

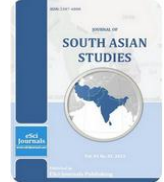


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THE MODERN ROOTS OF THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FRAGMENTATIONS IN BALUCHISTAN IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Baluchistan is a marginalized area in Pakistan. During the last decade, the amount of chaos, lawlessness, rivalries, conflicts and conspiracies has reached an alarming level, which has severely affected the entire social and political life of this area. The troubles have evolved in a specific historical context that of the colonial legacy of borderland policies, in a complex process of interaction between the weak Pakistani state and security-oriented policies on one hand, and tribally-based structures on the other. The purpose of this article is to explain the historical roots of current rivalries and conflicts in Baluchistan, which reflect the interests of different factions of tribes and sub-tribes who have redefined their identities with hybrid patterns of tribal nationalism.

Keywords: Baluchistan, Bugtis, Colonialism, Fragmentation, Hybrid, Indirect rule, Marris, Mengals, Nationalism Pakistan, Patronage, Sardar, Tribe.

INTRODUCTION

Baluchistan is a large area divided into three parts among Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. Baluchistan is written in Baluchi, Farsi and Urdu in similar ways, but on the basis of dialects and accents in different local areas, the words are pronounced differently. In the English texts it has been written as Baluchistan, Baloochistan, Beloochistan, Balochistan, Belochistan, etc. Recently, the nationalists in Pakistan have tried to standardize the words as Baloch and Baluchistan. The biggest section of Baluchistan is now part of Pakistan. Baluchistan Province is the largest in terms of the area, and the smallest in terms of the population, in the Pakistani federal system. The federal system replaced the "one unit" system introduced by General Ayub Khan in 1955. Baluchistan Province constitutes about 43% of the whole Pakistan's territory of 796,095 square kilometers, but it is the most desolate part of the country, with just about 5-7% of the whole Pakistan's population of 179 million people (BBC, 2013). It is a mineral-rich area (particularly in copper and gas), but struggles with problems of poverty and underdevelopment. Pakistan is

one of the poorest countries in the world, but Baluchistan is the poorest province (UNDP, 2013) in the country. According to UNDP Human Development Report (2013). Pakistan's Human Development Index is 0.515 and its rank in the world is 146 (among 182 countries).

In modern times, the British contacts with Baluchistan started in 1809, when the British sent their officers, first Captain Grant and then Pottinger and Christie, to assess the geopolitical conditions of the area, in light of the threat of Napoleon to India. Three decades later, the contacts led to real influence and control of the entire area, particularly after the killing of the Khan of Kalat, Mir Mehrab Khan, who was the most powerful chief in Baluchistan, in December 1839. This was the beginning of a new era of control by the British, as the most powerful colonial power in modern history. The Khanate of Kalat was a tribal confederation ruled by a Brahui dynasty of Ahmadzai, and was functioning as a "proto-state", with certain obligations imposed by the British Empire. This relationship was frequently defined and redefined over time, but evolved into different examples of indirect rule, which were supposed to be more effective and much cheaper for the British, while still enabling them to establish a degree of control and

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stability in the area, and to keep away other rival powers. Particularly in the context of the "Great Game" (Hopkirk, 1992), in order to tighten the security belt further, from 1876 onwards the northern strip of Baluchistan came under the direct control of the British; but in many aspects indirect rule, at a lower level, was still exercised there.

Baluchistan became part of Pakistan in 1948. Whether Pakistan occupied Baluchistan by coercive means or Baluchistan joined Pakistan voluntarily are still very controversial issues. While the nationalist Baluch argue that Pakistan had occupied Baluchistan by force, many Pakistani sources believe that Baluchistan had joined Pakistan, following decisions in favor of incorporation by the Khan of Kalat and many other *sardars*, voluntarily.

The modern history of Baluchistan has been presented by the colonial British writers, and more recently by the Baluch nationalists, as a continuous process involving of hundreds of tribes and sub-tribes, reified by kinship and existing as quite independent socio-political entities. Many tribes have existed for a long time and acted as independent or semi-independent socio-political units, but many of them were invented and reinvented in the process of political conflicts and formation of new alliances (Pehrson, 1979).

In terms of demographic structure, Baluchistan is a significantly pluralistic society. Baluchistan is a multi-cultural, multi-linguistic and multi-ethnic area, in which the Baluchi speakers (excluding Brahuis) are very likely to be less than 50% (possibly about 35-40%) of the province's population. Baluchistan is also inhabited by Brahuis, Lasi, Jats (Jamotes), Dehwaris (Farsi Speakers), Pashtuns, and also Hazarhs, Seraikis, Punjabis and Sindhis who have immigrated to Baluchistan and settled there for generations. It should be borne in mind that even the Baluch historians believe that the "Baluch", as "Rind" and "Lashari" tribes, entered this area from surrounding areas in the 15th century. There is no agreement as to where their original point of departure was (Syria, North Iran or Central Asia?). If it is true, then it is very likely that they entered this area and "occupied" the land by force, and suppressed "others". They possibly adopted the previous "native" cultures and language or imposed their own. Even so, it is more likely that the result was a hybrid of two or more cultures. The primordialistic obsession of the nationalists, to find pure ethnic roots of the "Baluch", is entirely based on myths. Reality is more likely to have

been much simpler: a section of people who live in Baluchistan, as tribe or non-tribe, have immigrated with different cultural, ethnic, linguistic backgrounds, from different areas. These considerations question a simple historical account based on possession of "land", "natural" rights and purity of the race. Baluchistan is even a heterogeneous area in religious terms (mainly Sunnis, Shias, and Zegris, but also some Hindus and Christians).

