

The implications of the state's response to the violent ethnic conflicts in Balochistan

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Abstract:

The ethnic conflicts have severely challenged Pakistan's integrity and national security. Ethnic nationalists are entangled with the state over identity issues and their demand for a due share in power and resources. The study aims to explore the nature of the state response to these conflicts and to measure the effects of the state responses on the conflict's dynamics and social environment of Balochistan. The research questions are how the state responded to ethnic conflicts, and what are the implications of the responses on the dynamics of ethnic conflicts? The research is qualitative, descriptive, and interpretive approaches have been used to address the research questions. The material is collected from primary and secondary sources, such as government records, newspapers, books, periodicals, research papers, and websites. The study is significant because it has debated a less debated burning issue of Baloch. The research findings show that Pakistan responded with compromise and dominance, but dominance was always the paramount option. However, dominance has not been a better framework because it has further complicated the conflicts. It is recommended that reconciliation and compromise are better response options because they can positively defuse conflicts and adjust ethnic identities.

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1. Introduction

Pakistan is a highly diverse and plural society regarding its ethnic, religious, and linguistic composition. Therefore, Cohen (2005) said that Pakistan is one of the world's most ethnically and linguistically complex states (p. 201). There are five ethnicities in Pakistan i.e., Sindhis, Punjabis, Saraikis, Pashtuns, and Baloch. These ethnicities conflict with one another and with the state. Many conflicts are embedded in the discrepancy between the state's political institutions and societal diversity. The country's ruling elites are reluctant to accept the plural composition of society (Kukreja, 2020). The case of Balochistan is too complex as it is the largest province of Pakistan but the poorest and least developed province (Tariq, 2013). Generally, Baloch as a nation in Pakistan felt underprivileged and ignored. The Baloch has great resentment about persistent renunciation of their due share in the national matters. They have spoken about their distrust with federal authority that is delivering nothing (Hashmi, 2013). The conflicts with the state have been started right from the inception of the state. Balochistan's conflicts have numerous fault lines. Presently, The Baloch ethnicity can be divided into two factions. The "nationalists" demand maximum autonomy for the province but always wish to live in the federation of Pakistan. However, the other factions of "insurgents" have been dissatisfied with this system and are working for the independence of Balochistan (Grare, 2013).

The main conflicts are between the state and the Baloch nationalists. Baloch also has conflicts with the Pashtun ethnicity and sectarian lords who have been militarized by the state through its policy of Islamization (Hasan, 2016). Overall, nationalists put their grievances and demands before the state in the shape of political and economic autonomy, sharing of resources, self-control, and restricting migrations. The insurgents' demand for a separate state is gaining popularity because of Baloch's continuous distrust and repression. The Pakistani government responded to these conflicts primarily with military operations and sometimes with compromises. Pakistan's military started several campaigns against them, but the issue is yet to be resolved. The result of this state's repressive response proved negative, as most of the nationalists, who were demanding autonomy before, also became insurgents in reaction (Grare, 2013). The military response created the reaction of the nationalists. Despite restoring peace, this response aggravated the situation further and created anarchy and economic and strategic compulsions. Likewise, it created room for foreign involvement and religious extremism that were absent before.

This study is an attempt to evaluate the implications of the state response to the ethnic conflicts in Balochistan. The main objectives of the research are "to comprehend the response of the state to the ethnic conflicts and to evaluate implications of the state's response to the ethnically motivated conflicts in Balochistan." The main hypothetical questions of the research are (i) How state of Pakistan responded to the ethnic conflicts in Balochistan? (ii) What are the implications of these responses on the dynamics of conflicts and social environment of Balochistan? The study is valuable because the previous accounts on the subject have ignored

this area. The scope of research is limited to the ethnic conflicts in Balochistan, the response of the Pakistani state, and the implications of these responses on the conflict and social environment of Balochistan. Though, the time frame of the research starts from the time of the inception of Pakistan and mainly dealt with the event following the fifth insurgency, which started in 2006.

