Higher Education, Neoliberalism, and Conflict: A Case of the University of Balochistan in Pakistan

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In loving memory of my mother and the continued support of my father

Traditional teaching of peace studies has been that of peaceful men – Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ, St. Francis of Assisi, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King Jr. being some of the prime examples – often with a heavy emphasis on their beliefs and attitudes rather than their action and behavior. This approach tends to focus on actors rather than structures, and is unacceptable from the point of view of peace studies, which would argue for including both.

—Johan Galtung

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEPAM	Academy of Educational Planning and Management
AL	Awami League
ASA	Academic Staff Officer
BPSC	Balochistan Public Service Commission
BUET	Balochistan University of Engineering and Technology
BUITEMS	Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences
BUMHS	Bolan University of Medical and Health Sciences
CPEC	China Pakistan Economic Corridor
CSS	Central Superior Services
DSP	Deputy Superintendent Police
EFA	Education for All
EiE	Education in Emergencies
FPSC	Federal Public Service Commission
FTDC	Faculty Training and Development Center
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
KBE	Knowledge-Based Economy
LUAWMS	Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water & Marine Sciences

MCKRU	Mir Chakar Khan Rind University
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NACTA	National Counter Terrorism Authority
NAP	National Awami Party
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NCEPG	National Counter Extremism Policy Guidelines
NISP	National Internal Security Policy
ORIC	Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization
QAD	Quality Assurance Department
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis
PCS	Provincial Civil Services
PHEC	Punjab Higher Education Commission
PMLN	Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PPSA	Pakistan Progressive Students' Alliance
SBKWU	Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TTP	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan
UOB	University of Balochistan
UOL	University of Loralai
UOT	University of Turbat
VC	Vice Chancellor

ABSTRACT

The current study focuses on the role of peacebuilding in the higher education sector of Pakistan's conflict-affected region of Balochistan. The research is an extended case study of the University of Balochistan. It addresses how the institution's peacebuilding agency has evolved in the face of ethnic conflict and the neoliberal reforms pursued by the state during the past two decades. The research is based on the study of policy documents, official reports, and individual and focus group interviews with various educational actors.

The peacebuilding agency of the institution is theorized according to the 4Rs (Novelli et al., 2019; Novelli et al., 2017). The analytical frame of the 4Rs attempts to address the structural causes of conflict and theorize the role of education in relation to its role contributing to those causes. The analytical lens incorporates conflict's cultural, political, economic, and social dimensions and proposes a holistic strategy for building sustainable peace. The research takes a normative stance of social transformation, rooted in the philosophy of Fraser (2005, 2020), by not merely focusing on 'fixing' the social outcomes through some affirmative action but also transforming the structural causes that give rise to social inequalities in the first place. Thus, the university's peacebuilding agency is measured through its ability to promote representation, redistribution, recognition, and reconciliation within its institution and the larger society.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In August 2006, Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti–a Baloch tribal chief, former minister, and

ex-governor of Balochistan province, was killed in a military operation near his hometown of

Dera Bugti. The military government accused the tribal chief of being an anti-state agent,

obstructing the region's development, sabotaging the development projects, and destroying

government installations. Among the Baloch ethnic group, the killing of Bugti was seen as a

continuity of the state's repressive policy towards ethnic minority groups. The ethno-nationalist

leaders accused the Pakistani state of its exploitative economic policies in Balochistan. They also

accused the state of attempting to change the demographics of the region through mega-

development projects like the Gwadar deep seaport. The killing of Bugti ended the fragile peace

in the region, marking the beginning of the fourth round of ethnic insurgency in the province of

Balochistan[1].

By the time I joined the University of Balochistan (UOB) as a junior faculty member in

2008, the province was already engulfed in a violent conflict. The armed conflict between the

Pakistani state and the Baloch insurgents had transformed the campus into a battleground of

political and ideological contestations. The hegemonic narrative of the state as a monolithic

nation founded on religion, with the army as a guardian of both geographical and ideological

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[1] The conflict first erupted soon after the forceful annexation of the province to Pakistan in 1948. Between
1958 and 1959, the Baloch insurgent groups were once again engaged in a war with Pakistan for a
separate homeland. In 1973, the conflict resurfaced after the first elected government of the province was
dissolved and a governor rule was imposed. To fight the insurgent groups, a major military operation was
launched in Balochistan, which lasted until 1977.

frontiers, was challenged by the counter-narrative of Pakistan as a multi-nation state with groups vested with the right of self-determination. The campus was at the center of political activities, as it provided a public space in which to challenge the dominant ideology of the state and allowed for the expression and assertion of long-suppressed ethnic identities in the province. Teachers and student organizations associated with the ethnonational political parties in Balochistan were at the forefront of providing the separatist movement with ideological and political support.

The university campus was not the only place implicated in social conflict. What I experienced as a young lecturer was that classrooms were also transformed into potential sites of conflict during the insurgency. The federally mandated curriculum rooted in the state's ideological project of religious nationalism also brought conflict inside the classrooms. It was a highly charged atmosphere in which teaching had to take place. I, like my colleagues, found myself in a situation I could not deal with. Teachers, being government employees, were supposed to tout the official version of "truth," which saw the crisis through the lens of "foreign conspiracy." The whole issue of political and armed resistance against the state was framed as one of "misguided Baloch youth playing into the hands of the enemy." The state response was founded on the denial of socio-economic and political causes of the conflict; instead, it declared those calling for a more significant share of rights to suppressed ethnic minorities as enemies of the state. As a result, there was no need to recognize the conflict as a social issue that could be solved peacefully.

