

TRACING ORDER IN SEEMING CHAOS: UNDERSTANDING THE INFORMAL
AND VIOLENT POLITICAL ORDER OF KARACHI

by

Nazia Hussain
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Committee:

_____ Louise Shelley, Chair
_____ Desmond Arias
_____ Terrence Lyons
_____ Janine Wedel
_____ Marvin Weinbaum, External Reader
_____ Kenneth Button, Program Director
_____ Mark J. Rozell, Dean

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George Mason University
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by

Nazia Hussain
Master of Arts
Boston University, 2007

Director: Louise Shelley, Professor
Department of Public Policy

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the people of Karachi and my parents.

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ABSTRACT

TRACING ORDER IN SEEMING CHAOS: UNDERSTANDING THE INFORMAL AND VIOLENT POLITICAL ORDER OF KARACHI

Nazia Hussain, PhD

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Dissertation Director: Dr. Louise Shelley

Megacities in developing countries reporting high incidence of crime, violence, and informality are perceived in policy literature as places experiencing breakdown of governance that may become future hot spots of instability. Evidence from Karachi, Pakistan, however, suggests that although political parties, individual entrepreneurs, and crime groups are involved in service provision, it does not indicate breakdown of governance. Political parties collaborate with crime groups and various state actors to create local orders. These orders, embedded in social, political and economic institutions create constituencies of popular support. However, the state regulates these orders by withdrawing or extending support and through punitive policies. Yet, while the state is organizing order from the top, an order is forming in response to the needs of an increasing population from the ground-up, highlighting negotiation between state and society. Employing process tracing over a period of thirty-five years (1978-2013), this dissertation presents a systematic comparison of the impact of relationships among political parties, crime groups and state actors on informal provision of water and housing and levying of extortion. Analysis shows that once patterns based on actions come into being, they lead to players learning by observation and practice, contributing to shared expectations or informal rules of the game. These results bear relevance for comparable cases.

INTRODUCTION

In August 2015, leaked video clips,¹ aired on major media channels in Pakistan, created an uproar in national politics. The videos showed top legislators of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), one of the largest political parties in Pakistan, meeting with and pledging support to Karachi's feared drug don, Uzair Baloch and his political organization- the Peoples Aman Committee (PAC). Called 'part Tony Soprano²....part politician'³ of Lyari, the oldest neighborhood of the city, Baloch was head of one of the largest drug gangs of Lyari involved in trafficking of Afghan narcotics through Karachi. The public meetings were professionally filmed highlighting that these meetings were not a covert affair- gone were the days of backroom deals. The footage revealed two trends. One, a crime group had carved out constituencies of popular support signaling its emergence as a political player. The relationship between the crime group and the political party was based on strategic interests- the PAC was useful in providing access to constituents in Lyari and thus their

¹ "Video footage shows PPP's close links with Uzair Baloch", *Geo News*, August 11, 2015, <http://www.geo.tv/article-193933-Video-footage-shows-PPPs-close-links-with-Uzair-Baloch>

² Tales of his gang's ruthlessness were chilling. For instance, the leader of his rival drug gang had been lynched and beheaded, his severed head serving as a football for the killers. "Arshad Pappu murder case: Witnesses claim they were forced to give testimony", *The Express Tribune*, April 22, 2015, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/874256/arshad-pappu-murder-case-witnesses-claim-they-were-forced-to-give-testimony/>

³ However, Baloch's charity works were known as well. Dina Temple-Raston, "The Tony Soprano of Karachi: Gangster or Politician?", *NPR*, January 2, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/2013/01/02/168197733/the-tony-soprano-of-karachi-gangster-or-politician>

votes.⁴ Two, this relationship enabled the PAC to engage in the existing practice of extortion or “protection money” which until now had been the domain of the most powerful political party in town, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). It was not just about the money- in levying extortion, the PAC (and more importantly, the PPP) were challenging the erstwhile hegemony of the MQM. The shared expectations of levying extortion and securing political constituencies by ensuring access to housing and water were known by this time to all key players in Karachi’s politics. Whoever did not engage in these practices lost political and economic benefits in the city’s political landscape. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) a transnational terror group and a newcomer in the city’s political arena, also learnt by observing these practices. After the PAC challenged MQM’s sole hegemony by levying extortion in parts of Karachi, the TTP followed suit, raking up millions worth of extortion money.⁵

Not a Breakdown of Governance: Emergence of an Informal and Violent Political Order

These developments highlighted how actors were learning from each other, in the process, laying down informal rules of the game that were shaping a violent and criminal order. Evolved over time, this order was deeply connected at one level or the other with

⁴ The PPP already enjoyed public support in Lyari because of the popular policies of Bhuttos, its top leadership. As an interviewee from Lyari argued, people from Lyari will always vote for the Bhutto name. However, over the years, it was easier to use intermediaries representing the people of Lyari. Uzair Baloch and PAC’s claim was just that- that they represented the people of Lyari.

⁵ Zia ur Rehman, “ Karachi: Enter TTP”, *The Daily Dawn*, March 9, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1091918>

the state.⁶ At some point in time, violence, crime, and informality had become constituting elements of this order- in other words, they were no longer epiphenomenal to the city's political economy. The presence of different types of players was emblematic of the complexity of the political landscape- it included a terror group with political goals, a crime group which was becoming a political player in its own right, and political parties which routinely supported individuals and crime groups engaging in crime, violence, and informality. Contrary to the perception of breakdown of governance suggesting an absentee state, ground details pointed to the important role played by the state in this order. Existing accounts of Karachi have primarily focused on violence in the city, overlooking the aspects discussed above. Yet, as the practices of MQM, PPP, PAC, and TTP demonstrate, the story is much more than about violence or crime. It is representative of how things work in present-day Karachi.

Cities like Karachi manifest an order of sorts. Despite presence of armed players such as crime groups and political parties and their role in deregulated provision of services, the state is still the final arbiter. The state decides what is informal and illegal and what is not in light of its strategic interests. Moreover, the role of actors in practices which are representative of functions of formal governance, such as, providing access to housing and water and levying extortion (or informal taxation) does not only denote criminal

⁶ Uzair Baloch and the PAC had been supported despite their criminal activities by then-PPP government for political and economic interests, *and* the state establishment for their anti-separatist stance. In view of a separatist movement waged by their fellow ethnic compatriots from resource-rich Baluchistan, this stance won them support from the state. However, as the leaked videos hinted, it was no longer in the strategic interests of the state to tolerate Baloch and the PAC. It was also time to discipline the PPP by discrediting it through its ties with the notorious drug gang and its misdeeds.

activities with economic benefits. They are also political in nature, highlighting social and political contestation among different players to gain access to resources. In doing so, they represent an order which has emerged over time in response to wider historical, social, and structural contexts.

Karachi is not the only city displaying such complexity. Examples from cities in Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa also attest to such realities. This diverse set of scholarship makes the case that in places with high rates of violence, crime, and informality, it is not that governance has failed as much as political order (s) have come into being which are premised on relationships between state and non-state actors. As a result, the boundaries between formal and informal realms are perpetually being negotiated by state and non-state actors as well as ordinary citizens (Bayat 2000; AlSayyad and Roy 2004; Altrock 2012; Gandhi 2012). Violence is often employed to create and maintain these orders (Arias and Goldstein 2010; LeBas 2013). Unlike traditional notions of governance, this conceptualization of governance reflects economic and political contestations among different political actors (Robison and Hadiz 2004). These orders evolve over time and present an opportunity to study how practices of key players in any political system, situated in specific structural contexts, can contribute to systemic changes.

The significance of understanding how cities like Karachi are being run is that it can provide a micro-level explanation of how crime, violence, and deregulated service provision are interwoven in the fabric of governance. Cities which have not broken down into complete conflagration represent a unique opportunity to study whether the state has failed and governance has broken down. These findings will be of value for not only urban

studies but also civil conflict and international security. If these cities become arenas where future conflicts unfold (Norton 2003; Kilcullen 2013; Muggah 2014), it will be useful to understand the dynamics of social and political contestation based on contextual factors. From a policy perspective, the hope is that such an understanding might prevent scenarios where things have reached the point of no return.

Evolution of Karachi and the State

In the case of Karachi, the relevant question then, is not whether the state has failed, but the ways in which the city began to be governed, and the relationship between those involved in governance and the state.

This dissertation makes the case that an informal and violent political order is at play in Karachi. Successive governments in the city have ceded space to licit and illicit actors to provide services to an ever-growing population. As a result, spaces opened up which enabled individuals belonging to political parties, crime groups, as well as individual entrepreneurs to become involved in informal service provision. Political parties, vying for control of the city's resources through legal and illegal means are central to this order. They collaborate with crime groups and various state actors and are a significant part of the city's informality. This order is embedded in the social, political, and economic institutions of the city and thus is not running parallel to the state. In effect, it is predicated on the support of the state as various state actors facilitate increasing informality for monetary gains, state withdraws and extends political support at will, as well as regulates conflict through punitive policies.

However, while the state, complicit in the emergence of this informal order, attempts a semblance of order by playing one actor against the other to maintain political equilibrium, an order is forming in response to the needs of an increasing population from the ground-up. Provision of services is intrinsically political as ensuring access to residents creates constituencies of support for political players. When these political players come to power, they use state resources and policies to marginalize interests of competing players, highlighting negotiation between state and society, each transforming the other in the process.

These ground realities suggest that governance cannot be abstracted from wider political, social, and economic struggles. Service provision in Karachi lends evidence to this argument as it reflects social, economic, and political contestation over resources among political players.

The genesis of practices of non-state actors dispensing governance-on-the-ground in terms of service provision can be traced back to the city's wider contexts. During pre-colonial times and the colonial period, Karachi and Sindh, its parent province, were ruled indirectly by rulers who devolved day-to-day powers of administration to middlemen. After the creation of Pakistan, as the city's ranks grew as a result of migrants from India and other parts of Pakistan, it was this indirect form of rule that provided precedents for the newly-formed state to let local community and kinship networks to provide housing to new migrants. Moreover, as the state's resources and policies began to fall short for the needs of the growing population, it tacitly allowed non-state actors to provide housing to the newcomers, especially those who were poor.

Similarly, the time period of military rule (1978-1988) is important for understanding how and why violence began to be used as a regulatory mechanism for political players. It was during this period that domestic and external factors contributed to producing conducive conditions for political parties to deploy violence to protect themselves and intimidate opponents. The military rule that lasted eleven years was marked by a brutal and systematic crackdown on political parties (Jalal 1991). In Karachi, the result was fragmentation of political space as peaceful means to compete with each other were replaced by the state pitting one political party versus the other. Availability of weapons and drugs due to the transit of Afghan opiates through Karachi added to this new dynamic of urban violence which continues to this day. It is interesting to note that Karachi's centrality as a trade route for licit and illicit goods such as opium dates back to eighteenth century when opium grown in parts of India traveled through it to markets in China (Farooqui 2005). All this to say that it is important to trace practices of players over time to situate them in the particular contexts in which they were shaped. These factors set the stage for a complex urban landscape where different actors began to compete for political and economic control.

What is the role of the state in this informal violent political order? It may seem that criminal power in the city rules supreme and that formal governance has failed. To the contrary, the state plays an important role in this order. Successive governments have provided and withdrawn favors to non-state actors which include political parties, crime groups or any other actors. Players such as political parties, when they become a part of the government, have rewarded their constituencies at the cost of others. These trends are

illustrated in deregulated provision of informal housing and water. This role of the state illustrates the fluidity between formal and informal realms. By endorsing actors and their practices, what is illegal is legitimized, and what is informal is formalized by association.

New Actors and Diverse Networks

Karachi's informal and violent order, mediated by the state through murky relationships with non-state actors has over time become complex, not only illustrated by the mesh of uneasy alliances but also by new *types* of players. Tracing practices of key players over the period of thirty-five years (1978-2013) highlights at least two of them.

The PAC, or Peoples Aman Committee, a quasi-political and social advocacy organization run by drug dons of Lyari was one such actor. The PAC claimed to represent the aspirations of the people of Lyari, an impoverished neighborhood commonly associated with poverty and criminality. At one point, the PAC was supported by one of the largest political parties of the country, the PPP, while the latter was in government. The PAC provided access to votes of Lyari to the PPP while the PPP looked the other way as the drug dons engaged in violence against their rivals. Over time, however, the dynamic began to change as the PAC appropriated political activities and even nominated political representatives of its own to run in elections.

Another new player in Karachi's politics was the terror group of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). While in the beginning, the TTP engaged in criminal activities such as bank heists and kidnappings-for-ransom,⁷ over the years, it became a political player in its

⁷ Zia-ur-Rehman, "Karachi: Enter TTP," *The Daily Dawn*, March 9, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1091918>

own right. Through a brutal and violent campaign against the political activists of the Awami National Party (ANP) which had hitherto represented the Pashtun community in Karachi, the TTP claimed leadership of the community. It also began to engage in land grabbing and extortion, practices which were primarily identified with political parties in Karachi.

These new players forged alliances with different social groups, political parties, and government functionaries to operate in a city whose politics had become sharply fragmented over the years. The multiplicity of networks and affiliations led to complexity of actors- so many players from different strata of society owed loyalties to various masters for survival and more. These partnerships and relationships among political parties, crime groups or criminal entrepreneurs, and formal government functionaries as well as the state establishment are also visible in informal service provision. For instance, Karachi's informal housing, although considered a racket, is not possible without relationships among land developers, political parties, and armed actors who engage in land grabbing or harassing competition. Similarly, informal water provision, widely attributed to the "water mafia" is a lucrative business that involves players from formal and informal realm.⁸ These patterns reflect the important role played by state and government functionaries in enabling

⁸ Karachi's informal water market operators including unlicensed companies and criminals siphon over 1 billion liters of water every day which constitutes nearly 41 percent of the city's demand. Major changes in the city's informal water market racket are unlikely on account of support of political players and high-level corruption within the state machinery. See, The Global Initiative Against Organized Crime, "Organized Crime: A Cross-Cutting Threat to Sustainable Development", A research report, (January 2015, Geneva), p.38.

and/or tolerating deregulated service delivery. Consequently, these activities and the protagonists do not represent parallel orders. Instead, they are emblematic of orders where formal actors play a key role.

Social and Political Learning by Political Actors

This study identifies social and political learning (A Bandura 1977) by various actors of Karachi as a causal mechanism at work in the city's political order. By social and political learning, I attribute to the learning by political actors through observation of which practices are beneficial to gain political and economic grounds. I identify this mechanism through tracing practices of key political players over the period of thirty-five years (1978-2013). The key is to study practices of players--in other words, what people do, that can lead to a ground-up understanding of how certain patterns evolved over time, and what such developments bode for the role of the state and those involved in governing the city.

Political players include major political parties, crime groups aligned with political parties, and a terror group. These practices, based on shared expectations or informal rules of the game have emerged over time, shaped by Karachi's historical, institutional, and political contexts as well as the role played by illicit economy in the city's political economy. These practices include engaging in provision of informal housing, water, and levying of extortion to gain political and economic benefits. Employing violence to protect their political and economic turfs and to intimidate opponents and protect themselves is another shared expectation.

The details of the case study of Karachi point to an understanding of governance which vastly differs from traditional conceptualizations. This type of governance indicates

how power has diffused out to social and political actors. The state has lost its monopoly over power but maintains hegemony over conflict. The state is even complicit in the informality of service provision but wields political power to legitimize some actors and practices over others. Since there are different types of actors at work in Karachi, their motives, strategies, and organizations differ from each other. As a result, localized orders controlled by them are also different. Yet, the state regulates conflict at a regular basis, even though it is unwilling as well as lacks resources to cater to the needs of a growing population. Lastly, an order is organized from bottom-up as the population which gets access to basic services from political players becomes dependent on the latter as well as their popular constituency. Patterns of informal service provision which have come into being, and which benefit powerful players in the government and outside it, are hard to reverse as well. This governance-on-the-ground does not conform to normative ideas of the role of the state and formal government, but exists nonetheless and is adapting to the changing environment in which it operates.

As Karachi's case suggests, informal service delivery, employing violence and presence of crime groups does not indicate parallel orders operating in a vacuum. Non-state actors such as crime groups and even terror groups (in Karachi's case) are embedded in some form of institution, tradition, or pattern of one form or the other. Moreover, the role of the state is important to study in how its interaction with society shapes governance. Since urbanization in developing countries is contributing to alarmist understanding of governance (and lack of it) in policy literature and increasing urban informality is perceived as breakdown of governance, this dissertation focuses on these issues.

Central Themes

The central themes of this dissertation include the following: urban trends producing megacities in the developing world, governance, and urban informality. According to estimates, Africa and Asia are experiencing higher rates of urbanization than other parts of the world. Of the projected increase in urban population between 2014 and 2050, nearly 90 percent will be concentrated in these two regions (United Nations: Department of Economics and Social Affairs Population Division 2014, p.1). The drivers behind the slated increase in urban populations in the world are generally credited to: higher birth rates (than number of deaths in urban population); migration from rural areas; and the geography of cities and their parameters (ibid, p.23). Some also attribute the increased growth rate of urban populations to economic opportunities, availability of natural resources such as water, and geographical location of any city (ibid, p.18).

A sizable part of this unplanned urban growth in the rapidly urbanizing parts of the world is ending up in informal settlements; nearly a third of the urban population in the developing world was living in informal settlements in 2012 (United Nations 2014). It is these precarious living conditions that present challenges to local governments and potential for instability in parts of the world already struggling with problems of governance. The interplay of these trends, namely, urbanization in developing countries, increase in urban informality, and challenges of governance, that form the central themes of this study.

Urban Trends: Megacities in Developing Countries

More than half of the world's population, at least 54 percent, lives in cities.⁹

Although a global trend, urbanization is predominantly taking place in the developing regions of Asia and Africa.¹⁰ An extreme form of such urbanization is contributing to growth of megacities, cities with a population of at least 10 million people. Housing 12 percent of the global population, at present, there are 28 megacities in the world- 16 in Asia, four in Latin America, three each in Europe and Africa, and two in North America.¹¹

Studies show that as cities are growing, migration from rural areas is contributing to it,¹² leading to an expected decline in rural populations in the coming years (ibid). These large movements of people indicate not only that people are moving to cities in search for opportunities. It is also that small landholders in countries with large rural populations are moving to cities as they cannot adapt to climate variability due to lack of access to credit and technology (Tacoli et al. 2015). In some cases, populations are moving to cities as they are displaced by conflict. In sum, urbanization is indicative of larger trends at play in the world today.

⁹ A percentage that will increase to 66 percent by 2050. See United Nations: Department of Economics and Social Affairs Population Division. 2014. *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision*.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² In 2008, for the first time in human history, urban population outnumbered rural population in the world. See, Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), "Progress to date in the implementation of the outcomes of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and identification of new and emerging challenges on sustainable urban development," First session New York, 17 and 18 September 2014<<http://unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Progress-to-date-outcome-Habitat-II-ENGLISH1.pdf>>

These increases in global urban population, especially in developing countries, are followed by an increase in the number of informal settlements which are emerging spontaneously in response to the need of housing.¹³ Most of these informal settlements not only lack basic infrastructure and services (ibid), they are also traditionally associated with the presence of crime and violence.

At the heart of policy scholarship on megacities in developing countries is the following concern- that these places will provide hospitable environments where non-traditional security threats will play out. Increasing deregulation of basic amenities, in particular, housing, only adds to this argument. In literature, traditionally, the growth of informal housing including slums is equated with rise in violence and crime. These concerns are not unfounded. As urban populations increase, they do so in a world with depleting natural resources such as water, onslaught of climate change, poor social indicators, absence of social planning, rural to urban migration, absence of infrastructure for migrants, and crime-terror interactions. Thus, it is important to understand how these cities, in particular, those with high rates of violence, crime, and deregulated service delivery for a significant portion of their population are governed.

Governance in Megacities of Developing Countries

Policy scholarship views these places as possibly becoming arenas for future conflict. The reasoning is intuitive- because states fail to provide effective governance,

¹³ Recent estimates indicate that a quarter of the world's urban population lives in informal settlements, which includes over half of the urban population in Africa, 30 percent in Asia, and 24 percent in Latin America and Caribbean region. See UN-Habitat. 2012. *State of the World's Cities 2012/2013: Prosperity of Cities*. Nairobi.

non-state actors are emboldened to step in. These non-state actors could be armed groups belonging to organized crime or espousing terrorist agendas. If non-state actors become more powerful than formal governments, not only can they control parts of the city but also sway loyalties of local populations to their favor. As a result, such cities may become unstable places and battlegrounds of warfare that can imperil regional and global security (Norton 2003; Davis 2012; Kilcullen 2013; Muggah 2014). This understanding finds its roots in normative concepts of state and government, in which governance is apolitical, government bureaucracy is an efficient engine, and institutions are assessed in terms of capacity (Fukuyama 2013; Zartmann 1995; Rotberg 2004).

These explanations, however, are driven by normative notions of governance and institutions, which are perceived in terms of capacity and technical processes alone (Hameiri 2007). Rather, institutions and government represent arenas where social and political struggles are playing out among different stakeholders (Hewison et al.1993; Hameiri 2007). In this conceptualization of governance, the boundaries between state and society, and formal and informal are fluid and negotiable. Thus, governance, and state institutions are emblematic of ‘power relations that permeate both state and society and the interests that benefit from the way institutions operate’(Hameiri 2007, p.140).

Scholarship based in criminology, anthropology, and political science on cities in Latin America, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa lends strong evidence to this reasoning. Informed by empirical data, these works present ground-up understanding of organization of political order and governance-on-the-ground. These accounts present a better alternative to understanding the seeming chaos of places experiencing violence,

crime, and informality as they are rooted in contextual and historical details instead of being driven by normative maps (Lund 2006, p.279). These works are open-ended, attentive to fluidity of social and political processes, and represent more of movement than stasis. For instance, accounts from Latin American cities illustrate how violence has become a part of urban politics (for instance, Arias and Goldstein 2010; Auyero 2010; Davis 2010). Similarly, forms of governance characterized by partnerships between state and non-state players also exist in some of these places, making the point that presence of crime and violence does not point to breakdown of governance (for instance Jaffe 2013; Arias 2010). Making similar arguments, empirical details from cases in Africa identifies presence of orders that cannot be explained in terms of traditional accounts of government and state, but which nevertheless exist (for instance, Lund 2006; Hagmann and Peclard 2010; Renders and Terlinden 2010; Lyons 2012; Simone 2005).

Karachi's ground realities find resonance in this literature. Within the scope conditions of Karachi, a city experiencing high rates of violence, crime, and pervasive informality, this dissertation proposes an alternative conceptualization of understanding political order and governance in places like Karachi. Three themes inform this conceptualization. One, shared expectations of key players are shaped by specific contexts. Two, despite involvement of non-state actors in service provision, these actors and their activities are dependent on varying levels of support from government officials. Three, boundaries between formal and informal realms are negotiated perpetually state and non-state actors including civil society. This proposed alternative conceptualization is led by empirical data collected during fieldwork as well as tracing of practices of key political

players over a period of at least three decades. In doing so, this study attempts to situate this account in historical context of the city which points out continuities of old practices as well as emergence of new patterns and players. Such an approach could prove useful in studying how actors and pre-existing social and political configurations interact with new variables and dynamics over time.

Urban Informality

In studying the nature of deregulated service provision in cities and the role of the state through its absence or support of non-state actors, urban informality literature is of particular importance. Urban informality, a multi-faceted concept, addresses the tension between formal and informal in the urban context. Although there are various themes that fall under its rubric, the concept of urban informality challenges clear distinctions between formal and informal- viewing them as representative of a continuum where formal is not the norm and informal not the deviation (Bromley 1978; Leys 1973). This literature initially originated in development economics as economists studied the nature and dynamics of the informal sector in any economy (Hart 1973; Portes 1998). However, the scholarship in the past forty years evolved to include other aspects of informality in an urban context. In particular, the theme of informal settlements in cities, how they come into being, and the role of the state in contributing to them has occupied the attention of scholars. The leading arguments contend that the state produces informality by purposeful deregulation (for instance, Roy 2009), and that informality exists in relation to what is circumscribed as formal, thereby highlighting that both are fluid concepts (for instance, Ley 2012; McFarlane and Waibel 2012). These discussions also highlight the ‘political use of

categories of ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ by states, media, activists, and residents’ (McFarlane and Waibel 2012, p.7-8). The state and/or powerful interests can declare an activity, sector of economy, or process as informal, delegitimizing it in light of strategic interests.

It is in this set of scholarship which is informed by empirical accounts from cities from all parts of the world that lends insights in the informality of Karachi. Evidence from the ground suggests that the state plays an important role in determining informality in Karachi. In addition, however, this dissertation makes the case that ‘conceded informality’ (Altrock 2012) exists in Karachi, that is, successive governments have conceded informal service provision as a coping strategy to deal with the needs of the local population. As later chapters indicate, this role of the state in contributing to the city’s deregulated service provision has evolved over a long period of time.

Goals of Research

The goal of this dissertation is to develop a ground-up understanding of governance which takes into account the dynamic nature of social, political, and economic struggles of a city, in this case, Karachi. Broadly, this study also attempts to understand the political economy of the community and the state of order in Karachi. The identified trends will be useful in highlighting how governance (and institutions at work) is being shaped over time by contestations among various interests, not only in Karachi, but possibly in other configurations in comparable cases.

The purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to scholarship on urban informality as well. Through its study of informal provision of housing and water in Karachi, and the variable of informal taxation or extortion, this dissertation’s findings will add to the debate

on urban informality. Traditionally, scholarship on urban informality has focused on informal settlements and the role of the state in organizing informality (AlSayyad and Roy 2004; Roy 2004). Studying of water provision is usually relegated to infrastructural problems (McFarlane and Rutherford 2008) and extortion is usually subsumed within criminological studies. However, all three of these variables come together in this study to attest to the larger debate at play-i.e., the integral role of the state in determining informality.

Research Problem

This dissertation addresses the following questions in the case study of Karachi: who governs? More specifically, who provides housing and water and protection?

Karachi is an important case study. A megacity of at least twenty million people, it contributes to at least a quarter of Pakistan's GDP and is its primary port. Because of its ethnic diversity and its substantial contribution to the national exchequer, Karachi's political and economic fortunes wield considerable importance for the national politics as well.

The city's growth trends resonate with global patterns- urbanization in other developing countries has also occurred as a result of migration flows. Between 1941 and 1961, Karachi's population increased by 432 percent, making it as the largest increase in any city in any given time in history (Tan and Kudaisya 2000, p.185). The drivers behind this increase in urban population included migrants from India who settled in Karachi after the partition of India in 1947. The city's population also grew exponentially as a result of migration from the rural areas of Pakistan. By 1970s and 1980s in the wake of Afghan

jihad, waves of migrants displaced from the tribal areas of Pakistan and adjoining Afghanistan, arrived in Karachi in search of opportunities. After the invasion of Afghanistan in the aftermath of September 11's attack on the twin towers, the long decade of military operations in Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan introduced subsequent waves of migrants.

The successive waves of migrants not only changed the demographics of the city introducing new social groups and political players. They also highlighted the challenges of addressing the needs of migrants which soon became more than economic problems- they gained political importance as they represented conflict over distribution of resources. Over the years, the city illustrated trends similar to megacities of developing countries, namely, the presence of crime,¹⁴ violence,¹⁵ and informality in provision of services.

The case study of Karachi can lend understanding in deciphering comparable scenarios in other such megacities of the developing world. Additionally, the presence of armed actors such as local and transnational terror groups adds to the layer of analysis which can contribute to the often-invoked image of the city becoming a battleground for future wars.¹⁶ Karachi is considered by some as one of the 'fragile cities' of the world in

¹⁴ Some of the world's highly-processed drugs transit through its port. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Pakistan Office, 'Illicit Drug Trends in Pakistan', (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: Pakistan, April 2008), accessed July 30, 2015. Available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/regional/central-asia/Illicit%20Drug%20Trends%20Report_Pakistan_rev1.pdf

¹⁵ Jacob Shapiro, Christine Fair, & Rasul Bakhsh Rais, 'Political Violence in Pakistan 1988-2010 Patterns and Trends,' *International Growth Center*, Working Paper, February 2012, accessed July 30, 2015. Available at: <http://www.theigc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Shapiro-Et-Al-2012-Working-Paper.pdf>

¹⁶ Presence of various armed actors such as global crime-terror syndicates such as the D-Company (Clarke 2011); and transnational terror groups such as Al-Qaeda, and terror

which social contract between citizens and the state is ruptured and local government is unable to carry out its responsibility of service provision (Muggah 2014). Military strategists such as Kilcullen (2013) consider Karachi as a potential theatre for future warfare. One of the most crowded coastal cities of the world, Karachi is highly connected to global networks and actors through its port handling significant share of the country's shipping and cargo traffic, information technology, finance and remittance systems (Kilcullen 2012, p.26). Its population is connected locally to ethnic and social groups within the rest of the country (ibid). These connections make Karachi and such cities a central node in the global system and create potential for their role as possible arenas of instability (ibid).

Analysis based on empirical findings from Karachi may have use in lending insights in larger concerns, namely, how governance is being carried out in comparable contexts. Does informal provision of services and levying of extortion equate to breakdown of formal governance and political order? What is the role of crime groups and violent non-state actors in urban environments? How does large scale migration affect governance of the community? How does the struggle over distribution of resources shape the political order and vice versa?

groups such as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) lend credence. See for instance, Zia-ur-Rehman, 'The Pakistani Taliban's Karachi Network', *Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point*, May 23, 2013, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-pakistani-talibans-karachi-network>

Research Method for Data Collection and Analysis

To study these questions, it is important to address these issues over a period of time by tracing the chains of events and linkages among different actors (state, non-state actors, and those who traverse both realms with ease) to see if pre-existing social, economic and political contexts shape new dynamics and why such changes take place.

This dissertation employs in-depth analysis through a single case study and uses inductive process tracing. The goal is to develop a credible causal explanation attentive to interaction among causal mechanisms at play and the context in which they operate (Falletti and Lynch 2009). By causal mechanisms, I mean relationships among variables or units of analysis (ibid, p.1146- 47). Variables are observable attributes, for instance, crime, violence, and informal provision of services. However, the relationships among variables can point to causal mechanisms, which in turn can be portable and comparable across different cases (ibid, p.1148).

This study relies on primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources consist of fifty semi-structured interviews of academics, NGO workers, members of political parties, government officials, lawyers, women and children, members of minority communities of Shias and Christians, and journalists. I conducted the maximum number of interviews that I could conduct during my stay in Karachi. I also noted direct observations through my stay and travel within different parts of the city. Secondary sources include newspaper analysis for the past twenty-five years for local and international press, NGO reports, as well as previous scholarship. The data was analyzed through inductive process tracing as a research method. This method was useful in tracing the evolving nature of dynamics and constellations of different actors engaged in informal

service provision and levying of informal taxation or extortion. It was also instrumental in identifying a causal mechanism that explained why and how certain changes took place over time.

Informal practices, or what people do, circumscribed the scope of this process tracing. To study how these patterns emerge and what factors contribute to changing of strategies by involved players in the formal and informal realms in Karachi, this study draws from the concept of informal practices- a concept proposed by Ledeneva (2006). This approach attempts to situate what people do and how they adapt to changing rules of the game. In doing so, it acknowledges the social and political struggles of actors as they contribute to the dynamics between formal and informal realms. Implicit in this understanding is that at the heart of these struggles, political power is being reconfigured and that actors in the field are adapting to ground realities, in the process, also changing the structural context in which they operate. I examine these informal practices within the context of informal provision of housing and water and levying of extortion. These variables are chosen to represent functions that are ideally considered the domain of the government.

Existing Scholarship and Contribution of this Dissertation

Existing scholarship on Karachi has primarily focused on rising levels of violence and criminality in the city. In the 1980s, studies analyzed the role of the military in politics in Pakistan and how democratic periods were temporary and turbulent- case in point, the violent decade of 1990s in Karachi. Over the years, literature grew to note the role of violent political parties such as the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) (Verkaaik 2004;

Khan 2010) as well as informal housing and self-organization on the part of residents in parts of Karachi (Hasan 2009; Hasan 2010). Aside from the few works on informal housing, in essence, the focus of the debate was on how violence and criminality increased during democratic periods, establishing a link between democracy and violence in Karachi.

More recent literature, in particular, policy narratives present macro-causal explanations of the conflict in Karachi which misses underlying drivers that have contributed to the city's complex landscape. These accounts describe Karachi as one of the world's "most dangerous cities"¹⁷ due to: the presence of crime groups; terror groups; crime-terror groups, violent urban politics; corrupt practices of police; and easy availability of weapons to all players. The image that emerges is that of a corrupt, violent and criminal order sustained by political parties where governments have failed to establish the writ of the state.

Little attention was paid to holistic accounts of urban conflict in Karachi until Laurent Gayer's analysis (2014). In his account, Gayer traces the trajectory of violence as a mechanism that emerged in the aftermath of Afghan jihad in the 1970s and 80s that strengthened crime groups and weakened political forces under the military rule at that time. Over the years, violence became a mechanism that shapes political order in Karachi which works through and sometimes despite it. Thus, increased levels of violence, Gayer argues, should not be perceived as failure of the political order but rather as a product.

¹⁷ Taimur Khan, "Cooking in Karachi," *Foreign Policy*, September 3, 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/09/03/cooking-in-karachi/>. Tim Craig, "Karachi residents live in fear as Pakistani Taliban gain strength," *The Washington Post*, February 3, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/karachi-in-fear-as-pakistan-taliban-gains/2014/02/03/010aafea-8991-11e3-833c-33098f9e5267_story.html.

However, Gayer's work focuses primarily on studying violence as a causal mechanism and its role in production of, what he calls, an "ordered disorder". In doing so, his work relegates other important facts of Karachi's case to the margins. It does not take in account other elements of Karachi's ordered disorder, namely, deregulated service provision by different political players, which remain tangential to the central thread of violence. If viewed from the perspective of social and political learning on part of players who realized the benefits of engaging in informal provision of housing and water, as well as levying of extortion, we can see how an order emerged in Karachi. In Karachi, the actions of the political party, the MQM, both when it was in and out of power, contributed to emergence of shared expectations which suggested that those who did not engage in these practices would lose out. Thus, over time, an order of sorts emerged, and violence in this order was as much linked with urban politics as with informal provision of housing and water.

Also, Gayer's explanation of why this ordered disorder emerged is almost fatalistic. Premised on Norbert Elias's sense of "game structure," which is based on interdependent actors, and which reproduces over time, Gayer argues that violence will keep reproducing itself in various forms in Karachi (Hussain 2015). Yet, as this dissertation makes the case, a historical reading is useful as it lends insights in how actors deal with new variables that may come into play—for instance, how do political parties adapt to an urban environment where a terror group comes into play? How do governments and local players adapt to increasing populations and depleting (or) limited resources? It is this missing piece from Gayer's work that this dissertation attempts to provide as an explanation of order in

Karachi. The lessons learnt from this case study can be of use for other comparable cases as well, where new orders such as the one in Karachi are being shaped by social, economic, and political struggles among key players.

An Overview of Chapters

This dissertation is organized as follows. The second chapter discusses an alternative conceptualization of understanding informality, crime, and violence in megacities of developing countries. It contrasts this understanding with existing policy scholarship which establishes a causal relationship between breakdown of governance and presence of violence, crime, and deregulated in service provision in cities in developing countries.

The third chapter presents the methodological approach of this dissertation which includes conducting an in-depth case study, conducting inductive process tracing, and identifying a causal mechanism. It also describes the primary and secondary sources used to gather data.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters present a series of chapters that trace the evolution of the informal and violent political order of present-day Karachi. The intent of these chapters is to trace the origin and development of trends by identifying turning points in the history of the city as well as the causal mechanism at play in present-day Karachi.