The paper is divided into seven main sections. The next section analyses the literature in this field. The third section deals with the theoretical perspectives of the research. The fourth section deals with the methodology. The fifth part is about the nature of the responses of the state. The sixth section addresses the implications of the response of the state to ethnic conflicts. The last section is the conclusion which reflects the summary of the paper, main findings, recommendations, and new avenues of research.

2. Literature review

There is ample and growing scholarship available on the phenomenon of ethnic conflicts in Pakistan. The main literature tells that the institutional imbalance that Pakistan inherited in the form of bureaucracy-military oligarchy is responsible for this struggle (Samad, 2014; Hussain et al., 2022). Much of the conflicts are fixed in the inconsistency between the state's institutions and societal diversity. The ruling elites are unwilling to admit the plural structure of society (Kukreja, 2020). Balochistan, located in the southwestern region is the largest province of Pakistan. It is a multi-ethnic province but still, Baloch are the primary cultural group (Muzaffar et al., 2018). Despite having sufficient natural resources, it is a marginalized province (Bansal, 2006; Grare, 2013; Samad, 2014; Akhtar, 2017). Baloch has a checkered history with the state of Pakistan, as right from the beginning, both are entangled with one another. The Baloch ethnic movement is multi-faceted. The nationalists¹ are demanding the provincial autonomy that has been pledged in the National Constitution. Insurgents² are disappointed with the current system, therefore, they are violently struggling for a separate state (Bansal, 2006; Grare, 2013; Mendez, 2020; Yogesh, 2021; Akhtar, 2017; Hashmi, 2013). The major unresolved issues of Baloch ethnicity with the state are the authoritarian rule, political and economic marginalization, military operations, human rights violations, arbitrary abductions, illegal migrations, and lack of share for Baloch in the developmental projects (Bansal, 2006; Grare, 2013; Mendez, 2020; Yogesh, 2021; Akhtar, 2017).

Additionally, Ejaz and Rehman (2022) and mentioned that Baloch feels that the state is trying to alienate their identity by empowering other ethnicities and Islamists. This situation is further complicated by the involvement of some foreign states that have political and economic stakes in the province (Hasan, 2016). Muzaffar et al. (2018) mentioned that the feelings of deprivation are at an extreme level in Baloch, and it is the main cause of triggering conflict. The Pakistani state labels nationalists and insurgents, as miscreants and separatists, that have disturbed the peace in society and are challenging the writ of state (Grare, 2013). Ejaz and Rehman (2022) mentioned that the Baloch movement is still stronger and enjoys the support of local tribes,

diaspora, and political factions. The bloodshed and suffering of the people are still unrelenting. The Pakistani state has countered with both political and security means. However, neither it could satisfy Baloch, nor it was able to eliminate them (Grare, 2013). The political responses have made them calm for the time being, however, the military responses made them reactionary, and they stood against the state.

The above analyses discussed ethnic conflicts, somehow state responses but the scholars have missed implications of the state responses on the conflict dynamics and the social environment. Even, the literature is not sufficient to logically describe the state responses. This study is an attempt to bridge that gap while collecting archival data, electronic sources, and personal reflection. It is an important project as it has disclosed the effects of compromise and dominance that helps the researchers and policymakers to mitigate the conflicts in the area.

3. Theoretical framework

Internal ethnic conflicts are one of the formidable challenges to the stability of the nations. They have become threats of much higher order, as compared to external threats (Ayoob, 1991). They threaten the fabric of society, expose integrity, give rise to organized crimes, and destabilize economic development. Though not all conflicts have these consequences, still they bring human miseries in the shape of killings, injuries, and starvation (Cordell & Wolff, 2011). The state's constructive responses can minimize the menace, while the state's weak management can intensify the position of the conflicts. The states are not the homogenous and unitary actors, today. Toland (1993) argued that the idea of a pure state with one monolithic voice is not a reality and cannot become a reality. The state is plural and has to serve all groups' interests, irrespective of their differences. Ethically divided societies have ethnic agreements with the state. Lake and Rothchild (1998) elaborated that ethnic contracts stipulate privileges, access to resources, and responsibilities. The agreement also includes the safeguards like electoral rules, power sharing, and weights.

