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TA4757-PAK: BALOCHISTAN ECONOMIC REPORT

Balochistan Economic Report
Background Paper on Social Structures and Migration

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Introduction

Compared with other provinces of Pakistan, and Pakistan taken as a whole, Balochistan's economic and social development appears to face particularly daunting challenges. The province starts from a relatively low level – in terms of social achievements such as health, education and gender equity indicators, economic development and physical infrastructure. The fact that Balochistan covers nearly half of the land area of Pakistan while accounting for only a twentieth of the country's population is a stark enough reminder that any understanding of the province's economic and social development will need to pay attention to its geographical and demographic peculiarities. Indeed, remoteness, environmental fragility and geographical diversity might be viewed as defining the context of development in the province.

But interestingly, Balochistan's geography might also be its main economic resource. The low population density implies that the province enjoys a potentially high value of natural resources per person. The forbidding topography is home to rich mineral deposits – some of which have been explored and exploited while yet others remain to be put to economic use. The land mass of the province endows Pakistan with a strategic space that might shorten trade and travel costs between emerging economic regions. The long coastline is not only a possible site of transit routes for trade and travel, but also the gatekeeper of rich marine resources.

This paper deals, moreover, with another set of challenges to Balochistan's economic and social development – namely, those relating to institutions, social structures and political fragmentation. Its history is perhaps as distinctive in Pakistan as its geography. The province first came into existence in its present form in 1970. Political administrations here have been mired in conflict and controversy from the very outset. The relationship with federal entities remained an uneasy one from the start. Civil strife erupted into a violent insurgency and counter-insurgency in the 1970s and close parallels exist with the current situation in the province.¹ Tribal structures are thought to dominate political processes, resulting in the prevalence of patron-client networks. The ethnic diversity of the province – with ethnic Balochis being a bare majority – adds a dimension, *prima facie*, to political fragmentation. The province is also home to competing political ideologies – such as various brands of ethnic nationalism as well as Islamic traditionalism- which stand apart from the Pakistani mainstream while also appearing to be at odds with one another.

This paper seeks to examine the main internal political obstacles to social and economic development of Balochistan. It would be reasonable to argue that the main political obstacles to development might actually lie outside the province: Balochistan's position in the federal system; resource rents and allocations to the province; and the role of extra-provincial or even extra-national political stakeholders. The remit of the present paper, however, focuses exclusively on issues that are internal to Balochistan. There is value in pursuing this line of analysis even if it were to turn out that the main political obstacles were indeed exogenous ones. Regardless

¹ For accounts of the 1973-77 conflict see Grare (2006). The present law and order situation in the province also gives cause for concern on humanitarian and economic grounds.

of whether the burden of the “blame” lay inside or outside, an understanding of the internal institutional, social and political dynamics within the province would remain pertinent to moving forward.

Section 1 proposes a political-economy framework for interpreting Balochistan’s economic potential. It argues that all of the key sectors and activities that might contribute to growth in the province are those that are related to the creation and realization of economic rents. Section 2 examines tribalism and ethnicity as possible sources of political fragmentation and social stagnation. Section 3 elaborates upon Balochistan’s actual experience with tribalism and ethnicity using a range of material including micro-level observations from fieldwork, key informant interviews and historical narratives. Migration and its interplay with existing social structures and economic development is discussed in Section 4. Section 5 reviews the political processes and outcomes – conflict, consensus-building and accommodation respectively. Section 6 concludes with observations on the dynamics of institutional change and the potential for social and economic development.

1. Basis of economic development

There are important contrasts between Balochistan and the rest of Pakistan in terms of comparative advantage and potential sectors of economic growth. While the rest of Pakistan is a labour-abundant economy with potential growth modes in agriculture, manufacturing as well as labour-intensive service sectors, Balochistan is relatively scarce in its endowments of human capital, agricultural growth and industrial investment. For the last fifteen years, the overall share of Balochistan in the national GDP has remained constant at 4 percent.² In the service sectors Balochistan's growth potential appears to be closely connected to its integration with the national economy and other regional economies. Any growth strategy for Balochistan would need to take these differences as a point of departure.

While agriculture continues to attract interest, like in the rest of Pakistan, as a source of growth, its relative potential in Balochistan is circumscribed by the chronic scarcity of water over much of the province.³ The irrigated Kachhi plains account for a high proportion of all crop production. Livestock and horticulture dominate the agricultural sector in the rest of the province. Persistent droughts and chronic water scarcity has meant the loss of grazing land, and hence the reduction in livestock herds.⁴ Only one-third of the total land of Balochistan can be deemed reasonably productive grazing land.⁵

The introduction of deep submersible tubewells as a drought mitigation measure was meant to support the horticultural economy. These tubewells, along with persistent drought conditions resulted in the mining of underground water resources, down to unsustainable levels in some key horticultural regions such as the Pishin-Lora valley. In many parts of the province including Quetta, Mastung and Killa Saifullah the water table is decreasing by more than 1.5 metres annually.⁶ Traditional methods of water harvesting no longer appear to be economically feasible. Although most policy documents continue to refer to agricultural growth as part of an economic development strategy, this is quite largely an acknowledgement of historical patterns rather than future potential.

Conditions for manufacturing growth, likewise, are relatively unfavourable compared with the rest of Pakistan. Even the relatively advanced regions like Punjab and southern Sindh have experienced difficulty in attracting private industrial investment. It is not clear why new investment will arrive in Balochistan in the medium-term in the absence of generous concessions and subsidies, and the economic logic of such concessions and subsidies remains elusive. The main exception in this regard is likely to be the Hub region which is contiguous with the city of Karachi. While the

² Malik, S. (2006). Regional Accounts of Balochistan: The Balochistan Economic Report Methodology. (Presentation). Islamabad: ADB & WB.

³ See for example, the Balochistan Conservation Strategy, and technical and background papers prepared for the Balochistan Resource Management Program.

⁴ There was a loss of 43% of livestock population in the last drought. This was reported in: Asian Development Bank. (2005). Technical Assistance Islamic Republic of Pakistan: Balochistan Economic Report. Islamabad: ADB.

⁵ Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB. p.1.

⁶ Government of Balochistan. (2006). White Paper Budget 2006-07. Quetta: GoB.

experience of concessions and subsidies in this region since the 1980s failed to live up to the promise of developing an autonomous industrial base for Balochistan, its viability as lower-rent alternative to Karachi does appear to have a firmer basis.

Three main nodes of potential economic growth in Balochistan, within the context of Pakistan's national economy, and the wider regional and global economy, have been identified. These are: (a) mineral resources; (b) trade and transit routes; (c) coastal development.

1.1 Mineral resources

The mineral sector is a potentially significant but as yet under-developed sector in Balochistan's economy.⁷ Currently this sector employs only about 1.3 per cent of the employed persons in the province.⁸ Extraction of thirty-nine out of the fifty recorded mineral resources present in Balochistan⁹ generates an annual revenue of close to Rs. 3.4 billion.¹⁰

Gas and coal have traditionally been more important amongst the mineral resources of the province and have been utilized widely for national use and export purposes. Natural gas generates annual revenues of around Rs.3.1 billion.¹¹ Some of the major gas exploration facilities are in Sui which produce close to 300,000 million cubic feet (mmcf) at Rs.22.14 per million BTU. The annual productions of gas installations at Pir Koh, Loti and Uch are 32000, 14000 and 57000 mmcf at Rs.66.92, Rs.63.20 and US\$ 3.17 mmbtu respectively.¹² Continued exploitation of gas and oil reserves has depleted much of the reserves in Sui, Loti and Uch. However, despite the limited exploratory work being conducted in the province¹³, gas and oil reserves have been detected in Kohlu, Dera Bugti and Khuzdar. Exploratory work has also been conducted in the Zarghun gas field, which is expected to start production in 2009 under the Mari Gas Company Ltd.¹⁴ The provincial government has welcomed such endeavors, deeming them responsible for generating employment and developing local communities.¹⁵

⁷ World Bank. (2007). Balochistan Economic Report – Oil and Gas Aspects. (Discussion Draft). Islamabad: World Bank.

⁸ Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB. p.20.

⁹ Asian Development Bank. (2005). Technical Assistance Islamic Republic of Pakistan: Balochistan Economic Report. Islamabad: ADB.

¹⁰ Asian Development Bank. (2005). Technical Assistance Islamic Republic of Pakistan: Balochistan Economic Report. Islamabad: ADB.

¹¹ Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB.

¹² Government of Balochistan. (2006). Mineral Resources. Available: www.balochistan.gov.pk. Accessed 28 December 2006.

¹³ World Bank. (2007). Balochistan Economic Report – Oil and Gas Aspects. (Discussion Draft). Islamabad: World Bank.

¹⁴ World Bank. (2007). Balochistan Economic Report – Oil and Gas Aspects. (Discussion Draft). Islamabad: World Bank.

¹⁵ To ensure this, the Government of Balochistan has created jobs for a 1000 levies to guard the oil and gas exploration facilities, and resettled 2000 Marri families to benefit from the mineral resources. This is stated in: Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB.

The share of the provincial governments in oil and gas resources is composed of royalties, Excise Duty and Gas Development Surcharge. In accordance with Rule 18 of Pakistan Petroleum (Production) Rules 1949, royalty on a gas field is calculated by using annual gas production and a fixed price for the well-head. The royalty is 12.5 percent of the total annual gas production, using a well-head price determined at the time of the concession, and can be paid in both cash and kind.¹⁶ Royalty is collected by the Central Board of Revenue. Under the Petroleum Exploration and Production Policy 2001, the price of gas is pegged to that of crude, which results in a price of approximately US\$ 2.75/mmbtu.¹⁷ However, the royalty for Sui gas, discovered in 1951, has been increased from the original value determined on the well-head price, to 50 percent of the 2001 policy price, with effect from 1 January 2007.¹⁸ The Sales Tax, Income Taxes and Excise Duty (at approximately Rs. 5.09 per mmbtu) are collected by the Ministry of Finance.¹⁹

The Gas Development Surcharge is collected, by the transmission and distribution companies, differently for different gas fields. For Sui and Mari, the GDS is the difference between the prescribed and actual producer price, while for the gas transmitted and distributed by Sui Southern Gas Company Ltd. and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd, the GDS is the difference between prescribed tariffs and retail prices. The GDS is pooled together and distributed amongst the provinces in accordance with their production.²⁰

Coal has also been a traditionally important mineral resource of Balochistan. Balochistan's coal production of approximately 2 million tonnes forms the highest provincial share in the national coal production.²¹ The production is increasing over time. From 2000/01 to 2004/05, there has been a 12 percent increase.²² The rate of royalty on coal has also been multiplied three folds from 20 to 60 with effect from June 2006.²³ This growing output and increased royalties project coal to be a mineral responsible for generation of increased revenue for Balochistan. The province also has large untapped coal reserves. 262 million tonnes of sub-bituminous coal reserves are present in Bolan, Quetta, Sibi and Loralai districts of the province.²⁴

The demand for coal has also been increasing. Cement, sugar, textile and fertilizer industries have switched their main fuel source from furnace oil to coal, which has

¹⁶ Government of Balochistan. (2006). White Paper Budget 2006-07. Quetta: GoB.

¹⁷ World Bank. (2007). Balochistan Economic Report – Oil and Gas Aspects. (Discussion Draft). Islamabad: World Bank.

¹⁸ For the provincial government's position on the distribution of royalties and surcharges see Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB.

¹⁹ World Bank. (2007). Balochistan Economic Report – Oil and Gas Aspects. (Discussion Draft). Islamabad: World Bank.

²⁰ World Bank. (2007). Balochistan Economic Report – Oil and Gas Aspects. (Discussion Draft). Islamabad: World Bank.

²¹ Government of Balochistan. (2006). White Paper Budget 2006-07. Quetta: GoB. According to the Government of Balochistan website, 90 percent of the coal produced is sent to other provinces for consumption.

²² Stanley, M., Koryukin, E., Maraboli, L., (2006). Balochistan Economic Report - Mining Sector Development. (Presentation). The World Bank Group.

²³ Government of Balochistan. (2006). Mines and Minerals Department. (Presentation). Available: www.balochistan.gov.pk Updated September 2006. Accessed 28 December 2006.

²⁴ Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB.

created significant demand for coal in the country. With the growing population, the demand for coal for domestic use is also increasing.

Natural gas and coal together meet around 40 percent of the primary energy production needs of Pakistan.²⁵ The Senate's standing committee on Petroleum and Natural resources has also highlighted the need for exploration and development of oil, gas and coal reserves to meet the growing domestic demand for energy resources.²⁶ Income from hydrocarbons forms a quarter of Balochistan's budget.²⁷

In addition to natural gas and coal, Balochistan is also rich in precious metals and uranium.²⁸ The federal government has devoted much resource on the exploitation of the large copper reserves in Balochistan, as a result of which, copper production has increased from 10,000 in 2002/03 to almost 4 million metric tonnes in 2004/05.²⁹ The largest copper and gold mining project in Balochistan is the "Saindak Copper Gold Project" in Chagai. The project is managed by Saindak Metals Limited (SML), an organization under the federal Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources, responsible for exploration and processing of copper-gold, silver and allied minerals. SML. In 2002, the SML agreed on a ten-year joint venture with the Chinese Metallurgical Construction Company. The SML and MCC have a 50-50 partnership in the profits, after repayment of loan with interest.³⁰ The project, currently in the production stage, pays an annual rent of US\$ 0.5 million to SML, royalty to the provincial government at 2 percent of the sale price, and the EPZ development surcharge of 0.5 percent of the actual product sale.³¹

A second major copper-gold mining project is in the Rekodiq area also in district Chaghi. This is a joint venture between Government of Balochistan (GoB), Antofagasta of Chile and Barrick Gold of Canada on a 25:37.5:37.5 partnership. The Balochistan Development Authority (BDA) is the organizational counterpart on the side of the provincial government. This project aims to tap the estimated two billion tonnes of copper and 20 million ounces of gold reserves in Balochistan.³² The project is planned to begin by 2008, and expected to generate an annual revenue of Rs.2000 million in royalties and share.³³ As the largest mineral exploitation project in Pakistan, it is celebrated by the state as an opportunity for employment generation, technology transfer, revenue generation, and community development.³⁴ On the other hand, the

²⁵ Government of Balochistan. (2006). White Paper Budget 2006-07. Quetta: GoB.

²⁶ Dawn. (2006). Petroleum Ministry Ordered to Focus on New Oil, Gas finds. Dawn. 29 December 2006. Karachi.

²⁷ World Bank. (2007). Balochistan Economic Report – Oil and Gas Aspects. (Discussion Draft). Islamabad: World Bank.

²⁸ Grare, F. (2006). Pakistan: The Resurgence of Baluch Nationalism. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

²⁹ Stanley, M., Koryukin, E., Maraboli, L., (2006). Balochistan Economic Report - Mining Sector Development. (Presentation). The World Bank Group.

³⁰ Government of Balochistan. (2006). Mines and Minerals Department. (Presentation). Available: www.balochistan.gov.pk Updated September 2006. Accessed 28 December 2006.

³¹ Government of Balochistan. (2006). Mines and Minerals Department. (Presentation). Available: www.balochistan.gov.pk Updated September 2006. Accessed 28 December 2006.

³² Kiani, K. (2006). Balochistan wants 20pc share in PPL. Dawn. 11 December 2006. Karachi.

³³ Government of Balochistan. (2006). Mines and Minerals Department. (Presentation). Available: www.balochistan.gov.pk Updated September 2006. Accessed 28 December 2006.

³⁴ Government of Balochistan. (2006). Mines and Minerals Department. (Presentation). Available:

copper-gold exploitation projects have been considered enclave industries for three reasons: most inputs-to-production of the projects is specialized imported equipment, human resource in professional capacity is foreign and outputs are export-oriented.³⁵

Marble is also another important mineral resource of the province. An estimated 200 million tonnes of marble reserves of good quality are present in Chagai, Zardkan, Siah-Chang, Jhulli, Patkok, Maskichah, Zeh, Chilgazi and Buttak. Onyx reserves are present in Chaghi, Bolan, Lasbela and Khuzdar.³⁶ The marble and onyx from Balochistan are of superior quality and are used extensively in the local construction industry. With improved technology and better marketing practices, total export of marble and onyx is projected to increase from US\$ 7 million to US\$ 40 million.

In addition, Balochistan has almost 30 million tonnes of iron ore reserves in Chaghi and approximately 200 million tonnes of 150 million years old hematitic sedimentary ironstone bed in Mustang. Quartzite in Lasbela, Limestone in Quetta, Kalat, Harnai, Sor Range, Spintangi areas and Sulphur in Chaghi are also present. Approximately ten million tonnes of Baryte, a mineral used by OGDC and oil drilling companies, is present in Khuzdar.³⁷ To tap this largest resource of baryte, a joint venture on a 50:50 partnership between Government of Balochistan and PPL was launched in 1974. This venture (that was called Bolan Mining Enterprises (BME)) is responsible for mining, grinding and marketing of the mineral.³⁸ In 2004/05, almost 40,000 tonnes of baryte was extracted, which generated a royalty of Rs.3.83 million.

The World Bank has agreed to loan 53 million US\$ for the development of the sector starting 2008. The broad goals of mineral sector development outlined by the World Bank resemble those of the ADB. The broad goals are (i) Geo-data production including establishing Balochistan Geo-data center, air-borne geophysical survey, and detailed assessments of mineral prospects and geological mapping; (ii) revisions of regularity and fiscal framework, mines safety regulation, social and environmental assessments and institutional capacity building; and (iii) poverty alleviation as a result of mineral development, mining and safety education, and establishment of a mining hazard prevention centre.³⁹ The World Bank has also asked Pakistan to develop an institutional framework to attract foreign investment in the mineral sector.⁴⁰

1.2 Trade and transit routes

Balochistan is located at an important geo-strategic position. Opposite Straits of Hormuz, it is on the cultural and geographical crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East. The Straits of Hormuz marks an entry into the Persian Gulf and

www.balochistan.gov.pk Updated September 2006. Accessed 28 December 2006.

³⁵ Stanley, M., Koryukin, E., Maraboli, L., (2006). Balochistan Economic Report - Mining Sector Development. (Presentation). The World Bank Group.

³⁶ Government of Balochistan. (2006). Mineral Resources. Available: www.balochistan.gov.pk. Accessed 28 December 2006.

³⁷ Government of Balochistan. (2006). Mineral Resources. Available: www.balochistan.gov.pk. Accessed 28 December 2006.

³⁸ As in the case of Rekodiq the government counterpart is the BDA.

³⁹ Government of Balochistan. (2006). Mines and Minerals Department. (Presentation). Available: www.balochistan.gov.pk Updated September 2006. Accessed 28 December 2006.

⁴⁰ Haque, I. (2006). Govt urged to develop Mineral Sector. Dawn. 27 December 2006. Karachi.

is an important route for oil trade. Nearly 17 million barrels of oil passes through the Straits of Hurmoz daily.⁴¹ Straddled by the 900 km western border with Iran, and around 1200 km north-western border with Afghanistan, Balochistan opens access to these mineral-rich and strategically important areas⁴². It also marks an entry point into the resource-rich landlocked provinces of Punjab and NWFP. Its geographical proximity to the oil and gas deposits of Central Asian regions adds to its strategic importance.

Balochistan's strategic location with access routes into numerous resource-rich regions makes it a possible hub for inter-regional transport and trade. Official sources recognize the importance of the province as a trade and transit route; the importance of the region can only increase exponentially with development in surrounding areas.⁴³ The landlocked areas of Afghanistan and Central Asia can access the Arabian Sea through Gwadar, with the latter emerging as an important player in intra and inter regional trade. In fact, Gwadar has been marketed by stressing its importance as a futuristic trade gateway with Central Asian regions.⁴⁴

From the Gwadar port, goods can be transported via land routes to Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and deeper into Central Asia. To make this possible, road and railway networks are being laid linking Gwadar to Afghanistan and Iran.⁴⁵ Plans to open gateways on the Afghanistan and Iran borders are also under execution.⁴⁶ With these and similar developments, Balochistan can serve as a transit route into the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan and Iran, and a trading gateway into Central Asia.

The development of the deep-sea port on the Mekran coast in Gwadar has been explicitly stated as an attempt to exploit the strategic location of Balochistan and its proximity to major economic centres in the region.⁴⁷ China has been prominently involved in the development of Gwadar. The port enables China to establish an overland trading route to the Arabian Sea through its western provinces and Balochistan. Also, Gwadar provides a viable alternative port to China, with some of its external trade being channeled through its western provinces. The transportation route from its western regions to Gwadar is almost half of the route from the western provinces to its eastern coast.⁴⁸

Gwadar is considered by the provincial government to be an opportunity for the development of the entire province. Backward linkages from the import and export at the port, and multiplier effects from the coastal highways connecting it to different

⁴¹ Hassan, A. (2005). Pakistan's Gwadar Port – Prospects of Economic Revival. Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School.

⁴² Government of Balochistan. (2005). Development of Areas Bordering Balochistan. (Presentation). Quetta: GoB.

⁴³ Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB.

⁴⁴ Dawn. (2003). Gwadar turning into mega seaport. Dawn. 15 September 2003. Karachi.

⁴⁵ Grare, F. (2006). Pakistan: The Resurgence of Baluch Nationalism. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

⁴⁶ Shahid, S. (2006). Gateways Along Border Planned. Dawn. 14 December 2006. Karachi.

⁴⁷ Shahid, S. (2006). Gateways Along Border Planned. Dawn. 14 December 2006. Karachi.

