

Nature and Impact on Perceptive Understanding of Nationalism in the Conflict in Balochistan

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Abstract

The conflict in Balochistan and its frequent recurrence is dependent on understanding the concept of nationalism. The study aims to elucidate a general trend towards the notion of 'nationalism' among the people of Balochistan. The research is an exploratory attempt to streamline different opinions about nationalism. It uses primary sources of data collection in the form of interviews which were compiled by coding and corroborated by memo-driven analysis. The analysis projected that there exists a general understanding in the population about the idea of 'nationalism' as being a political ideology employed for communal gains and struggle. The analysis reveals a strong sense of cooperation by majority of population with the state authorities despite the projected nationalist struggle as populist at different levels.

Keywords

Balochistan, conflict, insurgency, nationalism, politics, demographics

Introduction

Balochistan is a vast, arid and semi-desert region divided in three countries. Historically, it has been a major battleground for many empires which have held nominal control over its boundaries. The people of this region have been nomadic and semi-urban for a long time. All these factors have developed a sense of pride and confidence in its inhabitants. The long history of this self-pride has also made this region witness a lot of conflicts. Wars with the British colonizers and resistance movements against Pakistan have impacted the history and politics of this region, developing the sense of separate identity and authority for the Baloch people. This has made the concept of nationalism flourish in the region with indigenous concepts and political objectives.

Baloch nationalism has historically been justified through the self-rule and unacceptance of any authority by Baloch people. It takes a modern and reactionary tone after the intervention of British control over the region. The modern concepts of nation and nationalism are rooted in the tribal politics of society with prominent leaders. This nationalism became the basis for political movements and collective authority in the region which change with the partition of subcontinent and the accession of State of Kalat with Pakistan. The change in control of authority and

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further consolidation of Pakistani control changed the nature of Baloch nationalism. Tensions started on the question of provincial autonomy leading to armed conflicts (Gichki, 2015, pp. 241-251). The conflict in Balochistan is evident in the history of Pakistan. In its seventy years, Pakistan has faced several nationalism-based movements and armed insurgencies in its largest province; aiming to (re)define political control and authority in Balochistan as the right of its natives. The gradual complexity of this concept determines its popularity and pertinence in the question of Baloch identity and politics of the province. The most recent wave of insurgency in the province was observed during 2000s and is referred as the most violent and destructive struggle (Bansal, 2010, pp. 115-121).

Baloch 'nationalism' has been framed as the 'ideological front' for every single wave of insurgency in the province of Balochistan. This paper argues that, the frequent usage of this concept (i.e., nationalism) for the political objectives need to be (re)examine. In doing so, this study aims to understand the concept of Baloch 'nationalism' and its role in creating and sustaining recurrent conflicts. In seeking such a link between 'nationalism' and 'insurgent movements', it is necessary to clarify that the province Balochistan is the home of diverse ethnicities and communities. Therefore, to conceive 'Balochistan' as being a province of homogenous ethnicity (i.e., Baloch) would be empirically and conceptually flawed. The insurgency is, however, concentrated in Baloch dominated areas.

This research employs the concept of 'nationalism' that has been defined as a group with "shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity" (Smith, 1986, p. 32). The application of this concept is intrinsically defined concept most successfully employed in the paper is argued by the constructivist school of thought as;

Constructivism merits careful consideration because awareness of how our understandings of the world are individually and socially constructed, and of how prevailing ideas mold our beliefs about what is unchangeable and what can be reformed, allows us to see world politics in a new and critical light (Kegley & Blanton, 2010, 2011, p. 46).

Nationalism is used as a notion that has different meanings in different contexts. It is used for achieving different political goals around the world (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2007, p. 161). To understand the current manifestation of Baloch nationalism, a redefinition of this socially constructed concept is imperative. This redefinition depends on studying different meanings of this concept and arriving at a consensual definition constructed through popular understanding. This process is dependent on the usage of constructivist philosophy of creating new meanings to established identities by general comprehension of an idea or a notion.