The conflict also brought schism and division among the teaching community. Faculty members were divided into various ideological camps, which mostly overlapped with their ethnic identity. On the one hand, Punjabis, who constitute a majority in Pakistan but a minority

in Balochistan province, became targets of the ire of the insurgent movement in Balochistan. Because ethnic Punjabis are seen as the biggest beneficiaries of the majoritarian state, the strongest adherents of state religious nationalism, and the controllers of the powerful army, the faculty members from the Punjabi ethnic group became a "legitimate" target of the Baloch separatist groups. On the other hand, the repressive state policies resulted in targeted killings, torture, and forced disappearance of Baloch teachers, students, and political and rights activists, an issue that remains unresolved to this day.

As the conflict escalated, the university became a highly securitized zone. All political activities were banned, and student organizations were uprooted. The campus became a closed space, wholly detached from the local community. Security forces strictly regulated the entry points, metal gates were installed, and surveillance of teachers and students became the norm, as dozens of security cameras were installed throughout the campus. A large number of paramilitary troops were also stationed inside the campus.

During the same period, the state initiated large-scale neoliberal reform in the higher education sector. The government aggressively pushed toward instituting a knowledge-based economy in a highly ideological fashion[2]. The Boston Group–a group of scholars of Pakistani origin based in the U.S.–was asked to frame higher education reforms in the country. A new organizational setup of the Higher Education Commission (HEC henceforth) was erected over

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[2] The knowledge-based economy is often referenced to the economic model based on the production of high value goods and services, which include knowledge as the factor of production. In Pakistani context, the idea inspired a wide range of higher education reforms to increase economic growth and modernize the production process using advanced scientific and technological methods.

the ruins of the erstwhile University Grants Commission[3]. A large sum of money was pumped into the system to resuscitate the ailing public-sector universities and unleash the entrepreneurial skills of the Pakistani youth. Universities were dubbed as the engines of economic growth. All these efforts were carried out in a bid to transform the national economy, mainly based on agricultural production, into a knowledge-driven economy.

My interest in exploring the role of education in conflict situations in Balochistan stems from personal experiences and my later contact with educational literature known as "education in emergencies" during my Ph.D. coursework in the United States. The literature allowed me to reflect upon my experiences at the university and make sense of what I encountered as a faculty member. The field provided a new perspective to critically evaluate the negative and positive role played by the education system. The political economy approach to understanding the role of education in exacerbating conflict or promoting peace is not merely a descriptive tool but is embedded in the social justice agenda of social transformation. It provides a framework to establish a socially just and equitable society, with education playing a pivotal role in the process. As an educator in a community marred by ethnic, religious, and sectarian conflict, the field of education in a conflict-affected context provides crucial insights to understand and act toward positive social change and promote sustainable and just peace.

Study Rationale

The research aims to expand our understanding of the higher education institution's role in peacebuilding, which is *theoretically informed* and *historically grounded*. It is an important issue to consider, as the field of education in emergencies (EiE) is highly varied in terms of the

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[3] The University Grants Commission was a federal government body which existed from 1974 to 2002 and was entrusted to look after the disbursement of funds to the public-sector universities.

use of theory, methods, and geographical and institutional focus. It borrows insights from various academic disciplines, bringing epistemological and ontological diversity and a multiplicity of theoretical and methodological approaches. The field mainly lies at the intersection of Peace and Conflict Studies, Development Studies, and Comparative and International Education (CIE). This multi-disciplinarity brings richness and gives the field its academic rigor.

Most of the studies in EiE can be organized according to five major thematic areas, i.e.: (a) the effects of violent conflict on education systems (Buchert, 2013; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2010; UNESCO, 2011), (b) the role of schools in promoting fragility and conflict (Barakat et al., 2008; Brown, 2011; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Gross & Davies, 2015; Miller-Grandvaux, 2009), (c) rebuilding and reconstruction of schools in the post-conflict period (Milton & Barakat, 2016; Pigozzi, 1999; Smith, 2005; Winthrop, 2009), (d) the tools of education intervention by international organizations in conflict settings, also known as conflict sensitive education (INEE, 2010, 2013; Paulson, 2009), and (e) how to use education to build peaceful societies (Barakat et al., 2008; Barakat et al., 2013; Davies, 2010, 2011; Lopes Cardozo & May, 2009; Magill et al., 2009; Smith, 2005, 2011; USAID, 2006). Most of the studies have tended to be focused on the schools (primary, secondary, and intermediate levels). Little attention has been paid in the literature to higher education institutions in the context of conflicts and emergencies.

An understanding of the causes of the conflict has also varied in the literature due to differences in ontological and theoretical positions (Berdal & Malone, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). The theories focusing on "greed'" as the cause of social conflict take a more individualistic view of society, whereby the conflict results from rational actors maximizing their

economic interests, mainly when large (natural) resources are at stake. This understanding of social conflict also shapes peacebuilding strategies and the role of education in it. However, studies grounded in this approach fail to consider the social and historical factors that enabled the conflict to arise in the first place. These studies carry a blind spot and ignore the social structures responsible for historical injustices leading to inequalities based on race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender, region, caste, sect, etc. Thus, the current study grounds itself in the political economy understanding of the causes of conflicts and situates education as part of more extensive social formation.

