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From Frontier Resistance to Political Nationalism: Changing Strategies of Resistance in Balochistan

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ABSTRACT

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Political resistance is a recurring theme in Balochistan's relations with outside and regional centres of power, and the nature, purposes and political significance of this resistance has transformed over time. This article explores how the resistance in Balochistan has evolved from early localized struggles to external authority to organized political and cultural struggle during the British colonial rule. The study uses historic sources, colonial developments, political writings and recent scholarship to view resistance as a continually evolving strategy, not as a nationalist struggle that was continuous or uniform. In previous times, external domination was restricted by difficult geography, local governance, evasion, refusal of tribute, migration and armed resistance. Negotiation, alliance-building and political consolidation grew more significant means of maintaining autonomy during the Khanate of Kalat. In the nineteenth century, the British came to expand, changing the nature of power as well as resistance as they had to rely on a system of frontier administration, indirect rule, and tribal intermediaries. Armed resistance was complemented by political organizations, journalism, poetry, historical memory and nationalist discourse by the beginning of the twentieth century. The article draws on theories of James C. Scott and Charles Tilly to suggest that resistance in Balochistan began as a result of the shifting patterns of political opportunities, state presence and collective action.

Introduction

Balochistan's location between the Iranian plateau, Afghanistan, the Indian subcontinent, and the Arabian Sea placed the region within overlapping political, commercial, and strategic

networks. Various influences were exerted by Persian, Afghan, South Asian and later British political powers over areas that make up the present-day Balochistan. But power was always



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unevenly distributed throughout the region. The ability of larger political centres to assert uniform control was often constrained by difficult terrain, scattered settlements, tribal and local systems of authority and changing relations with neighbouring states. Thus the political history of Balochistan should not be seen as a series of foreign invasions and local responses but as the evolving nature of the relationship between an external authority and local political systems and the varying nature of the responses of accommodation and resistance.

There are extensive historical accounts available of political development in the area, the Khanate of Kalat, colonial expansion and the rise of Baloch nationalism. Inayatullah Baloch (1987) analyzes the historical and political roots of Baloch nationalism, and Axmann (2008) illustrates how the Khanate and conflicting perceptions of sovereignty are relevant for the subsequent emergence of nationalist politics. British frontier policies, tribal institutions and the nature of change of political authority under the British rule have also been the subject of studies on Baloch political history. Another aspect of this was cultural resistance. For instance, in the case of literature which became a significant medium for articulating anti-colonial sentiment and collective identity Syed (2007). While these studies shed light on specific moments and modes of resistance, another question that occurs with a longer historical view is how and why did the forms of political resistance in Balochistan shift as the configuration of political power shifted?

In this article resistance is conceived not as a tradition but as a political practice, which is historically contingent. James C. Scott's work is helpful in distinguishing those acts which involved open confrontation from those actions that were subtler through which subordinate communities evade, negotiate or challenge authority (Scott, 1985, 1990). This way of thinking extends resistance to rebellion and war, to non-compliance, evasion, withdrawal, and cultural expression. Charles Tilly's notion of "repertoires of contention" offers a complementary framework, and highlights the fact that collective actors rely on forms of contention that are available in certain historical and institutional contexts (Tilly 1995, 2006). These are being used here as analytical tools, and

not as statements that the resistance in Balochistan was a unified theoretical process.

The article contends that resistance in Balochistan saw a radical change with the changing of political power. Early and medieval reactions were frequently aimed at local solutions and consisted of evasion, denial of tribute, retreat, and armed clashes instead of nationalistic, territory-wide opposition. Diplomacy, alliance-building and negotiated autonomy were added to this political toolbox with the consolidation of the Khanate of Kalat. British expansion later engendered another dynamic between local society and political power when colonial officials established indirect forms of frontier governance and involved tribal intermediaries in administrative systems. As political communication and organized politics grew by the early 20th century, new types of resistance emerged, including associations, newspapers, literature, and a nationalist discourse. The resistance in Balochistan has thus not always been uniform and violent, but varied in form as a result of shifts in political power, institutional structures, and the ability of Baloch actors to act collectively.