⁴⁸ Hassan, A. (2005). Pakistan's Gwadar Port – Prospects of Economic Revival. Monterey: Naval Postgraduate School.

regions within and outside the province are deemed to be beneficial for the entire province. The development of the port is tied to the development of trade, agriculture and industry within the province.⁴⁹

Balochistan is also a transit and transport route of gas pipelines. The 4 billion US\$ Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, with an approximate length of 3000 km and capacity of 1.1 to 3.4 BCFD, is planned to pass through Balochistan.⁵⁰ The 1700 km Turkmenistan-Pakistan gas pipeline and the 1650 km US\$ Qatar-Pakistan gas pipeline also pass through Balochistan.⁵¹

In recognition of Balochistan as a potential hub of regional commercial activity, the Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy has regarded infrastructure development, particularly extending and improving the road network, as an important part of engendering growth.⁵² The Asian Development Bank has also loaned funds to the provincial government for a mega project on infrastructure development. The project aims to facilitate pro-poor development by improving access of the poor, facilitating trade, “improving efficiency of the priority road transport corridor linking Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia”, and providing support to the Communications and Works Department. Around 1000 km of provincial roads are to be rehabilitated and constructed under the project.⁵³

1.3 Coastal development

The coast of Balochistan extends for 770 km, making up 70 percent of Pakistan’s coastline. The coast is scenic and houses various types of marine life forms, which presents an opportunity for both tourism development and marine fishing. Along with development of mineral resources, promoting Balochistan as a tourist attraction and developing coastal and marine resources is part of Balochistan’s poverty reduction strategy.

Balochistan also accounts for almost thirty percent of Pakistan’s landed catch⁵⁴. In 2004-2005, Balochistan’s fisheries sector contributed to 9 percent of the national fisheries sector.⁵⁵ In the last decade, the production of fish and domestic and export distribution has remained almost unchanged with the exception of a decline in 2004-2005.⁵⁶ Ninety percent of fish and related products are exported.⁵⁷ The catch is supplied to domestic and international markets through Karachi and Turbat. The fisheries sector is also a source of employment for many in the coastal areas. Nearly

⁴⁹ Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB.

⁵⁰ Government of Balochistan. (2006). Mineral Resources. Available: www.balochistan.gov.pk. Accessed 28 December 2006.

⁵¹ Government of Balochistan. (2006). Mineral Resources. Available: www.balochistan.gov.pk. Accessed 28 December 2006.

⁵² Government of Balochistan. (2006). White Paper Budget 2006-07. Quetta: GoB.

⁵³ Government of Balochistan. (2006). White Paper Budget 2006-07. Quetta: GoB.

⁵⁴ Asian Development Bank. (2005). Technical Assistance Islamic Republic of Pakistan: Balochistan Economic Report. Islamabad: ADB.

⁵⁵ Malik, S. (2006). Regional Accounts of Balochistan: The Balochistan Economic Report Methodology. (Presentation). Islamabad: ADB & WB.

⁵⁶ The BPRSP connects this drop to an increase in illegal fishing.

⁵⁷ Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB.

70 percent of the total employed persons in the coastal districts are associated with the sector.⁵⁸

The fishing policy developed in 1995 segments the coast into three zones, each for different sized vessels. Zone 1, which is from the coastline to 12 nautical miles is used for small-scale fishing and is under the management of the provincial government. Both Zone 2 (12 to 35 nautical miles) and Zone 3 (35 to 200 nautical miles) fall under the purview of the federal government. Zone 2 is used for fishing by medium sized vessels, and Zone 3 for industrial fishing.⁵⁹ To increase its revenues from fishing, the government of Balochistan has asked the federal government to also shift Zone 2 into its jurisdiction.⁶⁰ However, no action has been taken in this regard and all fishing done along the coast of Pakistan is bound by the guidelines stipulated in the fishing policy of 1995.

There are two major fish harbours (Gwadar and Pasni) and a number of minor ones along Balochistan's coastline. The availability of fish-harbour and processing facilities is seen as a major constraint in the growth of the sector.⁶¹ Additional harbour development, therefore, is expected to increase value added and exports. The Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper places the estimated fish output at 0.12 million tonnes, with a potential for an approximate two fold increase.⁶² It is estimated that a catch of 130,000 mt goes unexploited every year.⁶³ Approximately 30 percent of marine catch is lost due to inadequate processing facilities.⁶⁴

1.4 Rent creation and appropriation

Balochistan's economic development potential is largely pegged to sectors and activities that will require the exploitation of natural resources – minerals, marine resources and strategic location. These sectors will inevitably employ relatively few workers while generating a large proportion of the value added in the province. This economic structure is typical of what are known as rentier economies. The near parallels are the low population density economies of West Asia, and economies that benefit from their location as transit points between high growth economies.

The analysis of competitive markets treats rents as sources or signals of inefficiency.⁶⁵ The literature on state failure and governance is concerned about the rent-seeking behaviour of government functionaries. An economy where agents have incentives to create rents through regulatory functions, asymmetric information, or the abuse of office, is likely to allocate resources inefficiently. Rentier state economies are seen with concern in the political science literature as potential havens for dictatorship,

⁵⁸ Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB.

⁵⁹ Asian Development Bank, & World Bank. (2006). Development of Balochistan's Coast. (Presentation). Islamabad: ADB and WB.

⁶⁰ Kiani, K. (2006). Balochistan wants 20pc share in PPL. Dawn. 11 December 2006. Karachi.

⁶¹ Kiani, K. (2006). Balochistan wants 20pc share in PPL. Dawn. 11 December 2006. Karachi.

⁶² Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB.

⁶³ Government of Balochistan. (2003). Balochistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Quetta: GoB.

⁶⁴ Asian Development Bank. (2005). Technical Assistance Islamic Republic of Pakistan: Balochistan Economic Report. Islamabad: ADB.

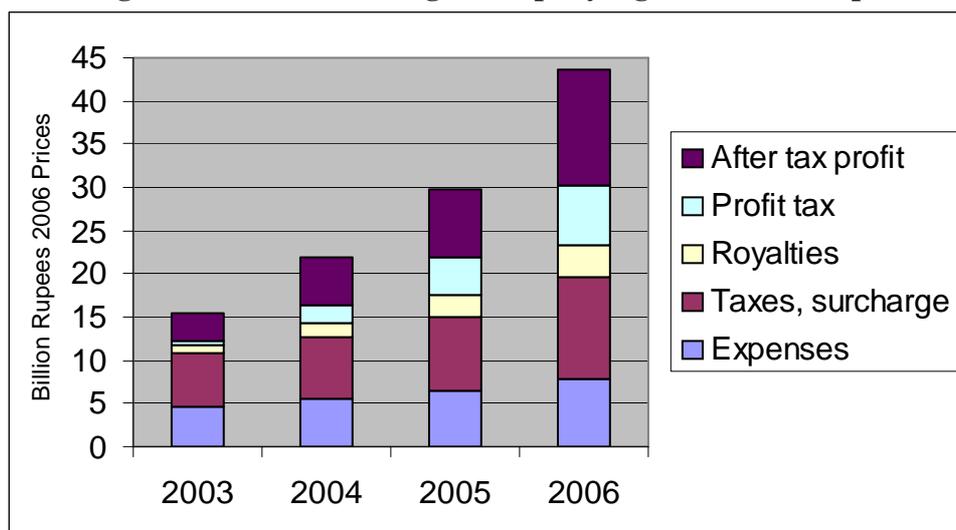
⁶⁵ The discussion on rents draws on Khan and Jomo (1996) and the review of analytical literature provided there.

because a state elite that is not required to impose taxation on its citizens is presumed to act autonomously from society. The rentier state is also seen as problematic because the pay-off for the capture of state position is potentially much higher than returns on productive economic activity.

All of these arguments notwithstanding, there are many areas of economic activity where the existence of economic rent cannot be regarded as a problem of efficiency. Rents can be efficiency-enhancing if they lead to the optimal use of scarce natural resources. The appropriation and distribution of such economic rents is a normative problem in economics – it does not really matter in terms of efficiency as to who owns, appropriates or receives economic rent. There is, in principle, a wide range of negotiable possibilities, therefore, in how economic rents might be distributed.

The accounts of a major gas company with extraction interests in Balochistan are analysed here to highlight the types of issues that are likely to be of concern in the appropriation and distribution of economic rents. Figure 1 illustrates the trend and the breakdown in the value of the gross sales of the gas company in real terms between 2003 and 2006.⁶⁶

Figure 1: Breakdown of gas company’s gross sales receipts



Source: Pakistan Petroleum Ltd Annual Reports 2003-2006

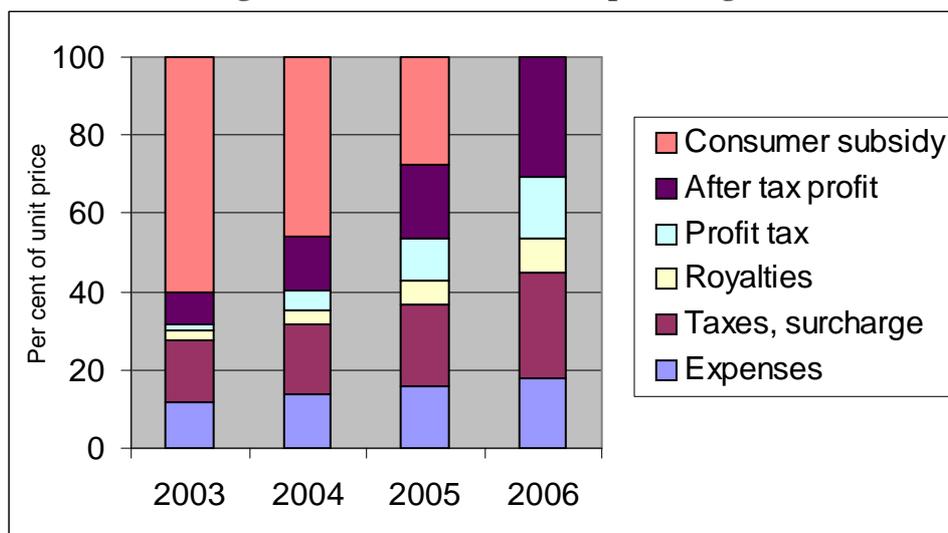
Gross sales increased between 2003 from just over 15 billion rupees to nearly 45 billion rupees. Expenses which amounted to around 5 billion in 2003 increased to 8 billion in 2006. Federal excise tax, sales tax and the gas development surcharge doubled from 6 to 12 billion, government royalties went up from 1 to 4 billion, and profits also increased by a multiple of nearly seven times from 3 billion to 20 billion. After tax profits rose more modestly, but for these the rise was more than four-fold. All this was achieved through a mere 12 per cent increase in the volume of gas production. Increases in the sale price of gas, therefore, were the major contributors to rising sales, taxes, royalties and profits. In fact, this period had witnessed a price reform in the gas sector in order to bring prices in line with world market prices.

⁶⁶ The GDP deflator was used to obtain real values in 2006 prices.

The difference between the gross revenues of the gas company and its expenses represents a measure of the economic rent earned on natural gas. This was broken down into federal taxes, surcharges, royalties, profit taxes and dividends. The various stakeholders who appropriated economic rents included federal and provincial governments and shareholders. Local rents in the shape of lease payments to landowners, the concessional employment of local labourers and sub-contractors and other “social” investments in local communities were incorporated under the expenses in company accounts. Figure 1 suggests, therefore, that economic rents accounted for between two-thirds and four-fifths of the value of gas sold.

Considering the fact that increases in gross sales were partly due to the reduction in consumer subsidies, it is useful to get a suggestive picture of the breakdown of the unit price of gas had it been sold competitively throughout. Figure 2 charts an approximate breakdown in the unit price of gas sold by the company. Gross sales receipts were normalized using the total volume of gas production in any given year. The unit price thus obtained for 2006 was then used as a reference market price for gas, under the assumption that the implicit subsidy had been removed in this period. The difference between the current unit price and the unit prices calculated for the previous years was classified as consumer subsidy.⁶⁷

Figure 2: Breakdown of unit price of gas



Source: Pakistan Petroleum Ltd Annual Reports 2003-2006

Figure 2 shows that gas consumers may have enjoyed a subsidy of the order of 60 per cent of its value in 2003. The increase in economic rents (in the form of higher taxes, surcharges, royalties and profits) took place at the expense of implicit consumer subsidies. Economic rents, therefore, represented an improvement in efficiency over time, as the unit price of gas was increased to match the true opportunity cost of the resource. How the resulting rent was distributed, however, was a matter of history

⁶⁷ This is a rough approximation, because the competitive market price of gas might also have been going up during this period in line with the prices of crude oil.

and politics. The relevant factors included existing legal structure governing the ownership of oil and gas resources in Pakistan, and taxation and company laws.

Other rents, although apparently governed by a constitutional and legal framework, were also, in practice negotiable. The Balochistan provincial government argued for allocation of a gas development surcharge, and a share in the gas royalties, and agreements were made and revised with the federal government from time to time in this regard. The demand that a proportion of the share-holding of the gas company ought to be transferred to the provincial government simply confirms the negotiability of rents. In fact, the provincial government already owns part of a subsidiary of the gas company, and earns dividends on its shares. The contrast between the different ownership and therefore revenue-sharing arrangements for the two copper-gold mining projects in Chaghi district also indicate that rent distribution remains politically negotiable, without any implications for efficiency.

2. Tribes, ethnicity and political fragmentation

Tribal structures

Tribes and tribal networks dominate social organization among the main ethnic groups of Balochistan – Baloch, Brahui and Pashtun. The only significant exception in this regard is the southwestern Baloch coastal region of Mekran (consisting of the districts of Gwadar, Kech and Panjgur), where racial origin competes with tribal affiliation as a marker of identity. The image of the “tribal” Baloch, Brahui and Pashtun is partly the result of contrasting historical experiences, nomenclatures and governance systems that became associated with the British colonization of the country. The “tribe” can be regarded as a broadly kinship-based group with a shared history, exclusive customs and myths, and coherent internal systems of leadership and collective action.

It is not immediately clear why the extended patriarchies that are known as tribes or *qabail* (plural of *qabeela*) in Balochistan ought to be regarded as being qualitatively distinct from patriarchal *biraderis* (also extended kinship groups) in the Punjab and Sindh plains. In fact, in common parlance extended patriarchal kinship groups are often referred to as *quom* in Balochistan as well as other provinces of Pakistan. There is an active debate in Balochistan about whether and to what extent the social organization of the Baloch (and Brahui) and the Pashtuns corresponds to a “tribal” or a “feudal” system. Why then, is it necessary to single out tribes and tribalism in Balochistan as possible sources of political fragmentation? And if the tribalism in Balochistan has, indeed, morphed into some variant of “feudalism”, is there any additional analytical value in focusing on “tribalism” in Balochistan?

The Balochistan tribe (Baloch, Brahui or Pashtun) appears to command a stronger bond of affiliation than kinship groups in other parts of the country. The corporate identity of the tribe is well-defined, exclusive and complete. There is little ambiguity about the tribal identity of a person, and a person can be easily “placed” – in a social sense – with reference to his or her tribal and kinship coordinates. The membership of a tribe is connected with ethnic identity at the top, and works its way all the way down to smaller kinship groups of extended families. The bonds of affiliation are maintained even across long distances. There are few, in the tribal regions of the province, that do not clearly “belong” to any particular tribe. The tribal identity, therefore, is simply one part of a more intricate kinship-based system of social affiliation extending from families to entire ethnic groups. The tribal system has active functions and roles in the management of collective action. There are unambiguous structures of leadership, and established informal norms concerning the conduct of leadership, dispute resolution, management of common property resources, and leadership transition.

It can be argued, of course, that the *biraderis* and *quoms* in other provinces (particularly in the supposedly non-tribal Punjab and Sindh) function in an analogous manner. Many of the castes or *biraderis* in Punjab and Sindh have strong corporate identities, intra-community norm-setting, leadership and collective action.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ In fact, some observers have noted that the extended patriarchal kinship organizations of the Sindhi

Balochistan's tribal regions might be considered qualitatively distinct from these provinces because the tribal system is "comprehensive" – i.e., everyone is organically linked to some sub-tribe, tribe and ultimately, to an ethnic group. In Punjab and Sindh, by contrast, there are many, particularly those belonging to "low status" kinship groups who are affiliated with more powerful patrons in factional alignments rather than social networks. In fact, however, Balochistan tribes also have "low status" affiliates whose full and equal membership of the tribe or even the ethnic group has been contested and negotiated over time.

The difference between the social organization of tribal Balochistan and other "non-tribal" parts of the country is perhaps not qualitative in nature, but a matter of degree: the extended kinship group bond simply happens to have been stronger and more active in Balochistan than in the supposedly non-tribal areas. What is clear, moreover, that whether or not the tribal form of organization was really distinctive in Balochistan, it was acknowledged, endorsed and perhaps even strengthened in the development of modern governance in the province. Until 2006 the predominant provincial force for the maintenance of law and order were "Levies" that were raised on a tribal basis. The "sardari" system was only legally abolished in 1978, and till 1997 most of the province was governed using the Frontier Crimes Regulations drawn up by the colonial government for dealing with "tribal" territories on the north-western fringes of the British Indian empire. The tribal system was also accommodated (or strengthened) by modern corporations who have been engaged in Balochistan, particularly in the minerals sector.

There are differences of opinion about the relationship between modern governance and tribal social organization. On the one hand there is the view professed by the architects of British colonial policy in Balochistan, and their institutional heirs in Pakistan, that accommodation with traditional structures was a necessary condition for the establishment of basic law and order. Any concession to tribal social organization, therefore, was simply based on an acknowledgement of existing centres of political power. A rather different perspective is held by those who prefer to take a more dynamic view of social change in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Balochistan. This view holds that colonial policy did more than simply acknowledge the existence of tribal social organization – it fossilized a corrupted form of tribal organization and vested the power of the modern colonial state into this archaic system.

While some of the historical and contemporary evidence will be examined further in Section 3 below, what can be stated with certainty at this stage is that a distinct treatment of the Balochistan tribe, in contrast with the Punjab and Sindh caste, is at least partly an outcome of the importance of the former in formal systems of governance in the province. In the meanwhile it is useful to note the possible ways in which the predominance of tribal social organization impacts development outcomes.

First, kinship groups, sub-tribes and tribes constitute vertically aligned social networks that act as important domains of political mobilization and action. The presumed division between the social, economic and political domains that allows for

and Punjabi castes have adopted, over time, the informal governance structures and nomenclature of their Baloch and Pashtun neighbours.

the development of institutions such as anonymous markets, civil society and political representation, therefore, cannot be expected to work in the same way in tribal societies. Tribal leaders are quite often political leaders as well as channels for accessing economic resources. The Baloch-Brahui tribal *sardars* in particular are thought to enjoy positions of preeminence in multiple domains.

Second, tribal social organization tends to favour vertically-aligned cooperative behaviour, often at the expense of consensus building, or even horizontal class-based mobilization. Conflicts between tribes and kinship groups and cooperation within these groups can make it costly to obtain agreement on issues that affect people across kinship and tribal lines.

The Balochi-speaking Mekran – comprising the districts of Panjgur, Kech and Gwadar – stands out in Balochistan as a region where the tribal social organization is relatively weak. The traditional informal system of governance in this area was constructed around a land-owning aristocracy (*hakims* or rulers) who controlled large villages and oases. These aristocrats – claiming to belong to “pure” racial Baloch and Gichki families – used farm servants and slaves on date plantations, and the “aboriginal” Med fisherfolk community for marine labour. Unlike the Baloch tribes elsewhere there was no system of social incorporation of the subalterns into a hierarchical tribal structure.

The system of hierarchy here was based on racial divisions. People of African origin had been brought as slaves, and descendents of slaves were known as Ghulam (slave) or Darzada (“home born”). With the abolition of slavery and the steady economic and political empowerment of the Meds and the Darzadas, a cultural Baloch identity has emerged to challenge racial divisions in Mekran society. The former aristocratic families still see themselves as racially superior, but they constitute a small minority of the population, and are unable to dominate the terms of social interaction.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity and ethnic identity are complex social divisions. At a simplistic level ethnicity might be defined in terms of language. According to the 1998 Population Census (Table 1), the largest ethnic group in Balochistan were Balochi-speakers, consisting of 55 per cent of the population. The next largest group were Pashto-speakers making up 30 per cent. Others included Sindhis (6 per cent), Punjabis (3 per cent) and Seraikis (2 per cent).

The Population Census does not explicitly mention Brahui-speakers as a separate linguistic group. In fact the Brahui-speakers dominate the central upland districts of Mastun, Kalat, and Khuzdar, and also have a sizeable presence in some of the other districts. Linguistically Brahui and Balochi are distinct languages. In terms of culture, social organization, and history, however, the native speakers of these two languages see themselves as part of a wider Baloch society and tradition. This is an interesting case where an ethnic group has two distinct languages. Because of their shared ethnicity, and for political considerations, Brahui-speakers have been classified as Balochi-speaking in the Population Census. This paper will refer to Balochi and Balochi-Brahui ethnicity as interchangeable categories.

Table 1: Distribution of population by mother tongue and district

	Total population	Per cent population by mother tongue						
		Balochi	Pushto	Sindhi	Punjabi	Seraiki	Urdu	Others
BALUCHISTAN	6,565,885	55	30	6	3	2	1	4
QUETTA	759,941	28	30	1	16	2	6	17
CENTRAL UPLANDS								
Awaran	118,173	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kalat	237,834	99	0	1	0	0	0	0
Khuzdar	417,466	97	0	1	1	0	0	1
Mastung	164,645	80	6	1	1	1	0	11
NORTHWEST								
Chaghi	202,564	94	3	0	1	1	0	1
Kharan	206,909	99	0	0	0	0	0	0
MEKRAN								
Gwadar	185,498	98	0	0	1	0	0	0
Kech	413,204	99	0	0	0	0	0	0
Panjgur	234,051	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
SOUTHERN PLAINS								
Lasbela	312,695	65	3	24	2	1	1	5
KACHHI PLAINS								
Bolan	288,056	58	1	18	1	17	0	5
Jafferabad	432,817	62	0	24	1	11	0	2
Jhal Magsi	109,941	69	0	21	0	8	0	2
Nasirabad	245,894	55	0	30	0	6	0	8
Sibi - Sibi	103,746	44	11	20	6	8	3	7
EAST								
Barkhan	103,545	75	1	0	0	1	0	23
Dera Bugti	181,310	96	1	0	1	1	0	1
Kohlu	99,846	91	7	0	1	0	0	1
NORTH								
Killa Abdullah	370,269	2	97	0	1	0	0	0
Killa Saifullah	193,553	0	99	0	0	0	0	0
Loralai	297,555	3	92	0	1	1	1	2
Musakhel	134,056	14	79	0	0	1	0	6
Pishin	367,183	0	99	0	0	0	0	0
Sibi - Harnai	76,652	7	90	1	1	0	0	0
Zhob	275,142	0	97	0	1	1	0	0
Ziarat	33,340	0	100	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Population Census 1998

The ethnic groups in Balochistan are mostly regionally segregated. Pashto-speakers inhabit the districts of the northern and northeastern part of the province, bordering Afghanistan and FATA, Brahui-speakers occupy a north-south corridor along the centre of the province, while the Balochi-speakers are divided between the west and southwest and the east. There are large concentrations of Sindhi-speaking people in the southeast (Lasbela) and the Kachchi plains area.