Lake and Rothchild (1998) argued that effective safeguards make them secure about their future and they live in harmony with the state. Lobell and Mauceri (2004) noted that such ethnicity even does not object to the granting of rights to other minorities. The state's inability to carry the social contract decreases the security of the identities and they try to get control of the state with violent means. Thus, they confront the state and other groups (Saideman, 1996). Angew (1989), Azar (1990) and Kaldor (1999) considered ethnic conflicts as intractable. To them, either they are irresolvable, or their resolution is colossally difficult because they create goals, symbols, and interests that cannot be mediated discursively. Azar (1990) further argued that human long-standing cultural values and needs cannot be exchanged or bargained. In contrast theorists such as Horowitz (1985), Gurr (1993) and Stavenhagen (1996) stated that ethnic conflicts can be managed, but it is necessary to take the identity as an analytical unit then, the nation-state. To add more, the exploration of the needs of the opposing parties, rather than the interest of the state would be the centre of resolution.

There are two approaches to responding to ethnic conflicts. Williams and Rhenisch (1977) called them dominance and compromise, Joireman (2007) mentioned them as repression and accommodation and Gurr (1993) as constructive and non-constructive means. This research mainly adopted the portrayal of Williams and Rhenisch (1977), though the theory has also got support from other mainstream theorists of ethnic conflicts. Williams and Rhenisch (1977) explained “dominance” as collective action with the support of forces for destroying others. It includes the methods of annihilation, destruction of capacities and resources, and expulsions like exile and deportation. The outcomes may be the withdrawal of principal actors because of social separation (like deserting and divorcing), physical separation (like segregation), and cessation of communication (refusing to accept messages and suspending diplomatic ties). Ultimately, conflict may end as one side is no more effective to linger on the conflict. The security response or preventive diplomacy only addresses the immediate causes of conflicts, the deeper causes may remerge. The risk of the involvement of the military in deep-rooted ethnic conflicts is high because they are determined by emotions typically, and not material interests (Stofft & Guertner, 1995). The security response can only achieve limited objectives and it largely gives birth to grievances and reactions (Young, 1986). The dominance demands disarmament which is not easy in an area where violent ethnic conflicts are going on (Miall *et al.*, 1999; Zaagman, 1996). Joireman (2007) noted that dominance as a method of dealing with ethnic movements has been ineffective. The state’s response of dominance creates reactions and further intensifies the situation.

Williams and Rhenisch (1977) explained “compromise” as a settlement, in which warring parties accept something different than the original indispensable goals. The compromise is neither necessarily symmetrical nor confined to the issues that triggered conflicts. The parties change their goals and aspirations in a way that goals would become roughly compromisable. Joireman (2007) mentioned the accommodation policies as addressing the concerns of disadvantages, power sharing, strengthening federation, inclusiveness, and reforming the electoral system. Gurr (1993) noted the constructive measures as power-sharing, regional autonomy, assimilation, and pluralism for the accommodation of the interest of the marginalized. He presented two models of constructive management. The social and political policies that bridge the gap between minorities and the state, and the creation of management processes at the earlier stages of conflicts. The series of negotiations, rather than dictation, are utilized as a technique to modify attitudes, norms, and laws. Compromise is a long-term policy that addresses the root causes of conflicts with democratic, humanitarian, and plural responses. Literature on conflict resolution supports this process (Iswaj, 2000). The international practices and experiences indicate that it is somehow an effective way of dealing with and managing ethnic conflicts (Joireman, 2007).

