

The History of Baloch and Balochistan: A Critical Appraisal

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ABSTRACT

This paper will present a critical review of the Baloch and Balochistan showing that how the Baloch have evolved to become a nation, and Balochistan from being a hinterland in Iranian plateau to a province of Pakistani federation. The paper will discuss the origin of the Baloch and examine the various theories about the origin of the Baloch nation and argue that neither the primordialist nor the modernist theories of nationhood can explain the Baloch nation. In fact, it is the ethno-symbolists that offer the best understanding of the Baloch as a nation. The Baloch nation is heterogeneous in its composition, being an admixture of various ethnic, racial, and linguistic groups over a long period of time. Baloch nationalism, however, is best understandable via the modernist theories of nationalism. The paper will contend that the Baloch nation is neither ancient nor modern because it emerged as a nation before the era of enlightenment and the French revolution. The paper will elaborate the modern Baloch nation, the birth of 'Baloch Confederacy' in its historical perspective, from the arrival of the British in 1839 to the fall of the State of Kalat into the Pakistani federation in 1948. The paper will finally provide a brief but robust analysis on the emergence, evolution and dynamics of contemporary Baloch nationalism vis-à-vis the federation of Pakistan.

Key Words Baloch, Balochistan, The Kalat Confederacy, Nationalism

Introduction

Tracing the actual history of the Baloch is although a daunting task, as the mention of the Baloch people is rare in ancient and historical literature, but writers like, Dasthi (2012), Spooner, (1983), Sahlins, (1968), Dames (1907), among others believe that the history of modern day Baloch people goes back to around three Millenniums when a myriad tribes left their original abodes in Central Asia and traveled towards the northwest, the west and the east. After decades or perhaps centuries of hardships and pains they settled in northwestern Iranian plateau, a region then called of Balashakan. They were the Aryans tribes with pastoralist nomadic characteristics. However, the settlements of these tribes or Balashchik were short-lived as they were forced to migrate from Balashakan. After centuries of wanderings with enduring suffering and torments these nomads eventually settled down in southeastern edges of Iranian Plateau, and changed from being Balashchik to "Baloch" and their new settlement where they ultimately became the inhabitants of, was Balochistan, the land of the Baloch people. With them they

brought their indigenous culture and native language that they imposed and spread around the entire region, and created an autonomous Confederacy of the Baloch Tribes ranging from the Indus River to the east, modern day Afghanistan to the north, Iran and Persian gulf to the west and southwest. After undergoing through various ups and downs during its existence, the Baloch state came to a final end when it gave up its sovereignty to the British Raj in 1839 (Janmahmad, 1989).

It is hard to construct a chronological history of the Baloch using the ancient historical accounts, as the mention of the Baloch, its sociology, history and way of living is random, sporadic and abstract in form, context and content. The old historical records are almost hushed up in describing any aspects of Baloch life. Whereas it is difficult to ascribe any solid reasons of this sheer silence of ancient historians concerning the Baloch and its history, yet one may argue that the nomadic and tribal structure with pastoralist economy without any formidable and direct impact to the political and economic developments of the time could probably be a reason for not getting any attention of historians of the time. Like many other pastoralist nomads of primordial Iran that descended on Iranian plateau from Central Asia, the historical documents rarely mentioned the Baloch. Nevertheless, the difference of Baloch to the other identical groups is that many of these ethnic groups vanished and ceased to exist as separate ethnic entity, whereas the Baloch emerged as a distinct linguistic and cultural entity during the medieval era (Sahlins, 1968, Spooner, 1983).

