

**Uprootedness and Groupness of educational migrants amidst ethnic violence: a case  
study of the Baloch students in Lahore**

By:

Mohammad Ahsan Cheema

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Advisor: Professor Dr. Rainer Baubock

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## **Abstract**

This project is aimed at understanding the dynamics of the individuals who migrate for social mobility to a perceived enemy territory amidst violent ethnic secessionist struggle. The project embarks on asking three questions, do those who migrate for social mobility internally feel *uprooted* from their *past-self* and alienated from their *present-self*? Secondly, Do the choices of those who migrate for social mobility internally *assimilate* them either into their *past-self* or their *present self*? Lastly, do those who migrate for social mobility internally respond to the *conferral properties/identities* associated with them with respect to their own sense of ethnic identity? A case study was taken of the Baloch students migrating to Lahore for educational purposes and grounded theory was used to reach a theoretical framework to describe the situation of individuals stuck between two hegemonic narratives. In total, twelve in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted and later, these interviews were coded as per the framework of grounded theory. In result, a conclusion was reached that individuals had a multi-directional view on their sense of ethnic identity, the categorization of individuals into groups, membership criteria within a group, the definition of the group and the importance of ethnic identity overall in such context.

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## Introduction

It was any other day in the month of August. To be exact, it was around the 16<sup>th</sup> of 2015. The city of Lahore was still in the hangover of its 14<sup>th</sup> August Independence Day celebration. The streets were still dressed in green and white and here and there you would still find people waving flags and blowing horns to express their political freedom from both the British and Indians. Like any other normal day, I was hanging out with my friends at a tea stall. Drinking tea at the tea stall is perhaps the most beloved activity of the undergraduates of Lahore - especially at certain tea stalls like the one in Gulberg main market where I was. It attracted students from Forman Christian College and Government College in the evening for their past time. Like any other day, I was expecting my other friends to join in, and many of them were from Balochistan. I myself spent most of my childhood and teenage in Balochistan, so I enjoyed their company, since we had much in common, linguistically and culturally. But that did not mean that we did not have friends from Lahore. So like any other day, when one of my Baloch friend arrived, he was furious with another friend of mine from Lahore. On asking as to why the Baloch friend was so angry, he said that this Lahori friend of ours had posted and tagged a picture of his (my Baloch friend's) on facebook, celebrating 14<sup>th</sup> August in Lahore and with a flag of Pakistan in the background. Although it might seem banal, this was a serious matter for the Baloch friend. Two days prior, we had gone to have fun in the 14<sup>th</sup> August Independence Day celebration. The purpose was merely to have fun, like any other college student would have. We didn't think much while taking the pictures, nor did we think much when shouting 'Pakistan Zindabad' (Long live Pakistan). My Baloch friend was more scared than he was furious. He mentioned that he comes from 'Mundh' a region in the south west of Balochistan that was at the time under the governance of Sarmachars (the Baloch liberation

freedom fighters) and he was scared that if someone had seen the photograph on his Facebook page he might get into some serious trouble. He stayed in the grip of fear for a few days until he had a chat with his brother and cousins about it, and after their reassurances he felt a little better.

Looking back at this event and story, I wondered how these students who migrate to Lahore for their education, and economic and social mobility, feel, encounter differences and similarities and navigate through the difficult political terrain presented to them due to the ongoing conflict between the Baloch nationalists and Pakistani state. In all this, I have multiple times heard my friends from Balochistan say that they are profiled as Baloch in Lahore and face problems like the story mentioned above back home.

On this basis, I embark on this study to see whether they can be grouped together as Baloch or whether there is more to their existence than just their ethnic identity. In this study, I use a grounded approach to see how the students in Lahore explore their self and their surrounding and situate themselves in the political discourse of Balochistan vs Pakistan. I started with asking three main questions. Firstly, do these students feel uprooted from their past and their present self? This question was inspired by Ashish Nandy's work on uprootedness<sup>1</sup>, where he argues that a change of narrative around the political scenario can dislodge people from their sense of self and their placement in the political and social scenario. This question was also inspired by Homi Bhabha's idea of pedagogical self and performative self<sup>2</sup>, where the pedagogical self reflects the narrative that migrants especially remember and develop about their past. This perspective does not particularly refer to their homeland, but this homeland can be part of it. By contrast, the performative self represents the present conditions and situations that these people find themselves in. In this case, their past self is particularly related to life in Balochistan and the present self to

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<sup>1</sup> Nandy, *Intimate Enemy*; Nandy, "South Asian Politics."

<sup>2</sup> Bhabha, *DissemiNation*; Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

life and their situation in Lahore. Secondly, the question which was both obvious and important to ask was about the assimilation pattern of these students. Were these individuals (students) associating more with their past self or their present self or were they going in a direction that is different from both these narratives? It becomes important to note their agency over the construction of their own narratives, their own meanings and their own associations. The idea of multi directional assimilation is borrowed from Brubaker<sup>3</sup>, but here it is used in context of the two dominant narratives, the history and political associations presented by the Pakistani state and the Baloch nationalist elite. Thirdly, this paper also inquires on how these students respond to the properties associated with them by the people around them. There are two ideas behind this question. One is how they respond to gatekeeping and boundary maintenance by people in both their home town and in Lahore. This other is how they relate to the properties associated with them or conferred on them.<sup>4</sup> This is to see how they respond to the prejudice and assumed social truth and reality constructed around them and how they construct their own way through it.

The paper itself is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter is this introduction, where I elaborate how I started with the idea of this research and why there is a need for this kind of research, especially on the Baloch students. The second chapter explains the methodology and theories I have used to interact with the data. However, it is of key importance to note that the theoretical framework was designed and constructed after the interaction with the data to preserve the key idea of grounded theory. The last chapter focuses on the discussion and conclusion. The discussion and conclusion was reached after three levels of coding of the data. In the first phase, I open coded the data using keywords and memos, the second level was axial coding, when these memos were drawn up in themes and lastly, selective coding where these themes were merged to

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<sup>3</sup> Brubaker, "The Return of Assimilation?"

<sup>4</sup> Sveinsdóttir, "Categories We Live By."

yield the conclusions drawn at the end. To collect data, I used semi-structured in-depth interviews. There were twelve interviews done in total spread over one month. The reason for keeping the questions open and the interviews semi structured was to gain as much insight as possible from the interviewees with the assumption of them being experts on the situation in which they live. For sampling, a snowballing technique was used. However, diversity was kept in mind, especially related to class, gender, geographical region, religion and language to ensure that snowballing does not result in a selection bias and overly homogenous group.

In the discussion chapter, three themes become prominent. Firstly, the theme of backwardness<sup>5</sup> and boundary maintenance highlights some of the fears, anxieties and discomforts of the interviewees. This theme also answers the question about conferral properties<sup>6</sup> and the question of gatekeeping. Also, as a result, it was noticed that the reaction to these properties varied. There was concern about the idea of acceptance, but interviews took multiple directions to cope with boundary maintenance. Some disavowed the process altogether, while others accepted one narrative or the other. But there was also an interesting blend of resistance to the question of who they are and how important their ethnic identity is for their sense of self.

Secondly, the theme of uprootedness<sup>7</sup> also became important. For some of the interviewees, the sense of uprootedness was present, but instead of evaluating it negatively, they found it liberating. For some of the interviewees, although the feeling of uprootedness was present, but they negated it thoroughly and tried to keep a strong connection to of some kind of roots. Lastly, for the third group, they rooted themselves in both Lahore and their hometown, creating another space for themselves against the boundary maintenance process.

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<sup>5</sup> Chakrabarty, "Provincializing Europe"; Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.

<sup>6</sup> Sveinsdóttir, "Categories We Live By."

<sup>7</sup> Nandy, "South Asian Politics."



Lastly, one of the most important themes appeared to be groupness and groups. The data did not support the idea of a general and shared sense of ethnic group identity. Interviewees had multiple definitions of the group and membership criteria. Not only this; a variance was noted on religious, linguistic and class basis as well. This highlighted Brubaker's argument on separating groupness as an event in time and space from groups, and identity from identification.<sup>8</sup> Where these individuals exhibited some sense of balochiat and identification as Baloch, it varied considerably. Most of them also kept a Baloch identification as part of many other identifications they had associated themselves with.

In conclusion, it appeared salient that the group of students had taken many different directions in defining themselves against the major narrative of ethnic identity in conflicts and conflicting assimilationist politics and policies. The conclusion lends some support to Brubaker's idea of multidirectional assimilation as well.<sup>9</sup> The individuals appeared to have expressed their agency not only against the boundary maintenance pressures, but also against multiple ideologies around balochiat, expression of their ethnic identification and their sense of self.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Brubaker, "Ethnicity without Groups."

<sup>9</sup> Brubaker, "The Return of Assimilation?"

<sup>10</sup> Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond" Identity".

## Literature review

The study becomes important as it fills the gap that exists on the narratives of subalterns in situations like these. By situation I mean when two elite groups are constructing a particular desirable ethnic group identity to fight against each other in a secessionist conflict. Much of the literature on the ethnic minorities and ethnic conflict is situated in what Brubaker would call reification of the existing group dynamics. On this note, the role of the research becomes to really test these group dynamics and the ‘group’ itself in such situations.

A lot of importance in such cases is given to the structure of the conflict and the structure of the group itself. For example, Fredric Barth<sup>11</sup> argues on how different interaction structures between majority and minority members can affect their relationship as ethnic groups. In an unequal and prejudiced dynamics, the boundary maintenance plays an important role in the processes through which groups maintain their culture, dynamics and identity. But the reaction of individuals to this boundary maintenance appears to be missing in Barth’s narrative. To fill this gap, it becomes important to understand the relationship of the individuals from their agency’s point of view to see how they relate, interact and chose against the backdrop of this process of boundary maintenance.

On the question of relations, Henri Tajfel<sup>12</sup> also emphasizes the relational structure of the minority and majority dynamics. Tajfel looks at multiple outcomes depending on the permeability, legitimacy and stability of boundaries.<sup>13</sup> However, in case of the Baloch and Balochistan, we need to consider that since economic and political stability is missing due to multiple military operations and an ongoing armed struggle, lack of opportunities in the job sector and the lack of educational

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<sup>11</sup> Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*.

<sup>12</sup> Tajfel, “Social Stereotypes and Social Groups.”

<sup>13</sup> Tajfel.

opportunity, the predicted outcome would be a strong rejection of the majority. This does indeed become salient with the secession movement, yet this narrative fails to cover the population that migrates for social mobility and also the narrative of the subaltern who are caught between the struggle of the two political elite, the Baloch nationalists and the Pakistani state. Hence, it becomes again important to look at the questions asked above to really understand the subaltern agency of the individuals who look for opportunities amidst political and economic stability and who are walking on thin line between losing recognition from either the state or the Baloch nationalist groups.<sup>14</sup> In this respect, both Tajfel and Barth seem again to reify the narrative of an existing group, which is challenged as an outcome of this research. Moreover, Brubaker suggests that such studies can impact on the real understanding of the individuals who are labeled as belonging to a particular political and social group.<sup>15</sup> Multiple literatures also suggest crossovers and formation of identities and identifications on multiple scale that go beyond group dynamics, calling them hybrid identities. One such case is that of youths of multiple different origins living in UK who may identify on multiple scales with different groups.<sup>16</sup> Though, in Balochistan and for the Baloch students possibility of hybridity is always put in question due to the ongoing ideological and violent conflict.