The impetus of this research lies in finding new meanings of nationalism that have been employed for various political objectives in Balochistan. The chief among them is to justify the prevalent insurgency in the region on the basis of the notion that as a distinct nation, Baloch people have a right to self-determination and independent state. The research aims to explore the consumption of nationalism 'as an ideology' which has created and sustained the on-going conflict in the region. Indeed, nationalism can be considered as one of the causes of conflict, however has played a complex role in the prolongation of conflict. To this end, this paper presents the notion of nationalism from the respondents' perspective. Moreover, such an analysis allows us to frame the nexus between the perceived nationalism and insurgent movement(s).

Understanding the ‘Baloch’ Nationalism

Baloch nationalism has its basis in historical facts, cultural similarities and territorial claims. The history of Baloch people, as told in their oral poetry and war ballads, reveals the characteristics of an ideal Baloch. These oral traditions also serve as the mythic foundation of Baloch character, norms and mores as well as the historical articulation of Baloch conquest, war and construction of Baloch state. Baloch (1987) in his book explains the origins of Baloch nationalism by stating the historical roots of Baloch state system. He explicates that along with social factors (e.g., language, culture and identity) other environmental factors (e.g., history, geography and climate) nurtured Baloch identity and socio-economic structures of its organisation. Dashti (2012, pp. 4-5) describes the historical nomadic setup of the Baloch society and illustrated that:

Relationship between nomadic, seminomadic, and sedentary peoples within different Persian empires has always been characterized by shifting hegemony, rivalry, wars, and alliances on various pretexts. These changing relationships played important roles in the sufferings of the Baloch tribes and frustrated attempts of subsequent identity formation as a distinct ethnic entity.

Along with these historical interactions playing a part in the identity formation of Baloch identity, several other factors are also involved. Bareesag (2004, p.23) is of the view that the separate identity of Baloch ethnicity is based on the understanding that, “national identities are based on two elements: an ethnic element, which stems from cultural-historical legacies and a civic-territorial element, which stems from modernity”. These cumulative factors develop the identity of Baloch as distinct and different from the rest of outlying cultures and identities. Therefore, we can argue that Baloch ‘nationalism’ begins from this aforementioned idea of ‘distinction’.

Similarly, Bareesag (2004), Axmann (2008) and Baloch (1987) describe the genesis of Baloch nationalism as a product of the geographical constraint of Balochistan. Comprising of arid lands, mountainous and desert areas, the fight for arable plains needed unified structure and a central system. This type of centrality was lacking in a tribal system such as that of Balochistan. Accession of lowland areas and arable plains brought upon this centrality and a proto-state structure formed. Furthermore, Dashti (2012, pp. 158-159) explains the issue from historical point of view and argues that:

The development of a Baloch national consciousness was another stimulus in the establishment of the Chieftdom of Kalat. The subsequent birth of the Baloch state was an inevitable consequence of a long period of subjugations, deprivations, and denial of an honourable socio-political status for the Baloch by various powers. With facing ore oppression, the desire of the Baloch to acquire a dignified position among the community of nations became more solidified. With the right opportunity, they became able to assert themselves by declaring the region of Balochistan, which was called Turan by the Arab historians, a state.

The system developed by Nasir Khan-I² included taxation, land appropriation and military service for the Khanate of Kalat. The geographical

² Nasir Khan was the sixth Khan of Kalat. He is credited with centralizing administration of Balochistan and constituting a standing army to assert the political independence of Kalat state from Afghan subordination. “Rediscovering the state with the historical boundaries during his reign became the founding pillar of the Baloch national resistance against colonial rule in the coming centuries.” For details, see Dashti (2012, pp. 183-196).

boundaries of Kalat state and the subsequent structure of state was designed upon the incorporation and cooperation of the tribes and their individuals with the authority of *Khan* (the ruler of Khanate of Kalat)³. The system was socially developed on tribalism and this was the dominant idea until the coming of British colonizers and their incursion into the tribal setting of Kalat.