Now, for more than a decade, Baluchistan has been entangled with further conflicts and widespread human rights abuse (HRW, 2010, 2012; International Crisis Group, 2007; Amnesty International, 2011a, 2011b; CRSS, 2012), but this article has no space for dealing with these issues. This article is rather an attempt to highlight some aspects of internal socio-political problems, such as the resistance of social fragmentation and tribal-*sardari* conflicts in Baluchistan. *Sardar*, particularly in Pakistan, has a wide meaning which includes tribal chiefs, feudal and even influential local bosses. In Baluchistan, they are also called mir, khan, nawab, *sardarzadah*, *nawabzadas*, *malik* (pashtun) etc.

These internal socio-political problems will be explained by a complex process of interaction between tribes and the external powers who entered and controlled the area: first the British Empire, then Pakistan. It will be explained how this process has shaped the structure of the tribal systems and influenced tribal politics, which has led to fragmented and hybrid social and political relations. This research is based on a literature review.

FROM THE BRITISH FORWARD POLICY TO ENCAPSULATION OF BALUCHISTAN BY PAKISTAN

For the British Empire, Baluchistan had no economic significance, and as a whole was not worth political integration. But for geopolitical and military reasons, it was closely watched as a buffer zone. This was seen as necessary to protect the Indian borders from any possible invasion by rival powers, who could approach through Iran or Central Asia. The British authorities undertook some measures to protect the administrated areas, particularly Sind, from the neighboring Baluch tribal invasions and predatory incursions. At an earlier stage, in 1840-1876, the British pursued a "close border" policy, which started from the storming of Kalat and the killing of the Khan of Kalat, Mir Mehrab Khan, the most influential chief in Baluchistan, in 1839.

This was a fatal blow to the Khanate authority in controlling the tribal *sardars*. Then the *sardars*, not only

among the Baluch tribes in Makran, but also among Brahui tribes in Sarawan and Jahlwan, just in the backyard of Kalat, became more reluctant to obey the Khan of Kalat, and strengthened their autonomy. In spite of British expectations, the subordination of Khan to British authority did not strengthen the Khan's authority and did not lead to further centralization of the area; it ended in insurgencies, chaos and insecurities (Gechki, 1982)ⁱ. Obviously, this policy failed; and the British had no intention (and even could not afford) to fight with insurgent tribes and pay for the building of a "state" for the Khan.

As a consequence of this failure, the British adopted Sandeman's "forward policy" (Bruce, 1900), which was a softer policy designed to take more responsibility to facilitate more peaceful penetration in Baluchistan. According to Lord Roberts, in a speech in 1898, as the Russians were approaching closer to the Indian border, the British needed to see the other side of the "hills" where the enemies could use the passes (*Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India* (III), 1910). Lord Roberts was quoting the Duke of Wellington, who said that "we must be able to see the other side of the hill".

For Lord Roberts, the "Forward policy" was an attempt to extend the British influence over, and establish law and order along the border, where anarchy, murder, and robbery had reigned. He believed that the policy of non-interference with the tribes, as far as they did not make trouble, was wise forty year earlier, although it was selfish, and not worthy of a great "civilising power". But lately, this policy had become most unwise and imprudent (*Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India* (III), 1910).

By bringing the *sardars* in direct contact with the British political agents, the *sardars* directly benefited from the British financial and political support and contributed to maintaining a level of law and order in their own constituencies. In terms of peace in the whole area, the forward policy was more successful; nevertheless, this undermined the power of the Khan of Kalat and restructured the system of *sardari* confederation under colonial control (Swindler, 1996, p. 181; Spain, 1979).

This process of restructuring in Baluchistan gave clearer delimitation and demarcation of the borders, but created even more layers of controlled fragmentations. In the early 20th century, three or even more political arrangements across geographical divisions could be identified in Baluchistan. These arrangements could be

explained by a broader policy identified as the "three-fold frontier" by Lord Curzon in India (Embree, 1977), consisting of the Kalat Khanate, British Baluchistan and the leased areas (Agency Territories). Kharan and Lasbela sometimes were considered as separate "states" and Gwadar was also an area leased to Masqat. At the same time, in each division of Baluchistan there were varied forms of administration and political controls. For example, the political agent in Sibi district, which was part of British Baluchistan, politically controlled the autonomous tribal areas of Marris and Bugtis, as well as tribes in the *Lahriniabat* of Kalat (*The Imperial Gazetteer of India Baluchistan, 1906*).

The Kalat Khanate, as a confederacy and the biggest section in Baluchistan, remained under the indirect rule of the British. British Baluchistan, in a broader sense included the leased areas, such as Quetta and Chagai, was a narrow strip that emerged in 1876, and permanently came under direct control of British India. This part was controlled by a more sophisticated, multi-layer administration, in which the British Political agents had the most important roles, but *Jirgas*, *Shahi Jirga*, levy, police, headmen etc. all played different, but important roles in assuring law and order. As Embree commented, the British aims were strictly limited to imposing law and order; and a level of social reform, rather than social change (Embree, 1979).

Since these forms of political arrangements were associated with different forms of authorities, even British Baluchistan was not fully an administrated area. Therefore, the creation of the bureaucratic system was very much mixed with semi-bureaucratic and traditional organizations. However the purpose of the British was not political integration, the power of the *sardars* was weakened to some extent, but was not seriously challenged. Because of this weakness, there were more opportunities for internal competition and more possibilities for able, influential and effective chiefs to play important roles as member of *Jirgas* or *Shahi Jirgas* and act as headmen etc. But since the effectiveness of the roles in the new context could only be realized by accepting the superiority and supervision of the British officers, the patron-client relationships were strengthened.

