



Theories of Ethnic Conflict and Baloch Nationalism: A Historical Analysis

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Abstract

This paper is designed to come with analysis of Baloch Ethno-Nationalists politics on theoretical basis. Theories of ethnic conflict are important to study to examine properly and explain Baloch ethnic-conflict and correlation amongst situations such as economic, political and social. Similarly, theories of ethnic-conflict are important to develop understandings of different situations as well as conflicts that arise in multi-ethnic state of Pakistan in post-colonial era. Theories of ethnic conflict also help in analyzing the Baloch Nationalists political unrest, research domains for understanding political situation in Balochistan and the process to avoid violence in discriminatory socio-political conditions. By understanding these phenomenon, it helps in understanding violence against state of Pakistan by segment of a Baloch society on ethnic basis.

Key Words: Baloch, Ethno-Nationalism, Greed and Grievances, Ethno-political Mobilization, Relative Deprivation

Introduction

Demographically, Balochistan is inhabited by Baloch, Barhvi, Pashtun, Urdu speaking, Punjabi, Hazara and other ethnicities while marking Baloch and Pashtun as the larger ethno-political groups.¹ Politically Baloch seems to be part of the tribal system as Baloch tribesmen were warrior but the leadership is missing historical documentation. From 7th century AD they were engaged with Arabs in wars and in the 10th century AD witnessed Baloch tribesmen fighting with neighboring states.² In 16th and 17th centuries witnessed the establishment of Talpur state of Sindh and Khanate of Kalat. Because of this division Baloch tribesmen were not able to



brand their ethnicity.³ In medieval era Baloch were under the tribal political setup with weak control and weaker financial managements.⁴

Mir Chakir Khan established a weak tribal confederacy in 1566 A.D. which split into Khanates ruled by tribal chiefs.⁵ The tribal chiefs were nominal heads while the real power was interested with neighboring emperors of India, Iran and even to the emperors of Afghanistan till 1838.⁶ Although strong tribal chief like Naseer Khan Noori objected the assault of Baloch chiefs by Afghan kings for not allowing them to make their own decisions in 1760 AD. But after a slight military pressing, he was agreed on more cherish term for Afghan King.⁷ Mir Khudadad Khan was overthrown from power by Mir Shair Dil Khan in 1863 and became Khan of the Kalat state. Mir Khudadad Khan soon killed Mir Shair Dil Khan and became Khan of Kalat under the consultant of British Raj in India. In 1893 due to differences with British Raj in India he was imprisoned where he died in 1909.⁸⁻⁹ The economy of the society was nomadic in nature that was the reason behind the lose control by Kalat's authorities over people.¹⁰

At the time British withdrawal from Sub-continent the sense of national identity evolved among Balochs. As nominal Khan of Kalat; Mir Ahmad Yar Khan II asked the British administration of India for handing power through a memorandum at the time of partition of India. With agreement of the British All India Muslim League also signed an agreement for announcement of independence of Kalat on 11th August 1947.¹¹ In this connection Khan of Kalat also declared the independence of Kalat in a speech on 11th August 1947 and on 15th August, independence announcement of Kalat Government with national flag of green and red color.¹² The constitution also provided space for elections and Kalat State National Party won the house of common. Khan discussed the freedom of leased areas to British but failed and then Khan meets with M.A. Jinnah.¹³ From 12th to 15th December 1947 accession to Pakistan was debated in *Dar-ul-Awam* but the presence of nationalist decision was not taken. According to 3rd June plan these states were required to either join Pakistan or India¹⁴ and *Las Bela, Makran and Kharan* joined Pakistan in March 1948 but were politically opposed by the nationalists from Kalat.¹⁵ However, Kalat with no option sign merger agreement with Pakistan on March 27, 1948. This decision of Khan of Kalat was opposed by nationalist and propagated the idea of forceful accession of Kalat by Pakistan and the agreement was enforced on August 15, 1948. Upon this Prince Karim went to Afghanistan and started attacks of state and its infrastructure.¹⁶ This marked the beginning of the armed Baloch ethno-politics in Pakistan. KSU was political banned and Prince Karime along with other nationalist renamed the Party as Kalat State National Party (KSNP). In January 1955, through an agreement Khan of Kalat was, assigned the status of "President of the Council of Rulers of the Balochistan States Union" and KSU was merged into One Unit.¹⁷

