted themselves in Karachi despite all the turmoil, Karachi is their home now, and all traces of sadness for their past uprootment from India have gone away.

Notes

1. For a detailed account of how Muhajirs were treated in Pakistan, see Ansari 95-108.
2. For more information on how non-Punjabi refugees were kept out of Punjab, see Bhavnani 12.
3. Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar claims that the population of Karachi tripled with the Muhajir influx from India after Partition, see Zamindar 5-6, *The Long Partition*.
4. For an analysis of the contradictory responses which Muhajirs received from Sindhi politicians, see Kumar, and Rita Kothari 781-84; and Bhavnani 10-11.
5. For more information on the development of political rivalries based on ethnic tensions, see Kumar, and Kothari 784-787.



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6. For a detailed understanding of General Ayub Khan's threats to the *Muhajirs*, see Kumar, and Kothari 784.
7. For strong points about the rise of the M.Q.M, see Frotscher 87-114.
8. For a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of non-Muslim migrants in India, see Zakaria 162.

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