

**Managing Diversity in Pakistan: Going Beyond  
Federalism**

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# Managing Diversity in Pakistan: Going Beyond Federalism

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## Introduction

The paper considers various theoretical perspectives that underscore the relevance of managing difference in a multinational state and the various strategies used by states in regulating difference in general and in Pakistan specifically. It then briefly illustrates the central features of federalism at different points in Pakistan's history and considers actually the practise of managing difference at various historical junctures. A critical analysis of the various alternatives is then deliberated on and an evaluation of the pros and cons of each approach is made allowing for reflections on possible policy development. Management of Ethnicity in the era of globalization

Ethnic mobilizations have been a persistent problem in Pakistan's history and considerable angst and blood has been and is being spilt over this issue. The breakup of the country in 1971 with the emergence of an independent Bangladesh and continuing difficulties today in Balochistan are a key reminder of the seriousness of the issue. The concern is that on the 41st anniversary of the independence of Bangladesh there is almost a complete amnesia here in Pakistan with hardly any reference to the events that led up to breakup of the country in 1971. Those who do not learn from history are bound to repeat their mistakes and the same mistakes are being repeated by resorting to a military solution for a political problem in Balochistan.

To compound the problem, ethnicity has become more significant, generally, in the era of globalization. The process of social change has initiated processes that unleash ethnic and national movements challenging state systems, which were locked in states during the Cold War. The processes leading to the collapse of nation states, emergence of virulent forms of ethnic movements demanding statehood have been invigorated by the emergence of transnational processes that side-step the nation state, directly intersecting with the locale. It is a testament to the impact of globalization, which has been in part responsible for the explosion in ethnic and nationalist conflict (Barber 2003, Castells 1997), testified by the collapse of Yugoslavia, Somali and the emergence of East Timor and South Sudan as independent countries. It is in this context of transnational processes promoting ethnic national movements that Pakistan's enduring difficulty in managing differences needs to be seen in the issue of managing difference, in particularly the separatist impulses in Balochistan are more difficult to handle due to transnational character of the opposition. In other words, state control has become vitiated by contemporary ethnic militancy that has diasporic support, financial and technical, mainly in

Oman and Gulf states and uses transnational media, located in Europe and the USA, as both a political and cultural tool evading national control and challenging ideological hegemony.

Formally Pakistan is a federation; however, federalism has only been operating partially in its history, which has intensified complaints of majoritarian rule. Long stretches of military rule with its majoritarian compulsions have exacerbated the difficulties of managing ethnic mobilizations. A highly centralised, top-down style of control associated with authoritarian rule simply exacerbates the difficulty in managing difference as shown by the Balochistan example. Thus any discussion on Federalism its refinement and advancement is grounded on the assumption of democratic rule and rights of citizenship.

Managing difference is a major concern for most nation states and various strategies are employed on the macro and micro level that involve various combinations of power sharing and recognition of cultural difference. For Charles Taylor, the philosophical premise is that lack of recognition causes harm (Goldberg 1994). Identity politics is shaped by its recognition or its absence or misrecognition and absence or misrecognition causes harm. The issue of absence or misrecognition causing harm becomes apparent when an overview of various strategies for managing difference is made. A taxonomy of managing difference can be broadly divided into two strategies, those that attempt to eliminate difference-genocide, forced transfer of mass population, partition and/or secession; and those that try to assimilate or manage difference – ranging from various form of majoritarianism, including hegemonic control, arbitration, cantonisation or federalism, consociationalism or power sharing and multiculturalism (Mc Garry and O’Leary 1993).

In Pakistan, it is alleged, partitions, transfer of population, genocide, secession, assimilation, federalism and hegemonic control have all been applied for the elimination and regulation of difference. Partition of British India into two independent countries was accompanied with transfer of population in order to eliminate religious difference making Pakistan more than 95 per cent Muslim. This strategy of removing diversity persisted into the 1950s when communal violence in East Pakistan led to the forcible departure of the entire Hindu population to India. Finally the military’s response to the political demands of East Pakistan was allegedly an attempt to use genocide to eliminate difference and when this failed it resulted in succession and the emergence of an independent Bangladesh. In post-1971-Pakistan dominant mode has been hegemonic control within a federal context, and the breakdown of hegemonic control has resulted in other procedures being applied (Samad 2007:90-101).

