

## Theorizing Political Economy of Ethnic Nationalism in Balochistan within the Context of Constitutionalization and Internationalization

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This study has no aim to hurt any ideological or social segment but purely based on academic purposes.

### Abstract

Baloch ethnic conflict is not a new phenomenon in the 21st century in Pakistan. It has had strong historical roots since the partition of India and Pakistan. From the State of Kalat to the amalgamation of Balochistan into Pakistan, the history of Baloch ethnicity prevailed. Similarly, during the 21st century, this conflict is being raised day by day as the geopolitical importance of Balochistan is increasing. Although, several state nationalists argue that there is foreign involvement in funding and motivating Baloch insurgents, this argument is rejected by the Baloch nationalist leaders in Pakistan. This study highlights the actual political economy of this ethnic dilemma which is forcing the state of Pakistan to take strong measures in generating provincial harmony. Similarly, the political and economic concerns of Baloch nationalists are also discussed in this study along with analyzing constitutionalization and internationalization with special reference to the Balochistan Province during the 21st century.

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## Introduction

Ethnicity refers to rather a complex combination of racial, cultural, and historical characteristics by which societies are occasionally divided into separate and probably hostile, political families. In its simplest form,

the idea is exemplified by racial grouping where skin color alone is the separating characteristic. Almost anything can be used to set up ethnic divisions, though, after skin color, the two most common by a long way, are religion and language. According to the Dictionary of Politics, ethnicity raises the whole socio-political question of national identity which is why ethnic politics is at its most virulent and important in third-world countries whose geographical definition owes often far more to European empire builders to tend them to any ethnic homogeneity (Fenton, 2010, 01).

Ethnicity is basic since it provides a sense of ethnic identity where cultural and linguistic symbols are used for internal unity and differentiation from other groups. It is an alternative form of social organization to class formation. W. J. Foltz has identified four types of characteristics that distinguish different ethnic groups (L., 1987, 269).

- 1) The first characteristic is biological, where members of a group develop common physical characteristics by drawing upon a "particular genetic pool" (L., 1987, 269).
- 2) Cultural factor is also very important (L., 1987, 269).
- 3) The linguistic factor develops a distinctive value system of an ethnic group (L., 1987, 269).
- 4) Finally, the ethnic group may evolve a structural identity by developing a particular type of "joint" relations, differing from the way others organize their "social roles" (L., 1987, 270).

Another Sociologist Paul Brass brings ethnic groups within three definitional parameters.

- 1) First, in terms of "objective attributes" which distinguish some cultural, religious, or linguistic feature that separates one group of people from another (Brass, 1991, 12).
- 2) Second, in terms of "subjective feelings" where a subjective self-consciousness exists (Brass, 1991, 12).
- 3) Third, behavior is how ethnic groups behave or do not behave, especially concerning other groups (Brass, 1991, 12).

## Nationalism

On the other side, nationalism is the political belief that some groups of people represent a natural community that should live less than one political system while leaving others independent and often has the right to demand an equal standing in the world order with others. Although, sometimes a genuine and widespread belief, especially under conditions of foreign rule, it is equally often a symbolic tool used by political leaders to control their citizens. Nationalism has always been useful to leaders because by stressing national unity harping on threats from those who are foreign or different internal schisms can be prepared over or otherwise unpopular policies can be executed. This statement simplifies, nationalism's contrast with internationalist movements or faiths, and it is a means of stressing on local, at times almost tribal, identities and loyalties (Greenfeld, 1993, 02).

Nationalism is a feeling of protection of the interests of a nation and national state. It should not be inter-mixed with ethnicity. Sociologist Hassan Nawaz Gardezi describes that Nationalism was and is a great power that developed nation states in Europe. This gave birth to colonialism, and it resulted in the development of multinational aspects of nationalism and imperialism. Due to colonialism, nationalism developed in the slave countries and they got freedom from the oppression of colonialism. Later on, in

the newly independent states, under the neo-colonial setup, ruling classes changed this weapon into ethnicity and used it for their interests under the philosophy of divide and rule (Gardezi, 1991, 21).

Nationalism has had a huge influence in the world's history. The quest for national hegemony has inspired ages of imperialism and colonialism, while struggles for national liberation have resulted in many revolutions. In modern times, the nation-state has become the dominant form of societal organization. Historians have used the term "nationalism" to refer to this historical transition and to the emergence and predominance of nationalist ideology (Greenfeld, 1993, 03).

## **Ethnic-Nationalism**

At the same time, ethnic nationalism is more than nationalism. It defines the nation in terms of ethnicity which always includes some element of descent from previous generations, for example, gynophobia. It also includes ideas of a culture shared between members of the group and with their ancestors, and usually a shared language. Membership in the nation is hereditary. The state derives political legitimacy from its status as the homeland of the ethnic group, and from its function to protect the national group and facilitate its cultural and social life as a group. Ethnic nationalism is now the dominant form, and is often simply referred to as "nationalism". Social Theorist Anthony Smith uses the term "ethnic-nationalism" for non-Western concepts of nationalism, as opposed to Western views of a nation defined by its geographical territory (Smith, 1991, 07). According to him;

"The term ethno-nationalism is generally used only regarding nationalists who espoused an explicit ideology along these lines; "ethnic nationalism" is the more generic term, and they used it for nationalists who hold these beliefs in an informal, instinctive, or unsystematic way (Smith, 1991, 08)".

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and with the end of the cold war, the nation-state is being challenged by the drive of racial, cultural and religious minorities for the rights of self-determination. The world is facing a wave of ethno-nationalism. The problem is being faced by both old and new nations, from Great Britain, Russian Federation, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan etc. The myth of national integration or unification is being exploited by the social diversity of constituent minorities (Smith, 1991, 08).

## **Political Economy**

Political economy most commonly refers to interdisciplinary studies of economics and political science in explaining how political institutions, the political environment, and the economic system (capitalist, socialist, or mixed) influence each other (Caporaso, 1992, 02-03). The Journal of Economic Literature divides the political economy into three subareas (Journal of Economic Literature, V.07, 1967). These are;

- 1) The first area is related to the role of government and power relationships in resource allocation for each type of economic system (Journal of Economic Literature, V.07, 1967).
- 2) The second area is related to the international political economy, which deals with the economic impacts of international relations and economic models of political processes (Journal of Economic Literature, V.07, 1967).