It can be assumed that Baloch nationalism was also an effect of British experimentation with the social and government structure of Baluchistan. It developed as a response to the alteration of Baloch social values by British colonizers. In the same vein, the modern version of Baloch nationalism lies in the development of political parties that emerged as a reaction to British system in Balochistan. The Sandeman⁴ system as argued by Axmann and Baloch (Axmann, 2008; Baloch, 1987), introduced many changes in tribal system of Balochistan. These changes altered the traditional tribal structure of Balochistan by giving a greater control and importance to *Sardars* in order to challenge the authorities of *Khans*. The system also designated more authority and independence to local chiefs (i.e. *Sardars*) enabling them to be at conflict with *Khans* (Axmann, 2008; Baloch, 1987). This led to a deterioration of the conventional system of authority and superiority of British in the affairs of Balochistan. Consequently, these colonization techniques were challenged by the Baloch, primarily targeting the role of British and their designated *Sardars* while constructing the sense of nationalism and nationalist politics.

Bareesag (2004) and Baloch (1987) have astutely observed that the emergence of political parties and their leadership has been a fundamental aspect towards understanding the Baloch nationalism. To this end, *Mir Yousaf Ali Magsi* and *Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd* have been the pioneers in establishing and pronouncing the Baloch nationalism. Their political stance and activities were the first sense of modern politics in Balochistan until 1947. Baloch (1987) has analyzed in detail the history and politics in the era before partition. He states that the emergence of 'Young Baloch' party by Abdul Aziz Kurd should be considered as the pioneer effort of establishing 'political movement' in the state of Kalat. This political awakening was further augmented in the form of *Magsi* agitation demanding constitutional reforms in the state of Kalat and formation of 'Anjuman-e-Itahad-Balochistan'. Successively, Kalat state National party formed in 1935 (Khan, 2003, p. 285) which demanded an independent state after the departure of Britishers became the frontrunner of politics in the Kalat state and directed its agenda against the British colonizers (Baloch, 1987). This period set the tone for further ideas of Baloch nationalism and their incorporation in the Baloch identity. The change in the political and administrative landscape in Balochistan changed with the partition of subcontinent.

Baloch nationalism took different dimensions after the accession of State of Kalat and amalgamation of Balochistan in the State of Pakistan. The struggle emerged from recognition of Baloch ethnic identity leading to provincial autonomy, more importantly, culminating in the emergence of the idea of a greater independent Balochistan (Baloch, 1987). Baloch nationalism in the aftermath of 1948 is a continuation of the politics of sovereignty and this factor becomes the cornerstone of later nationalist ideas and movements. The idea of Baloch nationalism after the accession of Kalat became more complex as the added factors were introduced into

³ The Khanate of Kalat was the official name of the region before the advent of British. The Britishers divided the region and ruled some of it centrally as British Balochistan and rest as satellite states, one still named as Kalat. For details see, Harrison (1981, p. 19)

⁴ Sandemen system was "An administrative system that was ... system of administration ... imposed on Balochistan, which treated it as a political agency ruled through an indirect rule of the political agent of the governor general" (Khan, 2003, p. 284)

the phenomenon. Consequently, the first resistance soon after accession emerged, as the first in a series of later conflicts. Axmann (2008, p. 235) states that “even today the rebellion is viewed as a landmark of the Baloch struggle for national self-determination and independence. It has been glorified by Baloch nationalists as the First Baloch War of Liberation & National self-determination against the oppressive state of Pakistan”. This idea of ‘projected’ State oppression is also defined as the main cause of Baloch nationalist movement and conflict. For instance, Atarodi (2011, p. 13) describes this issue as: “[..] Baloch nationalism draws strength from a combination of economic, political, cultural and historical grievances”. Similarly, Grare (2013, p. 5) is of the view that: “Baloch nationalism relates to the broader national question in Pakistan. Politically, it covers everything from aspirations to full independence from Pakistan to demands for autonomy within the Pakistani federation”.

Another factor that adds to the current nationalist tendencies and further extremity of Baloch nationalist narrative is the economic ‘exploitation’ of the province Balochistan. The nationalist discourse argues that the economic structure of Baloch society is deteriorating because Baloch people are not getting their due share in the resources and their monetary benefits extracted from ‘their’ land. This argument is stated in the works of Kupecz (2012, pp. 101-103), Samad (2014, pp. 294-304), Atarodi (2011, pp.38-39), Grare (2013, p. 512) and Mazhar, Javaid and Goraya (2012, pp. 118-120). Adding to the economic perspective Wirsing’s (2008) innovative work describes the nationalist movement of Baloch people in the context of global energy politics. The author associates the natural resources of Balochistan and its effect on nationalist movement at both national and global scale.