Similarly, literature also highlights the diversity in the meaning of peace and the multiplicity of approaches toward peacebuilding. Many peacebuilding practices are grounded in the liberal peace theory, which focuses on the cessation of hostilities as the priority, followed by opening markets, conducting general elections, and instituting liberal democratic institutions. However, there is a growing realization in the literature about the limitations of this approach. Many scholars have critiqued an implicit assumption about peace as an absence of violence (Galtung, 2008, 2011; Galtung & Fischer, 2013a; Lederach, 1996; Lederach & Appleby, 2010). Theoretical advances show various forms of violence (direct and indirect)[4] and Peace (negative and positive) (Galtung & Fischer, 2013b; Galtung & Höivik, 1971). The current study takes a normative position that without addressing the structural causes of the conflict, positive peace will remain an elusive dream.

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[4] The direct form of violence implies the physical and psychological violence perpetrated by the individual actors, while the indirect form of violence results from discriminatory social structures like patriarchy, slavery, racism, class exploitation, etc.

Geographically, the literature has focused on diverse contexts, including sub-Sahara, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Balkan regions. Cross-country and country-level studies focus on Pakistan, investigating the aspects of the education system that result in adverse social outcomes. Most of these studies tend to focus on two areas: Madrassahs (religious seminaries) and school textbooks (Lall, 2008; Looney, 2003; Naseem, 2005; Naseem et al., 2016; A. Nayyar & A. Salim, 2010; Nayyar, 2010; Saigol, 2005, 2014). Despite the manyfold increase in the number of universities established during the last two decades, the country's higher education sector is largely unexplored. The lack of focus on higher education institutions is more conspicuous in the case of Pakistan's troubled region of Balochistan, where universities have been the target of suicide bombings and teachers and students are the victims of target killings and forced disappearances. Thus, addressing the gap in the literature, the rationale of the study is to understand the role universities play, either implicitly or explicitly, in promoting or mitigating conflicts.

Research Objectives and Questions

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the implications of higher education reforms and national security challenges on the peacebuilding agency of the University of Balochistan. With this said, the researcher seeks to achieve three main objectives. First is to explore the nature of higher education reforms and their ideological underpinnings. It is important to note that the ethnic dimension of the conflict has remained a primary focus in the literature on education in emergencies, while the role of neoliberal economic policies remains largely unproblematized. Thus, the study's first objective is to bring into conversation the

economic reforms inspired by neoliberal ideology and investigate its role in peacebuilding processes.

The second objective is to highlight the expanding role of the state's security apparatus in education agenda setting, policymaking, and its provision. The study's final objective is to bring together the first two objectives (i.e., the higher education reforms and the increasing role of the state's security agencies in the educational landscape) and to explore how these two factors reflect on the capacity of the higher education institution to promote peace and mitigate social conflict.

The main research question of the study is:

"How has the university's peacebuilding capacity evolved in response to the higher education policies and the local security challenges in the conflict-affected context of Balochistan?"

Conceptual and Methodological Starting Points

To understand the nature of conflict and the structural causes underpinning it, the researcher uses insights from the pioneering work of Galtung (Galtung, 1976, 2008; Galtung & Fischer, 2013b). The theoretical lens traces the causes of conflict not to the individual but locates them in unequal social structures. This approach provides a conceptual distinction between direct violence, cultural violence, and structural violence. It also differentiates between negative peace and positive peace; the former implies the absence of direct forms of violence, while the latter emphasizes addressing the root causes of the conflict.

To theorize the peacebuilding agency of the institution, the study uses the framework of the 4Rs (Novelli et al., 2017, 2019). The 4Rs (redistribution, representation, recognition, and

reconciliation) is a comprehensive framework focusing on the conflict's economic, political, and cultural causes and understanding education regarding its role in ameliorating or exacerbating these structural causes of the conflict. *Redistribution* focuses on education's economic aspect by exploring the issues of inequalities in education input, output, and outcomes for the individual and society. *Representation* explores the issues of participation of the stakeholders in education policymaking and governance. *Recognition* deals with the issues of diversity and acceptance of the differences in education institutions, teaching methodologies, curricula, and textbooks. Finally, *reconciliation* focuses on the issues of dealing with past injustices and the strategies to move forward toward building a cohesive society.

The researcher also employs various methodological tools to extract the data, which is typical in case studies. The study uses narrative interviews, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions to collect data. In total, 25 participants took part in the study. In addition to primary data, the researcher also uses policy documents. These documents pertain to two different areas, namely, security policy and higher education policy. The former documents include the National Internal Security Policy 2014, National Counter Extremism Policy 2018, and National Security Policy 2022, while the latter include the Task-Force Report (2001) on higher education reforms and the Annual Reports of the Higher Education Commission from the period between 2002 and 2020.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY, CONFLICT, AND EDUCATION

In contemporary times, Balochistan finds itself in the midst of a complex security nexus that involves not only Great Powers ([the] United States and China) but also regional powers (Iran and India), non-state actors including jihadist organizations (Taliban, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Jundullah), Baloch nationalist parties (Baloch Liberation Army, Baloch Republican Army, Baloch Liberation Front), as well as global multinational corporations (Tethyan Copper Company). (Siddiqi, 2012b, p. 158)

Balochistan [is] a boiling cauldron of ethnic, sectarian, secessionist and militant violence, threatening to boil over at any time. (Hussain, 2012, p. 2)

Introduction

Pakistan emerged on the map of the world in August 1947. With a current population of more than 207 million people (GOP, 2017), it ranks as the fifth most populous country globally (Bank, 2021). The country is in South Asia and shares its border with India in the East, China in the North, Afghanistan in the West, and Iran in the South-West. It also has a coastal region in the south, which provides the country with access to the Indian Ocean via the Arabian Sea. According to the constitution of 1973, Pakistan is the Islamic Republic with a federal form of governing structure. The federation comprises four provinces, i.e., Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Sindh, and Balochistan, while the provincial status of the Gilgit-Baltistan region is yet to be ascertained by the constitution (see Figure 1). The political system is based on a parliamentary form of government, with the Prime Minister as the head of the government and the President as a ceremonial head of the state.