- 3) The last area is derived from public choice theory and dates from the 1960s. It deals with the self-interests of voters, politicians and bureaucrats with special reference to studying constitutional political economy (Journal of Economic Literature, V.07, 1967).

Economists and political scientists often associate political economy with approaches using rational-choice assumptions, especially in game theory, and in examining phenomena beyond economics' standard remit, such as government failure and complex decision making in which context the term "positive political economy" is common. Other "traditional" topics include analysis of such public policy issues as economic regulation, monopoly, rent-seeking, market protection, institutional corruption, and distributional politics. Empirical analysis includes the influence of elections on the choice of economic policy, determinants and forecasting models of electoral outcomes, the political business cycles, central-bank independence, and the politics of excessive deficits (Caporaso, 1992, 04).

### **Political Economy of Ethnic Conflict**

As per the definition and explanation of the term "Political Economy", the political economy of ethnic conflict refers to the study of ethnic dilemma in the context of political and economic interests of both the stakeholders; claimers to be an ethnic group and supporters of state nationalism. Modern definitions also argue that the political economy of ethnic conflict means international involvement in boosting any ethnic conflict in a specific state for some specific geopolitical or economic interests. It can also be assessed by studying resources occupation of by the central government in any area which are claimed to be the property of any ethnic group. Similarly, a state usually rejects a wave of ethnicity by promoting state nationalism and arguing about it as mutiny with foreign funding. Conflict in Sudan was a major example where South Sudanese demanded a separate homeland. This region was full of oil resources. The government of Sudan argued that major powers want to divide Sudan for capturing its oil reserves. Although, South Sudan is now gained independence from Sudan now, it's another region Neurland is demanding independence from South Sudan. Within South Sudan, this region is also full of oil resources. And, now South Sudan has the same stance on the Neurland independence movement as Sudan had about South Sudan (Biziouras, 2014, 165-167).

### **Ethnic-Nationalism in Pakistan**

Pakistan is trying its greatest to the fulfillment of minority's demand for self-determination. It was an ethno-nationalist state in the post-colonial era. Being an independent state, Pakistan largely ignored the social diversity and economic disparities of its people. The construction of national ideology is based on pure mechanical national unity and simplistic ideas of cultural homogeneity. The ruling classes of Pakistan neglected social diversity and ignored the interests of ethnic and regional minorities. This gave the ultimate death blow to Pakistan. A majority of its people broke away to form a separate country Bangladesh. The remainder of Pakistan is under the siege of political instability, ethnic and sectarian conflicts, religious terrorism and economic inequality (Siddiqi, 2012, 27).

In Pakistan, the ethnic movements have been of differing varieties, and have shifted from seeking advantage within the state to moving beyond the realm of ethno-nationalism, rather than reverting to the former position. While, these shifts have been correlated primarily to internal political developments like in the case of the Sindhu Desh movement, and, in some cases, external developments have had a major

influence also as in the case of the Greater Balochistan and Pushtunistan movements. But, during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ethnic parties lost their grip over electoral politics in Pakistan. In the elections of 2002, 2008 and 2013, political parties at the national level won the majority of seats more than the ethnic parties (Siddiqi, 2012, 28).

The roots of these problems lie in Pakistan's failure to acknowledge and accommodate its ethnic diversity, economic disparities and provisional autonomy. Ethnicity particularly has been much talked about, with little understanding. Pakistan is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. The constitution of Pakistan provides equal rights and opportunities to all nationalities and ethnic groups in all walks of life. Language and culture of all identities should be promoted and there should be mutual respect and tolerance. Suppression of diversity in the name of Islam, national unity or strong center is not only a violation of basic human and democratic rights but is counter-productive to the aims of suppression. Unity among all nationalities, and ethnic or racial groups must be sought and can be found within the cultural and ethnic diversity of Pakistan (Siddiqi, 2012, 29).

## **Elements of Ethnic Problems in Pakistan**

Much has been said and written about the history, facts and legitimacy of ethnic problems, grievances and national questions in Pakistan. Here, we will only highlight some basic elements of ethnicity in Pakistan.

### **1) Provincial Autonomy**

Provincial rights, regional autonomy, and self-determination are basic types in which the ruling class of the dominant nationality or ethnic group has raised grievances against the domination of the ruling elite of Punjab. In a different part of the country, political elements from time to time raise their voice for complete independence, confederation with only residual powers for the center, more autonomy within the federation, creation of new provinces for different ethnic entities, and demand for change in provincial boundaries to create more homogeneous provinces (Khan, 2012, 83).

### **2) Allocation of Resources**

This is the most important area in which oppressed nationalities and ethnic groups are very sensitive. The resources for which they struggle are financial resources for development and recurrent expenditures, more share in irrigation water, Government jobs, opportunities for professional and higher education and allotment of agricultural land to civil and military bureaucracy in Sindh and Balochistan (Khan, 2012, 84).

### **3) Inter-Province Migration**

There is a wave of great anger over migration from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Sindh and Balochistan. Refugees from other South Asian countries, Afghanistan, and Arab countries are also a problem for Balochistan. In 1998, the last Population Census calculated a net migration to a total population ratio of 9.6 for Sindh. This migration created a huge burden on the limited resources of these provinces. In Balochistan, the case of Gwadar and the making of cantonments become a sensitive issue, because it will change the demographic balance of Balochistan (Khan, 2012, 85).

#### 4) Language and Culture

This is another sensitive area. Demand for the protection and promotion of languages and cultures of different ethnic groups against the domination of Urdu and neglect of regional cultural heritage. It is a permanent feature in the struggle of different ethnic groups for their identity assertion. Despite a dominant nationality, Punjabis are deprived of their mother tongue. Language and cultural identity serve as instruments for forging group cohesion and legitimating group demands (Khan, 2012, 86).