With direct contacts with the chiefs, the British directly paid them subsidies or kept and paid levy corps, as they did in Makran, and paid the chiefs for protecting the telegraph line. Kharan's chief Noushirwani, as a semi-

independent state, also received 6000 Rs per annum (*The Imperial Gazetteer of India: Baluchistan 1906*, p. 177). For the protection of the Bolan Pass, the British also directly paid money to the Mazarani Marris and Kurds (Bolan, 1986).

The *sardars*, to a large extent, offered their loyalty, obedience and services directly to the British, while drawing patronage from them. Through gaining further political support and economic resources, the main *sardars* strengthened their political and economic power, which changed their behavior in their own tribes and communities as well. In the context of the erosion of traditional functions such as incursion and warfare, *sardars* had to redefine their new roles. On one hand the *sardars* had to sell their image as powerful and capable representatives of their tribes to the British, and on the other hand they had to regulate the tribal practices, to meet the requirements of the colonial power. However, *sardars* could not achieve this effectively without a degree of consent of the tribal members. Gaining consent, under relatively new and uncertain conditions, in which authority of the *sardars* had also been damaged, was dependent on the ability of the *sardars* to obtain support, other than that they traditionally had.

Previously, many tribes obtained booty through the very dangerous processes of fighting, looting and robbery, in which all male and ambitious tribe members could participate and gain a reasonably fair share of personal status through their bravery, but now hardly any could have such an opportunity. Now the injection of money from the British, allocated to the *sardars*, partly compensated for the losses of the traditional income from raiding and banditry, but could not completely compensate for the psychological and sociological status they had. The money, directly handed to the *sardars*, was used by them as a new means of strengthening their power. Further access to money also increased the *sardars* power of consumption, in growing trading markets in tribal communities.

By adopting the forward policy, the British maintained an acceptable level of peace, but the *sardars*, not just in the tribal areas and the Kalat Khanate, acted as "rentier" "classes", and so their power, status and prestige were accordingly transformed. The Khan of Kalat, for example, had high revenue in the early 1900s, but instead of investing in Baluchistan, he invested much money in the British banks, to gain interest (*Imperial Gazetteer of*

India: Baluchistan, 1906). According to the same source, the revenue of the Kalat was based on 3 principle sources: subsidies and rents paid by the British Government, interest from investment, and land revenue. Subsidies included RS 1000,000 paid under treaty of 1876, and rents included: RS 30,000 for the Bolan Pass, and RS 151500 rent for the leased areas. Since 1893 a surplus of 41.5 lakhs has been invested in Government securities and received 1.5 lakh interests per year. From this revenue maintenance of the former Khan, Mir Kodadad Khan, subsidies to Jhalawan chiefs, Brahui Thanas, and the expenses of the Makran administration were paid. The total revenue was estimated to be 7.5 and 8.5 lakhs. Expenditure amounted to 3.5 or 4 lakhs. A sum of RS 53, 000 annually was expended by the British in shape of telegraph subsidies paid to chiefs for controlling their tribesmen and the maintenance of levies. Then 1.2 lakhs per annum was paid for the Makran Levy Corps (*Imperial Gazetteer of India: Baluchistan*, 1906).

The *sardars* failed to build infrastructure and promote new methods of production and trade, but they were enjoying the consumption of relatively more luxurious goods. Under the Kalat Khanate, for example, education, health and security system remained much more backward than in most parts of British Baluchistan, particularly where areas were directly administered.

After the emergence of Pakistan, in 1947, in spite of the formation of a new "nation state", the colonial legacy of the frontier structure strongly continued to exist. Some scholars have even traced the segmentary system in Pakistan back to Mughal empire a few centuries ago (Embree, 1979; Lindholm, 1979; for recent developments see Lieven, 2011). This meant that indirect rule associated with tribal *sardari* leaderships and patron-client relationships limited the process of integration of Baluchistan in Pakistan. In a new context, later on, particularly when some Pakistani central governments, such as that of Ayub Khan with his one unit policy and Bhutto with his agenda of the abolition of *sardari* system, attempted to enhance their control on Baluchistan, the *sardars* in Baluchistan strongly resisted in order to maintain their autonomy. Because of fewer resources, and less prestige and power than the colonial British, Pakistan had no choice other than accepting some forms of indirect rule.

In the face of the resistance of the *sardars* and the

changing balance of power, the Pakistani central government had to define and redefine their relationships with the *sardars*, to maintain a degree of their loyalty/obedience and reduce the level of tension with them. What has been called the “encapsulation” of the tribes, by anthropologists (Baiely, 1969; Salzman, 1974; Swindler, 1979), has adequately explained the process of interaction between the central government and the *sardars*, which has provided the *sardars*, as middle men, with some resources and the space to maintain their autonomy. This line of argument has also been taken by the Baluch intellectual nationalists, for example Janmohammad Dashti (1982) and Enayatullah Baloch (1987), who have romanticized the pre-colonial era. A more profound argument was put forward by a Pakistani Marxist, Aijaz Ahmed (1973), from a historical materialism point of view, who argued that colonialism had frozen the transformation of *Sardari*-tribalism into feudalism

Nina Swindler (1979) suggested that the Pakistani Government, to a large extent, was uncertain about using *sardar* as middlemen in a tribal society, which could strengthen *sardars* further. The process of encapsulation might have been inconsistent, but in reality, it has created a space which has facilitated negotiations between *sardars* and the bureaucracy of Pakistan. Both civilian and military Pakistani governments, to a large extent, encouraged a patronage system in which the local *sardari* powers, could mutually serve them.