## Federalism in Pakistan

In formal constitutional terms the official mechanism for regulating ethnic difference in Pakistan is federalism. As a system for regulating ethnic conflict it can be successful if the boundaries between ethnic communities match the units of the federation. Federations tend to emerge out of multi-ethnic colonies, where administrative elites have an interest in sustaining the federation

and it is usually justified in terms of large economic markets and greater security (McGarry and O'Leary 1993). Whereas in the United States the diversity of regions and people necessitated the decentralisation of power, to curb central government from becoming too powerful, in post-colonial states and in particular in South Asia this logic has been inverted and it is argued that strong federal governments are necessary to corral and homogenise diverse pluralities into the nation. Federalism was a common mechanism for managing difference in multi-national states on a macro-level and has been more successful in those states where some attempts has been to recognise difference. In India the centre-state relationship combined with positive discrimination have been partially successful in managing difference. Recognising linguistic minorities by redrawing state boundaries proved to be successful in defusing tension, but the recognition of religion has been more problematic and this has been a cause of tension in Kashmir, the Punjab and North East India, while caste also continues to be an intractable problem (Pandey 2007).

Pakistan has experimented with different forms of constitutional arrangements within a federal framework, which became unworkable due to intractable political crisis. The inability to manage difference, primarily based on language, has been an enduring problem for the political system of Pakistan. Federalism in Pakistan and India is based on 1935 India Act, which initiated provincial autonomy in British India. The Act was designed deliberately to undermine the nationalist movements by providing some form of self-rule to the provinces while holding fast to the centre. The dilemma for Muslim nationalism was that to project a unified position at the centre it had to concede considerable autonomy, far more than it leadership would have liked, to the provincial affiliates. This strong desire for autonomy was underlined by the confederalist nature of the Lahore Resolution. With partition in 1947 the centre amassed enormous powers under the Independence of India Act and Muslim nationalism now adopted a centralising agenda due the exigencies of deteriorating relations with India and the population imbalance between the two wings of the country (Samad 2007, Waseem 2010).

In the constitutional and political debates of the 1950s Punjabis and Muhajirs were the most vocal advocates of the construction of a strong centralised state and a single national language and were prepared, almost, to go to any means to achieve this goal. Here a minority raised fears of majoritarian domination and used their ascendancy of the state to maintain control and garbed their intentions in the discourse of parity. However, the Bengali representatives in the legislature resisted this move and wanted a more decentralised federation, even if it meant reducing tension with India and thus undermining the call for a larger army and Bengali recognised as an official state language. Simultaneously they attempted to use the political processes to translate their political majority into institutional predominance as well (Samad 1995).

Parity between the two wings of the country was the basis of the 1956 and 1962 Constitution. The establishment of One Unit, which was the formation of West Pakistan, was a device, garbed as purely administrative, to establish Punjabi domination. The unification of West Pakistan was explicitly a vehicle for domination but was presented in such a manner as not to arouse the opposition of the minority provinces (Samad 1995: 173-4). The exclusion of Bengalis from the

centre, the tightening grip of Karachi over East Pakistan, the insensitive handling of the language issue and the economic exploitation of the region pushed East Pakistan along the road of separatism.

The 1973 Constitution was bi-cameral system, which had built in feature to restrain majoritarianism. While the lower house was elected on population basis the Senate provided for equal representation for the provinces, which gave it a dampening role to the majoritarian impulses of the lower house. However the Senate had no authority over finance and the budget could bypass the Senate and receive assent from the Presidency directly. With Gen (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf's 17th Amendment, besides expanding the two chambers, money bills had now to be presented to the Senate. The 1973 Constitution gave some recognition to language groups, introduced language based quotas for government employment and education (Waseem 2010). Critics, who argue that all recruitment should be merit based, forget that in colonial India Muslims were the beneficiaries of quotas and other forms of positive discrimination in competition with Hindus. The very groups most critical of quotas today were its beneficiaries in an earlier period (Samad 1995). Another criticism of the quota system is that it is province based and that educated settlers from other provinces are the main beneficiaries.