Literature Review and Analytical Framework

The study of Balochistan has focused on political struggle as the history of the Khanate of Kalat, the British frontier and the rise of Baloch nationalism. Inayatullah Baloch (1987) refers to the history of Baloch nationalism, pointing out the importance of political autonomy, territorial awareness and relations between Kalat and neighbouring powers. The Khanate and its history is more carefully explored by Axmann (2008) and he shows how the memories and interpretation of Kalat's political status went on to play a significant role in Baloch nationalist discourse. Though the main focus of these studies is not the long term changes in the nature of the forms of resistance, these studies are particularly valuable in understanding the relation between territory, sovereignty and nationalism.

Anthropological and historical studies also show that the issue of political control in Balochistan is not a dichotomy of the centralized rulers and resisting tribes. Swidler's (2014) analysis of the Brahui political system emphasizes the negotiated nature of authority and the role of tribal leadership, relationships and structures in the

operation of the Khanate. These changes were more than replaced by colonial expansion. Political agents, tribal intermediaries, subsidies and indirect rule became the features of British frontier administration. The study of the colonial frontier, such as Tripodi's (2009) study of the Sandeman system, shows that the British rule relied heavily upon accommodation and incorporation of local elites as well as coercion. Resistance in the period of colonial rule should, therefore, be considered not only in terms of armed opposition, but also in terms of changing means of governance.

The twentieth century saw the emergence of organized politics and cultural expression, further complexities in opposition. Syed (2007) demonstrates that Baloch literature under British rule was an essential means of expressing anti-colonial discourse, history and collective identity. The range of possibilities through which colonial power could be challenged was thus increased in political institutions, in journalism, in poetry and in nationalist discourse. This was an important break from previous modes of localized opposition, but it did not supersede armed, tribal or negotiated opposition entirely.

This article uses the understandings of James C. Scott and Charles Tilly to interpret such transformations. Scott (1985, 1990) expands the scope of resistance to include less overt forms of resistance, ways in which subordinate groups avoid domination, negotiate it, or work to overturn it. This is a valuable way of understanding practices like non-compliance, withdrawal and avoidance of political obligations as not necessarily organised nationalist movements. Tilly's idea of repertoires of contention joins this view by pointing to the fact that modes of collective action are shaped by the political context, by political opportunities and by past experience.

The article presents these perspectives together, and does not see resistance in Balochistan as a permanent cultural trait, nor as a continuous nationalist endeavour. It investigates the evolution of existing repertoires from localized evasion and confrontation to negotiated autonomy, organized political mobilization and cultural resistance to shifts in structures of political authority. This method relates episodes which are usually

considered separately and it provides an explanation of continuity in resistance, but not necessarily continuity in political meaning.

Research Methodology

The study is of qualitative historical nature which explores the transformation in political resistance in Balochistan in the various regimes of political power. The study is not so much a continuous or uniform tradition of resistance, nor a history of resistance in the city, but a series of comparisons between selected historical episodes in order to identify changes in the means, organization and political goals of challenging external and local authority. The study is based on published historical accounts and colonial era sources, as well as political writings, regional histories and contemporary academic research in the field of the Khanate of Kalat, British frontier administration and Baloch political mobilization.

Due to the broad chronological range of the study, a special consideration is given to source criticism and historical context. Early and medieval documents are carefully consulted to suggest relationships of taxation, political power, evasion and armed conflict without imposing later nationalist identities on earlier peoples. For the colonial period, the reading includes regional histories and political writing, as well as scholarship on British frontier governance, indirect rule, and nascent nationalist politics. Local historical stories are viewed as significant sources of local interpretations and historical memories, and factual elements in these stories are, where feasible, compared with academic and contemporary evidence.

The study uses Scott's notions of 'everyday' and 'less visible' resistance and Tilly's 'repertoires of contention' to analyze historically different practices. In this comparative perspective, resistance is analysed in the context of evolving patterns of authority, ranging from local resistance and non-compliance to negotiated autonomy, structured politics, journalistic writing, literature and nationalist mobilisation.