It seems that since Swindler wrote her very stimulating articles, many changes have happened in the ways that the Pakistani Government exercises power. The intention and power of the central government to enhance the rationalization of the society in Baluchistan have become weaker and the clusters of local patronage networks have increased. These have led to a weaker, more inefficient, more fragmented and more corrupt system, which is less capable of allocating resources to the *sardars*, who have many more expectations than before for a very recently updated analysis (Lieven, 2011).

Drawing from some wider cases in the Middle East, including the encapsulation of the Yarahmadzai tribe in Iranian Baluchistan, Salzman (1974) suggested that indirect rule puts the chief in a position of a middle man to fill at least three functions: First, he was an intermediary acting as the channel through which information and resources flowed between the tribe and

the Government; second, he was a mediator, attempting to bring the tribe and the representatives of the Government to some mutually agreeable position in regard to various kinds of policy matters and their administration; third, he was a broker, attempting on behalf of the tribe to acquire advantages of resources from the Government (Salzman, 1974).

Control of resources strengthened the position of a *sardar* as a patron and his tribesmen as his clients. This resulted in a differentiation in political authority and economic power within the tribe. As far as a tribal *sardar* economically became independent from his tribe's people he would shift to a higher class status. Now it is quite obvious that, as Salzman, (1973, 1974), had suggested, the gap inside tribes in Baluchistan, has created some choices for some other tribal members to challenge the main chief who has lost his traditional credibility among the tribes' people. This process leads to undermining of tribal authority (Pehrson, 1979).

In local literature, the progressive poets have widely used the concept of “*Dallal*” in Baluchi. This concept closely overlaps that of the “middleman”. In modern poetry a number of anti-*sardar* poets such as Gul Khan Naseer, AzatJamaladini and Adam Haqqani have considered *sardars* as *Dallal*. But in their poems *Dallal* also means “traitor” and “predator” Adam Haqqani in a poem, “*parangi*” (westerners or imperialism here) (1979) and also in another poem called “*Zamaanag but Badal*” (the time changed) (1972), describes new *sardars* as poisonous “cobra”, changing positions to deceive people (Haqqani, 1987). It seems that Haqqani even believed that rebellious nationalist *sardars* were made by the westerners as Nawabs and *sardars*, and now wanted to cheat people to sustain their *sardari* statuses (Haqqani, 1987).

There have been some other political and economic transformations in Pakistan, which have affected the traditional role of *sardars* inside their tribes and in society. At the political level, the formation of federalism in Pakistan, and some regional and global shifts during and after the cold war; and at the economic level, the importance of further local energy sources, for both the local *sardars* and Pakistan, has been very crucial factors.

The emergence of the federal system in the 1970s in Pakistan had a complex influence on tribal relations in Baluchistan. On one hand, it facilitated allocation of resources more fairly and pushed the bureaucratic

system to spread and reach more isolated areas. On the other hand, it weakened the power of the central government, by creating strong intermediate institutions such as the provincial government and parliament. This system in reality redefined and strengthened the level of indirect rule by creating a bigger distance between central authorities and provincial and local powers. The huge gap between the “core” and the “margin”, in the context of the tribal structure, to a large extent brought bureaucratic institutions at local levels, as another source of power, in control of *sardars*. However, the provincial government and parliament to some extent downgraded the tribal autonomy and pushed the *sardars* to exercise their authority through new channels. However, while this opened the space, in many areas, for some severe intra and inter-tribal rivalries, it did not stop *sardars* from controlling resources and power at provincial and local levels. Concentration of resources in provincial government, either in parliamentarian or military appointed ones, jobs and political positions, became important channels for gaining economic sources and prestige for the *sardars*. *Sardars* even reconstructed, in some ways, their traditional roles, to mobilize their tribal members and gain political positions, particularly through parliament. In the context of the weakness of traditional chieftdom, strong market-oriented demands, as well as the application of the old policy of “divide and rule” by the Pakistani security forces, rivalries inside and between tribes intensified.

In this way, *sardars* gained an opportunity to minimize the damaging effects of the bureaucratic system on their own power by channeling resources for their own benefit and expanding their own local/provincial patronage networks. Through adopting a seclusion strategy, the *sardars*, to a great extent succeeded in controlling the process of building infrastructure and modernization, particularly in education, migration and urbanization, and maintaining the loyalty of a big section of tribal members, mainly through sharing resources with the influential clients inside their tribes.

Discovery and excavation of the sources of energy and natural wealth in Baluchistan, started in the 1950s, and has been another important factor in defining the nature of *sardari* relationships with the central government on one hand, and with their tribal members and the Baluch on the other. Tribal *sardars*, particularly in Bugti, Marri and Mengal areas gained access to massive economic resources from the royalties from coal, gas, petrol, marble

etc. This helped *sardars* to act as a new entire class and they have had many opportunities to define and redefine their roles with Pakistan’s central power, as the evidence in the mass media clearly shows (*The International News*, 2010)ⁱⁱ. Many *sardars* gained, to some extent, more independence in their relationship with the Pakistani central government (Wirsing, 2008). But they also had to negotiate with Pakistan over the nature of contracts, royalties, and access to profitable markets. As it will be shown later, these sources of energy and natural wealth intensified the intra-tribal tensions.