Baloch nationalist again resisted the merger of Kalat into West Pakistan under the "One Unit Scheme" in 1958. KSNP was also banned in 1955. During political conventions of Quetta and Mastung; Hussain Unqa, Mir Gul Khan Naseer, Qadir Bakhsh Nizamani, Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo and Abdul Karim Shorish founded Ustaman Gal (Party of the People) in 1956.¹⁸ The

main objective of Ustaman Gal was preservation of Kalat's state and autonomy.¹⁹ This was the reason that Bakhsh Bizenjo and Prince Abdul Karim joined National Awami Party (NAP).²⁰

This was again nationalist move to sustain and achieve their cherished goal of independence as NAP's constitution was convergent for autonomy.²¹ The 1958 martial law regime with Basic Democracies Public Offices (Disqualification) Order (PODO) and the Elective Bodies (Disqualification) Order (EBDO) allow the government for unjust dealing with political leadership. Many political leaders were imprisoned and thrown out of their political offices. The Baloch nationalists protested and were promised for the release of Baloch leadership but due to political ignorance Baloch Ethno-nationalist Nawrooz Khan started armed conflict that continued till 1964.²² Similarly dismissal of elected Baloch nationalist government further intensified Baloch Ethno-nationalism and its aftereffects was seen in 2006 after the killing of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti.

Baloch Nationalism and Theory of Greed and Grievance

One of the key factors involve in post 1990s ethnic conflicts is greed and grievances. The greed and grievances led ethnic differences to armed conflict between the ethnic groups or ethnic group with dominant group in modern states.²³ In 1948 the grievances of the tribal chiefs were translated into ethnic struggle which caused armed conflict between the ethnic Baloch and Central Government of Pakistan. Similarly, it was the grievance of the Baloch for inclusion of One Unit Scheme and beside grievance it was political greed against 1958 Martial law that marked armed conflict with state authorities by Baloch Nationalists.

The followers of greed and grievances approach believe that inequality among groups, political deprivation, and oppression of a group in issues are the main causes of ethnic conflict.²⁴ In 1948 Baloch Nationalists conflict was subjugated but in 1962 because of Baloch Nationalists beliefs that they will be dealt unjustly again intensified conflict in the shape of armed struggle. In 1970s the dismissal of the elected government of Baloch Nationalists in Balochistan further strengthened the sense of discrimination and inequalities among the Baloch and a stronger armed conflict aroused between Baloch Nationalists and Federal Government of Pakistan. Similarly in 2004 the Baloch Nationalist exploited public sentiments upon the unjust division of resources and economic development under CPEC. Beside these the cultural differences and ethnic hatred cause civil or ethnic conflict.²⁵ In the case of Balochistan, the Baloch Nationalists tried to poster separate identity in 1970s as the Provincial Government deliberately announced

that the government employee of other provinces will be transferred to their respective areas and the right to have employment in Balochistan is only for the people of Balochistan. This sense of separate identity was further strengthened by the 2004 Baloch Nationalists politics and the attacks were carried on people of Punjab whether they were providing services in Government or private sector. This caused civil war situation resulting in an intensified conflict between Baloch nationalists and Federal Government of Pakistan.

Subsequently, the conflict on intensification caused movements and these movements turned into ethnic armed conflicts and ultimately became movements for demanding separate homeland.²⁶ These assertions are correct in the case of Balochistan as the Baloch Nationalist from decades narrated that Federal Government did not provide the proper shares of revenue provided by natural resources of the Balochistan. The Baloch Nationalists narrated the abundance of resources of Balochistan in one hand and on the other hand Baloch Nationalists propagated a sense of discrimination and unjust distribution of resources. Nawab Akbar became the champion of such narration who highlighted the Sui Gas shares. The situation remains worsened after 2004 as Baloch Nationalists beside provincial shares also propagated that under CPEC the Federal Government is colonizing the province and looting the resources. This time beside above-mentioned factors the killing of Baloch Nationalist Akbar Khan the conflict got the shape of armed violence in Balochistan. The conflict was so intensified that it was taking the shape of a separatist's movement in Balochistan.

The proponents of the Greed and Grievances asserted that the powerful insurgent groups are mostly attracted by their greed for resources and its exploitation that led to ethnic conflicts and the conflicting groups on the extreme case tend to gain more and more resources for conflicting group.²⁷ In the case of Balochistan the Baloch Nationalist upon stimulating public sentiments in the name of unjust division of resources and exploitation of resources. However, under the carpet they are securing their own interests as in 2004, Nawab Akbar Khan opted for violent struggle to receive more shares from Sui Gas field.