Localized Authority and Early Repertoires of Resistance

Early Balochistan politics emerged against a backdrop of difficult geographical connectivity, scattered populations, and local power

configurations. The areas now under the control of Balochistan were important trade routes linking the Iranian plateau, Afghanistan, Sindh and the Indian subcontinent, but this did not lead to uniform and uninterrupted political control when incorporated into larger imperial systems. The power of external rulers to retain power in Makran and its vicinity was also dependent on access to water, supplies, communication routes, tribute, and cooperation of local political actors in addition to military conquest. The possibilities for imperial expansion and for the locals to resist it were therefore shaped by geography.

These restrictions are evident in the early Arab invasion of Makran. The problems involved in extending Muslim control as far as Makran and the importance of the region's hostile environment and scarcity of resources is underscored by Al-Baladhuri's account of the Muslim conquests (Al-Balādhurī, 1916). The Arabs gained military power in the area in the 7th century, but conquest did not necessarily lead to administrative control. Political authority was uneven and continually renegotiated or disputed at the local level. Such engagements have been better explained as early examples of modern Baloch nationalism rather than as an early example of modern Baloch nationalism. This is important to make because the political feelings and geographical notions that led to the formation of later Baloch nationalism had not yet taken the form that they do today.

Subsequent dynasties continued to have an unstable relationship with the local communities. Political power in the Middle Ages was often based on tribute and recognition from local chiefs. The denial or boycott of tribute may thus become a significant method of confronting outside power. According to regional historical accounts there were times that Makran and Khuzdar refused to pay taxes related to Ghaznavid rule, and then there were military expeditions for the purpose of re-establishment of political power and tax collection (Quddus, 1990). But whatever the details and chronology of the later historical accounts, these show the political significance of taxation: the withholding of revenue could be used as a political challenge to the right to rule, even without an organised movement for independence.

These can be understood in the light of Scott's

contrast of 'highly visible confrontation' and less 'institutionalized' methods of resistance. Internal resistance was a mode of resistance by local actors, who avoided taxation, withdrew from areas within administrative reach and sometimes temporarily avoided compliance, all without continuous military confrontation (Scott, 1985, 1990). Armed resistance or renewed accommodation were other options where such practices proved unsuccessful. Resistance and negotiation were therefore not mutually exclusive and local actors could shift between confrontation, evasion and accommodation depending upon the political context.

These practices, however, were not determined by a specific regional tradition of rebellion, but by political structures available in the historical context as seen by Tilly's concept of repertoires of contention. Local control over both leadership and administration, restricted administrative access, poor lines of communication, and reliance on tribute allowed for other modes of resistance to develop, which differed from political parties, newspapers, and other nationalist organizations (Tilly, 1995, 2006). The importance of these initial episodes was not to prove that there was a continuous nationalist struggle, but to show that political power had a recurring issue: it could win battles, but not secure ongoing control over the land, resources, and local political actors.

Thus, the initial strategies of resistance in Balochistan was mostly localized and adaptive in nature. Even so, the geography limited the ability of the states to penetrate and fiscal non-conformance threatened claims of political authority, withdrawal mitigated exposure to coercion and armed confrontation was still possible if talks broke down. These practices offer a starting point in history to understand the evolution of resistance in a more politically territorialized period where the local rulers in the Khanate of Kalat had stronger institutions.

The Khanate of Kalat: State Formation, Negotiation, and Political Autonomy

The unification of Khanate of Kalat is a significant change in the political history of Balochistan. The resistance to outside powers was to a greater extent focused and based on geographically-dispersed communities and chiefs than before, and the formation of the Khanate provided a more

organised framework for the consolidation of political authority and for negotiating relations with other powers. Over time, under the Ahmadzai rule, Kalat evolved a political system that connected the Khan with the tribal chiefs through allegiance, military obligations and negotiated authorities. The Khanate cannot be equated with the modern concept of a centralized state; political unity relied heavily on the persuasive power of the khan to keep the tribal and territorial interests together (Swidler, 1972; Axmann, 2008).