Given the scarcity or even the absence of detail historical literature and accurate anthropological data on the origin of the Baloch and the exact location of their initial homeland in Iranian edge from where they probably migrated to Balochistan, led to rise contrasting theories and opinions by the academics and historians. For instance, earlier researchers on the origin of the Baloch deliberated on various theories and tried to align them with different racial entities of the region. Speculations were mainly focused on the lines that whether Baloch belonged to Aryan, Semitic, or Turanian group of tribes. Pottinger (1816, 1972) believes that the Baloch had Turkmen ethnic origins, while Rawlinson (1873) is in favour of a Chaldean (Semitic) origin of the Baloch, Bellew (1874) aligns them with the Indian Rajput tribes, and Dames (1904) considers them as from the Aryan groups of tribes. This paper however will argue that, whatever the origination of the Baloch as a nation may be, it is neither a primordialist nor the current theories of nation and nationhood can explain the Baloch nation. Instead it is the ethno-symbolists theories that offer the best possible understanding of the Baloch nation, and Baloch nationalism is best understood through modernist theories given its reactionary behaviour to foreign/occupation forces. In addition the paper will discuss the modern Baloch nation, the formation and ascendancy of Baloch confederacy, its culmination into Khanate of Kalat, and the arrival of the British and ultimately the incorporation of Balochistan into the Pakistani federation after the Partition of India in 1948, besides providing a brief account of the dynamics of Baloch nationalism.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: section two will discuss the

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beginning of the Baloch and its evolution and development to becoming a modern Baloch nation. While section three will present the Genesis of Balochistan, section four will explain various dynamics of the Baloch nationalism vis-à-vis the federation of Pakistan. Last section will conclude the paper.

The Baloch Nation: A Historical Account

The origin of the Baloch as a nation is elusive and obscure (Ahmad, 1992 and Harrison, 1981). Historians of the 20th century have different views vis-à-vis the origin of the Baloch nation. Writers such as Rawlinson (1873), Bellew (1874), Dames (1904) and Pottinger (1972) associate the Baloch with different racial entities of the Iranian region. Rawlinson (1873) in the favour of a Chaldean (Arab-Semitic) origin of the Baloch, while Bellew (1874) aligns the Baloch people with the Rajputs, who, he believes, are of an Indian origin. He identifies the name Baloch with 'Ballicha', a clan of Chuahan Rajputs. Pottinger (1972) on the other hand rejected the theory of the Arab origin of the Baloch and argued that the Baloch are of Turkmen ethnic origin. Dames (1904) considers them to be from the Aryan and Iranian groups of tribes. He held this opinion on the basis of the physical structure of the Baloch. He considered the Brahui to be a different race because of the linguistic differences with the Baloch and linked the former to an Indian origin. He opines that those who speak the Balochi language are Baloch while those live around Kalat and speak the Brahui language, are of an Indian origin. Baluch M.S.K (1958: 265) also considers the Brahui as a different race (linguistically) to the rest of the Baloch, and asserts, "...the origin of Brahui race is an enigma of history."

On the other hand many Baloch historians such as Dashti (2012), Naseer (2010), Breseeg, (2004), and Baluch I. (1987) reject such racial theories and argue that the British Government and its history writers intentionally divided the Baloch people on the basis of languages for the purpose of advancing colonial interests and ruling them. According to Breseeg (2004: 131) '[w]hatever their ethnic origin may be....the Brahui regard themselves as part and parcel of Baloch nation, sharing a common culture, religion, historical experiences and unifying symbols with the Baloch, and above all....there is strong desire among them to emphasise on a common origin with the Baloch and that is politically very important."

In **fact** the writing of history of the Baloch and Balochistan began systematically in 19th century with the advent of British Colonialism, especially with their penetration to Balochistan. In fact the colonial era's historians in line with the classic Sandemanization "divide and rule" policy investigated the genesis of Brahui tribes and described them as being ethnically different from the Balochi speaking tribes. Certainly such a notion was obviously not based on reliable historical accounts and linguistic and genealogical data, instead it was aimed more of fashioning schism and disregard within Baloch tribes in order to create cracks within the Kalat Confederacy. This argument is somewhat authenticated by

Gershevitch (1962a, 1962b), where he traced the origin of Brahui to the Bradazhui tribe among the other Baloch tribes residing in Barez Mountain of Central Persia during the Achaemenid Dynasty. Therefore, the argument of Dashti (2012) appears to be very relevant when he claims that “It is most probable that they got their present name of Brahui after first being called as Barezui as they descended from their mountain abodes and began their *en masse* migration toward east in medieval times. By the time they settled in their present abode in Jhalawan and Sarawan (Turan) regions of Balochistan, they became known as Brahui from being Barezui” (P: 6).