The fact that the idea of an independent state is now the extreme stance of Baloch nationalists, owes its inception and progression to the ideas of political authority in the province of Balochistan. The main source of politics in Balochistan revolves around Baloch nationalism however in different forms. There exist political parties that believe in the struggle for the rights of Baloch people by conforming to the State of Pakistan. These nationalist parties believe in political struggle for the province by demanding greater share of the resources of province, complete authority and control, and absolute provincial autonomy. This is one side of the Baloch nationalist thought; the other side includes the organisations that believe in armed struggle. Their idea ranges from complete change of the nature of State, right of self-determination and self-government. The most extreme position of the Baloch nationalist perspective is the complete independence of ‘Greater Balochistan’ through armed conflict with the State(s) involved. Therefore, it is important that the current multifaceted Baloch nationalism be understood in the context of history, politics and economics and through the lens of Baloch identity itself. The conflict in Balochistan started as a small resistance and with time has evolved. Many different experiences with times has changed the basic nature of the conflict. The only thing that remains in the evolution of this idea is the changing nature of the political ideology on which the conflict has based. This ideology is now a complex phenomenon which needs to be investigated so to understand its general comprehension. The problem lies in understanding the conflict in its entirety as it incorporates many perspectives and ideas. The cumulative result of these perspectives has made a concept based on nationalist tendencies grow into a highly reactive ideology that is making the conflict grow more violent.

In doing so, this paper attempts to highlight the ongoing manifestation of Baloch nationalism (as a conflict) that erupted in 2006. It aims to understand the role of Baloch nationalism in the conflicts of the past and focuses on the current conflict.

In addition, this paper aims to understand the role of Baloch nationalism and its effect on the political environment of Balochistan. Such an analysis will enable us to comprehend the capacity, use and misuse of 'nationalism' in generating future conflict. With regards, this research asks the following important questions: What is the true application of nationalism in the case of Baloch? Why do the conflict and politics in Balochistan tends to revolve around ethnicity? How nationalism manifests itself frequently and forcefully in the insurgencies of Baloch people?

Methodology

This research employs qualitative methodology in order to understand the notion of nationalism, its consumption, and overall its relationship with the insurgent movement(s), from the research participants' perspective. In doing so, open-ended questionnaires were devised. The posed questions aimed to document the participants' perceptions about nation, identity and conflict. The themes of the questions pertained to the notions of: identity and identity-based politics; conflict, its causes and the parties in the conflict; nature of the political parties and their role in the society; and views on the current and the previous instances of conflict. The questionnaires were disseminated by 'face-to-face' and through internet (Facebook and email).

To understand the concept of 'nationalism' from the respondents' perspective, the recruitment was confined to the province of Balochistan. The research was conducted primarily in various universities located in Balochistan. The population sample of this study comprised the resident of Balochistan regardless of their ethnicity or religious association. The sample was purposive in nature and was chosen to be in the age bracket of 18-30 years. The participants were to answer a 15-question through semi-structured interviews (30 to 45 minutes, each interview). The total number of interviewees was 70, with 65:35 males to female ratio. Educational level of the participants was from intermediate to post graduate studies, with most of the participants belonging to ungraduated level. Participants were not asked to specify religious beliefs and employment level. The data obtained was then analyzed by coding technique. The coding process enabled various themes to be emerged which were collected around various components of posed main research questions (for detail, see section below).

The participants were facilitated through personalised briefing(s) in order make them understand the questionnaire. There existed some hesitation in the participants, but they were convinced while providing assurance regarding data confidentiality and its consumption exclusively for the research purposes. Nevertheless, the overall response rate of the approached participants was satisfactory. Over all, the aforementioned adopted methodological approach allowed the author to gain a vivid picture of nationalism and its relationship with insurgent movement in case of Balochistan.

Considering the fact that this research was conducted in ethnically (identity) charged and sensitive context, research ethics and guidelines were followed. Therefore, participants were informed clearly about the aim and scope of this research. In addition, informed consent forms were signed by the research participants. The right to anonymity was also applied where requested or felt necessary.