The provincial capital of Quetta is “shared” between the two main ethnic groups, though there is a sense that the city has its distinctive Pashtun and Baloch-Brahui

clusters. Quetta has a large minority of Punjabi-speakers (16 per cent), who along with the Urdu-speakers (6 per cent) are often collectively referred to as “settlers”. Another important group in Quetta are the Persian-speaking Hazaras who migrated from central Afghanistan in the 19th century. They are classified under “others” in the Population Census.

Balochistan, of course, is not unique in Pakistan for its ethnic (or linguistic) diversity. There are sizeable linguistic minorities in all four provinces – Seraikis in Punjab, Urdu-speakers in Sindh, and Chitrali, Seraiki and Hindku-speakers in NWFP. Ethnic identity can assume important political dimensions in Balochistan (and Sindh) compared with the other two provinces, however, in two respects. First, the linguistic or ethnic minorities are relatively large in size – so much so that the “main” ethnic group might not constitute a majority. Second, there is a perception among many representatives of the “main” ethnic group that they are at a political disadvantage vis-a-vis the minority ethnic groups.

Ethnic identity can be seen as a continuum of kinship and tribal structures in Balochistan. The Baloch, Brahui and Pashtun ethnic groups might be regarded as “super-tribes” made of tribes, sub-tribes and kinship groups. Ethnicity, therefore, is not some autonomous cultural marker of identity, but part and parcel of a comprehensive system in which individuals and families find themselves. The close connection with kinship and tribal structures implies that ethnic identities are robust and resilient.

In principle, the ethnic identity can be expected to magnify the effects of tribal social organization on development outcomes. The two points noted above with respect to tribal organization – absence of a separation between economic, social and political domains, and the pre-eminence of vertical alignments – might be replicated and reinforced up to the provincial level of decision-making and beyond. Specifically, four factors are thought to be important in Balochistan.

First, ethnic considerations complicate the business of arriving at agreements, let alone consensus, on provincial priorities concerning development. Statements about the province’s agreed position on any issue are subject to specific concessions to ethnic considerations. In extreme cases there might be open disputes and conflicts along ethnic lines.

Second, the identification of specific sub-regions with particular ethnic groups implies that many resource allocation decisions need to pay attention to “even-handedness” between regions (or ethnic groups) regardless of the technical merits of the case. Other criteria such as poverty rankings, or development needs are often accorded secondary weightage after taking into consideration the representation of different ethnic regions – particularly the Baloch-Brahui and the Pashtun.

Third, ethnicity plays some role in the placement of personnel in the provincial government’s administrative organization. There are implicit balances that need to be maintained in public sector employment at the provincial level, due to the great symbolic value attached to ethnic and tribal affiliation. The presence of a large number of officials from other provinces is seen, at once, as both necessary and

disruptive. These officials bring much-needed technical skills. At the same time, however, they are not always viewed as neutral third parties autonomous to the intra-provincial ethnic balances. They are at times regarded as being aligned to one ethnic group or other, or even to extra-provincial economic interests within the province.

Fourth, the fragile internal ethnic demographic balance within the province gives greater prominence to the issue of immigration into the province from other parts of Pakistan, or from other countries. The ethnic background of government officials from other provinces can become politically contentious. Projects and developments that might lead to migration of workers from other provinces also give rise to political anxieties. The arrival of refugees from Afghanistan since the 1980s has also played itself out as a Baloch-Pashtun issue in the internal politics of the province. The Afghan refugee population was thought to have increased the numbers of ethnic Pashtuns and Hazaras at the expense of ethnic Balochis and Brahuis in a number of locations, particularly in the provincial capital.

Political fragmentation

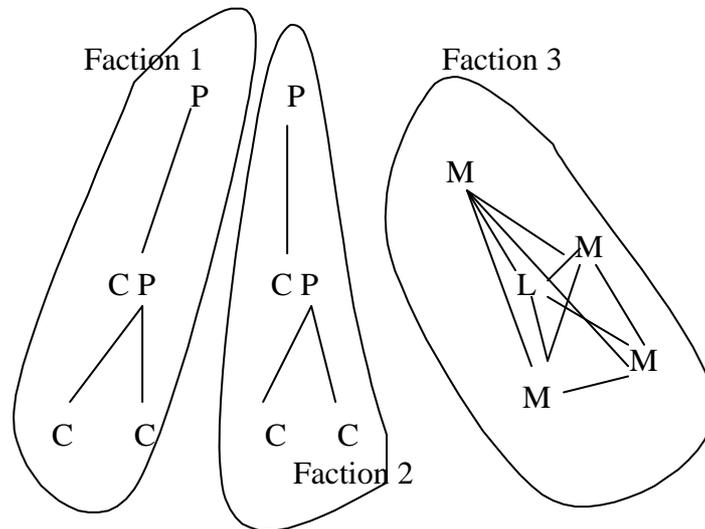
The hypothetical political model that emerges from the above stylized description of tribal structures and ethnicity in Balochistan can be summarized with the help of a diagram (Figure 3). To the extent that tribal social organization is based on exclusive networks of kinship groups, tribes and their constituent sub-groups would facilitate the formation of political factions. Tribes might be internally hierarchical with strong leaders in the shape of *sardars*. Alternatively they might be more egalitarian with strong bonds between members but less authority vested in leaders. Hierarchical tribes would result in vertical patron-client alignments as illustrated in Factions 1 and 2 in Figure 3. A tribe with a “flat” structure might have a less determined pattern of leadership (and delegation or representation) but can still be expected to function like an exclusive political faction. It is believed that the Baloch tribes tend to be of the hierarchical type whereas Pashtun tribes have “flatter” internal organization.

Because kinship groups form the basis of ongoing multiple social interactions between individuals and families, and hence relations of trust, they can lend themselves to the construction of stable factions. These factions and their leaders are likely to pursue a politics of maximizing their own pay-offs at the expense of their factional rivals -- in other words, politics is likely to be viewed mostly in terms of zero-sum games. Whether, or to what extent, the pay-offs are shared within the faction will depend on its internal structure. In Factions 1 and 2 there is a vertical alignment between patrons and clients, and it is presumed that allegiance is transferred upwards while patronage or protection is dispensed downwards. In Faction 3 all of the members (M) are linked with each other bilaterally and the leader (L) also has bilateral ties with all of the members within the group. It might be presumed that pay-offs are shared more equally between members, depending on their proximity to the leader.

The key point to note is that tribal structures (or strong extended kinship groups), regardless of their internal structures, will tend to hinder the emergence of active constituencies for higher pay-offs across factions, or non-zero sum games. Political fragmentation along tribal structures is likely to produce strong leaders at the level of the tribe or kinship group, but weak leadership at the cross-tribal or provincial level.

One recurrent feature of provincial governments in Balochistan is their reliance on multiple factions and the need to accommodate all factional leaders, thus compromising on the compactness of government.

Figure 3: Factions and political fragmentation



Note: P=patron; C=client; L=leader; M=member

The cost of generating political consensus on difficult issues – for example, the reform of the electricity tariff for tubewells – tends to be prohibitively high with the consequence that such decisions are not taken or not implemented. The governance of public service provisioning is also weakened by a factionalized polity. There is little incentive for public servants to perform if they know that they will, ultimately, be protected by their respective factional leaders from any sanction.

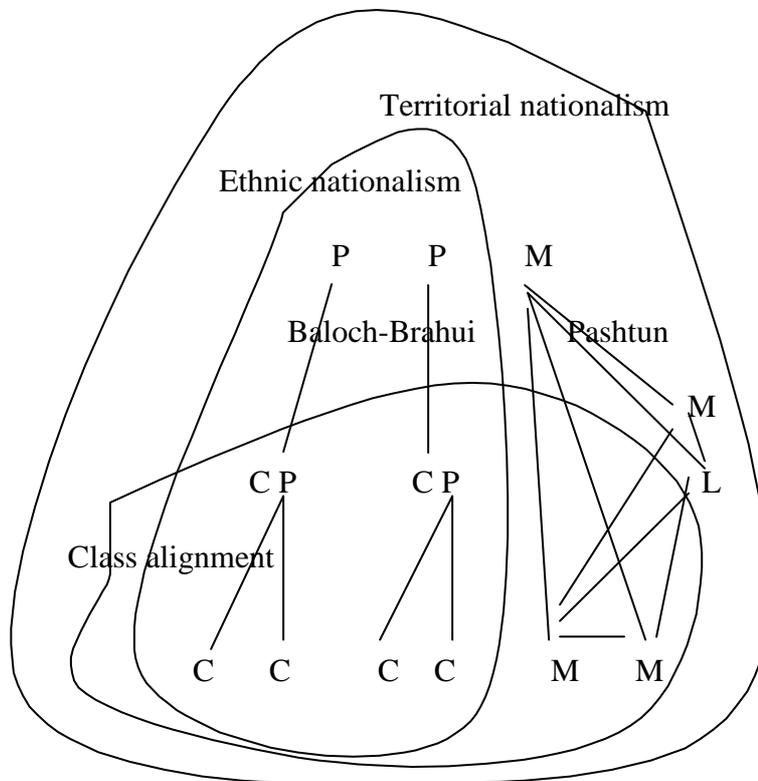
It might be hypothesized that weak political will for province-wide economic growth, social development, and public interest is linked to the difficulty in constructing horizontal political coalitions of the elite and the non-elite segments alike. It can be argued that elite coalitions may pay greater attention to the overall economic development of the provincial economy and might be able to impose costly but necessary measures in that regard. The absence of effective coalitions among the provincial elite might be responsible for a range of apparently inefficient outcomes. The inter-tribal disputes over coal mining concessions in the Chamalang region of Loralai and Kohlu districts is one such case. Another case was the long-running conflict between Bugti sub-tribes over claims to natural gas fields.

At the other end of the economic spectrum, political alignments around tribal structures might make it more difficult to construct horizontal coalitions of the non-elites. Such coalitions would be important not only for organizing on class-based issues such as land ownership distribution, tenancy rights, and wages, but also for resisting elite capture of public goods and services as sources of rent. Non-elite groups are likely to be disproportionately dependent on public goods and services

such as rural health centres, government schools, and water supply schemes. The elite have greater possibilities of access to the private sector, and hence of exit.

The governance of public goods and services can be distorted due to political fragmentation, if existing factions use public sector jobs or contracts as pay-offs to faction members. The intended benefits such as health care or schooling, in these cases, are non-excludable public goods, and therefore not seen as tangible pay-offs to faction members. Another example pertinent to Balochistan is the politics of the tubewell subsidy, that appears to benefit rich farmers at the expense of the public purse and poorer farmers. It might be argued that despite external pressures, the provincial government has not been able to mobilize political support for a reform of this subsidy.

Figure 4: Possible horizontal and “consensus” alignments



Note: P=patron; C=client; L=leader; M=member

“Political consensus” – or agreement of all major political interest groups on leadership, policy, or course of action – is a rare commodity in any political system. The idea that tribe/ethnicity-based political fragmentation in Balochistan might undermine the achievement of political consensus is not interesting in itself. What is important and interesting, however, is the consideration that a fragmented polity might lead to the blocking of a development intervention (say, a price reform, a private sector investment, an infrastructure project etc.) because a powerful faction or fragment opposes it. In principle, broader coalitions might be able to overcome the resistance of narrow factional interest groups. This might be more difficult to achieve

in a fragmented polity where the transactions costs of constructing broad coalitions might be high.

Figure 4 illustrates the difficulty in constructing broader coalitions in the stylised polity modelled in Figure 3. Three possible types of coalitions are hypothesized here, though others too are possible. Horizontal class alignments would have to cut across existing factional alignments between tribes. Given the fact that tribes (both, of the patron-client type and the leader-member type) are robust entities with strong multiple bonds between constituents, horizontal class alignments that cut across these bonds are likely to require a high degree of political investment. Class-based or even religion-based ideology might be a possible counter-foil to the power of existing social structures.

It is also possible to see the emergence of broader coalitions that are made up of existing factional groupings. If a number of tribes “naturally” form themselves into a well-defined supra-tribal group then there might be potential for larger coalitions. In the case of Balochistan, where ethnic groups act like “super-tribes” with a continuous social organization including tribes and sub-tribes, ethnic nationalism could quite conceivably emerge as a binding force for larger coalitions. Given the ethnic diversity of the province, however, such nationalism is likely to be ethnically exclusive and therefore leave out significant segments of the population. A territorial nationalism that might encompass all of the main segments of the population may be harder to construct.

Sustaining patriarchy

Patriarchy is arguably a basic building block of the tribal-ethnic social organization found in Balochistan. Tribes that merge into ethnic groups are themselves based on kinship relations between their constituents. Members of these extended patriarchies often identify themselves and define their relations with others with respect to lineage histories and current norms and preferences concerning kinship ties. Codes of honour and sanctity, which are frequently (though not exclusively) to do with relations between men and women, play a key role in sustaining traditional social structures. Prescribed gendered divisions of space, labour, roles, and authority are the hallmark of tribal and ethnic norms. In practical terms what matters in terms of social change are rules governing women’s rights to self and resources, gender segregation, and women’s access to public spaces, education, and health care.

Male members of tribes, sub-tribes and families are accorded sovereign status in informal terms – for example, it is thought inconceivable that a woman might become a chief, or take part in arbitration. The subject status of women is quite often an implicit fact in the management of relations between males within and across kinship groups. The social status or distance of a tribe, sub-tribe or family might be measured in terms of the possibility of contracting marriage relations with them. The traditional practice of “gifting” women and girls to an aggrieved party as part of conflict arbitration is simply one extreme example of how women’s subject status is necessary for the maintenance of relations between male sovereigns. If tribal social organization dominates the political process, it is likely to be difficult to generate political will for social reforms aimed at challenging traditional patriarchal relations.

3. Social structures and resources

The abstract picture of tribalism and ethnicity in Balochistan that was used in Section 2 above to outline stylized routes to political fragmentation and social stagnation is confronted here with historical as well as current observations about society and governance. There are three main sources for the material presented here: published sources of historical information; key informant interviews; and recent primary fieldwork in various rural areas of the province.

Historical overview

The province of Balochistan was formed in 1970 following the abolition of the “One-Unit” in what was then West Pakistan. One Unit had been formed in 1955 by merging all of the territory in the western wing of Pakistan into a single provincial administrative unit. At the time of independence in 1947 the regions constituting present-day Balochistan were clubbed together, broadly, into two distinct political-administrative entities: British Baluchistan and Kalat Khanate. The former with its headquarters in Quetta consisted of the present-day districts of northwestern, northern, and eastern Balochistan and the Kachhi plains. The latter included the Khanate⁶⁹ governed out of the fort-city of Kalat, as well as its vassal states of Kharan, Mekran and Lasbela.⁷⁰ In addition, until 1957, there was a third nominal source of sovereign authority in Balochistan. The coastal town of Gwadar and some of its neighbouring areas in Mekran were under the rule of the Sultan of Oman across the Arabian Sea.⁷¹

British Baluchistan and the Kalat Khanate were distinct, of course, at least in the sense of political symbols. The former was nominally under the direct control of the government of British India, whereas the latter was a formally sovereign state with treaty status with the British Crown. In terms of actual governance, however, the picture was more complicated. Much of British Baluchistan was administered indirectly in a manner that was more in line with the “native states” of British India. Quetta, the provincial headquarters, was probably unique within the territory of British Baluchistan to have a semblance of direct colonial rule. The Kalat Khanate, for its part, was sovereign only in nominal terms. It was held under the watchful eye of political agents and other officials of the government of British India.

The Kalat Khanate owed its origins to a state consolidated in the 18th century by Brahui chieftain warrior Naseer Khan who became strong enough to enter treaty terms with neighbouring sovereigns.⁷² Naseer Khan had served in the armies of Afghanistan under Nadir Shah and returned to Kalat after the death of his mentor to establish a confederacy centred around Kalat. The core territory of the state consisted of the Brahui-speaking central uplands. In addition, the Kachhi plains region had been annexed from the Kalhora rulers of Sindh, and allocated to the various tribal allies of

⁶⁹ This corresponded with the present-day Mastung, Kalat, Khuzdar and Awaran districts.

⁷⁰ The Wilayat of Kharan was in the present-day Kharan district and the districts of Panjgur, Kech and Gwadar made up the Wilayat of Makran. The Jam of Lasbela was the native ruler of the present-day district of Lasbela.

⁷¹ See Annex 1 for the chronology of political and administrative developments in the formation of the present-day province of Balochistan.

⁷² Berseeg (2004).

the Khan. The confederacy has been seen by some observers as a step towards state-formation out of the existing system of loose tribal alliances. The fact that Naseer Khan was able to enter treaty relations with the Afghans in the north, and the Persians in the west meant that Kalat was successful to some extent in establishing political overlordship on Kharan, Mekran and Lasbela. The eastern Baloch regions consisting of Barkhan, the Marri and Bugti tribes, and the Derajat plains along the Indus were not under the Khanate, and were inhabited by autonomous self-governing tribes.⁷³

The system of governance in British Baluchistan was innovated by a Punjab Civil Service officer called Robert Sandeman who constructed what came to be known as the “Forward Policy”.⁷⁴ Operating out of Dera Ghazi Khan which shared a border with the eastern districts of present-day Balochistan province and with a substantial Baloch tribal and ethnic population itself, Sandeman concluded a series of agreements with Baloch chiefs aimed at controlling tribal raids and ensuring safe passage. The “Forward Policy” evolved, eventually, into a system of governance based on an implicit pact between the colonial state and tribes. Tribes were held collectively responsible for security in designated areas. This responsibility was often delegated to the tribal chief or sardar who received a stipend in return for raising a local force of Levies who would ensure safe passage and carry out law and order duties.

The northern region of present-day Balochistan came under British colonial rule as a result of the British-Afghan wars, and this too was made subject to the Forward Policy.⁷⁵ The present-day districts of Nushki and Chaghi were also brought under direct British colonial control in order to ensure the safety of the road and rail link from Quetta to the Iranian border and beyond. All of these regions that had come under the direct control of the British Indian state were eventually consolidated into a single administrative unit in 1887 and called British Baluchistan. The “Forward Policy” found formal legal expression in the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) in 1901 and Levies system which was extended to all parts of British Baluchistan except Quetta.⁷⁶

A political objective of the “Forward Policy” was to curb the autonomy and ambitions of the Kalat Khanate. A series of treaties with Khanate successively reduced its sovereign powers and made it subject to intrusive and detailed British colonial control. On the side of the Khanate there was a perpetual struggle of managing friendly relations with the British while maintaining internal autonomy. The Khanate had developed the political, administrative, and judicial institutions of a functioning state, and these survived its interaction with British colonial power.

The core territory of Kalat was divided administratively into two main provinces – Sarawan or the north, and Jhalawan or the south. The Khanate was a true tribal confederacy with tribes forming its primary units of governance. Tribal organization easily lent itself into military organization and this, in turn, formed the basis on which the Khanate was structured. The political status of a tribe was partly a function of its

⁷³ Marri (2005).

⁷⁴ A contemporary account is available in Bruce (2002), first published in 1900.

⁷⁵ These areas came under British controlled as a result of the Treaty of Gandamak following the Second Afghan War 1878-80. They were incorporated into British Baluchistan in 1887 (Luni, 2003).

⁷⁶ Azad (2003).

contribution to the *lashkar* or armed force of the Khanate. The larger and more powerful tribes with bigger military contributions and pledges were recognized as leaders.⁷⁷

At one level the British colonial government was eager to limit the power of the Khanate. Once its political ambitions had been successfully curbed, however, the Khanate became an important ally and instrument in spreading the influence of the colonial state. Mekran, for example, which was a remote region with a loose affiliation with the Khanate, was brought under the formal tutelage of Kalat in 1898 following a failed uprising of local clans.⁷⁸ The British instructed the Khanate to dispatch forces to quell the uprising and to convert Mekran into a province with a governor from Kalat. Similar arrangements existed with respect to Lasbela in the south and Kharan in the west, whose formal association with Kalat was endorsed and encouraged by the British.

The traditional legal code was an unwritten constitution known as *rawaj*. All tribes, even those outside the Khanate had their own *rawaj* or unwritten legal codes. In the Khanate, however, this was later formalized as the *Dastoor-ul-Amal Diwani Kalat* (constitution of the state of Kalat). The judicial system was a mix of religiously-sanctioned Qazi courts and a hierarchy of tribal councils.⁷⁹

Kalat was formally governed by a ruling council consisting of the chiefs of the Sarawan and Jhalawan tribes. The *diwan*, a bicameral legislative body, consisted of the *Darul-Umara* (the House of the tribal chiefs or Upper House) and the *Darul-Awam* (the House of Commons or Lower House). *Darul-Umara* was composed of 35 hereditary chiefs of the tribal provinces of Jhalawan and Sarawan. *Darul-Awam* had 52 members, of whom 47 were elected and 5 nominated by the Khan. The official court language was Persian though there was state patronage for Brahui.⁸⁰

An important distinction between Kalat and the eastern Baloch regions (Marri-Bugti areas, Barkhan and Derajat) was the existence in the former of state or proto-state institutions. According to some historians the Kalat confederacy represented a qualitative development in the social organization of pastoral autonomous tribes.

There were further variations in Mekran and Lasbela, the vassal states, or provinces of the Khanate. In these two regions the system of governance was based on the rule of recognized chief families over economically dependent but socially unconnected subservient populations. This “*hakimi*” system was distinct from *sardari* in the important sense that political power was not even nominally derived from tribal leadership.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Marri (2005).

⁷⁸ Balochistan District Gazetteer Series, Mekran District, Directorate of Archives Balochistan Quetta.

⁷⁹ Azad (2003).