Although, the origin of Baloch is a conundrum and much debated among the historians and theoreticians due to dearth of sufficient logical and systematic literature on the Baloch. Nonetheless, four dominant theories regarding the origin of the Baloch have been presented with varying claims and arguments. Firstly, that they are Arab (Semitic), secondly, that they are Aryans, thirdly that they are the aboriginal people of Balochistan, and fourthly that the Baloch as a nation are an admixture of various ethnic, racial, and linguistic groups over a long period of time. We understand that the last theory could better explain the Baloch as a nation and we would elaborate it in a more detail.

The first theoretical assertion of the Baloch being Arab or Semitic origin is put forward and supported by Baloch writers including Naseer (2010), Baluch (1958) and K. B. Baloch (1974). They are of the view that the Baloch origin goes back to thousand years when they migrated initially from the Halab (present day Syria) to Balochistan, and by origin they are Kurds and Arabs. Baluch (1958) for instance argues that Baloch are the original inhabitants of the Tigro-Euphrates valley, belonging to the Mimrud, who was the god of its tribe, hence they are Arab/Semitic. Similarly, Naseer (2010) and Baloch (1975) opine that the original abodes of the Baloch were Tigris and Euphrates near Aleppo in Syria, and from there they migrated to Iran and eventually to the present day Balochistan. The argument goes on saying that in fact Baloch and Kurds belonged to the same tribes residing in Aleppo, yet, internal feuds, perhaps over green pasture and water sources, they migrated to Caspian Sea, Persia and finally Balochistan (The Baloch), and towards Iraq and Turkey (the Kurds). Nonetheless, this theory raises many questions among historians on various grounds. The fact that the Baloch have lived in and around the Persia and India for hundreds of thousands years, and therefore, “the [Baloch] pretension to an Arab decent [is] probably rooted in the consistent suspicion and distrust between them and their powerful Persian and Indian neighbours” (Breseeg, 2004: 115). Thus, tracing Baloch origin to Arab/Semitic assertion does not have convincing and sufficient theoretical argument. In addition on linguistic ground we doubt the Baloch are Arabic origin. Balochi is an Indo-Iranian language with no similarity with Arabic and other Semitic languages. Even the word “Baloch” is pronounced as “Balosh, as the “ch” sound does not exist in Arabic. Similarly there are numerous phonemes of Balochi language that are alien in Arabic and vice versa. Not only this, the entire linguistic feature of Balochi is dissimilar from Arabic, which thereby contradicts the whole

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notion of the Baloch being a Semitic origin.

The theory of the Baloch being Aryans in origin is supported by historians and scholars including Dashti (2012), Karimzadi (2015a, 2015b), Janmahmod (1989), Morris (1888) et al, who believe that the Baloch are Aryans and linguistically belong to Indo-Iranian groups. For instance, the cultural, anthropological, historical and linguistic similarities and physical appearances of the Baloch with the people inhabiting around the Caspian Sea led Karimzadi (2015a) to conclude that The Baloch are Aryans in origin, which therefore negates the Arabian/Simitic theory of the Baloch ethnic basis. Similarly, Dashti (2012) posited “from the available evidence on linguistic and cultural aspects, it can be deduced that the Baloch migrated along with other migrating Indo-Iranic tribes from Central Asia towards the Caspian Sea region of the Iranian plateau, most probably around 1200 BC.”

The Aryans origin of the Baloch nonetheless is also contentious, as it failed to describe the aboriginal and native people who had been the primitive inhabitants of the land called Balochistan. The archival evidence – Mehrgarh civilization claims to be one of the oldest civilizations is a classic example of ancient settlements in Balochistan – reveal that before these immigrants tribes from the Caspian Sea or Halab or elsewhere Balochistan had had a native population. Now the question is where did the native go, did they submerge with the invading tribes, or did they flee to Indus civilization? These are few pertinent questions on which theoretical perspectives, discussed above, failed to provide any prudent answer.