The 18th of Amendment of 2010, formulated by Senator Raza Rabbani's committee on provincial reform, was a positive step forward. It made parliament supreme, reduced the power of the centre to intervene in provincial affairs and renamed North West Frontier Province as Khyber Pukhtunkhwa. The concurrent list was abolished, increased the provinces say in some subjects in the Federal List by moving some subjects; census, major ports, estate duty and the deployment of police from one province to another, from Part 1 of the Federal List to Part II, which falls under the purview of the Council of Common Interest. Greater power was invested in the provincial assemblies; the power of the provincial governors to declare emergencies and extend ordinances was curtailed and required approval of the provincial assemblies. Aspects for granting greater autonomy to the provinces were designed to address grievances from smaller provinces particularly in Balochistan. Federating units were made joint and a co-equal owner with the centre for mineral and oil and gas deposits in the province and parliament was empowered to legislate laws that redressed provincial under-representation in the services of Pakistan. Furthermore, the federal government had to consult the provincial government in the decision for making hydroelectric power station in the province. The Council of Common Interests, quasi-executive body to manage centre-province issues, which had been ineffective under Musharraf, was expanded, apparently strengthened and designated to report regularly to parliament. The National Finance Commission Award moved away from distribution of revenues on the criteria of population to a multi-criteria formulation based on underdevelopment, revenue collection and generation, and inverse population density. The centre's share of revenue was considerably reduced and provinces now could raise loans on the domestic and international markets. (Dawn 13/12/2009, 18th Amendment, 2010). The Balochistan package was also presented by Senator Raza Rabbani's committee to parliament as it was inextricably about

provincial autonomy. The package consisted of a range of constitutional, economic, political and social proposals to deal with the grievances of the province (SAMMA 25/11/2009).

## Hegemonic control

In practise, however, in Pakistan hegemonic control has been the main system of managing ethnic difference. Hegemonic control in liberal democracies appears less feasible as citizenship rights generally allow for and facilitate organisation and mobilisation around ethnicity. Generally, democratisation can be seen as a facilitator for ethnic mobilisation. However, democracy can also lead to hegemonic control through majoritarian rule. Simply put it was rule through the use of the carrot and stick. Authoritarian regimes controlled multiple cultures through coercive domination and elite cooptation. Ethnic divisions, both latent and active, particularly in periods of rapid modernisation, were suppressed. Control was hegemonic if explicitly violent ethnic challenges to state power were at an unacceptable high human cost. Hegemonic control accordingly was a system where ethnic challenges to state power were 'unthinkable' or 'unworkable' for subordinate communities. Hegemonic control in authoritarian regimes did not necessarily depend on the support of the largest ethnic groups but rather on the control of the coercive apparatus by an ethnic group (McGarry and O'Leary 1993). There are many examples of ethnic minorities' control of the security forces and the police allowing them to sustain hegemonic control such as the Alawites preponderance in Bashar al-Assad security forces in Syria or the role of Sunnis in Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

In pre-1971 Pakistan, the Punjabi dominated military-bureaucratic oligarchy used hegemonic control against the Bengali majority. Failing to deal with the problem politically and resorting to military means pushed East Bengal down the road of secession, which finally led to the emergence of a separate state (Ahmed Salim). The resistance went underground during military rule and resurfaced with venom in the general upsurge for democracy a decade later. The essential demands of East Bengal's Awami League – decentralisation, greater representation in the army, and respect for a majority decision in the assembly – would, if accepted, have undermined the foundations of the Punjabi dominated military-bureaucratic oligarchy. The class difference between landed elites of West Pakistan and the middle class opposition made the gulf between the two a chasm that the military believed could only be dealt with the mailed fist. The fact that 1,200 miles of Indian territory separated East and West Pakistan eventually made the exercise of brute force a futile affair. Genocide and forced transfer of population were unsuccessfully used to eliminate difference when hegemonic control broke down (Samad 2007).