Another aspect in the literature that becomes important is the representation of the Baloch population by both the Baloch nationalists and the Pakistani state. This pertains to the assimilationist policies of both the Baloch nationalist and the Pakistani nationalists. In this respect the literature on the Baloch associates them mostly either with their conflict with Pakistan<sup>17</sup> or

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<sup>14</sup> Sheikh, *The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>15</sup> Brubaker, "Ethnicity without Groups."

<sup>16</sup> Huq, "1 European Youth Cultures in a Post-Colonial World"; Alam and Bramwell, "From Speech to Naming in a Scottish Pakistani Community"; Diego Sánchez, "Hybrid Cinemas and Gender Representations in the South Asian Diaspora."

<sup>17</sup> Bangash, *A Princely Affair*.

their origin as a nation and race separate from that of Pakistan.<sup>18</sup> In doing so, the narrative of the people themselves is again missing. A little bit of the latter is captured by Jamali when commenting on the people of Gwadar, especially in context of the Gwadar port mega project, but Jamali again groups them together as Baloch, reifying a narrative that is in line with the Baloch nationalist narrative of Baloch deprivation.<sup>19</sup> In doing so, he misses out on the narratives that may be constructed by the subaltern themselves when situating themselves in relation to the conflicting narratives of the two power elites. Although, when talking about assimilation and assimilationist policies, in the literature we often come across the idea of a core culture that holds legitimacy and is desirable for the individuals to acculturate themselves into.<sup>20</sup> In case of these students we see two separate core cultures developing which these individuals have to navigate through. A close parallel to this case is that of the Kashmiri youth in India, who are similarly exposed to different assimilationist policies. And yet most of the literature that we see on Kashmiri youths is how settled they feel in Dehli, how they identify themselves with religion, how they interact with the environment and how well they cope.<sup>21</sup> In focusing on this perspective, these literature either compares the Kashmiri youth with other ethnic groups or limit their interaction with the world on the basis of the conflict between the Kashmiris and the Indian state. What becomes most salient and important is the conflict and not the individuals and their agency. Therefore, it is important to also view the world and the choices made in such circumstances from the point of view of the

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<sup>18</sup> Akbar, *The Redefined Dimensions of Baloch Nationalist Movement*; Baloch, *Makaran*; Akhtar, "Balochistan versus Pakistan"; Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Dames, *The Baloch Race*.

<sup>19</sup> Jamali, "A Harbor in the Tempest."

<sup>20</sup> Broom and Kitsuse, "The Validation of Acculturation"; Williams Jr and Ortega, "Dimensions of Ethnic Assimilation."

<sup>21</sup> Ashai and O'Brien, "Coping With Loss"; Var et al., "Self-Esteem and Psychosocial Problems among Kashmiri Youth"; War and Ramanathan, "Stress and Coping among Kashmiri and Non-Kashmiri Students"; Khandelwal et al., "The Ultimate Attribution Error."

individuals themselves, while keeping the conflict as one of the salient factors shaping their choices. This means that it becomes important to highlight and empower the subaltern to really understand their circumstances, group dynamics and their identity or identification from their own perspective and not the conflict's perspective.

For this perspective it is necessary to look at the interplay of past memories and present circumstances of the individuals in discussing conflicts such as that between Baloch nationalists and the Pakistani state. One also needs to know how the individuals place themselves from their perspective in such circumstances, extending inquiry to how important the conflict itself becomes for them, if they feel uprooted or rooted somewhere, and whether they find uprootedness liberating or coercive. Also, to what extent the boundary maintenance and gatekeeping pressures from two assimilationist forces impacts them. Lastly, whether assimilation processes are unidirectional or multidirectional, leading to a narrative challenging the core culture ideas pursued so far in Baloch literature.

# Context



Figure 1

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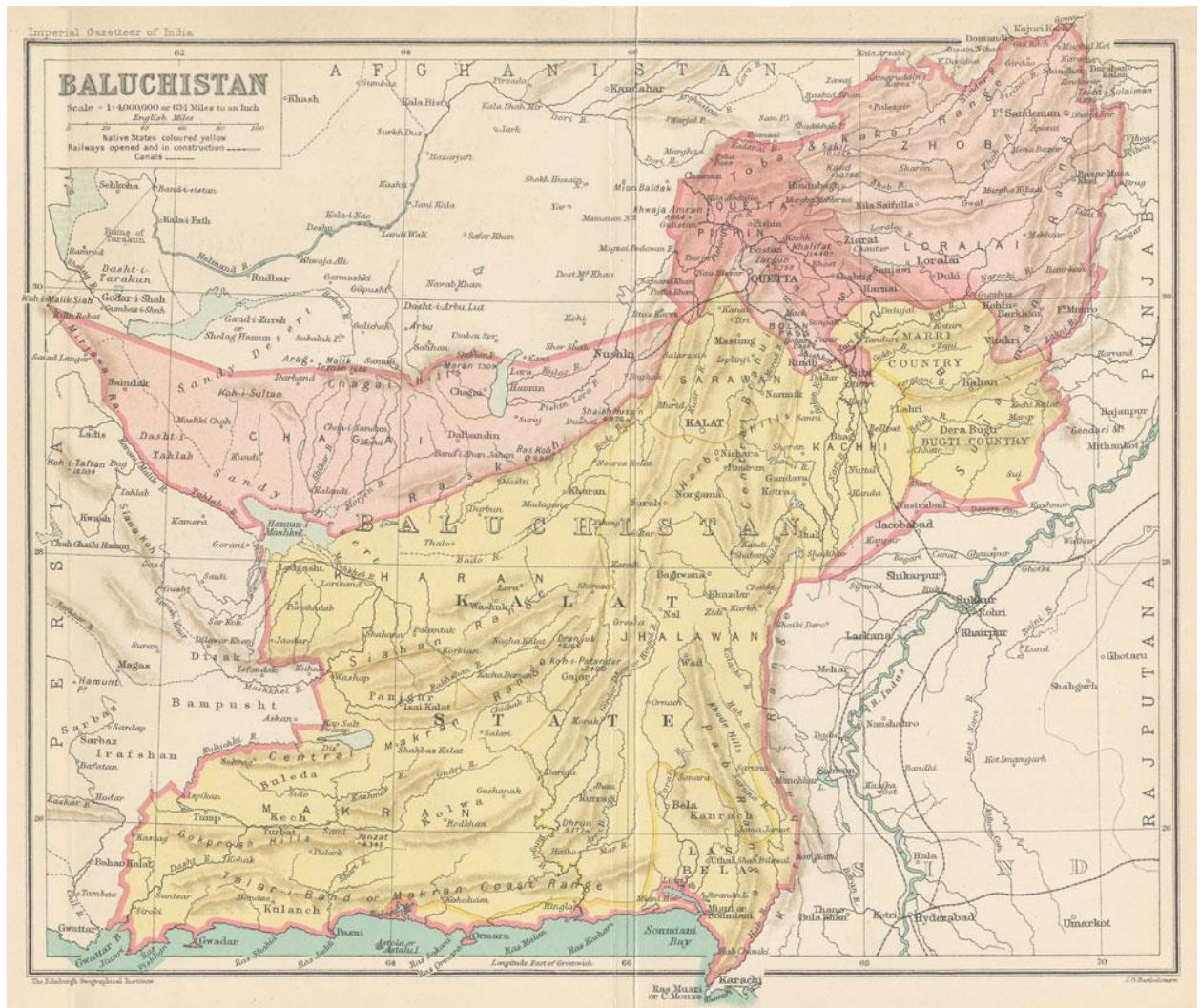


Figure 2

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Historical and Political context:

Balochistan gained legal status as a province after the 1973 constitution. Before that, Balochistan was divided into the Kalat state, which included the Khuzdar, Kharan, Chagai, Washuk, Mustung, Bolan, Nushki, Punjgoor, Kech and Gwadar districts and the rest was considered British governed Balochistan. Right after the Partition between Pakistan and India,

<sup>23</sup> "Kalat."

British Balochistan came to Pakistan in the distribution of land, whereas, the Kalat state joined Pakistan on 27th March, 1948.<sup>24</sup> There are two narratives to this story from we see a point of departure between the Pakistan state and the Baloch nationalists. The Pakistani narrative states that the Kalat state came willingly to Pakistan, the Baloch nationalists claim that the Kalat state was annexed forcibly by Pakistan.

#### Pre-partition

Power in Kalat state was divided between the Khan of Kalat (the prince) and the Royal Jirga (the assembly). This Jirga was composed of different Sardars or Mirs representing different regions or vassal sub-states within the Royal Jirga.<sup>25</sup> The Royal Jirga was based on the feudal and tribal system in Balochistan, which started to break up and wither away with the formation of an urban educated bourgeoisie party called Anjuman-e-ittehad-balochan. This party, composed of the young members of the grand Jirga, was more inclined towards turning Kalat into a modern state while leaving behind its feudal past. The party, though, in 1935, after the death of its founding member, Yousaf ali Magsi (also considered the father of Baloch nationalism), separated itself from the Samad Khan Achakzai group, who became part of the All India Congress chapter in Quetta.<sup>26</sup> This separation between the two groups was based on the maintenance of a unique Baloch identity, separate from India, although the new Baloch group (which became the Kalat State National Party (KSNP)) remained a sympathizer of All India Congress in the late thirties and the early 40s.<sup>27</sup>

Under the leadership of the Magsi, the aim of the Anjuman-e-ittehad-e Balochan (AIB) was greatly inspired by the revolution in Russia, Turkey and the movement in India.<sup>28</sup> The purpose

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<sup>24</sup> Bangash, *A Princely Affair*.

<sup>25</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Sheikh, *The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>26</sup> Sheikh, *The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>27</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>28</sup> Breseeg.



of the construction of the party was to start a movement to reform Kalat, unite the Baloch lands divided on the Sandeman principle (indirect control of the populous of the British through tribal chiefs) and move forward with independence from the British as a united Balochistan state. It is due to these demands that the Congress and Muslim League both condemned the AIB, and it is also these aims and points in which the Baloch nationalists find the roots of their nationalist secessionist narrative.<sup>29</sup>

Towards Partition:

AIB and later KSNP were dedicated towards the objective of resisting the Sardari nizam (chieftain tribal system) and the British. For this reason, the Sardars forced the Khan of Kalat to ban the party in 1939 from Kalat, because of which the party moved to Quetta and kept operating from there and amassed a number of followers. KSNP was allowed back into the Kalat in 1945 after the war<sup>30</sup> where they initially considered joining Congress, but then changed their stance and started to propagate an independent Balochistan as a constitutional monarchy. By 1947, the party was able to develop a Darul Awan (lower house) and Darul Umara (the upper house) in the Kalat state (against the feudal system), whereas the lower house was an elected body with only 5 reserved seats of Khan's nomination and the upper house was in the hands of the Sardar.<sup>31</sup> By 1946 when it had become evident that the British were leaving the subcontinent, both KSNP and the Khan of Kalat approached the British authorities on the fate of Kalat and maintained that like Nepal, Balochistan is not part of the Indian subcontinent and is in union with the British only through the treaty of 1876.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Dames, *The Baloch Race*.