4. Research methodology

As the objective of this research was to develop theory and opinions, therefore, a qualitative research methodology was adopted. Qualitative research involves the collection and analysis

of non-numerical data for understanding opinions, concepts, and experiences (Creswell, 2013). Descriptive and interpretive approaches have been adopted to deal with the research queries.³ The descriptive approach answers the question of “what is”, rather than how and why something happened. It attempts to identify, determine and describe the situations (Gall et al., 2007). The interpretive approach answers the queries of “why and how.” It involves the causal explanations of events and interpretations are made under the theoretical foundations. It is not an absolute approach, it suggests multiple causes of a single event through analyses, comparison, and critical thinking (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). This research involved two sets of queries “What is” and “Why and how it is”. The evaluation of the state's response was the inquiry of “how it is.” It dealt with an interpretive approach. The measurement of implications of the state's response was the query of “what is.” This query dealt with the descriptive approach.

The data and material for this research has been explored both from primary and secondary sources, such as government records, newspapers books, research papers, periodicals, and websites. The archival data of foreign writers particularly that of Indians looked biased, therefore, its internal and external validity was checked before being used. The researchers also observed the events practically and to interview the nationalists' leaders, but the security environment of the area did not allow doing so. Even when they were contacted via WhatsApp, they did not reply, if they were to be cooperative the research would become more interesting and logical. Data analyses in qualitative research is distinctively different from quantitative research. It is not a technical process as in quantitative research but a dynamic and creative process of thinking, reasoning, and theorizing. The Six Stage Thematic Analysis Model of Braun and Clarke (2006) is employed for the analysis of data. The analysis of data is also compromised because it is unsafe to write directly about ethnicity and Baloch identity in Pakistani society.

5. State's response to ethnic conflicts in Balochistan

Pakistan's ruling elites are reluctant to recognize the plural composition of the state. Instead of accepting the ethnic issue as part of governability, reduced it to law-and-order problems (Malik, 1997, p. 168). In the case of Balochistan, political discourse is absent (UNPO, 2013). Sial and Basit (2010) argued that dialogue with insurgents has not been taken as an option. Hashmi (2013) mentioned that during the Government of Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008) two high-level peace committees made recommendations for peace deals, but their recommendations were ignored, and the operation was carried out. The Government of PPP (2008-13) formed the all-parties parliamentary committee to probe the issues and to make recommendations for the resolutions. Hashmi (2013) said further that Yusuf Raza Gillani, PM of Pakistan (2008-12) made an apology, gave amnesty, and released some political prisoners, and offered confidence-building measures (CBMs). Raja Pervez Ashraf, the new PM from PPP (2012-13) also announced the dialogue but only with the nationalists (who believe in the Pakistani flag) and not with the insurgents, whom he considered anti-Pakistani. The call was constructive, but his

polarized method did not lead to dialogue. The deadlock continued because Baloch felt their offers and recommendations were not honoured (Siddiqi, 2012).

5.1. Compromise

The policy of compromise was a later development in centre-province relationships. Balochistan was given the status of a full-fledged province in 1970. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1972-77) was the first to compromise with the Baloch ethnicity. He provided them the equal provincial status in the 1973 Constitution, addressed their socio-economic grievances, and greater control over provincial affairs. However, his intolerance for opposition and subsequent military operation faded away his constructive works for autonomy and acceptability (Hasan, 2016). Zia-ul-Haq to defuse the populism of Bhutto gave them certain concessions. In the late 1980s, with the revival of democracy, Pakistan brought a fundamental change in the policy and took them to mainstream, by listening to their demands for royalties from gas and other natural resources (Akhtar, 2017). Pakistan People's Party (2008-13) after deliberation brought about the full package with the name of Aghaz-e-Huqqooq-e-Balochistan (Beginning of Right in Balochistan). The province was given maximum political autonomy under the 18th Amendment in the Constitution. Likewise, under Seventh National Finance Commission (NFC) Award the share of Balochistan in financial assets was increased. The other concessions were greater political control, self-control over resources, share in mega-project, and an increase of quota in jobs and educational scholarships (Ejaz & Hussain, 2018).