Despite the debacle in Pakistan after 1971, hegemonic control is still associated with majoritarianism. The state is not ethnically neutral and the dominant linguistic group is the Punjabis. The key institution where this preponderance is most clearly apparent is the army and bureaucracy particularly at the highest level even though Punjabis have seldom been prime ministers. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a Sindhi himself, used co-option with Sindhis by recognising their language and through quotas, but coercion was used in dealing with the opposition that was

primarily located in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and Balochistan: The toppling of the National Awami Party-Jamiat Ulama Islam coalition in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and the incarceration of Wali Khan on trumped up charges alienated Pukhtuns and their repression intensified the calls for greater autonomy. Meanwhile, the dismissal of Ataulah Mengal's government in Balochistan precipitated a rebellion by the Baloch tribes. With the toppling of Bhutto's regime and his execution and the expulsion of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), the main political force in Sindh, from the central arena resulted in the flourishing of different forms of Sindhi nationalism. These developments were accompanied by a realignment of political forces both at the centre and in the centre's relations with other minorities. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan increased the significance of the western provinces. Sensitive to the possibility that the opposition forces in Balochistan might become surrogates for Soviet-Afghan plans for the destabilisation of Pakistan, Zia made a serious attempt to co-opt them; Baloch suspicions were not so easily allayed, but the regime did succeed in making them neutral towards it. In Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, the Establishment found its task easier as Pukhtun refugees from Afghanistan swung public opinion in favour of the centre's strategy against the Kabul regime. The fact that Pukhtuns were prominent in the army made this task easier and Pukhtun generals and bureaucrats played a significant role in the regime (Samad 2011, Noman 1990).

The co-opting of Pukhtuns, however, was at the expense of the Karachi Muhajirs, and coercive rule was used against them. The shift against them had been initiated during Bhutto's government by the imposition of an upper ceiling on their recruitment into the civil service. This displacement expanded into other areas from Zia's time. Mainly Punjabi but also Pukhtun influence increased in Karachi at the expense of Muhajirs. They were still influential in the Federal Government and in the administration in urban Sindh but their position was being eroded. This process of exclusion, ultimately, resulted in a shift in identification. Muhajirs had been the solid supporters of Islamic parties, as Islam was the justification for their presence in Pakistan. A younger generation of Muhajirs, however, realised that ethnicity was the only game on the table and in 1984 they invented Muhajir ethnicity: the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), which later renamed as Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). The military had a hand in this ethnic polarisation by using the MQM to undermine Benazir Bhutto's government and install its favoured candidate Nawaz Sharif as prime minister. However the spiralling ethnic conflict unleashed in the province of Sindh, combined with the general lawlessness due to the blow back from the Soviet's Afghan intervention eventually forced the army to act against the MQM. Hegemonic control through cooptation and coercion was sustained during the Musharraf's rule (1999-2008). The Punjabi-Pukhtun coalition was reinforced with the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) entering office in Sarhad and Balochistan, and was augmented with the political inclusion of Muhajirs by bringing the MQM into a coalition both at the centre and at provincial level (Samad 2007).

The increasing centralisation of power made it difficult to deal with issues raised by groups that were not co-opted by the regime. Compare the handling of the Waziristan issue and of the