As mentioned above, the data was analysed through a coding process. The answers of questionnaires were coded according to similarity and difference, in terms of received responses. The participants' responses were broad in subject and thematically distinct, therefore, the 'memo-code' technique was further adopted to generate the broad themes from the collected data. The identified themes were

generated by examining the relevance of the coded data with regards to the research questions (the data produced insights in form of words, ideas and descriptions). The collectivization of all the relevant answers in a single theme produced the specific words, ideas, descriptions and opinions for a particular theme. The four major themes specified were: The Nation, identity and nationalism; Status of politics and political parties in Balochistan; Conflict in Balochistan; and Solution to the problem. These themes corresponded to the general premise of the question of nationalism and conflict.

Understanding and Miss-understanding the Politics of ‘Nationalism’: A Case of Balochistan

The data defined the participant’s comprehension of nation and identity as a group of people linked through societal attributes of language, history, culture, traditions, values, norms, ancestry, and birth. Some unique attributes include supportive political dimension, education, justice and unity. The concept of identity also substantiates this notion of nation. Nationalism as understood by the data is the disavowal of another nation and love for one’s own nation. The data suggests that, the idea of nationalism that Baloch people have stems from a strong sense of bonding associated with one’s nation. This includes the idea that nationalism is a source of political supremacy and ultimate political maturity. It is understood to be the most prominent political ideology prevalent in the region of Balochistan.

Status of Politics and Political Parties

The politics of Balochistan is different and diverse as it includes nationalist sentiments, insurgent behaviours and tribal loyalties. The analysis of this research presents an interesting fact. As previously understood that political parties have the preeminent role in building the current state of nationalism, the data rejects this proposition as it clearly indicates that there is no confidence of population in the political process and political parties in the present times. The current state of politics and political parties presents a huge gap of understanding between the inhabitants and elites of the land. According the research participants, the political parties are believed to be purely working for their self-interest and have no role in shaping modern population’s voices. Majority of people described the role of political parties as being negative and self-centred. One of the participant distinguished between the nature of political parties as being religious oriented, nationalist oriented and federalist oriented. The data generally viewed the federalist parties as being insufficiently active and negatively affecting the interests of people. A general lack of confidence was evident in mainstream electoral political parties. As regarding the groups indulged in the conflict, the data remains largely neutral. There is a wide understanding that a conflict may resolve the inherent social and economic injustices, so the groups must continue but there is also a disdain prevalent which terms the tactics of the insurgents as xenophobic and damaging.

Conflict, its causes and future

The data states that the causes of conflict do not have just the nationalistic causes, they have been complemented by state failures, economic disparities and challenging power structures in the region. It is believed that the foremost cause is the feeling of people that they are underprivileged due to a systemic exclusion of state authorities. Nationalism as an ideology has developed in response to this feeling. Along with this general understanding is that nationalism is a political ideology turned into violent means by more extremist individuals. The previous instances of conflict in this regard have been helpful in creating more voiced opposition but not a

general statement of complete people's representation. All the conflicts in Balochistan may have started from nationalism but do not have a direct relationship of cause and effect in the modern or future conflict.

The causes most prominently stated include injustice, oppressions, unequal rights, resource exploitation, missing persons, deprivation of rights and involvement of foreign parties. The data revealed interesting behaviours that along with general causes that are listed in various studies, there is the understanding that unemployment and military presence are a cause of conflict. In addition, lack of education, harsh state policies and a general neglect were also stated as the causes of conflict.

Regarding the future recurrence of conflict, diverse opinions were recorded. One of the most iterated was the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), others revealed the relevant causes for future conflict may be religious, sectarian or tribal enmities. expansion of current conflict and any local or international conflict. Majority of participants were of the view that the Chinese investment is a very exploitative factor. The label indicated that CPEC has not been designed while keeping the Balochistan in view. In addition, significant number of the research participants believed the investment as Chinese colonialism, massive influx of Chinese in the region and further exploitation of the natural resources. The apprehensive nature of the population in this project stems from the Chinese mining at Saindak. The general acceptance of CPEC is very low and this can become a cause for future insurrection.