The seventh chapter sums up broad trends at work in Karachi and contrasts them with comparative cases from Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. Lastly, it presents implications for policy and maps directions for future research.

**UNDERSTANDING INFORMAL VIOLENT POLITICAL ORDERS IN
MEGACITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: AN ALTERNATIVE
CONCEPTUALIZATION**

In megacities of developing countries, pervasive violence, crime, and deregulated service provision, in particular for the underprivileged, have become everyday realities. Policy scholarship generally articulates these developments as indicative of disorder and breakdown of governance where parallel centers of power have emerged to contest the sovereignty of the state. This dissertation contests this conceptualization- it argues that order (s) exists in such places, which instead of operating parallel to formal processes intersect formal orders and can become integrated in the wider political system. In such orders, the state plays an important role and relationships between state and non-state actors including political parties, crime groups, and civil society sustain and contribute to processes of deregulated service provision. Violence is often used to create and maintain such orders. Non-state actors such as political parties and crime groups develop networks of connections with other players such as government officials and members of civic society to engage in dispensing services as well as to gain political influence. These orders come into being over time, denoting dynamism, and present an opportunity to study how practices of key players in any political system, situated in specific structural contexts, can contribute to systemic changes. This chapter discusses these arguments in light of existing literature.

Policy scholarship, in studying megacities of developing countries which report high levels of crime, violence, and deregulated service provision for large sections of local populations, has done an excellent job of identifying that complex problems can emerge in such environments. Yet, it presents an incomplete understanding. It is based on traditional conceptualization of governance which is apolitical and functional in nature. By divorcing governance from wider contexts in which it takes place, it demonstrates a reified understanding of a process intrinsically political in nature. This instrumental understanding of governance, in turn, is premised on clear demarcations between state and society, and formal and informal.

In doing so, this understanding often ignores the relationships that exist among government officials and actors such as political parties and crime groups that are integral to preservation of these ‘parallel’ centers of power. These ties have developed over time--informed by wider structural and historical contexts--together shaping political order (s) where violence, crime, and deregulated service provision are products of these orders (AlSayyad and Roy 2004; Arias and Goldstein 2010; LeBas 2013; Jaffe 2013). In these orders, the state is an important player in determining informality, at times purposely deregulating sectors of service provision (Roy 2005). At other times, informal practices are allowed by the state because of their usefulness to broader political interests as they present solutions to emerging problems (Altrock 2012) or as continuation of post-colonial legacies of rule (Hansen and Stepputat 2005; Naseemullah and Staniland 2014). As a result, boundaries between formal and informal realms are perpetually being negotiated by state and non-state actors as well as ordinary citizens (Bayat 2000; Gandhi 2012). Unlike the

traditional notions of governance, this conceptualization of governance reflects economic and political contestations among different political actors (Robison and Hadiz 2004).

Building on existing scholarship, this dissertation presents an alternative conceptualization of order in megacities in developing countries. In this model, the approach is more interpretive than normative as it is understood through tracing practices of key players (Ledeneva 2006), or in other words, what people do, over time. Through inductive causal analysis of the case study of Karachi and supported by a diverse set of literature drawing on empirically-informed analysis of conflicts in Africa, violent urban realities of Latin America, and multi-faceted scholarship on urban informality, this framework is premised on three key features. One, shared expectations of key players which constitute an order are shaped by specific contexts in which they take form. Two, the state plays an important role in producing informality as evidenced by connections between state and non-state actors, especially in deregulated service provision. Three, formal-informal boundaries are perpetually negotiated by different players including state and non-state actors. The result is an understanding of an order (s) that does not represent parallel realities but is connected to political players and formal political processes. Such an approach is helpful in studying a political order from the ground-up, instead of top-down.

This dissertation focuses on specific contexts in which shared expectations for key players take shape which in turn produce an order, and how such an order exists in relation to the formal political system. Developing such an understanding offers an alternative perspective to images of dystopian urban realities where governance has failed. Studying

the nature of connections that exist among government officials, crime groups (and other armed actors), political parties, and civic organizations presents an opportunity to trace the evolution and functioning of these orders, the effects they have on civil society, polity, and the nature of governance in such cities. As a set of lenses, this approach may be useful in focusing on dynamics and aspects of such orders which are often obscured by teleological accounts of governance and politics in places where violence, criminality and informality are pervasive. Finally, ground-up accounts of the nature of order in such places may present the understanding needed to study the impact of new variables on existing dynamics. Such variables could include challenges such as climate change, migration, resource scarcity, and deep-rooted ethnic and (or) sectarian conflicts, which are contributing to more complex problems.

The remaining chapter is organized as follows. The first section summarizes primary arguments of policy literature about governance in cities in developing countries. The second section presents key normative concepts which inform and challenge the conceptualization of disorder as presented in policy literature. The third section describes an alternative approach of studying order in cities with high incidence of crime, violence and deregulated service provision. The fourth section presents the conclusion.

Breakdown of Governance? Key Arguments in Policy Literature

Implicit and explicit in policy scholarship with its forward-looking approach is that poor governance is a precursor to conflict. The premise of this argument is that formal governments in poor countries are failing, have failed, or will fail to deliver basic services to local populations. They will also be challenged in upholding their monopoly over

violence. Once governance breaks down, conflict will ensue as armed actors attempt to control neighborhoods. In resultant governance voids, the social contract will be broken between citizens and the state. In these places, restoring legal order and containing violence will be a challenging endeavor, especially as urban populations keep growing in numbers. In sum, the arrow of causality is between breakdown of governance and conflict- when governments fail to perform their duties, they create hospitable conditions for armed non-state actors to step in. As a result, there is an increase in violence, criminality and vulnerability of citizens.

A growing body of work attests to these concerns. From the days of Kaplan's article, 'The Coming Anarchy' (1994) in which he argued that much of the Global South was on the path to violence ridden "anarchy", where states were collapsing at an alarming rate accompanied by an increase in number of private armies and organized crime establishing parallel governance, not a lot has changed in the discourse on cities in developing countries. Beall et al. (2010) write that the growth of cities and slums in developing countries is creating demands that are burdening the capacities of governments to expand public provision of services. Consequently, these cities can become havens for terrorists and criminal networks as well as sources of major environmental depletion (Liotta and Miskel 2012).

Kilcullen (2013) notes that in cities in developing countries, where the state has lost popular support due to its poor governance, the possibilities for actors such as gangs and warlords to seek control over territory and vulnerable populations are rife. These actors, he makes the case, represent a critical security threat. Evidence adds to this argument. In her

work which focuses on interactions among crime, corruption, and terrorism, Shelley (2014,p.144) identifies four of the deadliest terror attacks in the 2000s, three of which occurred in megacities of the developing world. Interaction of crime and corruption in these places with weak governance undermines the state and contributes to hospitable conditions for terror groups to take root and plan attacks. For instance, in Karachi, a megacity rife with informality and violence, its corrupt local government and custom officials facilitate crime and terror groups. An example is the D-Company, a crime-terror group based in Karachi which played a pivotal role in carrying out terror attacks in Mumbai in 1993 and 2008. Karachi's strategic location as a port city through which international drug trade passes through presents terror groups to finance attacks (ibid, p.146). This phenomenon is not specific to Karachi only; comparative analysis of other such cases highlights similar trends (ibid, p.144).

In describing such cities, a new social category has been drawn up in security and development debates (Muggah 2014, p.346). Called the 'fragile city' or the 'feral city' (Norton 2003), it is a place where governments lack functional and institutional authority and capacity to provide basic services, security and welfare, resulting in loss of political legitimacy (Beall, Goodfellow, and Rodgers 2011; Savage and Muggah 2012). The concept of fragile cities highlights an important shift-fragile cities like their predecessors-fragile countries, are now seen as loci of instability (Muggah 2014).

It is in these environments, where governments because of poor administration lose control to armed actors who may establish parallel orders (Davis 2012, p.16) that future conflict will take place. Norton (2003) calls them "feral" cities, a terminology that denotes

wide currency of anxiety associated with these places, resulting in the popular metaphor of non-white, poor, savage, men living in these cities, most often in the developing countries, who pose a threat to the world, the West in particular. Yet, this imagery misses the reality of corrupt government functionaries and powerful actors such as traffickers, or political parties engaging in criminal activities. These cities can be divided on the basis of the health of their governance-the healthiest ones being those where governments can control the city at all times and enforce effective administration. At the other end of the spectrum are cities where the government has limited authority and there are multiple contenders for power, while “feral” cities are where the government is an ephemeral notion (Norton 2003, p.101). Similarly, Kilcullen (2013) writes that in poor countries, trends of interconnectedness, littoralization, rapid urbanization and increase in population will combine to produce contestation among armed actors. Consequently, ‘crime, conflict, social injustice, or political unrest will follow’ (ibid, p.44).

Normative Underpinnings of Policy Literature and Competing Explanations

This conceptualization of disorder in cities experiencing breakdown of law and multiple centers of power rests on traditional conceptualization of formal governance. In this understanding, although scholarship is divided in opinion on the role of the state-whether it is responsible for provision of services, or for maintaining control over violence¹⁸- two themes are central. One, there are clear distinctions between state and

¹⁸ Some scholars conceive of state’s duties as making and implementing decisions for collective good, in particular, exercising internal sovereignty (Krasner 2004; Risse 2011). Even this definition is an ideal type, one in which most of the world’s political systems fall short (Krasner and Risse 2014). In this definition, it is the state’s ability to control

society, and thus formal and informal realms. Two, formal governance is measured in terms of capacity, a concept abstracted from social and political conflicts. Hence, if formal governments do not provide public goods because of overburdened, ineffective or corrupt institutions, informal processes and (non-state) actors step in governance voids.

The binary distinction between state and society is still a ‘profound template’ (Lund 2006, p.675) despite the realization that there is fluidity in state-society notions. Even as state and society are not considered monolithic entities but rather a set of dis-aggregated institutions and networks and movements respectively (Chazan 1994, p.258), the focus is on organizations and institutions that exercise legitimate authority while tuning out those who are not considered as legal part of the state (Migdal 1988). There is merit to that observation as referenced by innovative neo-institutionalist research that called for focusing on both formal and informal institutions (North 1990; O’Donnell 1996; Lauth 2007; Helmke and Levitsky 2006; Bratton 2007; Azari and Smith 2012).¹⁹

means of violence that is central. Whether this control over use of force ends up providing security to citizens as a public good, scholars argue, is an empirical and not a definitional question (Risse 2011, p.4). A large n-study by Lee et al. (2014) supports this conceptualization, and argues that contrary to conventional understanding, the state does not play a central role in service provision. For others, the state ought to provide services to its citizens or it has failed in its duties. (Zartmann 1995; Rotberg 2004). These services include a wide variety, such as security, rule of law, infrastructure and social services, with security being the most fundamental of them (Eriksen 2011). Even the Weberian conception of governance is that governance is not equated with the state; the state is more than the government (Stepan 1978, p.xii). Then there are others who make the case that if the state is not providing basic services, it is still engaging in governance (Peters and Pierre 2015).

¹⁹ The work done on informal institutions offers rich discussions on what constitutes an informal institution, its connection with formal institution, the nature of its impact on formal institutions, and its origin. Research also establishes that informal institutions are not within the domain of developing countries alone, but that even in developed countries, forms of informal institutions can and do exist.

Similarly, the concept of capacity is an important building block in traditional approaches to studying state and governance. For instance, Fukuyama (2013, p.6) defines governance as ‘the government’s ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services.’ Governance is about ‘execution... as opposed to politics or public policy’ (ibid, p.351). This concept of governance resonates Weber’s focus on bureaucracy as the highest form of legal-rational institution, serving the needs of the people while remaining apolitical. Even later ground-breaking scholarship on governance as a concept that argues for dissociating governance as ‘almost inherently...the appropriate province of the institutions within the formal public sector’ is functional in its approach (Peters 2008, p.3). Skocpol et al. (1985, p.4-5; 20) in their pioneering work on the importance of the state note that the ‘capacities’ of the state include the ability of states ‘to implement official goals, especially over the actual or potential opposition of powerful social groups, or in the face of recalcitrant economic circumstances.’ In this work as well, although the authors emphasize the importance of political role that the state can play in capital accumulation, capacity is conceived as a functional attribute of the state.

Despite the diversity in these conceptualizations, competing explanations question the apolitical and technical understanding of capacity, as well as identifying state-society boundaries where formal government bureaucracy stands apart from society as ideal-types (Migdal 1988). Migdal, Kohli and Shue (1994) make the case that scholars need to ‘examine the complex and multifaceted relationship between society and state. A central insight of this approach is that society and state are not separate realms, a dynamic “mutual transformation” intertwines them. At times, society can penetrate and transform the state;

in other conditions, the state may transform society. They write, "...states are part of societies. States may help mold, but they are also continually molded by the societies within which they are embedded... societies affect states as much as, or possibly more than, states affect societies" (p.2). This approach questions the common assumption of the statist and institutionalist literature that autonomous states shape society.

Norms and ideas about statehood and governance, long in gestation and primarily based on the European experiences of state-formation, are more natural to historical and cultural experiences of the West (Chakrabarty 2007). Even in the Western experience, the evolution of public and private domains took centuries of 'convoluted, back-and-forth processes of contention' (Johnston 2014, p.33). Tilly (1990) notes that in the history of state formation in Europe, state building took different trajectories, and the modern form of national state came into being only recently. In addition, works coming out of or focusing on non-Western and post-communist countries (Ledeneva 2013; Wedel 1986; Yurchak 2002; Yang 2002) direct focus to 'blurred' (Gupta 1995) boundaries between state and society and thus formal and informal realms. Even in the western context, an emerging body of work points to the multitude of players like think tanks, nongovernmental organizations, and lobbying firms in the informal realm which influence formal policy-making that affects society while evading accountability (Wedel 2009, 23-45; Wedel 2014, 23-25).

It is also important to take in account the colonial legacies of many non-Western countries. In these places, despite varied experiences, colonial rule was marked by 'fragmented and complex' (Hansen and Stepputat 2005, p.4) forms of sovereignty, marked

by convenient alliances between the colonial rulers and local forms of authority. These time periods were reflective of extraction of resources and excessive violence to secure order and obedience, with minimal efforts towards nation-building (ibid, p.4). The effects of colonial rule are visible in these countries, where state sovereignty is one among the ‘several possible dispensers of violence and coercion....taxation and exploitation’ (ibid, p.27). Naseemullah and Staniland (2014) identify the varieties of indirect rule in which colonial rulers shared authority with local political players through implicit and explicit power arrangements. These legacies of rule are manifested in negotiated governance in many post-colonial countries.

Scholars also question linking the idea of state failure with capacity of state institutions as it fails to take in account ‘the emergence and possible trajectories of social and political conflicts’ (Hameiri 2007, p.133). They contend that social and political institutions (and thus governmental capacity) are arenas where social struggles between ‘shifting coalitions of state power and social interest’ (Robison and Hadiz 2004, p.5) are playing out. In this conceptualization, capacity does not become limited to some institutions or individuals, but ‘an attribute that relates to broader social and political structures, such as those affecting class and ethnicity, within which institutions develop’ (Hameiri 2007, p.124). This understanding of capacity extricates it from technical expertise and ‘re-politicizes’ it, defining it as a socially constituted and dynamic phenomenon (ibid, p.123). In this conceptualization, a state is more than a set of institutions (and government functionality) - it is an expression of power (Hewison, Rodan, and Robison 1993; Hameiri 2007). Thus, the use of state capacity is not neutral (even if that is a desired ideal); it is

used to promote or marginalize interests (Hameiri 2007, p.140). Concomitant to this reasoning, state and society represent arenas where political power is organized.

An Alternative Framework to Understand Governance in Cities with High Incidence of Crime, Violence, and Deregulated Service Provision

The diversity of scholarship on ideas of state and governance opens up possibilities of understanding how institutions (and state capacity) that are responsible for governance emerge--what social and political struggles lead to formation and disintegration of certain power arrangements that in turn have an effect on how any city or country is governed. Especially in megacities in developing countries,²⁰ which, for purposes of this study, are cities with large populations (exceeding 10 million) and report high levels of crime, violence, and deregulated service provision, what is the nature of orders at work and their connection with the political system? How do such orders come into being and evolve over time? What is the role of the state in such political orders? Which actors are engaged in governance on the ground in provision of basic amenities?

This dissertation addresses these questions within the scope conditions of Karachi, Pakistan, a megacity experiencing high levels of crime, violence and deregulated service provision. Although not non-normative since it is attentive to arguments that direct focus to fluidity of state-society boundaries and ‘power relations that permeate both state and society and the interests that benefit from the way institutions operate’ (Hameiri 2007, p.140), this study’s goal is to understand how governance is carried out on the ground (Olivier de Sardan 2008, p.18). Such an understanding of state capacity and institutions

²⁰ Cities with population of at least 10 million.

connects the idea of governance to social, political and economic conflicts within society and is useful in studying how social and political power is being organized (Hout and Robison 2009, p.6). It enables scholars to note the ‘diversity, ambiguity, innovations, syncretism, contradictions and conflicts’ (Olivier de Sardan 2008, p.3) related to an understanding of how things work on the ground in local contexts. In doing so, it remains attentive to emergence of new players and variables that might come into play as key players change their strategies and those strategies interact with wider contexts, leading to new equilibria and new forms of political orders that work, even if they are not reflective of traditional notions of state and governance.

This approach is useful as it provides an opportunity to draw from empirical accounts of cases rooted in contextual and historical details instead of being driven by normative accounts (Lund 2006, p.679). These works are based on empirically-informed case studies which have significant theoretical and epistemological insights (Lund 2006, p.679) and which direct attention to specific historical and cultural trajectories (Robinson 2002; Edensor and Jayne 2012; Chattopadhyay 2012). Their approaches, more interpretive than normative, focus on ‘open-endedness and fluidity of state trajectories and formative political processes while possibly underscoring the diversity of emerging patterns’ (Doornbos 2010, p. 745). An example for instance, is the framework of ‘negotiated statehood’ (Hagmann and Peclard 2010) to study processes of state formation in postcolonial Africa. This framework is premised on three features, namely, ‘who negotiates statehood in contemporary Africa (actors, resources, repertoires); where these negotiation processes occur (negotiation arenas and tables); and what these processes are all about

(objects of negotiation)’ (ibid, p.539). Michael-Muller (2012) in his historical analysis of state formation in Mexico and its impact on policing, writes about the “negotiated state” in Mexico. Unlike its western counterparts which came into being as a result of centralized control of means of violence within state apparatus, the Mexican state had multiple local centers of power. The Mexican rulers integrated these local power centers through negotiation and bargaining processes. These processes included bribes, patronage, corruption etc. and facilitated ‘informal appropriation of ‘public’ resources’ (Muller 2012, p.35). Examples of this appropriation included implementation of state policies, mobilizing voters, maintaining order in territories etc. In turn, local power holders used police forces for their purposes as long as they did not hamper the workings of the state. The impact of these negotiated workings of the state on the Mexican police which had become embedded ‘within the workings of power in Mexico’s negotiated state’ were that it became ‘*politicized, negotiated, informal and appropriable nature*’ (ibid, p.65).

Another example is that of the concept of ‘violent pluralism’ (Arias and Goldstein 2010) in Latin America, which argues for studying how power has diffused out of formal state and how new social and political actors deploy violence, in the process, becoming integrated with political processes. Through empirical accounts, this scholarship ‘pleads in favour of a study of conflict *in motion*, as it transforms its social environment and feeds on these societal changes, rather than *in intention*, through the fetishisation of root causes’ (Gayer 2014, p.12). In doing so, these works highlight how conflict is shaping political orders and violence is being used to form and maintain orders (Kalyvas, Shapiro, and Masoud 2008).

In studying the nature of order in places with presence of high rates of violence, crime and informality and their wider impact on governance and politics, three concepts are useful in providing multiplicity of lens to study nature of political order. One, shared expectations of key players, or informal rules of the game that develop over time are dependent on specific structural and historical contexts. Two, although non-state actors may be involved in service provision for some parts of the population, these enterprises are dependent on varying levels of support from government officials. Three, although there are equilibria, the boundaries between formal and informal realms are negotiated perpetually by state and non-state actors as well as civil society. Each of these themes is explained in the remaining sections.

Shared expectations are dependent on wider contexts

Tracing shared expectations of key players as shaped by specific contexts provides a useful lens in developing a micro-level understanding of how individuals' actions can bring about changes at a systemic level. In other words, this concept connects micro-level actions to macro-level processes. Yet, it is a challenging endeavor to understand and predict shared expectations of players as not only is it difficult to research informal codes of conduct, but also these rules change as soon as too many players learn them by top players who wish to maintain their edge (Ledeneva 2006).

To that end, scholars propose studying shared expectations through following practices of players, or what they actually do, thereby placing human agency as shaped by specific contexts at the heart of change. These practices could be carried out by licit and illicit actors. Alternatively, these practices could be strategies of players that could simply be

about 'practical norms' which are neither limited by social norms (drawn from education, tradition, morals, religions etc.) or professional norms (drawn from official documents) (Olivier de Sardan 2008, p.13).

Informal Practices

The concept of practices places human agency at its core. Although there is no unified explanation of what constitutes informal practices, it has been studied by thinkers belonging to different disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and sub-fields of history. Leading theorists from fields of sociology and philosophy such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Pierre Bourdieu, and Anthony Giddens, place human agency as the middle path between extremes of explaining social phenomena as a result of individual actions and its logical opposite-explaining it through means of social structures (Postill 2010, p.4). These theorists placed human agency--the ability to act upon and in the process, change the world-- at center stage-free from limitations set forward by structuralists and systemic models, while simultaneously avoiding the trap of focusing solely on human ability as a vector of change (ibid, p.4).

The concept of informal practices was put forward by Ledeneva (2006). She described them as,

....regular sets of players strategies that infringe on, manipulate, or exploit formal rules and that make use of informal norms and personal obligations for pursuing goals outside the personal domain. Such strategies involve bending of both formal rules and informal norms or navigating between these constraints by following some and brokering others where appropriate. (2006, p.22).

This conceptualization of formal-informal straddles the space between formal rules and informal norms. It is what players do, rather than focus on what rules of the game are, that Ledeneva focuses on. This understanding is in contrast with that proposed by Helmke and Levitsky (2006b), who focus on rules and not players. It is their focus on ‘rules’ that Ledeneva contests. The word ‘rules’, she points out, can suggest two meanings as Pierre Bourdieu argues,

It’s impossible to tell exactly whether what is understood by rules is a principle of the judicial or quasi-judicial kind, more or less consciously produced and mastered by agents, or a set of objective regularities imposed on all those who join a game. When people talk of a rule of the game, it’s one or other of these two meanings they have in mind. But they may also be thinking of a third meaning, that of the model or principle constructed by the scientist to explain the game. (1990, 60)

Contrasting informal practices as conceptualized by Ledeneva (2006) with Helmke and Levitsky (2006b), it would be fair to argue that while the former focuses on the strategies of players, the latter places rules of the game as their central concern. Figure 1 offers a diagrammatic representation,

	Informal Institutions	Informal Practices
Common Ground	unwritten rules	unwritten practices
	subvert, complement accommodate, compete with formal institutions	subvert or complement formal institutions

Point of Divergence	rules enforced outside of official channels	rules enforced by players who traverse both official and unofficial realms with ease
	focus on rules of the game	focus on strategies of players shaped by rules (which can change the rules in turn)

Figure 1 Contrasting Approaches of Helmke and Levitsky (2006b) and Ledeneva (2006)

And what of unwritten rules? They represent not as much rule following as much as patterns of rule breaking, Ledeneva (2006, p.15) argues. She likens them to, in Bourdieu's terms, strategies, adopted by a 'feel for the game, as the practical mastery of the logic or the imminent necessity of a game—a mastery acquired by experience of the game, and one which works outside conscious control and discourse' (Bourdieu 1990, p.82).

Ledeneva (2006, p. 15) makes the case that the closest one can get to define unwritten rules is to identify them through identifying patterns of navigating between formal rules and informal norms, as they change as soon as too many players learn them in order to maintain their exclusive nature. It is this flexibility and movement that defines the concept of informal practices.

Contexts

Tracing practices of key players and identifying them as an indicator of shared expectations enables in identifying invisible and subterranean patterns of codes of behavior, shaped by structural and historical contexts.

While contexts can be explained in different ways, the definition offered by Falleti and Lynch (2009) presents a useful construct. Citing Pawson's example of gunpowder exploding in only the right conditions (Pawson 2000, p.296), they define context as 'relevant aspects of a setting...in which a set of initial conditions leads (probabilistically) to an outcome of a defined scope... via a causal mechanism or set of causal mechanisms' (Falleti and Lynch 2009, p.1152). In this understanding, contexts are as important as mechanisms²¹ at work, as the same mechanisms in different contexts can contribute to different outcomes. This is why it is important to identify the specific contexts of any case study in order to arrive at tenable conclusions.

Examples of developing an understanding of macro-level changes through practices of players which lend insights about shared expectations of actors can be found in different case studies. In Lagos and Nairobi, two of the 'most violent and crime-ridden' (LeBas 2013, p.240) megacities of Africa, shared expectation of political parties relying on ethnic and ethno-religious vigilante militias emerged in the context of violent electoral politics. This shared expectation of employing militias to assist in contestation over votes and resources and intimidation of opponents encouraged political parties to rely on these organizations. The larger effects of these developments were that these organizations began to be widely perceived as providers of private protection, found recruitment pools in slums,

²¹ Falleti and Lynch (2009, p.1147) define causal mechanisms as describing 'the relationships or the actions among the units of analysis or in the cases of study. Mechanisms tell us how things happen: how actors relate, how individuals come to believe what they do or what they draw from past experiences, how policies and institutions endure or change, how outcomes that are inefficient become hard to reverse, and so on..'

and in the process, disinvested public institutions (ibid, p.247) through fragmenting the state's monopoly over violence. In the case of Lagos, Gandy (2006) makes the point that in the aftermath of the civil war in 1967 which resulted in part from secessionist attempts to control oil resources, militarization of politics intensified and was a manifestation of the larger phenomenon of political articulations. In Lagos, as the vast number of migrants from affected parts of the country in combination with people displaced as a result of slum clearance programs undermined long-established kin networks. New forms of anomie, violence and community breakdown followed as a result. Consequently, formation of militias and reliance on them by political parties became a shared understanding for key players.

In Latin America, a region wracked by violence and organized crime, strategies of key players have emerged in specific contexts of transnational drug trade becoming integrated in political systems, neoliberal policies which reduced public expenditures on development, and transitions from authoritarianism to democracies (Arias and Goldstein 2010). It is in these wider contexts that social and political actors deploy violence, in the process, forming relationships amongst each other. In Rocinha, a neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, for instance, a powerful drug gang formed clandestine relations with government officials through civic society leaders. The shared expectation among both the state officials and the gang members was of maintaining indirect contacts on account of the gang's involvement in the drug trade (Arias 2013). In a different context (and neighborhood), where conditions for the drug trade were not as fruitful as in Rocinha, the shared expectation among local armed groups and political parties was of maintaining more

open relationships. In this context, armed actors engaged in less unsavory illicit activities than the drug trade, such as delivering pirated cable television, controlling the real estate, and supporting off-license van lines (ibid, p. 277).

In Russia, after the fall of communism, hiring private means of protection including crime groups became a shared expectation for businesses. Varese (2001, p.17) traces the phenomenon of privatization of protection to the context of flawed transition from a centralized to a capitalist economy. During this transition, powerful social groups were successful in securing distribution of financial assets which ended up enriching them at the cost of others who were not connected to their networks. As a result, the private sector, which had not received tax exemptions like these social groups ended up paying more taxes. Since the state had failed to act as a neutral arbiter and protector of property rights and the rule of law was subject to flexible interpretations, it was in this context that private businesses hired legal and quasi-legal ‘providers of protection’ which included crime groups as well (ibid, p.188). Their purpose was to collect debts, settle business disputes, and protect against competitors etc. (ibid, p.189-190). In a setting where everyone relied on these criminal means of protection, the ‘military standing of one’s protector’ was ‘the strongest legal argument’ (ibid, p.190).

Another example is that of the shared expectation of engaging in *Blat*, a practice that helped address everyday needs of ordinary people living under the centralized economy of Soviet Russia. Within the context of an economy which produced shortages, people resorted to this practice by tapping into personal networks and relationships for simple things such as a bottle of wine, funeral costs, or travel tickets. These exchanges

were facilitated by a code of reciprocity- favors could be returned immediately or at any point in time (Ledeneva 1998, p.118). However, as the context changed with the fall of the Soviet regime, in the post-communist Russia, so did the nature of *Blat*. In this new setting, *Blat* was used to gain and provide access to state resources to crime groups, private businesses, and state officials (Ledeneva 2008, p.132-133).

As this practice changed, so did the players, replacing ordinary people seeking to get by in a centralized economy to networks of elite players who wished to maximize their profits and influence (ibid, p.133). Every player engaged in these activities was aware of the unwritten rules and strategized accordingly. This kind of knowledge contributed to ‘the so-called nontransparency of the rules of the game in the Russian economy’ (Ledeneva 2006, p.12). This nontransparency was sustained due to the following reasons (ibid, p.12-13):

Rules of the game were nontransparent and changed frequently due to incompetency of laws- for instance, formal laws regarding important issues such as protection of property rights, limits to open competition etc. led the average citizens to violate existing laws and play by the unwritten rules brokered outside of formal institutions.

Anyone could be framed and punished in violation of formal rules as the economy worked in such a manner that there was bound to be violation of rules by actors- for instance, almost everyone was a part of the informal economy in order to make ends meet. Businesses were taxed at exorbitant rates, forcing them to evade taxes altogether. Because nearly everyone was violating rules, it was difficult to punish everyone.

Because rules were violated at an extensive basis, punishment was selective on the basis of standards outside of formal domain-since everyone was under the threat of punishment, the actual punishment could be meted out at a particular time of choosing by the state. It became a pervasive practice for officials to resort to formal laws on a selective basis. Paradoxically, sometimes, violation of unwritten rules became the premise of enforcement of written laws.

Through these empirical accounts of how things work on the ground by mapping practices of key players as shaped by and shaping specific contexts, scholars identify a middle path of connecting human agency to structural constraints. As scholars trace patterns of practices contributing to formation of order (s), alliances and power arrangements of open and obscure nature connecting different players, they may find a window in seeming disorder. Lastly, shared expectations of key players operating in specific contexts lend credence to the argument that causation lies not only in variables but in the ways they interact with each other. Thus, in places which report presence of crime, violence, and deregulated service provision, it is not always that governance has failed, but that these variables are shaping political order(s) through interaction and relationships and actions among different players.

State- produced Informality

That informality is within the domain of the state is counter-intuitive in light of traditional understanding of state and governance that suggests a clear demarcation between formal and informal realms. Traditionally, informality is perceived as ‘a sphere of unregulated, even illegal, activity outside the scope of the state, a domain of survival by

the poor and marginalized, often wiped out by gentrification and redevelopment' (Roy 2009, p.826). Yet, scholars working on urban informality make the case that the state plays a primary role in determining what is informal based on its political and economic calculus. Informality, then, is not lack of regulation, but purposeful de-regulation. It may also be an example of governance from below.

Examples from different parts of the world lend evidence to this argument. For example, in Calcutta, politics of patronage by the ruling party enables informal settlements for the middle class, involving transactions between private developers, peasants with de facto rights to land on the fringes of the city, and housing consumers (Roy 2004). The peasants sell the land to the developers who sell it to housing consumers. These transactions are implicitly endorsed by ruling political party cadres who wish to retain electoral support among the local populace. In using populist tactics as these, the state is violating its own rules that prohibit urbanizing agricultural land (ibid). This unique combination where the political party acts as a developer and has access to infrastructure provided by the state allows both the party and the state to profit from the process of creating informal settlements (ibid, p.158).

Similarly, in Delhi, despite the fact that almost the entire city violates some form of planning or building codes, the state designates some areas, such as slums, illegal and informal, while endorsing other areas as worthy of protection (Ghertner 2008). In doing so, the state is distinguishing between informal and informal, rather than between formal and informal (Roy 2009c, p.80).

In Cairo, although informal housing can be credited to a range of factors, Egyptian elite play a substantial role in it as well (Dorman 2013). The state has produced informality by largely ignoring the needs of ordinary Cairenes while extending control over desert land at the fringes, building lucrative enclaves for the military elite (ibid, p.1586).

These and other works challenge the premise that informality is outside the domain of the government. In particular, the notion that the scope of government extends only to actions which are visible is problematic. In reality, the reach of the government can operate as a context that proscribes possibilities, even if it is not visible (McFarlane and Waibel 2012, p.4). As Roy (2009a, p.10) writes, '[Informality does not] lie beyond planning; rather it is planning that inscribes the informal by designating some activities as authorized and others as unauthorized, by demolishing slums while granting legal status to equally illegal suburban developments.' Informality, perceived in such terms, is a 'mode of urbanization' (Roy 2005, p.147) and an organizing logic.

In addition, although non-state actors may be involved in service provision for some parts of the population, these enterprises are dependent on endorsement from government officials at one level or the other. In urban informality literature, some call it 'conceded informality' (Altrock 2012) which implies governments conceding informality as a coping strategy to deal with changes, an example being the urbanized villages in Pearl River Delta in China that are used as affordable housing for low-income population. In a similar vein, Kreibich (2012, p.150) argues that in the context of fragile states in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia, informality can be attributed to 'regulatory activities of non-statutory institutions'. In cities in these countries, the gap left by legal institutions in

addressing the needs of the growing urban population is filled by local institutions and grassroots organizations (ibid, p.156).

In studies on crime and violence-ridden cities in Latin America and Africa, this phenomenon is visible in government-produced illegality in service provision. In Lagos, for instance, local government relies on criminal organizations as well as militias to expand its revenue base by outsourcing tax collection to these organizations (LeBas 2013). These relationships are mutually advantageous, for actors such as drug dons or other criminals, their association, whether explicit or of clandestine nature (Auyero 2010) with politicians and government officials lends legitimacy and social capital (Arias 2006a; Sives 2012). For government officials, such as underpaid police officials for instance, contacts with illicit markets may provide important resources (Arias 2006b). In Lagos, Lebas (2013) writes about government's expansion of tax collection through local criminal actors called 'area boys' who charge protection rents. For the government, the local knowledge of these actors helps in raising higher tax revenues than through legal channels while these actors get to keep a share of the collected money as a reward.

Some scholars suggest placing some of the relationships between state and non-state actors such as political parties or local strongmen (who also engage in crime) as continuation of patterns from colonial times. Gandhi (2012) for instance, in his study of pavement-dwellers and street-hawkers in Delhi, notes that in much of the colonial world, rulers made patchwork alliances with traditional authorities to rule 'subjects', not 'citizens' (ibid, p.56). This pattern of investing in community representatives carried over the years and became an important aspect of governance in Indian cities, challenging the idea of an

omnipotent state (ibid, p.57). In Delhi, *pradhans* act as brokers on behalf of poor communities, obtaining access to amenities such as water and electricity connections and ration cards, as well as meting out punishments for perceived wrongdoings (ibid, p.58). It is through such intermediaries that the urban poor negotiate with local officials to lead daily existence. Hansen (2005, p.177-179) in his study of urban India draws attention to employment of excessive violence by the state in urban centers of British India to ensure a disciplined labor force while depending on de facto sovereigns in the form of local strongmen for daily administration. These traditions continued even after independence of India; excessive use of force against the poor by the Indian police to maintain order continues to this day (Hansen 2002, p.121-159). Similarly, networks of brokers and strongmen exist in any neighborhood of an Indian city, their activities challenging notions of legality and illegality as they help citizens in acquiring jobs, school admissions, housing, and water connections, while mediating conflicts (Hansen 2005, p.185). They may also extort money or employ violence to intimidate opponents and bring others in line (ibid, p.185). Regardless of their scope of activities, they represent ‘the elementary units of local politics, of social work, and of cultural organization’ (ibid, pp.185).