Figure 1. Map of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. (Source: Geology.com)

The Pakistani society is ethnically and linguistically diverse. Before 1971, Bengalis accounted for roughly 54% of the total population, making it the single largest ethnic group in Pakistan. However, after the breakup of the country in 1971, Punjabi became the single largest ethnic group in the country, constituting half of the country's population. They are followed by Pashtuns, Sindhi, Saraiki, Muhajir (Urdu-speaking migrants from India), and Baloch, respectively. Muslims comprise 97 percent of the population, followed by Hindus (1.73 percent) and Christians (1.27). The Muslim population is divided along sectarian lines, with the Sunni sect forming the majority. Although no official statistics are available, the Shia population ranges from 10 to 15 percent (Center, 2009).

Of the four federating units, Balochistan is the largest in terms of territory but the smallest in terms of population. The province makes up around half of Pakistan's area but constitutes only six percent of the total population. Economically, it is the country's least developed (Pasha, 2021; Siddiqi, 2012a). Balochistan is home to various ethnic and linguistic groups; the most prominent are Baloch and Pashtuns. Baloch is further divided linguistically into the Balochi-speaking and Brahvi-speaking populations. A small minority of ethnic Hazaras is also settled in the provincial capital of Quetta. In addition, people from other regions of the country have also migrated to Balochistan since the colonial period, primarily due to their jobs in various departments in the colonial administration. The largest of these groups are Punjabis and Urdu-speaking migrant communities from India.

Politics and History

In August 1947, British colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent ended with the creation of two independent states: India and Pakistan. As the British departed after two centuries of colonial rule, they left their former colony amid communal riots, arson, rape, and killings of unimaginable scale. The end of British rule marked the most significant human migration in recorded history. Millions of Muslims and Hindus left their homes and crossed the hitherto unspecified international borders searching for safety. The newly created state of Pakistan was carved out of provinces and princely states where Muslims constituted majorities. The territories which became part of Pakistan included the partitioned provinces of Bengal and Punjab, the provinces of Sindh and North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), and the region of Balochistan (four princely states, tribal region, and British Balochistan). The provinces of Punjab, NWFP, Sindh, and Balochistan were geographically contiguous. They made up the western wing of the

country, while the province of East Bengal was separated from the other regions by 1000 miles of Indian territory.

Since its inception, the country has faced multiple internal and external challenges, ranging from resettling refugees, bringing a semblance of order, establishing state machinery, and framing a new constitution. After just one year of existence, India and Pakistan went to war over the territory of Kashmir. This also led to the Indian refusal to transfer Pakistan's share of financial resources, which was decided at the time of partition, thus further jeopardizing the viability of a financially stable country. In the same year, the country also lost its founding leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who dominated the political struggle without leaving behind a well-formed party structure of the Muslim League and its grassroots organizations.

Unlike the Indian National Congress, whose various cadres had practical experience participating in anti-colonial politics and struggles, the Muslim League remained elitist. Its struggle mostly revolved around the demand for constitutional guarantees for Indian Muslims (Jalal, 2009; Tudor, 2013). Thus, without a cadre of elected officeholders and local organizations, the party started to divide into various factions and interest groups soon after achieving its goal of an independent state for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

Other challenges included a deadlock over the nature of the new constitution, issues of representation among various ethnic groups, and the distribution of political power between the central and provincial governments (Khan, 2012; Waseem, 2022; Ziring, 2019). In 1949, the legislative assembly passed the Objectives Resolution, which vaguely declared that the new constitution shall be based on the principles of Islam, all laws should be made in accordance with

the injunctions of the Quran and Sunnah, and the elected representatives shall exercise the authority of the state.

The issue of representation was very contentious due to the country's demographics. The eastern part of the country, i.e., East Bengal, was more populous than the rest of the four provinces combined. A democratic dispensation would have allowed East Bengal to form a national government without needing any support from the rest of the country. This shift of political power to the eastern part of the country was bitterly resisted by the two most influential groups in the western wing, namely the Punjabi-dominated Army and the civil bureaucracy, which was controlled mainly by the Urdu-speaking Muhajir community (Rizvi, 2000; Ziring, 2019).

To preempt the transfer of power, the four western regions were merged to form a single province of West Pakistan, and East Bengal was declared East Pakistan. This One-Unit scheme, as it was known, was bitterly opposed by both the Bengalis and ethnic minorities within the Western wing of Pakistan, namely the Pashtun and Baloch. The federal government's representation issue was resolved by reducing the Bengali majority and replacing it with the principle of parity between the two wings. This forced settlement allowed the new constitution to be framed in 1956. Regarding the issue of the distribution of power between federal and provincial governments, the constitution provided for a strong central government with relatively few subjects delegated to the provinces. The tension between East and West Pakistan grew bitter over the next decade as the latter's economic exploitation and political domination over the former continued during the twelve years of military rule from 1958 to 1971.