The major issue, for the leadership, was to frame a viable political system in the aftermath of the state's creation in August 1947. The preparation of the various drafts for a viable constitution that could satisfy the expectations of all the provinces of the new country reflected the economic, social, political and cultural problems which confronted Pakistan. The failure of the political leadership to accommodate ethnic diversities within a representative political framework was responsible not only for the failure of civilian rule and the military takeover in 1958 but also for the creation of ethno-nationalism (Khan, 2012, 90).

Nationalism is a product of the concept of a nation. The Pakistani state has four major nationalities in its federation. The ruling class of Pakistan is ignoring this fact since its creation and trying to change its multi-nation status into a single nation. Anees Alam says that in the newly independent states, the institution of state was born and developed under the shadow of colonialism. Now, this institution (state) has become involved in "negative" practices to developing a single nation country Pakistan. The creation of Bangladesh and continuous unrest in Balochistan is the result of this state's "mentality" (Khan, 2012, 91-92).

#### Political Background of Baloch Ethnic Conflict

To understand the present insurgency in Balochistan, it is necessary to overview the historical background of the movement. In 1947, there were three independent rulers in independent Balochistan, Khan of Kalat in Baloch areas, Nawab Jomezai in some Pashtun areas and some other Pashtun areas were independent. Geographically, Balochistan was distributed into four states and two regions. States were Lesbela, Kalat, Makran and Kharan while two regions are British Balochistan and Tribal Balochistan. The four states were under the Khan of Kalat before the arrival of the Britishers. Two agreements were signed in 1878 and in 1939 between the Khan of Kalat and the British Government. The Britisher got Quetta, Noshki, Bolan and Naseerabad on rent from Khan of Kalat. The area of the railway line from Jacobabad to Taftan was also on rent. In 1947; The Khan of Kalat and other Baloch sardars wanted to be an independent Balochistan. For this purpose, they formed Kalat National Party. The forceful merger of Balochistan into Pakistan was the first contradiction of Baloch with the Pakistani ruling class. When the nominal ruler of Balochistan, the Khan of Kalat, dragged his feet in the early 1950s over signing the Balochistan accession document to Pakistan, the impatient federal government threw diplomacy and negotiation overboard and speedily sent a couple of PAF jets to bombardment his palace and make him change his mind (Webb, 2015, 74).

Natural Gas was discovered in Sui around 1952. Since then, Pakistan has benefited hugely from this cheap source of energy. Balochistan, however, neither had gas for its use nor was paid royalties which were its due right till the mid-1980s, when General Zia-ul-Haq was trying to moderate the Baloch nationalists since he had his hands full with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's People's Party. Even today, the only the gas pipeline in

Balochistan runs through Quetta, with a proposed pipeline to Khuzdar, still to become a reality. The lack of alternative fuel has uncovered; whatever little forest covered the dry province. Only under international environmentalists' pressure, has the federal government lately approved the need for the gas supply to Ziarat to save the unique Juniper Forest from destruction. The royalties being paid to Balochistan for its gas are lower than those being paid for later discoveries in Sindh and Punjab. This was the cause of much heartburning for the Baloch people (Webb, 2015, 75).

When One Unit was declared in 1955, Sher Mohammad Marri, a tribal 'wadera', protested the usurpation of 'provincial rights', fled to the hills with a band of loyal tribesmen and started taking pot-shots at the 'occupying Punjabi army'. The seeds of Baloch provincial awakening gave rise to Baloch nationalism in the aftermath of national elections, the eruption of Bengali separatism and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's PPP won Sindh and Punjab and Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman's Awami League swept East Pakistan, the fact also was that the National Awami Party led by "nationalists" Ghaus Bux Bizenjo, Ataulah Mengal, Khair Bux Marri, Akbar Bugti and Khan Wali Khan dominated Balochistan and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. At the time, even the Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam of Maulana Mufti Mahmud (father of Maulana Fazlur Rehman) thought fit to join hands with the nationalists to adopt the provincial cause (Webb, 2015, 76).

The 1970s revolt of the Baloch, which manifested itself in the form of an armed struggle against the Pakistan army in Balochistan, was provoked by federal impatience, high-handedness and undemocratic constitutional deviation. It was the effect of unjust federal policies and not the cause of them. At that time, Nawab Akbar Bugti served as an agent of the federal government when he was appointed governor of Balochistan by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto throughout the time of the insurgency and spoke not a word in favor of Baloch rights or provincial autonomy. The greater irony was that the insurgency came to an end following the army coup of General Zia-ul-Haq against the civilian government of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (Webb, 2015, 77).

Soon thereafter, General Zia extended plans to desensitize the isolated Baloch and Pashtun leadership with a multi-faceted strategy aimed at co-opting the leaders into the office while providing jobs and funds in the federal government to the alienated and insecure tribal middle classes. More significantly, he created maximum political space for the religious parties in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, so that, they could be stimulated in the jihad against the USSR in neighboring Afghanistan. The years of Zia's political conspiracies had their effect, and although, the PPP emerged as the single largest party in the 1988 elections, it failed to gain an overall majority in the national assembly. Benazir Bhutto's Prime Ministership was, therefore, the result of a compromise with the existing structures of power, with the division of powers tilted heavily in favor of the President (Webb, 2015, 77).

In the course of the four elections held in Pakistan since 1988, political coalitions have been built across ethnic lines and the national parties have made inroads into the provinces. For example, after the 1997 elections, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) chose to form a coalition government with many ethnic parties. Instead, it formed a coalition with the Awami National Party (ANP), the Balochistan National Party (BNP), Jamhoori Watan Party, The Baloch leaders, who had taken up arms against the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto regime, were also brought back into the mainstream after the death of General Zia. While the Baloch political parties remain fragmented, the mainstream national parties increased their support in the

province. The old alignment between the Balochis and Pashtuns also ended as a result of the arrival of Afghan refugees into Balochistan (Webb, 2015, 78).

Although conflicts continued with the center over the distribution of resources, including water, these issues are not framed in ethno-national terms anymore. The civilian Governments headed by Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif made overtures to the Baloch nationalists and managed to encourage them to give up violence, despite continuing differences between the central government and the Baloch nationalists over questions such as genuine political autonomy for Balochistan, larger allocation of central tax revenue and development funds for Balochistan and payment of insufficient royalty for the gas found in Balochistan and taken to Punjab to sustain its economy (Webb, 2015, 79).