Weinstein (2013, p.287) in her study of slum demolitions in Mumbai addresses the contradictory state policy of evicting slums through violence on a regular basis when it rarely ever carries out proposed development plans on these lands. She concludes that these performances of violence are a show of state power to local strongmen who wield informal sovereignty in these slums as well as local elites such as political party leaders and speculative investors (Weinstein 2013, p.292). In this manner, the state demonstrates that

it possesses political tools that other sovereigns in the city do not have. It can also be argued that these demonstrations of power represent negotiation and renegotiation between state and other informal sovereigns in the city (Hansen 2001; Hansen 2005).

Together, these works illustrate the argument that while the state may not have monopoly over violence, it is still a powerful player. It may have conceded power in response to its limited resources, continued older practices of delegating functions to local brokers based in communities, or, developed murky relationships with armed actors including crime groups and political parties. What is necessary then is to study the nature of relationships (open and obscure) between state and non-state actors. This is what Auyero (2007) calls “the grey zone of politics”-- that has become the focus of scholars studying connections among state, non-state actors, and civic society—and, which together are forming varied orders (Arias 2013).

Negotiability of Formal-Informal Boundaries

Informality is also viewed by scholars as being negotiable. It is in every day struggles that the informal plays out in connection to the formal-- it does not exist in isolation from the formal (McFarlane and Waibel 2012, p.5). AlSayyad and Roy (2004, p.5) argue that, ‘if formality operates through the fixing of value, including the mapping of spatial value, then informality operates through the constant negotiability of value and the unmapping of space’ (ibid, p.5).

This understanding of informality is premised on the conceptualization that informality represents ‘convergence of legality and extra-legality in the same process’ (Ley 2012, p.16). In this view, formal and informal are blurred. People traverse between formal

and informal activities over the course of their lives and even during a day (McFarlane and Waibel 2012, p.5). Bayat (2000) for instance, in his study of the urban poor in the Middle East notes the ‘quiet encroachment’ of the ordinary people against the privileged in their efforts to subsist and improve their lives. Although not an organized movement, it is in the small things ordinary people do, that shows resilience that negotiates a decent chance at life. These ordinary people, the migrants, the squatters, the unemployed, challenge the ideas of order, modernity, and governance as espoused by politicians (ibid, p.546). Some examples include: unprecedented rise of informal settlements in and around Tehran despite the government’s opposition in post-revolutionary Iran; spontaneous communities in cemeteries, roof tops, and public lands in outskirts of Cairo; forcing municipal authorities to extend urban services to their neighborhoods by tapping them illegally, and refusing to pay up after utilities have been installed (40 percent of poor residents of an informal community in Beirut refuse to pay electricity bills; residents of informal settlements in Alexandria do the same) etc. (ibid, p.546-547). These actions are not organized political efforts but rather motivated by necessity; they slip into the political realm when these individuals and communities are confronted by those who threaten their ‘encroachment’ (ibid, p.547).

Another example is South Africa. after the end of apartheid, self-help organizing took place to address the needs of the black communities which hitherto had been excluded from the cities (Ley 2012, p.18). These efforts were outside of formal institutional channels, but at some point, were instrumental in opening up spaces of governance to

formal actors such as government officials. It is this 'juggling' of formal with the informal that Ley (2012) illustrates, highlighting the negotiability of value. She writes,

The channels for participation provided by the state are seen as dysfunctional and inadequate for a community-driven approach. Instead the Federation seeks to gain strategic influence outside the state-provided route. In order to achieve this, it develops social ties with various levels of government... The Federation encourages these government officials to exchange experiences and ideas with partners and government counterparts in other countries. Additionally, government representatives are directly integrated into the Federation's governance spaces. (Ley 2012, p.21)

AlSayyad (1993, p.42) notes that in the Middle East, the urban poor take advantage of modes of organizing that do not always involve organized political process. In Saudi Arabia, the poor made use of existing Islamic laws to legalize land. In Egypt, in one case study, in the absence of Islamic laws, the poor sought tribal protection and later, the government's concessions. In another case study in Egypt, the poor withdrew from official channels and relied on traditional systems of social organization to solve problems. It is this negotiating of value that determined informality, in some instances tacitly approved, in others tolerated. This is what Gandhi (2012, p.61) notes in a lively residential area in Old Delhi which remains full of illegal electricity connections, outlawed hawkers, and banned cycle-rickshaws. Politicians pay lip service to the violation of laws but do not say anything or else they lose votes; municipal bureaucrats let contravention of laws slide by as they would miss a cut from raised revenues; and poorer communities circumvent

possible raids and demolitions by carrying out ‘quiet politics’ such as petitions, hunger strikes, marches etc. (ibid, p.61). Through this case study, Gandhi questions the reification of formal law as a shared and universal in the urban context. He writes,

Rather, the question of what is legal or not, cannot be seen as everyday operative’s terms in the same sense as that preserved by law...illicit housing and commerce among the urban poor, what we could term banal forms of illegality, are written into both de facto governance schemes but also the formalized institutional practices of the law in such a way that questions the self-seeking primacy of the written law, and its adherence in everyday life. (Gandhi 2012, p.63-64)

Similarly, the activities of the Amadlozi, a vigilante group that operated in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, points to ‘ongoing contestation’ (Buur 2006, p.741) between the realms of formal and informal. The Amadlozi, an example of ‘twilight institutions’ (Lund 2006b) that come into being but are never fully formed, comprised of members of civic, religious and liberation groups. They carried out investigations, arrests, torture during custody of alleged criminals and made impressive strides in recovering stolen goods. They also developed informal contacts with police officials and over time, became a part of advisory fora for the local police. The Amadlozi’s activities are emblematic of perpetual negotiation between formal and informal realms, and which point to creation of new variables in the province of maintaining order.

In Jamaica’s case, it is what Jaffe (2013) calls a “hybrid state”. The hybrid state is an arrangement which includes government bureaucrats, crime groups, politicians, and police as they control urban spaces, collaborating with each other, motivated by

overlapping interests. Together, these relationships are shaping governance that ‘cuts across public-private boundaries and combines elements of redistributive, market, and predatory logics’ (ibid, p.735). These new patterns have also contributed to emergence of new “types” of players.

These examples lend evidence to the understanding that formal and informal are more of logics of organization and control than explicit boundaries between licit and illicit, constitutional and extra-legal, and organized and unorganized. These logics of action are changing the nature of political order and governance itself. Over time, they may form patterns of rule as well as fluid formations which come into being but are never fully formed, which Lund (2006a) for instance, calls, ‘twilight institutions’.

Together, these repertoires of understanding highlight how order (s) exist in places experiencing violence, crime, and informality. They provide registers of practices and insights in understanding the relationships and connections between government officials and non-state actors which are contributing to shaping informal and violent political orders.

Informal and Violent Political Order of Karachi

The informal and violent political order of Karachi presents a microcosm of a type of governance which vastly differs from traditional conceptualizations. In Karachi, a megacity whose population increases each year on account of migrants, depleting resources and ineffective policy planning have led successive governments to cede space to licit and illicit actors. These actors, including political parties, crime groups, and individual entrepreneurs have become involved in informal service provision.

At the heart of the city's violent and informal political order are political parties vying for control of the city through legal and illegal means. In doing so, they engage with organized crime groups in the city as well as develop relationships with individuals involved in crime to carry out activities which fall outside the realm of legality. This order, however, does not stand apart from the formal state structure; it is predicated on support from various state actors for political and financial gains.

Moreover, the state strategically withdraws or extends support to these actors, legitimizing some practices and actors while delegitimizing others (who may be engaged in similar activities). It also regulates conflict among actors through punitive policies such as military operations, extra-judicial killings etc. to maintain political equilibrium, even if tenuous and uncertain. These policies reflect the state's political use of violence to signal to competing 'informal sovereigns' (Hansen 2001; Hansen 2005) that it holds the ultimate power.

Yet, these relationships among political parties, crime groups, and state actors impact the governance of the city as evidenced by informal provision of water and housing to a large section of population, particularly the poor. As a result, social and political constituencies of support have come into being as those who get access to these services support these actors. This development suggests that this order is embedded in social, economic, and political institutions of Karachi. Thus, while the state is organizing order from the top, an order is forming from the ground-up in response to the needs of an increasing population highlighting negotiation between state and society, each transforming the other in the process (Migdal, Kohli, and Shue 1994). An example is

formulating of policies by political parties to benefit their constituents when they are in power. While their stint in government may be temporary, their accountability to the electorate is long-lasting as eventually they have to get votes and social support from them.

An important feature of this informal political order is the use or the threat of violence by political actors as an enforcing mechanism. It is employed to levy extortion, a practice that indicates control of one player over a neighborhood, against political opponents, or while gaining access to resources. Violence is also related to the number of political actors—evidence suggests that when there are more contenders, chances of contention over licit and illicit resources increases as well. The state, despite losing its monopoly over violence to other actors, still maintains hegemony and regulates conflict through military operations. It can be argued that these punitive policies are an attempt by the state to contrast ‘the ‘weakness’ of everyday stateness’ by ‘attempts to make state power highly visible’ (Hansen 2005, p.29).

Understanding the differences among various actors is important as some of them may not be intending to opt out of the formal political system while others may wish to do so. They differ from each other on the basis of motives, strategies, and structures of their organizations. For instance, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), a political party can run for elections, is connected openly and integrated deeply within civic society through its community outreach efforts and wishes to remain within the formal political system. It has legal and illegal methods at its disposal to reap political and economic gains. When it was in power, it implemented policies which marginalized other groups. It also continued its illicit activities to maintain its order—such as extortion, supporting land grabbing,

committing acts of violence against political opponents etc. On the other hand, the People Aman Committee (PAC) was more circumspect in its dealings. Run by drug dons, it made a concerted effort to clean its image and distanced from criminal activities in order to establish itself as a political player in its own right. It did not have access to state's resources as the MQM. However, its patron political party, Pakistan Peoples party (PPP), who happened to be the ruling party in the federal government at the time, lent it support and funds for public development for Lyari which had to be managed through the PAC. However, the PAC did not manage the funds directly—it let civic organizations to run in Lyari with its support. The Tehreek-e- Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a terror group, was more constrained than the PAC. It was a terror organization which was adept in guerilla warfare but not versed in dynamics of dealing with the city's varied assortment of non-state actors. It drew upon local criminals who were adept with dealing with the police to engage in land grabbing and other subversive activities on their part.

It is also important to note the dynamism of localized orders as they exist in Karachi. These orders, as formed by a major political party, an organized crime group, and a terror group, have come into being over time. In doing so, they indicate social and political learning on the part of players in Karachi—that is, actors have learnt by observation and adapted to informal rules of the game or shared expectations²² accordingly. This is an important distinction—studying how these orders evolve over time identifies

²² I use the term 'shared expectation' to define emergence of new informal rules through which actors observe and behave to the ground realities. Despite being different from each other in important ways, all actors 'share' as to what to 'expect' from their constituents in response to a particular action, hence the phrase 'shared expectations'.

continuities as well as new patterns. These shared expectations indicate how actors behave in response to ground realities- be it engaging in violence or providing services to create political constituencies. They signal how actors deal with new variables that may come into play—for instance, how do local players act in light of depleting resources as a result of environmental changes and (or) resource depletion? These are more pressing questions than the argument of “feral” or “fragile” cities where non-state actors will challenge state authority. Contrary to the argument posed by some in policy scholarship as governance voids where crime and terror groups may step in, in Karachi, it is political parties who are at the forefront of violent and criminalized politics. Crime groups have begun to become a part of this order, but are vulnerable in terms of state’s withdrawal of support in light of its interests.

The impact of this informal and violent order on the city’s politics is that shared expectations, or informal rules of the game have come into being, which include employing violence, levying extortion, and playing a role in informal service provision through licit and illicit means. These rules of the game have made politics in Karachi extremely violent. They have led to increasing informality in service provision which has resulted in practices which may be illicit in nature (land grabbing etc.) as well as impacted policy-making. Unlike the conceptualization of governance as functional, governance in Karachi as represented by informal service provision indicates wider social, economic, and political contestation over resources among political players. Not only is it lucrative to get a share in the real estate and the organized water racket of the city, ensuring access to residents creates constituencies of support for political players. If these political players come to

power, they use state resources and policies to marginalize interests of competing players. These ground realities of Karachi indicate that social and political institutions are arenas where social, economic, and political struggles are playing out and where political power is being organized (Hewison, Rodan, and Robison 1993; Robison and Hadiz 2004; Hameiri 2007).

Conclusion

This chapter identifies primary arguments about seeming failure of governance in megacities of developing countries experiencing crime, violence and deregulated service provision as highlighted in policy literature and the diverse normative discussions that support and challenge these arguments. It suggests an alternative conceptualization of understanding seeming disorder in these places. In these orders, the state does not always wield monopoly over violence but wields enormous power, and forms relationships (obscure or otherwise) with players including crime groups and political parties. Formal-informal boundaries in these orders are negotiated by all players including members of civic society. A key insight from these studies is that political order and governance on the ground is being shaped over time by contestations among various interests. Moreover, governance does not fail because of presence of crime, violence, or informality. Over time, these indicators of dysfunction shape political order (s) at work.

In sum, through approaches, which are more interpretive than normative, scholars are developing ground-up understanding of political order in these places. In the process, these studies are highlighting the dynamism associated with struggles among various contenders, as well as how these orders exist in relation the wider political processes.

Together, these works present helpful maps to address the questions of how such orders come into being and in what ways they exist in relation to formal political processes and actors. As the next chapter on methodology will explain, inductive process tracing circumscribed by focus on practices of key players is a useful method in addressing these questions.

METHODOLOGY

Karachi, a megacity of at least twenty million people, is characterized by pervasive violence in urban politics, relationships between organized crime and political parties, and increasing informality in service provision. If viewed through the lens of traditional conceptions of governance and role of the state, the city presents breakdown of governance. Yet, for residents of the city who receive basic amenities through informal means- it is quite the opposite. Instead of breakdown of governance, relationships between the state and non-state actors become evident. For those who have not been serviced by the state in the provision of basic amenities, such governance might as well be formal. The resultant order is outside the fold of formality and often violent. A defining feature of this order is its dynamism and complexity- the city's political order evolved over the years to account for new actors with distinct identities and specific functionalities, such as, crime groups providing services and terror group with political aspirations.

How did this order evolve and what are plausible causal explanations of its dynamics? This is the goal of this study- to trace the evolution and nature of the order at play in Karachi.

Research Question

This study is based on the hypothesis that there is 'order' in Karachi's 'disorder' as experienced by citizens on a daily basis. In other words, there is a type of informal order at play that does not fit neatly into the traditional concept of governance. In effect, there are shared expectations among key players or informal rules of the game on which this

political order is based. To test this hypothesis, the main question of this study is: What is the nature of political order in Karachi? What are its main elements? How has it evolved over time? What are shared expectations of key players? Is the state of Pakistan one of the many actors or one which wields sovereign control in Karachi?

To address these questions, this study focuses on two variables that signify the working of the state, namely, provision of basic services and tax collection. Since this study focuses on informal governance, taxation is represented by extortion and informal provision of basic services is represented by housing and water. Focusing on housing, water and extortion is important as most of the city is provided water through informal means; informal housing meets the needs of half of the population; and, extortion has become a pervasive phenomenon.

Addressing the questions of who provides housing and water through informal means and who carries out extortion will be helpful in identifying the causal mechanism that explains the nature of informal political order in present-day Karachi and how it is connected to formal institutions.

Reasoning for Case Study Method

Studying the political order of Karachi requires a research method that allows for studying this complex phenomenon by accounting for interaction effects, feedback loops, and the temporal factor of studying a macro social change over a long period of time. Case studies, conceived as a subset of qualitative methods, allow for studying cases of complex causation even in the study of one or a few cases (George & Bennett 2004, p.19). In doing

so, case studies serve the heuristic purpose of identifying variables which have not been identified as yet, for which well-defined data sets do not exist or which cannot be easily quantified (Sambanis 2004; George and Bennett 2004).

However, there are trade-offs to using case studies. Case study methods are not useful for drawing conclusions about how much of an increment in a cause will affect the outcome, they are less able to generalize to broader populations in cases where there is unit homogeneity, and unlike statistical methods, they are weak in identifying outliers or deviant cases in a specified population (Bennett and Elman 2006, p.260)

This study keeps these trade-offs of using case study method in account. It finds this method useful, however, as it is not focusing on a linear understanding of how much of an increment in one causal factor is leading to the ‘disorder’ of Karachi. Rather, it is focused on how the interplay among different variables over time has produced a system that works, even if flawed and tenuous. It also takes in account the possibility of multifinality (many paths leading to different outcomes) or equifinality (many paths leading to the same outcome). Moreover, it does not find itself in the situation where there is unit homogeneity.

Case Selection

Research based on secondary sources identifies common themes in megacities of developing countries, namely: persistently high rates of urban violence; increasing incidence of crime; easy availability of weapons; entrenched informal economies; division of the city into slums or informal settlements and gated communities; and, weak state authority or complicity of state officials in crime or informal economies. Interaction among these themes is contributing to

particular kinds of political orders in cities in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Karachi's case illustrates these themes with the distinction that the city is home to a terror group with political goals. It is not the only city with this indicator but it does present a well-developed mini-case study of development of a terror group into a political player.

Through its in-depth analysis, Karachi serves as a foundational case in understanding other comparable cases. Moreover, it is accessible in terms of providing empirical data that is needed for in-depth analysis for causal inference. Fluency in the native languages of Urdu and Punjabi, and knowledge of the culture and history of civil society have been useful in talking to 'major actors in an open and trustful atmosphere' (Blatter and Haverland 2012, p.102), a key element in conducting field interviews.

Method of Analysis: Process Tracing

This study's method of analysis is causal process tracing (CPT). The goal is to shift the focus away from the macro-level, black-box approach designed to prove (or disprove) law-like theories which are ill-suited to explain complex interaction of crime, violence, and informality. The purpose of this study is to find how effects of crime, violence, and informality are affecting the social and political equilibria in Karachi as well as shaping governance-on-the-ground. Moreover, how do shared expectations of key players as shaped by wider contexts come into being? This approach requires a more y-centric focus and process tracing presents the appropriate lens to do so. Process tracing shifts the focus from X-centered approximation to finding many and complex causes of a specific outcome; and questions of the form 'does it (X) matter?' change to 'how is this (Y) possible?' (Blatter & Haverland, 2012).

In addition, causal process tracing by way of identifying interactions between political processes and crime, violence, and informality can identify plausible causal mechanisms. Between law-like statements and highly case-specific detailed descriptions, causal mechanisms open the black box and expose the ‘cogs and wheels’ of the social phenomena that would otherwise be impossible to be explained (Elster 1998, p.47). In this study, causal mechanisms open the black box of interaction of crime, violence, and informality with political processes in Karachi. They also direct attention to intermediate processes that need to be taken in account before a plausible understanding of the nature of political order can be investigated.

Doing Process Tracing

Blatter and Haverland identify the empirical building blocks of process tracing, namely comprehensive storylines, smoking guns, and confessions (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). Knowing that causality plays out in time and space, they argue to take into account a ‘longer period of time in which all causal process evolves, and much shorter periods of time in which causal conditions add up or interact in decisive ways for further development of the causal process (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). To lend structure to what many consider the inherent flaw in the process-tracing approach, i.e. too much micro-level data to ‘lose the big picture’ (Checkel 2006, p.368), what follows is a brief summary of the empirical constructs in this case study. Detailed analysis will follow in the succeeding chapter.

Comprehensive storylines:

Comprehensive storylines narrate relevant causal conditions using broad strokes and focus on structural factors. They serve two important functions (Blatter and Haverland 2012). One, they describe the most important structural conditions that potentially have an influence on the outcome

and development of these factors over time. Two, they identify the most important steps that have led to the outcome.

In Karachi's case, a selective history of the city before and during the colonial period (1839-1947) and since the creation of Pakistan (1947-2013) is useful. A focused tracing of events and dynamics during this period is useful in identifying old and new patterns in crime, violence and informality. In addition, these story lines identify how these variables are interacting to shape the city's present-day political order.

Smoking guns:

'Smoking gun' or 'smoking gun observation' in this context is not a test; rather, it is 'an observation that presents a central piece of evidence within a cluster of observations, which together provide a high level of certainty for a causal inference' (Blatter & Haverland 2012, p.115).

In this study, for instance, smoking gun evidence would illustrate murky relationships between crime groups and political parties which are beneficial for both players. Similarly, evidence that highlights the role of the state in favoring one player over the other to maintain the status quo, and (or) encouraging informality of one kind and delegitimizing another etc. also falls in the same category.

It is important to note that using the analogy of smoking gun in the hand of a suspect provides necessary evidence but it is not enough to establish causality. Other evidence is needed to make a plausible argument.

Confessions:

Confessions provide such evidence. They are 'explicit statements of actors in which they reveal why they acted the way they did. These statements can contain information about all elements of a full-fledged mechanism-based explanation' (Blatter & Haverland 2012, p.117). They

do not refer to criminal confessions obtained by the police or statements in open court. Instead, they point to statements of any player which may lend insights in her actions.

Confessions in the case of this study include statements of key players including affiliates of political parties, government functionaries, people working-on-the-ground such as NGO workers and journalists, individuals belonging to crime and (or) terror groups etc. Multiple sources of evidence- such as written statements, conversations, and media interviews and reports are useful in gathering confessions.

Causal Mechanisms

Mahoney defines causal mechanism as an ‘entity that—when activated—generates an outcome of interest’ (Mahoney 2001, p.580). In essence, mechanisms are relational concepts that open the black-box of law-like statements, and expose the cogs and wheels of generalizable phenomena (Hedstrom and Swedburg 1998; Mahoney 2001; George and Bennett 2004; Checkel 2006; Falleti and Lynch 2009; Blatter and Haverland 2012). Falleti’s definition is closest to my line of reasoning, and is as follows:

Mechanisms describe the relationships or the actions among the units of analysis or in the cases of study. Mechanisms tell us how things happen: how actors relate, how individuals come to believe what they do or what they draw from past experiences, how policies and institutions endure or change, how outcomes that are inefficient become hard to reverse, and so on. (Falleti & Lynch, 2009)

In this case study, the underlying premise is that pervasive violence, crime, and informality--instead of denoting breakdown of governance-- are reflective of an order. Despite informality, the state plays a pivotal role in this order. Relationships between actors in licit and illicit realm exist, and shared expectations among key players illustrate the

organized chaotic conditions of present-day Karachi. Clandestineity prevents observation of many of these phenomena. Studying informal practices (Ledeneva 2008) of key players, in other words--what people do—illustrates some of these dynamics.

To explain the mechanisms involved, I follow in the footsteps of theory-oriented adherents of mechanism-based social science. These scholars consider mechanisms as configurational entities, combining three different types of social mechanisms: *situational mechanisms*, *action-formation mechanisms*, and *transformational mechanisms* (Hedstrom and Swedburg 1998; Hedström and Ylikoski 2010; Blatter and Haverland 2012). This typology (Figure 2) is a derivative of James Coleman's well-known model for conceptualizing collective social action – the so-called macro-micro-macro model.

The general argument is that a proper explanation of causal association at the macro level at one point in time influences the behavior of individual actors, and these actions generate a new macro state at a later time (Hedstrom & Swedberg, 1998). First two types of mechanisms (situational and action formation mechanisms) operate at the micro level where the actor is an individual and mechanisms are internal and 'in this way psychological or social-psychological' (Hedstrom & Swedberg, 1998). Transformational mechanism (type 3) transitions from micro to macro level of analysis in which there are a number of actors, and collective action of them leads to outcome of interest.

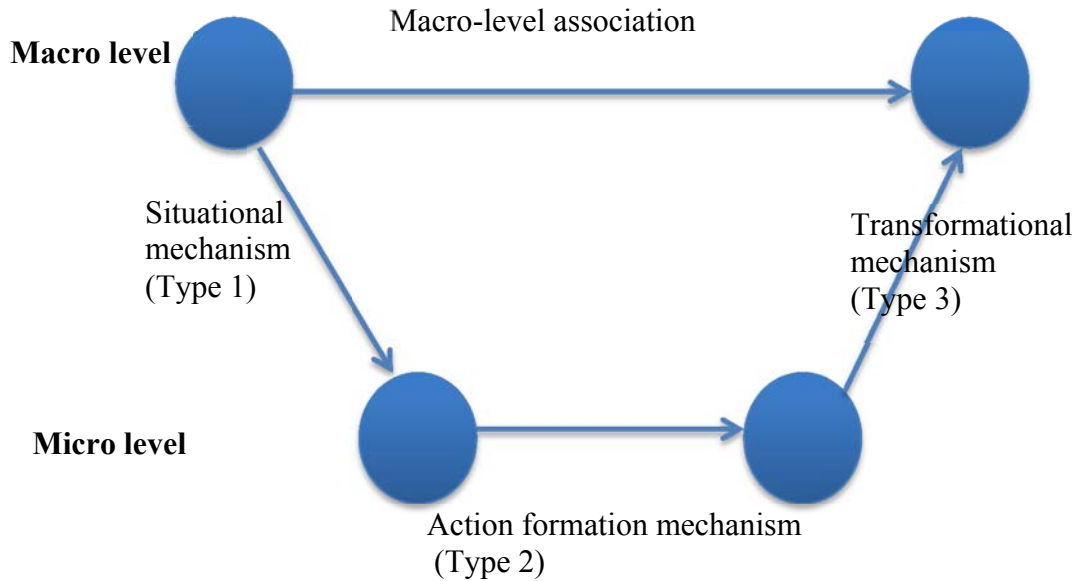


Figure 2 A typology of social mechanisms
 {Adapted from Hedstrom & Swedberg (1998)}

In situational mechanisms, individual actor is exposed to a specific social situation that will affect him in a particular manner. In this case study, the situational mechanism is denoted by two key facts. One, in the face of depleting resources and poor planning, the state ceded space to non-state actors for provision of housing and water to significant sections of population. As a result, licit and illicit actors stepped in over a period of six decades, including community networks, political parties, individuals engaged in illicit activities such as land grabbing, water pilfering etc. Although the state had ceded space to these actors, various state actors developed relationships with them for economic and

political gains. Provision of services turned out to be not only a lucrative venture. Over time, it also became politically beneficial to gain votes and support of populations which benefited from access to basic services.

Action formation mechanisms are located at the micro-level (step 2), and ‘show how individual’s desires, beliefs, and action opportunities generate a specific outcome’ (Hedstrom & Swedberg, 1998). In this study, this mechanism illustrates social and political learning of different actors in Karachi, that is, actors learnt by observing which practices led to economic and political gains. These actors included political parties, a crime group, and a terror group. Their actions, shaped by the situational mechanism, led to their involvement in service provision and highlighted shared expectations of players.

Transformational mechanism covers the micro-macro transition (type 3). Here a number of individuals interact with one another, and based on the mechanism at play, individual actions are transformed into some kind of collective outcome. In Karachi’s case, this mechanism highlights how the actions of armed players including a crime and a terror group led to shaping of localized orders which were embedded in wider social, economic and political contexts of the city. Informality of service provision became entrenched, and urban politics became more violent over time. However, since these orders were contingent on support from the state in one form or the other, the state continued to regulate conflict among armed political actors. Figure 3 presents a diagrammatic representation of these mechanisms.

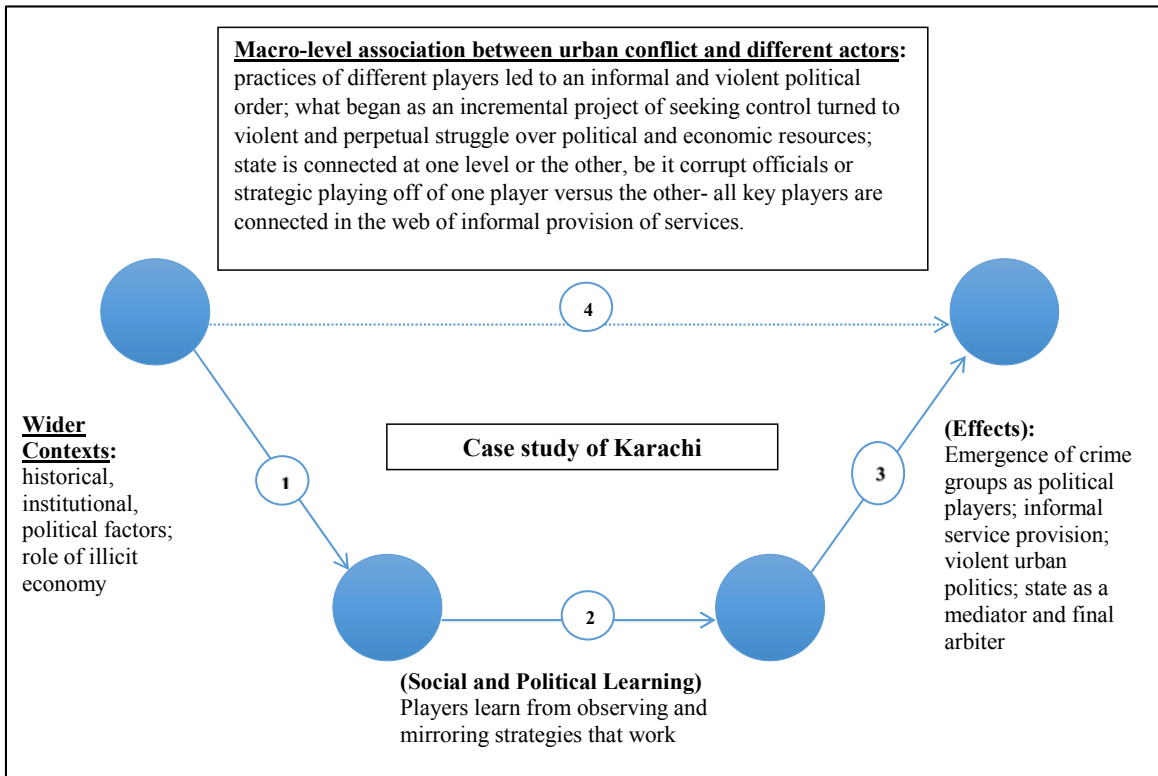


Figure 3 A Ground-up Understanding of the Informal and Violent Political Order of Karachi

Data Sources

In terms of availability of data, there were problems in finding adequate data to conduct rigorous quantitative data analysis. For instance, the indicators of violence and crime offered an opportunity to develop the sensibilities that would be helpful in answering some of my questions. While the statistics of crime (such as street crime, car thefts, robberies, kidnappings, murders etc.) and violence (such as number of assassinations of workers and leaders of political parties, police, civil society notables, or ordinary citizens) weaved a narrative, there were numerous challenges in relying solely on them. Crime statistics were not publicly available and local newspapers provided the best source of information for an understanding of broad trends over the years but not micro-level data.

In some cases, victims did not report crime, as it was tantamount to signing one's death warrant and further compounding the losses incurred. In other cases, the offenders were too powerful due to their political connections or the local police station was complicit in the crime as police officials were either corrupt, loyal to a particular political party or crime group, or possessed all of the aforementioned characteristics. These challenges in data accumulation led this study to rely on multiple sources, namely, newspapers, interviews and field research, blogs, videos etc.

Newspapers

Newspapers provided a useful source of tracing themes over time. For the purpose of studying events and actors over a long period of time, I benefitted from newspapers for the years 1990 until the writing of this dissertation. These newspapers included national newspapers in English and Urdu language, namely the Daily Dawn, The News, Herald, and the Daily *Jang*. These newspapers were not representative of overt political affiliations; rather they represented middle-of-the-road perspectives. They were useful in providing statements of different actors such as political leaders, government officials, and independent monitors such as Human Rights groups and journalists who covered the city over time. I accessed these newspapers primarily from the archives of the Library of Congress for the period of 1990-2008. For the period of 2009 until 2015, I independently read newspapers on a daily basis.

Urdu language newspapers provided a more detailed analysis of events at the city level than the English language newspapers in the national press. However, English

language newspapers provided op-eds on evidence-based analysis and thus were invaluable in understanding various patterns as they unfolded over time.

Since freedom of press is limited in Pakistan and journalists face grave risks in exposing wrongdoings or injustices in their line of work, it was useful to verify information gleaned from newspapers with independent accounts from interviews and scholarly work on Karachi. This study also used sources such as blogs of journalists and documentaries based on various issues in Karachi, as well as stories that appeared in the Reuters, the New York Times, and the Washington Post. International newspapers provided independent analysis and offered insightful stories about actors in Karachi. They differed from the national press from the vantage point of not facing the possibility of retribution in case their stories revealed actual identities of those involved in possible wrong-doing.

In using evidence from newspapers, while my primary focus remained on the issues of housing and water provision, and extortion, I paid attention to the themes of crime, violence, and urban politics of Karachi as well. In doing so, I adopted a holistic perspective that everything was connected at some level and could not be overlooked.

Academic and Non-Academic Literature

Previous scholarship on Karachi by anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists and historians was instrumental in providing explanations behind the violence and political history of the city over time. Non-academic literature such as the verdict of Supreme Court over high rates of criminality and violence in Karachi, and reports of the

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan were useful in providing independent evaluation about the different aspects of the situation in Karachi.

Field Research

Lastly, this study relied on fieldwork in Karachi. I spent a month for field research in Karachi and conducted fifty interviews. I interviewed as many people as possible and also observed the city and its residents by visiting different parts of the city with help of personal contacts. Present-day Karachi is not an easy city to navigate without the support of personal contacts, and people do not open up as easily unless one goes with a referral. Even with such introductions, it was not easy to gather information and some parts of the city, especially the areas controlled by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) could not be visited due to lack of security.

However, traveling through different parts of the city provided a rich understanding of the unpredictability and precariousness of life in Karachi. This experience was helpful in providing contextual details about the city and how ordinary citizens go about their daily lives. An important aspect for instance, was how citizens avoid seeking confrontation and go out of their way to avoid antagonizing anyone, especially if one appears to have an affiliation with a particular political or religious party. Another aspect of the city's physical geography was how flags of political parties dotted different parts of the city or graffiti that was political in nature marked walls. Rental buildings pockmarked with bullets in some parts of town were symbolic of the violence that can erupt in the city among various groups at any time. How citizens have adjusted to violence and uncertainty due to street crime was visible in their safety precautions. For instance, people kept inexpensive possessions, such

as, cheap cell phones with them so that in the case of being robbed, they did not lose anything of significant value. Observations were helpful in making sense of daily existence in the city by meaning-making through studying symbols, language, and actions of people in Karachi. As Geertz (1973, p.24) points out, such an endeavor is useful in ‘gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can in some extended sense of the term, converse with them.’

Semi-Structured Interviews

Conversations were an important component of field research. Although more people could have been interviewed, the main problem confronting my field research was availability of personal introductions that would have ensured deeper access to a wide variety of people, as well as personal safety in the cases that respondents were living in volatile parts of the city. Baig (2008, p.xxii) highlights the obstacles in doing field work in Pakistan if one lacks personal contacts as the world of politics in the country is personalized in nature. As he aptly observes, ‘without such, research may be impossible, or at least would constitute a very frustrating experience’ (ibid, p. xxii).

Thus, although I would have preferred to interview more people, I had to make the best of available resources. It was partly the reason why I did not seek access to top-level leadership of political parties to seek their views. Instead, I relied on their statements in newspapers and published interviews for registering their perspectives. Blogs of individual journalists were particularly useful for accessing the statements and perspectives of those actors who were openly known as criminals but who also harbored political ambitions and were linked to political parties.

