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**IDEOLOGICAL FRAGMENTATION AND INTERNAL
CRISES IN JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI PAKISTAN (1941–2025)**

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Summary Statement

This comprehensive analytical report examines how internal
conflicts, ideological rigidity, and strategic contradictions within
Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JI) from 1941 to 2025 led to
successive waves of defections. Each period reflects an internal
crisis influenced by socio-political transformations, leadership
struggles, state relations, and global shifts in Islamic political
thought. The analysis integrates historical background,
institutional evidence, political events, and verifiable examples to
explain how the Jamaat's centralized structure both strengthened
and fractured the movement over time.

The Founding Vision That Bred Its Own Contradictions

When *Maulana Abul A 'la Maududi* founded *Jamaat-e-Islami* in
1941 in Lahore, the organization sought to create a disciplined
ideological vanguard rather than a populist political party. Its
mission was to reconstruct Muslim society based on Qur'anic
values and Islamic governance. Maududi's model emphasized
intellectual uniformity and a hierarchically controlled structure.
However, this centralization generated inherent tension: it
ensured doctrinal purity but suppressed intellectual diversity.

From the outset, the movement's strength—its organizational coherence—was also its weakness, as it alienated those who valued interpretive freedom and pluralism within Islam.

The First Intellectual Schism

By the early 1950s, ideological differences emerged between Maududi's political vision and the spiritual scholars within his circle. Figures such as *Amin Ahsan Islahi* and others from the Qur'anic exegesis school disagreed with transforming the Jamaat into an electoral political party. Their vision centered on personal reform and spiritual awakening rather than political power. When Maududi's focus shifted toward active politics, these intellectuals left the movement. Their departure reflected an early internal crisis where scholarly autonomy clashed with political ambition, leading to the establishment of independent institutions focused on Qur'anic education and moral reformation.

The Political Ambition Phase (1958–1970)

After Pakistan's creation, JI transitioned from a reformist movement to a structured political party. Maududi opposed both secular nationalism and military rule, seeking an Islamic constitutional order. During this period, JI built its social infrastructure—educational networks, publishing houses, and youth organizations like *Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT)*. However, the increased focus on political mobilization created friction within its ranks. Some intellectuals, including *Dr. Israr Ahmad*, resigned in protest against Maududi's "party-based Islam," advocating instead for a spiritual and revolutionary awakening through *Tanzeem-e-Islami*. His departure marked the first organized institutional defection based on principle, not personal gain.

The 1971 Crisis and Its Aftermath

The 1971 Bangladesh War marked a severe reputational blow to Jamaat-e-Islami. The party's involvement with pro-Pakistan militias and its political stance against Bengali nationalism created a moral and historical crisis. Many members, especially from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), either disassociated or were banned from political activity. Within Pakistan, the episode led to internal self-doubt and questioning of leadership decisions. Several academics and professionals quietly withdrew from active Jamaat politics, preferring neutral or educational engagements to avoid association with the party's tainted wartime image. The event also fragmented JI's regional cohesion and tarnished its ideological purity.

State Patronage and Pragmatism

General *Zia-ul-Haq*'s Islamization policy appeared to validate Jamaat's ideological agenda, granting it unprecedented state patronage and political influence. JI members were appointed to advisory councils, educational boards, and ministries. However, this partnership blurred the line between ideological mission and political opportunism. Many within the party argued that JI had become a tool of military rule rather than a moral force for Islamic transformation. Prominent intellectuals such as *Dr. Khurshid Ahmad* moved their focus toward independent think-tanks like the *Institute of Policy Studies*, while others emphasized academic Islamization instead of state collaboration. These defections highlighted the classic dilemma between moral integrity and political expediency.

The Pipeline of Political Defections (1980s–1990s)

Jl's student wing, *Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT)*, produced some of Pakistan's most influential political figures. Its training system provided leadership experience, networks, and ideological grounding. Yet, many IJT alumni, after achieving political maturity and public recognition, left Jamaat to join mainstream parties such as *PML-N* or *PTI*. Figures like *Javed Hashmi* are examples of such political migration. These defections were often driven by ambition, differing political visions, and the realization that Jl's rigid hierarchy limited individual advancement. The phenomenon reflects a systemic issue within Jamaat—its inability to retain charismatic or ambitious individuals once they gained influence.