<sup>30</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Sheikh, *The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>31</sup> Sheikh, *The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>32</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

In the narrative of the Baloch nationalists, on 11 August 1947 the charter of independence was distributed by KSNP and endorsed by the Khan. The charter suggested a democratic system with Riwayat (traditions) as the constitution of Balochistan, while the act of 1946 Kalat as the written constitution.<sup>33</sup> The first election for the Darul Awan were held in 1947 and on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August the Khan declared Balochistan an independent state. Initially, as per the “standstill agreement’ and Khan of Kalat, not only that Pakistan endorsed the creation of Balochistan but also supported it.<sup>34</sup> Infact, it was Jinnah who acted as the legal advice for the Khan of Kalat against the British hearing on the matter of complete independence.<sup>35</sup> But in December of 1947, Jinnah suggested Khan Mir Ahmed Yar Khan to accede to Pakistan. In response, Khan called on to his Diwan (assembly) where unanimously the decision was rejected. To this Pakistan responded with force and by March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1948, Pakistan was able to annex all the lands that were once the Kalat state.<sup>36</sup>

In the narrative of Pakistan on the other hand, no such events took place. Historically, Balochistan was part of the Indian subcontinent and governed similarly as any other princely state in the British Raj.<sup>37</sup> Balochistan is portrayed as a strong proponent of the Pakistani movement and hence when Ch. Rehmatullah formulated the name Pakistan, he explained that the ‘tan’ of Pakistan represented Balochistan and its land.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, even Yousaf Ali Magsi is portrayed as the founding father of the Pakistan movement in Balochistan and as a loyal ally and member of the All India Muslim League.<sup>39</sup> It is this at point in history that two narratives are constructed by the

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<sup>33</sup> Breseeg.

<sup>34</sup> Breseeg; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Sheikh, *The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>35</sup> Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*.

<sup>36</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Sheikh, *The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>37</sup> Kelly, “The History and Culture of Pakistan.”

<sup>38</sup> Kelly.

<sup>39</sup> Kausar, “Balochistan Muslim League (1939-1947).”

Baloch nationalists and the Pakistani state. Whereas the Pakistani state maintains that no such options were given, the Baloch nationalists claim that Balochistan was given the choice of seceding from Indian subcontinent altogether. Whereas Pakistan suggests that the Khan of Kalat willingly and legally came under Pakistani rule, the Baloch nationalist suggest Khan was coerced through force to sign the accession act with Pakistan.<sup>40</sup>

#### Post Partition

##### First insurgency:

Right after the accession of Balochistan into Pakistan, the Brother of Khan Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, Prince Agha Karim, led the first insurgency against Pakistan with his thousand men. After initial skirmishes and losses, Prince Karim took refuge in Afghanistan, from where he tried in vain to gather support from the Baloch Sardars. Most of the nationalists, like Gul Khan Naseer and Ghaus Baksh Bezinjo, believed that the Baloch were too weak to stage an armed struggle.<sup>41</sup> While gathering followers, Prince Karim established the Janissar (devotee) and Jahanbaz group (the one with the courage) to identify and kill the ones that were considered traitors. Although the rebellion of Prince Karim failed in 1948 and he was captured by the Pakistani state, the idea of locating and hunting continues to this very day.<sup>42</sup>

##### Second insurgency:

In the 1950, Balochistan was given the status of union states within Pakistan with the Khan being the head of the union assembly, while a prime minister was separately appointed by the center as a compromise. This Union lasted until 1954, when the center grew suspicious of the Balochistan assembly decisions and dissolved the union altogether.<sup>43</sup> In the later part of the 1950s,

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<sup>40</sup> Bangash, *A Princely Affair*.

<sup>41</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>42</sup> Breseeg; Dames, *The Baloch Race*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Sheikh, *The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism*; Akhtar, "Balochistan versus Pakistan."

<sup>43</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

the Khan (Mir Ahmed Yar Khan) was captured by the state and the merger of Balochistan into the West Pakistan one-unit scheme<sup>44</sup> was brought about as a retaliation. This led to another upheaval in Balochistan, starting with the rebellion of Nauroz Khan Zehri with his estimated 1000 to 3000 guerilla forces.<sup>45</sup> In 1958 Nauroz Khan was captured along with his followers and later in the 1960s, at the time of Ayub Khan, all apart from Nauroz Khan were hanged for treason. Nauroz Khan was only one exempted due to his old age.<sup>46</sup> This led to an outcry in Balochistan and to the formation of the Balochistan People's Liberation Army (BPLA) under Sher Mohammad Marri.<sup>47</sup> In response to this, Ayub Khan increased the presence of military in the province and the insurgency lasted throughout Ayub Khan's tenure from 1962 to 1969. It was only in 1971, when Yahya Khan came into power, that a negotiation was reached between the BPLA and Yahya Khan.<sup>48</sup> Yahya Khan in 1970 announced the dismantling of the one-unit scheme and the formulation of the 4 provinces in west Pakistan, namely, Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh and North Western Frontier. This brought an end to the second uprising in Balochistan.<sup>49</sup> Though, it is to note that the one-unit scheme was not abandoned in response to the Baloch, rather abolishing it was an effort and pressure from People's Party and Awami Party from East Pakistan.<sup>50</sup> Also, in this period, the Baloch had established one of the most prominent organizations that to this day is active to some extent in the propaganda of Baloch nationalism, namely the Baloch student organization. The Baloch Student Organization (BSO) is now divided in multiple groups and some of them are even rivals, yet they all agree on the stance of Baloch as separate from Pakistan. Also, due to the

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<sup>45</sup> Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*.

<sup>46</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>47</sup> Breseeg; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*.

<sup>48</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Sheikh, *The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>49</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan*.

<sup>50</sup> Waseem, *Politics and the State in Pakistan*.

insurgency as an outcome, the military presence of Pakistan drastically increased in Balochistan and the approach used by the state to counter the insurgency was complete obliteration.<sup>51</sup>

#### The third rise of the Baloch

Conflict between the East Pakistan and the West Pakistan was already brewing under Ayub Khan's tenure.<sup>52</sup> This episode came to a conclusion in the 1971 civil war and later war with India, which resulted into the creation of Bangladesh. After this defeat, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, at the time leader of Pakistan's center, concluded an agreement with the National Awami Party (NAP) (the new name for the KSNP) Balochistan Chapter to 'gather the pieces together'.<sup>53</sup> This alliance though did not hold for long. Bhutto, instead of dismantling martial law, became the civil administrator of the martial law regime. Soon enough he started to take out his political rivals using his Federal security force.<sup>54</sup> In Balochistan, in 1973, Bhutto dissolved the assembly on the pretext that the province was constructing its own militia in the form of Dahi Muhafiz (rural police) and promoting secular and communist agendas.<sup>55</sup> Also, the provincial government was dissolved on the pretext of racism in Balochistan accusing the Baloch government of sending Punjabi government employees back to Punjab.<sup>56</sup> Although this had nothing to do with the Baloch government, instead this came with the dissolution of the one-unit program that had been prolonged until 1973.<sup>57</sup> The dissolution of the NAP government instigated the BSO to start another uprising against the Pakistani state, though this time the uprising was more towards constructing a socialist Pakistan and not an independent Balochistan.<sup>58</sup> However, even in this socialist agenda,

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<sup>51</sup> Akhtar, "Balochistan versus Pakistan."

<sup>52</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan*.

<sup>53</sup> Talbot.

<sup>54</sup> Talbot.

<sup>55</sup> Talbot; Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>56</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>57</sup> Talbot, *Pakistan*; Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>58</sup> Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*.

Baloch national sentiment played a very strong role. The role of BSO was to take the narrative of the nationalists to every household, as many students were going and gathering in universities in Karachi and Lahore.<sup>59</sup> BSO was the main institution in these universities to help the Baloch students settle down and in doing so maintain a sense of diasporic unity.<sup>60</sup> It would also be unfair to say that the prejudice against the Punjabis did not exist at the time and the expulsion was only on the basis of dismantling one-unit scheme. A strong prejudice existed against the Punjabis as the one who were the oppressors of the Baloch population in the BSO narrative.<sup>61</sup> The insurgency then spread through BSO acting as a political wing and Balochistan People's Liberation Front (BPLF) as the military wing. Initially the insurgency proved to be a nuisance for the Pakistani state, but in the battle of Chamalang in 1975 around 5000 Baloch, both civilian and guerilla, were killed and 900 taken captives.<sup>62</sup> The anti-insurgency operation of 1974 to 1977 was a joint effort between the Pakistani state and the Irani Airforce, who was also worried about the insurgency having a domino effect on the Sistan side of Balochistan (Irani Balochistan).<sup>63</sup>

#### Post 1980s

Pakistan entered into another military regime in the 1978 when Zia ul Haq staged a coup against Bhutto. General Zia, like all other military dictators, centralized the governance of Pakistan, and instead of provincial autonomy, for which the Baloch were fighting in the 1970s, General Zia empowered the local government system with a federal district commissioner (centrally appointed) holding veto power.<sup>64</sup> The Baloch elites were not happy. Akbar khan Bughti,

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<sup>59</sup> Mushtaq et al., "History of Student Politics and Its Revival in Pakistan."

<sup>60</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Mushtaq et al., "History of Student Politics and Its Revival in Pakistan."

<sup>61</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>62</sup> Akhtar, "Balochistan versus Pakistan"; Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Akbar, *The Redefined Dimensions of Baloch Nationalist Movement*.

<sup>63</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Akhtar, "Balochistan versus Pakistan"; Andley, *Balochistan*; Grare, "Balochistan."

<sup>64</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*; Talbot, *Pakistan*.

the head of the Bughti tribe, didn't speak Urdu in protest of the central government until 1985, when finally, the general election took place, with a referendum for the presidential post.<sup>65</sup> Zia's regime focused on Islamization policies in Pakistan, during which again the local identities were oppressed.<sup>66</sup> It is in this period that BSO became militarized in campuses against other student organizations like Jamait to maintain its space in universities and the public sphere.<sup>67</sup> Also, the idea of Islamization was completely against the socialist and nationalist narrative of BSO, that was independently struggling for an autonomous Baloch region and with control over their resources. In the 1990s, this struggle turned against the nuclear bomb testing in 1998. In fact, some of the students from BSO hijacked an airplane of Pakistan<sup>68</sup> in order to stop the nuclear testing in Balochistan, but failed at the attempt. After Pervez Musharaf's coup and takeover of the regime in 1999, the BSO was banned and, moreover, all other student organizations were also banned from operating. In the 2000s, BSO split into many fighting factions and those students who were leaving Balochistan started to associate less with the BSO due to fears of becoming part of the missing persons list in Pakistan.<sup>69</sup>

#### Recent insurgency

In 2001, Pakistan signed a deal with China to develop Gwadar as a port.<sup>70</sup> This mega project led towards another uprising in the Balochistan region, as Balochistan was completely excluded from the project altogether.<sup>71</sup> While the Baloch National Party and the National Party were protesting exclusion, the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) started a new wave of insurgency.

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<sup>65</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>66</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*; Talbot, *Pakistan*.

<sup>67</sup> Khan, "Renewed Ethnonationalist Insurgency in Balochistan, Pakistan"; Khan, Faiz, and Jan, "The Dynamics of Baloch Ethno-National Conflicts within the Federation of Pakistan (1948-2012)."; Andley, *Balochistan*.