In 1970, the One-Unit scheme was abandoned, and the country held its first general election after twenty-three years of existence. As expected, the Bengali nationalist party Awami League (AL) won all the seats except two in East Pakistan and emerged as the single largest party. The leader of AL Shaikh Mujib asked the military ruler General Yahya Khan to call the national assembly session, which the latter refused. To address the growing unrest in East Pakistan, the Army decided to launch a military operation and expose what they saw as an Indian conspiracy to dismember Pakistan. The operation left hundreds of thousands of Bengalis killed by Pakistan's security forces, with reports of widespread rape of Bengali women (Bose, 2005; Fair, 2014; Saikia, 2012). At the end of 1971, Indian troops entered East Pakistan, resulting in the surrender of the Pakistan army and the creation of a new state: Bangladesh. It remains an interesting anomaly in political history that a majority ethnic group got independence from a minority group.

In late December 1971, after a humiliating defeat by its archrival India, the military decided to hand over power to the civilian government. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) emerged as the second-largest party after the 1970 general elections, and subsequently, its leader Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto became Pakistan's first popularly elected Prime Minister. The Bhutto government succeeded in reaching a consensus with opposition parties over the new constitution's provisions. The legislative assembly passed the new constitution of 1973, declaring Pakistan an Islamic republic. The making of the constitution was a significant fiat as it remains promulgated in the country, despite being suspended several times by military rulers. Bhutto's populist stint in government ended in another coup in 1977. General Zia's eleven-year rule is considered the darkest period of Pakistan's history (Haqqani, 2005; Saigol, 2010). Zia got

the former premier hanged after a dubious court verdict. In a bid to get a semblance of legitimacy, the General strategically decided upon "Islamizing" the state and society of Pakistan. He banned all political activities, parties, and student unions and brutally crushed political dissent. Inside university campuses, only religious groups were allowed to operate. Zia cropped up a new breed of politicians and got them elected through his sham non-party elections.

Zia introduced "Islamic" punishments and established a Federal Shariat Court to ensure that judgments were dispensed according to Islamic law. One of the most long-lasting legacies of the General Zia regime is his militarization of religion through blasphemy laws. In many ways, Zia's dictatorial rule reconstituted the Pakistani state and society, co-opted religious parties and urban conservatives, militarized religion, and became instrumental in promoting religious and sectarian hatred across the length and breadth of society—the issues which we are still grappling with (Burki et al., 1991; Kennedy, 1990; Mehdi, 2013; Saigol, 2010).

After the death of Zia in a plane crash in 1988, along with the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan—a mystery that is yet to be solved—the country went on the path of political instability. The decade of the 1990s is characterized by the power struggle between Bhutto's PPP on the one hand and the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN) on the other hand, which Zia's loyalists packed. The leader of PPP, Benazir Bhutto (the daughter of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto), and the PML leader, Mian Nawaz Sharif, twice assumed the office of Prime Minister, albeit for short periods during this politically turbulent decade, which ended in another military coup in 1999.

After suspending the constitution, General Musharraf assumed the self-proclaimed office of Chief Executive. Like his predecessor General Zia, General Musharraf banned all political activities in the country and incarcerated political opponents, including the former premier

Nawaz Sharif. There is also another parallel between the two dictators. During the tenure of both military rules, the country gained considerable global importance due to the changing international political order. During the Zia period, Pakistan became a key player in Cold War politics after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Pakistan became a close ally of the United States in the latter's quest to give the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) a bloody nose in Afghanistan. The country served to host, recruit, train, and indoctrinate jihadi groups from around the world to launch the so-called "jihad" against the Soviet "infidels" in Afghanistan (Haqqani, 2005; Weaver, 2010). The whole jihadi industry was created and funded by the U.S. government; however, after the USSR withdrew from Afghanistan, the United States lost its imperial interest in the region and left the jihadi groups to their own devices.

During General Musharraf's stint in power, Pakistan once again gained international prominence after offering itself as a frontline state in the U.S.-led so-called "war on terror" in the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11, 2001. However, this time, the United States wanted to undo what they had previously helped establish: to dismantle terror sanctuaries in Afghanistan.

However, contrary to General Zia, who instrumentalized religion to gain legitimacy, General Musharraf concocted his brand of "enlightened moderation" to steer the country out of political, moral, and economic crises (Haqqani, 2005; Nasr, 2004). He promoted a degree of liberal values, allowed private news channels to operate, increased women's representation in elected bodies, and revived a local government system. His political machination met with strong resistance from the legal fraternity and political parties after the General got the topmost judges of the country arrested and removed from their positions, including the chief justice. After

Musharraf was forced to resign in 2008 by large-scale protests and the media turning against him, the democratic order was restored, which lasted for the next decade.

The current political dispensation in Pakistan is referred to as a hybrid regime (Adeney, 2017; Shah, 2003; Siddiqa, 2019). The powerful military has reasserted itself and assumed a new role in national politics. It has refrained from overtly taking the reins of power and has maintained a democratic facade to hide its ever-increasing role not only in national politics and foreign policy but in the sectors that are entirely alien to the expertise and functioning of the military, such as industry (cement, pharmaceutical, fertilizers, etc.), real estate, banking, education, commerce, construction, logistics, dairy production, media, and many other social and economic activities. The military has emerged as the single largest business entity in the country (Pasha, 2021), with at least 50 various business enterprises owned by them (Siddiqa, 2017; Wasim, 2016).