I focused on interviewing ordinary people under the assumption that they were more amenable to sharing their true perspectives, as they were not involved in high stakes. Interviewees were selected on the basis of addressing the issues of law and order, water and housing provision, and how these themes were connected (if at all) to political actors in Karachi. To that end, I interviewed low-level members of political parties, academics working on urban issues of Karachi, individuals working in non-governmental organizations (NGO) that focused on water and housing issues of Karachi, ordinary citizens such as women and children, businessmen, lawyers, and members of minority groups of Shiites and Christians. I also talked to members of formal state institutions such as police and judiciary as well as the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB). To ensure that gathered narratives were not biased, I talked to people with diverse backgrounds. From conversing with people who were barely making ends meet to those who were privileged was helpful in addressing the same questions from different perspectives.

A fascinating part of interviews was how individuals were part of different worlds, thereby evading neat categorization of their identities. For instance, during my stay in the city, I had a chance to meet a former journalist who had an affiliation with a political party but was also conducting business. In addition, he operated a *madrassa* in his ancestral home in the city. Another interviewee was a policeman as well as affiliated with a political party and ran his own business. He was also part of the Shiite minority living in Karachi and was in some ways connected to those who could ‘protect’ his ancestral house in a predominantly Shiite residential colony, as he had armed guards and CCTV cameras installed in front of his house. There were numerous other instances in which individuals

were part of different worlds, which at times were at odds with each other. In case of conflict, it was difficult to predict which part of their world demanded their supreme loyalty.

Majority of respondents spoke on condition of anonymity to ensure their safety. Speaking one's mind, especially if on the record, is a risky venture in Karachi, as almost all actors are armed to their teeth and if offended, can resort to vindictive violence. Unless stated otherwise, all identities have been kept confidential. Excerpts of people's interviews accessed through open sources such as newspapers or blogs have been cited with identities. Every interviewee was informed verbally about university protocols for conducting qualitative interviews before the beginning of each interview. Extensive written notes were taken after the interview was finished as it helped in not interrupting the flow of the conversations.

Although interviews were semi-structured in nature, they could take a life of their own at the will of the interviewee. The questionnaire was mainly structured around the themes of housing and water provision, violence in the city, the phenomenon of extortion, the role of politics in all of these issues, and how the interviewees predicted the future of the city. From those who were older in age, it helped to seek their perspectives on how the current state of affairs regarding these issues came into being. However, interviews were primarily conversational in nature and could veer into areas which the interviewees thought were of more importance.

In the interviews that were facilitated by personal contacts, it was easier for the interviewee to open up and share their perspective. My identity as a Pakistani living outside of the country helped in establishing credentials as an observer who was trying to understand their point of view. It was helpful to be well versed in Urdu language, as that is the predominant lingua franca of Karachi, even though the majority of people are able to express themselves in English language. In general, people were eager to express their opinions, and reassured by the fact that their identities were anonymized.

In some instances, interviewees offered trite explanations instead of their personal opinions. In such instances, background research proved useful as the tone of conversations changed when they were asked questions backed by data and evidence. For instance, a former police official who refused to address questions beyond a perfunctory analysis was more amenable to sharing his perspective when I presented facts as cited in open sources. However, even then, the interviewee was careful in presenting his views, but the interview in itself was revelatory regarding his views on what was really important and which actors he was careful to not talk about.

In other cases, interviewees refrained from naming culpable actors. For instance, a journalist who was aware of which political party he held accountable for establishing the culture of violence in the city explained the situation of the city without naming the party by name. His withholding of names was emblematic of the fear of retribution and lack of trust that pervaded the city.

While staying with personal friends who were affiliated with Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) who arranged meetings with low-level party members, it helped to be a native Urdu speaker whose parents had migrated to Pakistan just like the millions of *Mohajirs* at the time of partition. While the interviews were helpful in noting the perspectives of the MQM workers regarding the issues of water, housing, violence, and extortion in Karachi, spending more time in the city and having more meetings would have been even more useful in understanding even deeper and more honest analyses on these issues.

Data Analysis

Extensive field notes comprising of observations of daily life in Karachi as well as written accounts of interviews offered rich data that was crucial in providing an understanding of the situation on the ground. I conducted data analysis by identifying and categorizing themes and patterns that emerged in the written accounts.

It was particularly helpful to rely on data analysis techniques suggested by Gioia et al. (2012, p.20) who argue that initial analysis should help in identifying categories based on gathered information. With the progress of research, one can seek similarities and differences among different categories based on one's own analysis, theoretical concerns and the larger narrative (ibid, p.20). This leads to second-order analysis in which a researcher asks 'whether the emerging themes suggest concepts that might help us describe and explain the phenomena we are observing' (ibid, p.20).

Following this template, I found it helpful to identify categories based on the perspectives of the interviewees. For some, violence in the city was the main problem while others focused on how extortion had become a pervasive menace. Housing and water provision, according to many, had become political in nature. After the first round of analysis, it was useful to question whether these categories were addressing the research questions of this study. Subsequently, I placed these categories under the themes of housing and water provision, extortion, and linkages between state and non-state actors to understand how the reality on the ground addressed theoretical constructs.

These categories and themes were helpful in at least two ways. One, analysis and writing was an iterative process that involved continual engagement with data, concepts and relevant literature not only to find precedents, but also to identify new developments (ibid, p.21). Two, data based on direct observations and interviews was helpful in providing evidence that were helpful in causal inference. In some cases, one or two pieces of evidence were useful as they provided overwhelming support to an argument. Brady et al. (2010, p.24) define such evidence as a causal process variable (CPO) as it is ‘about context, process, or mechanism’. Such evidence may not constitute a set of scores but is useful for offering deep insights and is thus useful in making inferences (ibid, p.24). In addition, evidence from interviews and direct observations was helpful in tracing the evolution and progression of certain patterns that emerged over time in Karachi’s history.

Purpose of Research

This building block case study is useful as it contributes to the larger research agenda of developing a typological theory (theories on how different combinations of

independent variables interact to produce different levels or types of dependent variables)’ (George and Bennett 2004, p.46). George and Bennett (2004, p.235) define a typological theory as

...a theory that specifies independent variables, delineates them into the categories for which the researcher will measure the cases and their outcomes, and provides not only hypotheses on how these variables operate individually, but also contingent generalizations on how and under what conditions they behave in specified conjunctions or configurations to produce effects on specified dependent variables.

Rohlfing (2012) argues that case studies are built on the ontological foundation that ‘at least some empirical relationships are regular, that is invariant (regular without exception) or at least systematic (regular with exceptions), and that one can learn something about these relationships via systematic small-n research’ (Rohlfing 2012, p.1).

Through this building block study, the purpose of this dissertation is to present an in-depth analysis and causal mechanism that can be explored in other comparable cases. Conducting detailed analysis of Karachi offers a chance to understand the dynamics and nature of political order in one city which may bear relevance for other comparable cases. Secondary research on megacities in developing countries such as Cairo, Lagos, and Rio de Janeiro highlights commonalities of high rates of violence, crime, and informality. In these places as well, different types of political orders exist in relation to formal governance. Although there are distinct differences based on every city’s history, culture,

and political system, the commonalities of crime, violence, and informality present an opportunity to study the nature of orders at play in these cities to contribute to typological theory development.

KARACHI: A BRIEF HISTORY

The roots of informality and drug trade in Karachi go farther back in time than many would believe. Tracing patterns through pre-colonial and colonial times reveals insights that bear relevance for the informal and violent political order in present-day Karachi.

It is not the purview of this chapter to present a detailed history of the city and province over such a long period of time. Instead, this section briefly highlights the trends that have persisted over time. These trends include: Karachi being a transit point for opium trade; autochthonous claims that inform ethnic cleavages in the city's politics; and, the role of middlemen or intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled in service provision in the city today. Tracing these trends over time reveals that they are not entirely new in nature, denoting continuity, at the same time, keeping in view the particular rhythms of the time period in question. Each of these themes is explained before and during colonial rule in Sindh and Karachi.

Major trends in Karachi: Pre-colonial and Colonial Rule

Major trends in Karachi during the pre-colonial and colonial rule included: centrality as a trade route and transit of opium through Karachi; migration trends; Autochthonous claims; and intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled. Each of these is explained in more detail.

Centrality as a trade route and transit of opium

Karachi's centrality as a trade route in present-day Pakistan is undisputed. At present, Karachi is the busiest port of Pakistan and handles about 61 percent of the country's entire port traffic (World Bank 2010, p.21). It is also a pivotal transit point for the global drug trade originating from neighboring Afghanistan and intended for markets in Europe and North America (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2012).

This trend is in line with the role played by Karachi and Sindh in trade before and during the colonial period. In pre-colonial times (before 1843), Sindh's merchant networks linked the province to global market²³ while its *Hundi* networks facilitated trade throughout India and beyond.²⁴ By the mid-eighteenth century, Sindh was linked to important maritime and land routes that connected northern India to Arabia and the Persian Gulf (ibid, p.36). Markovits (2000, p.123) writes that merchants from Sindh established firms in Egypt and by the 1890s and early 1900s, there was a considerable influx of merchants and employees in Egypt. From Egypt, some big firms expanded into the Mediterranean, establishing branches in places as Malta, Algiers, Gibraltar, Naples, Sicily, Tunis, and Tangier. Some of these firms arrived in West Africa, reaching Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast by the 1890s, and Nigeria to a later date.

²³ For an excellent account of merchant networks of Sindh, see Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750-1947: Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama*: (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

²⁴ *Hundi* is a traditional system of exchange for transferring money. It was used by merchants for transfer of credit and goods. *Hundi* 'fulfilled the role of the letter of credit or bill of exchange nowadays given by banks to traders, basically allowing the latter to tide over the period between the conclusion of the transaction and the delivery of the goods' (Markovits 2000, p.186). See also, Marina Martin, "Hundi/Hawala: the Problem of Definition", *Modern Asian Studies* 43, no. 4 (2009), pp. 909-937.

Karachi²⁵ became a flourishing port attracting merchants from the rest of the country (Markovits 2000, p.38) as well as conducting trade with Muscat in the Gulf of Oman (Farooqui 2005, p.150).²⁶ The city's geographical location also became instrumental in trafficking of opium. By the early decades of the nineteenth century, Karachi became a point in the transit of Malwa opium through Sindh to China. Malwa opium, grown in the western and central regions of India, and traded by merchant groups challenged the British monopoly of Bengal opium that was also directed to Chinese markets (Farooqui 1995, p.448). By early nineteenth century, the British who held administrative control over the areas of Ganga region, declared monopoly over production of opium in the Ganga region (Farooqui 1995, p.448). Known as Bengal opium in British official terminology, it was massively exported to China, yielding hefty profits to the colonial government as well as becoming an important commodity in the Britain-China-India trade (ibid, p.448). The lucrative Bengal opium trade provided inspiration to private merchants in western and central India who began to grow opium, subsequently known as Malwa opium, as early as the 1770s (ibid, p.448).

The city remained an important link in the Malwa opium trade until early 1840s (Farooqui 2005, p.150). Opium became the largest component in the export trade of Karachi (Markovits 2000, p.41) and provided single-handedly, the largest contribution to government revenues in Sindh (Markovits 2013, p.99). In addition to massive revenues,

²⁵ First verified accounts of Karachi are found in early eighteenth century (Lari & Lari 1996, p.8)

²⁶ Karachi at this time was reported to have a population of around 14, 000 people, half of whom were financiers and moneylenders of various Hindu castes (Farooqui 2005, p.149).

the trade integrated Sindh in international trading networks that spanned China and Far East (ibid, p.41).

By 1839, the British were successful in annexing Karachi, allowing them to re-direct the Malwa opium trade from Karachi to Bombay so they could earn more profits (Markovits 2000, p.41). It is important to note that state patronage of the opium trade kept trade routes in the region thriving before and during colonial rule.

During the colonial rule, Karachi was developed as a port city in a bid to increase trade and revenues. Karachi became the headquarters for the governor, police captains, revenue collectors and other officials, prompting construction of roads and accommodations for the officials (Lari & Lari 1996, p.78). In 1852, Karachi municipality was created with the initial task of cleaning of the city (ibid, p.103). By 1913, the municipality consisted of councilors and salaried officials, and was dominated by Hindus and Parsis (ibid, p.105). By the end of 1920s, Karachi became British India's third largest port city, becoming a main base for Britain and allies in the First World War (Tan & Kudaisya 2000, p.179).²⁷

Migration Trends

At present, Karachi's population estimates around 20 million, making it a megacity (a city with the population of at least 10 million). Experts point to migration as the primary cause for the city's increasing population. As the city's population increases in numbers, it

²⁷It was not only the communication boom that helped Karachi to become connected with the global economy. Karachi's geographical location as a port connecting India to China, Central Asia, and what constitutes the modern Middle East, was one of the most important factors that led to its centrality as a thriving city.

also does so in terms of diversity, in the process, converting some ethnic groups to minority and others into majority. This trend as well, dates back to pre-colonial and colonial times. Karachi Municipality's chair and mayor, Jamshed Nusserwanjee observed in 1934 (Lari & Lari 1996, p.116),

We will have to be clear in our mind that the expansion of the city of Karachi is mainly due to the fact that it is a transit place, pure and simple, and its trade is chiefly a passage from Karachi to other places. The population increases mainly because of that; otherwise there will be no purpose to live in the City of Karachi.

The prosperity of Karachi attracted migrants from India as well as Arabs and Persians from the Gulf; by 1945, the city's population had reached the half million mark (ibid, p.102-103).²⁸

Autochthonous claims

In present-day Karachi, ethnic grievances of different communities and social groups has become an integral aspect of the city's violent politics. While there are various factors as to why the city's body politic has become sharply defined along ethnic lines, one aspect in particular is worth paying more attention. This aspect alludes to the question of 'ownership' of Karachi. From the Baloch drug gangs of Lyari, the oldest neighborhood of the city, to Sindhis to migrants, commonly known as *Mohajirs*, each player claims to be the rightful inheritor of the city's resources.

²⁸ The commercial success of Karachi attracted migrants from the entire country, including powerful Bombay firms, and by 1860, the city was important enough commercially to establish its own Chamber of Commerce (Lari & Lari 1996, p.87).

These claims of being true representatives of the people of Karachi can be traced back to pre-colonial and colonial times during which the local population developed feelings of being deprived of Sindh's riches by newcomers. In pre-colonial times, as Sindh's lands became available for cultivation due to irrigation channels, new arrivals streamed in, with Balochi tribesmen from the mountains and nomads from the desert settling in Sindh (Ansari 1992, p.12). It is to this historical fact that Sindhis and Balochis lay their claim to Karachi as true inheritors of the city.

During colonial rule (1843-1947) as the British invested in communication and irrigation infrastructure to increase agricultural output and trade (Ansari 2005, p.23), migrants from different parts of India arrived in Sindh in search of livelihood opportunities. The introduction of postal, telegraph, telephone and railways connections within Sindh and with the rest of the country linked the province with the outside world (ibid. p.23). By 1907, key railway lines traversed through Sindh, one linking it to different parts of India (ibid, p.24). The railway network was used to divert freight transportation from other railways companies and direct it to Karachi port which was in competition with Bombay for business (ibid, p.25).

A key feature of construction of infrastructure under the British was management of water through building of huge barrages to regulate distribution of water throughout the year (ibid, p.28). Not only were the new structures intended to increase cultivable land through perennial irrigation, paying off the costs incurred in construction within twelve years, leaving a revenue-raising property for the government (ibid, p.29). Also, such projects were considered the hallmark of good governance in the eyes of the British in a

land which was considered backward and dependent on the unpredictable Indus for irrigation water (Haines 2011, p.185). As Haines (2011, p.181) points out, governance in Sindh was tied to the control of water since times immemorial-nothing grew there without receiving water from the river. In addition, in the aftermath of the Khilafat movement, a protest movement that originated in India in the aftermath of the poor treatment of the Ottoman Empire,²⁹ and which found support in urban and rural parts of Sindh, the British considered construction of such projects as securing the stability of their rule (ibid, p. 185).

Consequently, the Lloyd or Sukkur Barrage was opened in 1932 and credited for revolutionizing irrigation in Sindh (ibid, p. 198). The Barrage increased the cultivable area exponentially- more than three million acres were increased in the Barrage zone alone and the annual acreage for cotton and wheat rose by three and four times respectively (Ansari 2005, p.30). Thus, crops like cotton and wheat increased in production and value by leaps and bounds, linking Sindh with world markets and establishing new economic relationships (ibid, p.30). New towns expanded with the rise in local populations; small factories (such as cotton ginning) sprang up, and demand for local mechanics, electricians, and craftsmen increased as well (ibid, p.31). All these developments attracted people from the rest of the country to migrate to Sindh in search of opportunities.

The British contributed to pre-existing insecurities of the local population in Sindh by encouraging settlers from other parts of the country, in particular, Punjab (ibid, p.31).

²⁹ In the years following World War I and following the breakup of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the war, Muslims in India initiated civil disobedience and carried out protests to pressure the British government to preserve the authority of the Ottoman ruler as the Caliph of Islam. These acts of protest came to be known as the Khilafat Movement (1919-1924).

These migrants arrived in Sindh with construction of the irrigation infrastructure that created jobs and local industries. An example was Sukkur Barrage. Worried about recovering costs of large projects such as the Sukkur Barrage which was constructed to increase cultivable area and encourage production of local industries around crops, the British encouraged an influx of cultivators from the Punjab whom they considered as skilled and efficient farmers as compared to Sindhi farmers (Ansari 1992, p.31).³⁰ As the newcomers arrived, the insecurities of the local population increased for fear of losing their lands to migrants. The slogan, *Mervesoon, Sindh na de soon!* (I will die, but not give up Sindh!) dates back to that period (Das 2001, p.104).³¹

It was a combination of such policies and concomitant developments that Sindhi identity and notions of ‘Sindhi’ and ‘non-Sindhi’ emerged. More was at stake and the local population began to increasingly feel marginalized in its own province. Sindh’s prosperity and Karachi’s emergence as a thriving port city attracted migrants from the rest of the subcontinent, in the process, making native Sindhis question *Sindhi-ness* of the migrants, and feeling disempowered as the latter kept pouring in.

Intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled

The role of strongmen is familiar to the residents of Karachi. Be it the drug gangs of Lyari who played a key role in supporting citizen groups overseeing state and non-state

³⁰ For more on Sukkur Barrage and its impact on the local political economy, see Daniel Haines, “Concrete “Progress”: Irrigation, Development and Modernity in Mid-Twentieth Century Sind”, *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no.1 (2011), 179–200.

³¹ Sindhi-led Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) raised the same slogan in 2013 against the Mohajir-led Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), the political party that claims to represent the people of Karachi and has often demanded that the city be made a separate province.

urban development projects (Viqar 2014) to the provision of jobs and housing to people by individuals belonging to powerful political parties, somehow governance is not experienced directly by citizens, at least the underprivileged.

The roots of this concept of middlemen, or strong men, is not new, however. In Sindh during pre-colonial times, these intermediaries were represented by local landholders who formed an interface with the people and distant governments in Kabul and Delhi (Ansari 1992, p. 12-13). In addition, because of its religious diversity, figures such as *Sufis*, religious leaders who practiced more spiritual and less formalistic communication with God played a pivotal role in mediating different social groups. Over time, *Sufis* formed an interface between the rulers and the ruled. It was *pirbhai* ties (links of brotherhood based on following the same *Sufi* or *Pirs* (*Sufis* or descendants of *Sufis*) among *murids* (followers) which helped to create a social grouping premised on association rather than birth (ibid, p.28-29). Followers benefitted if their *Pir* was strong as it meant that they could rely on him in difficult times. Tribal chiefs also looked to *Pirs* for legitimacy- the latter performed *dastar bandi* or inauguration ceremonies, signifying their influence to constituencies of their followers.

When the British annexed Sindh, in their bid to not disrupt existing social and political dynamics, they encouraged the patronage of local elite who continued to remain intermediaries between the local populace and the colonial masters. Through politics of patronage, the British attempted to integrate indigenous power holders of Sindh into frameworks of local authority (Ansari 1992, p.36). By a pragmatic balance of policies that aimed to align the interests of the local elite with those of the British, the new rulers began

to award proprietary land rights to *Waderos*, *Sardars*, and *Pirs*. They realized that it was not possible to collect revenue and maintain law and order if these elites did not become collaborators to the British rule (ibid, p.37). Most importantly, it was not possible to maintain a reliable system of political control if the local elite were not won over through favors that added to their prestige or withholding favors that signaled lack of their importance. As a result, the local elite formed an interface between the new rulers and the ruled, illustrating the continuity of a pattern existent before the onset of colonial rule in Sindh.

KARACHI: FROM 1947-1988

By 1947, Pakistan had come into being. In the newly-independent country, Karachi was declared the capital city.³² Being the first capital city of the new country and also because of its importance to the national economy, Karachi became a major theatre where national politics became linked with local politics.

After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the patterns of: centrality of Karachi as a trade route; autochthonous claims to its resources; and role of intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled continued, especially in terms of housing provision. Over the years, the city's urban landscape became complex with arrival of new actors and dynamics set in motion during the eleven-year military rule under General Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988). It was during this time that violence became essential to urban politics in Karachi as political parties routinely resorted to violent tactics to protect themselves from opponents. This chapter makes the case that the military rule served as ground zero for the violent and informal political order in present-day Karachi.

This chapter traces these trends and the broader contexts in which they were shaped. It is organized in two sections. The first section presents continuation of trends of claims over Karachi's ownership of resources between migrants and original settlers, and the role of intermediaries between rulers and the ruled in the sphere of housing provision. The second section focuses on the military rule of General Zia-ul-Haq (1978-1988), a turning point in the city's history.

³² By 1960s, however, the capital was shifted to Islamabad.

Migration flows, Housing Issues, and Ethnic Grievances

To understand the nature of multi-faceted conflict in Karachi over the city's resources, it is important to trace the genesis of grievances among different social groups in Karachi. The inception of this conflict lies in migration flows that turned the city's majority groups to minority. The large number of migrants in turn contributed to housing issues.

It is difficult to point out when the migration flows in Karachi started fueling ethnic grievances. It is easier to report that the large number of people settling in Karachi in the aftermath of independence of Pakistan soon contributed to housing issues of the city.³³ It is primarily this symbiotic relationship among the three elements of housing, migrants, and ethnic cleavages which have made housing as much of a political issue as an urban problem in Karachi. In an ethnically diverse country where different ethnic groups had not yet formed a national consciousness,³⁴ new migrants to Karachi who soon outnumbered local Sindhi and Baluchi population in the city contributed to housing problems and exacerbated pre-existing misgivings of Sindhis against the outsiders. Despite being a part of the new state, Sindhi consciousness balked at the idea of being marginalized in its own land at the

³³ India's partition in 1947 led to one of the bloodiest wave of migrations in the history of the world. Hundreds of thousands of migrants moved from India to Pakistan. Many settled in Karachi.

³⁴ After the creation of Pakistan, in the nation-building project, the ruling elite tried to shape a national identity based on Islam, in the process, denouncing linguistic or regional opposition as provincialism (Alavi 1972, p.76). It was not an easy project, forming a nation after the country had been created, which, typically, is in the reverse order where people have waged long-drawn struggles and come together as nations to fight for common goals such as independence (Alavi 1991, p.157).

hands of the new elite, who first comprised of Urdu-speaking migrants and later of Punjabis and Pashtuns.

At the time of partition, the majority of Karachi's population comprised of Hindus who formed the bulk of the city's business community (Tan & Kudaisya 2000, p.201). Other communities that were indigenous to the city were Baluchis and Sindhis. In the aftermath of the partition of 1947, refugees from north India poured into Karachi while Hindus moved to India. Migrants, most of them from United and Central provinces of India, arrived in Karachi in search of opportunities. The population of the city kept increasing over the years, with a record increase of 432 percent over the period of 1941-61, marking it as the largest increase in population in a city in any given time in history (ibid, p.185).

From 1950 onwards, Karachi also attracted Pashtuns from the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), and Punjabis from different parts of Punjab in search of opportunities. The development planning policies at the national level that aimed at increasing industrialization in the country had an impact on Karachi as well. Substantial numbers of workers from Punjab and NWFP joined the ranks of blue-collar workers providing manual labor (Nichols 2008, p.142). Pashtuns opened hotels servicing laborers while some turned to transportation (Khan 2010, p.30). Numerous Punjabis and Pashtuns enlisted in the military and police (ibid, p.30).

The city's ethnic composition over the years turned Sindhis and Baluchis, the original inhabitants of Karachi, into minorities in what they thought of as their own city. By 1961, more than 80 percent of the city's population comprised of migrants of one sort

or the other (Ansari, 2005, p.210). The impact of the new settlers in Karachi was felt at many levels by the original settler ethnic groups of Sindhis and Baluchis. One of the most visible issues, which arose out of inflow of migrants to the city, was urban housing.

Ethnic Grievances

Migration to Karachi resulted in not only housing problems but also contributed to ethnic grievances. These grievances were intrinsically tied to the struggle of different groups regarding political and economic resource allocation (Verkaaik 1994,p.7), over the course of history producing a narrative of resentments of various ethnic groups, each claiming their cause as just and Karachi as ‘theirs’.

To begin with, Sindhis had misgivings even at the time of independence in 1947 about the status of their province in the new country (Ansari 2005, p.50). With a population of 4.5 million out of a projected population of 70 million for the entire country, Sindh was allocated 4 seats out of the Constituent Assembly’s 69 seats (ibid, p.50). Not happy with its political representation, Sindhis worried about being inundated by migrants from other parts of British India, and being marginalized by them in the process (ibid, p.51). The declaration of Karachi as the capital of the country did not allay the insecurities of Sindhis that lost its sizable revenues from Karachi to the central government without any compensation in return (ibid, p.63).

As the vast number of migrants came to Karachi over the years in search of opportunities, they reduced original settlers of the city into minorities. The newcomers

became known as *Mohajirs*.³⁵ They were distinct from the original population of Karachi and Sindh based on their education and culture. Unlike their counterparts in Punjab, they did not assimilate into the existing culture of Sindh. The term *Mohajir* became reserved for refugees arriving from North India and spoke Urdu as their first language, while those who came from East Punjab gradually became known as 'Punjabi' (Ansari 1998,p.90).

Over the years, the grievances of Sindhis took an ethnic turn with implementation of Urdu (spoken and identified with Mohajir identity and culture) as the national language.³⁶ Sindhis who did not speak Urdu could not find government jobs and thus fared dismally in representation in contrast to Mohajirs and Punjabis (Das 2001, p.109). It also did not help matters with the official policy of not teaching Sindhi language in educational institutions in Sindh. All these developments added to the concerns of the local Sindhi population who perceived Karachi as becoming a political constituency of the Urdu-

³⁵ The concept of *Mohajirs* and *Ansars* dates back to the migration of Muslims in Mecca to Medina in the times of Prophet Mohammed. The Muslims in Mecca were called Mohajirs as they had left their possessions behind to follow the Prophet. The Muslims in Medina were called Ansars as they opened their doors of hospitality and welcomed Mohajirs as their own. The analogy of Mohajirs and Ansars was invoked in the aftermath of creation of Pakistan to create a sense of brotherhood between the refugees who had settled in Karachi as Mohajirs, and Sindhis had opened their homes to them like Ansars.

³⁶ In forging a 'Pakistani' consciousness, language was used as a marker and Urdu was declared as the national language, a policy which elicited criticism from Bengalis who were larger in number than the entire West Pakistan (comprising of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, North West Frontier Province, tribal areas) put together. This was just the beginning of a perpetual narrative of discontent amongst those provinces and ethnic groups who did not form a part of the ruling elite, and who registered feelings of being recolonized by the ruling elite (T. Rahman 1995). It is important to note that the Pakistan movement was the weakest in the Muslim-majority provinces of India which joined the cause of Pakistan only on the eve of independence (Alavi 1991, p.153). Thus, a national identity that rose above provincial interests to unify different ethnic groups and interests did not get a fair chance to be formed.

speaking Mohajir population and political elite (Rahman 2002, p.265). Differences between Sindhis and Mohajirs manifested in large-scale language riots in the 1970s in Karachi (Rahman 1996, p.115-117). Das (2001, p.122) in description of the mood in Karachi and Sindh during the language riots cites the newspaper, the Daily Dawn's report (11 July 1972),

Karachi, normally a busy commercial and industrial centre, was virtually deserted today and barricades and bonfires blocked the streets. The few cars and taxis still circulating had to dodge through barricades of rubble and clusters of youths waving and screaming. Occasionally gunshots rang out. Cars were flying black flags and drivers wore tags of black cloth.

In 1971, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came into power heralding a populist democracy. Sindhi by ethnicity, Bhutto introduced policies that benefitted Sindhis and added to a sense of marginalization experienced by Mohajir population in Karachi. For instance, Bhutto instituted a quota system for Sindhis in educational institutions and bureaucracy, which was aimed at increasing representation of Sindhis (Das 2001, p.120). By 1979, however, Prime Minister Bhutto had been sent to the gallows by military dictator, General Zia-ul-Haq, leading to a sense of deep mourning in the Sindhi consciousness in particular and the rest of the population in general.

Housing

The origins of informal housing market are connected to the state conceding informal solutions to the housing needs of migrants. The concept of state-'conceded'

informality denotes that the state lets non-state solutions to step in in case of its capacities falling short (Altrock 2012).

Government responses were ineffective and slow, opening up spaces for local players. Between 1947 and 1953, housing for refugees was developed in and around the periphery of the city (Hasan 1997, p.175). However, many of these housing ventures catered to privileged classes of government officials and their families (Ansari 2005, p. 139). Throughout the decades of 1950s and 1960s, there were sometimes successful attempts to evict and demolish informal settlements with housing provided to refugees away from the city center; while many refugees moved, others returned to the city (Gazdar & Mallah 2013, p.6).

The majority of poorer refugees from India and migrants from other provinces lived in squatter settlements within and around city center and in public and religious buildings (Hasan 1997, p.175). The government allowed refugees to settle away from the city center and transport where water was to be provided by laying down mains to bring water from reservoirs miles away (Ansari 2005, p141). Only homeless people were allowed to buy homes on the basis of hire-purchase installments (ibid, p.141). However, such a policy was bound to fail as homeless people neither had financial resources nor arrangements such as bank accounts to apply for loans. In essence, such a policy opened the door for speculation on land and official corruption.³⁷

³⁷ Based on Interviews. Another effort that did not bear fruit was the ‘Greater Karachi Plan’ drawn up by a Swedish firm of planners, Merz Rendall Vatten, which involved settling refugees in ten-storey apartment buildings near their places of work (Hasan 1997, p.141).

Thus, housing needs of migrants to Karachi, which by 1961, comprised 80 percent of the total population (Ansari 2005, p.210), were met by ‘informal’ land developers. These intermediaries or middlemen were based in communities and neighborhoods. Although official policies were conceived and implemented to a certain degree, in the end, it was the kinship and community networks, which were helpful to the newcomers. In communities, these players organized to become focal points of resistance against threat of evictions.³⁸ Such ties were reflected in the construction of cooperative housing societies as well as squatter settlements- living arrangements reflected how people sharing sub-cultural identities aggregated together. These players, however, were not establishing parallel systems; they were connected with police officers, politicians and government officials, signifying tacit endorsement of makeshift responses to housing needs of the urban population.

Ansari (2005, p.133) notes that along with official organizations representing refugee interests, there was initiative on the part of refugees themselves who lobbied for improved facilities and acted as an intermediary between the government and the people. The latter organizations were based on common interests, such as occupation or place of origin. The development of organizations speaking on behalf of refugees to protect and lobby for their interests strengthened their ties with their communities, in the process

³⁸ For instance, in Lyari, there were *jamadars* or contractors who hired workers from neighborhoods for industrial labor, and who formed organizations based on extended kinship members. These organizations were important in terms of preventing evictions (Gazdar and Mallah 2013).

worrying Sindhis regarding their distinct affiliations (ibid, p.138).³⁹ Such ties were also reflected in construction of cooperative housing societies as well as squatter settlements.⁴⁰ These living arrangements ended up functioning ‘to maintain sub-cultural identities by creating areas in which minority [lived] as a majority.’⁴¹

By staking a claim to a neighborhood, refugees in Karachi could ‘convert a part of the city into ‘their’ territory, creating new cultural maps that reflected the culture that they had brought with them to Pakistan’ (ibid, p.144). In this mapping of the city, Karachi had conformed to the indigenous urban tradition of division into neighborhoods based on communities identifying by occupation, religion, ethnicity, or other factors (ibid, p.122). This held true in cities during Mughal and British rules ⁴² and remains consistent to an extent to this day.

³⁹ By the mid-1950s, Karachi’s neighborhoods consisted of housing colonies with names which were representative of their identity or how they identified themselves (ibid, p.142). For instance, Aligarh, Bihar, and Hyderabad Colonies, Kutch Colony, Bangalore town, Islamabad, Punjabi Saudagaran Colony etc.

⁴⁰ For instance, there was Hyderabad Colony, a co-op housing society, where prospective tenants had to prove their connections with Hyderabad, Deccan; or the squatter settlement of Usmania Muhajir Colony, whose residents came from the British Indian provinces of United Provinces and Central Provinces (ibid, p.140).

⁴¹ K.R. Sipe, *Karachi’s Refugee Crisis: the Political, Economic, and Social Consequences of Partition-Related Migration* (unpublished Duke University PhD, 1976), p.214, quoted in Sarah Ansari, *Life After Partition: Migration, Community and Strife in Sindh: 1947-1962* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 140.

⁴² Lari and Lari (1996, p.60) characterize the city under the British as a “dual city” which represented ‘indigenous’ or ‘black’ and ‘modern’ or ‘white’ parts of town. The indigenous part of town was a “dense development served by narrow meandering streets, where ‘musjids’ and ‘Hindoo temples’ acted as the foci of mohallahs” (ibid, p.62). The modern part of town was established under the British in the form of the military cantonment, signifying separation of the rulers from its subjects (ibid, p. 63).

By 1970s, the issue of housing gained political importance. Regularization of informal housing became an electoral promise and soon enough, politicians became more influential than community based middlemen.⁴³ Political parties began to wield more influence in terms of gaining footholds in their ethnic enclaves. Over the years, as the city's population grew, the stakes became higher in terms of who acquired how much land and which ethnic group represented by a particular political party could seek financial and political control through housing provision. While for the residents it was a continuous struggle for the right to a decent life, it signified expanding and strengthening of political base by political parties. Political parties contributed to informality by settling people belonging to their ethnic groups on a piece of land and ensuring that the community received access to water and electricity.⁴⁴ It was as much a political victory for political parties to be a part of the web of informality as the monetary gains that accompanied it.⁴⁵ Over time, relationships among political parties, land developers, and local government

⁴³ Contractors who hired workers from neighborhoods for industrial labor, and who formed organizations based on extended kinship members. These organizations were important in terms of preventing evictions (Gazdar and Mallah 2013).

⁴⁴ Based on interviews carried out during the summer of 2013.

⁴⁵ As early as 1983, an author noted, "For politicians, katchi abadis are interesting mainly in times of elections and political crisis, and at those moments promises, plans and proposals usually seem to suffice. In intervening periods, a politician's power is based on personal contacts with other politicians and government officials. These contacts enable him to grant favours and provide services to clients and client groups in return for political support. Regularization and improvement of katchi abadis in a systematic way, like the Improvement Policy advocates, may well undermine this power base of politicians in katchi abadis. Piecemeal improvement of living conditions in still illegal katchi abadis...is negotiable and therefore becomes the outcome of an exchange of information, support, influence and money in a transaction between government officials, politicians, local leaders and katchi abadi residents." (Yap 1983, p.264)

officials became entrenched and formalized through alliances and shared expectations of players.