<sup>68</sup> "Pakistan hangs three separatists for 1998 plane hijack."

<sup>69</sup> Hassan, "The Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Case of Missing Persons."

<sup>70</sup> Khan, "Renewed Ethnonationalist Insurgency in Balochistan, Pakistan"; Akhtar, "Balochistan versus Pakistan."

<sup>71</sup> Saleem, "CPEC and Balochistan."

This insurgency was further fueled by the assassination of one of the most prominent leaders of Balochistan, Nawab Akbar Khan Bughti,<sup>72</sup> by the Pakistani state in 2006. In this period, Punjabi expulsion from Balochistan and ethnic cleansing of the Punjabis also started<sup>73</sup> in Balochistan, as they are seen as the major complicit group with the state in subjugating the Baloch population. During this time there was also a fear developing among the Baloch that with Afghan refugees coming into Pakistan due to the Afghan-US war, the increasing population of Pashtuns would render the Baloch population a minority in their own province.<sup>74</sup> This fear lingered from the 1970s when Looneys (a Pashtun clan) were settled in Chamalang region by the state after the Chamalang operation in 1975, where Marris are now not the sole major group anymore.<sup>75</sup> After the attack in Gwadar in 2005,<sup>76</sup> Pakistan formally started another all-out operation in Balochistan and since then there has been a very strong military presence in the province. For that matter, the phenomenon of forced disappearances started increasing in Balochistan and outside Balochistan affecting mainly the Baloch youth, including students. The Baloch students, unlike BSO, formed Baloch councils<sup>77</sup> in different universities in different areas of Pakistan to help adjust the students once they migrated, provide them with guidance for living and maintain an apolitical stance due to enforced disappearances.<sup>78</sup> Although with the recent rise of the Pushtoon Tahafuz Movement led by Manzoor Pashteen against the military establishment, the Baloch students bandwagon with the movement to stay political.<sup>79</sup> On the side, groups like BLA and Baloch Liberation Front (Baloch guerilla groups) maintain the ideas of Janisaar and Jahanbaz who abduct and kill traitors

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<sup>72</sup> Gazdar, "Bugti and the Baloch Cause."

<sup>73</sup> "16 Punjabis Killed in Balochistan Attacks."

<sup>74</sup> "Demographic Changes in Balochistan."

<sup>75</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>76</sup> Gazdar, "Bugti and the Baloch Cause."

<sup>77</sup> "Baloch Council GC University Lahore | Facebook."

<sup>78</sup> "Balochistan's Students Protest Enforced Disappearances."

<sup>79</sup> "PTM's Manzoor Pashteen Joins Protest for Release of Baloch Student."



still in Balochistan.<sup>80</sup> These circumstances and forces result in a very hostile environment for the students in spaces that are Pakistani-controlled and those that are in dispute between Baloch nationalist groups and Pakistan, leaving a very thin line for the students to walk when exercising their agency.

#### Social context

Since the Kalat state was never formally part of British India, little was done to assimilate the Baloch population into the British Indian population. The narrative was to honor their traditions and their tribal leaders, while only the northern part of the province was a little developed through railroads and the education system.<sup>81</sup> At the time, the only pragmatic value of the Kalat state to the British was the telegraph, later telephone, line connecting India with Iran.<sup>82</sup>

This was achieved through a treaty initially signed in 1875 and then later revised in 1880s and 90s. While the British control was strong in Derajat and Gulistan region, Kalat state mostly operated as a vassal state. Most of the population had no contact with the rest of British India, and only a few elites had access to modern education and political dynamics of India.<sup>83</sup>

Little was done after the formation of Pakistan in Balochistan, rather the state of Pakistan kept the same narrative of honoring the Baloch as their colonial predecessors. Little development was brought about by Pakistan to assimilate the population into the Pakistani national identity. Instead, after the formation of Pakistan, in 1948, the Education minister at one of his summits suggested in his speech that Pakistan was made for Pakistanis and not for the Baloch, Pushtoons, Punjabis, Sindhis or Bengalis, while addressing the issue of setting the curriculum in English and Urdu.<sup>84</sup> Due to this policy, not only the Baloch and other ethnic populations were marginalized,

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<sup>80</sup> "Mir Baluch (@Mir\_Baluch) / Twitter."

<sup>81</sup> Titus, "Honor the Baloch, Buy the Pushtun."

<sup>82</sup> Sheikh, *The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism*.

<sup>83</sup> Sheikh; Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*.

<sup>84</sup> Sheikh, *The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism*.

but a majority of the Pakistani population was excluded from the assimilation process since they neither knew Urdu nor English. While the availability of schools and other institutions that worked as melting pots were available in provinces like Punjab that were developed under the British rule, Balochistan suffered the most exclusion since no policies were formulated to assimilate the Baloch populations.<sup>85</sup> The province, which forms 48% of the total land mass of Pakistan, had only a single university and a handful of degree colleges and schools by the 1990s.<sup>86</sup>

Even as of now, there are only a handful of universities that are available and even these are not trusted by the Baloch students due to political issues.<sup>87</sup> This has produced mass flows of Baloch students either to Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore for educational purposes. Lahore becomes an interesting place to study, as it is the capital of Punjab and the prejudice between Baloch and Punjabis is extreme, as Baloch perceive Punjabis to be ones most represented in the armed forces, while the Punjabis are prejudiced against the Baloch due to the killings of Punjabi in Balochistan.

Ethnic demographics and linguistic composition of Baloch in Balochistan

Three major ethnicities reside in Balochistan, namely Baloch, Pushtoon and Brahvi. Although Brahvi speak a language very different from Balochi, since 1970s they are considered Baloch and they identify as such. This means that there are only two major ethnic groups that reside in Balochistan, the Baloch and Pushtoons. Ethnicities like Hazara, Punjabi, Sindhi are very small compared to the size of population of Baloch and Pushtoons. Within Baloch population, there are 8 languages that are spoken, namely, Lassi, Balochi, Judgali, Kaitrani, Barahvi, Sindhi, Saraiki and Punjabi. In Balochistan out of these languages, only Balochi, Barahvi, Judgali, Sindhi

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<sup>85</sup> Sheikh.

<sup>86</sup> Noraiee, "The Baloch Nationalism in Pakistan."

<sup>87</sup> "UoB's Video Scandal: The Tip of the Iceberg - Pakistan - DAWN.COM."

and Kaitrani is spoken amongst the Baloch population. The people who speak Kaitrani and Jadgali live in the border region with Punjab and Sindh. The Barahvi speakers live in Mustung, Bolan, Sibi, Kalat, Khuzdar and Quetta region. Balochi is further divided into three dialects, namely Makarani, Sulaimanki and Rukshani. Makarani Balochi is spoken in Makaran region, that includes Punjgoor, Kech and Gwadar. Sulaimanki is spoken in Sibi, Dera Bughti, Kohlu, Nasirabad and Jaffarabad region. Rukshani is spoken in Nushki, Kharan, Chagai and Washuk region.<sup>88</sup>

Quetta is an urban center where the population is mixed, though different enclaves have developed within that mix. With the increase in the incoming Afghan refugee, Quetta has now become predominantly Pashtoon. The second large Baloch urban center is Turbat which is also known as the cultural center of Balochistan.<sup>89</sup> Turbat, unlike Quetta, lacks in diversity.

#### Higher education in Balochistan

There are three universities in Quetta, namely University of Balochistan, Balochistan University of Information Technology and Management Sciences, and Bolan Medical College. There is one engineering university in Khuzdar, a maritime university in Lesbella and one university in Turbat. This in total is the number of university that cater to all of Balochistan. Due to this, most of the students in Balochistan travel to Karachi, Lahore or Sindh for further education.

#### Religious context

Religiously, the Baloch population is predominantly Muslim. Although, only recently the Shia- Sunni divide strengthen in the populous, the most prominent divide historically has been between the Zikaris and the Namazis. Zikaris are predominantly located in the Kech and Gwadar district of Balochistan. The visible different between the two is that Zikaris perform three time Zikar (visibly different praying structure from an orthodox praying pattern of Muslims) and a

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<sup>88</sup> Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*.

<sup>89</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*.

weekly Choghan (a collective worship) while the Namazis pray five times a day. Another major difference between the group is that the Zikaris believe that the messiah or Mahdi has already come and passed, while the Namazi still wait for the messiah or Mahdi.

The initial divide between the Zikaris and Namazi was constructed and fueled by Noori Naseer Khan in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in his ambition to conquer Makaran from the Boledis and Gichkis. After his initial defeats in Makaran, Naseer Khan started sending Mullahs to Punjgur to preach and construct divide between the Zikaris and the Namazi's (while Punjgur being predominantly Namazi) in order to secure an alliance with the people of the region and divide Makaran into Kech and Panjgoor or Zikaris and Namazis.<sup>90</sup>

Currently, the Pakistani state is also fueling the conflict on this line of divide between the Zikaris and the Namazis as well. After the second Afghan-US war, a lot of effort has been placed by the state to open madarasas (religious schools), tilting their favour towards Namazis.<sup>91</sup> But as a result, the Shia-Sunni divide has also increased in Balochistan. This is visible in the recent Hazara killings, as the community is very distinct (physical features from the Baloch population) and visible and generally regarded as Shias.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Baloch, *Makaran*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*.

<sup>91</sup> "The Rise of Religious Extremism in Balochistan – The Diplomat."

<sup>92</sup> "Pakistani Hazara Families Refuse to Bury Dead after Attack | News | Al Jazeera."

## Methodology:

Research Questions and Thematic framework

In this paper, my aim is to answer the following questions with respect to the following key concepts and themes:

1. Do those who migrate for social mobility internally feel *uprooted* from their *past-self* and alienated from their *present-self*? Here the past-self and present-self are taken from Bhabha's concept of pedagogical self and performative self. Where the pedagogical-self (past-self) represents the memory associated with identity, homeland and life there (in this case the village or cities of the Baloch students in Balochistan) and the performative self (present-self) represents how they construct their sense of self in the present situation (in this case Lahore and their interaction with the people of Lahore).

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2. Do the choices of those who migrate for social mobility internally *assimilate* them either into their *past-self* or their *present self*? Here the assimilation is used to refer to the action of the elites of the Pakistani state or the Baloch nationalists towards the members of the minority groups (the individuals in question) into a desired identity. In doing so, different institutions and apparatuses may be used by the dominant groups to construct a desired core culture and a dominant narrative that is later imposed on the individuals. This also refers to separation of individuals into different groups and later assimilation into the desirable identity on the basis of numerical majorities and minorities.<sup>94</sup>

3. Do those who migrate for social mobility internally respond to the *conferral properties/identities* associated with them in shaping and modifying their own sense of

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<sup>93</sup> Bhabha, *DissemiNation*.

<sup>94</sup> Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers*.

ethnic identity? Sveinsdóttir suggest that facts around identities are constructed through social conferral of the properties either institutionally or socially. Social facts thus can change from social situation to situation. In each conferral, there is a base property that the group that confers keeps in mind to affirm a belief (these can be physical markers in case of gender and race or social stereotypes, prejudice or assumptions).<sup>95</sup>

Whereas question 1 corresponds directly to the feeling of uprootedness<sup>96</sup> of persons from their sense of ethnic identity, question 2 corresponds to the choices individuals make that assimilate them in different directions in a multi-narrative structure. This research will also be looking on whether cultural assimilation is happening as diffusion or dispersion, converging or diverging and lastly, whether a new type of identities is developing instead.<sup>97</sup> Question 3 refers to the fluidity of one's ethnic identity<sup>98</sup> with respect to how others associate a particular property with one's identity and how one responds to this fluidity, whether as a threat or with acceptance or full embracing.