Ideological Paralysis (1988–2005)

After Maududi's death, leadership transitions from *Mian Tufail Muhammad* to *Qazi Hussain Ahmad* and later *Syed Munawar Hasan* revealed structural paralysis. Internal disputes over alliances—especially the *Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA)* coalition—divided purists and pragmatists. Some leaders advocated strict isolation from “corrupt political actors,” while others supported coalition politics to expand influence. Disillusionment among intellectuals and regional organizers resulted in several quiet withdrawals or ideological realignments. Despite maintaining organizational strength, Jamaat's political relevance declined, and internal debates grew louder about reforming the party's governance model and strategic priorities.

Post-9/11 Polarization (2001–2015)

The post-9/11 era tested Jamaat-e-Islami's ideological foundation. Its ambiguous position on jihad, terrorism, and U.S.-Pakistan relations caused internal polarization. Younger cadres questioned the leadership's stance on violent extremism and democracy. Some senior members resigned, arguing that the party had lost its moral direction. The rise of media-driven religious movements, reformist scholars, and educational organizations—many founded by former Jl affiliates—further diminished Jamaat's intellectual monopoly. Institutions like *Al-Mawrid* (founded by *Javed Ahmad Ghamidi*) and *Al-Huda International* (led by *Dr. Farhat Hashmi*) became symbolic of post-Jamaat reformism: emphasizing education, individual faith, and modern reinterpretation over political agitation.

Modern Fragmentation and Strategic Redefinition (2016–2025)

Between 2016 and 2025, Jamaat-e-Islami confronted a new set of crises shaped by digital politics, youth disengagement, and regional pressures. The party's influence shrank electorally but persisted through welfare organizations, student networks, and online preaching. Several prominent activists, policy experts, and academics distanced themselves, citing Jl's inability to adapt to modern governance and democratic pluralism. The *Bangladesh tribunal cases* and their revocations in 2024 reignited historical debates on Jamaat's wartime legacy, once again dividing opinion among members and sympathizers. By 2025, the organization remains ideologically intact but strategically fragmented — respected as a moral entity yet weakened as a political force.

Analytical Synthesis: The Recurring Logic of Defection

The long-term pattern from 1941 to 2025 reveals a consistent mechanism:

Centralization breeds coherence but suppresses pluralism.

Ideological rigidity limits adaptability, prompting intellectual secession.

State collaboration increases visibility but undermines credibility.

Ambitious cadres use Jamaat as a platform before migrating to broader power structures. Each external shock—Partition, 1971 war, Zia era, 9/11, or digital transformation—intensifies internal strain and renews cycles of departure.

This recurring process transformed Jamaat from a monolithic ideological movement into a fragmented network of affiliated institutions, scholars, and political actors—each claiming to represent the “authentic” Islamic vision that the original Jamaat once unified.

Institutional and Sociopolitical Implications

By 2025, Jamaat-e-Islami stands as a moral, social, and educational force rather than a dominant political party. Its alumni and former leaders occupy influential positions across religious academia, civil society, and mainstream politics. Yet, the very success of these individuals outside Jamaat underscores the party’s enduring dilemma: the inability to reconcile spiritual reform, political ambition, and democratic adaptability within one organizational structure. For historians and political scientists, the pattern of defections within Jamaat serves as a model for understanding ideological movements under the stress of modernization and political pragmatism.

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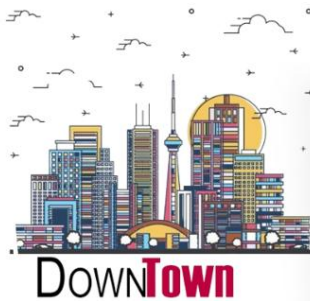
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