It was an important stage of the process that began under Nasir Khan II (second half of eighteenth century). During his reign, there were significant changes in the regional power balance. The power of the Mughals in the subcontinent had declined significantly and the Safavid Empire had been weakened throughout the century, leading to political turmoil in Iran. Meanwhile, Ahmad Shah Durrani took steps to establish a new political order in Afghanistan after 1747. These changing circumstances posed constraints on Kalat, but also opportunities. Thus, it was not only Nasir Khan's military successes against the neighboring powers that made him a politician; his negotiation, alliance and putting things together within the Khanate added to the effective autonomy of the Khanate (Baloch, 1987; Axmann, 2008).

The case of Kalat and their relationship with the Durrani state is a good example of this negotiated nature of autonomy. Although Nasir Khan recognised Ahmad Shah Durrani initially, there were political and military obligations between Kalat and Kandahar. Tensions then resulted in confrontation; the result was a settlement which redefined their relationship but not sovereignty in the modern sense of the word. Nasir Khan enjoyed a high degree of autonomy in internal affairs, and, at the same time, he signed a treaty with the Durrani ruler, which guaranteed his help in military affairs under certain conditions (Baloch, 1987). The episode illustrates that resistance might manifest itself as bargaining and renegotiation rather than war. Political autonomy wasn't the result of a final rejection of outer authority, but the result of changing the terms of the exercise of that authority.

Internal consolidation was also crucial. The authority of the Khanate was based on interaction

between the khan and tribal leadership, and there was a different level of autonomy in the different areas like Makran, Khara and Lasbela. Nasir Khan tried to consolidate Kalat's power by political ties, military structure and dealing with the relation between the constituent groups. Swidler's discussion of the Brahui political system is especially valuable because it demonstrates that the system was not predicated on the existence of an administrative hierarchy, but rather on a series of reciprocal political relationships. Kalat's strength was in a central leadership and negotiated relationship with local elites (Swidler, 2014).

The Khanate is an important step from the point of view of shifting strategies of resistance. As an indigenous political centre emerged, responses to pressure from outside could increasingly be made in the form of diplomacy, alliance formation, military mobilisation and negotiation between political authorities. This was not the same as past localized evasion, fiscal non-compliance and withdrawal. It did not eradicate such practices at the local level, but did create a more institutionalized repertoire in which political autonomy could be defended.

The importance of the Khanate does not only lie in the eighteenth century. This historical significance recently became a major component of political discourse during the British period and ultimately of Baloch nationalist understandings of sovereignty and autonomy. As Axmann (2008) shows, memories of Kalat's political past became an important part of the nationalist discourse of the twentieth century. It is thus essential to differentiate the political order of the eighteenth century and the nationalism which revived it. It was not modern nationalism that gave rise to the Khanate, but rather the historical experience of negotiated autonomy that provided the subsequent political actors with a vocabulary of territory, authority and historical rights (Axman, 2008)

The colonial expansion, the Sandeman system and the transformation of resistance

The involvement of the British in Balochistan in the nineteenth century brought a profound shift in the dynamics between foreign force and local power. British strategic interests were growing, and unlike previous imperial structures which played an inconsistent role in the region, British now needed a consistent political presence in

Balochistan. The area gained new strategic significance as a result of the expansion of Russian interest in Central Asia, and British interest in the north-western approaches to India. This strategic interest was directly confronted with the Khanate of Kalat and the tribesmen who controlled the important routes to Kandahar in the First Anglo-Afghan War (Axmann, 2008; Dashti, 2012).