Collier believes that the existence and continuation of conflict requires money. For him limitation of the financing can cause halt for insurgency and because of limited finance a movement is impossible to be continued and the conflicting ethnic group can easily be subjugated by the state.²⁸ In 1948, the Baloch

Nationalists involved in armed conflict lack the financing and were undermined easily by the Government. In 1970, the Baloch Nationalists started armed conflict with limited financing and were undermined by the Government. However, the armed conflict started after 2004 by the Baloch Nationalist was much stronger as it might be got financing. This time the Federal Government find it difficult to undermine the Baloch Nationalists and Federal Government provided political space for Baloch Nationalist in 2007 and in 2013 but still conflict remain in active mode. The strength and length of the conflict indicates that the Baloch Nationalists involve in the conflict might have financing from different sources.

In general, the extraction of the natural resources required land acquisition while acquiring land required migration of the inhabitants which results in deprivation of the inhabitants from their ancestral homeland. The extraction of the natural resources is also damaging environment in many ways.²⁹ In the case of Balochistan this might not be necessary factor that cause conflict as land acquisition in Balochistan requires Provincial Government approval or acquisition from Nawabs or Sardars. The beneficiaries in such cases are Government or individuals who can't shape ethnic conflict. On the other side the elite of the Baloch society can stimulate public in the name of deprivation for their personal gain.

With stronger economies the countries with rich natural resources can easily undermined the ethnic uprising. On the other hand, the countries with limited resources find it difficult to counter the uprisings. In general countries with least natural resources are weaker compared to natural rich resources country.³⁰ This might be true that in Pakistan the ethnic uprising cannot be easily undermined because of different factors i.e., weaker economy, under development, foreign involvement, internal instability, political factors and corruption.

Similarly, Snyder explained that the extraction of natural resources required larger financing economy. The natural resources extraction projects need huge investments for which the state has to impose taxes for increasing revenue. In case of rebellion the state has to further increase taxes to maintain stronger army for subjugation of the rebellion.³¹ In the case when ethno-political differences get the shape of armed conflict the rebellious group mostly derive their financing as black economy.³² In the case of Balochistan it might be true as a prolonged conflict required stronger financing for both state and conflicting groups. The conflicting

groups in Balochistan receives financing either from smuggling or foreign funding which is claimed time to time and again by the state of Pakistan.

Fearon and Laitin viewed that abundance of natural resources exposes the state for conflict as ethnic groups are attracted by the extractive price of the resources which prolong the conflicts.³³ In the case of natural resources rich Balochistan might be correct as different power have eyes on the resources and its extraction. For example, in Sendek and Recodick projects different parties from different countries are trying to be benefited from the Gold and Copper of the Sendek and Recodick. In such situation they may bribe the stakeholder or might create unfriendly environment for extraction through financing violent activities. Doyal and Sambian added that in such cases countries with weak economy not only have weak military but also weak political setup which cannot make a decisive step-forwarding for just distribution of the resources. These countries are economically dependent and their dependency further complicate the situation as the country's financial prudence rely on resources.³⁴ Pakistan's economy is weaker but has a stronger army. Pakistan's political setup is weaker and cannot make decisions for just division of resources and dealt the situation through military way which further worsened the situation. In case of Balochistan when conflict arise the failure of political authority which provides more space for the ethno-nationalists to worsen the situation and strengthen the ethno-political struggle.³⁵

Baloch Nationalism and Ethno-political Mobilization

Fearon and Laitin believe that diversity of ethnicity and religion exposes the population conflict. In diverse population, there exists a constant tension which ultimately getting the shape of violent conflicts.³⁶ Pakistan is a multi-ethnic country but religiously it is majority Muslim country. Being as a majority Muslim country no significant conflict is documented on religious basis. However, being a multi-ethnic country Pakistan history witnessed ethnic conflicts. Baloch nationalism on its extreme is one of the ethnic conflict in Pakistan.