Although this research is conducted using grounded theory (which I discuss in the next section), some concepts have been borrowed from Homi Bhabha<sup>99</sup>, Ashish Nandy<sup>100</sup>, Rogers Brubaker<sup>101</sup> and Sveinsdóttir.<sup>102</sup> These concepts are not used as theories to be tested in the field, which would negate the purpose of the grounded work; instead these themes are used to help with the construction of the research questions. In the field, these themes only remain as a reference

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<sup>95</sup> Sveinsdóttir, "Categories We Live By."

<sup>96</sup> Nandy, "South Asian Politics."

<sup>97</sup> Brubaker, "The Return of Assimilation?"

<sup>98</sup> Sveinsdóttir, "Categories We Live By."

<sup>99</sup> Bhabha, *DissemiNation*.

<sup>100</sup> Nandy, "South Asian Politics"; Nandy, *Intimate Enemy*.

<sup>101</sup> Brubaker, "Ethnicity without Groups."

<sup>102</sup> Sveinsdóttir, "Categories We Live By."

point to see the prevalence of concepts that may appear similar, or that negate or challenge the range of the themes that emerges from the interviews.

Keeping this in mind, the first theme that I use is the theme of uprootedness. Nandy defines uprootedness as the feeling of alienation felt by individuals from themselves and their sense of reality due to the changing mental and physical settings of the population that may feel uprooted.<sup>103</sup> He highly emphasizes the importance of narratives, where changing narratives can turn people into refugees in their own space. A good example of this is the population of Gwadar, who recently were uprooted from their way of life and their profession of fishing due to the mega project of the Chinese Pakistan economic corridor.<sup>104</sup> The new wave of development changed the dynamic of the economic and political structure of Gwadar, in which the local fishing population seemed both excluded and were destined to remain excluded, unless they would themselves bring about changes in their culture and tradition. Hence, they became refugees in their own space. In perspective of this work, I want to see if those who are travelling outside of their space and moving into a perceived ‘enemy’ space feel uprooted, to what degree and whether they consider this uprootedness as a positive or negative experience (whereas Nandy imagines this concept of uprootedness to be only negative).<sup>105</sup> By positive here I mean the sense that allows the individual to escape the limited spectrum of life imposed on them from the elite narrative, but negative is the feeling of alienation of their feeling of belongingness.

The second thematic concept that I have considered to construct the question is based on Bhabha’s<sup>106</sup> study of individuals migrating abroad and maintaining their sense of self. Impressed by the psychoanalytic school of thought, Bhabha suggests that members of such populations

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<sup>103</sup> Nandy, *Intimate Enemy*.

<sup>104</sup> Jamali, “A Harbor in the Tempest.”

<sup>105</sup> Nandy, “South Asian Politics.”

<sup>106</sup> Bhabha, *DissemiNation*.

experience two mental processes when they are constructing their identities in the new spaces.<sup>107</sup> The first one is what he calls the pedagogical self, a narrative that they imagine about their history and traditions and the second one is called the performative self, which is their response in construction of their sense of self in correspondence to their present situation. Bhabha suggests that any identity that is formulated is in the ambivalence of these two contrasting ideas, turning the history into a living past in the present. In this research, I am considering this ambivalence as one of the themes that may translate into fear, anxiety but may also provide multiple pathways for the Baloch students to assimilate and construct their sense of identity.

The third thematic concept borrowed from Sveinsdóttir.<sup>108</sup> Sveinsdóttir considers institutional and social groups conferring properties to individuals on a certain base property that may become a social fact for the individual. She uses this concept to discuss gender and how gender in different settings may appear to be different, in behavior and perception, depending on the institutions and social group around it. Similarly, I have kept this theme in mind to design the research questions in order to understand the dynamic between the individuals and the social settings in which they live.<sup>109</sup> This theme also helps me illuminate how the Baloch identity is taken by the individuals themselves and how much it is influenced by the institutions and people around. This concept also helps me construct themes around fear, anxiety, construction of self, disavowal and acceptance.

Lastly, while conducting my field work, I considered how, unlike in most Baloch literature, Baloch not as a group, but rather individuals categorizing themselves as Baloch (too varying degrees). I have borrowed this theme from Rogers Brubaker<sup>110</sup>, where he suggests that considering

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<sup>107</sup> Bhabha.

<sup>108</sup> Sveinsdóttir, "Categories We Live By."

<sup>109</sup> Sveinsdóttir.

<sup>110</sup> Brubaker, "Ethnicity without Groups."



groups as entities in themselves is mistaken. Not only does this reification present the group as an individual, but it also diminishes individuals since their actions and their agency is taken away. He suggests that we should consider groupness as an event, occurring due to certain political and social structure in a given time. This theme became important for me to include especially after fieldwork where the categorization and the definition of the group that these individuals belong to varied so much that a consensus on what is a Baloch identity would appear to be very limited and restricted. For this purpose, this theme remains prevalent in the discussion chapter as well.

All these thematic concepts and further themes that are developed in the result and discussion chapter aim towards theorizing on the agency of the individuals who are grouped in a population that is mostly defined by their political dissent from the major national narrative of Pakistan.<sup>111</sup>

Grounded theory:

In this research, I am using Grounded theory<sup>112</sup> for answering the research questions, for developing themes and finally contributing to some theory building regarding the population in question. The purpose of this method is to develop the theory from bottom up. This means that the fieldwork and the theme development happen simultaneously to reach a final conclusion, instead of starting from presumed hypotheses and assumptions. Another reason for using grounded theory is that the already existing literature bands the group I study together such that it appears as homogenous, and also the literature defines the group only in context of the conflict between the Baloch nationalists and the Pakistani state. In this the element of individual choice and experience is lost and emphasis is placed mostly on the social circumstances and grievances. I wanted to avoid

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<sup>111</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Baloch, "Parliament Siyasat Aur Baloch Jaddojahad Azad"; Baloch, *Makaran*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Jamali, "A Harbor in the Tempest"; Akhtar, "Balochistan versus Pakistan."

<sup>112</sup> Glaser, Strauss, and Strutzel, "The Discovery of Grounded Theory; Strategies for Qualitative Research."

he majority-minority dynamics (without denying its relevance) and the overall idea of a distinct ethnic group and wanted to focus on individual choices.

The purpose of grounded theory is to get out into the field to avoid any preconceived notions about the group and to avoid formulating simple answers to the questions. Instead, grounded theory helps me dive into the complexity of individual actions and taking the individual as an actor, making decision in complex situations. The theory hence is constructed out of the data, instead of being super-imposed on the data. This also helps me to be more sensitive to the evolving nature of the phenomenon. Hence, as per the framework of the methodology the actor is taken as acting on certain defined meaning and the researcher is required to understand the meaning behind each action. This leads to a better understanding by familiarizing oneself with the relationship between the individuals, the structure and the action of the individual and the consequence of it.<sup>113</sup>

Grounded theory draws its justification from Cooley's concept of the looking glass self<sup>114</sup>, meaning that a person is aware of the condition of others and can understand the world view from the point of view of others if given enough interaction.<sup>115</sup> Also it entails Mead's idea of sociability, meaning that a phenomenon can have multiple meaning depending on the symbolic significance present.<sup>116</sup> This leads to the major idea of grounded theory being placed in the social interaction theory, hence the idea that a true understanding can only come out of the interaction of the researcher with participants. This leads to a fundamental problem of how can I have prior thematic questions in the first place? Cutcliffe<sup>117</sup> helps me answer that question suggesting that normally grounded theory is chosen when the sample population is too small or if the literature on the

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<sup>113</sup> Strauss and Corbin, *Grounded Theory in Practice*; Brown et al., "Exploring Complex Phenomena."

<sup>114</sup> Cooley, "Looking-Glass Self."

<sup>115</sup> Heath and Cowley, "Developing a Grounded Theory Approach."

<sup>116</sup> Heath and Cowley.

<sup>117</sup> Cutcliffe, "Methodological Issues in Grounded Theory."

population is too limited to start from well-established assumptions, but that does not mean that the researcher can escape the social and academic biases of their socialization. Hence, to some extent thematic preconceptions can be used to formulate questions, which appears to be different from testing theories in the sense that the major purpose of these themes is not to test them but to help construct theory out of the data collected.<sup>118</sup>

This methodology to approach data is also selected to increase validity by minimizing researcher's effect and provide the interviewee the opportunity to present their narrative. Hence any interpretation that impacts from the researcher's culture has to be taken into the account for research itself. Therefore, the grounded theory is based on induction and emergence and deduction and speculation.<sup>119</sup>

#### Data collection

For collecting data and selecting the sample, I used a non representative snowballing technique. This puts a limitation on the reliability of the research, since the sample of twelve individuals that I selected is small, and secondly, the data is non representative of the population under study. The reason for using the snowballing technique was the unknown number of the sample size available in Lahore. Also, selecting this method to collect the sample pool and data was due to the limited time available for this research.

The population of interviewees remained diverse, as special attention was given to snowball in different institutions to make sure that the sample does not represent a unidimensional ideology. Therefore, class, gender, geographical region of origin, religion and educational majors were considered while taking the interviews to increase the diversity of perspectives in the sample

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<sup>118</sup> Cutcliffe; Heath and Cowley, "Developing a Grounded Theory Approach."

<sup>119</sup> Heath and Cowley, "Developing a Grounded Theory Approach"; Strauss and Corbin, *Grounded Theory in Practice*; Brown et al., "Exploring Complex Phenomena."

pool. Each individual was then asked for permission and an appointment to share their experience of living in Lahore as a Baloch student. Some interviews were conducted in public spaces as per the request of the interviewee and some of them conducted at either my own house or their dorms or houses. This was again done on the request of the interviewees. To build rapport with the interviewee, I asked them if I can meet them prior to the interviews in an informal setting. These meetings were casual and mostly about entertainment and sharing experiences.

Each interview was taken in a relaxed environment where the interviewee was most comfortable and also according to their preferences. Interviews lasted on average forty-five minutes to an hour and a half, depending on how comfortably the interviewee answered the questions. The interviews were kept semi-structured and the wording of the questions varied depending on the answers and also on how the interviewee responded. Sometimes follow-up impromptu questions were required to collect more data from the interviewee. Another reason for keeping the questions and interviews flexible was to enable the interviewee, who happens to be in the situation and is the expert of the situation, to have more agency and power in deciding on the answers and subject matter. This also helped me reduce any superimposition of concepts and biases on the interviewee. I did, however, use a semi-structured list of questions. The reason for having questions with pre-decided wording served as a reference for me to keep myself on track. The questions were as the following:

1. Where in Balochistan do you come from?
2. How long have you been staying in Lahore?
3. How often do you go back to Balochistan and for how long?
4. How often do you see friends and other people from Balochistan in Lahore?