Scholars like Marri (2010) reject any of such theoretical interpretations of the Baloch origin. On the contrary they believe that the Baloch are the native inhabitants of Balochistan, they have been living in Baloch land for 11000 years with a rich civilization (Mehrgarh) and language. This theoretical underpinning therefore rejects any other conception of Baloch origin. According to Marri (2010) Mehrgarh is one of the ancient civilizations on planet earth, thus he believes that Mehrgarh is not only the testimony of Baloch being the aboriginal people of this land, but also it has been a cradle of many other nations around the corner. Although the indigenous theory of Baloch origin has an appealing argument, yet it is not well documented with sufficient archeological evidence and valid historical accounts. This discussion therefore leads us to contend that instead of being a mono-racial group, it is more reasonable to believe the Baloch as a mixture of different ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups.

After studying the relevant literature, we argue that the Baloch nation is a mixture of various ethnic groups such as Aryans, Arabs, Persians, Turks, Kurds, Dravidians, Sewais (Hindu),¹ and the black African people. Thus, it is fair to say that the Baloch are heterogeneous in its composition and characters. According to

¹ According to the Imperial Gazetteer of India (1908; 276), all traditions asserts that before the Ahmadzai Khans of Kalat, who brought together western Balochistan into an organized state in 1666, the former rulers of Kalat were Hindus, Sewai by name.

Naseer (1998: 40-53), before the arrival of the Barahui tribes into Kalat, a Hindu dynasty, called Sewa dynasty, ruled this part of the country. In fact, the Brahui later intermixed with the local Sewa people, and when the former became dominant and established their own rule, the local Sewa people, with passage of time, merged into the Baloch tribal people (Naseer, 1998). In this regard Naseer (1998) viewed that *Nichari*, *Pandrani*, *Zehri*, and *Sajidi*² tribes of the present-day Balochistan are the remnants of Sewa people and hence the indigenous people of Balochistan.

Furthermore, there is a section within the Baloch that is made up of people of African origin, known as *Sidi/Sheedi*, *Ghulam* and *Naqeeb*. They live in Karachi, Coastal Belt, Makran region, Kharan and other parts of Balochistan. It is believed that during the 18th and 19th centuries, Arabs of Oman and other traders brought these people as slaves for trade purposes from Zanzibar to the Western Indian Ocean (Nicolini, 2006; Narang *et al*, 2011; and Baloch, 2009). The main slave centres were Jhalawan, Makran, and Kharan. According to one estimate the total number of slaves reached to 17800 in Kalat by 1911 (Matheson, 2009). According to a survey report conducted in 1926, it was estimated that the percentage of slaves in Jhalawan (the area under direct control of the Khan of Kalat) and the Marri-Bugti areas, the north-eastern part of Balochistan, was 4% of the total population, while in Makran and Kharan it was 6% and 15% of the total population respectively (Baloch, 2009: 289).³ After the ban on slavery, the *Sheedi* (a local word used for the African slaves) gained relaxation from their masters, and most of them settled in Lyari (Karachi) and other coastal areas of Balochistan such as Lasbela and Makran (*ibid*, 2009). Now, they are an integral part of the Baloch nation and considered themselves Baloch. In fact, Lyari was said to be the homeland and cradle of Baloch nationalism in the 1920s (Baloch, S., 2007).