⁸⁰ Aziz Mohammad Bugti, *Tarikh-e Balochistan*. Quetta, 1996, pp. 99-102. Berseeg, T. M. (2004).

Baloch Nationalism: Its Origin and Development. Karachi: Royal Book Company.

⁸¹ Balochistan District Gazetteer Series, Mekran District, Directorate of Archives Balochistan Quetta, Interview with Amanullah Gichki.

At the time of independence in 1947 British Baluchistan was incorporated into the new state of Pakistan at the very outset. The Kalat Khanate attempted to negotiate from the standpoint that it was already a sovereign entity. Political opinion within Kalat oscillated between negotiation and outright declaration of independence. In the meanwhile three of the vassal states or provinces of Kalat autonomously declared accession to Pakistan. It is interesting to note that the tribal chiefs of eastern Balochistan and the Derajat who had remained fiercely independent of Kalat through its history, petitioned unsuccessfully around the same time, to be merged into the Khanate. In 1948 Kalat's councils of representatives voted for accession, though this did not prevent the breakout of a small revolt for independence.

In the initial period from 1952 till 1955 the former Khanate of Kalat as well as its associated territories of Mekran, Kharan and Lasbela were amalgamated once more into one entity known as the Baluchistan States Union. British Baluchistan had, in the meanwhile, been made into the province of Baluchistan. Then in 1955 with the formation of the One Unit all provinces as well as "princely states" were merged into the West Pakistan province. It was finally in 1970 with the dissolution of the One Unit that present-day Balochistan came into being as a full province and federating unit of Pakistan.

It is important to note that in both British Baluchistan (except Quetta), and the Khanate of Kalat (except possibly Mekran and Lasbela), tribal social organization formed the basic unit of governance. The Forward Policy, after all, was premised on ensuring security for the colonial state by delegating responsibility of governance to the tribes. It might be paradoxical, in fact, that tribalism was probably a more conspicuous feature of British Baluchistan compared with the Khanate, which though a tribal confederacy, did attempt to acquire some institutional trappings of a state. The persistence of "tribalism" in Balochistan society, therefore, needs to be understood from a historical perspective. Contrary to some impressions, "tribalism" as observed today is not simply the perpetuation of some age-old cultural tradition, but has been part and parcel of Balochistan's interaction with modern sources of governance.

The main formal-legal manifestations of "tribalism" – the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) and the system of Levies – remained intact long after independence. FCR was finally abolished in Balochistan in 1997 after a series of court decisions ruling it to be unconstitutional. It is striking that FCR survived the 1973 Constitution, and *jirga* courts were recognized formally as judicial authorities some thirty years after Balochistan's full incorporation into the state.

The origins of the Levies system are worth highlighting. British Baluchistan was divided into "A" and "B" areas respectively. Any area with the presence of a "non-indigenous" majority was classified as an "A" area and placed under the jurisdiction of regular British Indian law. In practice these included urban localities and other "non-indigenous" enclaves such as cantonments, telegraph installations, and colonies of railway workers. Law and order was maintained in these areas using the provincially administered police force as in other directly-governed parts of British India.

Areas with an “indigenous majority” were classified as “B” areas where the overall political control remained with the political agent, but the maintenance of law and order was the responsibility of the local *malik* or *sardar* in accordance with customary and traditional codes. Specifically designated individuals were entitled to head tribal *jirgas* (councils) which acted as the basic forum of arbitration and judicial authority. The Levies were drawn from local tribes and placed under the nominal authority of the designated chief. The entire “customary” system was overseen by the political agent, and subsequently the district administration, and the chieftain, *jirga* and Levies were formally accountable to administrative officials.⁸² While the Levies and *jirga* systems continued to undergo changes – with greater control being exercised by administrative officials over time – it is only since 2004 that there has been a policy of replacing them with the “regular” system of policing and judiciary.⁸³

Kinship and lineage

Kinship and lineage are, arguably, the bases of any tribal system. In fact myths of origin among the Baloch and the Pashtun alike lay great emphasis on the shared lineages of respective groups. People claiming descent from some historical figure are acknowledged as belonging to one “super-tribe”, and divisions between tribes and sub-tribes are thought to represent family divisions over the generations. Relations within tribes and between tribes and sub-tribes are often expressed in such familial terms.

The tribes, sub-tribes and extended families reproduce their structures over successive generations through shared rules of marriage. Family identity is traced through the male line, though marriage relations with other tribes through receiving or sending brides also establish social and political affinity.

It is often said in the defence of the tribal system that it is “democratic” or even “communistic” in its original form. All members of the tribe – by which is often meant all male members – are entitled to take part in matters of common interest either directly or through their representatives. The idea that tribal leaders are essentially representatives of the collective interests of the tribe or the extended patriarchy, and that this system of leadership has been “corrupted” through its institutionalization in colonial governance, or because of its association with individual property rights, has been debated frequently among Baloch and Pashtun alike.

Many of the symbols of community leadership have nevertheless survived such “corruption”. The ceremony for appointing a new *sardar*, for example, requires the presence of representatives of all sub-tribes and clans. These representatives have to take part in tying a traditional turban on the head of the chosen *sardar* as a signal of endorsement and allegiance. There have been cases of the assembled representatives deviating from the nomination of the previous *sardar* in their choice of leader, because they have felt that a person more suitable to the job was available. In general,

⁸² Luni (2003), Azad (2003), Khan (1999) and various district gazetteers.

⁸³ A stage-wise plan for the conversion of most of the “B” areas into “A” areas was announced at the instance of the federal government (Dawn 5 November 2004).

however, the choice of potential candidates is restricted to male members of the *sardar* family – his brothers, sons, or nephews – and to other ordinary tribe members.

While kinship and lineage remain important cultural and social props of the tribal system in Balochistan, their significance can be overstated. Baloch society tends towards multi-ethnicity and multi-racialism. One clear example of this is with respect to Baloch-Brahui relations. Although Balochi and Brahui are distinct languages, that suggest distinctive racial and ethnic origins of their speakers, there is virtually complete identification between the two linguistic groups. Similarly, in Lasbela and the Kachhi plains areas speakers of Lasi and Jadgali (names for dialects of Sindhi) and people claiming specifically Sindhi (Sammatt or Jam) racial origins have been incorporated into the broader Baloch tribal structures. Even among the supposedly insular Marris of eastern Balochistan, many of the sub-tribes became part of the larger tribe over a period of political alliances, even if these were punctuated by marriage ties.

In fact the Baloch tribe consists of many sub-tribes of various origins. The key issues in their incorporation into the main tribe appear to be strategic and political rather than racial. If a clan or group of families joined themselves with the main tribe, accepted the rules and conventions, and gave political allegiance to the *sardar*, they were incorporated as members. In general this means that within tribes there is a hierarchy between clans and sub-tribes, often based on proximity to the *sardari* sub-tribe or clan. The *sardars* of the Mengals, for example, come from the Shahizai clan. Among the larger sub-tribes there might be further *sardarkhels* or clans entitled to lead the sub-tribe, and so on.

At the bottom of the social scale in or around Baloch tribes are traditional castes or clans of service providers such as the Lorhis or Sarmastanis (ironsmiths) Usta, and Mai. The inclusion of these groups into the Baloch tribe or ethnicity has been a matter of negotiation. There have been a number of references to the all-encompassing Baloch identity that includes the Lorhis, Sarmastanis, Jats and others. Even non-Muslims who reside with Baloch tribes have been entitled to use tribal names. The symbolic inclusion of these groups who are otherwise treated as being “non-Baloch” in racial terms is associated with high profile statements by prominent leaders, usually at times of political crisis.⁸⁴

Equal treatment in social matters remains contested. A key measure of social hierarchy within tribes, and indeed, in relations with the “low caste” affiliates, is the amount of money for blood compensation or *khoon-baha*. Informal tribal traditions dictate that the *khoon-baha* for a member of the *sardarkhel* must be higher than that

⁸⁴ The Khan of Kalat issued a decree (*farman*) in 1938 declaring that the Ghulams (former slaves), Lohri and Jamotes were to be treated as equal subjects. The symbolic expression of this equality was that henceforth the blood compensation (*khoon-baha*) for these groups would be equal to that of the “pure” Baloch. This *farman* was made under pressure from a movement launched by pro-social reform activists in Kalat (Berseeg, 2004). In 1944 on assuming the *sardari* of the Bugti tribe, Akbar Khan Bugti nominally freed Marhatta (a subject caste of the Bugtis) from bondage, and included them among those who were protected by the patriarchal honour code of *siyahkari* (Azeem, 2006). Until that time the Marhattas were formally barred from invoking the tribal honour code in the case of sexual transgression against their women.

fixed for “ordinary” Baloch tribals.⁸⁵ The “low caste” affiliates who are not traditionally acknowledged as Baloch were entitled, by convention, to even less *khoon-baha* than the ordinary tribal. Similar symbolic hierarchies exist in honour codes – with the “lower” groups not being traditionally entitled to retribution in cases of sexual transgression against their women.

Pashtun tribes of Balochistan pride themselves on a greater sense of racial and ethnic purity compared to their Baloch-Brahui counterparts. In this sense they claim to be closer to the original kinship and lineage notion of tribe.⁸⁶ The fact that Pashtun-dominated districts are almost-exclusively Pushto-speaking suggests a greater degree of racial and ethnic exclusivity here. Pashtun tribal organization also tends to be more egalitarian within, since “outsiders” who might be assigned lower positions in a hierarchy are not generally admitted into the tribe at all. Even among the Pashtuns, however, it is widely recognized that racial origins are not the exclusive markers of group identity. Some groups are considered to be “purer” Pashtun than others – clearly signifying the role of history and politics in the construction of the Pashtun identity.

The non-*sardari* Baloch region of Mekran provides interesting insights into the role of race and kinship in the construction of tribal and ethnic identity. The people of Mekran strongly identify themselves as being Baloch, yet clearly belong to different races. A large proportion of the population has African origins and is classified as Ghulam or Darzada. The former are descendents of African slaves brought to Mekran to work on farms, date orchards and in houses. Slavery was formally abolished here only in 1932. Darzada are supposed to be the descendents of children born to slave women sired by “pure Baloch” masters. Customary law did not entitle these children to inheritance. Although Baloch society is traditionally patrilineal, the Darzada were not acknowledged as full family members – the Darzada children of a Baloch man, for example, would have difficulty in finding marriage partners from among their father’s family. Besides the Ghulam and the Darzada, the Medh fisherfolk of coastal Mekran were also not accepted as racial Baloch.

Today, although race remains one marker of Baloch identity in Mekran, the idea that the Ghulam, Darzada and Medh are part of the Baloch ethnicity is also widely accepted. Mekran, unlike central and eastern Balochistan, did not have *sardari* arrangements, whereby political allegiance to the tribal chief opened up the possibility of inclusion into the wider community.

Maintaining property rights

If kinship and lineage play only a partial role in the construction and reproduction of tribal social organization it is important to examine some of the other factors that are thought to be significant. Two areas, in particular, demand attention: maintenance of property rights, and dispute resolution. These two aspects of tribal social organization are prominent not only in the legal and administrative history of Balochistan, but are

⁸⁵ Interview, Shah Mohammad Marri.

⁸⁶ It is, of course, a moot point as to whether the “original” form of tribal social organization ever actually did correspond with the family.

conspicuous in current observations about social and economic institutions in the province.

Systems of land ownership in the densely populated areas of Pakistan – Punjab, Sindh and plains NWFP – have evolved historically out of taxation arrangements. The land revenue administration continues to be the repository of legal title in rural areas. In Balochistan, however, intensive crop farming and horticulture have historically accounted for a relatively small proportion of the land area. Vast tracts of the province consist of what appears to be “waste” – barren slopes with little prospect of intensive agriculture. Given the limited scope for intensive farming over much of Balochistan, however, the expansive “waste” land was historically of relatively high economic value – as rangeland, as a source of water, and for timber, firewood, and other plants.

In conditions of crop farming private property rights are vested in individuals and recorded as such in the land revenue system. In Balochistan, as in other parts of Pakistan, farm and orchard land is, indeed, held as private property. Apart from the Kachhi and the Lasbela plains, however, crop and orchard cultivation takes place in habitats where there is a close correlation between private owned and farmed land and “waste” land. The typical landscape of the province consists of valleys and basins surrounded by mountains and hills. Typically, only a small proportion of the land in the basin, let alone on the slopes, has been converted into private use.

The fact that most of the land and its resources is not in private use does not imply, however, that it is of no economic value. Most of this “uncultivable waste” is used as rangeland, and livestock rearing has historically been more important than crop farming as a source of livelihood. Moreover, the “uncultivable waste” is precisely the resource which could be turned into valuable farm or orchard land, with the application of capital and labour. In most cases this would have meant mobilizing resources for irrigation – either to create terraced embankments (*bund*) or to harvest and convey groundwater.

Among both Baloch and Pashtun tribes of Balochistan there is a strong sense that communally-held tribal property was the primary form of property ownership. There are traditional customs and conventions regarding the division of communal into private property once a member of the community (individual, family or group of families) has invested capital and labour in developing that piece of land. It is quite common to find Pashtun tribal villages where all families own some farm or orchard land and trace their private ownership to the division of communal waste land among their ancestors for private use. Baloch villages tend to be more class-segmented but that is mostly because some of the sub-tribes are relative newcomers who were incorporated into the main tribe after the primary division of land had already taken place. Among Baloch tribal villages too there are customary institutional arrangements such as *lathbandi* that provide tenurial security and assured crop shares to “outsiders” brought in to develop communal land for private use.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ A *buzgar* or tenant who developed terraced embankments on *khushkaba* or *sailaba* land acquired the right to cultivate that land for as long as the works he carried out remained intact. His crop share was higher than that of a tenant who farmed land that was already developed by the owner.

The important point is that over most of Balochistan privately-owned land has been regarded, by convention, as that part of communal property which was divided for private use at some point in time. In other words, the reference notion of property was communal tribal usufruct over well-defined territories, often marked by geographical features such as mountain ridges or the direction of water flow. The communal claim is generally associated with a history or origin myth of migration, warfare, negotiation and settlement. It has been jealously guarded with long-standing rivalries and feuds between neighbouring tribes serving as constant reminders of territorial boundaries.

The joint ownership of property or usufruct rights is a key area of continual collective action on the part of the tribe. In the Pashtun area of Mekhtar in Loralai district, for example, the owner tribe collects dues from Afghan pastoralists who bring their herds for grazing. It was reported that the grazing fee was maintained as a common fund which was used to help with the legal costs of tribe members who had been arrested in the course of a conflict with rival tribes. In a Baloch cluster of villages in Khuzdar there were strict rules about which tribes and sub-tribes could use firewood and wild plants from particular hills. Pastoralists from other areas were allowed to graze their herds for a few days while they were in transit. Any stay beyond that grace period invited sanction from the *sardar* or his local representative.

While the precise nature of usufruct would require detailed descriptions from many different regions of the province, it is possible to highlight two key features of land tenure in Balochistan. First, by and large, unfettered private property rights exist in exception rather than the rule. Even with respect to privately owned farm area divided from communally-held land, owners' rights are qualified. For example, it is generally not possible for an owner to sell land to a complete outsider, or to do so without the consent of members of his clan or tribe. For land not in private possession the nature of usufruct is even more encumbered. Second, extended kinship groups such as clans, sub-tribes and tribes act as units of usufruct management – either through cooperative arrangements between members, or through designated or traditional leaders.

There is a gap between the formal system of land ownership and informal (yet robust) usufruct systems in rural Balochistan. The formal system is based on cadastral surveys and the identification and private individuals as land owners. This process is generally known as “Settlement”, as an abbreviation for the settlement of land revenue. Since the primary purpose of the Settlement was to assign land revenue, which historically was a major source of taxation, its focus was on cropped land. Over time Settlement came to be seen as a legal record of land ownership. In the high population density areas of Pakistan – the plains of Punjab, Sindh and NWFP – Settlement is indeed analogous to ownership. In Balochistan (and other areas with similar reliance on informal joint and common property resources) however, the picture becomes complex.

The history of land Settlement varies greatly across the province. The areas under the jurisdiction of the Kalat Khanate were, for obvious reasons, not subject to British colonial land revenue. Kalat had its own system of land revenues and these will be discussed further below. In British Baluchistan too, Settlement was carried out only selectively, and often in the face of local resistance. According to some sources the

only district where Settlement was completed was Quetta. In other districts the exercise remained partial at best.

One interpretation of the Settlement rules is that in districts where Settlement had been completed the state was the residual claimant of any land that was left out of the Settlement. This became problematic even in Quetta where despite land Settlement, informal claims of local tribes, based on their own usufruct arrangements had to be accepted.⁸⁸

Outside Quetta, in the rest of former British Baluchistan and in the area formerly under the Kalat Khanate, the traditional division of land was in terms of communal claims of tribes and sub-tribes. A valley or basin inhabited and cultivated by a particular group was used as a reference point. The demarcation of boundaries on the limits of their domain which included vast tracts of “waste” land was carried out with reference to natural features such as mountain ridges and water flows. The general and widely accepted traditional rule was that slopes from which the natural run-off of surface water flowed towards the basin or valley occupied by a particular tribe, was the joint property of that tribe. Territory was thus divided into *tappas* or geographical units that were owned jointly by a tribe or sub-tribe, and recognized as such in the *tehsil* records.

The revenue system of Kalat Khanate did not need to make a distinction between cropped and “waste” land. Unlike the British system, which was based on assigning cash tax liabilities, the Kalat revenue was based on crop and livestock sharing arrangements. The Khanate revenue officials or their tribal deputies at the local level were present at harvest time in order to claim the Khan’s share. Similar pro-rata impositions were made on livestock herds. In the place of an elaborate land recording and revenue administration, therefore, the tribal social organization with its hierarchy of *sardars* served the function of tax collection and appropriation. *Sardars* were officially recognized as claimants to a sixth of the produce – *shishak* – on land specifically designated as *sardari* land. They were also entitled to a fixed number of goats or sheep for every hundred heads of animals in a herd that grazed in their respective areas.

The importance of land revenue declined as a source of taxation over time. Eventually land revenue was abolished altogether in Balochistan in 1977. The need to carry out or complete the work of Settlement was no longer urgent. Much of the former British Baluchistan, therefore, continued with its pre-existing system of land usufruct. The incorporation of the Kalat Khanate led to important changes in the system of administration. The Khanate’s administrative system was replaced by *tehsildars* and other functionaries and officials. There were few changes, however, in the actual practice of land usufruct.

Some nominal changes were brought about as a result of political turmoil. Following the election of the first provincial government in 1970 there were demands for the abolition of the *sardari* system. In concrete terms this was translated into a tussle

⁸⁸ Interviews with Zulfiqar Durrani (P&DD), Arbab Abdul Zahir Kanshi (ANP), and key informants in Quetta *tehsil* office.

over the payment of *shishak* which was thought of as a *sardari* levy. The movement was partly the result of heightened class-based mobilization at the time. There were also other political factors at play. Eventually the *sardari* impositions were done away with under the Sardari Abolition Act of 1976. While this law and the mobilization that preceded it led to the end of *shishak* in many areas, there were also other areas where the former claimants to *shishak* were able to assert private property rights over former *sardari* lands and continue to take a share of the harvest in the form of the landowner's entitlement.

To see the continuing importance of common property resources, and particularly the right of eminent domain of usufruct of "waste" land, it is useful to refer to the case of mineral resources. Land ownership, under Pakistani law, does not entitle a person to rights over sub-soil resources such as minerals, which belong to the state.⁸⁹ Moreover, one technical interpretation of land use law might be that the provincial government is the residual claimant to Non-Settled "waste" land. Yet the Mines Department of the provincial government, which is responsible for awarding lease titles for mine development is careful to award such titles only to "local landowners". The record of ownership is, generally, in the collective name of the tribe, under the *tappa* system. The leaseholders are then free to negotiate terms with actual mine operators who work as sub-contractors. In the case of marble extraction the landowners themselves generally carry out the mining operations.

The Marri-Luni dispute over "royalties" in the coal mines of the Chamalang region of Loralai district provides an interesting case in this regard. Historical references were brought to bear in the cases presented by either side during arbitration. The Lunis claimed that the land where the mines are located lie within their ancient territorial boundaries, and the Marris arrived only relatively recently – this being some two hundred years ago – and were granted grazing rights then by the Lunis. The Marris, for their part, invoked their losses in combat activities against state security forces in the Chamalang area during the 1970s insurgency. They held that they lost dozens of people during that fight to defend the area against "outside incursion" whereas the Lunis who remained aloof from the fighting had forfeited any legitimate claim to the territory. Both sides asserted their claims in corporate terms – that is, the land belonged to the entire tribe and not to any particular individual – and the claims were backed up with historical accounts of migration and warfare. In the event, while the arbitration body which included representatives of the state, ruled in the favour of the Lunis, it also acknowledged some Marri entitlements and provided pay-offs to them.

Dispute resolution

Besides common or joint usufruct over land, tribes also come together as collective entities in matters pertaining to dispute resolution. The tribal code among the Baloch, known as *rivaaj* or *mayaar*, and that among the Pashtuns known as *pashtunwali* is sometimes referred to as the very basis of these ethnic identities. Among most Baloch tribes there is a well-defined hierarchy of dispute resolution and arbitration, that corresponds absolutely with tribal hierarchy. In fact, Baloch *sardars* are known to arbitrate matters pertaining to members of their tribes who have lived in Sindh for

⁸⁹ In the case of mineral resources other than oil and gas the claimant is the provincial government.

many generations. Tribal and *sardari* connections are kept alive over long distances in matters of arbitration.

It is generally claimed that the Pashtun system of arbitration is more “procedural” and less “political”. The idealized Pashtun view holds that a *jirga* is any gathering of respectable males, generally elders, who come together to arbitrate or mediate a dispute, and are accepted in that role by the parties to the dispute. According to this view there need not be any prior or subsequent allegiance to the *jirga* members as tribal leaders. A *jirga* is simply convened to deal with a particular matter and dissolves once that matter is finished or removed from its jurisdiction by either party. The idea that all male Pashtuns are brought up with the knowledge of *pashtunwali* is essential for sustaining this view of the *jirga*.