The return of the Army to power under President General Pervez Musharraf on October 12, 1999, led to a gradual deterioration of the situation in the province. Amongst the reasons for this were; the traditional objections of the Balochis over the lack of political autonomy and inadequate royalty payment for gas and lack of economic development. The construction of the Gwadar port by the Army with Chinese assistance without the involvement of the Baloch people and their Government in Quetta in the decision-making related to the port; the award of all major contracts relating to the construction of the port to companies based in Karachi and Lahore, and the re-settlement of a large number of ex-servicemen from Punjab and other parts of Pakistan in the Gwadar and the surrounding areas on the Makran coast to assure the security of the new port. The fact that Pakistan's nuclear testing site was located at Chagai in Balochistan also aggravated the grievances due to fears of long-term environmental and health damage (Webb, 2015, 80).

### **Analyzing Baloch Ethnic Nationalism during the Pervez Musharraf Regime**

The present phase of the Baloch struggle for “independence” was pushed by socio-economic reasons. The Baloch-Pakistan relationship did not take a rest soon after Sui gas started flowing to Pakistani homes and industries in Punjab and Sindh, Port Qasim and Port Gwadar were being developed with Kuwaiti and Chinese assistance. New industrial infrastructures attracted professional and labor forces from Punjab, Sindh and other areas of Pakistan (Akbar, 2011, 139).

Pervez Musharraf's arrival did not improve the situation. Baloch people's demand political autonomy, royalty from Sui gas, and award of major work orders to Punjabis and Sindhis and the induction of more Frontier Guards and regular army contingents increased the environment of tension. The Central Government of Pakistan added to the tense situation by rehabilitating the large number of ex-servicemen on denotified tribal land and inducting more Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Pashtuns to Quetta areas. Some minor Sardars were either bought off or disinherited by affluent Punjabis and rich ex-army personnel. Islamabad even failed to negotiate an acceptable formula on gas, copper, silver, gold and coal royalty. The Baloch Sardars resented the fact that Islamabad had not considered it necessary to consult the provincial government before conducting nuclear tests at Chagai Hills (Akbar, 2011, 140).

After the military coup in 1999, however, the fight against a “common enemy” once again acquired more determination than group interests. The military regime's worried move to manage Pakistan's declining economy, for which it seemed to believe that the exploration of Balochistan oil and gas resources hold



some hope, once again radicalized the nationalists in Balochistan. The military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf announced in December 1999 that exploration work would soon be started. Since then, nationalist elements have started using harsh language against the federal government. "The army is very strong, but this time it will not get a walkover," Mengal has been quoted as saying, implicitly pointing to the 1973 military operation launched against trouble-making Baloch tribal chieftains during the tenure of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto government that broke their back (Akbar, 2011, 141).

For a long, a predominant majority of the Baloch nationalist leaders have been agitating against the establishment of proposed army cantonments and mega projects, including the Gwadar deep-sea port, in Balochistan. "In the name of gigantic projects is a plan underway to settle the Punjabis in Balochistan," Mengal says. Since 2000, the Kachhi Canal, Mirani Dam, Gwadar Port, Makran Coastal Highway, Saindak Copper Project and Quetta Water Supply Scheme were announced by Islamabad. Over 300 percent increase was made in the national budget for development programs in Balochistan. These things have failed to materialize from paper into a solid form (Akbar, 2011, 141).

Along with the development programs came the Punjabi, Pashtuns, Sindhis and Chinese workforces. The Baloch people suffering from economic distress developed a clash of economic interests with the Chinese and other Pakistanis. Examination of economic indices of this period brings out the facts of glaring disparity between Balochistan and Punjab and Sind. The Balochis, like the Bengalis, were treated as raw material suppliers. The government accuses the nationalist Sardars of being opposed to the mega-projects in particular, and to development in the province in general, for fear that their traditional hold on their areas may be weakened by modernization. However, enlightened nationalists, including the three main nationalist Sardars, Marri, Bugti and Mengal, assert that they do not oppose development, but, deprivation of Baloch people's rights in the name of development and modernization (Akbar, 2011, 142).

Given this background, it is easy to understand nationalist misgivings about further exploration of gas and oil in the province. The tribes have been resisting exploration activities without a fair share in gas and oil development. Whatever little exploration activity has occurred in the past has been either under the protection of military deployments or agreements with local chieftains. In the case of the latter, the exploration companies have been accused by local people of bad faith and reneging on promises of providing jobs, schools, healthcare and other social infrastructure to the local population (Akbar, 2011, 143).

The Sendak copper and precious minerals project was supposed to train and employ local youth. Instead, after many false starts and remaining in limbo for almost a decade because of the unwillingness of the federal authorities to provide a paltry 1.5 billion rupees as working capital, the project has been revived under Chinese management. The latter, which put up the project in the first place, never forgot its export and earnings potential, and have a contract to run it in return for 50 percent of the profits. Out of the remaining, 48 percent goes to the federal government and Balochistan receives 2 percent. It is also argued that there are no local youths trained or employed in the project, another broken promise in a long line of similar disappointments (Akbar, 2011, 144).

Gwadar port's strategic and economic value has never been in doubt. It was the Baloch nationalists, at that time in coalition with Nawaz Sharif, who invited the former prime minister to announce the initiation

of the project at a rally in Gwadar. But subsequent developments have left these very nationalists bitter. The master plan for the Gwadar port, city and military base adjoining it has never been seen by either the chief minister of the province or been laid for discussion in the Balochistan Assembly (Akbar, 2011, 145).

Along with other development work on the ground, perceptions have developed that the new Gwadar city has turned out to be a major land grab for investors from outside the province, as advertisements in the national and even international media show. Initially, the federal authorities envisaged 2.5 million people being inducted from outside the province. This has now climbed to 5 million. Given that the population of the entire province is only 6-7 million, the people of Balochistan have raised protests that this massive influx will swamp them; deprive them of a share in the opportunities created by these mega-projects, and wipe out their identity (Akbar, 2011, 146).

The government believes that these are the work of elements opposed to exploration. One of the radical nationalists, Khair Bux Muree, who had played an active role in the 1970s insurgency, but has been living a secluded life for the last two decades, seems to have been chosen for the role of one social element and the government has implicated him in the judge's murder and put him behind the bar (Akbar, 2011, 147).