Fearon and Laitin provided with analysis of nine independent variables involve in multi-ethnic civil wars.³⁷ This analysis narrated that the countries with larger population with low income with recent independence and instable central government and with mountainous and non-contiguous land are more exposed for civil wars. Fearon and Laitin analyzed that ethnic and religious diversity are the factors that are also halting state conditions and healing for formulation of civil war a country.³⁸ Although Pakistan is a populated country but Balochistan leased populated area of Pakistan. In Pakistan resources distribution is based overpopulation distribution which always a point of concern of the Baloch nationalists. The Baloch nationalist stimulates the Baloch population while narrating distribution of state resources on the basis of

population as unjust. Balochistan is also at the lowest place in Pakistan in terms of per capita income. This factor of low per capita income is also a concern factor of the Baloch nationalist while accumulating public support for their political agenda. These variables suggested by Fearon and Laitin (population, recent independence and diversity of religion) are not involved in the case of Baloch nationalists. Instability of the central government with mountainous and non-contiguous land factors are helping Baloch nationalists to prolong and intensify conflict with the Central Government of Pakistan.

However, along with the above discussed variables, inequality in income, absence of weakening of political institution and discrimination on official level also increases the chances of civil war in a country.³⁹ In the case of Baloch nationalism, a nationalist in 1948 demanded the distribution of political power but the weaker political institution of the central Government could not respond politically which further intensified conflict. Resultantly Prince Kareem, the man successful for manipulating sentiments and a resistance was witnessed. Similarly, the political authorities under Ayub Khan again reflect political incapability to counter the ethnic uprising in 1962. Ayub Khan at first could not manage conflict of the Baloch nationalist with the federal government and responded with military operation. With worsening of conflict, Baloch cultural values and political efforts were functionalized which helped in normalizing the situation in Balochistan. In 1970 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto provoked by Baloch nationalist by dismissing the elected government of the Baloch nationalists in Balochistan. This the nationalists accumulated public support not only by manipulating political inequalities but also economic inequalities along with discriminatory approach of the federal government. This time it was Zia ul Haq, a military chief who managed the conflict but it was too late to think as the Baloch nationalist politics took the shape of violent conflict.

Fearon and Laitin's emphasis was laid over the economic variables. They believe that financially weak states are exposed for civil conflicts as the state could not manage proper political setup and could not manage proper just resources distribution. Beside these the financial weakness of the central government along with the hazard of corruption could not allow the central government to fight with opposition forces nor can it address the grievances of the conflicting groups.⁴⁰ & ⁴¹ In the case of Balochistan, with weaker financial position, the federal government of Pakistan could not manage proper political setup to address the grievances and demands of the Baloch nationalist. In 1970, because of financial weakness the federal government of Pakistan could not manage proper and just resources distribution which remain the concern of Baloch nationalists. Beside these the financial weaknesses of the central government along with the hazard of corruption could not allow the central government of Pakistan to fight with opposition forces of Baloch nationalists nor can it address the grievances of the conflicting groups of Baloch nationalists. That is why Baloch nationalist politics is based upon the stimulation over unjust division of resources.

Baloch Nationalism and Relative Deprivation

Ted Gurr, in his influential work "*Minorities at Risk*" he titles that nationalism can take place in a weak state with divided political system inhabited by heterogeneous society.⁴² These states often experiencing political unrest and the state machinery could not work for the welfare of the people. This is true in the case of Baloch Nationalists, as in 1948 Pakistan was a newly established state with weaker control and divided political system. With heterogeneous nature of the society and political unrest of Pakistan Baloch Nationalist find it easier to strengthen the conflict based on ethnic doctrine. In 1962 there was political unrest against Ayub Khan and the Baloch nationalists started armed conflict with state of Pakistan.

After the dismemberment of Pakistan and with increasing political unrest in Balochistan in 1970 which made happened after the dismissal of Nationalists Government. The Baloch Nationalists again started intensified armed conflict with Federal Government of Pakistan. In 2004 there again Pakistan saw political unrest under the emergency imposed by Pervez Musharraf the Baloch Nationalists again started armed conflict against the state of Pakistan. This time the intensity and length were of larger extent as compare to previous conflicts.