5. How settled do you feel in Lahore?
6. Would you like to continue living in Lahore?
7. Do you ever feel threatened in Lahore?
8. Would you prefer to build your career in Pakistan or abroad?
9. Have you ever felt unwelcome in your own hometown?
10. Do you think people see you as different (in Lahore and your hometown)?
11. How do you define yourself ethnically?
12. Is there any way *balochiat* (*Baloch reference to being a Baloch*) can be in harmony with being flexible towards new ideas?
13. How do you feel about the Baloch nationalist movement?

There are two primary reasons for selecting a Baloch population. Firstly, the conflict between Baloch and Pakistani state is perceived to be extremely strong. Secondly, both the Baloch nationalists and the Pakistani state have a competing narrative on political identities. This makes the Baloch students an ideal case to study the process of assimilation in violent ethnic conflicts.

Data analysis:

For the purpose of analyzing the data, I have used three coding methods as required by grounded theory.<sup>120</sup> Firstly, I transcribed the in-depth interviews. After the transcription, each paragraph was ‘open coded’.<sup>121</sup> The reason for not going for line by line open coding was the limited time. While coding, I kept in mind the ‘Looking glass self’ concept introduced by

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<sup>120</sup> Heath and Cowley, “Developing a Grounded Theory Approach”; Strauss and Corbin, *Grounded Theory in Practice*; Brown et al., “Exploring Complex Phenomena.”

<sup>121</sup> Heath and Cowley, “Developing a Grounded Theory Approach”; Brown et al., “Exploring Complex Phenomena”; Strauss and Corbin, *Grounded Theory in Practice*.

Cooley.<sup>122</sup> The reason for this is the idea how interactions can help an individual understand the perspective of the other person, making it possible for me to code, even when I am also subjected to my own socialization and biases. Secondly, while coding I also kept Herbert Mead's idea of sociability in mind, to read into perspectives given by the interviewee to understand and interpret them from multiple perspectives and symbolic values.<sup>123</sup>

After the initial open coding, these codes and memos were used to construct axial coding, where these memos and codes were further coded into themes.<sup>124</sup> The following themes have emerged through coding, namely anxiety and fear around labeling of the self, assimilation, construction of self, disavowal and acceptance.

Lastly, selective coding was used to formulate the conclusion and generate, if possible, some aspect of theory as a result of the empirical work. For this, the earlier mentioned themes of Uprootedness, Groupness, Ambivalence and Conferral properties are useful to help me to theorize the outcome of the study.

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<sup>122</sup> Cooley, "Looking-Glass Self."

<sup>123</sup> Feffer, "Sociability and Social Conflict in George Herbert Mead's Interactionism, 1900-1919."

<sup>124</sup> Glaser, Strauss, and Strutzel, "The Discovery of Grounded Theory; Strategies for Qualitative Research."

## Findings and Discussion

### Groupness and Group

“I don’t answer this as a Baloch, but I think of this as myself”

There are multiple aspects to this statement given by one of the interviewee. I have selected this statement in particular to discuss, because it appears to be something that appears in almost all of the interviewees besides two. The first aspect that I would like to discuss as per this statement is how Brubaker would differentiate between groupness and group.<sup>125</sup> The second is how these individuals would keep balochiat as only a part of their identity and through this would embark on multiple paths to constructing their own sense of self and place balochiat in it.<sup>126</sup> Lastly, this statement is also important in illustrating the difference within the group, on the basis of gender, class and religion in particular.

Starting with the distinction between groupness and group<sup>127</sup>, this discussion directly challenges scholarship on the Baloch as a group that is normally described on the basis of the Pakistan and Balochistan conflict.<sup>128</sup> In this scholarship, they are perceived to be a single group that has a singular history and through that history a similar culture.<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, in this scholarship, multiple divisionary narratives are masked, for example the conflict between the Zikris and Namazis. While taking interviews, I noticed that the leftovers of these different conflicts are pretty salient within the group. For example, the Brahavi speaking interviewees did not even acknowledge the Zikris as Baloch and considered them outsiders. Similarly, the Zikris in particular felt uprooted more because of a double struggle that they have to face. Although they mentioned

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<sup>125</sup> Brubaker, “Ethnicity without Groups.”

<sup>126</sup> Brubaker, “The Return of Assimilation?”

<sup>127</sup> Brubaker, “Ethnicity without Groups.”

<sup>128</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Baloch, “Parliament Siyasat Aur Baloch Jaddojahad Azad”; Akhtar, “Balochistan versus Pakistan”; Baloch, *Makaran*.

<sup>129</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Dames, *The Baloch Race*.

that their villages are predominantly Zikri so they don't have to face much discrimination there, in places like Turbat, the hatred among the two groups is increasing. Also, they mentioned that particularly Zikris are targeted more in Balochistan and their lands and holy places are being annexed by the state because only they are looked upon as a nationalist and anti-Pakistani group. When this was told to a Brahavi speaking interviewee, he simply dismissed the idea and suggested that not only the Zikris are not Muslims, they are neither nationalists nor are they Baloch. For the Brahavi speaker, one of the conditions for being a Baloch necessarily entailed being a Namazi Muslim, reflecting back on the conflict that was initially started by Khan Noori Naseer Khan, the khan of Kalat in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>130</sup> Noori Naseer himself being from north Balochistan and a Brahavi.

Secondly, an interesting division also appeared within the group on the basis of class. The interviewees came from different social classes, where the middle class interviewees mostly argued for a more loosely defined idea of Balochiat and Baloch nationalism and favored a more pragmatic approach towards life. They suggested that how people should maintain themselves in life is not determined by what their ethnicity is; rather their ethnic identity is merely one of their identities and it holds little importance to their own growth. For them the most important aspect was to learn new ideas and develop them for their own personal growth. Most of them either expressed their wish to move abroad or to remain in Lahore for further growth and personal development. However, one of the interviewees who identified as middle class preferred to maintain his ethnic identity as one of the most important aspects of his personal identity.

The working class interviewees expressed more ambiguities. Two individuals were extremely disavowing of the ethnic politics that was coming from both the elite structures of

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<sup>130</sup> Dames, *The Baloch Race*.



Baloch nationalists and the Pakistani state. They suggested that when Baloch people criticize the state, they should also criticize the Baloch elites who are also accomplice in maintaining the backward narrative around Baloch people and Balochiat. One of them suggested that the Baloch elite also needed to be accountable for the crimes against Baloch people if we are to hold the Pakistani state responsible for these. They suggested they would prefer to have their career outside of Balochistan, but they would want to return to a Balochistan that is not ridden with the elite conflict. They even mentioned that they would prefer to live a backward peaceful life than a more developed but violent one. For that matter, for them Balochistan and their own hometowns in particular were places that were once beautiful and are now destroyed by the elite conflict. They nostalgically dream of a good past that they heard about from their elders and want to return home once that past Balochistan is realized one way or another. This highlights two interesting ideas. Firstly, they imagine a home that once existed as their true homeland, and they accept Lahore to be their temporary homeland, hence are ready to intermingle with its residents. This attitude interestingly combines the idea of domicile (Lahore) and imagined homeland (their own hometown) which is romanticized into an imaginary land that at the moment is not achievable.<sup>131</sup> Secondly, it also highlights the ambivalence in which these individuals live in an imaginary past and their real present.<sup>132</sup>

On the other hand, those interviewees who came from an elite class background suggested that the working class was more fearful and also more nationalist. This also showed a disdain against the working class, where one of them mentioned that they don't educate themselves because they think when their kids get educated they would demand rights and would be abducted by the state. In blocking their children's education they keep the Baluchistan population backward.

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<sup>131</sup> Gruen, "13. Diaspora and Homeland."

<sup>132</sup> Bhabha, *DissemiNation*.

Another suggested that he feels fearful of the working class Baloch and because of them he also feels as an outsider in his own area because they think that his family is conspiring with the state to keep the population of the area in a working class status just because his family has more resources in comparison. For that matter, he mentioned that due to this kind of mindset they have more nationalist tendencies. The elite class interviewees showed desires to settle in Balochistan because they thought they would find more opportunities there than they would in Lahore. Also, they mentioned, unlike how the working class or lower classes feel, they felt rather secure in Balochistan.

On gender, there was again variation and discord. Only four of the interviewees even mentioned women in the whole conflict and suggested that they should follow the culture and maintain themselves as private beings and maintaining themselves only in private households. On the other hand, one of the female interviewees suggested that for her neither Baloch nationalism is liberating nor the Pakistani Islamic state. She feels the same distance from both the identities. Yet she mentioned that she feels more liberated in Lahore and finds more space for herself in the public sphere. On the other hand, she mentioned that her life in Balochistan only moved from one household to another and was fairly restricted. Lastly, she mentioned that we all need to first identify ourselves as humans and respect that and secondly discard ourselves of these petty identities that are only there for oppression and are merely constructed. By contrast, the other female interviewee expressed that the Baloch identity and the Baloch struggle was very important to her. On doing so, she deviated from seeing women only as private beings in a Baloch narrative, mentioning instead that women in different cultural epics have been seen as political beings, so in the culture she found a precedent for women as political beings.

Furthermore, the idea of being a Baloch or how to be a Baloch varied massively between the interviewees. For some of them being a Baloch entailed following the material culture of the Baloch tradition, even with regard to aspects on which there was disagreement. Some of them mentioned that even our material culture has been evolving so there is also room for that to happen. Others defined Baloch tradition as honour and hospitality. However, they mentioned that such ideas are also present among the Pushtuns and Punjabis, hence after coming to Lahore they found it difficult to say what truly makes them Baloch. Another interviewee mentioned that the Baloch really need to rethink what constitutes Baloch identity, because the traditions that they hold so dear are leading towards their oppression. Another interviewee mentioned that Baloch are those who take part in the political and cultural sphere of their respective areas, and hence constructed a division between the Baloch speaking population and being Baloch. He mentioned that those who experience the same problems, regardless of their ethnicity, are Baloch because they are part of that system within Balochistan. Another mentioned the Brahavi population as separate from the Baloch population because they can't speak any of the dialects of the Balochi language, hence he defined a Baloch and membership to Balochiat as linguistic. On the other hand, the Brahavi speakers defined membership of Balochiat as be nationalist, living in Balochistan and being a Namazi Muslim.

From these interviews one can infer not only that the group, which is banded together as singular people, even on such a small scale sample showed extreme variation and also disagreed on the criteria for someone to be classified as Baloch. On that basis, keeping in mind the definitions of how Baloch identity is represented in literature on the basis of geography, language, culture and Baloch secular ideology as homogenous did not hold ground even within a tiny group of twelve

individuals.<sup>133</sup> Even the criteria of identifying as a Baloch varied within the group. One thing that did unite them was the violence inflicted on Baloch students, because they all felt scared of being identified as Baloch. For that matter, the identity of being a Baloch for some of the interviewees was not so desirable, they actively participated in the Lahori public sphere, learned the language and proudly mentioned that they could pass as Punjabis. For others even the missing Baloch students and activists was not a rallying point to a single idea. Some of them criticized the Baloch nationalist groups for making their everyday life miserable not only in Balochistan but also in Lahore. Another group fully supported the nationalists in this regard. Lastly, there was another pattern, where some interviewees completely disavowed ethnic politics and presented themselves as beyond ethnic identity, with one of them mentioning that he would prefer to be detached from ethnic identity altogether, and two others that Baloch identity, or Lahori identity was just part of their greater self, which has more room to absorb new cultures and so. For that matter, for them being a Baloch was not at all important, as it was just part of their greater personal development as themselves. When asked who they are, they simply said we are in the making, and they don't know yet. By contrast, some interviewees took a strong nationalist stance and disavowed both the state and the Lahore altogether.