The Gichki (the ruling family of British Makran during mid 18th century) are said to have migrated from the Rajputana under Jagat Singh and settled in Kech (Makran) and their descendants are called Gichkis who ruled over Makran for decades (Sheikh, 1901, Baloch, 2009). The Gichkis have been living in Balochistan since 18th century and consider themselves as Baloch. It is also believed that the Rind tribe of the Baloch belongs to the Arab and are Semitic. Brahui (2009) argued that the ruling family of Kalat belonged to the Arabs who had migrated from Oman to Balochistan. He maintained that the Marri and Bugti tribes, living around the eastern mountains of *Koh-e-Sulaman*, also belong to the Rind tribe of Baloch. In his view, the Marri and Bugti came to Balochistan, either with the Arab invaders or afterwards. Furthermore, Tajik and Iranian origin tribes can also be found in the present-day Balochistan. According to Swidler (1992) the *Dehwar* or *Durzada* (a tribe in Balochistan) are of Tajik origin while

²Jelty (2004) suggests that the Sajidi is the perverted form of 'Seghthai'. The people of Saka dynasty were known as Seghthai. So according to Malik, the present Sajidi tribes of Balochistan belong to Saka group of tribes.

³For more details on slavery and its trade, see *Native States 1922 Abolition of slavery in the Indian States and in tribal areas in Baluchistan*, File Z/5, Indian Office Records (IOR/R/1/34/48: 1922), Hameed Baloch (2009), and Jahani *et al* (2003).

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Nausherwanis (once the ruler family of Kharan state) are purely Iranian.⁴ In the light of the above discussion, it is plausible to argue that the Baloch nation is a mixture of various ethnic, racial, and language groups.

The Genesis of Balochistan

The exact time of the formation of Balochistan as a formal nation-state is contentious, as it is neither ancient nor modern because it probably emerged as a nation before the era of enlightenment and the French revolution. Writers like Dames (1907) and Pottinger (1816) claim that the unity of the Baloch began around 11th Century BC when 44 Baloch tribes assembled under the chieftain of Mir Jalal Khan, who further unified into five major tribes: Rind, Lashari, Korai, Houth, and Jato, yet no documentary evidence substantiates Jalal Khan's rule and his formation of a Confederacy. On the contrary it is only the traditional Balochi folklore that considers him the founding father of Baloch nation, and the legends however hardly explain the origin and evolution of any nation. Interestingly the Baloch mythology has no mention of Jalal Khan's administration and strategic role in Baloch history.

Mir Chakar Khan Rind – a legendary Baloch chieftain and warrior – probably formed somewhat a formal, yet loose, confederacy of the Baloch tribes for the first time in 1480s. Janmahmad (1989) believes that the union of Rind and Lashar – the powerful tribes of time – heralded the formation of a large Baloch confederacy stretching from Kirman to the west and Indus River to the east. But the Baloch unification under this confederation was short-lived as the Baloch tribes were in frequent internal wars and feuds, which made them unable to maintain the political unity and harmony. Resultantly their confederacy – if it was a confederacy by any definition – under Chakar Khan collapsed, which led the tribes towards further divisions and fragmentation (Hughes, 2002). Given this one it is reasonable to argue that the Chakarian era was flushed with sheer tribalism and clanship that by no means qualifies for nation and nationalism. After falling into disintegrations and breakups in the ensuing periods the Baloch are believed to have emerged as a nation with the establishment of the Kalat Confederacy by Mir Ahmed Khan in 1660s (Khan, 2014).

It is worth arguing the fact that the Baloch until the 17th century did not fall into the framework of primordialist and modernist theories. That is because as per the primordialists the nation is natural and somewhat given since ancient times, and the national identity is unalterable and permanent, and the Baloch on the contrary put their claim of nationalism to the time immemorial regardless of their linguistic, racial and ethnic differences. Modernist theorists such as Gellner (1983), Kedourie (1960), Anderson (1983), Hobsbawm (1990) and others are of the opinion that nationalism engenders and creates nations, and not vice versa. They believe in the

⁴ See also Swidler (1992: 556) and Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India (1910).

modernity of nations and nationalism. However, in the case of Balochistan, the notion that industrialization and modernity are prerequisites for the emergence of a nation is misleading in essence and disqualifying in content. The Baloch as a nation existed prior to the industrial revolution, printing press, and capitalistic mode of production, and other such precursors of developments reached Balochistan only in the late 20th century.