The Baloch as Ejaz and Hussain (2018) said responded positively and this conciliatory move resulted in a decline in militant attacks. The construction of Gwadar Port and the establishment of a network of railways, roads, and pipelines under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) for Balochistan would also help in economic development (Hasan, 2016). It is found that, though the state has given concessions, but it did not compromise with Baloch ethnicity. To add more, even concessions were not the first option, as they followed the military operations and reactions. Brown et al (2012) remarked that the increased funding did not materialize into mega projects and infrastructure on grounds. Furthermore, the reforms of the central government were not fully implemented because of a lack of better human capital and a highly polarized environment. Hasan (2016) said that the underlying fault lines were not addressed. The transfer of responsibility under the 18th amendment was hindered, because of the poor provincial organizational structure.

5.2. Dominance

In the absence of a political dialogue and concessions, security measures have been taken to deal with social, economic, and political differences in Balochistan (Bansal, 2006; Grare, 2013; Mendez, 2020; Yogesh, 2021; Akhtar, 2017). Yogesh (2021) stated that Baloch has been colonized by dominant elites, who control the central government, state institutions, and apparatus. The Baloch treat the government and its organs, as alien lords in their areas. Mendez

(2020) noted that the state has ignored the Baloch's demands and reduced its capabilities of protest. Mendez (2020) claimed that, though annihilation is an exaggeration, but certain steps of the state are leading to annihilation. Grare (2013) stated that military operations, abduction, killings of the nationalists and insurgents, and population disappearance are dynamics of conflicts. Brown et al. (2012) mentioned human rights violations. Noraiee (2020) suggested that violence from both sides i.e., state and militants is the cause of the escalation of conflicts. The indiscriminate killings of nationals and foreigners, and “zero-tolerance” of Parvez Musharraf the then ruler asked the Inspector General of Frontier Corps, “crush the opposition in the province” (Samad, 2014, p. 294). The coercive responses of the state further made the ethnic identity reactionary.

Grare (2013) argued that the state's repressive response radicalized the nationalists and political solutions greatly diminish, thus, poor state response and reactionary violence of nationalists are the reason for the continuous insurgency (pp. 5, 10). Finer (1974) and many considered the civilian Governments as conducive for ethnicities but in the Pakistani case, both civilian and military governments suppress them. The authoritarian regimes in Pakistan also adopted the policy of “diffusion of Baloch Ethnicity.” It is not a bad policy but Finer (1974) argued that civilian regimes develop consensus while authoritarian regimes balance the ethnic forces in authoritarian manners with “forced cohesion” (p. 6). Ayub Khan in 1968 allocated the lands to non-Baloch particularly the Punjabi settlers, to reduce their influence. General Zia-ul-Haq (1977-88) empowered the Pashtuns and Islamists in the province. The elites cultivated the religious parties, as a rampart against the popular support that regional identities enjoyed. The power is further defused with the creation of Islamic forces (particularly sectarian), the migrations of Punjabis and Pashtuns, and the settlement of Afghan refugees (Akhtar, 2017). The persistence of conflicts and violence is proof that security-centric approaches to peace in Balochistan have failed to deliver prosperity and peace.

6. The implications of state responses

The above discussion indicated that the state's response to ethnic conflicts was based on security measures. The compromise was always a second and half-hearted option. The implications of security responses to ethnic conflicts were as follows.

6.1. Anarchy and reactions

The state got some successes in destroying the social structures of the insurgents but as Grare (2013) remarked that it is unable to enforce its writ in Balochistan. He further mentioned that the Pakistani Federation and the security establishment are losing control over the radical groups. It can be understood from the statement of a journalist quoted by Grare (2013); “Balochistan has turned into a security and governance black hole where multiple political, financial and criminal interests either converge or play out against one another.” Yogesh (2021) remarked that the state's coercive response radicalized the insurgents and the possibility of a

political solution almost disappeared. Thus, poor and violent state response has created anarchy in the province. Hasan (2016) concluded that suppression of forces gave rise to a new circle of violence, and it took the province into a fragility trap. The people with non-Baloch ethnic identities are under pronounced intimidation (Grare, 2013). The Punjabi settlers are dubbed as the pro-Establishment by insurgents and have been warned: “to leave or to die.” The Pashtuns are also the targets. The Hazara community is the target of sectarianism. Baloch themselves are the target of both state and Pashtuns, while security forces and common citizens are also under the wave of violence (Ejaz & Hussain, 2018).