These changes provided the *sardars* with resources to strengthen their local patronage networks. At the same time, Pakistan’s central government, which has been desperately dependent on energy from Baluchistan, used zero tolerance policies (Wirsing 2008) to physically eliminate the radical separatists by using extra-legal and coercive means to maintain its energy security strategies. On the basis of the relatively lower shares of Baluchistan from these resources and the higher degree of poverty in this province, *sardars* have been able to present the case as a popular issue. In the context of a widespread sense of deprivation, the coercive policies, particularly during the last ten years, have promoted a sense of alienation among the ethnic nationalists.

The impacts of these societal issues cannot be fully captured without understanding the influence of globalization and regional problems, which have led, even in developing countries, to a greater consciousness about global events and also further uncertainty (Giddens, 1999; Scholte, 2005; Bauman, 2007). The combination of Mojahedin-Taliban Jihadist dilemma, with the post 11th September events in the area, as well as the failure of the policies that Pakistan adopted, have resulted in devastating effects on traditionally weak and fragmented political systems in Pakistan. This situation has developed into a fertile soil for ideologically diverse radical insurgents in the country. In response to these multilayer challenges, however, despite being much divided in their strategies, many factions of the *sardars* have adopted more aggressive and localized approaches in order to reassert their tribal values and to maintain their authority, power and resources.

The relation between tribal and national identities, in Baluchistan, has not always been antagonistic, but, in certain historical times, partially or totally, has taken forms that involved compromises. The close connection between the Baluch Student Organization

(BSO), and BSO-Azat, with the tribal political figures is a good example. Internally, moving to more hierarchical structures has also weakened the authority and modified the functions of the *sardars*. In a very complex process, on one hand, these factors have facilitated dual or hybrid identities; on the other hand, they have carried all along tensions, instability and rivalries. The *sardars* have succeeded in controlling the political arena and benefit from combining their tribal position and a nationalist approach. *Sardars*/Nawabs, relying on their tribes or sub-tribes, are still the key players in the politics of Baluchistan, but are heavily involved in rivalries and conflicts.

Particularly, in the post cold war era, when there was no longer support of the Russian hegemonic power in this area (Noraiee, 2014), in many respects the level of fragmentation, and the inter and intra-clan conflicts have further escalated all over Baluchistan. Inter-clan and intra-clan rivalries have been big problems among Bugtis (Matheson (1980), Marris (Pehrson, 1977; Harrison, 1981; Axmann, 2008), Zehris (see for example inter and intra-clan conflicts among Zehris and between Zehris and Mengals), the Mengals (Manan, 2013), Raisani and Rinds (Ansari, 2003), but definitely not limited to them.

For example, the level of rivalries between the Gazzenni and Bijjarani in the Marri tribe has reached a highly destructive level. Many Bijjarani Marris such as Hazar Khan Ramkani and the late Sher Mohammad Marri, had a significant role in founding and leading the Parari Guerrilla movement (later the Baluch People's Liberation Front (BPLF), in the 1970s (Harrison, 1981). Now these figures, who abandoned armed struggle, are considered as traitors by the radical nationalists/*sardars*. Even inside the Gazzenni tribe, there is much tension between Jangayz Marri, due to his cooperation with the Pakistani government, and his other brothers, particularly Hyrbyar Marri and Mehran Marri, the leaders of BLA. Similar conditions can be seen between Akbar Khan Bugti's descendants who are deeply divided and fighting against each other. However, some skeptics believe that these tensions are not real and are seen as part of the games played by the leaders to gain more resources and not to destroy all their bridges behind them.

To illustrate the dimensions of tribal *sardari* rivalry among the nationalists it may be useful to point out that during the last few years it has become symbolically

important for the nationalists to choose a specific day as a "martyrs day". Because of tribal-*sardari* rivalries, identifying a "national" hero as a "martyr" has created many tensions between the nationalists. While Brahuis mainly consider Mehrab Khan, as the main martyr, Marris place the emphasis on Balach and BNP Mengal on Habib Jalib. Mehrab Khan was killed by the British in 1839; Balach was mysteriously killed or died in 2007. Habib Jalib was shot dead in 2010. There is a strong belief that Pakistani security forces have been behind the recent killings (Wirsing, 2008).

In some mine-rich areas, such as Marris and Bugtis, intra-clan rivalries reflect severe competition over controlling land to benefit from royalties. The rivalries have widely taken political dimensions and have been linked to the different strategies the *sardars* have adopted in their nationalist-tribal agenda.

Now, to have a better understanding of the nature of the conflicts and political strategies that the *sardars* are involved in, four case studies are presented:

CASE STUDIES

Case study 1: The conflicts over sardarship and control of land between the Gazzenni and the Bijjarani factions of the Marri tribe were highlighted once again when Justice Muhammad Nawaz Marri was shot dead on 7th January 2000 in Quetta.

The Bijjarani faction of the Marri tribe, according to Axmann (2008), revolted against Nawab Khair Bakhsh, the main chief from the Gazzenni faction, in December 1991. Following a decision made by the Bijjaranis in a council of the elders, they invited the government to start oil exploitation in their area. This was strongly opposed by Khair Bakhsh Marri and led to an intensification of intra-tribal conflicts. After the assassination of Justice Muhammad Nawaz Marri, an eminent figure of the Bijjarani faction and a senior judge of the Baluchistan High Court, Khair Bakhsh Marri was arrested on 14th January 2000 on a charge of ordering this killing. In the first half of the same year the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) started bombing. However, later on, as a political deal, Khair Bakhsh was released by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Axmann believes that there is likely to be a link between the BLA, Khair Bakhsh and this killing. On the basis of an interview with Khair Bakhsh, on 30th December 1999, Axmann suggested that Khair Bakhsh had considered the preservation of the mineral wealth of the Marri tribal area as his life mission. He had firmly stated that in his

life he would do his utmost to prevent any such exploitation (Axmann, 2008).