grievances of Balochistan by the centre. While Washington looks at the tribal area from a war on terror perspective against Islamic militancy, Islamabad has a more nuanced view as a number of senior officers hail from the region. In contrast, Baloch grievances were looked at in a harsh light or dealt with by coercive strategies because they had no access to the centres of power in the armed forces. This group is not represented in the senior ranks of military-bureaucratic oligarchy particularly in the crucial institution, the army. In Balochistan, there were a number of local concerns: the issues of development, revenue from energy and mineral resources that are extracted in the province, and the construction of Gwadar. While initially it appeared that the Balochistan problem is about resources, their extraction and revenue distribution, the construction of Gwadar presents a much more serious threat of difference being eliminated by assimilation. The migration of several million people to the city port would turn the Baloch into a minority population. With these tensions simmering in the background since 2000 there were attempts by the ruling party to consult with the Baloch leadership, and Musharraf relented and sent the leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League to negotiate with Akbar Bugti. Senator Mushahid Hussain, the Senate subcommittee chairman on Balochistan, was able to produce a number of recommendations on various contentious issues that concerned the province. However, events on ground overtook the Senate subcommittee recommendations and in August 2005 the military moved to coercion in containing the opposition and killed Akbar Bugti. This triggered a spiralling cycle of violence between Baloch and the government and between the Baloch and non-Baloch residents of Balochistan. Again a military solution is being employed for a political problem (Samad 2011). Even though Yousaf Raza Gilani's administration introduced the Aghaaz-e-Huqooq Balochistan package it has had no impact on the ground as army is out of control. A basic premise for negotiations by the overwhelming body of the Baloch leadership is that killings and disappearances of Baloch activists have to stop. Neither the federal nor the provincial government has been able to reign in the army.

## Pakistani Debate

Any debate on federalism and its extension is grounded on the assumptions that there is a democratic rule and citizen rights. It is the relationship between rights based on the individual and groups that debates on accommodating difference are located in on the macro level (Kymlicka 1995). In the Pakistani debate on group rights, federalism, confederalism, consociationalism, devolution of power and multiculturalism have all been promoted as solutions. All of these alternatives are based on the assumption that the military is not intervening in the political process, directly through coups d'état or indirectly through controlled democracy. They have weaknesses and strengths and are partial solutions that are effective on different levels. Some have argued for separatist solutions and there are various examples where separatism is a legitimate part of the political discourse. Need we remind ourselves that Mohammad Ali Jinnah's demand for Muslim homeland was legitimate political position and not treated as sedition. In contrast, discussion of separatism by the Baloch has resulted in prosecution, persecution, harassment, disappearance and allegations of extra-judicial executions

by the security forces. In this context, the rise of separatist influence has increased among the Baloch arguing the repression parallels the plight of Palestinians and morally the international community should intervene (Hybrair Marri 2011). They have arrived at this political juncture after the centre's unwillingness to engage with their concerns. The US Senate Committee on Balochistan ruffled many in the Pakistani Establishment as for the first time the international community is now reflecting on the possibility of an independent Baluchistan, particularly which is being sold to them as a package which would breakup Iran and Pakistan and give over Gwadar as a facility for the US fleet (Rehman 2012).

However the international community's major concern at the moment is that Pakistan shouldn't become unstable. A broken Pakistan, an unlikely event, would be linked to scenarios of external intervention, civil war and the rise of Islamic militants all raising fears of lose nukes. Washington would see this nightmare scenario as a game changer. In reality separatism would only become realistic if the Pakistani state was broken up and the danger would be that ethnic cleansing and genocide would accompany it. The troubles in Karachi in the 1990s indicated these possibilities, and the people's keenest on separatism are also the most vulnerable to the violence that would be generated by it. Given the asymmetry between the Baloch and the army the human cost for the Baloch people from such a conflict would be disproportionately high. In this scenario genocide and ethnic cleansing of the Baloch would perhaps become a reality.

Many academics have pointed out that the issue of accommodating cultural diversity is associated with devolution and this can be best done within a federal framework. The federal structure in Pakistan is based on the Government of India Act 1935. However federalism, as discussed earlier, has been inverted from its original intentions as in the USA it was seen as means for curbing the powers of the centre while in South Asia it is seen as a mechanism by centre to reign in regional and local particularities. Denial of autonomy to the regional and particularist groups was often a ploy for 'internal imperialism' (Rizvi 1993) and in the case of Pakistan this was combined with majoritarian domination of the military and bureaucracy resulting in periodic collapse of the political process and the establishment of a new constitution, and thus giving rise to the demands of some Balochis and Sindhis that the constitution should be confederal in nature with greater autonomy for the provinces. They justify their claims on the Lahore Resolution of 1940, which envisaged two independent Muslim nations and where the constituent units of the western entity would be sovereign and independent (Samad 2007: 85-8). However the problem facing the federal approach reappears in any confederal solution: the asymmetry between the size and population of the Punjab and other provinces and the majoritarian control of the state remains unaffected. The domination of the military-bureaucratic elite by the Punjab would be untouched. There are also other issues associated with confederalism, which includes difficulty in efficient executive and legislative decision-making as confederal components have considerable veto powers. The case of Bosnia-Herzegovina's political paralysis is due to the confederal arrangement that gives the Serb minority the ability to block decisions from the centre.