The clash in Balochistan is between "aggressive" modernization (backed by military force) and the Baloch people's demands for their rights. Force has not yielded good results in the past. It is unlikely to do so in the future. The government therefore would be better advised to seek a consensual mode of implementation of the mega-projects the poor people of Balochistan desperately need to overcome decades of neglect and deprivation of rights by bringing the nationalists on board through a fair distribution of the benefits of development and modernization (Akbar, 2011, 147).

For several years, there was a tension in Sui between the Bugti tribes led by Nawab Akbar Bugti and the federal government over issues of employment, job security, compensation, etc., relating to work conditions in the gas generating and distribution companies that pump Sui gas to the rest of the country. However, that was presumed to be a local affair. The federal governments of Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif and General Pervez Musharraf were convinced that Nawab Bugti was extracting money from Islamabad apparently on behalf of the Bugti tribesmen who work the gas plants but actually for himself by pushing it brutally with rockets the pipelines whenever the negotiations get down against his liking (Akbar, 2011, 148).

According to Baloch nationalist leaders, the military cantonments planned at Gwadar, Dera Bugti and Kohlu are viewed as outposts of repression and control, not development. The Frontier Corps is thoroughly hated and despised as a federal instrument of oppression. With the religious parties rampaging in much of Balochistan and defying the writ of the government, the rise of incipient armed nationalism poses a grave challenge to stability and security (Akbar, 2011, 149).

In this political seesaw, Akbar Bugti was not flexible about terms like "gas royalties", "provincial autonomy", "constitutional rights" etc., while portraying himself as the great and patriotic Baloch nationalist fighting for the rights of his province rather than for his tribe. The federal government, on the other hand, seemed falsely obsessed with "the need to open up Balochistan for economic development" and was constantly carping about the exploitative Sardari system in the province that kept the tribesmen

in chains and acted as a brake on progress, unfortunately for the stability and security of Pakistan, the truth is different on both counts. There is an unfortunate situation in which a Baloch Liberation Army comprising a few armed bands under tribal and middle-class command is conducting military operations against the army in Balochistan. Gwadar is an obvious target as it is perceived as a federal project without provincial approval or participation in which the non-Baloch civil-military elites are “grabbing land for a song” (Akbar, 2011, 149).

The single most critical macro factor was the social and electoral engineering initiated by the military regime in its last five years. By sidelining the mainstream PPP and PML-N parties and their natural progressive allies like the ANP, BNP and others in favor of the religious parties, like Jamat-e-Islami and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, General Musharraf alienated the old non-religious tribal leadership as well as the new secular urban middle classes of Balochistan who see no economic or political space for themselves in the new “military-mullah” dispensation (Akbar, 2011, 150).

Similarly, by undermining the cause of provincial autonomy at the altar of the local and federal government, the military regime has threatened the very roots of the constitutional consensus of 1973 enshrined in the Baloch consciousness. If the federal government had also delivered the great development paradigm and provided jobs and offices, it might have avoided this sense of deprivation and resentment among the political and economic have-nots of the province. But it has not; Balochistan remains a backwater province, infested by Taliban-type mullahs and opportunist politicians, all beholden to the (military) regime in Islamabad (Akbar, 2011, 151).

The intelligence agencies, civil and military, have been bending their backs to convince the government that the foreign hand has been responsible for all the trouble in Balochistan. The finger of accusation has been pointed by these agencies at Iran. The Iranian government has denied more than one time meddling in Balochistan, pointing out that only if peace prevails in Pakistani Balochistan will peace reign in Iranian Balochistan. The logic of this position is that Iran has nothing to gain and the prospect of trouble with its own Baloch nationalist’s resurgent demands for autonomy and rights if it were to ever contemplate support to Baloch nationalists in Pakistan. Much is being made by the government and its hangers-on of the alleged blockage of modernization and development by the Sardars of the Baloch tribes in order not to lose their grip on their subjects. If it is not the foreign hand, then the Sardars are the authors of all the trouble, according to this official view. This is misplaced propaganda capable of taking in only the uninformed (Akbar, 2011, 152).

History teaches that nationalism; with very few exceptions tends to be articulated by the local elite and intelligentsia. Why should it be surprising then that some Sardars are articulated the demands of Baloch nationalism? Given the tribal structure of Baloch society, the only surprise is that most of them are not doing so. The overwhelming majority of Sardars are, as usual, aligned with the status quo, including leaning on the Centre of their political existence, perks and privileges. The small intelligentsia on the other hand is in the Baloch nationalist camps. Quite progressive people to have been taken in by the government’s propaganda about the Sardars being the sole obstacle to progress and development in Balochistan, in a faint echo of the 1970s, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto managed to convince the rest of the country, especially the Left, aided considerably by a total news blackout on events in Balochistan, that

Balochistan's resistance to his military operation was only for the defense of Sardari privilege (Akbar, 2011, 153).

People have to understand that tribal society is at a different stage of historical development. When deprived of its rights for a long and oppressed in myriad ways, it resists, its language is inevitably that of nationalism, and its articulation inevitably by the local elite and intelligentsia. Balochistan is no exception. The tilting against Sardars is a red herring that obscures the real issues concerning Balochistan's historical grievances becoming inextricably intertwined with the affront to the tribal code of honor in the shape of the rape of a doctor on Balochistan soil and the attempts to protect the perpetrators, especially the principal accused hiding behind his sullied uniform (Akbar, 2011, 154).

### **Post-Bugti Scenario**

Some sources allege that the fourth phase of the Baloch insurgency was triggered off by the sexual assault on a female doctor, Dr. Shazia Khalid, by a gang of Punjabi employees of the PPL at Sui. Islamabad handled the matter in a cavalier fashion. Accumulated anger incensed the people and they mounted an attack on the Sui facility. Nawab Akbar Bugti, the leader of the Jamhoori Watan Party of Balochistan, stated that the attack was a manifestation of the anger of the people and had nothing to do with the nationalist struggle for freedom by the tribes. General Musharraf retaliated by ordering the ISI and the Army to mount operations against rebel Baloch forces headed by Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti. Bugti's critics alleged that he had rebelled demanding higher royalty payment for Sui gas. These charges have not been proven (Dashti, 2012, 351-353).