6.2. Rise of religious extremism

The state tried to defuse the unity and power of Baloch ethnicity with the weapon of Islamization and the creation of Islamic forces in the province. Grare (2013) mentioned that this attempt by the state resulted in the rise of extremism in the province, a thing that was unknown to the people before. Baloch activists considered that the state is still using this weapon against their movement. Baloch nationalists rejected the Islamization progression because they alleged it was an attempt to isolate them from the centre of powers. In a protest outside of the UN office, the protestor Qambar Baloch said that “Pakistan has been sponsoring religious terrorism by promoting Lashkar-e-Taiba and Laskar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), the splinter group of Taliban” (Business Standard, 2020). Notezai (2017) said that insurgents believed that Pakistan has mushroomed the extremists and terrorist groups to counter Baloch nationalism. But we believe that this short-sided policy adopted by the state would destroy the foundations of secular democratic Baloch society. The extremism also gave rise to sectarianism and the big victims are the Hazara Shia community. LeJ an anti-Shia and anti-Iran militant group, with the support of the Taliban, has been involved in the ethnic cleansing of the Hazara community (Aslam et al., 2023; Hassan, 2016).

6.3. Transformation of ethnic movement

The reactionary approaches created the reaction of Baloch identity in Balochistan. The nationalists were demanding provincial autonomy, but they wanted to live within the Federation of Pakistan. The latest insurgency started in 2006 and divided the Baloch ethnicity into nationalists who want provincial autonomy and insurgents who have irredentist claims. The nationalists have also transformed their demands from autonomy to “greater autonomy.” The insurgents have also transformed their demand from complete independence from Pakistan to the creation of Greater Balochistan uniting the Baloch of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan into a single territory (Brown et al., 2012). Bansal (2006) said that earlier insurgencies were localized, but the current wave of insurgency spread across the breadth and length of the province. Even, it has motivated the Baloch to sit outside of Balochistan. The transformation of the movement into irredentism got greater international attention and the US and the international community blamed Pakistan for human rights violations. The prolonged insurgency has also fuelled the ethnicities in other provinces, particularly in Sindh which has

had issues with the centre for a long. The Sindh Liberation Army (SLA) is already involved in bomb blasts and the connection between BLA and SLA also seems natural. Additionally, the Baloch diaspora which was inactive earlier has become increasingly active in the demand for complete autonomy and independence.

6.4. Involvement of foreign hand

An insurgency of this magnitude, it is claimed by the Pakistani state that it cannot sustain without foreign assistance. Noraiee (2020) mentioned that Balochistan is the battlefield of regional and international powers. There are claims about the involvement of India, Afghanistan, Iran, and the US. Even Pakistani media claimed that Russia has also stakes in the conflicts (Bansal, 2006). According to Brown et al. (2012), both India and the US hesitate to give open support to the irredentist elements in the province. However, scholars like Akhtar (2017) and Hanif (2018) noted that India supports the nationalists in destabilizing Balochistan. India's serving officer and RAW agent, Kalbhusan Jadhav was captured by Pakistani forces from Balochistan. To Hanif (2018) India is trying to destabilize Balochistan in two ways; by helping the dissidents from Balochistan abroad and by creating terrorism while using the territory of Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia and Iran's involvement can be realised from the insurgents' claims.

It is claimed by Allah Nazar, leader of Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), an irredentist organization, that Hyrbyair Marri is an admirer of Saudi's moderate Islam while Hyrbyair accused Allah Nazar as a puppet of Iran. Sources said that BLF got shelter and resources from Iran and even their injured members were hospitalized by Iran. Brahamdagh Bugti has also been accused of having very close relations with Iranian security forces. India is persuading Iran and Afghanistan to support the Baloch insurgents and also facilitates the Baloch outside of Pakistan. The US has many concerns about the presence of the Chinese. A group of Republican Congressmen led by Rohrabacher has recurrently met with nationalists in Pakistan, US, UK, and Germany. The US also raised concerns about human rights violations (Noraiee, 2020). The tussle between the state and the ethnic element created room for foreign involvement that has made this struggle more complex and unresolvable because now, more than two parties have stakes in the conflicts. Today, foreign involvement is one of the grave challenges to the security of Pakistan.