A way of remedying the over-centralisation of the federation is to consider redrawing provincial boundaries and to implement safeguards that strengthen federalism. Redrawing of boundaries would satisfy minorities' demands for the protection of their cultural distinctiveness and end the domination of the Punjab (Adney 2007, Faruqi 2004, Talbot 2002). This in India was relatively successful in defusing tensions around language mobilizations. The division of the Punjab into at least three provinces resonates with a wider proposition made by Waseem and Burki (2002) that a Constitutional Convention should redraw all the provincial boundaries in order to achieve some balance between the federating units and that federating units should be reorganised on the basis of language groups. Thus Balochistan would perhaps be divided between Balochi and Pukhtun speakers, while Sindh provides a much more tricky problem of reorganisation between Sindhis and Muhajirs and the tribal areas merged into the settled districts of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa. It would make the centre weaker, as it would not be dominated by one province, and would satisfy the demands of ethnic minorities.

This is an admirable proposition to counterbalance the overwhelming domination of the Punjab in the present federal arrangement. The fact that the Punjab has a population of eighty million people, much larger than that of many nation-states, offers administrative reasons for redrawing provincial boundaries and there are a number of groups in the Punjab province that aspire for a separate identity; Saraikis and Potoharis all chafe at the domination of central Punjab. The issue of diversity within provinces remains an issue, which is not addressed by these solutions. Federations are only effective if the federating unit are co-terminus with linguistic and cultural differences, and there is no way that existing units could be subdivided into culturally homogeneous entities (Samad 2007). The same objection can be made to the confederal argument: that it is unable to cope with internal diversity. Redrawing boundaries has no impact on the majoritarian characteristics of the militarily-bureaucratic elite, which is the main driver of hegemonic control. Redrawing boundaries also initiates a process where by smaller and smaller groups, sub-ethnic groups, demand recognition and this is accompanied by demands for territorial control. The 18th Amendment has strengthened the drive for the formation of provinces based on ethnicity and the demand at present is strongest in the Saraiki belt separating from the Punjab and Hazara region being separated from Khyber Pukhtunkhwa. However there is resistance to this process as the Establishment favours the formation of a new province, Bahawalpur province, based on administrative rather ethnic foundations. Opposition also comes from Punjabi politicians, who are only willing to see Punjab divided unless Karachi is separated from Sindh and the Sindhis find this unacceptable.

Alternatively, it is suggested that decentralisation of power, through empowerment of local bodies, is an important factor in accommodating diversity. In reality, however, decentralisation is not a simple panacea. The first point that needs to be amplified is the tacit assumption that local democracy is not a cover for consolidating military rule. A stratagem of non-democratic regimes from the colonial period to contemporary Pakistan was to allow for decentralisation of power on the local level, while retaining control at the centre. The trade-off was that by allowing some

form of democratic processes on the local level, opposition to the regime would be deflated. In both the colonial and post-colonial examples the stratagem failed. The people were not prepared to be bribed by limited democratic processes while being denied a sovereign parliament. The irony is that democratically-elected governments are suspicious of local government and this relationship becomes more problematic if local bodies and provincial government represent different political parties (Shah 2004). The government's interest was that local authority representatives should not undermine the provincial authorities. The same reluctance to decentralise was also been found in India, where state governments realised that empowerment of Panchayats was undermining their authority (Tummala 1992) requiring a rebalancing of relations between the centre, state and local level. Local governance can be another tool in fiscal devolution, as development resources are normally channelled through them, however it requires clear delineation of powers with the provincial authorities and under Musharraf it was used to encroach on provincial autonomy (PILER 2002). Waseem and Burki argued that the responsibilities and authorities of the three tiers – centre, provinces and local authorities – should be delineated through a consensus reaching process and not by authoritarian Diktat or majoritarian steamrolling (Waseem and Burki 2002). Local democracy on its own does not assist in the management of difference but combined with other techniques it can make policy implementation more effective. The 18th amendment has devolved local government to the provinces and the election commission is vested with the responsibility of holding elections however there has been little progress on this issue, primarily because the delineation of power between the provinces and local bodies remains unclarified (HRCP 2011).