Most of Khair Bakhsh Marri's sons (apart from Mehran), in different periods, have been the Provincial Parliament MPs from the Marri area, and also members of the provincial cabinets. Jangayz Marri, as the Khair Bakhsh's eldest son and acting sardar, is a member of MLP (Sharif), a provincial MP and member of the provincial cabinet. After the death of Khair Bakhsh Marri in 2014, it is very likely that the conflicts among his sons will intensify.

Case study 2: This incident is about the conflicts between Zehri and Mengal tribes which have taken a political dimension. Sardar Sanaullah Zehri, once claimed that he had killed 43 people, and that his father, while he was alive, had kept him in his private prison (see Weaver 1990). Sanaullah has been president of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawazsharif (PML-N) in Baluchistan. Akhtar Mengal is as on of Ataullah the chief of Mengal tribe, and also leader of the Baluchistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M). On 16th April 2013, it was reported (The Express Tribune 17 April 2013) that after returning from the election campaign in Khuzdar, Sanaullah's convey of more than 20 vehicles, accompanied by private and government security forces, was targeted by a bomb blast in Zehri area. As a result four people, including Sanaullah Zehri's son Sikander Zehri, his brother Mir Mehar and nephew Mir Zaid, were killed and at least 25 people were also injured. This incident turned into a crisis for Nawaz Sharif when he tried to make a deal with BNP-Mengal on seat adjustment, because *Sardar* Sanaullah Zehri accused the BNP-M chief over the murder of his son, brother and nephew. Sanaullah Zehri, expressed his great concern about Nawaz Sharif's plan and considered it as taking the side of the murderer of his family. He had warned the party leaders that if they insisted on this deal, then he would quit PML-Nawaz Sharif.

These conflicts are also related to wider intra-tribal conflicts between different factions of Zehri. Sanaullah Zehri's sardarship is challenged by Mir Amanullah Zehri, an active member of BNP-M's Central Working Committee, who has also announced himself as the *sardar* of the Zehri tribe. Amanullah's son Riaz Zehri was killed in 2009 by unidentified attackers in district Khuzdar, but he pointed the finger at Sanaullah Zehri for this tragic incident (Manan, 2013). However, this crisis for PML-N did not last for a long time because BNP-M

could not win more than one seat in the provincial assembly. So Sanaullah Zehri was appointed as Economic Minister in Dr. Malek's provincial cabinet (Butt, 2013). Since then there has been more bloodshed in this conflict.

Case study 3: The feud between the Raisani and the Rind is another story. Ansari quoted Abdul Ghaffar Abbasi, a sociologist in Karachi, that in tribal zones in Baluchistan, "it is always the word of the tribal chief that is law; laws of the state are secondary," and half-jokingly had added that "Even a sparrow cannot fly in a tribal area if it's not allowed by the tribal head," (Ansari, 2003).

When the Jarriges, a French archaeologist, arrived in Baluchistan, the area around Merhgarh was controlled by the Raisani tribe. The local chief, Nawab Ghaus Bakhsh Raisani, granted the archaeologist's team a plot of land near his compound in Merhgarh village. It was claimed that later Ghaus Bakhsh Raisani was killed by the Rind tribe.

Twenty years later, following local elections, the Raisani tribe clashed with the Rinds. Nine Rind tribesmen were killed, and the dispute eventually engulfed the entire area. The Rind and Raisani have been fighting and killing each other ever since.

Following Pakistan's military coup in 1999, the situation exploded in November 2001, when five people, including the six-year-old son and father-in-law of *Sardar* Yar Mohammed Rind, chief of the Rind tribe, were killed in an alleged Raisani ambush near Merhgarh. Two months later, the Rind started their revenge. According to Ansari, scores of tribesmen, armed with AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades, attacked the Raisani-dominated village of Merhgarh. The tribes clashed for three days while the village women and children hid in bunkers. Finally, the Rind offered the villagers an ultimatum: Leave Merhgarh or die.

The Raisani leader and his tribe left for Quetta, and Rind tribesmen moved in and looted the abandoned houses. They demolished the Raisani chief's compound with a bulldozer and torched more than a hundred other houses in the vicinity. Buildings in the excavation camp were also attacked, and the scientific instruments they housed looted (Ansari, 2003).

Nawab Muhammad Aslam Khan Raisani, chief of the Raisani tribe, has been a leader of the PPP and was Chief Minister of Baluchistan from 2008 to 2013. His brother Nawabzadah Lashkari Raisani left the PPP and joined PML-N in 2013. From the rival tribe, *Sardar* Yar

Muhammad Rind, Rinds chief, is affiliated to PML and have been a senator, MP and also a Federal Government minister.

Case study 4: This story happened about 7 decades ago, but is still similar to the stories that frequently occur in today's Baluchistan.

Bugti is one of the largest tribes in Baluchistan and was led by Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti until 2006. In 1946, when Sylvia Matheson met Nawab Bugti, he had just left the Aitchison College in Lahore, which was famous as the Princesses College related to Oxford University. Nawab Bugti had said to Matheson that he had killed the first man when he was just 12 years old. She asked him why? He replied that the man had annoyed him, although he had forgotten the cause. He admitted shooting the man, due to his hasty temper. He stated that it was not a capital offence under tribal law, but anyway as an eldest son of a chief he was entitled to do as he pleased in his own territory. He claimed his family enjoyed absolute sovereignty over the people, who accepted this as their tradition.