State and Society

During the pre-colonial period, the state in the Indian subcontinent was limited in its functioning and scope. It did not intervene in people's everyday life in any substantive way. The state in its modern form did not exist in India before the arrival of the British (Kaviraj & Hasan, 2000). However, with the onset of colonial rule, the "public" sphere was defined and dramatically expanded to allow the state to penetrate new areas of human activities. The local ways of social organization and dispute resolution mechanisms over property or women were increasingly appropriated as the proper domain of the state.

One of the interventions having profound and long-lasting impacts on society was the colonial state instituting a capitalist system in the colony. It profoundly reconstituted society by

introducing private property and inserting India into the burgeoning imperial economy (Akhtar,

2018; Habib, 1975). Its impacts were felt in the economic domain and altered every aspect of

life. Unlike in Europe, where the states evolved through historical processes alongside the

capitalist development in society, in India, the "alien" state directly intervened in society and

facilitated the rise of a particular kind of class formation in the colony, transforming the landlord

into a landowner, and changed the governing logic from "land to rule" to "land to own" (Akhtar,

2018).

      The state which Pakistan inherited at the time of its independence in 1947 did not

represent a break from the past but was a continuity of colonial practices and governing logic.

The state was an evolving and unfinished project of capital accumulation through its coercive

apparatus, legal framework, and daily interaction with subjects rooted in practices of the

patronage-based system. As Akhtar (2018) notes,

> ...the long project of state formation in Pakistan did not establish a rule of a
> particular dominant class, or even of the state as an (relatively) autonomous actor,
> but rather should be understood as an evolving assemblage of forces exercising
> power at different levels of the social formation. (p. 11)

      In the post-colonial period, the Army emerged as the most important actor of the ruling

"assemblage." Due to the perceived Indian threat, sovereignty in the newly established Pakistan

came to be associated with developing its defense capabilities to guard against possible Indian

aggression (Jalal, 1990). The state policies did not only come under the overbearing influence of

armed forces but also prioritized the development of the defense sector over the rest. Another

important factor for military dominance was that the designated regions for military recruitment

during the colonial period, i.e., Punjab and parts of NWFP, became parts of Pakistan after

independence (Haqqani, 2005). The existence of military infrastructure, training institutions, and

personnel who were already entrenched in the colonial structure of power became the most significant retarding force in society.

The civil bureaucracy, the second important actor of the ruling elite, was primarily dominated by the Urdu-speaking community who had migrated from the parts of India where they were in the minority and had settled in Pakistan. These people were at the forefront of the struggle for Pakistan, as they feared the overwhelming presence of the Hindu majority in united India (Alavi, 2002). Having settled in Pakistan after partition, the Urdu-speaking community, or Muhajirs as they are called, which translates as "migrants," had no historical roots in the new land of Pakistan. However, they could exert their influence on the polity by appealing to Islam as the foundation of the new nation rather than any historical identity. Thus, the nation-building project in the post-colony remains entangled to the present times, with Islam and the Urdu language as the only identity markers while marginalizing and delegitimizing all other ties and historical identities.

The military and the bureaucracy are the two dominant players in the state's power structure. The former arrogates more political, economic, and ideological power to itself, reducing the latter as its junior partner in sharing power. The military-bureaucratic oligarchy also plays the arbiter between other contenders for power. It mediates the interests of three other important elements of the state, i.e., the landed elites, the indigenous bourgeoisie, and the metropolitan neo-colonialists industrial class (Alavi, 1972).

However, after the 1970s, significant changes occurred in the power structure of the state. New actors became entrenched in the political system, particularly after General Zia's drive to "Islamize" the state and society, and also due to the emergence of upwardly mobile middle

classes in urban centers of Pakistan (Akhtar, 2018). Thus, the Pakistani state represents an arena of contestation between various power contenders, including religious groups, landed classes, spiritual and ethnic elites, and urban bourgeoisie, with the Army as a final arbiter and system's guardian.

Conflict Dimensions–Internal and External

Pakistan is facing multiple forms of internal and external security challenges. Since gaining independence due to the partition of India and the British withdrawal in 1947, Pakistan has been perpetually engaged in a rivalry with its former mother country, India. Both countries, now nuclear powers, have fought wars on more than three occasions, with an implication of making the national security agenda a top priority in national politics, particularly in Pakistan. Just over a month after independence, the two countries went to war over the princely state of Kashmir. Kashmir was one of the many semi-autonomous states within the larger British Indian empire, which the local rulers governed. The rulers enjoyed a degree of autonomy in local matters but were dependent on the British administration for all external affairs. As Kashmir was a Muslim-majority state ruled by a Hindu ruler, Pakistan feared that the state would opt to join the Indian dominion after independence. The political machination over the control of Kashmir led India and Pakistan into war in 1948. This was the first of a series of wars fought by the two countries, setting the stage for the region's militarization.

Pakistan considers Kashmir vital for its survival as it provides lifeblood to the country's vast irrigation system. The Indus River and its tributaries emerge from the Kashmir region and are the livelihood source for millions of people in Punjab and Sindh. Despite the resolution of the water issue between India and Pakistan in 1962 with the help of the World Bank, the two

countries went to war again in 1965. The seventeen-day war ended in a ceasefire after the intervention of the Soviet Union and the United States, and a brief period of peace was established as a result of the Tashkent Declaration in 1966. The war resulted in thousands of soldiers dead on both sides of the border and also witnessed the largest mobilization of tanks and armored vehicles after the end of the Second World War.