In 1839, the British marched into Afghanistan, which involved passing through the Bolan route and co-operation from the Khanate. After making a series of arrangements in respect of supplies and safe passage, Mir Mehrab Khan of Kalat was later accused by the British authorities of his inability or unwillingness to curtail attacks on British communications. In November 1839, the British attacked Kalat, where Mehrab Khan was killed in the fighting. Shah Nawaz Khan was appointed by the British and faced opposition to the new political structure, which proved to be unstable. Then Nasir Khan II came on the scene as Khan and slowly British relations with Kalat changed from direct intervention to negotiated political control (Axmann, 2008; Dashti, 2012). The episode provided a good illustration of the coercive power of the colonists and showed that such attempts to change the local structure of authority were not effective to any real extent without lasting political backing.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, British policy was to achieve stability not through wide-spread but through indirect administration. This method was closely tied up with the frontier policies of Robert Groves Sandeman, who sought to achieve order and routes through the existing mechanisms of tribal authority and leadership. The Treaty of Kalat was preceded by a settlement with the Khan of Kalat and Baloch chiefs at Mastung in 1876 which bolstered British control and formally confirmed the Khanate. The formation of the Balochistan Agency subsequently established a complicated political system with directly administered British territories, and princely and tribal regions under various systems of supervision and indirect rule (Tripodi, 2009).

Through the Sandeman system, the chiefs were given a new status and made significant intermediaries between the colonial officials and

the local population. Subsidies, allowances, recognition of chiefly authority, local levies and political agents were all means by which the colonial state tried to get cooperation without building a large administrative apparatus. British frontier governance was not followed by the abolition of tribal institutions, but rather by their incorporation and reshaping. This system saw a decrease in the expense of direct administration and ensured colonial officials were able to wield influence through local structures, while also having the effect of changing the dynamics between chiefs and their people, linking the power of the former more and more with colonial recognition and resources (Tripodi, 2009).

This change was significant in terms of resistance. The previous strategies of armed confrontation, raiding, withdrawal and refusal to recognize external authority were not eradicated. Tribal communities persisted in resisting colonial interference especially when it breached on their autonomy or on strategic routes. But, indirect rule blurred the political line between resistance and collaboration. Chiefs might negotiate with the colonial authorities, take up subsidies, or comply in one case and not another. Hence, it was a continuum between political accommodation and resistance. This environment also afforded opportunity to engage in non-compliance and evasion, as well as the obvious confrontation (Scott, 1985, 1990).

The Sandeman system also helped to change the institutional context for subsequent political opposition. The colonial administration was through tribal elites and there was a limited representative participation, which helped to maintain the political order with unequal distribution of authority. In the early twentieth century, however, education, print culture and political communication, and the interaction with broader movements of anti-colonial mobilization, provided opportunities for new actors and new modes of mobilization. The struggle moved beyond the local struggle against political agents or military power to opposition against colonial institutions and demands for political representation and constitutional changes.

Under the prism of repertoires of contention, British rule was thus a significant shift, and not just another stage in foreign rule (Tilly, 1995,

2006). Colonial rule, which was backed by military force, signed treaties, indirectly managed, paid subsidies and relied on institutionalized intermediary. Resistance adapted accordingly. Armed and tribal tactics continued, but were more and more complemented by political organizing, journalism, constitutional demands and cultural expression. The emergence of these new forms in the early decades of the last century would eventually represent a link to more general notions of anti-colonialism, ethnic identity and nationalism in general, and would transform the language and the organization of political contestation in Balochistan.

From Armed Resistance to Organized Political and Cultural Mobilization, 1920s–1947

Political opposition in Balochistan was also in the process of an important change in the early years of the twentieth century. However, armed and tribal resistance did not cease, and new political players began to contest colonial rule through association, through constitutional claims, through journalism, through public discussion and through cultural expression. This change was the result of changes not only in Balochistan but in British India as well. The spread of political communication, anti-colonial movements and discussions about representative government offered educated political activists forms of mobilization that were quite different from those of earlier times, where the basis of struggle was localized confrontation. Resistance grew no longer to avoid state power, but to voice a political demand by the community.