Solution(s)

The data indicated that the residents of Balochistan are well aware of their rights and the prevalence of nationalistic fervour. The foremost solution that emerged clearly is that the rights of population should be delivered. The general feeling inferred from the participants' responses indicated that, there is still a sense of confidence in the state to fulfil its duties and solve the problems of conflict in Balochistan. The views of the population regarding the belief in the state apparatus is redeeming. As the data argues, many research participants believed that the insipidity of nationalistic rhetoric has pushed population towards consultative and constructive solution. However, few respondents still viewed state as the harbinger of atrocities. The Results suggest three options for solving the problem (with varying support); involvement of third parties, complete independence from state, and political autonomy. However, much of the responses indicated that, in order to resolve the issue of Balochistan, the state must take concrete and serious steps to ensure the social and economic development in the province. Such steps must be taken in the presence of devolve authority. There should be the creation of an environment that allows freedom of speech and ideas which could develop into true political voice of and for the region. The state can hence apply its agenda to address the socio-economic challenges and improve the policy implementation.

The understanding of solution lies in understanding the problem. The population is deficient in amenities and their historical rigidity makes them prone to react excessively. The solution regarding the issue of Balochistan should be cajoling not controlling. Some view the CPEC as such an opportunity to uplift and develop the deprived population of Balochistan.

Discussion: 'Baloch' Nationalism, Identity and Development

The question of Baloch nationalism relating to conflict, requires a very detailed answer. The concept of nationalism is processed to depend upon many different concepts. It includes the attributes of identity and formation of nation. Identity serves to be the basic idea of understanding a nation. Baloch identity depends

largely upon the historical and current makeup of society. The study reveals that the concept of Baloch identity is the general trait of the society excluding any other identity. Majority of population believes in Baloch being an identity ordained through their history and cultural values. Baloch value their identity over other social constructs more owing it to their pride and valour. The identity corresponds to their idea of nation which is defined as the cultural, traditional homogenous group along with a specific geography. The intellectual idea is changed as it is defined in context of heterogeneity as a valid foundation for Baloch nation. Some terming it as 'civic nationalism' defined as the coming together of different groups into forming one identity. Another idea is based on geography being a source of 'strength'. Others are of the view that the Baloch nation also does not focus upon race as being a factor for nation. The concept of identity and nation in case of Baloch are very much complementing in nature as both these ideas depend upon similar attributes of society. The current understanding of the Baloch identity in general makes it a powerful sentiment. It is a notion that can be exploited for political or economic gains. The current makeup of society and its recurrent bad experience with the federalist parties has made the identity-oriented politics in Balochistan a lacuna that can be filled quickly with anti-state rhetoric. The need is to understand that Baloch nationalism and politics revolves around Baloch identity and any suppression of this identity will create monumental problems for the State.

Nationalism is defined in the context of any political movement for a common goal. The concept of nationalism prevailing in the Baloch society views it as such highlighting the nature of this Baloch nationalism as a political philosophy for attaining national goals. It is also defined to be a process for achieving superiority and common goals for national autonomy, independence and freedom. It however lacks the status of being the popular belief as the population lacks an overall understanding of the political and militaristic attributes to the ideology. Many people viewed nationalism as being an armed struggle neglecting the importance of the political pros and cons. The intelligentsia is however very informed and has very knowledgeable views about nationalism. They defined nationalism in context of historical achievements of this ideology citing the example of nation state structures. Other differentiated between the concept of ethno-nationalism and state-nationalism and defined the contours of involvement of state in supplementing and neglecting of this ideology. The most interesting development that the data informed is that there is a gap between understanding of general population and informed population about nationalism and its role in state-formation. This means that there is not a general belief that nationalism has a direct relationship with the armed struggle for a free state as demanded by the separatists. There exists a huge gap between the notions of separatists and general population. This interesting fact add to the validity of the notion that nationalism as a concept or ideology employed for separatist conflict in Balochistan has failed to achieve any substantial goals. The pattern and resurgence of insurgency in Balochistan although claimed to be based on nationalism is not understood by the population to be so. This difference in the perception of nationalism makes this conflict an unwinnable situation for the insurgents.