Supporters of tribal justice point to its many advantages over the formal system of courts and police as currently practiced in Pakistan. The emphasis on arbitration and negotiation as part of the process of redressal is seen in a positive light in a society where there are likely to be repeated transactions between parties. The supporters of traditional arbitration argue that even the court system ultimately depends on traditional forms of arbitration for actually ending a dispute. Government’s plans for the replacement of the Levies system with regular policing have led to a lively debate about the relative advantages and disadvantages of traditional systems of dispute resolution. The provincial assembly passed a unanimous resolution in April 2006 for the retention of the Levies system.⁹⁰

It can be argued, of course, that support for tribal systems of arbitration might be self-serving. Indeed, there are many who hold that these systems make it difficult for people to escape from tribalism. There is a vicious circle between the weakness and perceived corruption of the formal system of justice and the robustness of the traditional systems.

If tribalism is at least partly sustained by self-enforcing traditional systems of arbitration it is important to make note of some apparent signs of change. The religious clerics (*ulema* or *mullahs*) have come to provide an alternative space for arbitration and dispute resolution. Their role is very widespread in Pashtun society in Balochistan, where they have also emerged as a major political force. In Baloch areas the clerics have made inroads over the past few decades in the Brahui belt. At the local level the clerics offer to arbitrate disputes using Islamic *sharia* law. In actual practice their rulings rarely deviate from traditional tribal norms and codes. They have, nevertheless, emerged to challenge tribal systems of leadership in one domain, though not tribal identities.

Patriarchal norms

While the debate over the advantages and disadvantages of traditional systems of arbitration would continue, there is one important area where traditional systems

⁹⁰ Dawn 15 April 2006. This widespread feeling was also reflected in interviews conducted for the present study with a range of politicians and opinion-makers, some of them known to be critics of tribal chieftains.

remain manifestly unjust. Much of the tribal code among the Baloch and Pashtun alike is around the concept of honour, and the subject position of women plays a key role in maintaining honour codes.

The sovereignty of males in the tribal structure is symbolized through the propagation of the tribal system through paternal lineage. Tribal and sub-tribal identities are perpetuated by endogamy within the tribe, a norm that also mediates the perpetuation of the patriarchal social structure. Women are the embodiment of honour for the family and the tribe and can bring disrespect, dishonour and social chastisement on their family and tribe on deviating from the set norms. This is a powerful inducement in the traditional tribal discourse for maintaining gender seclusion and limiting women's access to the public domain.⁹¹

Besides enforced gender segregation, tribal societies and their codes in Balochistan have several specific institutional arrangements that confirm the subject status of women. Tribal conventions generally do not allow property ownership on the part of women. Entitlements to common property resources are also regulated and measured with reference to male family members. Even among highly egalitarian tribes – that is, those where “all” tribe members have equal shares in common property resources which they exercise and enforce – the privilege does not extend to women. This is ironic considering the fact that much of the economic value of common property resources is realized through the labour of women – in grazing animals, fetching water, gathering herbs and firewood.⁹²

Marriage customs in tribal Balochistan revolve around negotiations between families and the practice of bride-price (*lub* or *valvar*). This cultural practice has its roots in the notion that the payment is a token of respect for the bride's parents on the part of the groom.⁹³ These customs, however, can often degenerate into commodifying women. It is striking that the *lub* is negotiated and bargained by *saang-e-marka* - a team of men from the sides of the prospective bride and groom and women have little or no direct involvement on either side.⁹⁴ There is much in the current practice of *lub* that signifies commodification rather than respect. *Lub* tends to be higher for a woman who fulfils her gender expectations i.e. is beautiful and healthy and possesses good housekeeping qualities. A girl who is disabled, skinny, ill or mentally challenged has a lower *lub*. The *lub* belongs to the bride's father, except in Mekran where the *lub* is the property of the bride.⁹⁵

The customary marriage contract demonstrates, amongst other things, the level to which decision-making within the family lies in the male domain. It is not surprising that in the patriarchal setup of Pakistan, women do not have a strong presence in the public realm. What is interesting however is the considerably low level of influence they have in the private realm also. A young woman is excluded from decision-making, even if the decision has a direct correlation with her well-being. These

⁹¹ Marri, S. M. (2005). *Baloch Samaaj main Aurat ka Maqaam*. Quetta: Seva Publications.

⁹² See for example observations based on fieldwork in rural Khuzdar, Gazdar (2007).

⁹³ Rومان, M. A., trans. *Balochistan ke Qabail: Zilaee Gazetteer se Intikhab* Quetta: Ruby Publishers.

⁹⁴ Marri, S. M. (2005). *Baloch Samaaj main Aurat ka Maqaam*. Quetta: Seva Publications.

⁹⁵ Marri, S. M. (2005). *Baloch Samaaj main Aurat ka Maqaam*. Quetta: Seva Publications.

customs have been criticized on the grounds of reducing a woman to a faceless commodity changing hands from one male – the father – to another – the husband.⁹⁶

In case of disputes, both within and outside the tribe, marriages can also take place amongst the dissenting parties to establish peace. In the Baloch custom of *nekh*, if one man kills another, women from the family of the accused are married in the family of the deceased. The number of women to be married for dispute settlement is clearly stipulated in the jirga's decision about resolution of the dispute, and are in addition to any monetary – cash or kind - settlements of the *khoonbaha* (blood money). The laws of different tribes stipulate different arrangements of *khoonbaha* and thus what is given in settlement – the number of women, amount of money, livestock if any – also varies.

Needless to say, *nekh* is carried out where the family of the deceased is in a position to demand or exact *khoonbaha* from the family of the accused. Thus, in cases where the family of the deceased is from a *lower* tribe, such arrangements are not common. As can be expected, a woman married to settle a feud is many a time not treated well in her husband's home. There may be other problems in the future also, like finding suitable marriage partners for the married couple's children. These and other reasons have led to a decline in the practice of *nekh*. In the Marri tribe, the practice was abolished in the era of Nawab Doda Khan.⁹⁷ A similar practice of marrying females from one family into another for dispute resolution also exists amongst Pahstuns and is known as *swara*.

In the tribal patriarchal social structure, women are regarded as embodying the honour of their family and tribe. Women of all ages, but particularly young women, are expected to strictly guard themselves, stay within the protected environment of the home, and adhere to the moral code of the tribe. In case of failure in this, the punishments for the women are severe – public disgrace and death to reestablish her family's honour. A man or woman accused of being involved in extra-marital or pre-marital sexual relations is called the *siyah* or *siyahkar*, and the punishment of death ordained by the tribal code for this offence is called *siyahkari*.

The ritual of *siyahkari* is reported in the earlier chronicles compiled by British travelers and officers. The punishment of adultery reported was for the convicted woman to hang herself and for the convicted man to be killed by the woman's family. However, while this was the more practiced form of punishment, there were differences across the board, with rules stipulated in the tribal code determining the punishment of different people. The punishment of death was reserved for a married woman caught in a sexual act by her husband. In the State of Kalat, a married woman could not be killed until certain evidences or testimonies were presented by the husband in front of the Khan.

Some tribes settled disputes of honour through monetary compensation to the husband, and allowed the woman to marry her lover. There was relatively more flexibility in the case of an unmarried girl. Though the father was entitled to killing

⁹⁶ Ali, R. (2001). The Dark Side of 'Honour' – Women Victims in Pakistan. Lahore: Shirkatgah.

⁹⁷ Marri, S. M. (2005). Baloch Samaaj main Aurat ka Maqaam. Quetta: Seva Publications.

her and her lover, if the girl was pregnant, marriage to the lover was the preferred option. In other tribes, like Musakhels, Zakhpels and Wanechis, body mutilation and imputation rather than death was the punishment for both the man and woman involved. British gazetteers also note that while Baloch and Brahvis often punished both the woman and man by death, Pashtuns settled the matter through monetary compensation.⁹⁸

The four institutionalised arrangements – property ownership, marriage contracts, dispute resolution, and honour sanctions - discussed here illustrate the subject status of women in tribal social organization. Other democratic or hierarchical aspects of tribalism are subsequent to these deeply patriarchal norms that pre-define the social, economic and political agency of women.

Sociology of rent

Tribal social organization in Balochistan is attuned to the maintenance, appropriation and distribution of economic rents. This is in contrast to settled plains agrarian societies where potential rents are realized by owners of land – both landlords and self-cultivators alike – by virtue of their private property rights. Communal usufruct implies that the use of what appear to be freely available natural resources – such as water flows, grazing rangeland, firewood, and other wild plants – is rationed and regulated. Outsiders to the group have to pay economic rents to the joint holders of the common property resources. The imposition of rent, in these circumstances, may lead to efficiency in enhancing outcomes. The important point is that rents can only be appropriated if collective systems of usufruct are maintained, and the tribal social organization appears to provide relatively effective means for doing so. The same social organization also specifies channels for the distribution of rents earned on commonly held resources.

Economic rents of a different type have been much in evidence historically in Balochistan with respect to trade and transit. Lying between some important centres of economic activity – Sindh and India to its east, Afghanistan in the north, Persia to the west, and Arabia in the south – the landmass of Balochistan offered dangers as well as opportunities for trade routes. During periods of turmoil it was a common practice for tribal warriors to raid and plunder trade caravans. At times of peace, however, the towns of Balochistan themselves emerged as points of trade and transit.

The raiding activities of tribes established their ability to disrupt trade routes across a hostile terrain. The fact remains, however, that trade and travel between the four major centres around Balochistan did flourish for significant periods in history, and Baloch tribes played an important part in securing and facilitating that trade. The economic strength of the Kalat Khanate was partly derived from its guarantee of safe passage to trade caravans. The Khanate formalized a system of rent appropriation through levying duties on trade. It was able to ensure security of passage because the potential disrupters of trade were themselves incorporated into its system of governance.

⁹⁸ Ali, R. (2001). The Dark Side of 'Honour' – Women Victims in Pakistan. Lahore: Shirkatgah.

Something similar, and perhaps even more explicit, was done with respect to the Forward Policy of Robert Sandeman. Realizing that the tribes had the ability to disrupt military traffic to the Afghan border Sandeman gave responsibility of safe passage over specific territories to particular tribes and their leaders, against the payment of stipends and salaries. This arrangement was repeated with respect to a range of goods and services – such as railways, telegraph lines, roads, mountain passes – through the Levies system. The tribes, therefore, realized the economic rental value of their ability to disrupt traffic through territories that they justifiably claimed to be their own.

It is worth pointing out that the two types of economic rents mentioned here are not necessarily inefficient. The first one – that is the regulation of the use of natural resources – is clearly an efficiency-enhancing rent. The extent to which the tribal social institutions actually optimized this rent remains an empirical question. The fact that groundwater was not traditionally seen as a common resource – mainly because the binding constraint under conditions of pre-industrial technology was not water availability but the application capital and labour – has arguably led to water-mining using submersible tubewells. Conditions of Balochistan's rangelands also suggest overgrazing and natural resource depletion. This suggests that sustainable use of natural resources might have warranted higher economic rents than were actually charged.

The second type of rent – that is realizing the economic value of the ability to disrupt trade – appears on first sight as an efficiency-reducing rent. The same argument might apply to rent appropriation conflict for mineral resources as illustrated by the case of the Chamalang coal mines. There might be two types of objections to these rents.

First, it may be argued that the reward for not disrupting legitimate economic activity ought to be regarded as extortion rather than economic rent. In societies with well-defined property rights and an established rule of law this, indeed, would be the appropriate classification. In situations where property rights are not clear, or the legitimacy of any particular claim of property right is widely questioned, it is not obvious that a one-sided legalistic view provides the appropriate analytical vantage point. To the extent that there remains genuine confusion about the “true” ownership of the Chamalang mines, for example, political negotiation does offer efficiency-enhancing outcomes. The same would have been true of the free right of passage for trade caravans or logistical supplies through territories “owned” by a tribe. The fixing of an economic rent through political negotiation – as was done reportedly under the Kalat Khanate and in the Forward Policy - may be an efficient outcome.

Second, even if we get over the normative problem of recognizing what might be “extortion” to some as “economic rent” there is a possibility of inefficiency if the rent is based on the creation of monopoly power. If the only route possible for the conveyance of Persian carpets to India were through Kalat then the latter might be in a position to impose monopoly rents. Alternatively, if Chamalang was the only source of coal the Marri-Luni dispute might be regarded as one that was about creating monopoly rents. In practice, however, such monopolies have not existed. Persian carpets could, conceivably have been imported into India through Afghanistan, or through sea-routes not controlled by Kalat. Kalat's rent for safe passage, therefore,

would be aimed at securing some part of the saving made on the part of merchants and buyers from the use of a shorter and more direct route. In other words, Kalat would have realized the economic value of its strategic position – something that is not necessarily a source of inefficiency.

4. Migration

Migration has emerged as an important political concern in Balochistan, particularly with reference to development initiatives. One of the points of consideration for the Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan was to develop agreed positions on inter-provincial migration, particularly the expected inflow of migrants into Baloch-majority areas. Given Balochistan's low overall population density the process of economic development is likely to require an inflow of labour, particularly skilled labour, from other provinces and regions.

At the simplest level inter-provincial and intra-provincial migration can be in the light of ethnic demographic anxieties – specifically, the fear among the ethnic Baloch of being turned into a minority in the province as a whole and in areas that are currently Baloch majority areas. These anxieties have been expressed in the past with respect to the Baloch-Pashtun demographic balance in the province. The addition of mostly Pashtun displaced persons from Afghanistan from the early 1980s onwards had been regarded as a destabilizing factor by many Baloch nationalists and others. There is also a shared Baloch-Pashtun history of concern about migration of “settlers” from other provinces, particularly Punjab. An idea running through the migration debate is the fear that “locals” (particularly the Baloch) will be disenfranchised as “indigenous” ethnic groups and will be overtaken by more influential “outsiders”.

This section examines issues around migration in the light of the understanding of Balochistan's social structures developed in Section 3 above. It begins with a sketch of migration as a survival and livelihood strategy in the traditional pastoral economy of Balochistan. It is argued that current attitudes to migration might be partly based on the traditional experience of migration. Ethnic demographic anxieties are examined with reference to the Baloch-Pashtun “divide” and the question of “settlers”. The experience of Afghan displacement and migration since the early 1980s is discussed using insights from qualitative studies of Afghan communities in Balochistan.

Migration as survival and livelihood strategy

Migration has been an integral feature of the survival and livelihood strategies of communities across Balochistan. Influential origin myths are stories of migration due to military conflict or natural calamities such as drought. The original homeland of the Baloch, according to some accounts, was in the areas currently in Iran, and they spread eastwards over the last one thousand years. Subsequent waves of migration of Baloch tribes into Punjab and Sindh continued until the 18th century when the latter came to be ruled by a Baloch dynasty. The eastwards migration never really stopped completely, as the opening of newly irrigated lands in Sindh from the 1930s onwards attracted tenant-farmers from Balochistan.

Balochistan was also the site of forced migration of African slaves and their descendants through maritime links with the Arabian coast. The date plantations of Mekran relied greatly on the labour supplied from the slave trade. Slavery was finally banned in the territories of Kalat in 1932.

The areas that make up the province have historically played the role of recipient as well as source of migration to neighbouring countries and regions. Baloch migration eastwards into Punjab and Sindh was spurred on partly by internecine warfare, and partly by the search for economic opportunity. Some of this migration, as well the migration of Pashtuns from Afghanistan and northern Balochistan southwards was simply an extension of existing patterns of seasonal migration between the uplands and the plains.

Transhumance, or the cyclical movement between various places of habitation over a time period, is considered to be a hallmark of pastoral economies. Livestock rearing communities are known to move around with their herds in the search for pasture. Baloch and Pashtun tribes have institutionalized systems of transhumance spread across distances ranging thousands of kilometers. The *kuchi* pastoralists from Afghanistan, for example, have traditionally moved south across the border with their herds, across Balochistan all the way down to southern Sindh. The Afghan *kuchis* had been travelling along these routes for generations, well before the war and political strife in Afghanistan forced many others to move to Pakistan. A group of *kuchi* families would have well-established links with particular Pashtun and Baloch tribes in Balochistan, and long-standing arrangements for grazing their animals in the winter months in return for a levy.⁹⁹

Fieldwork in Brahui-speaking villages in Khuzdar district revealed it had been the norm until around fifteen years ago for entire families to spend most of the year travelling with their goats and camels to districts in Sindh, and to do seasonal harvest work along the way.¹⁰⁰ These pastoralists travelled along set routes and maintained homes and social networks along their routes of travel. There was a predictable seasonal pattern to the migration from these villages which was punctuated by the crop cycle in their home area and in the area of migration.

The pastoralists who also cultivated their own rain-fed land sowed wheat seeds in March (after the frost), locked up their homes, and set off with their herds and most of their belongings towards Sindh. In the irrigated districts of Sindh they found fodder for their herds and harvest labour for themselves, as the wheat harvest begins in lower Sindh in March. In the meanwhile some people would return to Khuzdar to check up on rainfall and condition of the crop that had been sown, and to make a judgement about whether it was worthwhile for the rest of the people and the herds to return home. If there was the possibility of a reasonable crop the pastoralists returned to harvest it and to remain at home during the summer. If the crop was not judged to be sufficient most of the people would continue to travel through Sindh, maximizing the duration of their seasonal employment by taking advantage of the differences within the province in the timing of the harvest season.

Periods of severe environmental stress – such as long periods of drought – led to disruptions in set patterns of mobility as people took up more permanent homes in

⁹⁹ Author's fieldwork in Mekhtar, District Loralai, 2004, (Gazdar 2005), and Collective for Social Science Research (2006).

¹⁰⁰ These observations are based on fieldwork in Khuzdar in 2006, and reported in Gazdar (2007).

agrarian regions and gave up their pastoralist lifestyles. Links with the “home” region were maintained over generations, however, and the tribal identity played a strong part in maintaining these links. Many people in the fieldwork villages in Khuzdar, for example, had worked as share-tenants in Sindh – in the very districts where they had originally gone for seasonal work and for grazing their animals. They still had close relatives in various districts of Sindh, and the older men and women spoke fluent Sindhi.

There were other forms of seasonal migration in Balochistan that were not premised on livestock. Villagers from Barkhan, for example, went to the neighbouring irrigated districts of Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan in Punjab at the time of the wheat harvest simply to carry out harvest labour.¹⁰¹ Wheat harvest labour was reported to be sufficient to provide a family with a year’s supply of grains. The relationship with the farmers and landowners of irrigated districts of southern Punjab was also, like the transhumance to Sindh, of long standing.

The traditional system of transhumance appears to have undergone many changes. There are relatively few people who travel seasonally with their livestock. In the fieldwork villages in Khuzdar several reasons were provided for the change. It was argued that more local labour had become available with the growth of Khuzdar town, and the development of local infrastructure. The recent drought, which in these villages had continued virtually unabated since 1998 further reduced the incentive to migrate seasonally to Sindh. It was estimated that the heads of livestock belonging to the residents of these villages had declined to less than a tenth of their number ten years before.¹⁰²

The conventional anthropological approach to transhumance is premised on the existence of a pastoral economy. It was found in the fieldwork villages, however, the practice of transhumance continued with some modifications despite the loss of livestock herds. The fact that families had close connections in Sindh and other places, made it possible for them to divide their members and the time of individual members between more than one place in order to optimize on economic opportunities. While the classical pastoral transhumance was around animal husbandry with an entire family dividing its time between different locations, it currently took the form of family members being divided between locations and maintaining homes in each location. The “culture” of transhumance appeared to make it easier for families to take advantage of economic opportunities over long distances. People from these villages lived and worked in various urban centres like Khuzdar city, Quetta, Hub and Karachi. Some had also moved abroad to Saudi Arabia or UAE.

The rural societies of Balochistan – both Baloch and Pashtun – were involved in migration both as migrants and hosts on a much larger and systematic scale than their counterparts in the settled agrarian plains of Punjab, Sindh and NWFP. While

¹⁰¹ Author’s fieldwork, 2004, reported in Gazdar (2005).

¹⁰² The depletion of livestock herds was clearly associated with the drought, but it was not typically due to animal starvation. Rather, the loss of grazing land induced people to sell off their herds or not to replenish them, and to look for other economic opportunities. For at least some livestock owners more remunerative employment or business opportunities in urban areas meant that there were positive reasons too for abandoning a pastoral lifestyle.

seasonal and temporary migrants have fulfilled key, but marginal, labour requirements in the settled plains, for the pastoral economies of Balochistan transhumance was the mainstream livelihood activity. There are well-developed social institutions around migration and transhumance in Balochistan. These are based on the wide mutual recognition of the prior entitlements of migrants and hosts alike. It is taken for granted, for example, that pastoralists would be allowed passage through lands owned by a tribe, but also that they would offer token allegiance to the host tribe. It is assumed that there are few “neutral” or “free” territories available for settlement, and that there is already a prior claim to all land and resources. A clear distinction is made between temporary and permanent settlement. The former does not create entitlements in resources, and the latter requires a migrant or group of migrants to undergo a process of political and social assimilation.

It can be argued that these generic institutional arrangements allowed some level of stability in societies and economies that otherwise required fluid movement of people across land distances. It is interesting that some of these conditions found formal statement in the relations between hosts and migrants in labour importing economies of West Asia. Rural to urban migration opens up new opportunities but also poses challenges because it is premised upon the creation of “neutral” or “free” spaces where migrants’ entitlements are subject not to informal traditional institutions but the formal institutions of the state.

From transhumance to migration

The Population Census is a widely-used source of quantitative data on migration in Pakistan. The census defines a person as a migrant if she or he previously resided in a district other than where they currently reside. The census categories are based on the model of a settled society where meaningful distinctions between “permanent” and “temporary” residents might be made. The emphasis is on counting the number of “life-time” migrants – i.e. people whose previous “permanent” (*mustaqil*) place of residence was different from current “permanent” district of residence. These questions are not suited to situations where a person or a family might have more than one “permanent” places of residence.

A relatively small proportion – just under 4 per cent – of the population of Balochistan was counted as “migrant” in the last population census.¹⁰³ By comparison, in Pakistan as a whole, migrants were 8 per cent of the population. It needs to be noted that the Population Census does not include Afghan nationals who arrived in Pakistan from 1979 onwards. Given that the Afghan nationals in Pakistan have been regarded as refugees in legal terms, their abode in Pakistan would not be classified as being “permanent”. In terms of permanent changes of residence Balochistan had relatively little migration up to 1998.