The most turbulent period in the history of Pakistan was 1970–71. The country managed to hold its first general elections in 1970. The election results gave Shaikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, the leader of the Bengali nationalist party Awami League, a clear majority to form a national government, which was not acceptable to the Punjabi-dominated military establishment. The deadlock over forming a new government and the delay in calling the parliamentary session left the Bengalis agitated, who were already crying foul over the state's exploitative policies. Instead of allowing the transfer of political power to the civilian rulers, the military government decided to launch a military operation against the dissidents. A bloody operation resulted in hundreds of thousands of Bengalis dead and millions migrating to neighboring India. The atrocities of the operation ended in December 1971 only after the Indian intervention, which led to the dismemberment of Pakistan and the establishment of a new state, Bangladesh.

The tension between the two states continued to simmer beneath the surface and erupted once again in open conflict in 1999. The war was preceded by a covert military operation that involved the infiltration of Pakistani troops into the Indian territory of Kargil. The operation was designed and executed by Pakistan's Army Chief, apparently without the knowledge or approval of the country's civilian Prime Minister. The Indian retaliation to the infiltration brought major

losses to the Pakistani troops and a diplomatic embarrassment to the country. The relationship between the two nuclear-powered neighbors remains far from normalized.

On the domestic front, ethnic conflict in Balochistan poses a major security challenge to Pakistan. The history of Balochistan is mired in conflict, military operations, and secessionist movements (Akhtar, 2007; Grare, 2013; Sheikh, 2018; Siddiqi, 2012b). Before the creation of Pakistan, the regions that later became the Pakistani province of Balochistan in 1948 consisted of discrete semi-autonomous political units operating within the British Indian empire. The region comprised Tribal Areas, princely states, and British Balochistan. At the time of British departure in 1947, the Pakistani state signed an agreement with the largest of the princely states, Kalat, which acknowledged the independent and sovereign status of the Kalat state. Following the declaration of independence, elections were held in Kalat state, and a bicameral legislature was established. During the drafting of the constitution, the parliament strongly rejected the idea of a merger with Pakistan.

However, notwithstanding the agreement with Kalat, Pakistan annexed the Kalat state in 1948 through the first of a series of military interventions in the region. The other area, i.e., British Balochistan, was made part of Pakistan in 1947 through a dubious referendum (Sheikh, 2018). After annexing former princely states to Pakistan, the government decided in 1952 to merge all the acquired territories to form a Balochistan State Union. Three years later, the Union was dissolved and combined with the rest of the provinces of Pakistan under the One-Unit[5] scheme.

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[5] One Unit was a political maneuver to merge the four provinces in the Western wing of Pakistan (Punjab, NWFP, Sindh, and Balochistan) to form a single larger province called West Pakistan, and to declare East

The move provoked strong resentment among the Baloch ethno-nationalist groups. In 1958, the Pakistani Army once again launched a military offensive in the Balochistan region on the false pretext that the Khan[6] of Kalat was amassing troops to launch a secessionist movement (Siddiqi, 2012a). This led to the second Baloch insurgent movement against the state of Pakistan. The campaign lasted only two years as the state treacherously declared a general amnesty for the insurgents. But as soon as the latter laid down their arms, the government arrested and awarded death penalties to the movement's leaders. Just before the first general elections in Pakistan in 1970, the military dictator General Yahya Khan dissolved the One-Unit scheme, which led to the creation of Balochistan as a separate province of Pakistan. The elections brought the National Awami Party (NAP), a left-leaning political party representing Baloch and Pashtun nationalists.

However, in 1973, the federal government seized a large cache of arms from the residence of the Iraqi Military Attaché in Islamabad. Government officials claimed that these weapons were destined to support rebels in Balochistan. The federal government removed the NAP government and dissolved the provincial assembly without providing any proof. The dismissal once again led to the mobilization of insurgent groups and an ensuing armed struggle against the state for the next four years. To counter the growing ethnic militancy in Balochistan, the state launched a third army operation supported by the Air Force. The operation was also supported by Iranian security forces, as they felt threatened by Baloch nationalism due to a substantial Baloch population in the south-eastern parts of Iran (Siddiqi, 2012a). The military

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Bengal as East Pakistan. The project was aimed to reduce the Bengali majority by introducing the principle of parity in power-sharing between the two wings of the country.

[6] Title given to the leader of Kalat state.

operation incurred heavy losses during this movement, so the movement could not recover until the turn of the century.

During the early 2000s, growing unrest emerged among Baloch nationalist leaders over the development policies of the federal government in Balochistan. The ethno-nationalists were demanding an increased royalty on natural gas, halting the construction of new military cantonments in the province, and were also concerned about the mega development project of Gwadar port that could precipitate a massive influx of people from other parts of the country and convert the local population into a minority (Boni & Adeney, 2020; Javaid, 2010; Samad, 2015; Siddiqi, 2012a). In 2006, the mounting tension transformed into an open conflict between the federal government and Baloch ethnic groups after one of the most notable tribal Chieftains, Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, who had previously served as a federal minister and the Governor of Balochistan province, was killed in an airstrike. The news of Bugti's death started another round of insurgency and engulfed the entire province in violence and armed resistance against the state of Pakistan.