The dynamics of informal housing market changed as a result of the influx of Pashtuns in Karachi (Tambiah 1996, p.84-155). Pashtun middlemen-flush with drug trade profits- imposed new codes in squatter settlements: after seizing lands, plots were developed and tenants could be evicted at will (Gayer 2007, p.522). The resultant effect was coercion and ruthless violence at the scale that the city had not witnessed before (ibid). In the coming years, the city's political economy was only going to become more complex with different actors aligning with each other in pursuit of common goals.

Turning Point: the Zia-ul-Haq years (1978-88)

The martial law years of General Zia-ul-Haq mark a turning point in the narrative of Karachi. This time period provided the context in which the city's politics became increasingly violent. In addition, one of the major political players came into being during these years. Some would go as far as to equate Karachi's violence primarily with this actor represented by the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) - a political party espousing the cause of migrants from India, or *Mohajirs* as they are commonly known.

In many ways, this time period constitutes a turning point in which productive and permissive conditions came together to shape the context in which violence became regulatory mechanism. In delineating permissive and productive conditions, this study borrows from Soifer (2012, p.1573) who writes,

.... we must distinguish between two types of causal conditions at work during the critical juncture: the permissive conditions that represent the easing of the

constraints of structure and make change possible and the productive conditions that, in the presence of the permissive conditions, produce the outcome or range of outcomes that are then reproduced after the permissive conditions disappear and the juncture comes to a close. The two types of conditions are nearly always framed as separately necessary and jointly sufficient for divergence to occur.

In Karachi's case, war in Afghanistan, transit of drugs and weapons through Karachi represent permissive conditions. The productive conditions were illustrated by General Zia's domestic agenda of supporting religious parties and enforcing a state-approved interpretation of Islam which was closer to Salafist interpretations (and funded by the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia). Together, these conditions paved the way for changes in Karachi's political economy. Weapons became easily available to social and political players; new players in the form of Pashtun drug smugglers became involved in the informal housing market; and, local crime groups became connected to the global drug trade. Together, these permissive and productive conditions give credence to characterization of this period as a turning point.

Afghan Jihad and 'Islamization': Permissive and Productive Conditions

General Zia's domestic policies were characterized by efforts to suppress democratic forces and implement a state-approved version of Islam. To counter pro-democracy forces, General Zia extended patronage to Islamic political parties, notable among them being Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). JI had served as a bulwark against leftist and

democratic forces over the past years- it was a natural ally for the new regime and endorsed its Islamization agenda as well.⁴⁶

Zia-ul-Haq's 'Islamization'⁴⁷ policies aimed to enforce a strict version of Islam on Pakistan and represented a social and political experiment that resonated well beyond the decade (1977-88) in which they were implemented. Their goal was to return a 'degenerate [Pakistani] society' to the pristine purity of Islam.⁴⁸ Some of them included: introducing Islamic laws on adultery; theft; drinking; appointing provincial Sharia benches at the High Court level and an Appellate Sharia Bench at the Supreme Court level who could decide whether any law was partly or completely un-Islamic; and conforming the economy in light of Islamic principles by ridding it of usury (Haqqani 2005, p.134). This campaign of bringing the state and society in conformity with Islam also discriminated against women through laws (Jalal 1991, p.323).⁴⁹

General Zia's argument was that Pakistan and Islam were two sides of the same coin and that the military establishment alone was capable of protecting the integrity of

⁴⁶ For an insightful account of Jamaat-e-Islami, see Vali Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

⁴⁷ In Pakistan's historical narrative, the word 'Islamization' has become a self-explanatory term to illustrate different policies instituted under General Zia-ul-Haq's rule to bring the country's laws and society in conformity with Islam.

⁴⁸ Cited in Khalid B. Sayeed, *Politics in Pakistan: the Nature and Direction of Change* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1980), p.183.

⁴⁹ For instance, Jalal (1991, p.323) writes, 'The Hudood Ordinance of 1979 blurred the distinction between adultery and rape. It was followed by the *qisas* [retaliation] and *diyat* [blood-money] ordinance in 1980 which provided that the compensation for a woman, who has been beaten or murdered would be only half that of a man. But the real howler was the law of evidence; it reduced the weight of a woman witness's evidence to half that of a man.'

both (ibid, p.319).⁵⁰ As a result of his policies implemented on a sustained basis, sections of Pakistani society grew conservative over the years, which set the tone of a country and society where one could be punished severely on account of openly flouting state-endorsed interpretations of Islam. In addition, these policies provided legitimacy to military rule and enabled General Zia to expand domestic powers and suppress democratic and leftist voices in a bid to build Islamic order (Nasr 2004, p.196). They also established the Pakistani military as the protector of state and society in one fell swoop, discrediting political forces as corrupt and untrustworthy.

In pursuance of these policies, the regime created various Islamic social and political institutions and opened access to numerous agencies to Islamist activists. Madrasas became the focal point of financial support by the government (for instance, they were key recipients of collected Zakat funds) and *Ulemas* (religious scholars), social groups, and Islamic parties were encouraged to do the same (Nasr 2000a, p.145). The Zia government also encouraged employment of madrasa graduates in various government institutions and agencies, encouraging many madrasas to train their graduates to constitute an Islamic bureaucracy for an Islamizing state (ibid, p. 147). Eventually, these madrasas

⁵⁰ For background, it is useful to remember that Pakistan was premised on the Two-Nation theory which argued that Hindus and Muslims being distinct groups, needed separate homelands. Thus, Islam presented the only unifying symbol for the new country. Although some scholars argue that the claim that Pakistan was formed on the basis of religion is facetious (Alavi 1991; Jalal 1991), yet, it was this marriage of convenience of religion and political goals that gave birth to a muddled consciousness regarding the role and importance of religion for the later generations in Pakistan. Yet, whose Islamic interpretation was valid or acceptable? To this day, Pakistan struggles with this intellectual conundrum of differing interpretations of the role of Islam in the social and political system of the country.

produced a constituency of Islamic parties which considered Islamic ideology to be the only acceptable *raison d'être* of political ambitions (ibid, p. 147).

In 1979, the Russians invaded Afghanistan. In Pakistan, the Zia regime relied on JI to play a formative role in garnering the support of Pakistanis in favor of *Jihad* against the Russians in Afghanistan (Nasr 1994, p.195). The policy of supporting *jihad* was beneficial for JI as well, as it provided it access to inner circles of military elite and involved it in the flow of money and arms to the *mujahideen* (those waging *jihad*) (ibid, p.195).⁵¹ In addition, madrassas in Pakistan, which had been at the receiving end of state support, also began to get funding from the Gulf States. These states provided generous funding for Islamic activities that aimed to train activists who were willing to fight in the war against the Russian army (Nasr, 2000b, p.144). These madrasas became as focused on religious education as the holy war (*jihad*).

Together these permissive (Afghan jihad) and productive (Islamization) conditions paved the way for bringing transformative changes in Karachi. They were most pronounced in making violence an integral part of urban politics, transforming small crime groups into powerful actors connected with the global drug trade, and introducing new players into the informal housing market of Karachi. Each of these changes is explained below.

Increase in Violence

As Afghan jihad paved the way for flow of weapons in Karachi, it was the Islami Jamia't –i- Tulaba (IJT), the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) that first laid hands on

⁵¹ In addition, JI's political and religious influence extended to the Afghan refugee community which established its credentials as a pan-Islamic party (Nasr 1994, p.195).

sophisticated weaponry. As the IJT flexed its muscles to suppress democratic and leftist political forces in student politics, its use of weaponry signaled other actors to do the same. The result was that over a sustained decade, everyone in Karachi's campuses politics became armed; from the university campuses, violence spread throughout the city. Gayer (2014, p.54) traces the evolution of violence in student politics from fistfights to gunfights (1979), to murders (1981 onwards), to a massacre (1989), making a convincing argument that violence from student campuses eventually contributed to larger social and political conflicts in Karachi.

Until 1960s and 1970s, student politics in Karachi and the rest of the country was led by activists with leftist ideological moorings. These activists maintained a strong international outlook.⁵² By the early years of 1960s, the IJT also became a visible force in Karachi's student campuses and represented an Islamist counter to leftist voices.⁵³

During the Zia-ul-Haq years, the IJT and its parent organization, JI, were close to the military establishment and formed a natural partnership, resulting in military training of IJT members (Nasr 1994, p.195). The IJT's armed militant wing, the Thunder Squad,

⁵² For instance, students protested against rapprochement between Pakistan and the United States as well as against policies of the Western bloc against the developing countries, and over the years became divided along pro-Moscow and pro-Beijing lines (Gayer 2014, p.55-60). They played a key role in destabilizing the military rule of General Ayub Khan in the 1960s and supported Zulfikar Bhutto, a populist Sindhi leader with socialist leanings. As a reward, some of the student leaders were also awarded tickets in the general elections in 1970 by Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) (ibid, p.58). However, these very students became opposed to Bhutto's rule as they observed his distancing from socialist principles⁵² and courting of most conservative sections of society (ibid, p.59).

⁵³ Formed in 1947, originally as a missionary movement, it was influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and devised its administrative structure and organizational strategy as advised by a Brotherhood member living in Karachi (Nasr 1992b, p.61).

introduced modern weapons (Sten-guns, revolvers, and Kalashnikovs) to Karachi's campuses, acquired either from the weapons markets of Khyber agency or even delivered directly by the Pakistani military (Gayer 2014, p.61). This weaponry was used for the first time in Karachi University in 1979, and soon enough militarized the rest of student groups who realized the need to acquire weapons (ibid, p.62-63). The resultant 'Kalashnikov culture' represented intimidation of political opponents through excessive violence (Nasr 1992, p.68). In addition, student organizations began to recruit petty criminals from outside the campus to provide them trained fighters for gun battles (Gayer 2014, p.66). The trend, set by the IJT, was soon followed by leftist and pro-PPP⁵⁴ student organizations. The inclusion of actors with criminal backgrounds and no connection to campuses beyond being hired guns contributed to intensification of violence on campuses (ibid, p.66). By 1984, the Zia-ul-Haq government banned student unions on account of violence. However, the decision had a contrary effect, as now the indicator of any student organization's success was not winning an election but owning arsenals of modern weaponry and foot soldiers (ibid, p.72).

The second half of 1980s witnessed the birth of Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) as a representative of Mohajir grievances. The political party grew out of campus politics, being preceded by formation of All Pakistan Mohajir Student Organization (APSMO) in 1978. APSMO and IJT were bitter foes; the latter had expelled APSMO from KU by force

⁵⁴ Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) represented the party of deposed Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, whose government was removed through a military coup by General Zia-ul-Haq. The PPP, although nationalist in outlook, represented Sindhis in particular, as its leadership was Sindhi in ethnicity.

in 1981. By 1987 however, the MQM had scored municipal electoral victory in 1987, challenging IJT's dominance (ibid, p.73). Furthermore, both MQM and IJT (and JI) claimed to represent Mohajirs of Karachi and thus, it was only a matter of time that armed rivalry between IJT and APSMO cross the threshold of the campuses to the streets of Urdu-speaking localities of Karachi. Rival activists were kidnapped, gutted in the streets, and by 1988, armed encounters between the two led to more than fifty people being injured across the city (ibid, p. 73). Violence, no longer in the domain of student politics, spread to the rest of the city.

Impact of the Drug Trade on Crime Groups and Informal Housing

As a consequence of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, Afghan farmers began to grow opium. For Karachi, this development resulted in transit of opium intended for markets in Europe and elsewhere. Over time, opium refineries also sprang up in northwestern Pakistan; there were an estimated 100 to 200 heroin refineries in the Khyber District alone (Haq 1996, p.954). With the involvement of Pakistani military and the intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), CIA-provided weapons transited Karachi and returned with heroin from Afghanistan.⁵⁵

The impact of the Afghan drug trade was multi-faceted. As Karachi became a transit point in the international drug trade, local crime groups became connected to the international drug trade, making the city an important node in the world of organized crime.

⁵⁵ 1985 report by Herald magazine (Pakistan) cited in Ikramul Haq, "Pak-Afghan Drug Trade in Historical Perspective", *Asian Survey*, Vol.36, No.10 (1996): 945-963. See also, Steve Coll, "U.S. declines to probe Afghan Drug Trade: Rebels, Pakistani Officers Implicated," *Washington Post*, May 13, 1990.

An immediate effect on the city was transformation of its crime groups in Lyari, one of the oldest neighborhoods of Karachi with a predominantly Baluch population. Drug consignments transited through Lyari, on their way to European, Gulf, and Central Asian markets. The Baluch gangs of Lyari became key intermediaries between drug traffickers of the tribal areas and the international buyers of the Afghan drugs (Gayer 2014, p.134).

Another neighborhood of Karachi, Sohrab Goth, predominantly inhabited by Pashtuns, became notorious for presence of drug smugglers. A neighborhood in the outskirts of the city, Sohrab Goth became associated with storage of weapons, heroin, local distribution, and transport to other destinations (Hussain 1990, p.186). Primarily identified with manual laborers from NWFP and Afghan refugees, Sohrab Goth became the largest Afghan refugee camp developed illegally on public land (Gayer 2014, p.294).

As the trade brought in substantial profits, converting petty criminals into feared drug traffickers, it also ushered in investments of the drug money into the real estate market of Karachi. As a result of the influx of Pashtuns in Karachi, the dynamics of informal housing market changed. Until the early 1980s, most middlemen were either Punjabi or Mohajir (Tambiah 1996, p.84-155). Pashtun middlemen, however, soon replaced Punjabis and Mohajirs in the informal housing market and imposed new codes in squatter settlements: after seizing lands, plots were developed and tenants could be evicted at will (Gayer 2007, p.522). The resultant effect was coercion and ruthless violence at an unprecedented scale in Karachi (ibid).

Conclusion

By mid-1980s, the urban landscape of Karachi had become complex. New actors such as violent land developers with ties to organized crime now operated in the city and undertook a variety of roles such as land grabbing. In addition, the city's politics had become violent- political parties drew upon violent tactics to protect themselves and intimidate opponents, in the process, even drawing upon criminals to do their bidding.

Moreover, prolonged suspension of democratic processes under military rule and elections based on non-party basis led to candidates seeking votes based on ethnic and sectarian markers. The failure of the state to provide housing for the increasing population led to growth of an informal system that involved a nexus of corrupt state officials and land developers who later joined political parties. Lastly, the drug trade connected organized crime groups to global syndicates, in the process making them powerful armed actors.

By 1988, the stage had been set in terms of introducing different players and variables. In the coming years, the city's political economy was only going to become more complex with different actors aligning with each other in pursuit of common goals.

THE MAKING OF AN INFORMAL AND VIOLENT POLITICAL ORDER: 1988-2013

The end of General Zia's eleventh year in office in 1988 ushered in the decade of 1990s- a time period in which violence became an integral part of politics in Karachi.⁵⁶ In subsequent years, political players began to levy extortion and engage in informal provision of housing. Within a span of twenty-five years, an informal and violent political order had come into being in Karachi. More than representative of breakdown of governance, this order represents shared expectations of key players which if they do not follow may result in losses or retribution.

By 'order', this study means 'a system of navigable rules and structures, which may be less visible to outsiders ...than to those who reside inside the system' (LeBas 2013, p.243). It denotes dynamism as it has evolved over time as well as complexity; the urban landscape includes political parties, crime groups aligned with political parties and a terror group. Moreover, the evolutionary nature of this order illustrates how shared expectations or informal rules of the game, once they come into being, are difficult to reverse.

The causal mechanism at play in Karachi's present-day order is social and political learning (Albert Bandura 1977) - that is, political actors have learnt by observing which patterns of practices yield gains and which practices if not carried out, result in retribution

⁵⁶ "Zia of Pakistan killed as blast downs plane; U.S. envoy, 28 others die," *New York Times*, August 18, 1988, <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/08/18/world/zia-of-pakistan-killed-as-blast-downs-plane-us-envoy-28-others-die.html>

or losses. This mechanism, shaped by wider contexts of Karachi, is illustrated through practices of players.

Why study shared expectations through practices of players? For one, shared expectations are unwritten and thus, cannot be found written somewhere. The closest guess is through actions of players, as they adapt their actions and strategies to the changing field of play.⁵⁷ Although there are multiple explanations of what constitutes practices, this dissertation draws upon Ledeneva's (2006) concept of informal practices discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Tracing these practices over time lends insights in how shared expectations, rooted in specific contexts, evolved over time. To this end, this chapter presents a chronological account from the 1990s to 2013 highlighting in each decade, the patterns of practices which contributed to the making of the informal and violent political order of present-day Karachi. The first section focuses on the decade of 1990s in which violence became routinized, extortion began to be levied systematically, and non-state actors began to engage in water delivery. The second section covers the time period from 1999-2013. During this time period, Pakistan experienced military rule under General Musharraf. For Karachi, this political change translated into support provided by the state to the MQM in

⁵⁷ The analogy of 'field of play' is inspired from Ledeneva's discussion of informal practices. Ledeneva premises her concept of informal practices within the discussions by Douglass North, an economist, and Pierre Bourdieu, a sociologist. Although both are based in different disciplines, they use the sports metaphor of the "game" to denote human action. She writes, "North is interested in rules, the structure behind the game", while, "Bourdieu is interested in players and the logic behind their strategies" (Ledeneva 2006, p.19). The concept of informal practices, lies in between, its focus more on actions of players.

a reversal of fortunes. It was also during this decade that the MQM formed local government in Karachi, contributing to a lull in violence because of the hegemony of the MQM. Things changed, however, during the democratic rule (2008-2013) when violence returned- this time because multiple contenders sought economic and political resources of the city. Each of these sections is explained in detail below.

I-The decade of democracy: 1990s

The decade of democracy was one of the most turbulent periods of Pakistan's history- democratic governments changed frequently over charges of corruption and poor governance.⁵⁸ Because these governments constituted shaky coalitions and were fearful of possible coups or dismissals, government resources were used to reward political constituencies during their successive tenures. It was in this political atmosphere that urban politics became more violent in Karachi. Contestation over economic and political gains pitted one political party versus the other, and the streets of the city became a political arena for securing gains. Old grievances based on autochthonous claims and those made by migrant populations culminated in violent exchanges.

⁵⁸ A lot has been written about the decade of 1990s in which not one political party completed its full tenure of five years. It is not the purview of this chapter to write on political instability that resulted and contributed to dismissal of political governments. Suffice it to say that within ten years, the hopes of establishing a two-party system were dashed as politics became a 'zero-sum game in which opposition denied ruling parties any legitimacy and governments used selective accountability to harry and intimidate their opponents' (Talbot 1998, p.287). See also, Veena Kukreja, *Contemporary Pakistan: Political Processes, Conflicts and Crises*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003); Hussain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*, (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 2005).

Violence- an integral part of urban politics

In the history of Karachi, this decade is important as it became synonymous with pervasive use of violence by political parties to protect themselves and harass opponents. It was not that violence was new to the politics of Karachi.⁵⁹ By the 1990s, however, violence reached unprecedented heights. The sight of mutilated bodies, acts of torture, and massacres of civilians became a part of the daily narrative. More than 6000 people died in the years between 1994 and 1998.⁶⁰ Corpses in gunny sacks were routinely found on street corners as a result of bloody battles among members of political parties.⁶¹

⁵⁹The Zia-ul-Haq years (1978-1988) had already witnessed increasing use of violence as well as easy availability of weapons, primarily as a consequence of Afghan jihad. General Zia-ul-Haq's policies of Islamization and de-politicization (banning political activities, exiling, jailing, and torturing political party activists, holding party-less elections thereby leaving ethnic and religious ties as the political marker) had atomized the polity along ethnic and sectarian lines (Talbot 1998, p.285). By mid-1980s, Karachi had already experienced its first-ever 'ethnic' riots that left hundreds slain in their wake. In addition, political parties recruited criminals as well as provided their affiliates with training in warfare. These dynamics paved the way for violence becoming a common practice in the urban landscape of Karachi.

⁶⁰"Pakistan: Information on militant political groups in urban Sindh, in particular Karachi", *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada*, 25 August 1999, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad7254.html> (accessed 4 October 2014)

⁶¹ The 1996 Amnesty International Report noted, 'The monthly political journal *Newsline* has begun to publish a "Death File", listing daily killings in Karachi: Randomly chosen entries, the first for 4 August, the second for 6 August read: "A former student activist was killed on main University Road. Police found mutilated bodies in the boot of a car in Gulbahar with a note attached ... saying 'Revenge for Farooq Dada's murder". The corpse of a policeman's son, who had been kidnapped earlier, was found in a gunny bag in Nishtar Road. The corpse of a Haqiqi activist was found in New Karachi and a bullet-riddled corpse was found in Azizabad. Two corpses were also found near Usmaabad Memorial Hospital.' Source: Amnesty International, Human Rights Crisis in Karachi, 1 February 1996, ASA/33/01/96, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a9b40.html> [accessed 24 October 2014]

Violence was multi-faceted,⁶² yet, organized use of violence during this time period could be credited to one political player- the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), the political party representing Mohajirs.⁶³ Practices such as gruesome target killings, kidnappings, and widespread extortion (or what is locally known as *bhatta*) became widespread. The number of killings of MQM affiliates who were killed since its inception as a political party range from official tally of 6000 between 1994 and 1998 to over 22, 000 (Khan 2010, p.7). MQM activists fought with Pashtun, Sindhi, Punjabi civilians and political groups, as well as the security forces and its splinter faction, MQM-H (ibid, p.7). Many neighborhoods became ‘no-go areas’ as MQM activists patrolled them, claiming de-facto ‘control’.

From the previous chapter, we have been introduced to the inception of MQM in student campuses of Karachi- its parent organization, a student body politic representing Mohajirs in the city. By 1988, the MQM had become a significant political player. In the general elections of 1988, it emerged as the winner of urban Sindh. It had patched up its differences with Sindhis, claiming that Mohajirs were part of the autochthonous population

⁶²For instance, young men who had been indoctrinated and trained to wage jihad in the 1980s in Afghanistan to defeat the Russian army now set their sights to waging jihad on Pakistani soil. Some of these men, primarily belonging to militant sectarian groups (for instance, Sipah-e-Sahaba and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi) contributed to an increasing number of killings of minority Shias in the city. These sectarian groups in subsequent years formed a natural constituency for Taliban and Al-Qaeda fighters who arrived in Karachi after September 11.

“Pakistan: No Protection Against Targeted Killings”, *Amnesty International*, 2002, <http://lubpak.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/shia-doctors-amnesty-report-2002.pdf> (accessed 4 October, 2014)

⁶³ Ethnic confrontations occurred in spite of electoral victories of the MQM in general elections of 1988, 1990, 1993, 1997, and 2002.

as well (Verkaaik 2004, p.66).⁶⁴ The MQM became a part of the ruling coalition with the PPP⁶⁵ government of Benazir Bhutto, a Sindhi by origin. However, the alliance between the MQM and PPP was short-lived. The years between 1986 and 1990 became known as the years of “battle” as streets and colleges witnessed violence with regularity (ibid, p.78). The remaining decade witnessed temporary alliances of the MQM with other political parties as well as infighting within the MQM itself.

As the party attempted to change from being a platform solely for Mohajirs to representing the entire peoples of Pakistan,⁶⁶ it sparked defections. A splinter faction called MQM Haqiqi (MQM-H, or the original MQM) came into being.⁶⁷ Since the MQM’s policy of dealing with dissent was ruthless violence (Verkaaik 2004, p.84), earning it the

⁶⁴ The slogan ‘Sindh is not another Dubai for us!’ became famous among Mohajirs. Essentially, that unlike the new settlers (Punjabis and Pashtuns) from Punjab and North West Frontier Province, Mohajirs had not come to Sindh only for earning a livelihood. They were loyal to the province and would live and die there, unlike the new settlers. The analogy of Sindh and Dubai was premised on the fact that Pakistani workers went to the Gulf countries in search of livelihoods but returned to their country afterwards. See Oskar Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), p.66.

⁶⁵ For reference, PPP, or Pakistan Peoples Party was the political party that was socialist in outlook and populist in nature. Its founder, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who became elected as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, was removed by the coup of General Zia-ul-Haq in 1977. Bhutto was implicated in a case and hanged to death, in what his loyalists called a judicial murder. See for instance, Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). Also, “Revisiting history: PPP demands judiciary reference on Bhutto’s execution”, *The Express Tribune*, April 7, 2013, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/532212/revisiting-history-ppp-demands-judiciary-reference-on-bhuttos-execution/>

⁶⁶ On account of the underprivileged urban population with modest “middle-class” backgrounds of its leaders as contrasted with the predominance of various sorts of feudal landowners (*waderos, zamindars, jagirdars*) in the ruling elite.

⁶⁷ MQM-H, formed in 1991, was led by three high-ranking leaders who had been expelled already by MQM on charges of corruption, violating party discipline, and conspiring against Altaf Hussain, the supreme party leader (Verkaaik 2004, p.84).

impression of being a mafia in its own right, many considered its inception as the work of intelligence agencies.⁶⁸ It is important to note the murky genesis of this MQM faction as it lends insights in clandestine relationships between the state and non-state actors. The role of intelligence agencies in the decade of 1990s was an open secret in Pakistan's politics. These shadow operators, working at the behest of the military elite, served as a watchdog to keep politicians in check. They would even disrupt the workings of democratic governments viewed by the military establishment as too independent in policy-making, in particular, regarding the foreign policy of the country (Kukreja 2003, p.67). For the purposes of our discussion, however, the role of the state in pitting one player versus the other is of relevance- it illustrates that political players, no matter how violent and criminal, were monitored by the state and used as pawns to keep each other's primacy in check.

The Practice of Extortion (Bhatta) by the MQM

Despite successive military operations during this decade (discussed later in this chapter), power diffused out of formal state structures and violence became entrenched in the city's politics. The MQM in particular, began to carry out quasi-state like practices, such as neighborhood policing and dispensing informal justice. It also began to levy protection money (or extortion) in exchange of protection from harm.

The MQM was the first political player that carried out extortion in an organized manner. In the 1990s, according to estimates, the annual value of money raised from

⁶⁸ According to many commentators in Pakistan, this faction was supported by successive federal governments and the military to weaken the main MQM.' Source: Amnesty International, Human Rights Crisis in Karachi, 1 February 1996, ASA/33/01/96, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a9b40.html> [accessed 24 October 2014]

extortion was 765 million Pakistani rupees.⁶⁹ The money was used for acquisition and storage of weapons, weapons-training, legal defense, welfare of bereaved families of workers who died for the party, medical treatments of injured workers, funerals, public relations, and buying off of witnesses in legal cases against the party and government functionaries (Khan 2010, p.43). No one was exempt from extortion; members of all communities were targeted. From bankers, doctors, businessmen, and teachers to religious figures, the activists of MQM spared no one (ibid, p.43). While it was a lucrative enterprise, extortion also became emblematic of the simulacra of MQM's quasi-state functions-it was demanded in return for protection of life and assets.

The practice of extortion was not limited to the streets of Karachi. It became integrated in the political system with the involvement of elected MQM legislators carrying out extortion in collusion with the local police (Khan 2010, p.7). In the 1990s, the MQM sought large sums of extortion money from prominent politicians, including those running for the office of the country's President (Khan 2010, p.44). Newspapers also cited demanding of bribes for votes by MQM legislators and funneling the money into legal and illegal businesses to support the party at local, national, and international levels in the same decade (ibid, p. 44). Thus, people from all strata of life paid extortion and by the 1990s, it had become an accepted part of the urban reality of Karachi. It is important to note that

⁶⁹ This estimate was based on monthly payments as follows: 50 rupees from a street hawker; 100-200 rupees from working, lower-middle class and middle-class homes; 100 rupees from mini-bus, taxi, and rickshaw drivers; 100 rupees from small shopkeepers; 200-500 rupees from larger shops; 5,000 rupees from small industrial units and 10,000 rupees from large industries. Azhar Abbas, *Policing the Police*, (Karachi: Herald, 1998), Vol 29, No. 10. Cited in Nichola Khan, *Mohajir Militancy in Pakistan: Violence and Transformation in the Karachi Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 43).

although it was criminal in nature, extortion became a political symbol of MQM representing itself as a de-facto hegemon in Karachi's politics.⁷⁰ Not only could the party unleash violence at will and successfully earn money from extortion from a broad swathe of society, it could also bring the city to a standstill through strikes and demonstrations.⁷¹

Informal provision of water

In addition to violence becoming integral to urban politics, the dynamics of informal water provision were also set in motion in the 1990s. To understand the extent of informality surrounding water delivery in the city, it is important to note that almost 41 percent of the water supply to Karachi is siphoned off from bulk distribution and sold in

⁷⁰ In tracing the purpose and origin of the practice, an author wrote,

The practice of forcing people to pay “voluntary donations” (*bhatta*) to party members spread widely. Within the neighborhood, MQM workers acted as the legislative, executive, and judicial powers all in one. They strongly dissuaded people to consult state institutions such as the city court in case of conflict and advised people to come to them instead. Some people found the MQM way of administering justice a lot quicker and more just than the way of the state, but others complained that justice continued to be as arbitrary as ever. Decisions and verdicts made in the MQM head office in Bhai Khan ki Chari were binding and there was the threat of physical punishment for disobedience. At the far end of Pakka Qila was an old brick barrack where violators of party discipline had reportedly been punished. Especially feared were Black Tigers, black uniformed MQM strongmen, trained in at least one of the martial arts. It was also common to say that the MQM forced people to obey “at gunpoint”.... I do not think that much of this was new in 1996. There had been complaints earlier about the MQM terrorizing its own neighborhoods. (Verkaaik 2004, p.167).

⁷¹ The street power of MQM made it an indispensable coalition partner for any political party. One day of strike in 1995 cost the national exchequer of 37 million US dollars (Frotscher 2008, p.249). Of note is that there were twenty-two days of strikes in the first ten months of 1995 (Gayer 2014, p.207). The frequent and successful strikes by MQM won its leader the moniker of ‘*Hartal Hussain*’ or ‘Hussain the Strike’ (ibid, p.207). Businesses tried to compensate for their monetary losses by reducing their workforce, increasing production on the number of work days when there were no strikes, or moving their investments to the north of the country, particularly, Punjab (Frotscher 2008, p.249).

the parallel water market through tanker supply (Orangi Pilot Project-Research and Training Institute 2013). There are more unofficial water filling points which serve as sources for siphoning water than official ones spread throughout the length and breadth of Karachi (Orangi Pilot Project-Research and Training Institute, 2013). Informal water delivery, although not a centralized cartel is a permanent reality of the urban landscape, a case in point being the private water tanker owners' welfare association whose members own 5000 tankers (ibid, p.13) and which in the past has played a role in protesting against the closing down of illegal water hydrants.⁷² This scale of operations is in contrast to the situation even ten years ago when informal means of water supply catered to 10 percent of the population (Ahmed and Sohail 2003). According to estimates, this enterprise earns approximately 49.6 billion Pakistani rupees each year (Rahman 2008, p.18).

Although informal water supply is widely attributed to water mafias connoting criminal groups who monopolize distribution of water supply, it fails to take in account the pivotal role played by the state. Public officials, including local police and officials from water and sanitation ministry turn a blind eye to pilfering of water from official mains.⁷³ Because access to drinking water is integral to daily existence, the ministry of water and sanitation is highly contested among political parties as it is no longer an urban issue but deeply political in nature. It is also lucrative- wherever water development projects by

⁷² "Water Fight: Owners of Private Tankers Give 24 Hours Ultimatum", *The Express Tribune*, 9 March 2012, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/347516/water-fight-owners-of-private-tankers-give-24-hour-ultimatum/> (accessed 4 October 2014)

⁷³ Moosa Kaleem and Maqbool Ahmed, "Tapping into Trouble: the Scramble for Karachi's Scarce Water Resources", *Herald Exclusive for the Daily Dawn*, September 16, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1130647> (accessed 4 October, 2014)

international development agencies are introduced, the value of land goes up.⁷⁴ Access to such information before it becomes public is available to those who are a part of the ministry. As a result, those who are privy to it can engage in land grabbing in those parts of the city, earning economic and political gains.⁷⁵

This state-endorsed informal water provision can be traced back to short-term solutions introduced in the 1990s. It was during this decade in which Karachi experienced a shortfall between water supply and the needs of residents due to rainfall variability.⁷⁶ As one of the primary sources of water supply, the Hub Dam reported reduced water availability. To address the needs of citizens, supply points were created by the state where thousands of tanker trucks filled up daily to distribute water to affected parts of the city (Gayer 2010,p.21). The solution comprised of selling water at a nominal price through commercial water tankers to parts of the city which were experiencing water shortages.

Because the institution responsible for water and sanitation (Karachi Water and Sewerage Board) lacked capacity, the provincial government entrusted the task to paramilitary forces stationed in the city (Ahmed & Sohail 2003, p.38). Locally known as Rangers, the paramilitary forces had been deployed in Karachi since 1989, and were

⁷⁴ Based on interviews at the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board in August 2013, Karachi.

⁷⁵ Based on interviews at the NGO, Shehri, in August 2013, Karachi.

⁷⁶ Over the years, Karachi, which is dependent for its water supply from rain-fed Hub Dam (which contributes between 30-75 million gallons per day) and Keenjhar Lake, which gets its supply from River Indus (which contributes 645 million gallons per day), (Rahman 2008, p.11), experienced reduced water supply from Hub Dam due to variability in rainfall, leaving Keenjhar Lake to contribute to most of the demand for water. Over the years, there was a shortfall between the needs of the residents and the supply of water.

considered more efficient and neutral than the local police (Gayer 2014, p.216).⁷⁷ Rangers, who managed official hydrants for KWSB and ensured supply of drinking water to the residents, however, also sold water in the informal market, charging double the official rate (Rahman 2008, p.13).⁷⁸ In addition, they extended support to organized crime groups engaged in the parallel water supply, earning significant (but difficult to quantify) incomes (Gayer 2010, p.21).⁷⁹

Gayer (2010) argues that these illegal activities of the Rangers were tolerated by the state because they had been asked by the local government to engage in law-

⁷⁷ The paramilitary forces, or Rangers, are led by a Major General, and are a part of the V Corps of the Pakistan Army in Sindh (Gayer 2014, p.217). They were deployed in Karachi in 1989 to aid the civilian government in restoring order in the city. They established a permanent presence in the city and aided government efforts in military operations to establish rule of law in the 1990s in Karachi.

⁷⁸ Official rate: 1000 gallons (150-250 rupees); 2000 gallons (300-450 rupees); 3000 gallons (450-800 rupees); 5000 gallons (1200 rupees). Unofficial rate: 1000 gallons (350-600 rupees); 2000 gallons (700-1200 rupees); 3000 gallons (1600-1800 rupees); 5000 gallons (2000-2400 rupees)

⁷⁹ Gayer (2010, p.21) describes the system, through which the Rangers supported organized crime groups engaged in the parallel water supply in the 1990s, They honed a dual system that operates as follows: individual customers can purchase a tanker truckload at the official price, between 240 and 375 rupees (between 3.5 and 6 euros) depending on the location, but the waiting lines are generally so long that they prefer to go through the parallel market, where the price of a full tanker truck costs between 600 and 1,000 rupees (between 9.5 and 15 euros). The parallel market generally functions to full capacity whereas the Rangers artificially saturate the official market. Out of the 300 tanker trucks that fill daily at the Central District Federal B Area pump, only 40 are delivered at the official price. At the city's main water supply point, located in the Muslimabad area, this ratio is even more imbalanced: although 1,000 tanker trucks fill there daily, only 80 pay the official price. And when the pumps break down due to power outages that regularly paralyze the city, official water deliveries cease whereas, thanks to generators set up by the Rangers, the loads sold on the parallel market continue. The protection racket set up by the Sindh Rangers is not limited to protecting organized crime actors who control Karachi's parallel drinking water market, from which the paramilitaries derive a significant, though impossible to quantify, income.

enforcement duties which fell outside their mandated activities. That they were extending protection to criminal entrepreneurs in parallel water supply and earning revenues was perceived as ‘self-financing of the paramilitaries, but it was also a way of rewarding their commanders for their loyalty’ (ibid, p.16). However, it is also pertinent to take in account violent realities of 1990s in which the polity had become divided along ethnic lines and civilian government institutions were increasingly perceived by the general public as rewarding one ethnic group over the other. It seemed as a reasonable measure then, to engage a player as the Rangers, who were perceived as more neutral than others to oversee provision of water.