Table 2 provides a district-wise breakdown of migrants in Balochistan. The provincial capital had the highest number of migrants, and Lasbela district bordering Karachi had the highest proportion (13 per cent) of migrants in its population. Other districts migrant population ratios equal to or higher than the provincial average were

¹⁰³ Population Census 1998.

Bolan and Nasirabad in the Kachhi plains, Dera Bugti and Kohlu in eastern Balochistan, and Loralai, Sibi and Zhob in the north. Quetta being the major urban centre of the province, and the provincial capital, was a natural destination of choice. The migration in Lasbela was mostly due to the development of Hub as an industrial, commercial and residential satellite of Karachi. The migration into the Kachhi plains districts was in response to the growth in irrigated agricultural opportunities there. In eastern and northern Balochistan the main pull factors were mining activities – natural gas in Dera Bugti and coal-mining in the other districts. Other districts with sizeable migrant numbers were Khuzdar and Chaghi. The former had emerged as an important military base and transport hub along the main Karachi-Quetta highway, while there had been the development of high value mineral extraction in the latter.

Table 2: Migration and distribution of migrants by origin

	Total	Migrants as per cent of total population	Distribution of migrants by origin (per cent)					
			From within Balochistan		Other provinces			Other countries
			Baloch majority districts	Pashtun majority districts	Punjab	NWFP	Sindh	
BALUCHISTAN	249,615	4	36	11	26	13	10	5
QUETTA	89,946	12	25	11	34	12	9	9
CENTRAL UPLANDS								
Awaran	25	0	48	0	0	0	52	0
Kalat	781	0	9	70	0	2	18	1
Khuzdar	10,836	3	34	7	48	6	3	1
Mastung	4,355	3	69	22	4	0	1	4
NORTHWEST								
Chaghi	6,586	3	11	7	49	14	13	7
Kharan	438	0	59	7	30	0	3	0
MEKRAN								
Gwadar	3,918	2	36	7	24	1	27	5
Kech	2,722	1	69	3	19	1	6	1
Panjgur	480	0	80	3	7	2	8	0
SOUTH-CENTRAL PLAINS								
Lasbela	40,034	13	58	4	8	5	24	1
KACHHI PLAINS								
Bolan	15,703	5	54	34	7	3	0	1
Jafferabad	9,880	2	68	1	2	0	27	1
Jhal Magsi	78	0	0	53	0	47	0	0
Nasirabad	13,858	6	81	10	1	0	8	0
EAST								
Barkhan	835	1	57	6	18	19	0	0
Dera Bugti	6,793	4	1	2	82	14	1	0
Kohlu	3,573	4	3	5	15	77	0	0
NORTH								
Killa Abdullah	2,522	1	1	2	48	47	1	0
Killa Saifullah	2,002	1	0	53	45	0	0	2
Loralai	15,223	5	0	12	44	38	1	5

Musakhel	318	0	0	51	44	6	0	0
Pishin	1,567	0	35	30	11	3	1	21
Sibi	6,887	4	30	18	18	25	5	4
Zhob	9,831	4	2	4	52	36	2	4
Ziarat	424	1	6	53	9	10	0	22

Source: Author's calculations from Population Census 1998

Table 2 also provides the distribution of migrants by their previous places of residence. Migrants from within Balochistan were classified by whether they originated in a Baloch or Pashtun majority district.¹⁰⁴ For migrants from out of Balochistan, NWFP and FATA were grouped together, as were Punjab, Islamabad and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Punjab turned out to be the largest source of migration into Quetta, followed by the Baloch-majority areas of the province. In Lasbela nearly three-fifths of the migrants were from Baloch-majority districts of the province, and another one quarter was from Sindh. The established city (Quetta) and the emerging urban centre (Hub) both showed signs of Baloch urbanization. The migration into the Kachhi plains districts had been largely from other Baloch-majority districts of the province. In the districts that had attracted migrants due to the expansion of mining activities people had mostly come from outside the province – from Punjab and the NWFP.

Economic and social changes since the last population census will have undoubtedly altered the migration profile of the province. It is expected that new centres of in-migration would have emerged along the coast, particularly in and near Gwadar town. It is possible, however, to comment on some broad patterns of migration even on the basis of the 1998 data.

The magnitude of internal migration has been small enough for it not to have greatly disturbed the ethnic balance of the province. The main exception is the city of Quetta where long periods of migration from other provinces, particularly Punjab, has created a class of “settlers” who do not fit into the existing Baloch-Pashtun tribal arrangements. Quetta might, therefore, be regarded as the model of a “neutral” space where migration and settlement have followed trajectories very different from the ones prescribed by traditional informal institutions associated with transhumance and political patronage. Historically, however, Quetta’s “neutral” space was created through the use of political power by the colonial state. Political patronage was, and will continue to be, a factor in migration into new spaces created within an otherwise tribal landscape.

Quetta’s “neutrality” could not be taken for granted. The city was the site of conflict between Baloch and Pashtun nationalist parties and their supporters. There have been occasions in Balochistan’s modern political history when the question of who “owned” Quetta has generated much energy and agitation. As it happens, tribal claims over land ownership and the unfair acquisition of tribal lands by state authorities continue to receive political support. Quetta, therefore, may not be a very pristine model of a “neutral” space. Within this context, it is quite easy for “settlers” – i.e.

¹⁰⁴ Those from Quetta were classified as coming from Pashtun-majority districts.

those migrants whose arrival was linked to their political allegiance to the formal institutions of state as opposed to any informal tribal authority – to become party to the tussle over ownership. In fact the state machinery itself might be viewed as a source of political patronage and protection to the “settlers”.

The experience of Hub in Lasbela provides an example of a somewhat different variant of state patronage and migration. In neighbouring Karachi, Hub was promoted as a site of industrial development in Balochistan. Some of the infrastructure – such as a road connection with Karachi – was already in place as through federal government intervention. The main vehicle or the “political patron” for the development of Hub was the provincial government – with incentives for private investment. Even though the initial industrial strategy was thought to have been unsustainable Hub did emerge as a new “neutral” urban space in Balochistan.¹⁰⁵ The leading role of the provincial government and private investment, and the absence of significant federal government organizations meant that the main source of migrants into Hub, in contrast with Quetta, were people from other parts of Balochistan. This was despite the close physical proximity to Karachi.

Going by existing patterns, migration into districts with growth in the mineral sector is unlikely to disturb the ethnic demographic balance – even though a majority of the migrants might be outside the province. These regions are remote and inhospitable, and are unlikely to attract many permanent settlers. For other nodal points of economic development, notably Gwadar port and its surrounding areas however, the picture is likely to be more mixed. Gwadar has already emerged as a new “neutral” urban space in the period since the last population census, and is projected to grow further. The question about its “political ownership” is likely to remain since the experience of Quetta shows that even “neutral” spaces are subject to contestation. The alternative scenarios of Quetta and Hub indicate, moreover, that the sources of migration are not independent of the main political stakeholders that create and manage a “neutral” space.

One way in which the issue of “political ownership” and the respective rights and entitlements of migrants and hosts have been addressed in policy is through “domicile”. The certification of domicile allows for provincial or even local level privileges and entitlements to people deemed to be the original or native residents of a particular area.¹⁰⁶ The present anxieties about “original residents” being overwhelmed by “outsiders” are not new. They have their roots, as was argued above, in the traditional societal organization found in Balochistan. Even in the modern context, however, there is a history of policy-making on these matters.

As indicated above, the division of British Baluchistan into “A” and “B” areas was initially made on the basis of classifying the population into “indigenous” and “non-indigenous” groups. This was also an important consideration in laws relating to land ownership and alienation. It is useful to cite the District Gazetteers at some length:

¹⁰⁵ The population of Hub town grew by an annual rate of 17 per cent between 1981 and 1998, when it was the fourth largest urban centre of the province after Quetta, Khuzdar, and Turbat (Population Census 1998).

¹⁰⁶ Representations to the Parliamentary Committee on Balochistan included discussion of differential rights for migrants and locals based on domicile laws.

“No orders have, as yet, been issued restricting the transfer of land to aliens, but under the provisions of the Civil Justice Law, 1896, Agricultural Land cannot be sold in execution of a decree without the sanction of the Local Government...In the draft Land Revenue Regulation, to which a reference has already been made, a provision had been included that no agricultural right in land shall be alienated by transfer, sale, gift, mortgage or other private contract to any person, who is not entered in a record of rights, as member of proprietary body of an estate, or if the transferee is resident in a part of Baluchistan where no such record of rights has been prepared, unless the transferee is a Pathan, Brahui or Baluch landowner, and unless he is approved by the headmen of the village where the land is situated.”¹⁰⁷

The conditionality of land alienation is layered. First, land alienation is made subject to local government. Second, if a prospective buyer is from a part of Balochistan where records of rights do not exist – which in practice meant virtually all of Balochistan – he needed to be a Pashtun, Brahui or Baloch landowner. In other words his ethnic origin established his credentials as a native of the province. Finally, the local community in the shape of the village head had a say in someone’s ability to buy land.

The question of domicile came up soon after the independence of Pakistan when a petition was presented before the Baluchistan Council in 1951 (the consultative body for the Chief Commissioner’s Province of Baluchistan) on behalf of refugees from India who had settled in the province for the grant of domicile. This provoked the response that groups who had been settled in the province for several decades – such as the Hazaras, and various “outside” tribes among the Pashtuns, had still not received such status. The Hazaras, some clans of the Durranis and Ghilzais, and the Yusafzais who had been long-standing residents were finally declared as “indigenous” through a letter issued by the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions in 1962. This declaration was soon followed up by a similar granting of “indigenous” status to the Nasir, Tajik and Wardak tribes among the Pashtuns.¹⁰⁸

Afghan displacement and migration

The war and civil strife in Afghanistan since the late 1970s onwards saw an unprecedented movement of displaced people into Pakistan. According to the UNHCR Census of Afghans in Pakistan there were 2.5 million Afghan displaced persons in the country in 2005 (Table 3). Around a quarter of these (769,268 persons) were in Balochistan at the time of the census. People of Afghan origins made up 9 per cent of the province’s estimated population in 2005, and dominated all other internal and foreign migrants by a large margin (Table 4).¹⁰⁹

The main ethnic group among the Afghans in Pakistan was the Pashtun representing around four-fifths of the population. In Balochistan too Pashtuns made up just under

¹⁰⁷ Balochistan District Gazetteer Series Chagi, Districts, p 176.

¹⁰⁸ Azad (2003).

¹⁰⁹ An annual population growth rate of 2.5 per cent was applied to the population count from the 1998 Population Census in order to estimate the total population in 2005. The number of Afghan origin people counted in the UNHCR Census of Afghans in Pakistan was added to these figures to obtain total population figures, and the proportion of Afghans was derived using these totals.

80 per cent of the Afghan population. Although their overall proportions were much lower, it was significant that the two other Afghan ethnic groups with a prior presence in Balochistan – that is, the Baloch and the Hazara – were over-represented in the province. There were around four times as many Baloch Afghans and twice as many Hazara Afghans in Balochistan respectively, compared with the rest of the country. Ethnic affinity appeared to have played a role in the choice of destination in Pakistan.

Table 3: Distribution of Afghan population by ethnicity

Ethnic group	Afghans by ethnicity in Balochistan (per cent)	Afghans by ethnicity in the rest of Pakistan (per cent)	Numbers in Pakistan
Pashtun	78	83	2,485,120
Baloch	4	1	52,009
Hazara	2	1	39,454
Others	16	15	472,685
Total number	769,268	2,280,000	3,049,268

Source: UNHCR Census 2005

The Afghan population was not spread evenly across the province but concentrated in the north and north-western districts. While in the province taken as a whole, Afghans constituted 9 per cent of all residents, in Quetta and Pishin every fourth person was an Afghan. The Afghans clearly would have shifted the demographic balance of Quetta quite decisively in favour of the Pashtuns. Chaghi was the only Baloch-majority district with a large Afghan population. This was because of the placement of large refugee camps in this border district. Afghans made up 22 per cent of the district's population in 2005. All other districts with significant Afghan populations were in the Pashtun-dominated north.

Table 4: Distribution of Afghan population by district

	Prior ethnic composition of district	Afghan population 2005 (number)	Afghans as per cent of total population
Balochistan		769,268	9
Quetta	Mixed	337,499	27
Pishin	Pashtun	155,776	26
Killa Abdullah	Pashtun	87,982	17
Chaghi	Baloch	69,410	22
Loralai	Pashtun	57,510	14
Killa Saifullah	Pashtun	31,749	12
Zhob	Pashtun	10,984	3
Mastung	Baloch	4,598	2
Khuzdar	Baloch	4,339	1
Sibi - Harnai	Pashtun	3,543	4
Kalat	Baloch	3,109	1
Ziarat	Pashtun	1,675	4

Source: UNHCR Census 2005

The Afghan presence in Balochistan has been a conspicuous political issue for decades. In the 1980s a number of Baloch and Pashtun nationalist parties were in opposition. They also supported the left-wing Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan for ideological reasons. It was widely argued then that the Afghans had been encouraged to come to Pakistan by the military government of General Zia-ul-Haq in order to stage military opposition to the Soviet forces and their Afghan allies. Many also believed that the scale and manner of the Afghan presence in Balochistan was designed to create a support base for an unpopular military government in Pakistan. Some of the political parties, particularly those with an Islamic ideology, supported the Afghan presence and the resistance to Soviet forces. On both sides, therefore, political attitudes towards Afghan displaced persons were strongly shaped by attitudes towards the left-wing Afghan government and its Soviet backers.

With the exit of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1988, and with the subsequent ending of the Cold War, the political outlook on the Afghan presence started to change. Civil war continued in Afghanistan and it became clear that Afghan displaced persons would not return to their homes in the near future. Many suspected that the Afghans would remain in Balochistan for good. As these perceptions took hold, the Baloch nationalist opposition to the Afghan presence shifted from ideo-political to ethnic grounds. Fears that the Afghan presence was “designed” to turn the Baloch into a minority in their “own” province were widely articulated.¹¹⁰

On the Pashtun side too there were subtle but significant changes. The Jamiat-e-Ulema-Islam (JUI) had always supported the Afghan *jihād* (“Holy War”) and the Afghan *mohajireen* (refugees). The Pashtun nationalists who had supported the pro-Soviet government now began to regard Afghans as fellow-Pashtuns from across an arbitrary colonial border. Parties such as the Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) openly extended protection to the Afghans on grounds of the common ethnic bond. The traditional nomenclature of transhumance was invoked to suggest that the Afghan Pashtuns in northern Balochistan were not in foreign land at all.¹¹¹

Qualitative research on Afghans in Quetta has revealed further nuances to the politics of their interaction with local communities.¹¹² The role of political parties in helping Afghans was confirmed at the community level. It was reported, for example, that a pro-Pashtun party had helped Afghans to acquire Pakistani National Identity Cards on the grounds that they were fellow Pashtuns, but also that they should support that party’s candidates in the elections. Similarly, the Pakistani Hazara community of Quetta had assisted the Afghan refugees of Hazara ethnicity due to prior social links. There were also cases of Pashto-speaking ethnic Baloch groups from Afghanistan – people who claimed that their ancestors migrated from Balochistan to Kunduz, a Pashto-speaking enclave in northern Afghanistan over a century ago and acquired Pashto but retained their tribal identities. These Baloch groups had first arrived in

¹¹⁰ One of the few instances of actual violent conflict between Afghan displaced people and the local host population took place in Chaghi – the only Baloch-majority area with a significant Afghan refugee presence.

¹¹¹ The PMAP position on Afghan Pashtuns, expressed in an interview to the author, was that they were *kadwal* or people who had shifted location within their own homeland. It is interesting that this term has traditionally been used for pastoralists practicing transhumance.

¹¹² These observations are based on Collective for Social Science Research (2006).

Peshawar and then moved to Quetta in order to re-establish their tribal connections with their “parent” tribes in Balochistan.

It is possible to make three broad observations with regards to the politics of the Afghan presence in Balochistan. First, given the sheer scale of the displacement, migration and settlement, any political tension around the issue needs to be placed in the context of the remarkable ability of Balochistan’s society to respond positively to the crisis. Second, social networks of Afghans with their respective counterparts in Pakistan, along the lines of ethnicity, political affiliation, and tribal connections, played an important role in relations between the displaced people and the host communities. Despite the scale of Afghan migration into Pakistan the informal institutions governing mobility in traditional pastoral economies appeared to hold fast. This was possibly due to the fact that Afghans and their hosts in Balochistan had a common prior shared knowledge of these institutional arrangements.

Third, although it proved to be relatively easy for Afghans to acquire formal documents of citizenship – such as National Identity Cards, passports etc. – the knowledge systems of the informal institutions proved harder to circumvent. Some two decades after their migration, and despite similar cultures, it was simple enough for an indigenous Pashtun, Baloch or Hazara to recognize and set apart an Afghan counterpart. The process of assimilation, or the extension of entitlements, was slow and political, with tribal identities and origins preserved, over many generations.

Dealing with migration

Migration has taken many different forms in Balochistan. It has been a conspicuous issue in the political debate over development. Concerns have been raised about the effects of large numbers of extra-provincial migrants who might overwhelm the existing fragile ethnic balances in the province and lead to the disenfranchisement of the indigenous communities. Matters relating to domicile and differential entitlements of migrants and hosts have a long history in the modern political debate in Balochistan.

The traditional social organization of the Baloch and Pashtuns in Balochistan had prescribed informal institutional arrangements for transhumance, migration, settlement and assimilation. These were premised upon a clear prior understanding or acknowledgement of the respective entitlements of migrants and hosts. The entitlements of the latter were generally articulated as group rights over natural resources and political authority. The process of migration and settlement involved political negotiation and incorporation where it was cooperative, and violent where it was contested. The experience of Afghan displacement and settlement has shown that many of the features of the traditional social organization remain intact and effective.

Cities represent modern spaces that are supposedly neutral territories, where migrants do not pay allegiance to particular individuals or groups, but have entitlements by virtue of their formal citizenship-based claims on the state. In actual fact, however, the creation of these supposedly neutral spaces has involved the use of political power on the part of the modern state. There is a wide perception, therefore, that migration even to the new urban spaces is not entirely devoid of political content.

Urban centres, nevertheless, provide important domains for facilitating social change in Balochistan. They offer alternative spaces to the ones dominated by traditional patriarchal social structures. The extent to which these new spaces will be available to, and utilized by, the local communities in Balochistan, and contribute to social change in Balochistan, will depend on how they are managed in political terms. It will have been a historic waste of political energy if indigenous communities found themselves engaged in a struggle for entitlements with “outsiders” or “settlers” just at the moment when they had the possibility of challenging the hold of traditional systems of patronage.

5. Political processes and outcomes

This section returns to the questions posed in Section 2 with regard to social structures and political fragmentation. It may be recalled that a stylized model of a tribal and ethnic society was constructed in order to understand the problem of political fragmentation and the possibility of broader coalitions for development and reform. Section 3 described the nature of tribal social organisation and ethnic diversity in Balochistan. It was shown that traditional social structures are robust not only because they are based on kinship and lineage, but also because they have been part of the governance, collective action, and common property management. Ethnicity could be seen as an extension of tribal social organization, as ethnic groups functioned like super-tribes. Political processes and outcomes are examined here to assess the extent to which political fragmentation of the type hypothesized in Section 2 actually exists in the province. The possibilities of non-factional alignments discussed in that section are also reviewed.

Tribalism and patron-client politics

It was argued in Section 2 that if traditional social organization was the exclusive or dominant source of political mobilization, one ought to expect robust political factions around tribal structures. The fact that voters were already engaged with one another in exclusive groups, bilaterally or through hierarchical patron-client relations, in many other domains such as kinship relations, joint resource management, and dispute resolution arrangements, it would be relatively easy to organize collective action for votes. Moreover such factions are likely to promote rent-seeking behaviour instead of broader coalitions for development or reform.

A corollary of robust tribal factions is that electoral politics may not be competitive. A tribal leader or his nominee is likely to face little effective competition if tribal structures are robust and stable. Electoral politics is likely to be dominated by a predictable set of *sardars* and *maliks* who might manage their respective factions with different degrees of internal equality or hierarchy. These propositions emerge directly out of the hypothetical model of political fragmentation in a tribal society, and can be put to an empirical test.

A somewhat crude attempt at such a test was made with reference to data from eight successive elections to the provincial assembly elections in Balochistan. The first ever elections were held in 1970. The elected government was then dismissed in 1973 and the subsequent elections in 1977 were boycotted by the opposition. In 1985 the military regime held “party-less” polls. After that there were elections in 1988, 1990, 1993, 1997 and 2002. Constituency level electoral outcomes were compared across these eight sets of elections to examine the frequency with which a particular individual or his or her close relatives had been elected from a region. Changes in electoral boundaries over time did not allow exact comparisons, but it was possible to get a reasonable correspondence between constituencies over time.

A constituency where a traditional leader – a notable *sardar* or *khan* – had been returned successful for more than a majority of the elections was deemed not to have

had competitive elections.¹¹³ It was surprising to learn that only 17 or one-third of the constituencies in the current provincial assembly of 51 elected seats had predictable traditional leaders (Table 5). Of these there were some where the same individual or family had won the election without fail since 1970. In most of the other 17 the traditional leaders or his close family members had failed to win only once or twice in six to eight attempts.¹¹⁴

The classic traditional factional leader is likely to be someone who either stood as an independent or shifted party affiliations between apparently diverse ideological positions. It was useful to those leaders separately from traditional leaders who maintained fixed ideological or party-political positions – that is, relied on broader political appeal than pure factional loyalty. Out of the 17 constituencies with traditional leaders there were only 11 where traditional leaders were clearly just factional leaders. A seat classified as competitive in Table 5 does not necessarily imply that traditional leaders and factions were unimportant there. Some of these seats certainly did appear to have competitive party-based elections. In others, however, there was competition between traditional leaders and their factions.