In his death and how it was carried out, Sardar Akbar Bugti was likely to become a martyred hero for Baloch nationalism. Bugti, the Sardar or chief of more than 200,000 Bugti tribesmen, was killed along with more than of his followers when the Pakistan Air Force bombed his hideout in the Bhambhore mountain range in the Marri tribal area. Pakistani officials declared that at least 16 soldiers including four officers were killed after they went in to mop up the remnants of the Baloch guerrilla group. A fierce battle ensued which led to their deaths. Bugti, a 79-year-old invalid who could not walk due to arthritis, is reported to be buried in the rubble of the cave where he was hiding (Dashti, 2012, 351-353).

For months, Pakistani politicians including members of the ruling party had been insisting that the military regime agree to hold talks with the Baloch leaders to stop what was becoming an ever-widening civil war in the province. Several security agencies and advisers to President Pervez Musharraf, including the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Intelligence Bureau, asked Musharraf to hold talks with the Baloch leaders (Dashti, 2012, 351-353).

However, other councilors and the Military Intelligence advised him to crush the Baloch leaders, which included three prominent Sardars, Bugti, Khair Bux Marri, and Ataulah Mengal. Senior politicians say that Mr. Musharraf's lack of understanding about the Baloch issue, his underestimation of the growing sense of alienation in all the smaller provinces and the attack on his ego when his helicopter was fired upon by Baloch rebels in 2006, all contributed to his helping him decide to kill Bugti (Dashti, 2012, 351-353).

Bugti was not the leader of the mysterious Balochistan Liberation Army which has been banned by Pakistan, but he was certainly its most visible spokesman over the past three years, as the Baloch

insurgency against Islamabad has grown. The army has attempted to divide the Baloch by promising large aid grants to those tribal leaders who support the government, even as Islamabad claims that it is eliminating the Sardari system. Pervez Musharraf may have underestimated Baloch nationalism. Baloch nationalists have long argued that while Islamabad exploits its massive gas and mineral deposits, they give little in return to the province (Dashti, 2012, 351-353).

In 2006, the ruling Pakistan Muslim League agreed on a package of incentives for the Baloch that included a constitutional amendment giving greater autonomy to the province, but it was overruled by Musharraf and the army who then vowed to militarily crush the rebellion. The army argues that millions have been spent on development, but projects such as the building of the Gwadar port, the building of cantonments and even new roads do not necessarily benefit ordinary Baloch. The projects are defined by the army and its national security needs, rather than through consultations with the Baloch or even the Balochistan provincial assembly. Then the projects are carried out by outside companies who give menial jobs to the Baloch (Dashti, 2012, 351-353).

By killing Bugti, the president earned the enmity of not just the Baloch rebels but the wider Baloch population who may not believe in taking up arms but are still frustrated with Islamabad for its failure to develop the province. He might have seriously underestimated the power of Baloch nationalism which has led to four wars with the Pakistan army in the past. Nationalism within the smaller provinces has always been the biggest threat to military regimes just as it was to Pervez Musharraf (Dashti, 2012, 351-353).

The hanging of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto 1979, who was a Sindhi, by an earlier military ruler has made Sindhis resentful of the army, while they have, by and large, always voted for the opposition Pakistan People's Party. In the North West Frontier Province where Talibanization is rampant, Pashtun nationalism is presently taking the form of political Islam (Dashti, 2012, 351-353).

By killing Bugti, the army was sending a clear message to nationalists in other provinces as to how they will be dealt with if they rear their heads. However, the smaller provinces are seething with resentment against continued military rule. Their sense of frustration and alienation is growing as they see the army representing only its interests or that of Punjab, the largest province in the country (Dashti, 2012, 351-353).

The army is also sending a powerful signal to neighboring India and Afghanistan. The army has accused India of financing and arming the Baloch rebels, while it has accused Afghan President Hamid Karzai of allowing the Baloch to train in Afghanistan. India and Afghanistan have denied these charges at the highest level, but Pakistani officials say that there is little doubt that the Indians were involved in funding the Baloch movement because of their long-standing involvement with the Baloch and the evidence that arrested Baloch rebels have provided the Pakistani intelligence services (Dashti, 2012, 351-353).

There is an ever-deepening political crisis in Pakistan which the death of Bugti will only aggravate. Many people say that the country is rapidly separating with Pervez Musharraf refusing to give clear-cut guarantees about free and fair elections in 2007, while he insists on running again for another five-year term as president even as he remains army chief. Bugti's death will only add to the growing fears about

the country's future and the danger inherent in a policy of killing political opponents rather than holding a dialogue with them (Dashti, 2012, 351-353).

### **Implications for Pak-Iran-India Gas Pipeline and other Mega Projects**

The political unrest in Balochistan and the murder of Akbar Bugti is a serious threat to the gas pipeline of Iran, Pakistan and India's project. During the visit of Iran's oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh of New Delhi to discuss the future of the pipeline, anti-government elements in Balochistan blew up two gas pipelines sending a message to all parties involved in this pipeline peace project. The area of the Balochistan-Punjab border where the pipeline is supposed to run is one of Pakistan's poorest areas and its most restive province. In recent years it has been a battleground of private militias belonging to Baloch tribes. Sporadic armed clashes resulted in attacks against water pipelines, power transmission lines and gas installations. Yet, the region is strategically important due to its large reserves of oil and gas. Over the years Islamabad has failed to provide a fair share of the oil and gas wealth in the shape of royalty to Balochistan. Lack of economic progress and a deep sense of disaffection has contributed to the distrust between the federal government and the Baloch people (Banskota, 2012, 105).

As a result, the tribes now oppose any energy projects in their area. Since 2003, sabotage of a gas pipeline from Sui to cut off supply to Punjab has become a routine. Later on, a wave of attacks against gas installations caused the government to send troops to protect the installations. During the era of the Musharraf regime and especially in the following year the confrontation is growing more and more. To calm the area Islamabad added carrots to its policy of sticks by increasing investment in regional development projects. However, it seems that violence has resurfaced and the region is sliding into a near-war situation (Banskota, 2012, 105).