Nawab Bugti went on to say that his own father had been poisoned and that his uncle, currently acting as regent during his college studies, was responsible. The author asked the Nawab what he planned to do about it and if he wanted to poison his uncle. He had replied that poisoning was too good for such a man and he didn't want a blood feud on his hand. He would wait until he could discretely get rid of the whole family (Matheson, 1967).

After partition, his uncle was killed in 1951 in Jacobabad. Nawab Bugti for a short period became the defence minister of Pakistan in 1958. He was arrested on charges of killing Sardar Haibat Khan, uncle of his wife and father in law of his brother, Ahmmad Nawaz Bugti, in 1959. As an influential political figure, he cooperated with Bhotto's Government against his previous colleagues and friends, who had formed the first provincial Nationalist government in 1973. Then many nationalists considered him as a "traitor" and he was appointed by Bhotto as provincial governor. Again he became Chief Minister of Baluchistan in 1989. In the early years of 2000s, he revolted against Musharraf, and eventually he was killed by military forces, or some say he died mysteriously, in August 2006, but by this time he was a great hero for the nationalists.

These are just a few examples of real incidents which are frequently covered by the local and Pakistani national

newspapers on Baluchistan. Some similar stories also happen in other parts of Pakistan, but Baluchistan is a special place in terms of the dimensions, political direction and widespread nature of such episodes.

These case studies clearly demonstrate an amalgamation of hierarchy, authoritarianism, feuds, tribal and nationalist politics in Baluchistan. At least since the 1920s, with the emergence of some elements of nationalist awareness, the tribal structures and values faced with new challenges. Giving priority to national loyalty could undermine tribal loyalty, and this was an alarming threat for the power of the *sardars*. Choosing the nationalist label, tactically or strategically, in any form, at least could serve nawabs and *sardars*, to minimize the damaging effects of so much division and suspicion. For many decades, rarely a *sardar*, in Baluchistan, has refrained from being called or calling him a nationalist. As result, a section of *sardars* and nawabs, have adopted a hybrid identity, combining nationalism and tribalism.

THE NATURE OF NATIONALISM IN BALUCHISTAN

Nationalism, as anywhere else, is a modern phenomenon in Baluchistan. The Baluch nationalism, both as a movement and an ideology, has kept strong links with the interests and power of the *sardars* and nawabs, whose older generations were supported by the British political and military agents. Since the emergence of Pakistan, foreign interests in conflict with Pakistan, particularly India and Afghanistan, have significantly influenced the nature and the process of development of nationalism in Baluchistan (Titus & Swindler, 2000).

The earlier Baluch nationalists were working together with the Pashtun. For example "Baluchistan and All India Baluch Conference" (the Conference) in which Yusuf Ali Khan Magsi was a leading activist, mainly focused on the "oneness" of Baluchistan and people as "Baluchistani", to be a unit of Federal India (Baluchistan and All India Baluch Conference, 1st May 1933). In some ways, later in the 1970s, this quite liberal political alliance continued under the flag of National Awami Party under the leadership of Wali Khan. The Pashtun nationalist party, the Pakhtoonkhawa Milli Awami Party (PMAP), led by Achagzai argued for the separation of Pashtun areas from Baluchistan and for them to join the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) (now Khyber and Pakhtunkhwa Province).

From the early stage of the cold war and emergence of Pakistan, a considerable number of the earlier Baluch-

Brahui intellectuals considered themselves as progressive and revolutionaries and had quite a strong anti-*sardari* approach. However, this approach was mixed with nationalism, tribal and socialist values. For example, Gul Khan Naseer, Azat Jamaladini and many other poets reflected this approach in their poems. They strongly criticized the *sardars* and nawabs as “bloodsucker”, “puppet”, “scavenger”, “oppressor”, “exploiter” etc. (Jamaladini, 1985a; Naseer, 2011). Many of these intellectuals, in the 1950s, had very close relationships with the Punjabi and other non-Baluch intellectuals and benefited from their support, experience and other resources to organize Baluchi cultural activities. Latt Khana in Quetta was a good example of these broad-minded intellectuals, socialised in this cultural-political association (Jamaladini, 1985b). On the basis of persuasion and support of this cultural association, Azat Jamaladini published *Mahtak Balochi* in Karachi in 1956. For this wave of intellectuals, freedom was mainly about freedom from *sardars* rather than territorial independence. This approach put enormous pressure on *sardars* in the area.

In spite of all these activities and pressures, the culture of enlightenment among the Baloch and Brahui population remained very weak. The parochial values embedded in the culture of the tribes to some extent diluted overtime, but “kinship” loyalties remained highly strong. From a tribal perspective, nationalism has been perceived as a cultural tradition, a matter of tribal honor for a young or an old male to protect and celebrate. Almost all dominant political organizations in Baluchistan were formed on the basis of tribal and traditional values and structures which intrinsically promoted social and political fragmentation and rivalries. Traditional values such as “*nam-o-nang*” and “*rasm-o-rawaj*” were interpreted in primordialist manner to help *sardars* in a nationalist context. In this way, *sardari* relationships, feuds, rivalries and also discrimination against women and lower classes were justified.

A blended brand of nationalism/*sardarship* has, to a large extent been processed and legitimized, through widespread, unreliable and even fictional political judgments, not much different from other parts of Pakistan, based on conspiracy theories (Lieven, 2011). The attraction of fantasies in the Baluch political life is not very strange, and in many ways they are similar to the excellent stories of a Baluch satirist Mohammad Baig Baigal (2014), who writes for the monthly magazine of

Mahtak Balochi in Quetta.