The issue that needs to be considered when reflecting upon decentralisation of power and redrawing of boundaries is whether this can create local hegemony. In the movements for independent Bangladesh, Greater Balochistan, Pukhtunistan, Sindhu Desh and Muhajiristan, the assumption has been that they are reflecting homogeneous entities. Bangladesh, however, has difficulties in accommodating diversity represented by Biharis, Hindus and tribals in the Chittagong Hill tracts. Balochistan has a substantial Pukthun and Punjabi minorities and the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa possesses a substantial Hindko speaking population. In Karachi, too, we find a heterogeneous population. While Muhajirs are the largest group in the city, Karachi has the largest urban concentration of Pukhtun and Baloch people in the country and there is also a substantial Punjabi population, as well as a significant Sindhi minority. Thus decentralisation and provincial reorganisation, while benefiting the dominant group in each unit, would be clearly disadvantageous to minorities. The argument for decentralisation is that it allows for diversity and difference to be accommodated on the local level, but the local level itself in many cases is quite heterogeneous and, while Muhajirs would gain, minorities would in turn be marginalised and disenfranchised in the process. Decentralisation combined with redrawing of provincial boundaries would create a local hegemony that would exclude non-Muhajirs. The principle of majoritarian pluralism would result in a simple majority allowing the MQM to run the city but would disenfranchise significant elements of the population. Such an outcome is inconsistent with the aim of trying to acknowledge and accommodate cultural diversity and difference. The

situation in Karachi is symptomatic of many regions in Pakistan that there is a great cultural diversity and difference but no mechanism for their recognition. The principle of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination needs to be consistently adhered to whether one is a minority or a majority (Samad 2011).

Lijphart (1979) advocates that the solution lies in a federal consociational democracy combined with proportional representation, where there would be a coalition on the elite level representing the various ethnic groupings. In some respect, this feature is common in Pakistan and the present PPP government implicitly reflects an elite contract. Various forms of consociationalism exist such as in Holland, Belgium and Switzerland where language or religious difference is accommodated. In the case of Switzerland and Belgium it is language while in Holland it is faith based and in all three cases it is combined with proportional representation. Proportional representation merely means that percentage of votes is reflected in a percentage of representatives instead of the first past the post principle where winner takes all. There are different forms of voting, party list system form of proportional representation – as in Sweden and Finland, single transferable vote – as in Australia, etc. This recognition of difference is usually reinforced by an ethnic veto in the legislative assembly combined with proportional representation, which would allow ethnic/religious minorities to be proportionately represented in the state institutions. Such forms of segmental autonomy are usually located in a loose federal systems or even a confederation. Segmental autonomy can be based on language as in the case of Switzerland and Belgium or religion as in the Netherlands. Thus in Belgium the local state is Francophonic or Flemish speaking depending on the locality. While marginalised minorities such as Sindhis and the Baloch would benefit as segmental autonomy would allow them to use the vernacular language in local and provincial institutions and proportional representation would give them greater representation on all three tiers of the government. However from this process Muhajirs would not benefit, as they are not asking for proportionate representation in state institutions but arguing that their dominance should be sustained and advanced by making Urdu the sole official language of governance. Proportional representation would also mean that Punjabis would maintain their dominant position by virtue of their numbers and historic prominence in the military-bureaucratic combine. Proportional representation would have no impact on the ethnic character of the military-bureaucratic elite unless it was combined some form of quota system. Another difficulty with proportional representation is that Islamic groups would have greater political influence but it is preferable to incorporate them politically and possible wean them of militancy. A breakdown, however on the elite level, would result in a political crisis as in the failure for the Flemish and Walloon blocks to agree on a coalition government in Belgium. The success of coalition government in Pakistan is chequered, generally short-lived and ending in crisis even though the present PPP administration demonstrates a maturing of the political process towards a more consensual model (Samad 2011).