After the murder of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, it is very difficult for Musharraf Government to snub the Baloch nationalism and insurgency in Balochistan. During the attacks the Baloch Liberation Front and Balochistan Liberation Army fired rockets at the pipeline and exchanged gunfire with the security forces for several hours on a government installation. During the fire exchange, the pipeline caught fire, disrupting the supply to a power plant. As we have seen in other parts of the world where pipelines are under attack, ending the onslaught may well prove to be mission impossible. Nevertheless, Islamabad has already indicated that the pipeline project will be pursued even where India decides not to join (Banskota, 2012, 105).

### **Human Rights Violations**

There are serious violations of human rights in Balochistan. Thousands of Baloch militants had been killed in the last three decades movement. According to the Carnegie report, in the last 30 years, the conflict in Balochistan resulted in 8,000 deaths, 3,000 of them from the army. The HRCP report said that up to 85 percent of the 22,000-26,000 inhabitants of Dera Bugti had fled their homes after paramilitary forces shelling repeatedly hit the town. There were alarming accounts of summary executions, some allegedly carried out by paramilitary forces. The HRCP received credible evidence that showed such killings had taken place, across Balochistan, the HRCP team found widespread instances of disappearance of torture inflicted on people held in custody, and on those fleeing from their houses. Carlotta Gall, The New York

Times correspondent visiting the area in April 2006 reported having witnessed deep bomb craters caused by MK-82 bombs. According to her, “Hundreds of political party members, students, doctors and tribal leaders have been detained by government security forces, many disappearing for months, even years, without trials in well-documented cases. Some have been tortured or have died in custody (Wirsing, 2013, 50)”.

She proceeds to comment, “In places like Dera Bugti and Kohlu, government forces have carried out reprisals against villagers, Baloch leaders and human rights officials say. In a case documented by the Human Rights Commission, the Frontier Corps killed 12 men from Pattar Nala on Jan 11, 2006, after a mine explosion near the village killed some of its soldiers. Two old men from the village who went to the base to collect the bodies were also killed. The next day, the 14 bodies were handed over to the women of the village. Local fighters say the Frontier Corps has carried out 42 such reprisal killings in the last three months of 2006 (Wirsing, 2013, 50)”.

The first reports about major displacement due to fighting appeared in April 2005 when some 300 government troops were surrounded by thousands of tribal militants in the town of Dera Bugti, located close to Pakistan’s largest gas reserves. The fighting was reported to have displaced around 6,000 people and killed scores of civilians. Militants have continued to target gas pipelines, railway lines and electricity networks, and have launched rocket attacks on government buildings and army bases, followed by retaliation and search operations by the military. The security situation for the civilian population has severely worsened due to the use of landmines in parts of the Dera Bugti and Kohlu districts both by rebel forces, in particular the Balochistan Liberation Army, and by the Pakistani army. As of April 2006, more than 50 civilians had been killed by landmine explosions since the beginning of the year. The army has used heavy artillery and launched air strikes against insurgent bases; this has also killed and maimed civilians. By December 2005, about 90 percent of the population in the town of Dera Bugti was reported to have fled and displacement was also reported in the district of Kohlu. During subsequent fighting, thousands of civilians were reported to have fled several areas in the neighboring Jaffarabad and Sibi districts. The situation deteriorated further in the wake of the killing of Baloch tribal leader Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti in August 2006 which was followed by bloody riots. Several have warned that the conflict will go on escalating if the government continues its harsh military response against political opposition groups in the region (Wirsing, 2013, 50).

There are no official or UN estimates of the extent of the displacement due to the fighting. One regional human rights organization says 200,000 people were displaced as of July 2006. The displaced had at that point fled to relief camps or towns in safe areas of Jaffarabad, and the Naseerabad, Quetta and Khuzdar districts of Balochistan, as well as to the Sindh and Punjab provinces. No other source has verified this figure. Another media report says 50,000 remained displaced due to military operations as of July 2006 (Wirsing, 2013, 50).

Several reports have testified to the critical living conditions for the displaced that moved to relief camps as well as a general apathy demonstrated by the Pakistani authorities vis-à-vis the displaced civilian population. Although the media have not been allowed to move freely in the areas most affected by the violence, deplorable conditions and lack of assistance to the displaced in relief camps have been reported since the onset of the conflict. In May 2006, assistance had not yet reached the camps. The displaced were

reported to be living in the open in baking hot weather without food and other facilities. Provincial opposition leaders appealed to international and national humanitarian organizations for assistance. The displaced were still reported to be living in temporary settlements without provision for water, sanitation, food, schooling and health care. The government is accused of deliberately blocking access to the displaced populations and has stopped efforts to provide health services in the camps. Official sources said that the displaced were well off and not in need of assistance (Wirsing, 2013, 50).

### **18<sup>th</sup> Amendment in the Constitution of 1973**

April 8, 2010, will be remembered as a milestone in the constitutional history of Pakistan as the National Assembly of Pakistan passed the constitutional bill of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan 1973. It was a breakthrough, the presidential authority to dissolve the parliament was abolished. According to the Parliamentary Constitutional Committee, this amendment is an effort to revive the original shape of the 1973 Constitution by maintaining the balance of power between organs of the state. It changed the political culture of Pakistan from semi-presidential to parliamentary. An important development due to this amendment is the renaming of North-West Frontier Province as 'Khyber Pakhtunkhwa'. Moreover, the word "Baluchistan" was replaced with the word "Balochistan", and "Sind" with the word "Sindh". The dictators disfigured the original constitution of 1973 according to their vested interest. It has become more democratic and parliamentary after the amendment and can ease political insecurity and instability in the country. The Senate of Pakistan passed the bill on April 15, 2010, and became an act of parliament when President Asif Ali Zardari signed the bill on April 19, 2010. It was for the first time in the history of Pakistan that a president voluntarily withdrew a significant part of his powers happily and transferred them to parliament and the office of the prime minister to strengthen the democratic system (Akbar, 2011, 113).