Over time, what was considered a temporary solution became a lasting reality of the water woes of Karachi. Although not openly endorsed by formal institutions, officials in government institutions such as the local police, Rangers personnel, senior officials of KWSB, and political parties became a part of this enterprise.

The Role of the State

As the decade of 1990s became synonymous with violent urban politics, it also became known with multiple military operations and pitting one political player versus the other. Despite the excesses committed during these operations, the state managed to make short-term gains only. In addition, the role of the state in conceding informal water provision as well as its tacit endorsement of organized crime actors engaged in the enterprise illustrated how informality was becoming a part of governance-on-the-ground.

Between 1992 and 1993-1994 and 1995-1996, military operations were carried out in Karachi and the countryside to rid the country of ‘antisocial’ and ‘anti-state’ elements

(Frotscher 2008, p.218). These operations were led by the paramilitary forces or Rangers, who had been called by the civilian government in 1989 to help in restoring order in the city.⁸⁰ Since then, they established a permanent presence in Karachi.

Although these military operations were aimed to establish the rule of law, they were specifically aimed at dismantling the secondary state established by the MQM to reclaim territories under its control (Gayer 2014, p.215). To that end, raids were conducted on MQM headquarters, its activists tortured and killed by the splinter faction MQM-H,

⁸⁰ Led by a Major General, the Rangers were and continue to be responsible not to the local government but to the Ministry of Interior and the V Corps of the Pakistan Army in Sindh (Gayer 2014, p.217). Most of the personnel is of Panjabi or Pashtun descent, the ethnicities that were considered the martial classes by the British, and their origin is perceived as more reliable in managing urban conflict in Sindh (Gayer 2010, p. 16). Brought in Karachi in 1989 to aid the civilian government in restoring order in the city wracked by political warfare, they established a permanent presence in the city. The Rangers seconded the army in the first Operation Cleanup, followed by the second Operation launched under the second Bhutto government in 1995. At present, there are 11, 500 Rangers (against 30, 000 policemen) deployed in Karachi (ibid, p.216). In a city where it is impossible to survive without aligning with an ethnic or political group or the other, the Rangers are generally perceived as more neutral and efficient than the local police (ibid, p.216). However, their neutrality as a player is open to debate as they are headed by a senior army officer and are considered close to the intelligence agencies and the army (ibid, p.217). An illustration of the ties among Pakistan Rangers, army, and intelligence agencies was when former Director General Rangers Sindh, Lt General Rizwan Akhtar was appointed the new chief of Pakistan's premier intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Over the years, the legal mandate of the Rangers has extended to include arresting individuals suspected of serious crimes, in particular, terrorism (ibid, p.217). Over the course of the decade, the Rangers were allowed to carry out unconstitutional actions, with the endorsement of successive civilian governments (Rizvi 1998, p.103). In addition to excesses during periods of urban warfare, civil and military authorities at federal and provincial level allowed the Rangers to raise revenue through legal and illegal activities, as they were carrying out law-enforcement duties that fell outside their mandate. For instance, MQM accused the Rangers of executing 500 of its party members through extra-constitutional means. See Mazhar Abbas, "MQM gears up for war with agencies", *The Friday Times*, 4-10 July 1997. Kamran Yousuf, "Ex-DG Rangers Sindh named new ISI Chief," *The Express Tribune*, September 22, 2014.

often with the covert support and implicit knowledge of members of law enforcement agencies.⁸¹ These operations became notable for extrajudicial use of violence against political activists, in particular, those belonging to the MQM.⁸² Moreover, military tribunals were established, lending judicial powers to the paramilitary forces in addition to their policing powers (Kennedy 2004, p.393).

The impact of these operations was immediate- the leadership of the MQM moved to other parts of the country and its founding leadership sought political asylum in England (Frotscher 2008, p. 219). The state reclaimed some 'no-go' areas under the MQM and violence levels dropped down as well (ibid, p.231).

Yet, these gains were short-lived. During the general elections in 1993 and later 1997, the MQM continued to demonstrate its popular appeal with election results- in both elections, it was the most popular party in Karachi (ibid, p.220-231). The MQM's return

⁸¹ Amnesty International, Human Rights Crisis in Karachi, 1 February 1996, ASA/33/01/96, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a9b40.html> [accessed 24 October 2014]

⁸² The Human Rights Watch in its 1997 report noted,
Law enforcement agencies routinely used illegal and excessive force against suspected MQM militants with complete impunity.... Between July 1995 and March 1996 an estimated 75,000 Urdu speakers were reportedly rounded up in this way; toward the end of the year, hundreds remained in jail awaiting trial. Several key MQM militants were the victims of extrajudicial executions, either during targeted police raids; or in custody, allegedly after being tortured or severely beaten; or in staged "encounters," often during transit between prisons. Police rationalized the illegal killings on the grounds that witnesses' reluctance to testify against militants in open court made it nearly impossible to secure convictions.... Between mid-1995 and mid-1996 at least 150 alleged militants were killed and 800 suspects arrested.
Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Watch World Report 1997 - Pakistan, 1 January 1997, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a8b80.html> [accessed 24 October 2014]

to provincial assemblies despite its violent politics denoted it could garner votes among its electorate. In addition, its street power despite being diminished from the military operations was still considerable.⁸³

It could then be argued that despite the military operations, violent political actors such as the MQM were a reality in the city's politics. Even the splinter faction, the MQM-H, which was favored and supported by the state to weaken the MQM was equally violent as its counterpart- in little time, it also developed 'no-go' areas in the city (Gayer 2014, p.215).

The state's support of one violent group over the other, in addition to excesses committed against MQM affiliates and anyone suspected of supporting the party⁸⁴ harmed its perception as a neutral arbiter. These actions also nullified the impact of state's disclosures of violent practices of the MQM, which were perceived by Mohajirs as propaganda against the MQM (Frotscher 2008, p.220). Moreover, the systematically

⁸³ In June 1995, on the call of top leadership, MQM affiliates came out of hiding to wreak violence against the government and the splinter faction of MQM-H. In three days, more than 80 people died and hundreds were wounded. This episode of organized violence is indicative of the popularity of the MQM among its voters who could be rallied at will by the leadership.

⁸⁴ Houses were searched indiscriminately in the middle of the night, people arrested on doubts of affiliation with the MQM (Frotscher 2008, p.220). Political prisoners were executed and tortured without due legal process.

violent operations⁸⁵ motivated by ethnic and political biases⁸⁶ made the state lose credibility, in particular, in the eyes of Mohajirs sympathetic to the MQM.

The resultant effect, even after systematic attempts to weaken the MQM, was not that the state had managed to establish the proverbial 'writ of the law'. Instead, it had continued the tradition in Pakistani politics of invoking extra-constitutional measures justified by the doctrine of necessity.⁸⁷ The doctrine provides a basis for otherwise illegal government measures deemed necessary to save the state (Stavsky 1983, p.342).⁸⁸ These

⁸⁵ Frotscher (2008, p.230) writes about how one could tell who tortured and killed someone through the manner in which his or her body was dumped; corpses full of bullet holes that turned up on a rubbish tip or the trunk of a car were the handiwork of the Rangers, while the MQM preferred to dump bodies in gunny sacks (although both mimicked each other's methods to dispel suspicion).

⁸⁶ For instance, in the operation launched in 1995-1996, then Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, called MQM activists, *cowardly rats* and compared MQM leader, Altaf Hussain to *Adolf Hitler* (Frotscher 2008, p.226).

⁸⁷ From Mark M. Stavsky, "The Doctrine of State Necessity in Pakistan," *Cornell International Law Journal* 16, no.2 (1983), footnote 6, p.342: As early as 1672, a British court held that "the law for necessity dispenses with things which otherwise are not lawful to be done. . . ." *Manby v. Scott*, 1 Lev. 4 (1672). Glanville Williams lists a dozen maxims recognizing the doctrine, from sources which include Bracton, Coke, Hale, and Bacon. Williams, *The Defense of Necessity*, 6 CURRENT LEGAL PROBS. 216, 218 (1953). The doctrine involves more than just the typical considerations which enter into a judicial determination. "In a manner of speaking the whole law is based upon social necessity; it is a body of rules devised by the judges and the legislature to provide for what are felt to be reasonable needs." *Id* at 217. An emergency is the sine qua non of the doctrine. The Privy Council has defined emergency as follows: [The natural meaning of the word [emergency] is capable of covering a very wide range of situations and occurrences, including such diverse events as wars, famines, earthquakes, floods, epidemics and the collapse of civil government A state of emergency is something that does not permit of any exact definition: it connotes a state of matters calling for drastic action. *Ningkan v. Gov't of Malaysia*, 1970 A.C. 379, 390.

⁸⁸ It was not the first time that this doctrine had been invoked. In 1955, the Supreme Court of Pakistan endorsed the extra-constitutional action of dissolving the constituent Assembly by then Governor General in 1954. The Governor General declared that the constitutional machinery had broken down and that the Assembly could not function any longer, thus necessitating new elections (Stavsky 1983, p. 365). The Supreme Court's ruling set a

methods of governance could be likened to a ‘zone of anomie’ (Agamben 2005, p.23) in which de facto practices, ‘which are in themselves extra or antijudicial, pass over into law and judicial norms blur with mere fact’ (ibid, p.29). It was such extra-judicial decisions implemented and endorsed by the state institutions that not only delegitimized the state in the end of the populace. They also created space for tolerance of excesses that state actors such as the paramilitary forces who committed in their dispensation of duties. An example was the role of the Rangers in the delivery of water in Karachi (discussed above). These practices, discordant in nature- as the state accepted one form of informality and delegitimized the other- illustrated that the state decided which form of informality and illegality was acceptable and which one was not.

II-1999-2013: An Emerging Order

Between 1999 and 2013, domestic and external developments paved the way for an important time period for Karachi. At the domestic front, by 1999, a coup had taken place in Pakistan, ushering ten years of military rule. At the international front, the events of September 11 had led to another war in Afghanistan.

For Karachi, these changes led to new developments. Since the MQM was a major player in the city’s politics and supported military rule, it received patronage from then President and Army chief, General Musharraf. Between 2002 and 2007, it formed local government, setting practices of gaining state resources in motion, such as state-encouraged informality in provision of housing. In later years, under democratic rule of the

precedent that was later used not only by military rulers but also by successive democratic governments in the 1990s, an example of which were the successive Operation Cleanups in Karachi that relied on the military for succor.

PPP (2008-2013), these practices were replicated by other political parties, including the Awami National Party, the Sunni Tehreek etc.. Examples included different players levying extortion, a practice which had hitherto been reserved by the MQM. This pattern of practices led to increased violence during 2008 and 2013, as contrasted by the relatively peaceful period of the MQM rule (2002-2007) because of one hegemon (versus aspiring contenders). Figure 4 highlights number of killings based on estimates from reports from Human Rights Commission Pakistan.

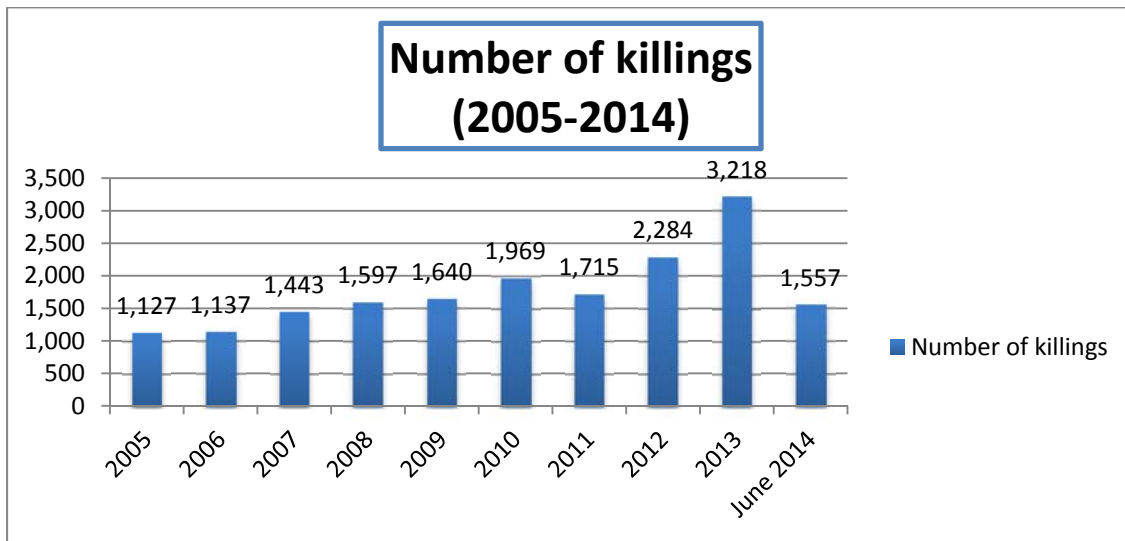


Figure 4 Number of killings: 2005-2014

Source: Human Rights Commission Pakistan Reports 2010, 2012, 2013

The drivers of violence that had motivated bloody sprees in the 1990s remained the same. Political parties fought over votes, land, extortion, and jobs. However, unlike the decades of 1980s and 1990s, when violence could be divided into ethnic and sectarian (predictable flare-ups in certain neighborhoods or religious events), political (singled out individuals of a political party), and criminal (among gangs) categories, the landscape of

violence became unpredictable with proliferation of armed actors,⁸⁹ all vying for a piece of the pie.⁹⁰

In addition, in the aftermath of the US-led invasion in Afghanistan and military operations in Pakistan's tribal areas after September 11, Afghan refugees and internally-displaced persons from tribal areas settled in Karachi. Exact numbers are hard to come by but according to estimates, this influx contributed to changing demographics. For instance, the Pashtun population in 2011 constituted 14 percent of the population as contrasted to 11 percent in 1998 (Gazdar 2011,p.8).

A direct impact of the war in Afghanistan was arrival of Taliban and Al-Qaeda fighters, contributing to multiplicity of violent players, with the difference that they were transnational in outlook and resources. By 2008, various militant fighters united under the banner of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an organization with political goals of establishing Sharia State in Pakistan. These battle-hardened fighters formed alliances with criminals who were versed in navigating the crisscrossing borders of ethnic, sectarian,

⁸⁹ Gayer (2014, p.5) notes that among the ten most violent towns within Karachi in 2011 (Map 2), four were already major hubs of violence in 1995 (Orangi in the west; New Karachi in the north; Korangi in the south-east; Garden/Lines area in the city; center Map 3). The MQM remained central to these battles over the years. While in the 1990s, two factions of MQM fought between each other in localities of Orangi and Korangi, by 2011, gun-battles raged between MQM and crime groups of Lyari backed by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in Lyari and in the Old City. Sunni sectarian groups fought amongst themselves in New Karachi/North Karachi (ibid, p.7).

⁹⁰ This is because Karachi's financial importance to the country remains unparalleled. It accounts for approximately 65 percent of the total national revenue (federal and provincial taxes, customs and surcharges), and the recipient of 60 percent of the tax receipts of Pakistan and 70 percent of the taxes of Sindh. Moreover, its population has crossed the 21 million mark, making its political control important for any player.

political, and state actors, and found common cause with sectarian groups.⁹¹ Discussed in more detail in the following sections, these armed players contributed to unpredictability of violence during the time period of 2007-2013.

Karachi under MQM's rule

During General Musharraf's rule (1999-2008), in a stark reversal from the 1990s when it was the recipient of state violence, the MQM received patronage from the state as it provided support to the Musharraf rule unlike major political parties. In Karachi, the effects of constitutional reforms during this time period resulted in empowering local officials to become responsible for housing, urban planning, transport, land use, education, recruitment, and health (Gayer 2014, p.212).⁹²

By 2005, the MQM gained control of the local government structures through its City, Town and Union Council representatives, thereby getting unprecedented access to the city's resources and securing control over law-and-order forces (ibid, p.212). The party recruited its loyalists to the ranks of the city government in large numbers. In contrast to 15, 000 employees in the city's municipal corporation and development authority, the number of employees reached 80, 000 in the city district government led by the MQM

⁹¹ Karachi became an urban epicenter of sectarian killings of Shias and retributive killings by Shias "Karachi's sectarian backyard," *The Daily Dawn*, 14 January 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1080324>

⁹² Under Musharraf government, decentralization reforms were introduced; these reforms increased the scope of power for elected local governments who became responsible for many functions including allocation of expenditures for local services.⁹² Before the reforms, provincial bureaucracy enjoyed more powers. In Karachi, the Sindh Local Government Ordinance (SLGO) created a three tier local government, with the City District Government of Karachi (CDGK) at the top, eighteen town municipal administrations in the middle and 178 Union Councils (UC) at the bottom (Gayer 2014, p.212).

(ibid, p.212). By populating the city government with its members, the MQM was not only strengthening its control over local institutions, it also ensured that workers returned favors for getting a government job.⁹³

The MQM government also tried to legalize its quasi-legal practices. An example was the City Wardens, the MQM's own traffic police, mainly consisting of party workers and sympathizers, which was allocated 8 million rupees budget in April 2011 (ibid, p. 107). Political opponents characterized the City Wardens as parallel policing and accused them of illegally occupying a football ground for planning to construct their headquarters (ibid, p.107).

Moreover, during the MQM rule, the state encouraged informality in housing provision through a combination of practices. Having affiliated party workers in key departments such as water and housing was helpful in many ways. For instance, if any foreign donor agency signed a contract with the Karachi Water Sewerage Board (KWSB) for building water connections in a part of the city, party members and land developers tried to find out before the information was made public as to where the pipelines would pass as that would raise the value of the land. The next step after securing that piece of land was to populate it with Mohajirs so that, along with financial kickbacks, a political constituency of voters was created.⁹⁴

⁹³ Based on interviews with an official from KWSB and an NGO member and urban planner. News reports also corroborate this evidence, albeit in oblique references for fear of retribution. Gayer (2014, p.108) also cites the example of the clerk in CDGK who worked as a government employee by the day, but was involved in murder and kidnapping in the after-hours at the directions of the party (ibid, p.108).

⁹⁴ Based on interviews.

A particularly important feature of extending ‘control’ over the city was systematic land grabbing by the MQM. Not only did it earn substantial profits, it also entrenched its constituency by settling its supporters in informal housing thereby staking out physical space for its political aims. The MQM was not the first political party to use land distribution as a political tool, but it was certainly strategic in its approach. The party’s mayors supervised demolitions of several urban villages across the city, in particular along the roads and highways that connected Karachi with the rest of the country (ibid, p.263). In doing so, the MQM ensured that it retained access to entry and exit points of the city, as well keeping an eye on legal and illegal goods passing through Karachi (ibid, p.263). These actions were as much economic as political in nature; the failure to take control of a particular entry point of the city meant that it fell in the hands of the competition.⁹⁵ The MQM also seized public amenity plots in parts of the city (Nazimabad, Malir, North Nazimabad, Korangi) in the name of heirs of deceased MQM activists.⁹⁶ The late columnist and activist Ardeshir Cowasjee termed these practices as nothing less than ‘a variation of MQM’s Lebensraum (the 20th century Nazi scheme to resolve potential demographic problems through resettlement and defend the German race against stagnation and degeneration) which it is hoped will create vote-banks’.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ While recollecting that time, an of the conversations, an MQM party member, he expressed regret that a particular entry point of the city, where the party had failed to take control of the land, was a grave mistake as now the ‘terrorist’ Pashtuns had seized it.

⁹⁶ Ardeshir Cowasjee, “ I Own Karachi and Can Sell it! II”, *The Daily Dawn*, May 17, 2009

⁹⁷ Ardeshir Cowasjee, “ I Own Karachi and Can Sell it! III”, *The Daily Dawn*, May 31, 2009.

However, as the MQM affiliates argue, a lot of development projects were carried out under its mayor, Mustafa Kamal, who worked in the capacity from 2005-2010. Among his many projects, some pertained to his vision of addressing transport problems; one such policy was construction of overpasses that connected one part of the city to the next (ibid, p.270). Between 2001 and 2012, 46 overpasses were commissioned, connecting parts of the city, also illustrating that development projects were emblematic of progress. However, detractors pointed out that these overpasses presented a strategy to avoid passing through politically volatile, low-income, and ethnically ‘other’ areas (ibid, p.272).⁹⁸

The relevance of these projects was not lost on other ethnic groups. Not only were they seen as primarily benefitting the MQM electoral base, they reinforced a sense of being ‘the other’ in residents of low-income and politically volatile parts of the city (ibid, p.272). These projects also involved displacement of marginalized populations; for instance, due to the construction of Lyari Expressway, 24, 000 families were displaced.⁹⁹ They also contributed to exacerbation of a sense of deprivation in already-marginalized groups.

⁹⁸ For instance, Lyari Expressway and flyover linking Orangi-5 and North Nazimabad made it possible to bypass two of the most violent parts of the city: Lyari, and Pashtun-dominated parts between Orangi and Banaras Chowk. See Laurent Gayer, *Karachi: Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.271-272.

⁹⁹ A newspaper report on Lyari Expressway noted,

The human cost of the Lyari Expressway has been incalculable. Nearly 24,000 families have been displaced — often quite brusquely — and ostensibly settled in three sites at a cost of Rs5bn. While inaugurating the project President Musharraf remarked that as a schoolboy he had seen people living in shantytowns in the Lyari riverbed and he was happy that they had been shifted to townships where basic amenities such as schools, playgrounds, parks and other facilities are available. That is true but there is another side of the picture as well. The three sites — Taiser Town, Hawkesbay and Baldia — are far removed from the city centre and transport is not readily available at all hours. Many of the affected

Following MQM's Lead: Social and Political Learning

The MQM rule was instructive for other political players. Between 2007 and 2013, other political parties demonstrated how they had learnt by observing and mirroring patterns of state capture that the MQM had set in motion. It was not that Karachi was new to extortion, land grabbing, politicizing development projects, or populating government institutions with its affiliated members. Yet, the combination of all these practices was never as organized as under the MQM rule.

Through its practices, MQM had signaled to other players that it was not enough to employ violence as a strategic and necessary method to ensure survival in the city. It was also important to secure 'control' of the city through land grabs that would translate into constituencies, seek extortion from the populace as it signified offering protection to those who paid and retribution to those who did not, and to seek representation in local governance. These activities were driven by the motive of profit-seeking but they were political in nature as well.

people lost their jobs simply because they could not commute to work early in the morning. Besides, the amount paid to those uprooted (Rs50, 000 per family) was not enough to build a roof above their heads. Many complained of lack of amenities such as water supply and health facilities. Some never received the compensation that had been promised while it was claimed that some who never lived in the Lyari River area managed to get a plot, thanks to their 'connections.' That all has not been hunky-dory for the evictees in their new homes is evident from the fact that the land mafia has been quick to move into these townships. Why would anyone well settled in a place with no problems wish to sell off his plot?

See, Zubeida Mustafa, "Karachi: the White Elephant that is the Lyari Expressway," *The Daily Dawn*, February 14, 2008, <http://www.dawn.com/news/289299/karachi-the-white-elephant-that-is-the-lyari-expressway>

Other political actors, the Awami National Party (ANP) representing Pashtuns, and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), representative of Sindhis and Baluchis, followed suit. The theory of social learning, credited to psychologist Albert Bandura, is a useful conceptual framework in explaining how actors learn by observing from direct experiences, adding to their repertoire of ideas without having to ‘build up the patterns by tedious trial and error’ (Bandura 1977, p.2). On the basis of such information, they develop hypotheses about the types of behavior most likely to succeed (ibid, p.3).

This social learning on the part of different players in Karachi represents the causal mechanism at play. As different players began to mirror MQM’s practices, they not only deregulated the marketplace of violent enterprises, they also formulated a blueprint of sorts for new players. These players also included the crime group of Lyari and the TTP, a terror group.

May 12, 2007- ‘the day the state withdrew’¹⁰⁰

The simmering conflict among political parties of ANP, PPP, and the ruling MQM became evident in a particular event in 2007 when organized violence among these political parties led to gruesome violence on the streets of Karachi. Of note was organized violence led by the ruling MQM against the PPP and ANP in a show of strength by withdrawing state security apparatus as affiliates of these parties fought on the streets of Karachi.

On May 12, 2007, the embattled Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Iftikhar Chaudhry and lawyers supporting his dismissal and maltreatment by then General Musharraf, arrived in Karachi. This was also the period in which General Musharraf’s

¹⁰⁰ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, “Carnage in Karachi: A City Under Siege”, (Lahore: Human Rights Commission Pakistan, 2007), pp.35-36.

regime was weakening, followed by his retirement from the army (Gayer 2014, p.118). The dismissal of the Chief Justice became a galvanizing moment for those who opposed General Musharraf's rule.

The arrival of the deposed Chief Justice in Karachi on May 12, 2007 became the flagship event in which MQM flexed its muscles as the ruling hegemon and activists from ANP and PPP showed up to challenge its monopoly over violence. The MQM tried to prevent the Chief Justice from holding a rally in Karachi by limiting his presence to the airport. On the behalf of the Chief Justice, who at that time, was in opposition with General Musharraf, ANP and PPP activists engaged in gun battles with the MQM. At least 48 people died while the number of injured ran in hundreds. Although most of the casualties were of ANP's activists, the clashes signified emergence of new political and military contenders challenging the hegemony of MQM (ibid, p.118). Recounting the incidents of May 12, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan noted,¹⁰¹

It can be stated without fear of contradiction that May 12 represented something quite unprecedented in the history of Pakistan... Well over 40 people lost their lives, and the number of the injured ran into hundreds... An entire city of nearly 15 million was held hostage by people who appeared to be private citizens. The violence and the threat of violence engulfed nearly all of the localities of this huge city... There was something qualitatively distinct also about the nature and scale of the violence that was unleashed, and the political context in which this happened (the fact that MQM is in government)... The idea of a showdown between

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

supporters of the CJ, who despite the reference was a serving functionary of the state and supporters of a political party was almost entirely artificially created.... Despite the normalcy that has returned to the city, the very fact that political violence of this nature could be organized and executed and state security agencies withdrawn, ought to be taken extremely seriously...No city can be allowed to descend deliberately into organized chaos.... The spectacle of a disarmed police force operating on the directions of armed cadres was highly disturbing, especially since key officers of the state responsible for security were reduced to expressing their helplessness.

Aspiring Contenders: ANP; PPP and the Lyari Gangs; TTP

Awami National Party (ANP)

By 2008, the civilian government led by the PPP had come into power. In Karachi, this development translated into a coalition government including members of the ANP and the MQM (Gayer 2014, p.118). Despite being coalition partners, armed clashes between the ANP and the MQM continued, each side presenting the other as criminals.¹⁰²

While both parties blamed each other about engaging in extortion, land grabbing,

¹⁰² See for instance, “MQM, ANP clash in Gulistan-e-Johar”, *The Daily Times*, September 10, 2009, <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/karachi/10-Sep-2009/mqm-anp-clash-in-gulistan-e-jauhar>

“Fw: Country Monitor Pakistan Alert: Clashes between MQM and ANP – Karachi”, *Wikileaks*, May 19, 2010, https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/docs/38/385164_fw-country-monitor-pakistan-alert-clashes-between-mqm-and.html

“New Turf Battles between MQM and ANP”, *The Daily Ummatt*, June 29, 2011, <http://ummatenglish.com/exclusive/2011/06/29/new-turf-battle-between-mqm-and-anp.html>

and violence against opponents,¹⁰³ the MQM went a step further in establishing a linkage between the ANP and the growing threat of militant extremism of the Taliban. This was a bold move- linking Pashtuns and their representative political party with militant Taliban fighters was a narrative that had the potential of gaining traction in national and international media. It also presented the MQM as the bulwark against radical Islam- a perception that was actively promoted by MQM affiliates at home and overseas.¹⁰⁴

In the backdrop of incoming populations from the tribal areas displaced due to drone strikes and military operations, the accusations of Talibanisation further alienated the local Pashtun population from the MQM. The ANP, which had a history of secular leadership,¹⁰⁵ was swift to repudiate the claims. Its leadership made the case that equating Pashtuns with Taliban was flawed and dangerous reasoning. A party official's statement succinctly sums up the ANP's stance,¹⁰⁶

The Pakhtoon¹⁰⁷ are hardworking people and have the right to live anywhere without being branded the "Taliban", he urged, adding that religious seminaries had

¹⁰³ MQM warned, 'If the Sindh government fails to disassociate itself from ANP's criminal elements, MQM would be left with no option but to dissociate itself from the federal and provincial governments.' See "PPP ANP patronizing Talibanisation-MQM", *The Daily Dawn*, May 11, 2009, <http://www.dawn.com/news/463660/ppp-anp-patronising-talibanisation-mqm>

¹⁰⁴ MQM affiliates in an annual meeting in Atlanta, for instance, for instance, presented the MQM as the last frontier against creeping Talibanisation in Karachi. Interviews held in June 2013.

¹⁰⁵ The ANP's history is rich with secular traditions and deserves more detail but is limited here to fit within the purview of the discussion.

¹⁰⁶ "ANP rejects Talibanization Claims", *The Daily Times*, July 18, 2008, <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/national/18-Jul-2008/anp-rejects-talibanisation-claims>

¹⁰⁷ The term, Pakhtoon, here is used interchangeably for Pashtuns.

existed in Karachi for a long time and had nothing to do with the recent influx of Pakhtoon in the city.

As a result of MQM's efforts to mobilize public opinion against the ANP, MQM affiliates coordinated attacks against the ANP activists and Pashtun vendors and restaurant owners (ibid, p.119).¹⁰⁸ These efforts, opportunistic in nature, contributed to weakening of the ANP. In the coming years, the ANP was pushed out of Karachi by the same Taliban (that it had been accused of association) through bomb attacks on ANP's offices, assassinations of ANP leaders, and threats to continue these activities unless its leadership left the city. The Taliban's violent tactics proved fruitful- most of the top leadership of the ANP left Karachi. With the ANP out of the picture, the Taliban claimed to be the true representatives of Pashtuns in Karachi.

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Baloch Dons of Lyari

In 2008, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) came into power as a result of the general elections. It formed a government in Sindh with the coalition of ANP and MQM. Although it was a coalition partner with MQM, the PPP drew upon crime groups in Lyari to challenge the former's street power. The history of the PPP in national and provincial politics, in particular, Sindh and Karachi merits detail. However, within the purview of this dissertation, I focus primarily on its relationship with Lyari, the oldest neighborhood of

¹⁰⁸ A newspaper report for instance, noted how hundreds of posters containing gruesome images of severed heads and mutilated limbs had appeared on the walls in Karachi, condemning Talibanisation in the city. "Posters slamming Talibanisation appear in Karachi areas", *The Daily Times*, August 3, 2008, <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/national/03-Aug-2008/posters-slamming-talibanisation-appear-in-karachi-areas>

Karachi and the crime gangs.

Traditionally, the people of Lyari always represented the vote bank of PPP in Karachi. Since the 1970s when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (ZAB), the founder of PPP had regularized the informal settlements of Lyari, the people of Lyari had become staunch loyalists. As a Baloch resident of Lyari told me, ‘the people of Lyari will elect even a dog on the ticket of PPP’. Then in the 1980s, the wedding reception of Benazir Bhutto had been hosted in Lyari,¹⁰⁹ and it was here where she successfully ran for a seat in the National Assembly in the general elections in 1988. It was also Lyari’s crime don, the famous Rehman Dakait, who was responsible for Benazir’s security on her return to Karachi in 2007 (ibid, p.139).

The Baloch crime groups of Lyari represented a new phenomenon in Karachi’s politics. Lyari, home to the autochthonous Balochis, has a rich history,¹¹⁰ but is generally characterized as a place where crime gangs have chalked up neighborhoods. In the 1980s, crime groups of Lyari, erstwhile involved in petty crime as bootlegging or selling tickets in black outside cinemas (Gayer 2014, p.133), became middlemen between drug traffickers who transported Afghan opiates to Karachi and international syndicates who distributed it to markets in North America and Europe in the 1980s. The proximity of Lyari to Karachi’s

¹⁰⁹ “Wedding video of Benazir Bhutto and Asif Ali Zardari”, available at: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x12f039_wedding-video-of-benazir-bhutto-asif-ali-zardari-at-lyari-short-video_music

¹¹⁰ See for instance, Hasan Mujtaba, “Lyari: Land of Magic”, *Newsline Karachi*, July 1997.

port was instrumental in this trade.¹¹¹ After September 11, as Afghan farmers began to cultivate opium again, the drug trade found its way back to Karachi, transiting with the help of networks that had been developed and sustained since the 1980s (United Nations 2009).

In 2008, the warring crime groups of Lyari¹¹² were united under the banner of Peoples Aman Committee (PAC). The PAC's trajectory presents insights in the complicated relationship between state and non-state actors, premised on informal pacts and understandings that benefited both sides. The PAC was instrumental to the ruling political party at the time, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in ensuring access to voters in Lyari. It also provided organized cadres which could challenge the de-facto hegemony of the MQM by levying extortion in Karachi.

Equally ruthless and violent as the MQM, the PAC began to seek extortion in MQM's area of influence.¹¹³ By 2012, the PAC was successfully levying extortion from some of the strongholds of the MQM as well as competing with the MQM for providing protection to transporters carrying goods for NATO forces in neighboring Afghanistan (ibid, p.152). Supported by the PPP and condoned by law enforcement officials, this development was important on at least two counts. One, it challenged the supremacy of MQM as the only player in the city to carry out extortion and thus undermined MQM's

¹¹¹ Karachi was not new to transit of opiates through its port. In early nineteenth century, Malwa opium, grown in the western and central regions of India and intended for neighboring China, was transported through Karachi (Farooqui 1995, p.448).

¹¹² For a detailed account of gangs of Lyari, see Laurent Gayer, *Karachi: Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 131-142.

¹¹³ Based on interviews.

claim to be the de-facto authority in Karachi. Two, it paved the way for other players to follow suit in challenging MQM's hegemony.

The PAC, however, was not focused solely on carrying out extortion in Karachi. Through its actions, it presented itself as a political player and not just a band of drug dons following the bidding of one of the largest political parties of the country.¹¹⁴ It demanded that its nominated candidates run for seats in the legislature instead of PPP's politicians who were not cognizant of the problems faced by the people of Lyari. Under the PAC's control, crime rate plummeted while money acquired through the drug trade and extortion was invested in welfare schemes in Lyari (ibid, p.255). The PAC's increasing political role, however, threatened to change the clientelist dynamic of the relationship between the PPP and the PAC.¹¹⁵ As a result, rifts grew between the PAC leadership and the PPP, resulting in the political party distancing itself from the drug dons they had formerly supported.