This leads me to conclude that Brubaker's idea of groupness and groups, where the groups barely exist and groupness is a political event that is constructed, appears to be salient in this group at least.<sup>134</sup> Interestingly, even when confronted with serious political events, like the missing persons and the ongoing armed conflict between the state and the Baloch nationalists, the sample fails to unite even in that groupness. Instead, we notice a multidirectional path that these

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<sup>133</sup> Breseeg, *Baloch Nationalism*; Dames, *The Baloch Race*; Dashti, *The Baloch and Balochistan*; Baloch, *Makaran*.

<sup>134</sup> Brubaker, "Ethnicity without Groups."

individuals take to define who they are and what it means to them to be a Baloch or associated with Balochistan.

#### Backwardness and boundary maintenance

In the twelve in-depth interviews another common theme that appears is boundary maintenance, especially around who is backward and who is developed. Dipesh Chakrabarty<sup>135</sup> comments that certain types of ideas are limited to the western world, owned by them and then later that narrative is used as an Occam's razer to define others as either contemporary or backward. This theory can be extended to the case of the Baloch and the urban centers like Lahore, where the development is measured by the Lahori culture and backwardness as being non-Lahori.

Almost all the interviewees highlighted that from time to time they are held answerable for any violence that is reported in Balochistan. All of them mentioned that from time to time, even close friends asked them as question like 'why is there violence in Baluchistan?' and 'why do they kill Punjabis?'. From these questions I assumed three experiences that the subalterns who migrate from Balochistan to get educated in Lahore are exposed to. Firstly, they are labeled as violent, against the non-violent culture of Lahoris. From this barbarity or backwardness is associated with the Baloch, who have been living, in the case of our sample, in Lahore for between one (minimum and eleven years (maximum)).<sup>136</sup> Secondly, these questions also work as gatekeeping and boundary maintenance between the backward Baloch and developed Lahori. Thirdly, one can also look at how the state plays a role in assimilation policies, and, in doing so, passes down the passive assimilation at the bottom.<sup>137</sup> Lastly, an 'us vs. others' is constructed, where the us is associated with complexity and the other appear with simplicity.

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<sup>135</sup> Chakrabarty, "Provincializing Europe."

<sup>136</sup> Sveinsdóttir, "Categories We Live By"; Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.

<sup>137</sup> Dirks, "The Policing of Tradition"; Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*; Chakrabarty, "Provincializing Europe."

Starting with the role of the state in constructing boundaries, Dirk<sup>138</sup> argues that the state can use a number of ways to construct boundaries and interfere with the local perception of others. The state does not require legislated policies to do that, rather it can use media and time to time harassment to set the narrative. Although Dirk<sup>139</sup> is arguing in the context of colonial India, a similar pattern can be seen in Pakistan and Lahore. As mentioned by the interviewees, the harassment of the interviewees by the local law enforcement on the basis of how they are dressed, or the way they look (long hair and beard and their big trousers, which happens to be their cultural expression) can remind the Baloch students that they are outsiders in Lahore. This generates multiple expressions in the Baloch students themselves. Some of them asserted that they started dressing, speaking and behaving like Lahoris, other suggested that they stopped interacting in the public sphere of Lahore altogether. One of the interviewees mentioned, that he has been living in Lahore for the last 10 years, and yet does not know what Lahore looks like, except for his educational institution. He either stays in the institution and hostel, or goes back to Quetta at every opportunity. On the other hand, one of the interviewees compartmentalized the Baloch identity and Lahori identity and maintained a Lahori identity in Lahore and Baloch identity when back home. In this case of compartmentalization, though one can assume that the interviewee did this for instrumental reasons, the interviewee suggested instead that he had both these identities and he accepted and made salient one identity dependent on the environment. For that matter, the Lahori and Baloch identities become one of the many roles that he played. Not only this, he mentioned that there he will hopefully absorb other identities as well if he travels further, while keeping each identity distinct and separate. However, he did mention that he faces much resistance in both

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<sup>138</sup> Dirks, "The Policing of Tradition."

<sup>139</sup> Dirks.

Lahore and his hometown when absorbing the other identity as part of boundary maintenance.<sup>140</sup> When asked if he feels uprooted from both the places because of this, he showed resistance towards this idea of boundary maintenance suggesting that it is at the end of the day dependent on him and only him to decide what each of these identities mean. For him, his identity becomes part of his agency and it is through his resistance that he expresses himself. This can further be reflected through Goffman's idea of rewriting the cultural scripts, where the agency of the individual is reflected through dissent from the cultural script in play.<sup>141</sup>

Secondly, Dirk<sup>142</sup> suggests that there are other ways through which the state can induce policing from below, constructing a privileged population over another marginalized. This became salient in this case from the perspective of an interviewee when mentioning that the representation of the Baloch population and Balochistan in media is always reduced to violence. As per the data, almost all of the interviewees complained (I am using the word complain here to assert the emotions of the interviewee at the time) that the only interaction that the people of Lahore have with Balochistan is through media. Due to this, the population that they interact with are fear ridden to interact with the Baloch or to visit Balochistan, and because of this they also feel fearful around Lahoris if they don't know them. Due to this mutual fear induced by the state, there is little encounter between the two populations. Many of the interviewee said that they invite and sometimes take their friends to their respective areas, where they want to express how they are more than the barbarians that they are perceived as. Although, they suggest that once they interact with Lahoris and these visit Balochistan or know them, they feel more comfortable, yet the people around them ask them (those who are strangers still) 'the questions' on the violence of Balochistan

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<sup>140</sup> Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*.

<sup>141</sup> Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*.

<sup>142</sup> Dirks, "The Policing of Tradition."

and Baloch as violent people. This leads to multiple outcomes in the outlook of the population of Baloch students. Some of them suggested that they have started taking in more of Lahori culture to pass as Lahoris so that they don't have to face these questions. Others formulated a strong disavowal towards the Lahori culture and Lahori people. One male interviewee suggested that the people of Lahore and their language and culture is dishonorable, vile and disgusting. Another female interviewee suggested that Lahoris are the completely opposite of Baloch and she wants to have nothing to do with them. On the other hand, a third group disavowed the Baloch as too traditional and wanted to construct their own sense of identity as 'Baloch' which would be a mixture of their culture and the new things that they learn from Lahore. In this aspect, to some extent, they accepted the narrative that Baloch are too rigid, traditional and backward, highlighting the oppression on a psychological scale as well, as Fanon mentions it.<sup>143</sup> Fanon suggests that when violence is done in representation of the people, it is not only done by the powerful on the body, but it is also done on the psychology of the oppressed, where they start believing in the narrative that the powerful construct for them.<sup>144</sup> Two of them mentioned that the Baloch riwaj (cultural code) is too rigid and authoritative, and the concept of Ghairat (honor) is only instigated when the powerful in the Baloch society want to assert their authority or impose violence. One of them mentioned that they would not want to live anywhere else but in Lahore. Lastly, one of the interviewees mentioned that they have lived long enough in Lahore and have learned enough of the Lahori culture that they now know there is no difference between Lahoris or Punjabis and the Baloch, hence they like to keep their identity: "Why should I lose my identity when it is no different than that of Punjabis, we have the same idea about life, we almost eat the same food and

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<sup>143</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.

<sup>144</sup> Fanon.



we have mostly the same customs, I don't see a reason to not call myself a Baloch and a Punjabi now, I see no difference between the two.”

Appadurai<sup>145</sup> suggests that states (although he refers mostly to the colonial and authoritative states) for good governance use segregation between the population, while favoring one over the other. He called it the politics of numbers, where a certain population is grouped, given numbers and then segregated from the rest of the population. Such policies do not only reify discrimination but also formulate prejudices in the majority population as well. In case of Pakistan, the prejudice against the Baloch in Lahore as backward and barbarian also comes not only from the representation of the population (as mentioned before) as backward but also due to the scheduling of Balochistan as backward in the legislation.<sup>146</sup> By contrast, Lahore and Lahoris are seen as one of the developed urban centers of Pakistan. This has a lot to do with number politics as well. Since the Baloch population is defined as a backward minority, the resources spent in Balochistan are also limited due to their small numbers (which itself offers a contradiction between backwardness and amount spent per capita) as compared to Lahore, which amounts to half the total number of all of Balochistan's population. Due to the lack of investment and infrastructure, the Baloch population also lacks education, which becomes another aspect of discrimination and boundary maintenance on which the interviewees raised questions. Most of them suggested that they started working on their language skills, especially in Urdu and English for different reasons. One said that she worked on her language skills to come to equal terms with Lahoris so that her 'people' don't have to face the same discrimination. This interviewee had a strong sense of going back home and taking the education with her to help her hometown grow. Five of the interviewees said this gave them the opportunity to be more developed, again accepting the narrative of

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<sup>145</sup> Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers*.

<sup>146</sup> Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*.

backwardness associated with being Baloch and hence they were happy that their language skills were improving. Four of the interviewees suggested that they want to keep their language as it is, showing a strong disavowal to the discrimination they faced. One of them even suggested that they don't have to feel discriminated, because discrimination is only felt if one wants to be part of the group, while he had no desire to be one of the Lahori, therefore he did not really care about what they say or how they say it.

#### Family and boundary maintenance from Balochistan

The pressure of gatekeeping and boundary maintenance is not only limited to Lahoris and the state. The group who was approached to take part in this study has to constantly face gatekeeping from Balochistan too. So even when they are in Lahore, they have to be answerable back home as well. Almost all of the members of the group identified with family. Only 2 of them suggested that they are more independent. Interestingly, both of these interviewees were from small towns from Makaran and Zikris. They also suggested that they faced no pressure from home to maintain a certain identity, especially from the families. Instead they mentioned that their family and their hometown are proud of them for being in Lahore and getting educated. Though, this takes us back to the idea of backwardness and acceptance of backwardness<sup>147</sup>, one of these interviewees shared a story that when his town was raided by the army and they were looking to 'fill' the quota of the sarmachars (a term designating the Baloch freedom fighters) killed (which disturbingly suggested that the army was killing innocent people just to show the number to their superiors) his town was saved just because he was studying in Lahore. This led him to have a special position in the village as Kahuda (the one who is there when others need him) and is looked upon as someone of high moral position. This act of the army's intervention also inculcated the narrative of

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<sup>147</sup> Chakrabarty, "Provincializing Europe"; Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.

backwardness<sup>148</sup> in the people of the village, who now keep reminding the interviewee, through his title, that he is required to move forward from this backwardness, be developed (in a certain narrative of the state) and bring this development back to his village. He suggested, that this expectation, although there is a pressure on him to work hard and not fail, also gives him a lot of freedom to learn new things in Lahore.