Table 5: Elected seats in provincial assembly by competitiveness

	Total seats elected	Competitive election	Traditional leaders - ideological position	Traditional leaders - shifting affiliation
Balochistan	51	34	6	11
Quetta	6	6		
Central uplands	7	5	2	
Northwest	4	3		1
Mekran	6	6		
South-central plains	2			2
Kachhi plains	9	5		4
East	3		2	1
North	14	10	2	2

Source: Author's calculations based on results of 8 Provincial Assemblies

The regional breakdown of competitive seats partly confirms the prior view that traditional tribal leaders are less dominant in urban centres (Quetta), the Pashtun-majority areas (north), and Mekran. Correspondingly, traditional leaders prevail in all of the seats in the east, with its history of strong tribal leadership. There were also a number of unexpected findings. The central uplands, which are often thought of as bastions of traditional tribal order turned out to be, on average, as competitive or more than the north. In fact, in contrast with the north there was not a single seat here that had traditional leaders of the classic type – that is, those without fixed ideological positions. The regions with the least competitive seats were, perhaps surprisingly, not

¹¹³ In some cases the set of elections was limited to fewer than eight, since the constituency had been carved out of one or more existing constituencies. There were yet other constituencies where the dominant traditional leaders chose not to contest elections for political reasons – this was the case in particular with the elections in 1977 and 1985 – the field was left open for other less influential candidates. In these cases the score of wins was taken after subtracting the boycotted elections.

¹¹⁴ There were a few seats that had consistently returned politicians who were not traditional leaders or their nominees. These seats are counted among seats having had competitive elections.

the conventional tribal heartlands, but the two areas of Balochistan with settled agrarian economies – namely the south-central and the Kachhi plains.

There were two clear core areas where non-tribal politicians and parties with ideological bases were important – the Pashtun-majority north, and the Baloch-majority Mekran. Then there were traditional leaders in the north, the central uplands and in the east who had fixed ideological positions. In the Pashtun-majority north the dominant ideological grouping was around the Islamic clerical JUI (F), followed by Pashtun ethnic nationalism. In Mekran Baloch ethnic nationalism was the main ideological position. In the central uplands and in the east too the ideological position that dominated was Baloch ethnic nationalism. Both Baloch and Pashtun ethnic nationalisms, moreover, had historically been influenced by the social reform agendas of left-wing politics.¹¹⁵

The analysis of provincial assembly seats provided here is obviously subject to many qualifications. Traditional leaders, even those with flexible affiliations, are not entirely devoid of ideological considerations. To this extent their prevalence is only a crude index of factionalism and fragmentation. Conversely, ideological parties and leaders are not averse to constructing their constituencies using traditional social structures. This is, of course, most emphatically the case with ideological parties that are fronted by traditional leaders. One often-expressed view is that ideologies provide a cynical cover for traditional leaders who seek broader projection.¹¹⁶

In reality there is a mix of traditional leadership and ideological affiliation. In fact much of electoral politics in Balochistan is competitive precisely because it is made up of an apparently chaotic mixture of rival patron-client political factions interacting with ideological positions. Political competition does not imply, of course, that there is no fragmentation. What is clear is that factions are not large or strong enough in most cases to have their way without facing competition from rival factions, constructing cross-factional coalitions, and negotiating pay-offs. The presence of ideological parties obviously reduced transactions costs in some areas.

Nothing illustrates the nature of political fragmentation quite like the distribution of ministerial portfolios or cabinet rank positions. Table 6 provides a region-wise breakdown of Treasury seats and cabinet rank positions for the current assembly. Out of the 50 directly elected members – one seat remained vacant and another 14 were elected indirectly for reserved seats – 35 sat on the Treasury benches while 15 were in the opposition. All but six of the directly elected members of the Treasury benches – or nearly three-fifths of the entire elected body – held ministerial positions or cabinet rank (including the positions of Speaker and Deputy Speaker). The position in the current assembly is not very different from the pattern in previous assemblies in this regard.

¹¹⁵ Student and youth organizations with left-wing ideological leanings had been important in the evolution of these ethnic nationalist movements.

¹¹⁶ This is a commonly-held charge against ethnic nationalist parties, though Islamic clerical parties have also been willing to adopt traditional leaders as their candidates in certain areas.

Table 6: Treasury seats and cabinet rank

	Seats elected	Treasury seats	Cabinet rank
Balochistan	50	35	29
Quetta	6	4	4
Central uplands	7	4	4
Northwest	4	4	3
Mekran	6	3	3
South-central plains	2	2	2
Kachhi plains	9	7	4
East	3	1	0
North	13	10	9

Source: Author's calculation based on assembly and cabinet positions

The preponderance of cabinet rankers in the assembly as a whole, and the virtual correspondence between Treasury benchers and cabinet rankers suggests political fragmentation of a high degree.¹¹⁷ One common interpretation is that virtually every Treasury bencher behaves like an independent factional leader and needs to be paid off individually in order to remain supportive of the government. This, however, cannot be the complete picture. As the current position shows, members belonging to ideological parties with a degree of collective leadership are no less likely to hold cabinet rank compared with the traditional factional leaders. It might be argued that cabinet rank is not simply a pay-off to individual members, but assurance pay-offs to different parties in a coalition government.

The regional breakdown of cabinet rankers suggests, moreover, broad parity in the ratio of cabinet rankers to the number of seats. The main exceptions are east (with no cabinet representation), and south-central plains (with over-representation) – but both these regions have relatively few seats in total. The Kachhi plains appear to be under-represented among cabinet rankers, but this situation is compensated by their over-representation at the federal level. Coalition governments have been the norm in Balochistan partly because no single party is able to gain a majority or even a plurality in the two main ethnic regions – Baloch and Pashtun respectively. It appears, however, that concern about regional representation does not stop at the broad Baloch-Pashtun level. Rather, the process of coalition-building at the provincial level appears to require the representation of all of the main sub-regions within the Baloch and Pashtun regions respectively.

Ethnic division

The Baloch-Pashtun divide appears, on the surface to be a defining characteristic of Balochistan's politics. There have been conspicuous conflicts, some of them of a violent nature. The ethnic demographic anxiety of Baloch nationalists on the one hand, are primarily directed towards the large and burgeoning presence of Pashtuns. Of late, attitudes towards Islamic clericism are also articulated in ethnic terms. Pashtun nationalists on the other hand, complain about feeling like second class citizens in a province that, in its nomenclature, is the domain of the Baloch. They

¹¹⁷ Some of the Treasury members not "rewarded" with provincial cabinet positions had close family members who held office at the federal level.

have their views about the veracity of census data and suspicions that the Baloch are actually already a minority. Origin myths of both communities can also provide plenty of material about rival claims of ownership over land, and a history of conflict. Given that a great part of the folklore and literary tradition of both the groups is about warfare, it might be expected that relations between the two will be fractious and hostile.

In fact, there is very little evidence of active conflict between the two communities. The conspicuous cases of conflict appear to be just that – conspicuous cases. There were violent clashes in Quetta in the late 1980s, ostensibly over the allocation of bus routes between Baloch and Pashtun transporters respectively. The area outside of the city centre and cantonment is divided along ethnic lines. But these divisions notwithstanding, clashes are not common. A common reason given for the absence of open conflict is, indeed, that by and large Baloch and Pashtun do not inhabit the same spaces. Another set of clashes, some fifteen years ago, took place in Chaghi when tensions boiled over between Afghan Pashtun displaced people and local Baloch communities. This too was one of the rare cases where the two communities happened to share the same space.

Other flashpoints have been around the placement of provincial facilities in Baloch or Pashtun areas respectively. The siting of the medical college, an agricultural university, and a cadet college, for example, were issues on which there was adversarial mobilisation and agitation along ethnic lines. The fact that ethnic nationalist parties have been active among students undoubtedly played a role in these flashpoints. Another conspicuous case is that between Baloch Marris and Pashtun Lunis in Loralai over the ownership of the Chamalang coal mines. This conflict which claimed many lives was no different, qualitatively, from other similar contests about ownership between neighbouring tribes. The fact that the tribes in question happened to be Baloch and Pashtun respectively, allowed them to appeal for support to broader coalitions based on ethnicity.

In general, relations between the Baloch and the Pashtuns as ethnic groups are marked by mutual acceptance of difference and peaceful accommodation. Informants of diverse political persuasions cite the fact that the two communities mostly inhabit mutually exclusive spaces implies that they have not much cause to contend with one another. Besides this passive explanation for the absence of perpetual conflict, it is also evident that two communities share a common history of negotiation and accommodation. For every instance in their histories of a clash there is also an instance of cooperation. The code of mutual coexistence between the communities is analogous to arrangements for mutual coexistence and cooperation between neighbouring tribes within each community. At their base there is a prior acknowledgement of the respective entitlements of parties. Conflicts, where they have occurred, have taken place in situations where prior entitlements are contested or not well-understood, as in the case of new forms of resources and rents.

One important feature in the relations between Baloch and Pashtuns is a history of mutual support during times of conflict with third party outsiders. Baloch nationalists acknowledge, in their origin myths, that the fertile Kachhi plains areas were acquired by Kalat from Sindh through the assistance of Afghan warrior kings. There is a

history of shared suspicions of larger more powerful states in the neighbourhood – states such as Persia, India and British India. It was striking that Pashtun politicians interviewed for this study – those in government and those in opposition – expressed sympathy for what they called the “legitimate Baloch struggle for rights and resources”.¹¹⁸ In the words of one informant: “Pashtuns have no problem with the Baloch getting rights to their resources, and the Baloch have no objection to the Pashtuns getting rights over theirs.”

One of the principal means through which accommodation between the two communities works is regional rationing of public goods, services, infrastructure, employment, and resource allocations.¹¹⁹ In some cases this is manifested in unstated but firm adherence to parity between the two communities. Some cases of regional or ethnic rationing follow principles of parity – that is, equal allocations to each community. Others attempt to follow, broadly, some proportionality to population ratios. The settling of rationing is often taken as an implicit point of departure, and is sometimes subject to negotiation, and infrequently open contestations. In either case there is an idea that there is something to negotiate and it will be costly for both parties to push matters to maximalist positions.

Ideological positions and possibilities

Apart from the general ideological currents in mainstream Pakistani politics there are two tendencies that are of particular interest with respect to Balochistan: ethnic nationalism and Islamic clericism. These two ideological tendencies have persisted from the very inception of modern political mobilization in Balochistan, and have occupied most of the ground vacated by purely factional politics based on traditional sources of authority. As set out in Section 2, the traditional social structures of Balochistan appear to be geared towards fragmentation along the lines of narrow factions. These ideological tendencies are interesting, therefore, in revealing something about the possibility of broader, non-traditional coalitions that challenge fragmentation along purely factional lines.

Ethnic nationalisms of the Baloch and the Pashtuns have evolved mostly separately, often in cooperation, and sometimes in conflict. They have separately or jointly controlled provincial governments, though at the present time, with the exception of a rump nationalist Baloch party, the Baloch and Pashtun ethnic nationalists are in the opposition. Ethnic nationalists of both groups have some essential ideological precepts in common. The base their politics on the belief that the communities they claim to represent are nations or at the very least “nationalities” that are currently inhabiting a multi-national state. The Baloch and the Pashtun nationalists both are keen to root their claims of nationhood in history, and refer to unfair historic divisions of their respective communities by arbitrary boundaries drawn up by British colonial rule.

¹¹⁸ Interviews with representatives of JUI(F) and PMAP.

¹¹⁹ The submissions of the PMAP to the Senate Committee on Balochistan, for example, argue the case for Balochistan in general, and also add specific demands for the northern districts of the province.

The political objectives of the Baloch and Pashtun nationalists are also similar. They range from making the federation work as originally intended, reforming the federation to make it more responsive to the needs of the multiple “nations” and “nationalities” inhabiting the state, to outright secession. The same parties and individuals can quite comfortably hold all three types of “tactical” positions – the underlying strand being self-government of their respective “nation” or “nationality”.

Ultimately, the discussion about various political possibilities generally comes down to a concern about collective entitlements, as “nations” to resources and rents. The symbolism of “nationhood” is important, and it is not a coincidence that culture and mythology played and continues to play an important role in the genesis and sustenance of these movements. Culture and mythology, however, are mostly invoked in order to establish the claim of being a collectivity – nation, nationality or something else. Once that claim is established the political argument really is around entitlements to resources and rents.

There is an important reason why the Baloch and Pashtun nationalisms are mostly mutually cooperative. The maximalist position of both sides pose no existential threat to the other. For the Baloch the maximalist position is outright secession and the formation of an ethnically Baloch nation-state. For the Pashtun nationalists the maximalist position is the unification of all Pashtun lands, and also outright secession and the formation of a nation-state. Because the two communities reside in and lay claim to mutually exclusive territory – with the possible exception of Quetta – there is little need for friction.

Baloch and Pashtun ethnic nationalists also have a shared history of engagement with left-wing and communist programmes and parties. Their understanding of “the national question” is from common theoretical perspectives, and rhetoric about class mobilization has been present in their political vocabularies. University and college students and their organizations have played an important role in the evolution of the ethnic nationalist movements. Many of the current politicians started their careers as student leaders. The ethos of the ethnic nationalist movements is, therefore, decidedly modernist.

While most traditional leaders have engaged in purely factional politics some of them have been supporters and leaders of ethnic nationalist movements from the very outset. The idea that the tribal system, in its pure form, is democratic or even communistic, has facilitated this seemingly odd juxtaposition of traditional leadership with a modern current. Ethnic nationalist appeals to Baloch and Pashtun “cultures” also allows for the movements to maintain a non-confrontational posture vis-à-vis tribal social organization. Although Baloch nationalists have nodded positively in the direction of class struggle, they have been vulnerable to being outflanked from the left at crucial times.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ The first elected provincial government with a nationalist platform was challenged early in its tenure by peasant uprisings against the payment of *shishak* or *sardari* taxes in some areas. Although it was suspected that the then federal government had encouraged the peasant uprising in order to embarrass the nationalist government, the uprising was nevertheless did find a weak spot in the nationalist argument (Interview for this study with Amanullah Gichki). See also Marri (2005).

Islamic clericists have frequently cooperated with ethnic nationalists to form governments, or opposition.¹²¹ Currently, the main clerical party, JUI(F) is in government under the umbrella of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). The ideological objective of the JUI(F) is the establishment of an Islamic state following Sharia laws in Pakistan. Like the ethnic nationalists, in practice this ideological objective can translate into a range of political options. A mainstream position is, not unlike the ethnic nationalists, the faithful implementation of the current national constitution. This, according to the current leadership of the MMA provides for the establishment of Sharia law.¹²² A maximalist position would be the establishment of theocratic state where authority will be vested with Islamic clerics of the Sunni Deobandi sect, along lines of the Taliban state in Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001.

The clericist movement is based on an existing presence of mosques and *madrassahs* in the rural and urban areas of Balochistan. The cadre is also quite largely student and former-student based – though the educational institutions are seminaries and clerical schools as opposed to the modern university and colleges from which the ethnic nationalists drew support. Mosques were integral to social and community life in the Pashtun villages. In the core areas of the Kalat Khanate there was state patronage for *madrassahs* as the primary centres of education. The Khanate also relied on the clergy and staff in lower level judicial offices, and encouraged the dissemination of clerical literature. The clericist movement, despite what some of its detractors argue, has had a long-standing presence in Pashtun and Baloch societies.

The main innovation of the JUI and its predecessors was to gradually infuse the existing religious infrastructure to the Sunni Deobandi theology, and to provide for linkages between clerics and their students across the province (and the country), creating a strong political organization capable of winning representation. The political rhetoric of the clericist movement sometimes used strong sectarian messages in order to consolidate its ideological base. There are also consistent references to class and suggestions that the clerical movement challenges existing traditional hierarchies. The movement often plays up the contrast with the ethnic nationalist movement among Pashtun and Baloch alike, which it is alleged, is led by traditional leaders of the ruling class backgrounds.¹²³ The clerics see themselves as representatives of “poor people” and other subalterns long oppressed by the traditional tribal leaders.

There appears to be little common ground between the two main ideological currents in Balochistan. In fact there seem to be many potential points of conflict and rivalry. The ethnic nationalists stress the identity of Baloch and Pashtun respectively as the

¹²¹ For a recent statement about their willingness to cooperate with ethnic nationalists in the future see the statement of Maulana Mohammad Khan Sherani, MNA, Balochistan provincial chief of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, Dawn 25 February 2007.

¹²² A further nuance is that Sharia law is already being practised at the local level in many areas of the country under traditional arrangements – the example of the Qazi courts in the former Kalat Khanate region of Balochistan is cited (Sherani in Dawn 25 February 2007).

¹²³ This is confirmed by observations from the other side that the traditional office of the cleric was to function as a dependent servant of the village community or the tribal chief. Complaints that these “upstarts” have “encroached” into politics simply serve to reinforce clerical claims of “humble backgrounds”.

main collectivity, while the clericists emphasize the importance of the Islamic community cutting across ethnic boundaries. Although with a predominantly Pashtun support base, the clericist party has had a history of winning elections in the Brahui-speaking central uplands – the core territory of the former Kalat Khanate. In terms of ideological objectives, cadre base, and political programme too, the two types of movements are very divergent. It is not surprising that in the Pashtun areas there is no love lost between the ethnic nationalists and the Islamic clericists.

But Maulana Sherani's claim cited above about possible cooperation between the nationalists and the clericists is not without foundation. There is a long history of cooperation between the two currents. In order to understand the nuances of mutual cooperation and conflict between ethnic nationalisms, and their relations with Islamic clericism it is instructive to briefly examine the histories of these ideological currents.¹²⁴

The first modern political manifestation in the province was the All India Baloch and Balochistan conference held in 1932 in the ethnic Baloch city of Jacobabad in upper Sindh. This followed up the following year with a second conference in Hyderabad, Sindh. Although an ethnic Pashtun and founder of the largest ethnic nationalist Pashtun party in Balochistan, Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai was an important supporter of these conferences, and had the honour of chairing their sessions. Important leaders included Sardar Yusuf Aziz Khan Magsi, Mir Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo and the popular Balochi poet and writer Gul Khan Naseer. The conferences were both anti-colonial and pro-social reform. Prominent demands included the ending or modification of patriarchal codes such as *lab* and *valvar*, the ending of *sardari* levies, the promotion of education particularly female schooling, and the codification of customary law. Prohibition on the sale of alcohol in Balochistan, clearly motivated by Islamic religious considerations, was also one of the demands.

An important political landmark was the formation in 1937 of the Kalat State National Party (KSNP) with many of the conference participants as its leaders. The KSNP was also anti-colonial and social reformist. Its opening position regarding Balochistan's relationship with the rest of British India was not separatist – rather it was integrationist and demanded the incorporation of Balochistan as a full province with all of the institutions and norms that had been granted by the colonial government to Indian provinces in the Government of India Act of 1935. The clericists under the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind cooperated with the KSNP and some clerics were counted among important leaders of the party. Achakzai also remained a key player, and was banned from entering Kalat for his labours.

The KSNP was broadly seen at the time as being aligned with the All India Congress and the broader Indian anti-colonial struggle. It might be recalled that the Congress had couched its anti-colonial struggle quite largely in terms of social reform of Indian society. It was no anomaly in those years that the early political campaigns of the KSNP were directed against caste and racial inequity in traditional Baloch society, and for the abolition of what were declared then as extortionist *sardari* taxes. The nascent

¹²⁴ See Annex 2 for a “family tree” of some current parties and ideological tendencies.

period of modern political formation thus combined ethnic nationalists, clericists, and social reformers on one platform in an anti-colonial struggle.

Clericists and Baloch nationalists came together again in 1947-48 when the decision about Kalat's future relations with the newly formed independent state of Pakistan were being debated. Some of the participants in this debate that argued for Kalat separate but friendly existence alongside Pakistan stressed the Islamic credentials of both states, and hoped for brotherly Islamic relations between them. When supporters of independence revolted briefly in 1948 against Kalat's accession to Pakistan, Islamic clericists were prominent among them. A *fatwa* issued by some leading clericists of Kalat declared that Pakistan no longer qualified as an Islamic state, and it was a religious duty of Kalat Muslims to resist accession.¹²⁵

In the post-independence period many of the leaders of the proscribed KSNP came together to form the National Party, which later changed its name to the National Awami Party (NAP). In the late 1960s veteran Pashtun nationalist leader of Balochistan Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai left NAP to form his own political organization. NAP however, was not a Baloch party at the national level, and its main central leadership included Pashtun nationalists from NWFP. Achakzai's exit from NAP, therefore, did not signal a break between Baloch and Pashtun nationalists. At this juncture too the clericist movement, represented by the Jamiat-e-Ulema-Islam (JUI) worked closely with the ethnic nationalists. NAP and JUI jointly formed the first ever elected provincial government of Balochistan in 1972. In this case, as in the 1930s and 1940s, it was possible for these disparate ideological trends to make common cause in Balochistan in the face of what were perceived as "external" forces.

Ideological currents based on ethnic nationalism and Islamic clericism respectively have succeeded to a great extent in overcoming the challenge of political fragmentation that is characteristic of tribal social organization. In some regions of the province they have been able to occupy political spaces that might have been formerly held by purely factional traditional leaders. In the terms outlined in Section 2, these ideological currents have constructed broader alignments and coalitions.

While challenging political fragmentation at the micro-level, however, these very ideological currents, have led to the danger of political fragmentation at higher levels. At times the various ethnic nationalists have been at odds with each other. The relationship between ethnic nationalists and Islamic clericists appears fraught with potential difficulties given their disparate visions and political ethos. Despite the obvious difficulties, however, these currents have cooperated with one another in the past vis-à-vis players external to Balochistan. In practice this is made easier because of the mostly exclusive regional constituencies of ethnic nationalists and Islamic clericists respectively. As past experience has shown there is plenty of scope within Balochistan's political culture for negotiation and arriving at middle positions. Difference of ideological position, under these conditions, is not necessarily a sign of fragmentation.

¹²⁵ Marri (2005), p 307.