Some of the key figures in this change were Yousaf Ali Khan Magsi and Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai. Both had come from different political and ethnic backgrounds and challenged the limited political framework of the Balochistan state and tried to mobilise opinion through organised politics and print. Magsi was connected to growing Baloch political awareness, which connected political reforms with issues of identity, political rights and the status of Kalat. Samad Khan, working mainly in the Pashtun regions of British Balochistan, formulated an anti-colonial political agenda that focused on representative government, political rights and Pashtun social and political awakening. Their actions demonstrate the development of political

leadership that more and more sought to channel separate grievances into concerted collective action (Yaqubi, 2013; Tobawal, 2010).

Political mobilisation of Baloch gained an institutional dimension with organisations linked to Magsi and his peers. Around the end of the 1920s, there emerged a political and social reform group, called the Anjuman-i-Ittehad-i-Baluchan, and it was also one of the major events that paved the way for future nationalistic organization. Political activity continued after Magsi's death in 1935, and it ultimately led to the establishment of the Kalat State National Party (KSNP) in 1937. The KSNP comprised educated political activists like Ghaus Bakhsh Bizenjo and pushed for political reform and a more powerful constitutional role of the Khanate. But these activists were increasingly provided a historical vocabulary with which present-day demands for autonomy and political rights could be framed, by the political memory of Kalat (Baloch, 1987; Axmann, 2008).

A political process parallel to but distinct from that of Pashtun activists developed. Anjuman-i-Watan headed by Samad Khan had become an important anti-colonial organization in British Balochistan and had established links with the wider Indian nationalist movement (Tareen, 2020). It was linked to the Indian National Congress; thus regional political issues became nationalistic issues of opposition against the British rule. Those networks illustrate that resistance in Balochistan was not in isolation; political activists were involved in broader networks of anti-colonial politics as they also expressed regional and ethnic demands. Thus, if Baloch and Pashtun leaders were able to cooperate around the opposition to colonial restrictions, despite any differences in their political programmes (Yaqubi, 2013; Tobawal, 2010).

Print culture was crucial to this changing repertoire. Activists had access to newspapers and political writing, which allowed them to communicate with people outside of tribal and local communities. Samad Khan's journalism, such as *Istiqlal*, was a part of a process of political education and contestation of colonialist limitations through public argumentation. Historical writing, journalism, and poetry were also means of articulating collective identity

among Baloch intellectuals. Political communication was no longer limited to chieftainly discussions or antagonism towards officials, but also attempts to create a politically aware public were increasingly becoming a feature (Yaqubi, 2013; Tobawal, 2010).

This transformation was especially marked in the case of literature and poetry. According to Syed (2007), the Baloch resistance literature during the British rule expressed opposition to the colonial rule, and referred to historical heroes, collective honour, homeland and sacrifice. This kind of cultural work was more than a description of political grievances. Writers and poets helped shape a common sense of the past by interpreting it in terms of the present's concerns. The glorification of previous resistance might be able to turn neighborhood memories into signs of collective political identity. Cultural resistance was thus linked to the new language of nationalism.

Scott's approach provides a useful way of understanding why these practices may be termed as resistance, even if they did not include armed confrontation. Journalism, political writing, cultural expression, challenged colonial representations of authority, developed other narratives of political community. Tilly also provides a way to explain its historical significance through his concept of repertoires of contention: as opportunities for communication and political organization grew, actors came to have additional avenues for making collective claims.

Resistance then in Balochistan was manifested in a variety of and overlapping repertoires, by the 1940s. Tribal and armed means continued, while organised political parties, constitutional claims, journalism, links with more general anti-colonial movement and the cultural production became more significant. This was not an easy transition from violence to non-violence. Instead, the range of contention grew. The political actors now had the possibility of mobilizing through institutions, print, history and culture – and could still appeal to older notions of autonomy and resistance. By 1947, all these had led to the formation of political languages and organizations to raise the issues of identity, territory, representation and the future status of Balochistan in a manner much different

from the localized resistance of previous centuries.

Changing Strategies of Resistance and the Transformation of Political Authority

The history discussed in this article indicates that political resistance in Balochistan cannot be seen as a traditional rebellion or an ongoing nationalist movement. The forms depended upon the nature and extent of the political power in various historical contexts. Political actors challenged, negotiated, or evaded authority in various ways as structures of rule shifted from limited external penetration and localized authority, to the Khanate of Kalat, British frontier administration, and organized colonial governance. Centrality, thus, was not to be found in a coherent political goal or community but in the ongoing renegotiation of political power in different historical circumstances.