¹¹⁴ Dina Temple-Raston, "The Tony Soprano of Karachi: Gangster or Politician?", *NPR*, January 2, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/2013/01/02/168197733/the-tony-soprano-of-karachi-gangster-or-politician>

"Overcoming grudges: Lyari's Uzair Jan Baloch opens arms for Karachi journalists, requests unbiased reporting", *The Express Tribune*, July 25, 2013, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/581421/overcoming-grudges-lyaris-uzair-jan-baloch-opens-arms-for-karachi-journalists-requests-unbiased-reporting/>

¹¹⁵ A PAC worker's statement captures the situation succinctly, 'It's upsetting. If the PPP has a presence in Karachi, it is in Lyari. So why are you treating Lyari the way a stepmother would? You should provide services to the people of Lyari. If you can't make Lyari into Paris, then at least make it like DHA or Nazimabad. You have seen — it's a reality — that MQM has done so much work in its areas that are its vote banks. I know that MQM hasn't done work in all of Karachi, only where its vote banks are. But [Lyari] has been a vote bank [for PPP] since 1971. What have they done? If you can't make Lyari like Paris then at least make it like Nazimabad.' Fahad Desmukh, "'You are in Islamabad because of our Votes': Interviews with the Lyari PAC", *Third Worldism: Dispatches from the Global South*, May 3, 2012,

By September 2013, a military operation to cleanse the city of criminal and terrorist elements was underway in Karachi. The PPP had withdrawn its support of the PAC and the leaders of the PAC were on the run. Despite its exit from the stage, the phenomenon of PAC highlights the changing dynamic between a political party and a crime group which shifted from clientelism to a political role. In doing so, it represents a new actor in the politics of Karachi.

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

Another new player in Karachi's politics that emerged was the terror group of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The trajectory of the TTP in the urban terrain of Karachi presents an important case study of how a terror group incorporated in the local political economy, became a player in the violent politics of the city. It also highlights how the state's patronage of armed actors such as jihadi fighters for the war in Afghanistan during the 1980s as an integral element of the country's strategic interests and the systematic enforcement of state-approved interpretations of Islam had contributed to constituencies of support for this new actor.

In the aftermath of the American invasion of Afghanistan after September 11, and military attacks in the tribal areas of Pakistan in the ensuing years, the battle hardened fighters of Taliban and Al Qaeda arrived in Karachi (Rehman 2013a). They found support in jihadi groups as well as madrassas with whom they shared commonalities in religious interpretations. Karachi had been home to jihadi groups since the Afghan jihad days, when

<https://thirdworldism.wordpress.com/2012/05/03/you-are-in-islamabad-because-of-our-votes-int/#more-128352924>

the military government of General Zia-ul-Haq had provided patronage to the religious right for domestic support. This support had included legal reforms to bring existing laws in conformity with a state-approved version of Islam, providing funding to madrassas, and hiring madrasa graduates in bureaucracy. In addition, the state encouraged the student wing of the religious party, the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), to counter leftist and democratic student groups on university campuses. Moreover, the regime relied on the religious right to play a formative role in creating a favorable view of the country's participation in the Afghan jihad (Nasr 1994, p.195). Among the legacies of the Afghan jihad years included generations of young men who had waged jihad in the battlefield of Afghanistan and madrassas which had developed curricula and support for the concept of waging jihad. Furthermore, in the 1980s, the state supported and organized militant Sunni groups throughout Pakistan which in turn developed organizational ties with jihadi groups fighting in Afghanistan (Nasr 2000, p.177). In the 1990s, some of these organizations proved useful to wage irregular warfare in Indian-controlled Kashmir and operations in Afghanistan (ibid, p.179).

In Karachi, the impact of these developments culminated in a rise in religious sectarianism, a phenomenon encouraged and morally justified by some madrassas (Gayer 2014, p.183).¹¹⁶ Militant groups, believers in the cause of jihad in Afghanistan and India and sectarian in outlook, found a safe haven in the city. Among others, they included

¹¹⁶ For a detailed study on the role of madrassas and extremism, see International Crisis Group, "Pakistan: Karachi's Madrasas and Violent Extremism", International Crisis Group Asia Report no.130, March 29, 2007.

Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) which was responsible for the Mumbai attacks in 2008,¹¹⁷ and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), a sectarian organization which was linked to the murder of the Wall Street journalist, Daniel Pearl.¹¹⁸ Some of these groups were also active in establishing a foothold in the city through land grabbing.¹¹⁹ It was in this fertile terrain that the fighters of Taliban and Al-Qaeda arrived in Karachi.

Initially using the city as a hideout where they engaged in bank robberies and kidnappings to raise revenue for jihad in Afghanistan, the fighters of Taliban and Al Qaeda began to play a more active role in the city. By 2008, various Taliban groups joined hands to form the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an organization premised on the goal of establishing a Sharia state in Pakistan.¹²⁰

The TTP's efforts to play a prominent role in Karachi were facilitated by the erstwhile rivalry between the ANP and the MQM over votes, land and jobs. In its bid to discredit the ANP, the MQM speciously linked the ANP with the Taliban.¹²¹ The TTP, capitalizing on

¹¹⁷ For more on LeT, see Ryan Clarke, *Crime-Terror Nexus in South Asia: States, Security and Non-State Actors* (London & New York: Routledge, 2011).

¹¹⁸ Salman Masood, *Pakistan Arrests Militant Suspected in Daniel Pearl Killing*, *New York Times*, March 19, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/20/world/asia/suspect-in-daniel-pearl-killing-is-arrested-in-pakistan.html?_r=0

¹¹⁹ See for instance, Gayer's work on the Sunni Tehreek. Gayer, Laurent. *Karachi: Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, (2014), pp.178-183.

¹²⁰ Hasan Abbas, "A Profile of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan", *Combatting Terrorism Centre at West Point*, January 15, 2008.

¹²¹ MQM warned, "If the Sindh government fails to disassociate itself from ANP's criminal elements, MQM would be left with no option but to dissociate itself from the federal and provincial governments." See "PPP ANP patronizing Talibanisation-MQM", *The Daily Dawn*, May 11, 2009, <http://www.dawn.com/news/463660/ppp-anp-patronising-talibanisation-mqm>

the conflict between ANP and MQM, waged a violent campaign against the political activists and leadership of the ANP, claiming leadership of the community.

In addition, the TTP became involved in land grabbing and extortion, practices which were primarily identified with political parties in Karachi. The TTP engaged in multiple fronts. It encouraged homogenized settlements formed by clusters of displaced populations from the tribal areas of Pakistan where it could implement tribal laws. It recruited criminals in collecting extortion money, land grabbing, water delivery and other crimes, as local criminals were adept in navigating the complex meshing of ethnic and political affiliations in local state institutions including the police. It also attacked police stations in their areas of interest, terrorizing others in the process. Extortion provided lucrative profits for the TTP. It targeted wealthy Pashtun businessmen and transporters in Karachi earning thousands of dollars. TTP chapters from different parts of tribal areas of Pakistan formed networks in Karachi that targeted businessmen belonging to particular parts of tribal areas. For instance, the Mohmand chapter of the TTP sought extortion from Mohmand tribesmen involved in selling timber and construction materials¹²² Since the TTP members could identify families and individuals belonging to tribal areas, they threatened to kill or kidnap family members of businessmen and truck drivers in Karachi if they refused to pay extortion money (Rehman 2013b). Demands ranged from \$10, 000 to \$50,000 per person

See also, Posters slamming Talibanisation appear in Karachi areas”, *The Daily Times*, August 3, 2008, <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/national/03-Aug-2008/posters-slamming-talibanisation-appear-in-karachi-areas>

¹²² Zia ur Rehman, “Taliban Collect Funds through Extortion, forced Zakat, officials say””, *Central Asia Online*, August 1, 2012, http://centralasiaonline.com/en_GB/articles/caii/features/pakistan/main/2012/08/01/feature-01 (accessed 10 October 2014)

(ibid). Not only targeting businessmen from tribal areas, the TTP also aimed at schools, hospitals¹²³ and doctors¹²⁴ and other members of society for extortion, including MQM party members. In doing so, not only was the TTP raising funds for its operations in the tribal areas and the city, it was also displaying adeptness in following informal rules of the game followed by political players in Karachi.

To the general public, the TTP's entry as a political player in Karachi became clearly visible when it expressed its opposition to political parties in Karachi during the general elections in 2013. As the political parties-PPP, ANP, and MQM prepared for the next general elections in Karachi, they began to receive threats of violence against their supporters and candidates. The threats were not empty- soon enough, attacks against candidates took place¹²⁵ followed by warnings to the public to abstain from voting in the general elections.¹²⁶ The TTP had already been threatening the leadership and workers of the ANP to pay up extortion, leave the city, or face violent ends. Beginning in early 2012, the TTP had been forcing the ANP workers to close offices in the city (Gayer 2014, p.187).

¹²³ "Taliban, Criminals extort Schools, Hospitals", *Central Asia Online*, December 17, 2013
http://centralasiaonline.com/en_GB/articles/caii/features/pakistan/main/2013/12/17/feature-01 (accessed 10 October 2014)

¹²⁴"Karachi Docs handed Extortion Slips by TTP", *The Nation*, March 16, 2014,
<http://nation.com.pk/national/16-Mar-2014/karachi-docs-handed-extortion-slips-by-ttp>
(accessed 10 October 2014)

¹²⁵ "Pakistani Elections Hit by Bomb Attacks", *The Guardian*, May 11, 2013,
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/11/pakistani-elections-bomb-blast-karachi>

¹²⁶ "Pakistan: Ensure Election Security from Taliban Attacks," *Human Rights Watch*, April 29, 2013, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2013/04/29/pakistan-ensure-election-security-taliban-attacks>

They also threatened the local population to quit supporting the party or face violence. As a result, a considerable number of political workers and leaders of ANP left the city.¹²⁷

By early 2013, newspapers reported about the TTP-established sharia courts dispensing their brand of justice, comprising of a combination of tribal justice and Sharia law as interpreted by the organization.¹²⁸ The result was dispensation of swift justice to residents in TTP-controlled neighborhoods. In a country where access to justice for the common man is seldom easy and rarely efficient, these measures offered an effective solution and generated support in these neighborhoods (ibid, p.189). These developments signaled the emergence of a player who, unlike, other armed actors in Karachi, favored divine law over the country's constitution- they also illustrated the rapid evolution of a terror group into a political protagonist.

Role of the State

How did the city's terrain become so complex over the years and what role did the state play in its formation? In tracing the practices of key players (Ledeneva 2006), we can identify how the state continues to play a significant role in the violent and informal political order of Karachi. This chapter makes the case that state institutions, as arenas of social, political, and economic struggles (Robison and Hadiz 2004; Hameiri 2007), have favored one player over the other in a bid to build constituencies of support and also to

¹²⁷ South Asia Intelligence Review, "Pakistan: Weekly Assessments and Briefings", *South Asia Intelligence Review*, Vol.11, no.17, October 29, 2012,

¹²⁸ Fahim Zaman and Naziha Syed Ali, "Taliban in Karachi: the real story" *The Daily Dawn*, March 12, 2013, <http://www.dawn.com/news/799118/taliban-in-karachi-the-real-story>

serve a larger political agenda. In Karachi's case, for instance, General Zia favored the religious right and its militant student wings to counter possible threats to his rule by sections of society who supported the removed civilian government of Prime Minister Zulfikar Bhutto. It was in the state's interest at that time to encourage building of madrasas and to send young men willing to wage jihad in Afghanistan in the 1980s. These policies contributed to availability of weapons in the hands of political players and resultant violence in the city, and the drug trade profits which led to changes in the informal housing market. Similarly, in present-day Karachi, the PAC was tacitly favored by the state because its leadership, Baloch by origin, it did not support the Baloch insurgency being waged in resource-rich Balochistan at the time. That the leadership of the PAC comprised of feared drug dons was of lesser importance than the fact that they could offer alternative leadership to disgruntled Baloch youth in Lyari, and maintain peace of sorts. Even the MQM, whose workers were at the receiving end of the wrath of successive military operations in the 1990s and later in 2013, was supported by General Musharraf to counter the influence of other political parties that the military government considered a threat to its stability at that time. These relationships, based on mutual interests, illustrate the larger social and political contexts in which state institutions operate.

Similarly, the state plays an important role in determining informality in light of its political and economic calculus. This is especially apparent in the informal housing market and water provision. In the informal housing market, for instance, the state under the MQM rule in Karachi was an important instrument in acquiring land that benefitted the constituency of the MQM. In the informal provision of water, everyone from government

functionaries, political parties who may be a part of the government, and individual entrepreneurs is involved. A lucrative business that rakes in at least 50 billion rupees per annum cannot function as an illegal enterprise without the endorsement of actors in the formal realm.¹²⁹ Thus, informal provision of services in Karachi is not representative of breakdown of governance. Rather, it is still the domain of the state, which, has the authority to ‘inscribe the informal by designating some activities as authorized and others as unauthorized’ (Roy 2009, p.10).

The resultant order that has emerged, however, despite the significant role played by the state in its formation, represents a situation where multiple actors enforce orders with violence as a regulatory mechanism. In doing so, these actors work with the state in pursuing mutually beneficial goals. Governments, thus, are willing to tolerate high levels of criminality and violence as long as the larger interests at that time are not affected. For instance, PAC’s crime dons were allowed to enforce their order through violence and

¹²⁹ For instance, in reporting the resignation of a top executive of the institution responsible for water and sanitation, KWSB (Karachi Water and Sewerage Board), a newspaper article noted, ‘MD Water Board Misbahuddin Farid was an ‘acceptable person’ for both Pakistan People’ Party (PPP) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement, both vying for more and more control of city resources and his appointment was a settlement between the two coalition partners, desiring to have the control of KWSB. The struggle for control over the city’s water hydrants, in addition to the money involved in the proposed S-III Sewerage and K-IV Bulk Water Supply project, has intensified the clash between the coalition partners and, ultimately, Farid was unable to face the pressure and resigned,’ the source explained. They said most of the water hydrants were being run by persons affiliated with both ruling coalition partners, influential personalities, senior police officials and bureaucrats, all of whom were displeased by Farid’s decision to close all hydrants.’ ‘KWSB Chief quits over ‘political pressure’, *The Daily News*, September 7, 2012, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-4-130442-KWSB-chief-quits-over-political-pressure>

intimidation against their competitors as long as the PAC's partnership was beneficial for then-ruling government of the PPP. Similarly, high level of sectarian violence carried out by various jihadi groups against Shia professionals in Karachi was tolerated by the state during the 1990s. These groups were instrumental in waging jihad in neighboring India and Afghanistan, which at that time, was in the strategic interests of the state. Lastly, violence and criminality instituted by the MQM affiliates was characterized as equivalent to terrorism by the military operation initiated in September 2013. However, the same MQM and its activities were deemed acceptable under the government of General Musharraf (1999-2008) as the MQM supported military rule at that time.

Yet, while it is important for scholars and policymakers to understand that the informal and violent political order of Karachi is not equivalent to breakdown of governance or state failure, it is equally relevant to study how this order comes to bear on notions of citizenship, legality, and rights. Armed political players are able to operate in the city not only because they are tolerated by the state, but also because they have developed constituencies of support. In doing so, they are contributing to shaping of social acceptance of violence as an enforcing mechanism and as a means to resolve disputes. Similarly, drawing upon local political leadership instead of the government to ensure access to basic amenities highlights the perception of the former being more powerful and reliable than the latter. What these developments portend for the larger questions of rule of law, human rights, and institutional reform in Karachi merit further analysis.

An Informal and Violent Political Order

This chapter makes the case that an informal and violent order has come into being in Karachi. The notion of such an order presents an alternative approach to trace relations between state and society in a city which reports pervasive informality and high levels of violence and crime. This is a ground-up account, informed by analysis of practices of key players over a period of time which is useful in identifying continuities of old patterns and emergence of new ones.

Karachi's present order displays an evolutionary nature, a point which may appear simplistic, as most phenomena evolve over time. Yet, to understand why the urban terrain comprises of political actors that include a terror group, an organized crime group, and political parties, it is useful to note how and when these actors entered the system, when and why their motivations changed, and what constituencies of support already existed to provide them grounds to claim representation. Tracing these developments over time presents an opportunity to study these processes with a nuanced approach.

The larger context to this order is the ceded space by successive governments to non-state actors to provide housing and water. Causal explanations can be made about limited resources, poor policy planning, and an increasing population on account of migrants coming from all over the country for livelihood. Scholars also attribute this hands-off approach to governance as a post-colonial legacy of indirect rule (Naseemullah and Staniland 2014) and the traditional role played by criminal-cum-political strongmen in British India who worked as intermediaries between the rulers and the ruled (Hansen 2005).

Yet, as previous chapters demonstrate, Karachi's increasing population created demands for public amenities in a newly-independent state struggling to keep herself united

and financially viable despite ethnic diversity and other issues. Karachi, with its strategic location as a seaport, also suffered the curse of geography as it continued to be used as a trafficking route for drugs and weapons during the Afghan jihad days and after September 11. It was in this context that non-state actors stepped in to incrementally contribute to service provision.

How does this order work? At the heart of it are political parties vying for control of the city through legal and illegal means. While legal means include acquiring political office to benefit their constituencies through jobs, lands etc., illegal means include controlling the city through violence and the potent method of extortion. Through extortion, a form of informal taxation, political parties enforce protection of life and assets. In a city where the state is not a neutral arbiter and rule of law is bent to accommodate political and economic interests, these privatized means of protection and conflict resolution represent an inevitable reality, not unlike privatized protection in post-communist Russia (Varese 2001).

Crime groups such as the PAC are also a part of this order, but it is important to note that they are a vulnerable link on account of their unsavory activities. Actors like the PAC as well as individuals such as assassins or petty criminals have become a part of this order on account of relationships with political parties. Political parties employ these actors to carry out violence against opponents, levy extortion, become involved in land grabbing etc. These relationships are of myriad natures. Criminals may be a part of political party machinery, for instance, the military wing of the party. They may be clientelist in their dealings with political parties, or they may be working as equals. For instance, the PAC

could ensure access to constituents in Lyari. It also managed to get its nominated candidates elected as members of legislative assembly on the ticket of the political party, the PPP. Yet, since criminals and crime groups are shadowy characters in the illicit realm, they are easy targets who can be disposed of through extrajudicial killings, withdrawal of political support, or media trials which paint them as the sole culprits.

It is important to note that although the state conceded space to actors such as community elders, political parties, and drug traffickers investing in the real estate, it plays a pivotal role. It maintains political equilibrium by supporting one player over other, display of force through military operations, and by tacit support for political and monetary gains. The regular displays of power by the state through military operations that are carried every few years are shows of strength to the many political contenders of Karachi as reminders of the hegemony of the state. While scholars have attributed such displays to the symbolism of state power (Hansen 2001; Hansen 2005; Weinstein 2013), these military operations also indicate the political acumen of the state—winnowing out the number of contenders and pitting one against the other suggests conflict regulation to refocus the political equilibrium.

Yet, while the state is organizing this order from the top, an order is forming in response to the needs of an increasing population from the ground-up. Over time, issues of urban planning have become political issues. As a result, political parties find it in their interests to include provision of housing and other amenities in their political agenda. Consequently, these political players have developed social and political constituencies in the local population as engaging in informal service provision by gaining access and

(whatever level of) control over land and water strengthens their position in contestation over resources.

These developments suggest that negotiation between state and society is ongoing, each changing the other in the process. Political parties attempt to seek control of ministries of urban services such as housing and water when they get in power and use these opportunities to entrench control over the city's resources. These benefits also trickle down to the level of local populace and contribute to the perception of political parties championing the cause of their electorate.

Moreover, the arrival of multiple contenders on the scene has led to fragmentation of polity and increase in violence. Even though shared expectations or informal rules of the game have come into being, political equilibrium in the city is tenuous and uncertain. Although the state is the final arbiter, power has diffused out to social and political actors. Multiple orders are at play as political parties protect their turfs, in the process, making it unsafe for residents as they navigate their daily lives through the crisscross of neighborhoods and realms in a city with multiple operators of violence (Gayer 2014, p.239). What is important to note is that over the years, violent patterns and practices, once they came into being, have become hard to reverse (LeBas 2013). Since the 1980s, when the MQM was the de-facto hegemon, new players like the PAC as well as the TTP have appeared on the political landscape, each of them equally, if not more, violent. These developments suggest that although there is no imminent threat of state failure nor of breakdown of governance, entrenchment of actors such as the MQM and their control over

some neighborhoods is inevitable. Since actors such as the MQM dispense public amenities, they have popular constituencies of support.

It is also relevant to note that service provision will become even more violent, uncertain and contested with increase in the city's population. With a state which is disinterested in governance beyond regulating conflict, it will be the local population which will become increasingly vulnerable and locked in a system of dependency with armed political players. Such a scenario will also highlight the social, political, and economic contestation over the city's resources.

Developing a micro-level understanding is key. Such an approach allows space for recognition and understanding of new players and phenomena and dynamic aspects of state-society relations.

CONCLUSION: FROM UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM TO POLICY RESPONSES

In September 2013, a military operation was launched in Karachi.¹³⁰ Targeting actors in the city responsible for violence, extortion, and other criminal activities, it was led by paramilitary forces, locally known as the Rangers. Military operations against criminal and violent activities were not new for residents of Karachi. Almost twenty years ago, the city had witnessed two military operations during the 1990s. While the operations in the 1990s primarily targeted the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), the operation in 2013 was instituted against the crime groups of Lyari and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), in addition to the MQM. In barely two decades, Karachi's political landscape has grown to include new types of political players including a crime group with political ambitions and a terrorist group that mirrored practices of other political players. In the absence of the state as a primary provider of basic services to the underprivileged, these actors are engaged in informal service provision in one form or the other. In addition, alliances between crime and terrorist groups for mutual gains have become a reality.

In the aftermath of the military operation of 2013, newspapers reported joining of forces by crime groups in the city with members of jihadi groups including the TTP.¹³¹

¹³⁰ The military operation was underway until the writing of this dissertation.

¹³¹ For the TTP, the ongoing simultaneous military operation in its stronghold in the tribal areas of Pakistan adjacent of Afghanistan at the same time as the operation in Karachi weakened their organizational and operational strength while crime groups bore losses in Karachi. The result was recruitment of criminals into terrorist groups to carry out revenge attacks together, in the process, confounding law enforcement officials about the source and planning behind these activities. See "Nexus of banned outfits, criminals 'Channel 2' unearthed in Karachi," *Geonews*, September 10, 2015,

This alliance also highlighted how the TTP was simultaneously a local and international player. Its presence and activities in Karachi had an impact on its members and allies in the tribal areas of the country as well as neighboring Afghanistan. It is a fair assessment then to argue that despite the military operations conducted in the 1990s, Karachi's political landscape had become complex by 2013.

While the city's political order had evolved, policy responses had remained the same. In essence, they rested on the premise that effective policing could stem the tide of high levels of violence and crime.

This conceptualization overlooked the myriad ways in which the state is connected to the informal and violent political order of Karachi. In a megacity where half of the population lives in informal settlements¹³² and half of its water demand is met through informal water delivery (Rahman 2008, p.15), it is not impossible to fathom that various state actors are not involved at some level or the other. This lucrative deregulated service delivery also illustrates wider political, social, and economic conflicts among political players, each of which is catering to a particular constituency, contributing to fragmentation of polity. Moreover, demands of local population are shaping the actions of political players as they interact with the formal system. As a result, although the state regulates conflict among political contenders of Karachi, an order is also being organized from ground-up, highlighting negotiation between state and society. Lastly, emergence of

<http://www.geo.tv/article-197002-Nexus-of-banned-outfits-criminals-Channel-2-unearthed-in-Karachi>

¹³² "Majority of city's population lives in slums, seminar told," *The Daily News*, April 18, 2011, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=42185&Cat=4>

multiple players in the city's landscape signals shaping of localized orders, each different from the other on account of different actors (with differing organizations, strategies, and motives) at their centrality. Karachi's case is an example of dynamism of political orders which evolve to include new actors and variables over time.

The nature of conflict in Karachi and the traditional policy approach to address it are not unique. They are emblematic of broader debates on megacities in developing countries, especially those with high rates of violence, crime, and informality (in Latin American context, see for instance, Ungar 2002; Cruz 2011).¹³³ Policy responses are based on the understanding of conflict in these places as a problem of governance and failure of the state. This concluding chapter presents analysis based on findings from the case study of Karachi and discusses the implications and significance of these findings, and directions for future research.

Conceptualizing the Problem: Understanding Informal and Violent Political Orders:

In policy scholarship, primary debates regarding megacities in developing countries take in account the pervasiveness of crime, violence, and attendant rise in informal settlements as migrants make their way to cities in search of opportunities. What do futures in these places look like? Policy scholars predict dismal ones if the quality of governance is not improved, crime and violence are not curbed, and service provision is not secured within the domain of the formal state. Especially in a world which is experiencing complex challenges of climate change, migration, global terrorism, and ethnic and sectarian

¹³³ These debates are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

conflicts, the potential of places with poor governance and concomitant rise of non-state actors (such as crime and terror groups) providing alternative governance does not augur well for global stability (Kilcullen 2012). In this conceptualization, violence and crime are viewed as epiphenomenal to polity and governance. The problem, most argue, lies with weak governments and ineffective law and order measures (Norton 2003; Muggah 2014). The solution, these studies argue, is taking back the state through effective policing and regulating service provision through formal state institutions to meet the basic needs of the local population. While concerns about the future of these places are well-founded, the conceptualization of problems facing them and consequent policy solutions need to be revisited.

Keeping in view the diversity of opinions on governance and state-society boundaries,¹³⁴ how do we understand the nature of political order in megacities reporting crime, violence, and deregulated service provision? In many of these places in Latin America and Africa, scholars note deep connections among violent actors such as crime groups and (or) militant wings of political parties with government institutions such as police, local governments, and civil society organizations (Auyero 2007; Arias and Goldstein 2010; LeBas 2013; Moncada 2013; Hansen 2005; Gayer 2014). Are violence, crime, and informality of service provision still extraneous to the political order in these places or have they become a part of them and are contributing to practical governance (Olivier de Sardan 2008)? If they have become a part of the wider political system, what is

¹³⁴ These themes are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

the nature of such a political order? How did things get to that point and what are the implications for the broader political system?

Informal and Violent Political Orders

In addressing these questions, this dissertation proposes adopting an approach led by ground narratives in the case of a city which takes local forms of control in the city in account. This yields a different perspective than explanations which ignore the bottom-up aspects of formation of public authority (Lund 2006a, p.675). More interpretive than normative, this study alludes to what people *do*, thus placing human agency as integral to developing an understanding of how things work on the ground. In other words, causation does not reside in crime, violence, and informality, but in the interaction of their dynamics that are producing different orders. These interactions may be contributing to new patterns or continuation of old ones in new ways. This approach is useful as it focuses on dynamic processes, whether in the form of violence, or political negotiation.

Adopting this approach and based on its empirical findings from the case study of Karachi, this dissertation proposes that an informal and violent political order exists in Karachi. By ‘order’, this study refers to shared expectations or informal rules of the game known to key players, which in turn shape political practices. The existence of such orders does not imply breakdown of governance; in effect, it lends insights in the ways that deregulated service provision, violence, and crime have become part of political system and governance on the ground. This finding is not generalizable, although it finds support from comparable cases in Latin America and Africa and thus lays down groundwork for future research.

Karachi presents an important case to study the nature of political order in a city that has become synonymous with increased levels of violence, crime, and deregulated service provision. Based on fieldwork and secondary sources, this dissertation presents a micro-level understanding of the seeming disorder of the city. The central questions of this study are: what is the nature of order at work in Karachi and its connection to the political system? What is the role of state in this order? These questions are addressed in this study through tracing practices of key players including government officials, a crime group (PAC),¹³⁵ a terrorist group (TTP),¹³⁶ and political parties,¹³⁷ over a period of thirty-five years (1978-2013).

Far from breakdown of governance, the city exhibits an informal and violent political order. A city of migrants, the city's limited resources and flawed state policies opened up spaces for non-state actors including community networks, crime groups, political parties, and individual entrepreneurs engaged in illicit activities (such as land grabbing, informal water provision etc.) to provide housing and water to residents. Political parties are central to this order as they collaborate with crime groups, individual entrepreneurs and state actors to gain control of the city's resources through licit and illicit means. These relationships in turn impact the governance of the city as evidenced by informal provision of water and housing to significant sections of population, in particular, the poor. As a result, social and political constituencies of support for political players have

¹³⁵ Peoples Aman Committee, formed in 2008, represented the drug gangs of Lyari.

¹³⁶ In 2008, various Taliban groups joined hands to form the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an organization premised on the goal of establishing a Sharia state in Pakistan.

¹³⁷ Including the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Awami National Party (ANP).

come into being as those who get access to these services support these actors. These developments indicate that an order is being organized from the ground-up as the basic needs of an ever-increasing urban population are met by a variety of actors and institutions that do not fall in the realm of the state. The state, to an extent complicit in the emergence of this informal order regulates competing contenders by playing one actor against the other, through displays of its power in the form of punitive military operations, and through varying levels of support for the lucrative informal service delivery.

The details of this order highlight a hands-off approach to governance by the state which has limited itself to being a referee of sorts over competing contenders of Karachi's political and economic resources. In this order, violence is employed by political players as well as the state to display its hegemony. Violence also increases as the number of political contenders increases at one point in time.

The order in Karachi presents a fragile equilibrium that is mediated by the state from the top, but which is changing from the ground-up as well, impacting governance as players adapt and formulate responses to entrench their support in local constituencies.

This dissertation suggests a framework that presents multiplicity of lens bringing the dynamic nature of governance and political order of Karachi in sharp relief. It highlights the range of actors (state and non-state) wielding public authority and the ways in which such authority is organized and practiced. In doing so, it is useful in lending insights in how informal and violent political orders exist in reference to formal government institutions and the licit realm.

Shared expectations shaped by specific contexts

First, shared expectations of key players are shaped by specific contexts. Shared expectations of key players connect micro-level practices to systemic changes. They navigate past postulated assumptions of governance and the role of any particular player and study how change is taking place through actions of players (practices) based on shared expectations. These informal rules of the game, in turn, are contingent on historical and structural contexts.

In Karachi's case, the causal mechanism is *social and political learning* (Albert Bandura 1977); through observation and reinforcement of certain practices rewarded by the system, players learn to adapt their behavior. Following shared expectations or informal rules of the game, which if violated, lead to losing political and economic capital, players employ violence as a regulatory mechanism and engage in informal service provision of services and levying of extortion, an informal form of taxation. This causal mechanism, shaped by historical and structural contexts (discussed in greater detail in chapters 4 and 5), has contributed to formation of an informal and violent political order. The pervasiveness of violence and informality in service provision suggest a city with parallel quasi-governments or a 'state within a state'. The performance aspects of governance as carried out by political parties and crime groups—such as conflict resolution through informal means and (or) providing access to jobs in formal government institutions through contacts or in service of political parties or crime groups— adds to this perception.

Role of the State

Second, the state plays an important role in producing informality. Deregulated service provision presents an important arena in which scholars have identified the central

role played by the state in ‘conceding’ to solutions in situations where it lacks capacity (Altrock 2012; LeBas 2013) or purposely declare processes as illegal or legal depending on its wider interests (AlSayyad and Roy 2004; Roy 2004).

In Karachi’s order too, the state plays an important role. Over the years, government officials, in particular, at the federal level, have supported one political player over the other.¹³⁸ These relationships between government officials and other players, such as political parties and crime groups are most (although not always) of the times, obscure in nature. Auyero (2007) identifies a similar phenomenon in Argentina, calling it ‘politics of the grey zone’, which denotes clandestine connections between government functionaries and those who engage in collective violence. The latter can be “outsiders”- at times involved in violence, and soon be “insiders”- when they become a part of the government, highlighting that the boundaries among state actors, political party affiliates and actors who specialize in inflicting violence are disappearing (Auyero 2013).

Even if they were so at some point, these are not clientelist relationships anymore as such a dynamic suggests that those receiving state patronage are passive entities. On the contrary, the state benefits from these relationships as well. Political parties act as allies and can be coalition partners to incumbent governments, and benefit from access to state

¹³⁸ In the 1980s, then military dictator, General Zia favored religious parties over political parties espousing the cause of democracy as the latter posed a threat to his government and the former presented constituencies of support to legitimize military rule. Moreover, it is not only political parties that get support from the state. The democratic government of PPP (2008-2013) supported the drug gangs of Lyari that had combined to form a quasi-political organization, the Peoples Aman Committee (PAC). The PAC, which some detractors called the militant arm of the PPP, levied extortion on citizens, in the process, challenging the hegemony of the MQM which until then had been associated with the practice.

support. Similarly, local government officials in institutions such as the local police, or the housing and water departments, stand to gain financially from active participation or quiet endorsements.

The murky nature of these relationships between actors in formal policy-making realm and actors outside of it enables these players to rig the rules of the game. Because of the obscurity of their relationships, these players evade public accountability (Wedel 2005; Wedel 2009; Wedel 2014). A similar case can be made for studying relations between state and non-state actors in Karachi who make backroom deals and thus cannot be held accountable by the people.

Lastly, it is also important to take note of varying levels of state support. The idea of the monolithic state, despite being an ‘elegant metaphor’ (Migdal 1994, p.9) muddles our understanding of the extent and nature of the role of the state in such orders. The case study of Karachi is an excellent case in point. In Karachi, local government officials may be serving the interests of their political party (which may be in power in Karachi), even if it is at cross-purposes with the line of action taken at the federal level.¹³⁹ Similarly, at the local government level, officials in water and housing departments may be towing a party

¹³⁹ An example is that of the PPP government (2013-present) in Sindh (province whose capital is Karachi) which resisted extension in the powers of stationed paramilitary forces in the city, despite the federal government’s insistence to let the latter continue their military operation. Detractors point out that the PPP government’s resistance stems from its efforts to prevent punitive actions against its corruption and tacit support of illicit activities and operators. “Sindh assembly adopts resolution seeking to curtail Rangers’ powers”, *The Daily Dawn*, December 16, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1226757/sindh-assembly-adopts-resolution-seeking-to-curtail-rangers-powers>

line, serving their party's agenda, even if it translates into engaging in the informal housing market in some way.¹⁴⁰

What can we make of this contradictory role of the state in informal service provision? In urban informality literature, scholars point out that the state employs informality as a planning logic. Roy (2009, p.83) for instance, argues that the ambiguities surrounding land tenure provide the state the 'logic of resource allocation, accumulation, and authority' - the state can allocate the land to any project or player if it is contested. In Karachi's case, this purposeful use of informality, not only in land but also water, correspond to this point of view. In other words, the seeming invisibility of the state in provision of services in Karachi does not suggest that this sphere of activities is outside its scope. Instead, the state is proscribing the context (McFarlane and Waibel 2012, p.4) in which various actors can become a part of informality.

This study, however, also finds the argument of 'conceded informality' (Altrock 2012) as helpful in explaining the deregulation of services over the years. In places where the state is unable or unwilling to address the needs of the people, local institutions and

¹⁴⁰ For instance, government officials in-the-know about development projects introduced in a particular part of the city may share this information with their party members before it becomes public.¹⁴⁰ Development projects tend to raise the value of a piece of land, presenting a good incentive for land grabbing or more sophisticated techniques. For instance, government functionaries collaborate with political parties to sell agricultural land on the fringes of the city for profit (Hasan et al. 2013), and subdivide large amenity plots and public spaces into smaller plots to sell them in the open market. See Ali Arqam, "This land is my land," *Newsline*, May 21, 2015, <http://www.newslinemagazine.com/2015/05/cover-story-this-land-is-my-land/>; "What exactly is 'china-cutting'?" *ARY News*, June 16, 2015, <http://arynews.tv/en/what-exactly-is-china-cutting/>; Imtiaz Ali, "MQM leader's brother, others booked for China-cutting business, money laundering," *The Daily Dawn*, September 5, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1204952>.

grassroots organizations step in (Kreibich 2012, p.156). Karachi, a city of migrants, with an estimated population of 20 million, is large enough to overwhelm any government's resources. Letting non-state actors become a part of service delivery, whether by planning, or through incremental ways, also partly explains why governments let non-state actors to become a part of service provision.