Gurr stated that in circumstances where individuals experiencing poverty and financial backwardness the individuals demand could not be properly addressed and denied by the state machinery and the state energy is used for settlements of poles apart issues. This individual deprivation worked as binding force and the ethnicity opt for conflict.⁴³ In 1948, it was the individual grievances that stimulated and inspired Baloch Nationalism for ethnic conflict as could be seen in other Baloch Ethnic conflicts. These Baloch ethnic conflicts are the manifestation of the Baloch grievances of the Baloch ethnicity against the domination of the powerful groups in the country.⁴⁴

Ted Gurr used the word relative deprivation; he coined the term relative deprivation for individual's expectations and the real response within a state. Ted Gurr believes that because of the relative deprivation stimulated by different factors attract individual to participate in collective violence.⁴⁵ This is also true in the case of Baloch Ethno-nationalists as upon they translated their individual's grievances into ethnic conflict. In 1948 Prince Kareem was aggravated by removing from Princely office and his replacement by the modern state official. In 1962, Nowruz Khan and other individuals accumulated public support for armed conflict with state of Pakistan while translating his grievances against the newly applied laws of EBDO and PRADO. In 1970, the elected Baloch leadership translated their ousting from power in the term of Baloch Ethnic conflict. Similarly in 2004, Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti transformed his personal grievances of royalty from Sui gas field into Ethnic conflict. Gurr added that beside relative deprivation the justifiable values (material items or financial assets) also stimulated individual for violence. He believes that the individual perceives many material items as justifiable for him but in state response he found that these are not available and found himself in state of relative deprivation forcing the individual to participate in violence.⁴⁶

These assertions of Gurr help this study to find the answer of the question that why common Baloch participates in conflicts against the state of Pakistan. In the case of Baloch Ethno-conflict, the Baloch nationalist in all the conflicts placed the idea of extreme deprivation of Baloch ethnicity from their values and a common Baloch perceives that these values are their integral right however, the federal government is depriving them from their justified assets and values. That is why the Baloch Nationalists remain successful for accumulating public support and intensifying conflict again the state of Pakistan. According to Gurr the perception of extreme deprivation of individual or group produce obstruction which requires response and in extreme standard of deprivation case the response will be in a shape of violence and aggression. For him when the state of frustration occurs the state machinery has to act to release and ease the situation. The exploitation of the violence through mechanism draws the attention of participants for social conditions and transformation resulting in nationalism.⁴⁷

In the case of Baloch Nationalism in 1948 Prince Kareem found himself confined and replaced by modern state which was extreme frustration produced by amalgamation of Baloch areas into Pakistan. He responded violently by attacking state machinery. Being as newly state Pakistani authorities could not address the grievances of the Baloch people at that time to release the frustration of Baloch political elites of that time. In 1962 and 1970s the same frustrations got extreme shape and Baloch Nationalists managed armed conflict. Similarly in 2002 Baloch Nationalists were politically replaced in general elections-2002 and with the start of economic activity under CPEC further increased the frustration of Baloch Nationalists. As Baloch Nationalists were demanding their justified worth but the state could not provide the values, the Baloch Nationalists perceived justified for them. In such a situation Baloch Nationalists propagated the worsened social conditions of the people of Balochistan and presented the cause as discriminatory approach of the federal government of Pakistan. Baloch community members joined the conflict and their attentions were drawn towards social backwardness of the Baloch society. This approach of inclusion of maximum members of the Baloch people along with drawing attention toward social conditions the Baloch Nationalists remain successful for arousing Baloch nationalism in Balochistan.

Conclusion

Analyzing the theories of nationalism and ethno-political mobilization, it is concluded that this study finds that Baloch Nationalism being as a modern phenomenon was caused by different factors such as Lowest Per capita income of Baloch people, diversity of ethnic population of Pakistan, least civil liberties and weaker democratic level of the political system of Pakistan, socio-ethnic discriminations in Balochistan, inequality of income from different parts of Pakistan, largest territory with low income of Balochistan, larger population of the country, political instability in the country and foreign support for Baloch Nationalism. Beside these factors this research finds that under the influence of these factors Baloch elite also play their role as they translated their personal grievances into ethnic conflict and to intensify the conflict, they symbolized the Baloch ethnicity.

As a result of their symbolization of the Baloch cultural values they accumulated support from Balochi people. Upon inclusion in the conflict, they draw individuals' attentions to the backwardness of Baloch society and narration of their rights from which they propagated that the state of Pakistan had disproved them from their just values. This produced frustration among Baloch tribes and the weaker state of Pakistan could not release masses frustrations because of the weak economy, political unrest and lack of strong decisions for equal distribution of resources. In these circumstances the Baloch Nationalist translated Baloch frustration into conflicts and upon extreme the conflicts get the shape of armed struggle against the state of Pakistan.

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