Federalism, confederalism and consociationalism are macro approach to managing difference while multiculturalism operates at this level as well as the micro level. Charles Taylor identifies a normative conception of multiculturalism as a discourse codifying the procedural and substantive principles around which multicultural societies are organised (Goldberg 1994). Identity politics is shaped by its recognition, its absence or its misrecognition. This means that barriers discriminating against minorities, ethnic and religious, need to be dismantled so that there is a level playing field in employment, access to government services and resources and can include mother tongue education. For some groups positive discrimination in favour of minority groups would be necessary to accelerate their advance into key institutions. There are numerous examples of positive discrimination in terms of education and employment as with the case with Afro-Americans in the USA and Dalits in India (Samad 1997, Pandey 2007). While positive discrimination is not legal in the United Kingdom, legislation does require that public bodies should not discriminate against minorities and that statistics are collected so that indirect discrimination can be detected (Equality and Human Rights Commission). This is precisely the point made by Sanaullah Baloch, who argues that the key to Baloch advancement would be their presence, at senior level, in the key institution that dominates Pakistan; the army (Baloch 2005).

Usually multiculturalism is accompanied by a language policy such as in Canada where Quebec is Francophonic and the rest of the country is Anglophonic. Recognition of the vernaculars, including Urdu, by the state at all three levels would have considerable decentralising effects. Despite the official rhetoric that Urdu is the official national language, the language of the Establishment is English. Education policy that recognises vernacular languages and sanctions their use in the various tiers of governance would feed into employment and would have an empowering effect. It would introduce linguistic decentralisation facilitating ethnic minorities' direct participation in the decision-making process. This would lead to a change in power relations between the federation and the provinces and the provinces and local bodies and would end or reduce the power and authority of the present ruling elite (Rahman 1996, Rahman 1999). This, combined with proportionate representation and/or positive discrimination in favour of vulnerable ethnic minorities such as the Baloch and Sindhis, or religious minorities such as Hindus or Christians, would accelerate their incorporation into the establishment and bind all minorities more firmly into the Pakistan state.

While Tariq Rahman's (1996, 1999) is critical of the use of English as elitist, it does appear that in a globalised economy a workforce that engages with English would have a much better chance of participating in a global labour market. The Singaporean approach, where everyone in school learns their mother tongue, the national language and English, would have a positive effect in managing difference in Pakistan. It would allow skilled groups such as Muhajirs to engage more fruitfully with the global labour market. The opportunities for an English-speaking workforce range from call centres and transcription of manual records into electronic data bases to more high-end occupations such as IT and media workers (Samad 2011).

## Conclusion

The key to the alternatives is to develop a home-grown strategy through a bottom up process of engagement to arrive at a political consensus. There is a need for an open discussion, constitutional convention and public debate so that a consensus might be reached incorporating features with which people feel that they have ownership. The 18th Amendment is the beginning of this process but there is some way to go. It has initiated a dynamic course of action for new ethnic based provinces to emerge. There are, however, limitations with this process and the relationship between the centre, province and the local level needs to be clarified particularly in the area of fiscal devolution. The revival of local bodies within a federal framework with functioning provincial autonomy is an important question that needs to be dealt with. Once the local devolution of power is dealt with, the question of local hegemony needs to be addressed. If proportional representation and segmental autonomy is combined with federalism, small groups would gain increased representation politically and in sections of the bureaucracy. Multicultural strategies, including positive discrimination, is another approach and need to be considered as a means in removing barriers that limit certain group's entry into key institutions such as the army. Both approaches can be combined with a language policy that accurately reflects linguistic diversity in the country. The benefit of the multicultural approach is that it can be extended to cover faith groups, women and sexuality. There is a need to be ahead of the curve think through these alternatives to reach a consensus, and then wait for an opportunity to have maximum impact on policy-makers.

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