In explaining orders such as in Karachi, some would argue that the hands-off approach of the state is reminiscent of colonial legacies of rule in which the state lets intermediaries such as local rulers administer day-to-day matters. Viewed in this perspective, the local strongmen, or what Hansen (2005) calls 'Bade Admi' in the context of urban India, providing access to jobs and other amenities including protection, does not seem out of step. In Karachi as well, local strongmen, whether belonging to political parties or crime groups, are the interface between state resources and local residents, in particular, the underprivileged.

Yet, continuation of legacies of colonial rule can only explain so much. The state is at the same time, an active player, resorting to a permanent state of exception through suspension of law, whether in letting paramilitary forces support organized crime involved in parallel water market, or through tacit endorsement of violent operators of religious parties under General Zia. Similarly, the state, under the PPP government endorses extortion levied by drug gangs of Lyari.

How does corruption fit into these arrangements? There is mounting evidence of political players as well as government officials earning through the web of relationships. Traditionally, discussions of corruption in Pakistan and India dovetail with the concept of

black money. This dissertation has made indirect inference to money earned through licit and illicit means which is invested in formal sectors. For instance, the money earned through extortion is likely invested in the real estate of Karachi. Weinstein (2008) chronicles a similar phenomenon in Mumbai where local criminal syndicates with global connections, supported by the nexus of politicians, police, and bureaucracy, invest in the real estate of the city. All this to note that the concept of black money is very much a part of the popular discourse in the Indian subcontinent. Even in the context of the military operation in Karachi (2013-present), paramilitary forces explained their understanding of the criminal political economy of the city in terms of the illicit nexus of political parties and criminals who earn black money through extortion, land grabbing, and water supply etc.¹⁴¹

While noting the relevance and importance of researching the circulation of black money in the political economy of Karachi, this dissertation sidesteps this debate purposefully. For one, researching the origin and dynamics of investing black money merit more detailed analysis than could be carried out within this dissertation. Second and more importantly, this dissertation attempts to make the point that earning of money through licit and illicit means, while being criminal, is *also* political. It is the political element of this activity and its associated dynamics that tend to be subsumed or altogether ignored by scholarship. As the findings and analysis of this study suggest, the political dynamics of earning money through illicit activities such as extortion or land grabbing need to be

¹⁴¹ See for instance, “Billions of black money being used to fund terrorism in Karachi: Rangers chief,” *The Daily Dawn*, June 12, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1187627>

explored in more detail. Thus, it is important to keep in perspective the nuances of ties among different players, motivated by mutual interests, and political turf. As an MQM affiliate, on the question of the party's involvement, in particular, when it was in power, in land grabbing, extortion and other such activities, emphatically noted, 'It's not all about the money. It is about gaining and maintaining street power and political influence.'¹⁴²

Negotiation between formal and informal realms

Third, boundaries between state and society, and thus informal and formal, are perpetually negotiated by all actors including local populations. Examples abound from practices of slum dwellers to ensure their rights in the Middle East (AlSayyad 1993; Bayat 2000) to Latin America (Goldstein 2004; Perlman 2004; Holston 2008; Perlman 2009; Goldstein 2012). In literature from sub-Saharan Africa, scholars study fluid formations that do not become full institutions but which remain suspended within interstices of formal and informal (Lund 2006b; Buur 2006). These scholars note the conditions of sub-Saharan Africa as a place where violence is a regulatory mechanism, crime groups have proliferated, and privatization and development policies have weakened the role of the state (Hagmann and Peclard 2010). In these places, state formation is a dynamic process where various players are negotiating statehood in different arenas and processes (ibid).

Tracing the practices of players in Karachi lends insights in negotiability of formal-informal realms. These players are not high level government functionaries nor belong to powerful political machineries. Instead, they are ordinary individuals who are navigating complex geographies of the city's social and political terrain.

¹⁴² Interview with an MQM affiliate, June 2013, Atlanta, Georgia.

An example is that of individuals who draw upon multiple identities along the course of a single day to survive and (or) benefit from their knowledge of invisible power maps that have skewed the rules of the game. For instance, a low-level government functionary, such as a police constable, can engage in land grabbing in a territory controlled by Taliban, in the process, drawing upon his identity as a Pashtun, a policeman, and an entrepreneur dabbling in the real estate.¹⁴³ In a more controlled environment, since political party affiliates typically follow party lines, individuals could be government functionaries for their day jobs but follow party directives which may be defeating the spirit and sometimes the letter of the law.¹⁴⁴

Similarly, in studying informal housing, while the role of government functionaries, political parties, individual entrepreneurs and other actors becomes prominent, while the role of those who squat on irregular settlements is overshadowed. Yet, these individuals and communities are not always passive players- they can become vectors of resistance against forces which are threatening to disrupt their lives.¹⁴⁵ This study

¹⁴³ Based on direct observation during fieldwork in Karachi, Pakistan, August 2013.

¹⁴⁴ An extreme example (among many) is that of Faisal Mehmood, one of the co-accused in the assassination of a widely-publicized murder of journalist, Wali Khan Babar, in 2011 in Karachi. Mehmood was a clerk in the government during the day, a job he had secured through MQM's party favors. In exchange, Mehmood was involved in the dirty work of the party which included his involvement in attempted murder of a PPP cadre, kidnapping and murder of a Pashtun ice-cream seller, and the murder of the afore-mentioned journalist. Example cited from Laurent Gayer, *Karachi: Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 108-109.

¹⁴⁵ An example is that of residents of a village near the city periphery who saved their houses from demolition in 2006-2007 during the MQM-led government. The village was of interest to both the PPP and the MQM. The residents had to choose between the two evils- political parties who wanted their land or land suppliers who ensured their protection against the former in exchange of their permission to develop adjacent agricultural lands. The residents of this village chose the land suppliers as the lesser evil to protect their

makes the case that residents in these instances are equally contributing to laying down of facts-on-the-ground, through settling in one part of the city and “voting with their feet” (Perlman 2009).

Significance of Analysis and Implications for Policy

For as long as the residents of Karachi have become accustomed to gruesome violence, in the 1990s, for instance, slain political workers in body bags were routinely dumped on the streets - the city has also regularly witnessed military operations which take place every couple of years ‘to flush out the bad elements’, in the words of one of the interviewees.¹⁴⁶ As evidence from the ground suggests however, “bad elements” cannot be disentangled from the “good ones”.

Tracing patterns of formal-informal negotiation and the myriad ways that the state is connected to informal service provision suggests that this political order has come into being through incremental changes and motivated by mutual gains. These trends suggest how there is no larger agenda at work here- political interests shaped by the lure of short-term gains contribute to daily decisions and practices. The implications of such dynamics on introduction of new variables, in Karachi’s case, large number of migrants to the city which reduced its original settlers into a minority, introduction of a terror group as a political player, and environmental change which contributed to depletion of water

houses. In doing so, they confronted the might of the MQM, which was in power at the time. The MQM backed off as the land suppliers were stronger, media was mobilized in support of residents, and MQM’s opponent, the PPP, also supported the cause. This skillful maneuvering illustrates that residents are not passive players, although they do not always win. Example from Laurent Gayer, *Karachi: Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.264-266.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with an MQM affiliate in August 2013, Karachi, Pakistan.

resources for a part of the city are far-reaching. Stop-gap measures which do not foresee the possible fallout of policies, and existing formal-informal relationships which may prevent punitive action against powerful players (state or non-state), become permanent solutions over time. It can be argued then that the state is equally a part of the problem as a part of the solution.

In this order, subjectivities of citizenship are changing not only from one decade to another but from one part of the city to the other. Privileged neighborhoods, for instance, may not experience problems of gaining access to drinking water than those who live in less-privileged parts of the city. Similarly, the impact of violence on women and children also merits analysis. This dissertation has refrained from incorporating the impact of informality and informal rules of the game on women and children in Karachi, primarily because of limited data collected on the topic. Yet, the absence of discussion does not suggest that the violence described does not have far-reaching and pervasive impacts on the society at large that affects women's role as mothers and members of society. Existing scholarship points to the precariousness of daily life for women and children who suffer from the after-effects of violence against breadwinners in their families, whether they are members of political parties or state functionaries such as members of the local police. Violence against women and children can take many forms. The high rate of violence and killings undermines the financial well-being of women as many are dependent on their husbands for their financial well-being. Yet, they do not suffer only when male members of the family are killed. Family members can be taken from their homes to extort money. Police harass families by raiding houses of suspected individuals. (Chaudhry 2004, p.271)

This behavior in the traditional society of Pakistan is considered as dishonorable breaching of space, particularly if women are home alone. Emerging accounts from other cities, such as Lahore, on the impact of religious extremism on women and children suggests that similar trends might be at work in Karachi as well. For instance, newspaper accounts reveal how children and women travel from Lahore to Syria via Karachi to join the ranks of the Islamic State or ISIS as it is commonly known, highlighting the impact of radical ideologies and violence on all sections of society.¹⁴⁷

The impact and nuances of effects of violence on women and children in Karachi are multi-dimensional and deserve detailed attention in future research. Raising children in a volatile environment, ensuring their safety and access to decent education, and running households, especially in neighborhoods that experience daily violence are difficult, if not almost impossible tasks. These challenges are compounded for women who belong to underprivileged sections of society. Within Karachi's diverse ethnic population that is living in a city marked by different groups competing for turf, it is the women and children who are the most vulnerable. For instance, in neighborhoods dotted by presence of Taliban fighters, women's mobility can become restricted easily. In Lyari, although gang violence limits mobility of women, yet, in some instances, they fare better than men in the community as gangs may refrain from committing violence against women. However, it is also important to note that women from different strata of society experience challenges in their daily lives in different ways. Women belonging to privileged sections of society, for

¹⁴⁷ Umar Cheema, "20 men, women, and children from Lahore join Daesh, go to Syria," *The Daily News*, December 31, 2005, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/85370-20-men-women-children-from-Lahore-join-Daesh-go-to-Syria>

instance, may successfully extricate their children from living conditions where violence is routinized.

It also merits analysis what the ideas of state, government, democratic representation, and justice mean to citizens and political leadership in different parts of the city. In a city where multiple actors are vying for economic and political influence, ethnic and religious identities represent more of a marker than political ideologies. Moreover, the space for pluralism and tolerance of opposite views is being reduced because violent reprisals and settling disputes through power (be it political support or military might and most likely, both) are a norm.

Similarly, the fact that an ordinary citizen would rather draw on a local strongman, a political party affiliate, or community networks before seeking recourse to the government challenges basic assumptions about the relationship between citizen and state. In more than many instances, these non-state actors are more efficient in addressing the needs of people than a government official. The state also loses legitimacy in the eyes of the populace through its support of one armed player over the other, and because of human rights violations that routinely follow during military operations and police abuses.

Lastly, the dynamism of orders such as in Karachi, which can evolve from one armed player to proliferation of various types of armed players, such as the drug gangs of Lyari, or the TTP fighters, suggests that players are learning from each other and new patterns are coming into being. This warrants adapting policy responses to changing ground realities.

Implications for Policy

As the number of megacities (population more than 10 million) increases in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, successive waves of urban migrants face problems of unreliable access to basic amenities such as water, poor sanitation due to informal housing, and insecurity in cities attributable to violence and criminality. The vulnerable populations of these regions, including women and children can become foot soldiers in pre-existing exploitative political orders, or work towards creating prosperous and equitable societies. In other words, they hold the key to dystopic realities or brighter futures. It is thus, imperative for local and global policymakers to develop an understanding of the nature of political orders and governance-on-the-ground. Poor policy solutions, premised on incomplete assessments, may prove counterproductive and in the long run contribute to further complexity.

As evidence from the field and scholarship establishes, in our interconnected world today, local challenges can become global flashpoints over time. Complex challenges such as climate change, sectarian and ethnic conflicts, displaced populations, local and global syndicates of crime and terror and other such problems, on interaction with violent orders can contribute to inter and intra-state conflict. This becomes more urgent in the case of sub-Saharan Africa and the Bay of Bengal, two regions which are experiencing profound effects from environmental changes brought about by climate change. These regions are also witnessing rapid urbanization. Karachi, which falls in this category, faces this challenge as well.

It is useful here to draw from the concept of “entanglement” as introduced by Shelley (2014) in her study of crime, corruption, and terrorism. When these three

phenomena come together, they are ‘fundamentally transformed’ (ibid, p.5). This dissertation makes the case that in Karachi as well, the “entanglement” of these three phenomena is contributing to complex problems in many areas of daily life. For instance, the city’s water woes illustrate their potential of becoming thorny political problems over which different groups can fight with each other. Effects of climate change in Karachi are already visible, and depleting natural resources are sharpening pre-existing fault lines that divide different ethnic groups against each other (Imran 2013). Karachi presents the possibility of a case study where interaction of environmental changes with an informal and violent order will be destructive.

Similarly, the example of the TTP offers insights in how a new phenomenon can interact with existing political orders and threaten to disrupt tenuous balances. The arrival of TTP as a player has to be understood in how regional dynamics affected the city. The formation of TTP in 2008 illustrates the coalescing of local jihadi groups such as the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT), and jihadi fighters who were fighting Western forces in Afghanistan and Pakistani military in the tribal areas of Pakistan. These fighters found Karachi as a hospitable environment to hide and to commit crimes to raise money for jihad in Afghanistan. In doing so, over time, they also formed relationships with criminals who were more adept at navigating the urban landscape of Karachi. Soon enough, they became engaged in land grabbing and extortion as well as enforcing order in parts of the city, which were predominantly Pashtun neighborhoods. In carrying out these practices, the TTP proved their acuity in learning the informal rules of the game. They were also more violent in their approach, instilling fear in the hearts of opponents and residents

of the city alike. If allowed to persist for a long period of time, actors like the TTP can become an intransigent urban reality before their enforced orders gain legitimacy in wider populace.

For local policy makers, honest appraisals about the role and extent of involvement of government functionaries in the violent order of Karachi are needed. These assessments will point out the influential role played by state officials in promoting and sustaining informality. Military operations, if they primarily target small-time criminals without arresting their powerful allies, or disciplining one armed actor (and not all of them) to restrain or limit its power while committing egregious human rights violations, contribute to the state losing its ‘sublime’ qualities- impartiality and justice (Hansen 2001).

As this dissertation makes the case, the problems facing the city are criminal *and* political in nature. This in turn implies that legitimate political and economic needs of the populace need to be addressed. In a city of at least twenty million people with enormous ethnic diversity where the autochthonous majority has become a minority at the hands of successive waves of migrants, formal political safeguards ought to be suggested to prevent further conflict. The state’s recourse to supporting one political player over another, whether clandestine, or public, ought to be revisited as it promotes bitter competition over who gets access to state resources for their constituency. Similarly, violent contestation over resources by different groups in their bid to stake control of different parts of the city could be circumvented through inclusion of local stakeholders in formal governance of the city. Lastly, the state needs to address the interests and needs of poor and marginalized sections of the population to prevent them from being exploited by armed actors as well as

corrupt state functionaries. At present, these populations are left at the mercy of non-state actors who continue to keep them in precarious situations that can be exploited for political support. Alternative institutionalized responses to the basic needs of these populations can give them an opportunity to live in less violent daily realities and provide them decent chances for better lives.

For global policy makers interested in fostering development in these regions and cities like Karachi, it is equally important to support scholarship that produces micro-level understanding of practical aspects of governance and political realities. These explanations are needed to formulate more informed policy decisions instead of spending on development projects that are unsustainable because of the tenuous political orders they operate in. At times, these well-intentioned efforts may even be counterproductive as they contribute to contestation over resources and attention of international donors. In the long run, then, they may entrench exploitative political orders geared towards enrichment of the few at the cost of the many.

Path Forward: Directions for Future Research

This is an explorative case study that maps out a systemic understanding of order in seeming disorder of places like Karachi. For future research, the path forward is to study how interactions among violence, crime, and informality are contributing to different types of political orders in other megacities of developing countries. Megacities, with their large populations represent a privileged opportunity to study the impact of increasing populations in contexts where the state may be powerful despite ceding space to non-state actors for service provision to significant percentage of population such as in Karachi, or

where formal-informal boundaries have blurred to produce “hybrid orders” as in Jamaica (Jaffe 2013), or if multiple orders are intersecting democratic processes, shaping “violent pluralism” such as in Latin America (Arias and Goldstein 2010). Interaction among these dynamics may produce different types of orders where different notions of state, citizenship and governance exist, or some of them may reach a similar point despite different paths.

The larger purpose of such research would be to develop a typology of such orders from a ground-up perspective to benefit policy and scholarship alike. This scholarship could help address questions regarding the impact of varying and multiple layers of authority and formal-informal negotiation on the nature of politics, governance and citizenship. These insights may prove useful for policy measures that can be introduced in such orders that create opportunities for political and societal development for local populations.

APPENDICES

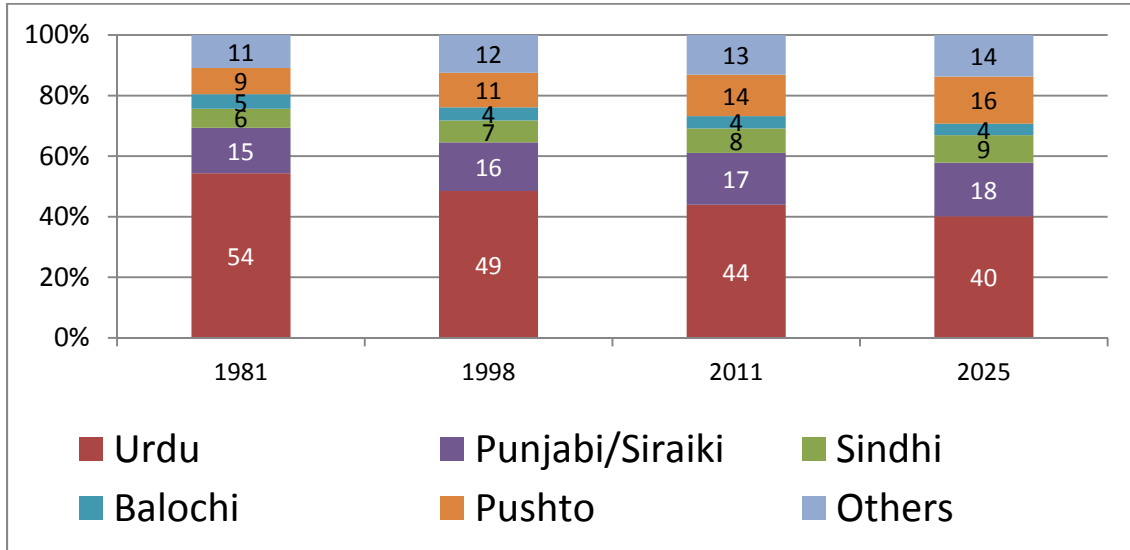
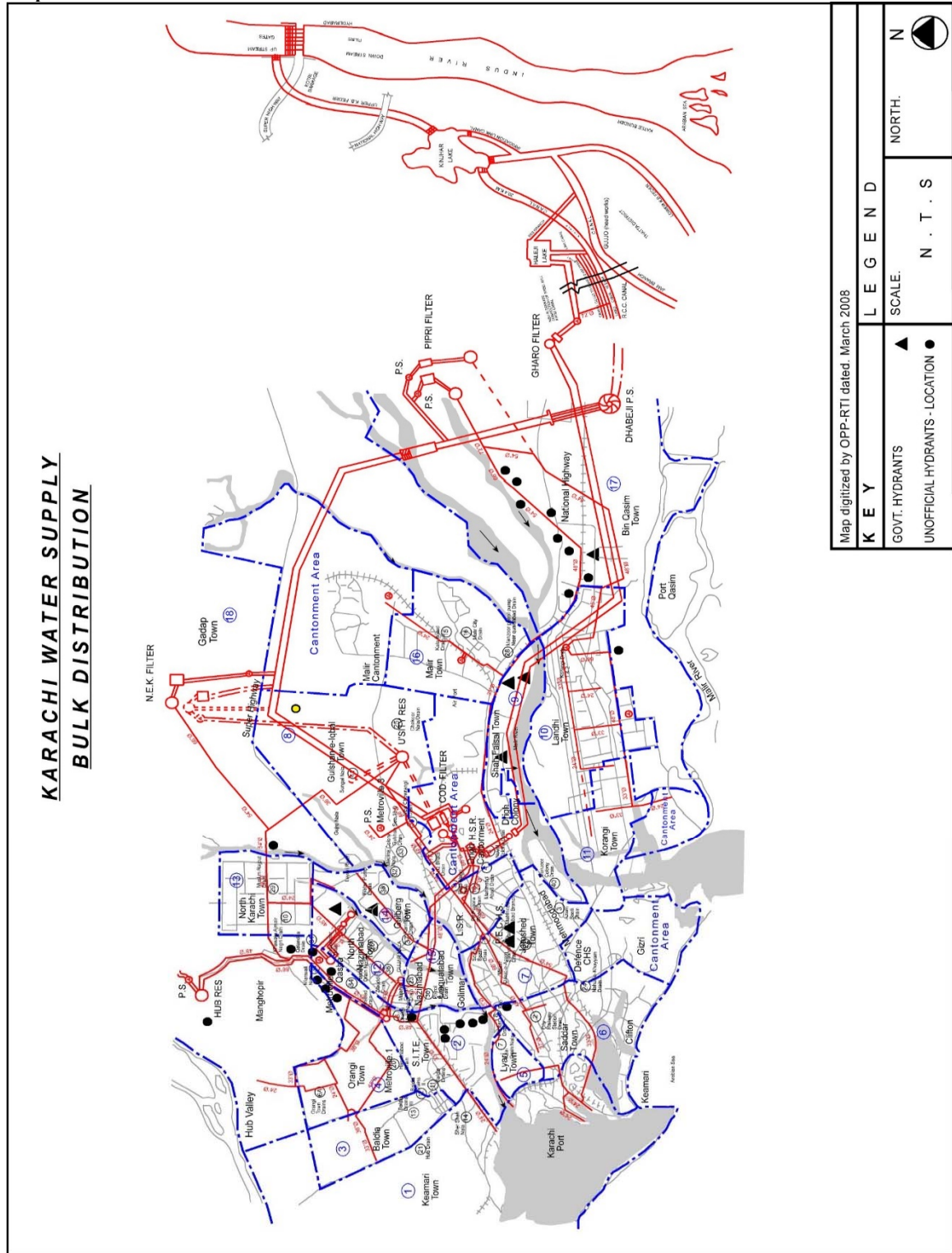


Figure 5 Ethnic Demography of Karachi-Past and Present Trends (represented by first language spoken by different groups)

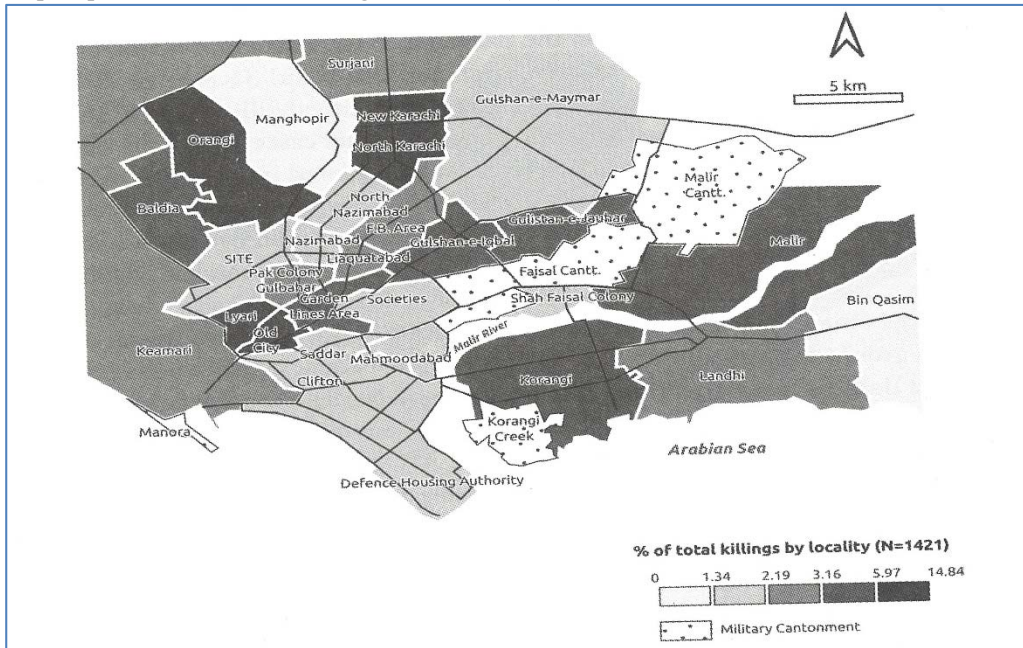
Source: Haris Gazdar, "Karachi: Violence, Duality, and Negotiation". *SPO Discussion Paper Series*, (10), (2011), p.8.

Map 1: Water Distribution in Karachi



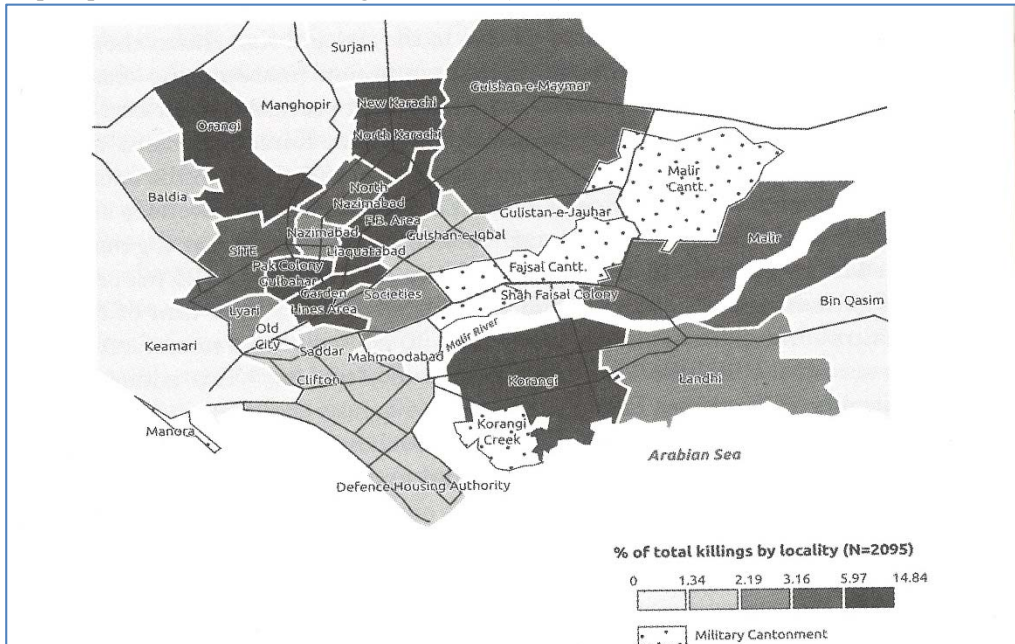
Source: Perween Rehman, “Water Supply in Karachi: Situation/Issues, Priority Issues and Solutions”, *Orangi Pilot Project-Research and Training Institute*, 2008

Map 2 Spatial distribution of killings in Karachi (2011)



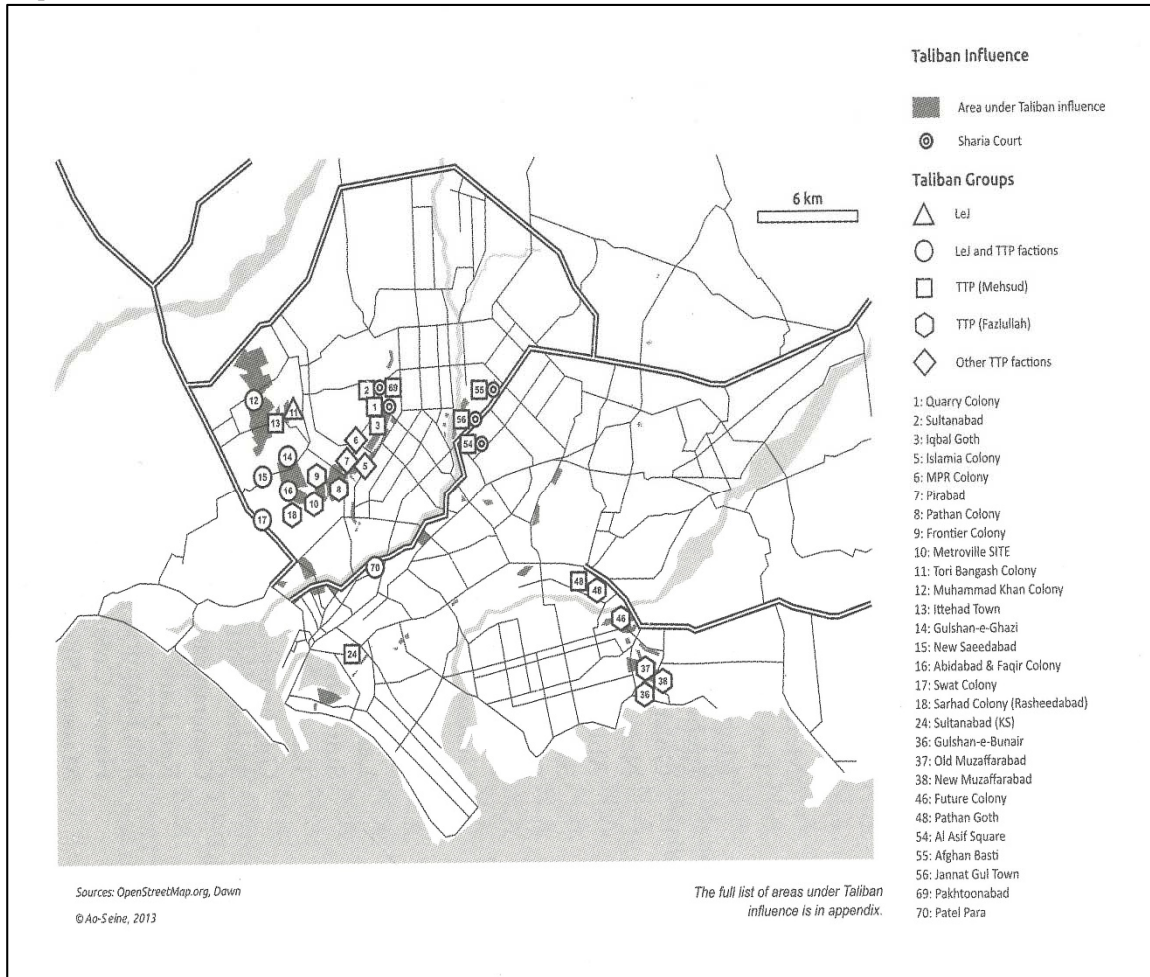
Source: Laurent Gayer, “Karachi: Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City”, *Oxford University Press, 2014*, p.8

Map 3 Spatial distribution of killings in Karachi (1995)



Source: Laurent Gayer, “Karachi: Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City”, *Oxford University Press, 2014*, p.6

Map 4 TTP's influence in Karachi



Source: Laurent Gayer, “Karachi: Ordered Disorder and the Struggle for the City”, *Oxford University Press*, 2014, p.191.

Table 1 Settlements with Sizable Presence of TTP and affiliates

No	Name of Colony	Population	Group
1	Quarry Colony	4, 986	TTP (Mehsud)
2	Sultanabad	4, 450	TTP (Mehsud)
3	Iqbal Goth	7, 391	TTP (Mehsud)
4	Mianwali and New Mianwali Colony	10, 310	TTP (Mehsud)
5	Islamia Colony	13, 377	TTP
6	MPR Colony	14, 697	TTP
7	Pirabad	12, 591	TTP
8	Pathan Colony	47, 873	TTP (Fazlullah)
9	Frontier Colony	49, 784	TTP (Fazlullah)
10	Metroville SITE	51, 336	TTP (Fazlullah)
11	Tori Bangash Colony	15, 320	LJ
12	Muhammad Khan Colony	66, 417	TTP/LJ
13	Ittehad Town	33, 774	TTP (Mehsud)
14	Gulshan-e-Ghazi	80, 920	TTP/LJ
15	New Saeedabad	21, 756	TTP/LJ
16	Abidabad and Faqir Colony	32, 605	TTP/LJ
17	Swat Colony	11, 096	TTP/LJ
18	Sarhad Colony (Rasheedabad)	13, 085	TTP (Fazlullah)
19	Bawani Chali	38, 321	N.A.

No	Name of Colony	Population	Group
20	Gulbai	N.A.	N.A.
21	Gulistan Colony	27, 656	N.A.
22	Niazi Colony	22, 901	N.A.
23	Lea Market	8, 039	N.A.
24	Sultanabad (KS)	13, 978	TTP (Mehsud)
25	Tekri Colony	17, 103	N.A.
26	Gulshan-e-Sikandarabad	86, 499	N.A.
27	Shireen Jinnah Colony	7, 635	N.A.
28	Generalabad	9,655	N.A.
29	Reti Lane	7. 049	N.A.
30	Pak Jamhuria Colony	N.A	N.A.
31	Hazara Colony (South)	N.A	N.A.
32	Massom Shah Colony no.2	13, 655	N.A.
33	Muhammad Nagar	16, 916	N.A.
34	Sherpao Colony	15, 441	N.A.
35	Bilal Colony	10, 839	N.A.
36; 37	Gulshan-e-Bunair; Old Muzaffarabad	57, 527	TTP (Fazlullah)
38	New Muzaffarabad	50, 089	TTP (Fazlullah)

No	Name of Colony	Population	Group
39; 40; 41	Firdous Chali; Dand Chali; Moinabad	59, 144	N.A.
42	Moinabad no.2	21, 637	N.A.
43	Quaidabad	N.A	TTP (Mehsud)
44	Laiquabad	N.A	N.A.
45	Gulistan Colony (Malir)	N.A	N.A.
46	Future Colony	44, 246	TTP (Fazlullah)
47	Hazara Colony	N.A	N.A.
48	Pathan Goth	17, 202	TTP (Fazlullah/Mehsud)
49	Natha Khan Goth	52, 366	N.A.
50	Pehalwan Goth	28, 256	N.A.
51	Bhitaibad	N.A	N.A.
52	Hussain Hazara Goth	5, 796	N.A.
53	Bajaur Para	18, 380	N.A.
54; 55	Al-Asif Square, Afghan Basti	N.A	TTP (Mehsud)
56	Jannat Gul Town	N.A	TTP (Mehsud)
57	Shafiq Mill Colony	13, 386	N.A.
58	Jehangirabad	4, 301	N.A.
59	Chawla Market	4, 932	N.A.

No	Name of Colony	Population	Group
60	Feroz Colony	6, 515	N.A.
61	Jalalabad and Musarrat Colony	12, 867	N.A.
62	Natal Colony and Dera Safiullah	29, 381	N.A.
63	Khyber Ajab Bangash Colony	16, 810	N.A.
64	Umer Farooq Colony	41, 910	N.A.
65	Usman Hgani Colony	23, 745	N.A.
66	Bilalabad	891	N.A.
67	Khalilabad	13, 228	N.A.
68	Yaqoob Shah Basti	N.A.	N.A.
69	Pakhtoonabad	25, 321	TTP (Mehsud)
70	Patel Para	17, 275	TTP/LJ
71	Darwesh Colony	10, 371	N.A.

Source: Fahim Zaman and Naziha Syed Ali, “Taliban in Karachi: the real story”, Daily Dawn, March 31, 2013

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BIOGRAPHY

Nazia Hussain received her Master of Arts in Political Science from University of the Punjab in Lahore, Pakistan in 2005. She received her Master of Arts in International Relations from Boston University in 2007.