The understanding of conflict in the region is apparently very complex. It is a phenomenon that has been associated with the paradigms of violence and incapable state structures. The concept of this conflict is viewed as a general trend of disruption and venting of anger against the failing and incoherent state policies in the region. There exists an idea that the present conflict is not a new one but substantiated from past conflict. The relationship between the present and past conflict is very much a failure of state's understanding of the conflict. The present sentiment defines the basis

of present conflict as being the outcome of state's unjust behaviour with the Baloch people. The other dimensions include the political handicapping of province and inequality in the provision of rights. The economic disparity has been evolved into economic deprivation.

The general trend of society is to term any new development activity as an extraction of resources without the consent of popular choice. This leads to other causes that can inevitably evolve into a new conflict in the future. One of these includes the recent collaboration between China and Pakistan into CPEC. There is a widespread belief that this project is very unjust and poses existential threats to Baloch society, people and culture. There is however a very interesting idea that people still believe in the state and its role in resolving the problem. The solution is apparent yet very despairing. If there is a will to understand the cause of conflict and solving it, there is a segment of society that still believes in the power of the state to do so. This involves understanding the structures of political power in the society. The truer representation of people's sentiments is divided but a very heavy majority is unhappy with the status of politics and role of political parties. The political parties of today are not deemed as the true representation of public, they have been stated as self-centred and without any policy for Balochistan. The solution hence can be presented into a model for understanding the general public's opinion, understanding at a large scale the implications of conflict and taking steps for conflict resolution and prevention in the future.

The solution model is based on the belief that if not all the causes but most of conflict inducing factors can be toned down to build confidence in the capability and will of the state. The first thing is to understand that the solution lies in changing the attitude of state which should not hold its writ in every situation. The will of the state should be to accommodate people and provide their due rights. This provision includes multi-dimensional activities. The people should have their right of free speech, expression and display of political inclusivity. The state should create an environment to ensure that political and popular dissent be voiced into debates and arguments rather than creating an environment which deprives the people of their basic rights in the name of maintaining law and order. The political exclusivity has made people lose confidence in the democratic process increasing resistance and polarity in the society. The environment once created will allow dissension to be voiced through political parties and these parties should be composed of people which argue about political dissension in terms of state maintenance.

After the political process and establishment of democratic procedures, the idea of equality has utmost importance. The state should take measures to introduce policy based on making the population heard by installing confidence building measures. The best possibility is the recent project of CPEC. If this project is made to favour Baloch population socially and economically, there is a great possibility of toning down the conflict. With the economic and social benefits of this project, confidence within the state can be improved, which can further be augmented in building up true long-term measures for permanent solution to the problem.

The research has collected primary data regarding the perceptions and understanding of common people. This research has also highlighted sectarian violence as a significant cause of the problem in the region. The research can be used as a foundation to develop further understanding related to the causes and possible solutions of this problem. The research is also important to point out the discrepancies in policy formulation and implementation on governmental level. The study has highlighted the need to find out the social makeup of population in Balochistan, in the

context of changing demographic features. There is a lack of relevant data for correct identification of ethnography and political structure of the region.

Concluding Remarks

The conception of nationalism in Balochistan has diverse understandings. The causal connection of nationalism as the basis of conflict remains largely incapable of influencing the populace. Despite the claims of nationalism, the real problem lies in the (unjustified) neglect of the State. Balochistan as part of federation has been clamouring for its rights since its incorporation in the polity. The attitude of the State has however remained dormant. The consensus on the notion of the Baloch nationalism may not be a quantifiable concept but this research has aimed to provide a uniformity in the various explanations regarding it. The research has provided the understanding that the various notions of nationalism derive from the same generality. It states that, conflict may have begun as a consequence of nationalistic thought in historical instances, but the current manifestation is a composition of identical social and economic agendas. The politics of representation in the local arena is understated leading to an absence of credible political players and parties. The neglect of federal political parties also has an alienating effect on the Balochistan. This vacuum is the space that insurgents claim and project themselves as 'representative' of the Baloch nation. The efficacy of any solution to this chronic problem depends upon the understanding of the needs of the Baloch people. There is an urgent need to instil confidence through representative share, economic share and political share in the federation by instituting policies that impact in short and long term.

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