Thus, the emergence of Baloch as nation took place with the advent of formation of the Kalat Confederacy. Yet the beginning of Kalat State is based upon speculations given the lack of any authentic written documents and historical accounts. Primarily when Mir Ahmed established the confederacy, it was only confined to Sarawan and Jhalawan areas of modern day Balochistan. The consolidation and expansion of Kalat confederacy with a centralized institutions and regular army took place when Mir Naseer Khan Noori I was ruler (1749-1817). Naseer Khan was a fine and shrewd administrator with remarkable strategic and political understandings.

However, the historians and writers altogether failed to mention an important – albeit ironic – chapter of Balochistan history that took place during reign of Naseer Khan: the mass persecution of the people of Makuran region. At the time Makuran was a semi-autonomous state ruled by Gichki and Buleidi families respectively. Under a false sectarian pretext, yet underneath with mischievous political designs, Naseer Khan waged three consecutive invasions on Makuran. This unleashed mass slaughter and persecutions, killing hundreds of thousands of innocent people. Consequently, although Naseer Khan succeeded in meeting political whims by subjugating Malik Dinar Dynasty and implanting his protégé and tutelage Skeigh Umer on Makuran throne, but his invasion left thousands people either killed, homeless or fled to obscure mountainous rugs, creating an environment of hatred and animosity among the people of Makuran that took centuries to subdue. Therefore, we argue that Mir Naseer Khan I whereas expanded the frontiers of Balochistan and brought a sound territorial integrity to Kalat Confederacy hence rightly considered among the Baloch as Naseer Khan the Great, yet for thousands of people in Makuran region he carried out unabated pains and agonies.

In addition to his territorial, diplomatic and internal conciliatory accomplishments Naseer Khan triumphed ushering in a political process and provided the Baloch with a constitutional structure – still unwritten and based on cherished traditional societal values – and setup a parliament, influenced probably from the Westminster model, with two houses – the house of lord and house of common. On economic front Kalat performed well during Naseer Khan reign. Agriculture, particularly in the plain land of Kachchi witnessed an unprecedented expansion and duly became the mainstay of Kalat economy. The irrigation systems of Kachchi comprised dams and channels, which had been established from ancient times. Under the instruction of the Khan, the officials organized and supervised the dams and channel systems strictly. The Kachchi lands were divided between different tribes of Sarawan and Jhalawan, according to their military

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participation in the army or their role in various battles. The tribal lands were divided between different constituent clans of the tribe. Each *Sardar* (tribal chief) was responsible to grant overlord rights to the sections of the tribe (Swindler, 1969,1992). The vastly increased resources reinforced the personal authority of tribal chiefs, which might have played an important role of transforming the *Sardar* from being elective to becoming hereditary. It also changed the socioeconomic dynamics of the Baloch society; in that, it established the tribal chiefs as landlords — a phenomenon which was new in the pastoralist nomadic Baloch society.

The glorious era of expansion, diplomacy, institutional buildings and internal cohesion – yet amidst ruthless persecutions of the people of Makuran – of Kalat state came to an abrupt end with the death of Mir Naseer Khan in 1817. After his demise, a period of crises ensued in Kalat that was mainly because, “...the succession of his son and grandson [to the throne] were challenged by the cousins supported by various Sardari faction....and as the Khans espoused a feudal system, the Sardars advocated a decentralized confederation and believed the Khanate to be based on tribal rather than feudal principles” Axman (2009: 24). A weakened and divided Balochistan fell prey to geostrategic politics of two great rival powers – the Great Britain and Czar Russia – of that era. The Great Britain concerning the Russian advancement to the warm waters of the Arabian Sea created a buffer zone that encompassed Balochistan and Afghanistan. The geostrategic location of Kalat State in defence and strategic point of view vis-à-vis to Britain and Russia and internal instability and tribal rivalries and mistrust paved the way for the entrance of British into the State of Kalat. Siddiqi (2012) argues that a disorganized and weak Balochistan and Afghanistan were indeed unable to counter the Czarist expansionist strategic towards South Asia – specifically to the Arabian Sea – and British perceiving the threat of Russian presence in the region adopted a sound deterrence plan to limit the Russia to the Central Asia. Therefore, “the British involvement in Balochistan was in lieu of its imperial rivalry with the Russian Empire. Balochistan bordered Afghanistan, the latter being susceptible to Russians because of its geographical proximity to the Central Asian region, where the Russians were now slowly and gradually expanding.” (Siddiqi, 2012: 54). This led to weaken the power to the Khan as ruler of Kalat State, and subsequently the Agent to the Governor General replaced the Khan as head of the Confederation dividing Balochistan into many administrative units with administrative and financial authority resting the British.