On the other hand, interestingly, those coming from urban centers in Balochistan identified strongly with their family and hence their hometowns. What is also interesting is that those who mentioned that they want to go back to their home cities at some point also used phrases like ‘have to’ and ‘even if I do not want to’ when referring to their eventual return to their hometown. Besides the two mentioned above, almost all of them said that their family keeps asking them to maintain a distance from Lahoris and Lahori culture and on many occasions, though in humour, they are reminded by the family that they are not from Lahore and they have to follow their traditions. Most of the interviewees suggested that they are reminded and even threatened sometimes and they have to be very vigilant of their family members in order to express their real self. But interestingly, Lahori culture is villainized by their families and in doing so, the interviewees are generally stuck between these counter narratives of being ‘traditional’ and ‘developed’. For this reason, most of the interviewee suggested that they have to be very conscious in their choices. One of them suggested that “we need to be very careful in our actions to be not too Pakistani or not too Baloch”. Another suggested “Like Pakistan is the guardian of Islam, Baloch are the guardians of Ghairat (Honour)” and on inquiring on what he means by that, he said that the Baloch cannot accept change and they make it a gesture of dishonor if someone is exhibiting change.

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<sup>148</sup> Dirks, “The Policing of Tradition”; Chakrabarty, “Provincializing Europe”; Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.

For that matter the boundary maintenance from both the people in Lahore and the families back home portray a salient expression of what Bhabha calls the ambivalence of the pedagogical and performative self.<sup>149</sup> The interviewees and hence the students in Lahore are stuck between the dichotomy of backwardness and a constant strain of being uprooted from their traditions and their roots. One of the interviewees commented explicitly and others hinted that they have to be very careful as to not to be too ‘Pakistani’ or not to be too ‘Baloch’ and maintain balance so that they should be accepted as both. This brings us down to the third theme of this discussion, namely uprootedness.<sup>150</sup>

#### Uprootedness

“So if I do something that seems more Pakistani, then the people of my town would treat me as an outsider and be unwelcoming and if I do something that seems too Baloch here, I would be treated as an outsider.”

To begin with this quote from one of the interviewees, the statement itself clearly shows the slippery slope these individuals have to walk on. For one, they have to be conscious of most of their actions. This in itself leads to their life both in Lahore and in their home town becoming ‘hot’<sup>151</sup> and nothing remains banal. Unlike Billig’s idea of hot and banal nationalism<sup>152</sup>, these individuals have to live a life of ‘hot’ self, where simple flag waving can cause much trouble for them. There are two things one can draw from this, firstly, the idea of double consciousness that Du Bois<sup>153</sup> expresses for the black diaspora in the Atlantic can be applied here as well and secondly, the feeling of uprootedness as Nandy<sup>154</sup> illustrates.

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<sup>149</sup> Bhabha, *DissemiNation*.

<sup>150</sup> Nandy, “South Asian Politics.”

<sup>151</sup> Billig, *Banal Nationalism*.

<sup>152</sup> Billig.

<sup>153</sup> Du Bois and Provenzo, *Illustrated Souls of Black Folk*.

<sup>154</sup> Nandy, “South Asian Politics.”

With regard to DuBois's double consciousness, a similar pattern is seen here as well, but unlike the ethnic expression, here the individuals struggle with first accepting their own separation from their homes, secondly accepting their own sense of self in cross cutting and lastly fighting against the prejudice existing in both Lahore and in their hometown against them. Hence, they have to be always aware to be not too Pakistani and not too Baloch.

In spite of this double consciousness, many interviewees develop their own sense of narratives around themselves. Two of the interviewees suggested that to be a real Baloch is to be a nomad and accept different places as one's own homeland. They further suggested that Baloch people have never been historically rooted anywhere and they have always been on the move, and so are they. For that matter, Baloch have changed, learned new things along the way and so they place themselves in this category of nomads. They don't have to prove to anyone that they are developed or backward, their own attitude will show how and who they are. One of them commented that if we take the settled areas of the Baloch in history, then Balochistan would stretch from Aleppo to Delhi. In this, it appears to be the case that they have constructed their own sense of self and their own version of Baloch to escape the dilemma of being uprooted from the popular narrative of the Baloch nationals and their hometown. But this also entails the idea that they are aware of being uprooted.

On the other hand, another group of interviewees suggested that they are rooted in both places, their hometowns and Lahore. For them the idea divides into present life and family. Which again shows the ambivalence that Bhabha highlights<sup>155</sup>, where the present life becomes Lahore and their pedagogical life becomes their family. Although they mentioned that their families still remind them of their traditions and culture, but interestingly they limited these traditions and

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<sup>155</sup> Bhabha, *DissemiNation*.

cultures only to the material culture around them. They said to be rooted is to be rooted in their family. If they are accepted by their family as kin, they feel rooted somewhere. For them the representation of being a Baloch comes from occasionally attending the Baloch events, wearing Baloch cloths and speaking the language and maintaining the language. They say they find it very difficult to maintain the same language as in their hometown, on which they face criticism back home, as often they speak creole of Punjabi, Balochi and Urdu. On this, they said that they felt different in their hometown because of the audible difference in their linguistic habits. Hence, they said they feel rooted in the family and where their family resides that is their homeland. They also mentioned they feel settled and rooted in Lahore, as they find the life in Lahore not only liberating but very acceptable and comfortable. They also mentioned that on the question of norms and values, they have no problem with learning new ideas, discarding those that are not required and accepting others that makes more sense to their rational self. However, they did mention they have to be aware when in Lahore and when in Balochistan as to which material culture to follow, as they can be discriminated and in extreme cases violently dealt with. From this, one thing that can be inferred is again the double consciousness of their self, their ideas and their struggle for acceptability in their two societies.

Another group of interviewees felt either completely uprooted or were struggling to keep their identity. Here the narrative of double consciousness becomes more salient. Two of them suggested that they don't know where they belong. At one end, they don't feel at home because of security, nor do their family like them to be in their hometown because of recent abductions. They mentioned they did feel at home in Lahore and comfortable there, but the recent forced disappearances of the Baloch students in Lahore have shook them a bit and they don't feel homely or rooted here as well. But interestingly, the reaction to this sense of uprootedness differed in both

the interviewees. One of them said that they felt relieved that they are not rooted anymore, now they can construct their own space whenever and for however long and then move on. In other words, he suggested that this sense of uprootedness has given him more freedom and agency to express himself. On the other hand, the other interviewee mentioned that they feel completely out of place, but they want to be rooted in both the spaces as they feel both the places to be their home. Another interviewee expressed a similar sense of uprootedness. He suggested that he feels neither rooted in his family nor his hometown, and he dislikes Lahore. This dislike didn't come from Lahore being a Punjabi city, but this dislike in general of all big cities. He suggested that when he is at home he is discriminated against for two reasons, one because he studies in Lahore and some of his relatives are part of the Pakistani state apparatus and secondly because his family is comparatively well off in the town. He says that people treat him with disgust in his hometown saying that their family is of the traitors against the nationalist cause, hence they are doing so well. He went to the extreme of saying that he has started learning Punjabi so that maybe he may qualify as a Punjabi so that somewhere he feels rooted.

Lastly, in two of the interviewees there was a denial present of feeling uprooted from their culture, although it appeared that they felt very saliently uprooted in their answers. One of the interviewees felt disgusted by the population in Lahore. She suggested that they not only have lost their roots but also their language and culture. She mentioned that she has no interest in interacting with Lahoris, hence she normally has friends mostly from either Balochistan or rural Punjab because they still own their culture. For that matter, her identity as Baloch was very important to her, which she mostly associated with language and material culture. But the real anxiety of feeling uprooted emerged when her sense of fashion and her choices as a person were confused with becoming more Lahori by her friends or her family. She also mentioned that she feels very

uncomfortable when she is treated as a guest back home, always arriving to leave and not stay. Most of her choices were built around this axis of holding on to her identity as a Baloch, in a city like Lahore, where people blend into this Lahori culture. On the other hand, the other interviewee constructed a cocoon around himself in Lahore, where he completely disassociated from Lahori culture and people of Lahore. He maintained a negative image of Lahore in his mind and repeatedly mentioned that they are everything a Baloch is not supposed to be and hence he wants to maintain his identity as a Baloch. Therefore, he completely cut himself off the Lahori cultural life. In doing so, he also expressed the anxiety of being uprooted if he starts interacting with his peers from Lahore or in Lahori culture. For that matter, he mentioned it explicitly: “I don’t want to be part of this culture and I want nothing to do with it. “

## Conclusion

There are three things to be noted in this study, as discussed in the finding and discussion section as well, that firstly the Baloch student population that is represented as belonging to a homogenous ethnic group and also as nationalists in the literature produced on Baloch appears to be very multidirectional in their outlook of life, their identity and their sense of self. In so doing, there are multiple paths taken by these students to express themselves, some have become more fervent nationalists and have moved to Baloch nationalist narratives, some have moved away from the Baloch narrative and some have completely disavowed both the ethnic narratives and want to pursue their own path. Also, the group was internally different with regard to where they are coming from, what language they speak, which gender they belong too, their social class and lastly their religion. Though it is understandable that the literature produced on the Baloch population is either coming from the Pakistani state or the Baloch sympathizers, who both represent the population as homogenous, this research suggests that populations like the Baloch students in



Lahore (perceived enemy territory) represent themselves on a larger scale as multidirectional in their assimilation and heterogeneous. Also, in this paper I suggest that there is a serious need to perceive Baloch more than just a dissenting ‘group’ against the Pakistani narrative and should be looked at as individuals with different socializations, coming from different social spheres.

This study also shows how the Baloch students even with multiple conferral properties<sup>156</sup> imposed on them maintain some sense of agency to take different directions in their construction of self. These conferrals can come in the form of state representation of Baloch as backward, policing around them and their traditions, legislating them as backward and maintaining a distance between the Baloch population and the rest of Pakistan. These “backward” properties can also be attributed by their families, people in their hometown and the Baloch nationalist apparatus. Even so, in this paper, I have noticed that these students express their agency by taking different routes not only to cope, but also construct their own sense of self. Some may have become more nationalist, others may disavow both and maintain an apolitical stance, while some took the idea of being either Baloch or Pakistani as part of their life’s journey. Yet, there is also a constant element of fear within the student group of threats emerging from both sides, giving them little room to express this agency.

This study also looks at how these individuals feel uprooted and the concept of home becomes ambivalent and precarious to them. What is interesting is that some of them look at this uprootedness<sup>157</sup> as liberating, while some completely escape the problem through their remembrance and forgetting of history. Lastly, there are those who try to hold on to their identity and roots. In any case, the idea of remembering a certain past and the ambivalence created by the

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<sup>156</sup> Sveinsdóttir, “Categories We Live By.”

<sup>157</sup> Nandy, “South Asian Politics.”

present<sup>158</sup> plays an important role in developing their sense of place for them to feel rooted. For that matter, due to my lack of expertise in social psychology, I failed to fully explore the attitude constructed and the psychological implications that may lead to different choices made by these individual.

The biggest limitation of the study is the small size of the sample, due to which claiming generalizations on a large scale is difficult. However, one useful and important result that I would claim for in this study is that it argues for looking into such groups and populations from another perspective, as subalterns and individuals, through which one may be able to discover a new paradigm about the population, which might be different from already existing knowledge. Hence, I would argue that a larger study might be helpful to really understand the dynamics of such students or populations stuck in such precarious situations from a social psychological perspective<sup>7</sup>.

One reason for the small size of the sample was the limited time that I had to conduct and conclude this study, although this study can be expended into a larger study, with more given time and resources. With the given time, it was very difficult to develop trust with a larger group to overcome the fear of security.

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<sup>158</sup> Bhabha, *DissemiNation*.

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