6.5. Economic and strategic compulsion

Balochistan has enough metallic and power energy recourses. Still, it is least developed, as compared to other provinces, in terms of infrastructure, agriculture, industry, and human resource development. Ahmed et al. (2020) mentioned that security issues, human rights violations, and insurgency are negatively affecting the economy in the province. The state is unable to get the maximum advantage from the valuable resources of Balochistan. Pakistan also has to give certain economic projects to foreign countries like Sandak Project, handed over

to China by federal government. Chinese company fetches 80% profit from home while Balochistan can get only 2% (Ahmed et al., 2020). The Baloch also has concerns that they are producing gas but neither they are given a royalty share, nor the right of using it.

The involvement of foreign powers particularly India induced Pakistan to hand over the Gwadar to China. Furthermore, mega-projects under CPEC and mining projects were also given to Chinese companies in Balochistan. Thus, China became closer to the Strait of Hormuz, Afghanistan, and Iran. It created concerns for US and India. The US, therefore, is playing a negative role in Afghanistan. It is pressurizing Pakistan for human rights violations. Additionally, it is meeting with the Bloch leaders on one side and passing the resolutions in American Congress for the right of self-determination of Balochistan on the other (Ejaz & Hussain, 2018).

7. Conclusion

Ethnic conflicts have proliferated in all societies of the world and have become more potential and destructive than external threats (Ayoob, *The security problematic in the Third World*, 1991). Hardly, there is any country that does not have an ethnic uprising. Often, these conflicts result in the miseries of the people (Cordell & Wolff, 2011). There are two types of responses of the state to conflicts i.e., dominance or repression and compromise or accommodation. The ethnic conflicts are the result of the state's inability to keep the ethnic contract with the identities (Lake & Rothchild, 1998). The objective of this research was to evaluate the impact of the state's response to the ethnic conflicts in Balochistan.

The major findings are the state responded with both compromise and dominance. It is found that compromise was never a paramount option. It is also perceived that the state offered the compromise, when, the conflict had already escalated. As Gurr (1993) said, it does not work much in such a situation. The major responsibility, as sources confirmed, was always folded in a security paradigm that included military operations, seizure, and negative diffusions. It is perceived that dominance was not the better framework, as it had created retorts and made the conflicts complicated and indeterminable. It is also perceived that such a response transformed the conflicts and created an environment of anarchy and intolerance in the province. Moreover, that response also gave birth to religious extremism, shattered economic development, and made room for the stakes of foreign powers.

The failure of dominance asks for an alternative strategy. The intervals of compromise in Pakistani history substantiated that the policy of compromise had accommodated and adjusted the ethnic identities and de-escalated the conflicts. Therefore, it is suggested that the state should adopt the policy of compromise honestly. Baloch should be stimulated for mainstream politics. The unsolved issues, such as military operations, the policy of diffusion, abduction, human rights violation, and greater autonomy should be settled.

This study is a theoretical and empirical attempt to evaluate the effects of ethnic conflicts. However, principally it is based on secondary data; therefore, its findings have limited application for generalization. Likewise, it deals with some puzzles; still, there are so many grey areas that need further exploration. Such as the implications of compromise on ethnic conflicts, gender, and ethnic conflicts, the impact of religion on ethnic conflicts, and the state's response to foreign involvement in ethnic conflicts.

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Notes:

¹ Nationalists are those groups that are demanding the maximum political and economic autonomy, but they want to live under the Pakistani federation.

² Insurgents are the Baloch nationalist separatists who have waged an armed separatist insurgency to achieve separate statehood for Balochistan.

³ Many scholars, such as Elliott and Timulak (2005) consider them as approaches of qualitative research.