With the advent of British and the subsequent weakening of Khan of Kalat, Balochistan underwent a series of political, administrative and economic changes. The British assumed the direct control of Balochistan, bringing far-reaching social and political changes in the Baloch tribal polity. The British employed the policy of “divide and rule” by keeping the Khan under their supervision, curtailing his powers, and acting as intermediary between Sardars and the Khan. Instead of establishing a clearly demarcated role for the Khan and the tribal chiefs, they

ensured that confusion and complications existed between them. Introduction of administrative reforms by Sir Robert Sandeman changed the basic fabrics of the Baloch society, which certainly helped the British to crush successfully the pockets of Baloch resistance against the occupation of their land.

For British colonizers Balochistan was nothing more of a frontier state, in contrast to other parts of the subcontinent, only having strategic significance. They denied all sorts of public services to the people of Balochistan and introduced no people-centric political, economic and social reforms; even a fraction of sorts that we see other parts of subcontinent. They intentionally kept the Baloch backward and underdeveloped with far reaching consequences. The legacy of this British imperial practice can be seen even in today's Balochistan. The tribal chieftains and the Baloch tribal system have to this day remain the key cause of many problems including lack of unity, feudalism, and animosity between tribes, leading to internal tribal wars, traditional economic means and with social dynamism.

The Dynamics of Baloch Nationalism

Baloch nationalism can best be explained through the ethno-symbolist approach, which sees modern nations as extended forms of older communities called ethnic (ethnic groups), and modern nationalism as being built on these pre-existing ethnic and cultural groups (see Smith, 1995, 2001 and 2004). Baloch nationalism and the Baloch resentment within the federation of Pakistan demonstrate that it is all about history, identity, and resources that shape the dynamics of Baloch nationalism. Factually speaking, Baloch nationalism itself is an old phenomenon that goes back prior to the formation of Pakistani federation. However, the Baloch disgruntlement that emerged just after the creation of Pakistan is a new occurrence with changing orientations. So far as the Baloch nationalism is concerned, it emerged with the arrival of the British in Balochistan in 1839 and evolved subsequently over the years. Kalat was a semi-autonomous state before the partition in 1947 under the suzerainty of the British Government as per the treaty of 1876 between the Khan of Kalat and the British Government. In post independence, Kalat was integrated into Pakistan under an agreement signed in March 1948 between the Khan of Kalat, Mir Ahmed Yar Khan and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the first Government General of Pakistan (Khan, 2014). Even after the complete merger of the State of Kalat in the federation, the status of Balochistan remained largely ambiguous until 1970 when it was recognized as a province of federation. It is worth noting that the Baloch leadership including some prominent chieftain and tribal elites had struggled to the successive central governments of Pakistan for the provincial status of Balochistan. Thus, in ensuing periods the Baloch nationalism became polemic that was marked by the contradictory forces of assimilation and political pragmatism. Political pragmatism during this time was at its peak amongst the majority of the political and tribal chiefs of the province. It was an era of divisions within divisions, alliances, and factionalism (Jaffrelot, 2002). However, in spite of this, most Baloch nationalist parties possessed a common stand on Baloch national

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issues such as provincial autonomy, control over resources, and constructions of mega projects in Balochistan.