Section 2 identified two areas – class and patriarchy -- where horizontal political alignments are necessary for social change. The ideological currents in Balochistan while providing for broader coalitions that allowed by narrow factions, have not generated class-based Balochistan-wide alignments. The issue of class inequality and other forms of social hierarchy have been dealt with within the parameters of specific ethnic groups or regions. Baloch nationalists, for example, have responded to racial or caste-based social hierarchy in their society. The Islamic clericists claim to have challenged established class hierarchies in the areas where they operate. Spaces that might be autonomous of traditional social structures are, perhaps, not broad enough yet to have generated cross-ethnic and cross-regional class mobilizations.

The patriarchal underpinnings of the societal organization reflect in the limited discussion of women’s issues and rights by various political parties, both in recent history and the present. The parent organization of the left leaning Kalat State National Party was a political group called the “Anjuman Ittehad Balochan” formed under the leadership of Abdul Aziz Kurd. Mir Yousuf Ali Khan Aziz Magsi was also a prominent leader of the group. In 1932, the party held the “Balochistan and All-India Baloch Conference” to develop a broad based understanding amongst Baloch political forces.

The conference also gave attention to various tribal customs that were seen as encouraging subhuman treatment of women. It condemned the custom of marrying women in an enemy’s family for resolving disputes, and requested a ban to be placed on it on account of “humanity, equality and justice”. It demanded an abolition of *lub* and *valvar*, and any customs that equated women with property and gave men a right of ownership over them. It requested the British government, Confederation of States and Baloch people to play their respective roles in promoting education for women. These demands were reiterated in the second “Balochistan and All-India Baloch Conference” in 1933.¹²⁶ Mir Yousuf Aziz Magsi emerged as a vocal campaigner for women’s empowerment and saw it as a prerequisite for the liberation of Balochistan. Magsi died in 1935 in the Quetta earthquake and his death marked an end to the open discussion of women’s issues for some time.

In the late 1940s, a peasant movement in the Marri tribe called the “Mazloom Party” gained momentum. The party, organized along the tribal structure, primarily demanded a cut in the various taxes to be paid to the sardar. Not only did the movement succeed in its primary objective, it also brought about certain important changes in the status of *siyahkar* women. Historically, the *siyahkar* women who managed to take refuge with the *sardar*, and lived and worked at his home could be married only outside the Marri tribe, and their *lub* belonged to the sardar.

After a struggle, led by the Mazloom Party, this arrangement changed. A *siyahkar* woman in refuge had to be married outside her subtribe (*saik*), but could be married within the Marri tribe. Also, the *lub* no longer belonged to the sardar.¹²⁷ The experience of the Mazloom Party revealed the possibilities as well as the limitations of challenging patriarchal norms while remaining within the tribal setup. Collective

¹²⁶ Marri, S. M. (2005). Baloch Quom – Qadeem Ahd se Asr-e-hazir Tak. Lahore: Taqleeqat.

¹²⁷ Marri, S. M. (2005). Baloch Quom – Qadeem Ahd se Asr-e-hazir Tak. Lahore: Taqleeqat.

action at the tribal level was required to make even marginal changes to arrangements that might have been regarded as unnecessary or even repugnant by many individual tribe members.

6. Dynamics of social change

What will be some of the main dimensions of social and economic development in Balochistan? These are simple enough to specify, envision and track in quantitative terms. It is uncontroversial that there needs to be economic growth, that such growth ought to be employment-creating and in productive sectors, that existing natural resources should be utilized to their economic potential, and that new ones should be discovered and brought into the economic realm. It is also beyond argument that economic development will be meaningful if it leads to reduction in poverty, the rise in literacy levels, improvements in health outcomes, and the eradication of gender inequalities.

Social and economic development will necessary have qualitative dimensions too. Improved governance, accountability and policy-making will be part of such change. As will greater autonomy for individuals to participate in markets, and civil and political life, regardless of prior kinship, tribal or ethnic association, the empowerment of women and the elimination of discriminatory traditional practices against them. Specifically, development will require widening access to economic opportunities, expanding the domain of competitive politics, reducing the reliance of people on traditional social organization, and challenging patriarchal norms and practices.

The bind of tribalism

The review of social structures and political processes in this study has shown that tribal social organization is ubiquitous and robust in most areas and across ethnic groups in Balochistan – the possible exceptions being emerging urban centres and the region of Mekran. In other areas the tribal social organization is strong and pervasive, and tribe and extended patriarchies are the default units of collective action and political mobilization. Ideological movements have eroded some of the more extreme factional tendencies of tribal social organization, but have not decisively reversed them. Interestingly, regions with relatively strong settled agrarian economies – and not the areas with the remnants of a pastoral economy – appear to be the strong-points of traditional patronage-based politics.

Ethnic social relations are in many ways extensions of informal institutions governing inter and intra-tribal relations. Ethnic groups operate as super-tribes. The received idea that “tribalism” is stronger among the Baloch compared with the Pashtun is a comment on the nature of leadership and hierarchy within tribes. Baloch *sardars* are, certainly, more important in the collective identity of tribes than are Pashtun *maliks*. But this does not mean that tribes, tribal social organization, and tribal codes are no longer important among the Pashtuns. In fact, Pashtun tribes are probably as robust if not more, given their emphasis on racial and lineage purity.

Kinship and lineage is only partly responsible for the strength of the tribal bond among the Baloch and the Pashtuns. Joint ownership and management of common property resources is a key economic dimension of tribal solidarity and rivalry. Dispute resolution is another key dimension of collective action among extended patriarchies. Membership of tribal social organization – particularly among the Baloch but also among the Pashtun to some extent – is based partly on origin myths,

and partly on the construction and negotiation of political alliances and allegiances over long periods of time. This system of association and assimilation has been available even to migrants from other areas that have broadly accepted these informal institutional norms.

Ethnic nationalist movements among the Baloch and the Pashtun – particularly the former – have been bedevilled with the paradox of the “political *sardar*”. The aims of these movements of constructing cross-tribal ethnic coalitions undermine tribalism and *sardars* to some extent. At the same time, these movements gain political strength when they are joined by powerful nationalist *sardars*. This paradox has remained with the ethnic nationalist movement from its very outset. The social-reformist agenda of the Kalat State National Party (KSNP) found wide acceptance among political activists of Balochistan some 70 years ago. The party faced the hostility of many of the established *sardars*. Many of its leaders, however, came from the ranks of *sardar* families themselves – even if they were mostly the lesser chieftains. The KSNP and its successor organizations might be regarded as a movement led, by and large, by the politically-minded *sardars* against the old static patronage-based order.

This paradox, however, is only partly a result of the limited alternative avenues for the emergence of a political leadership. Even for the next generation of ethnic nationalist activists, who came out of student politics, the question of their attitude towards tribalism and *sardari* remained a pertinent one. The robustness of tribalism was underpinned not only by its justifying ideology, but by the practical functions that it fulfilled in governance, dispute resolution and the joint management of common property. Even as the economic value of common property resources declined, the tribe remained the channel for the appropriation and distribution of other types of rents – including those arising from modern development interventions. Most importantly, the tribal social organization proved a resilient mechanism for securing and protecting group entitlements.

The issue of tribalism is no less important for Pashtun society in Balochistan. Even though the Islamic clericist movement claims to counter the power of tribal chieftains – in Pashtun and Baloch areas to an extent – its social interventions need to be interpreted with some care. In contrast with modernist Islamist movements in Pakistan and elsewhere, the Islamic clericist movement is at ease with tribal and ethnic identities. This movement has created space for itself through a network of religious establishments, and also by invoking the cleric’s role as an arbitrator. In practice the clerics have simply gained a strong foothold within the tribal system of dispute resolution and arbitration. They uphold rather than undermine the traditional tribal order, even if they would like to replace its current leaders in some places.¹²⁸ In fact, unlike the ethnic nationalists, the Islamic clericist movement is not even

¹²⁸ There is a view that Pashtun tribal chieftains were historically weaker than their Baloch counterparts. This was partly due to the greater emphasis on kinship compared with hierarchical tribal alliances in the construction of Pashtun tribes, and partly because the Pashtun region of Balochistan formerly belonged to Afghanistan which had a stronger imprint of a state system than the more autonomously self-governed Baloch areas. The clerics, it is argued, stepped in at a time when the *maliks* were already weak.

nominally opposed to many of the patriarchal and discriminatory customary codes against women.

Development and rents

If tribalism and ethnic political fragmentation represent positions of social equilibrium then it is not surprising that they invite apparently opposite political interpretations. There is an argument that Balochistan's society is incapable, of its own accord, of exiting from this equilibrium. External intervention on a massive scale can help Balochistan's society to overcome the bind of tribalism. This could be done through the development of physical infrastructure, creating new sources of economic growth, new and neutral spaces that do not fall within the domain of traditional leadership, and the removal of archaic systems of governance that perpetuate tribal social organization. A radical version of this position holds that the vested interests that benefit from tribalism and ethnic political fragmentation are bound to obstruct development, and need to be resisted by force if necessary.

An alternative view is that tribalism and ethnic political fragmentation appear to be social equilibrium positions only because the formal systems of the modern state function so poorly, not just in Balochistan but all over Pakistan. A frontal assault on tribalism and ethnic particularism is likely to fail if it does not engage Balochistan's society into manifestly more efficient and just systems of governance. A radical version of this view is that tribalism and ethnic political fragmentation actually serve to undermine the capacity of the province's polity from striking a collective bargaining position, and are thus encouraged by extra-provincial political players.

Dispensing with the more radical versions of the two alternative positions, it is possible to find evidence for both. Tribalism and ethnic political fragmentation contributes to poor governance, and poor governance for its part creates a rationale for the existing informal institutions. The Levies system of local policing, like the FCR and legalised Sardari before it, is linked with tribal social organization and creates scope for local rent-seeking behaviour. The replacement of the Levies with formal police (or the reclassification of "B Areas" into "A Areas") has provoked wide opposition including from within the provincial government.¹²⁹ The argument against the change, which carries some public support, is that the introduction of the police will create new avenues of extortion and corruption. The experience of other parts of the country with the police service is cited as plausible evidence for this claim.

The creation of neutral urban spaces through infrastructure development by the state is another example of an external intervention – that is, external to Balochistan's society – that might facilitate social change. Such spaces allow the development of segments in Baloch and Pashtun societies that are relatively autonomous of tribal social organization in the economic, social and political terms. The experience of Quetta shows, however, that no space is really neutral in a political sense. Even in Quetta where the formal institutions of the modern state were established over a century ago

¹²⁹ See the representations of various political parties to the Senate Committee on Balochistan. See also the statement issued by Maulana Sherani of the JUI(F) on this issue (Dawn 25 February 2007). Interviews with diverse politicians for the present study elicited similar views.

the informal claims of tribal communities had to be acknowledged and respected to some extent. Moreover, the fact that the social category “settler” was the outcome of an urban enclave implies that far from being neutral, the city had added yet another politically-connected category of claimants to the already existing contenders.

The development of the Gwadar port and coastal Mekran promises to open up unprecedented economic opportunities in Balochistan. Social structures in Mekran are relatively free of tribalism and informal systems of social organization, resource ownership and dispute management are less robust than elsewhere in the province. There are good reasons to expect, therefore, the Gwadar and coastal Mekran, perhaps even on a bigger scale than Hub, represent potentially neutral urban spaces for Baloch society. At the same time, there is an oft-expressed fear that Mekran’s very openness, and the absence of strong tribal organization there might have weakened the ability of indigenous communities in asserting and maintaining their entitlements to resources and future rents.¹³⁰

The examples cited here can be equally used to support two apparently opposing claims – that tribalism can be broken by state rather than societal action, or that tribalism is an effective societal response to state ineffectiveness. In fact these positions are not mutually inconsistent. They are characteristic of any situation that might be deemed to be in social equilibrium. What these analyses miss, and something that runs through all of the examples cited above however, is that tribal social organization is not simply a system of governance but that it also implies entitlements to resources and rents. It is analytically possible to separate out governance arrangements from the entitlements that they imply.

Attitudes towards the abolition of the Levies system, for example, can be interpreted in terms of the expected changes in the creation and appropriation of rents. Similarly, the development of new sectors and regions is likely to create new sources of rent while redistributing existing rents. In fact, as argued in Section 1, much of the potential economic growth in Balochistan is premised on the creation or realization of economic rents. In principle, arguments about rent distribution ought to fall in the political rather than economic domain. There are unlikely to be efficiency implications in the appropriation and distribution of resource rents. Development interventions that credibly protect the entitlements of local communities to resources and rents are likely to erode the economic rationale of collectivities such as tribes and ethnic groups.

The current formal framework (available to government and international donors) for the protection of prior entitlements in the course of a development intervention provides only a partial answer to the types of questions raised in Balochistan. This framework is based on compensating project affectees for the loss of earnings.¹³¹ In an economy where rents are likely to be a major, if not the major source of growth, *ex*

¹³⁰ It is ironic to hear informants from Mekran expressing frustration that unlike their compatriots in the tribal heartlands of the province, they feel vulnerable to the fear of dispossession.

¹³¹ For an illustration of the existing framework for compensation see Government of Balochistan (2006), “Balochistan Water Resources and Rural Infrastructure Development Project, Resettlement Framework”.

post expected future earnings or rents excite far greater attention than the *ex ante* opportunity cost of the resource.

As shown in Section 5 above, provincial politics in Balochistan, despite many problems, are both competitive and attuned to negotiated settlements between factions and fragments. Although this is not examined here, the sub-provincial units of government such as districts and below are likely to have similar possibilities of arriving at negotiated settlements. These levels of government, and particularly provincial government, are the correct political domains for the appropriation and distribution of economic rents. This is because it is at these very levels of government where stakeholders in Balochistan can exercise political influence and gain assurance about the protection of their collective and individual entitlements.

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Interview List

Sl no	Date	Name	Position	Interviewer(s)
1	22-Jan-07	Mr. Shahzaman Rind	MPA from PML-Q. Chairman Standing Committee for Food, Agriculture, Irrigation, Water and Power. Member Public Accounts Committee, Balochistan Provincial Assembly	Azmat Ali Budhani Hussain Bux Mallah
2	23-Jan-07	Mr. M.A Wali Kakar	Acting Chairman BNP	Azmat Ali Budhani Hussain Bux Mallah
3	24-Jan-07	Mr. Nawabzada Haji Mir Lashkari Khan Raisani	President Balochistan Chapter PPP	Azmat Ali Budhani Hussain Bux Mallah
4	24-Jan-07	Mr. Nadeem Murad Qalandarani	Journalist. General Reporter for the daily newspaper "Mashriq".	Azmat Ali Budhani Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah
5	7-Feb-07	Mr. Ammanullah Gichki	Senior Politician	Azmat Ali Budhani Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah
6	8-Feb-07	Mr. Zulfiqar Durrani	Chief of Section - Foreign Aid and PRSP	Azmat Ali Budhani Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah
7	8-Feb-07	Mr. Maqbool Ahmed (Secretary), and other senior staff	Mines and Minerals Department	Azmat Ali Budhani Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah
8	8-Feb-07	Mr. Arbab Abdul Zahir Kansi	Vice President ANP	Azmat Ali Budhani Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah
9	8-Feb-07	Mr. Kachkol Ali Baloch	MPA from NP. Leader of Opposition.	Azmat Ali Budhani, Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah
10	9-Feb-07	Mr. Maulvi Hussain Ahmed Sarodi	Minister from JUI. Town Planning	Azmat Ali Budhani Hussain Bux Mallah
11	9-Feb-07	Mr. Akram Shah	Senator from PKMAP	Azmat Ali Budhani Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah
12	9-Feb-07	Mr. Muhammad Usman Kakar	President – PKMAP	Azmat Ali Budhani Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah
13	9-Feb-07	Mr. Mukhtiar Shah	Account Officer Balochistan Assembly	Azmat Ali Budhani Hussain Bux Mallah
14	9-Feb-07	Mr. Maulvi Noor Muhammad	MNA from JUI	Azmat Ali Budhani Hussain Bux Mallah

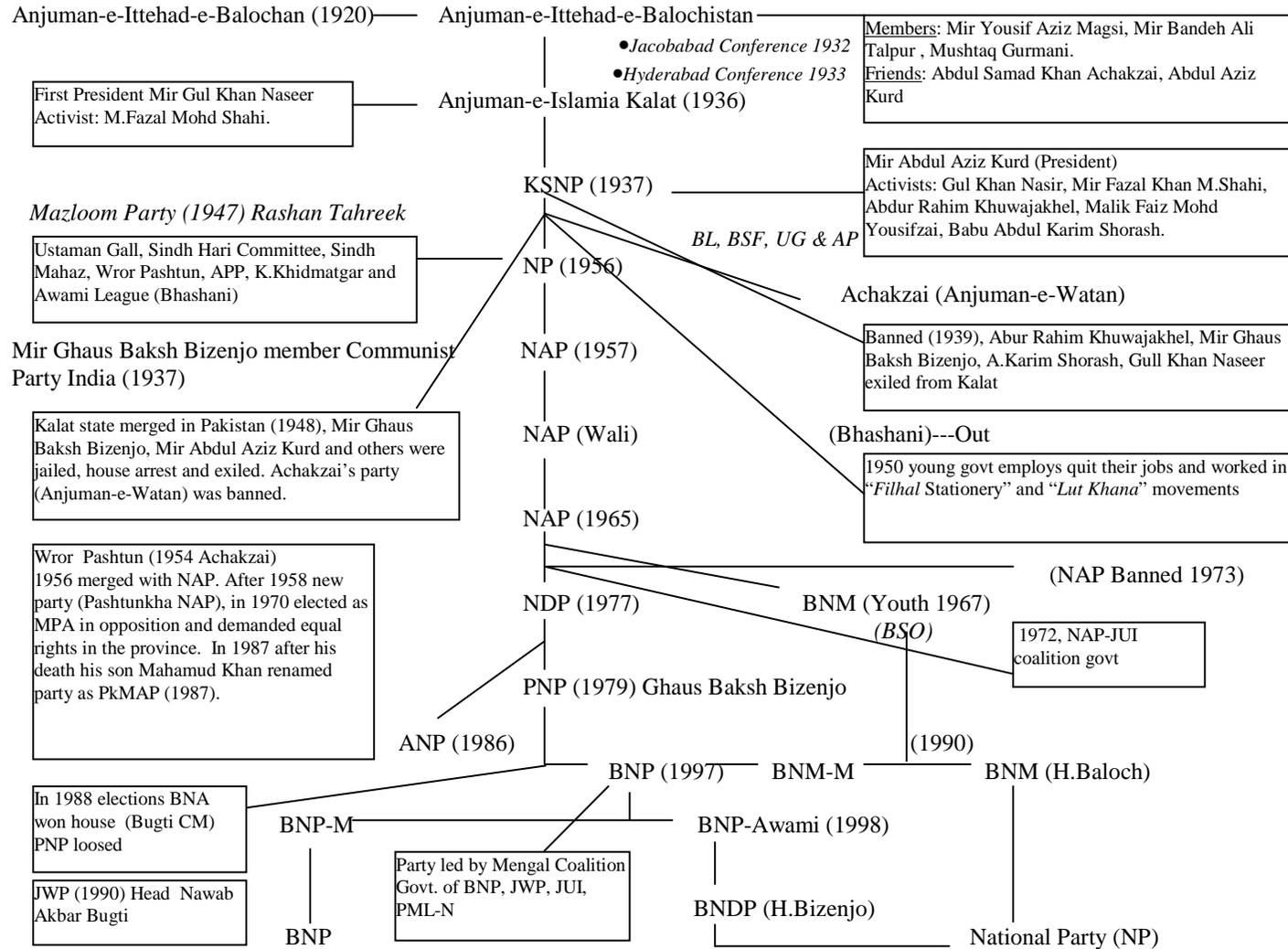
15	10-Feb-07	Mr. Raziq Bugti	Member PML-Q. Spokesperson for and Media Consultant to CM	Azmat Ali Budhani Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah
16	10-Feb-07	Mr. Amir Jan Raisani	Ombudsman	Azmat Ali Budhani Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah
17	10-Feb-07	Mr. Muhammad Iqbal Awan	Retired Sub-Tehsildar	Azmat Ali Budhani Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah
18	10-Feb-07	Mr. Tahir Muhammad Khan	Senior Politician	Haris Gazdar
19	10-Feb-07	Prof. Dr. Shah Muhammad Marri	Academic and Writer	Azmat Ali Budhani Haris Gazdar Hussain Bux Mallah

Balochistan – Recent History

British Balochistan						Balochistan Chief Commissioner's Province established after treaty with Khan of Kalat. Political Agent: Robert Sandeman			BCCP became part of Pakistan. Chief Commissioner appointed.			West Pakistan (one unit) created.						
Kalat	State of Kalat founded.		Title: <i>Wali</i> → <i>Beglar Begi Khan</i> → <i>Khan</i>		1749-1794: Noori Nasir Khan					Acceded to Pakistan.	Balochistan State Union formed by four states. Council of Rulers headed by Khan-e Azam.	BSU Dissolved.		Kalat, Awaran, Khuzdar, Mastung, Bolan, Jhal Magsi, Nasirabad				
		State of Kharan founded as a vassal state of Kalat.						1921: <i>Mir</i> → <i>Nawab</i>								Kharan		
				State of Lasbela founded as a vassal state of Kalat. Title: <i>Jam</i>														Lasbela
							State of Makran founded as a vassal state of Kalat.	1922: <i>Nizam</i> → <i>Nawab</i>										Panjgur, Kech, Gwadar
Gwadar					Khan of Kalat granted the revenue from Gwadar to Taimur Sultan, the defeated ruler of Muscat. When Sultan recaptured Muscat, he continued to rule Gwadar by appointing a <i>wali</i> .								GoP purchased Gwadar from Muscat for £ 3 million.	Gwadar				
	1638	1697	1739	1742	1783	1876-1891	1898	1921/22	14 Aug 1947	17 Mar 1948	3 Oct 1952	14 Oct 1955	1958	27 districts				

* Ziarat, Sibi, Jaffarabad, Dera Bugti, Kohlu, Chagai, Nushki, Pishin, Quetta, Qila Abdullah, Qila Saifullah, Zhob, Musakhel, Loralai, Barkhan

Family Tree of Current Parties and Trends¹³²



¹³² Information compiled from: Mahmood, S. (2002), Khan, T. M. (1999), Marri, S. M. (2005), and South Asia Partnership Pakistan. (2001).