The fruits of provincial autonomy would be beneficial if the 18th Amendment is implemented in its letter and spirit and also would be the great achievement of the Government. However, the tendency to tilt towards a strong center is still prevailing. The establishment is ever holding cards in its hands in one or the other way. There was a need to restore the original shape of the 1973 Constitution and to shift the powers given to the office of the president under the Zia-ul-Haq and General Pervez Musharraf regimes. The changes made in the Constitution by two military dictators through the 8<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Amendments not only undermined the democratic institutions but also deprived the provinces of their legitimate constitutional rights (Akbar, 2011, 114).

In this regard, it has been observed that the biggest beneficiaries are the federating units who have got full autonomy to legislate on forty-seven subjects placed in the Concurrent List earlier. From Balochistan, Senators Mir Hasil Khan Bizenjo of the National Party (NP), Agha Shahid Bugti of the Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP), and Israrullah Zehri of the Balochistan National Party (BNP-Awami) were the prominent Baloch leaders who signed the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment Bill. Most of the Baloch nationalist parties had no representation in the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reforms under the Chairmanship of Raza Rabbani that prepared the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment Bill as they boycotted the last general elections (Akbar, 2011, 114).

The Baloch nationalists have completely rejected these constitutional reforms as the new legislation was expected to help in reducing the tension in Balochistan but it did not happen so. However, apart from the



National Party, whose two leaders are members of the Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reforms; all other major nationalist groups declared they will not accept anything less than the right to self-determination (Akbar, 2011, 115).

### **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor**

Baloch ethnic conflict is cited as a key threat to the implementation of the China-Pakistan Corridor in Pakistan. What is often not acknowledged by analysts is the fact that the Baloch insurgency is dying. According to Baloch separatist leader Malik Siraj on December 2014 in a piece titled "The End of Pakistan's Baloch Insurgency?";

"Since its beginning in 2004, Pakistan's Baloch insurgency is caught up in the worst infighting ever known to the general public. Different left-wing underground armed groups that had been fighting Islamabad for a free Baloch homeland have now started to attack each other's camps. Frustration, suspicion, infighting, and division are the common features of the end of a guerrilla fight. Perhaps that time has come in Balochistan" (Akbar, May 11, 2015).

The announcement of the Pak-China deal seems to have re-energized those who seek to hurt Pakistan. They are now trying to resuscitate the dying Baloch insurgency. Western media has widely publicized an interview with Bramdagh Bugti who is running the insurgency from the comfort of a Swiss hotel room. In addition, Pakistan's western-funded NGOs are being used to play up the Baloch insurgency in the media with events like the "Un-Silencing Balochistan" event and by blaming the ISI for the murder of Karachi activists (Akbar, May 11, 2015).

### **Conclusion**

Pakistan is a federation of four provinces. Its creation is very unique. The role of provincial units, nationalities and ethnic groups in the creation of Pakistan is fundamental. The pre-partition strategy of the Muslim League was to struggle for provincial autonomy and lose the center for the rights of the Muslims. But after partition, all the political parties, the army, and civil bureaucracy had become the champion of a strong center. The attitude of a strong center and the refusal of provincial autonomy has played a vital role in the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. Again, the ruling class of Pakistan, Civil and military bureaucracy is refusing the rights of self-determination of oppressed nationalities like Balochistan. The guarantee of provincial autonomy that is given in the constitution of 1973 Pakistan is also denying these reserved rights. The various causes of unrest in Balochistan are serious and should be addressed and touched by the democratic government in the post-Musharraf scenario.

The formation of the democratic government in Pakistan and Balochistan provided the opportunity that democratic government should meet with the provincial award among the provinces, royalty of the provincial resources, Gwadar Port problem, and cantonment issue. The national, regional and international political scenario is very dangerous and complex. Therefore, the Balochistan issue should be addressed as early as possible to strengthen the Pakistani federation.

The new Nawaz government should focus on development plans and it must be directed toward the full empowerment of local people. The people must be recognized as stakeholders in the decision-making

process, and their interests must be placed at the top of the list of priorities. For this to happen, the people must be given a voice, this is possible only if civil society organizations make greater efforts to visit the areas of deprivation and interact with the people and are allowed to do so. At the same time, all movements must alter their approach to seeking rights from one of aggression, to a broader-based initiative aimed at building countrywide and even international alliances for their campaigns.

All steps are taken by the government as well as tribal leaders to end the practice of penal sanctions through jirgas as well as to do away with any form of private prisons that may exist. To meet the needs of people, educational institutions and vocational training centers must be established across Balochistan. Development cannot be limited only to building infrastructure or setting up giant projects. Development plans must focus on building civil society, including establishing press clubs, bar associations and community radio and television networks. This would connect the population of Balochistan to the rest of the country and enhance the cultural environment within which they lead their lives. The low visibility, negligible educational attainments and virtual lack of any voice in the decision-making of Balochistan's women is a serious hurdle in the development of the province. This situation needs the serious attention of the government, leaders of tribes, regional political parties as well as nationalist movements. In the explosive situation in Balochistan, the more vulnerable members of society, such as children, members of minority communities and unemployed youth not only deserve special protection, their social and economic advancement must be guaranteed through appropriate plans of action. Therefore, it is necessary to treat them very carefully on the Issue of Balochistan. The national interests demand that patience, negotiation and compromise should be the hallmark of federal policy rather than knee-jerk army operations and detentions. At the same time, the federal government should make serious efforts to clinch the new development conditions of resource sharing with local tribes and regions. The future of the oil and gas pipelines that are being planned across the mountains and deserts and coasts of Balochistan for the prosperity and stability of Pakistan hinges on a sensible and exclusionary approach rebel killing raises stakes in Pakistan.

It should be remembered that danger in Balochistan is twofold. The promising but alienated middle class in the few towns of Balochistan is now rallying behind the nationalists and accepts the sardars leading PONM as genuine leaders. At the same time, the developmental pause in the province is sufficient to substantiate the anti-center stance of PONM. That is why any military action in the province will completely lack local support. The other destabilizing factor relates to the ongoing battle against the Taliban-Al Qaeda combined. The Pashtuns in Balochistan also have serious problems with the federal government's policy on Pak-Afghan relations. This could be troublesome since Pashtun nationalism has also been responsible for the internationally reported presence of the Taliban in the province.

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