This ideological framework has not been entirely inconsistent with the methodologies and primordial assumptions that the Baluch nationalist scholars have applied. These assumptions in some respects, have been influenced by Stalin’s criteria of defining nationhood and nationalism, developed in his famous book: *Marxism and the National Question* (Stalin, 1913). Using a primordialist approach, for example, Naseer Dashti suggests that it is in nature of human beings to be always proud of his national conscious and remembrance of his roots” (Dashti, 2002). Naseer Dashti also argues that according to history, the Baluch are free-natured people and they have never accepted to be dominated by aliens. His love for his land is part of his faith (Dashti, 1982; Enayatullah Baloch 1987; Swindler, 1996; Dashti, 2002; Dashti, 2012).

Normative perspectives, which ignore diversity and historical reality, form the integrated elements of the nationalists’ arguments. Such perspectives hardly allow them to investigate profoundly and critically the complex social, political and economic conditions in Baluchistan. This has left a comfortable space for powerful *sardars* to justify their traditional behavior, including rivalries and conflicts between tribes or sub-tribes. There is a little doubt that these rivalries, to a some extent, have been the result of manipulation by the Government of Pakistan, particularly by security forces through patronage ties, but they can’t be completely and simply reduced to conspiracies. Historical, structural, and economic reasons are some fundamental factors in explaining the current conditions. These conditions have influenced the nature and functions of the current political organizations in Baluchistan. The political parties in Baluchistan, regardless of their names, have to a great extent functioned as the extensions of the tribal and kinship organizations. In a modern rational sense, there is no influential political organization built on the basis of voluntary professional political cadres. These organizations have no clear and effective written constitutions based on profound social, economic and political analysis. Even if there are any written statements, regardless of their contents, they simply remain on paper as highly abstract, meaningless, irrelevant and empty words. Lack of clearly defined strategies have made it easy for many *sardars* to act in an ad hoc manner, and in a very opportunistic way,

switching sides from one end of the spectrum to another. In the process of the frequent conflicts, nationalism has widely spread but has not emerged as a force to overcome or challenge tribal loyalties and *sardari* structures. In spite of the early optimism expressed by Harrison (1981), intra and inter-tribal conflicts have not gone away, but intensified. As the evidence shows, at least at organizational and political levels, there is not much transformation in tribal divisions.

CONCLUSION

The current situation in Pakistani Baluchistan, in which inter and intra-tribal feuds and rivalries, amalgamated with nationalist insurgencies occur, has to some extent deep roots in the social and political structures inherited from the British direct rule in this area. This historical context reflects not only a weak and highly fragmented state in Pakistan, but also weaker tribal systems in Baluchistan. The fragmented political structure in Pakistan has been associated with strong elitist security-military institutions. With the further weakness of the Pakistani state during the last two decades, the conflicts and rivalries in Baluchistan, as a marginalized area, have increased, and as a result coercive measures by the security forces, have intensified.

The fragmented political structures, which are seen as main sources of autonomous power of the *sardars*, are very likely to continue for a long period. When there is no strong culture of enlightenment and a hegemonic power, from inside or outside; rivalries and bloodshed are more likely to continue. Rivalries among the *sardars* on one hand, and coercive measures by the security forces on the other, have created a vacuum of power, which can create a fertile ground for the further influence of radical religious forces that widely use anti-corruption, egalitarian and anti-injustice rhetoric, and to some extent benefit from the support or sympathy of the security forces.

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ⁱ In his rare Book, written in Baluchi and Farsi, Kamalan Gechki, in 1880s, clearly reflected the weakness of the Kalat Khan, widespread insecurity, oppression and lawlessness in Makran. He wrote in Baluchi that "there is not one man in our Makoraan, everybody hits and goes, nobody cares, and the reality is that the country has no master (government). If the country had a master, the poor people would not have been in these conditions. The powerful people have made the country terrible. The Khan Saheb does not care about the areas, he does not know that he has a country as the British do not instruct. Kamalan Gechki who had strong sympathy to the British, dedicated his book to Colonel Miles in 1885. Kamalan wished that the British had occupied Makran and had brought an end to lawlessness, oppressions and conflicts between authorities.

ⁱⁱ For example, according to an anonymous source (August 2013), it is estimated that Shahzain Bugti, son of Talal Bugti and a grandson of *Nawab Akbar Bugti*, in one case, had received about half billion (about 48 Kror) Pakistani rupees from Akbar Bugti's Bank account. Before settlement of this case, Malik Rahman, Zardari's interior minister at that time, had asked Shahzain Bugti to pay him 50 million Pakistani rupees, to release money from a bank account. Possibly it is the same news which was seen in a different way in the "a news weblog" of The International News. The settlement of this case happened when Shahzain was Nawaz Sharif's special guest. According to the news, Shahzain returned to Quetta, after the payment of Rs506 million royalty of natural gas from the Uch Gas Field belonged to his father, Talal Bugti, the second son of the deceased Akbar Bugti, was ordered by the Lahore High Court (LHC). Interestingly a few days later, on 22 December 2010, Rahman Malik acted swiftly, and Shahzain with his 26-27 guards, on charges of smuggling arms, were arrested and sent to a "guesthouse", by the Frontier Corps (FC). This action of the Government was strongly condemned by Nawaz Sharif and he started a campaign to release him. However sometimes later, in mid-January 2011, they were released. This indicates how powerful the *sardars* are, politically and economically, in a highly corrupted system in Pakistan.