The first two eras had relatively decentralized forms of contention, supported by the lack of administrative penetration, difficult geography, and local structures of authority. Without the need to establish permanent political organizations, fiscal non-compliance, withdrawal, evasion and sometimes armed confrontation may limit the effective reach of external rulers. This repertoire was changed by the consolidation of the Khanate of Kalat, which was a more institutionalized political centre. During Nasir Khan I, the military power was still important, but diplomacy, alliance and negotiated relations with the Durrani state as well as internal political consolidation were also important means of political autonomy. Resistance therefore could include a renegotiation of the terms of an external authority instead of an absolutist rejection of political relationships.

British colonial expansion created another change. Colonial rule was a combination of coercion, treaties, subsidies, political agents, tribal intermediaries, and indirect rule. The Sandeman system was not only a means of thwarting resistance, it also altered the institutional landscape of contention by integrating parts of local leadership into colonial governance. Thus the elements of collaboration, negotiation, evasion and opposition might occur in the same political relationship. Scott's focus on less visible forms of resistance is relevant here because the political contestation does not necessarily manifest itself in

armed rebellions (Scott, 1985, 1990).

The twentieth century, however, saw a major increase in the repertoire. Political organizations, journalism, constitutional demands, anti-colonial alliances, literature and historical memory were used to allow actors to make claims outside of localised tribal and territorial contexts. Tilly's notion of repertoires of contention provides an explanation for this: the way people collectively act varies with different political institutions, communication networks, organizational capacities, and mobilizing opportunities (Tilly, 1995, 2006). Armed resistance was not, therefore, replaced by peaceful politics, but rather old and new repertoires were in parallel use.

In this interpretation, there is also a need to differentiate between resistance and nationalism. Episodes of early fiscal defiance or armed confrontation cannot a priori be described of as Baloch nationalist resistance just because later nationalists included them in their accounts of collective resistance. Historically specific processes of political organisation, territorial imagination, print culture and reinterpretation of the past led to the emergence of nationalism. It is precisely this change that makes the political history of Balochistan relevant: a practice that was embedded in the local politics of contestation of authority can be remembered, rearranged and given new political significance in the context of anti-colonial and nationalist discourses.

Conclusion

The article has explored shifts in political resistance in Balochistan in response to shifts in the political authority. Resistance was not a consistent or seamless tradition, but a repertoire of historically specific forms, influenced by location, institutions, political structures and rulers' ability to control its subjects. In the past, there was little of the type of state penetration and little political

structuring at the local level, which fostered fiscal non-compliance, withdrawal, negotiation, and armed confrontation. These strategies were aimed at contesting dominant power, but they did not always represent a common territorial or nationalist political agenda.

The unification of the Khanate of Kalat added to this repertoire, offering a more structured political platform through which autonomy could be sought via diplomacy, alliance-making, military levy and political negotiation. The British colonization led to another change. Colonial rule transformed existing forms of authority through political agents, tribal intermediaries, subsidies, treaties and indirect administration, and it established new contexts in which resistance, negotiation, and accommodation coexisted.

By the early 20th century, the nature of the political conflicts had become more than localized. The political organizations, constitutional demands, journalism, anti-colonial networks, literature, and historical memory facilitated the ability of political actors from Baloch and Pashtun communities to make collective claims through a more organized and mobilized political process. These changes were not a replacement for the previous repertoires, but represented an increase in the available political resistance.

Thus, the history of resistance in Balochistan can be said to be one of adaptation and not of continuous nationalist continuity. In its significance, it is the changing structures of authority which created changing forms of contention. This study helps to differentiate between early resistance and later nationalism, and traces the ways in which memories of earlier forms of resistance were rewritten into contemporary political debates and agendas by the end of colonial rule.

Conflict of Interest

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