In the general elections of 1970, the Baloch-Pashtoon nationalist, National Awami Party (NAP), won majority of seats both in provincial and national assembly and duly formed the provincial government with the coalition of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam. However, the NAP-led government was short-lived. Under the pretext of secessionist charges – though these charges were never proven – the NAP-led provincial government of Sardar Attaullah was replaced by yet another pro-federation dispensation that the representative Baloch leadership found hard to align with. It was not only a dismissal of the NAP government that caused a critical disgruntlement and deep apprehension among the Baloch people vis-à-vis the federation, it also led to the incarceration of around fifty senior members of the NAP, who were charged on treason allegations. This spurred another phase of conflict and strengthened the Baloch nationalism vis-à-vis the federation. The ire and antagonism between the Baloch leadership and federation culminated into a revolt and subsequent military intervention in Balochistan during 1970s, which was more intense and bloodiest as compared to the previous ones. However, when General Zia Ul Haq captured powers in 1977 as the military dictator, he released all the nationalist detainees including the Baloch leaders and the Hyderabad Tribunal Case withered away without any result. The era from 1977 to 2000s seems to be an era of calmness between the Baloch nationalists and the federation of Pakistan. One cannot see any major offensive from either side but rather the Baloch nationalist parties and leaders resorted to gain more provincial autonomy and control over the resources of their province.

It may be argued that the failure of the Baloch people – because of the reasons discussed above – in assimilating into the mainstream federal polity has catalysed Baloch nationalism, especially its hardcore variant within Pakistan. It is important to note that Baloch nationalism has not been monolithic in its orientation and dynamics, especially since the 1970s. It has two main strands: the federalists – nationalist and the hardcore – nationalists. The former are struggling for maximum provincial autonomy and control over Baloch resources within the Pakistani federation, while the latter demand self-determination, especially since 2000s, and are waging a low intensity militancy for an independent Balochistan. The increasing sense of Baloch nationalism also seems to be a reaction to the unfair socioeconomic policies of the Pakistani federation towards Balochistan.

Conclusion

This paper applying a modernist approach, investigated the emergence of the Baloch as nation. It discussed and analysed four different and contrasting theories on the formation of the Baloch as nation. The study tried to identify and analyse the different historical events and political, economic and geographical forces that led to consolidate the concept of nation-hood among the various tribes that have

become the basic elements of the genesis of the Baloch nation. We argued that the Baloch national identity emerged as a result of particular historical, social, economic and political circumstances that had a disruptive impact on the Baloch people of the Indo-Iranian hinterlands. We underlined that the construction of Baloch nation and nationhood occurred in the context of rapid social and political in relation to the British colonialism and nationalization of the subcontinent. We provided a historical account of Balochistan and the Khanate of Kalat, and presented that how the sovereignty of Kalat State was terminated by the British intervention in Balochistan, which continued till 1948 when Balochistan has formally become a part of Pakistani federation. The British rule in India brought about unprecedented changes in politics and socioeconomics of Balochistan. It disrupted and reoriented the traditional balance of hitherto traditional tribal structure that barely had any collective ethnic identity. Though the society of Balochistan was reoriented and restructured after the arrival of the British, the latter constructed only roads and railway line for purely strategic reason, which did not correspond with the population's social and economic requirements, as the British-built communication network did not connect the traditional population centres of Balochistan. The socioeconomic development that took place during this era was asymmetric, since the comparative rapid development in British Balochistan diminished the political and economic significance of the Khanate of Kalat.

In post-independence scenario the political complacency and economic interest of the rivaling tribal chieftains and political elite of Balochistan have overshadowed the Baloch nationalism. In any period if one part of Baloch population showed their radical resentment against the injustices of the federation towards the people of Balochistan and consequently adopted the militancy path against the state of Pakistan, at the same time another part of the same population cozied up with the ruling establishment and stood against their conational. The tribal structure of Baloch society never allowed them to become a nation with solid nationalistic agenda with ideological constructions seeking to forge a link between a united ethnic group and the state. Although the dynamics of Baloch nationalism has changed recently, historically it has evolved and was used by the competing tribal chieftains and political elite with the ample support and safeguards of ruling establishment at the centre as an instrument for achieving political aims and more as an argument for seizing and retaining political and economic control of Balochistan.

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