In addition to ethnic conflicts brewing in the "peripheral" regions, the country has also been embroiled in sectarian conflict and violence. Pakistan suffers from a security-driven foreign policy that led the state first into the so-called Afghan jihad project during the 1980s and later in the 2000s to neutralize what it had helped create in the first place. Pakistan's involvement as a "frontline state" in the so-called global war on terror led the country on the path of violence and destruction. Pakistan providing territorial, logistical, and military support to the NATO forces provoked a strong societal reaction which led to the emergence of a homegrown Taliban movement in Pakistan: Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

The effects of ethnic conflict, religious fundamentalism, and rivalry with the neighboring country had catastrophic consequences for Pakistan. The National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) reported a dramatic rise in terror incidence in Pakistan in wake of the Afghanistan war and ethnic conflict in Balochistan. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2. Terrorist incidents (2001-2018). (NACTA, 2018)
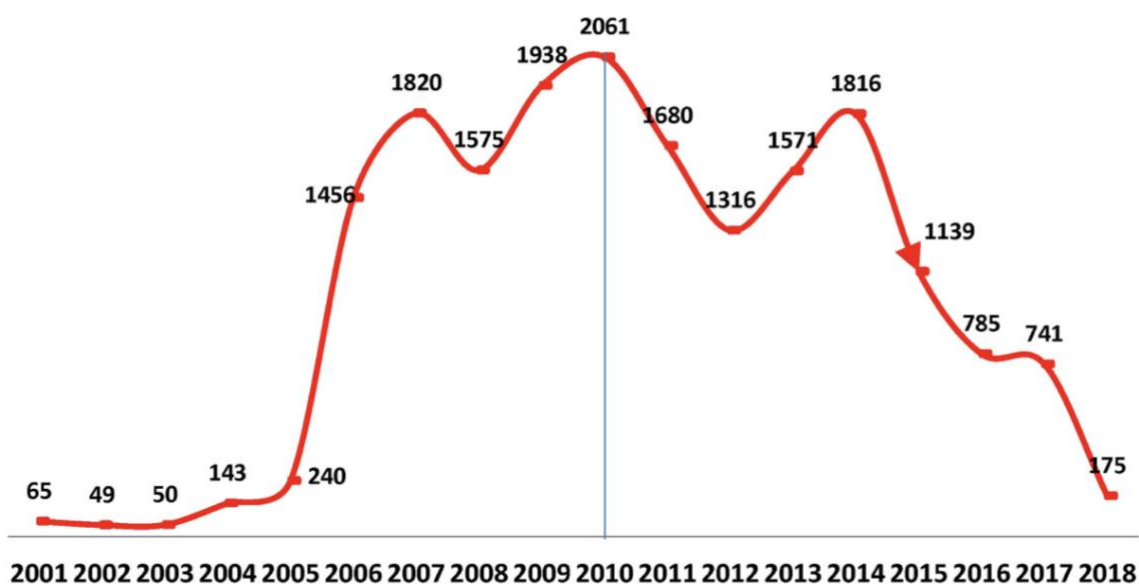
Balochistan Conflict and Peacebuilding

The structural causes that underpin the crisis in Balochistan are primarily associated with the economic exploitation of natural resources by the Army-dominated federal government, political disenfranchisement through majoritarian democracy, and fear of cultural extinction through mass migration and assimilationist state policies (Akhtar, 2007; Baloch, 2007; Group, 2006; Siddiqi, 2012a). In addition, the vast territory of the province, its strategic location, extended coastal region, substantial mineral resources, and small population all contribute to the

instability and conflict in the area (Baloch, 2007). These issues have evoked several responses from the people of Balochistan, some calling for armed struggle against Pakistan to achieve independent statehood, while others have sought a more moderate approach to solve these issues within the federal setup. The political parties representing the ethnic groups of the province have called for various economic and political arrangements to solve the impasse, but they are met with indifference or resistance from the powerful quarters of the country.

The nationalist leaders have long criticized the neocolonial policies pursued by the state, where the province is stuck in an exploitative relationship of producing raw materials for the benefit and development of urban centers in other parts of the country. They also challenge the over-centralized state governance mechanism and demand increased autonomy to the federating units by devolving political and economic powers to the provinces. The nationalist leaders also condemn the federal government's repeated military use to solve political issues and problems.

After the restoration of democracy in 2008, the civilian government initiated a reconciliation and peacebuilding process in the region by acceding to some of the demands of nationalist political parties and disgruntled militant factions. To address the province's grievances, the federal government launched an initiative, "Aaghaz-e-Haqooq-e-Balochistan" (Balochistan Conciliation Package), in 2009. The incentive package was announced to provide greater economic opportunities to the province's youth, which was deemed a section with the potential to provide recruits to the insurgent groups. As is popularly known, the Balochistan Package promised increased quotas for the youth in the federal government jobs, scholarship opportunities in other provinces, and infrastructural development projects like building roads and dams to facilitate economic activities in Balochistan.

In 2010, the federal government introduced the 18th constitutional amendment, which allowed a more significant share of political power to the provinces and devolved the authority to the lower tiers of governance. The criteria for distributing financial assets among the federating units were also revised through the National Finance Commission (NFC) award, which allowed an increased share of Balochistan from 5 percent to 9 percent.

However, little progress has been made in implementing these policies, and the province's peace process has remained fragile. The Army has regained its dominant position in national politics in the last few years. It is skeptical about the 18th constitutional amendment, which it sees as a threat to national security and the federation's unity. The General Musharraf-era policies of "kill and dump" and enforced disappearances of political activists, students, and ordinary people continue. The issue of missing persons and the inability of state institutions to recover thousands of political activists from the custody of security agencies remains the source of constant ire amid the brutal face of military authoritarianism in the country.

The State of Higher Education in Pakistan

For its initial four decades, the growth of tertiary education in Pakistan had been slow. At the time of its independence in 1947, there were only three universities, i.e., the University of Punjab, the University of Dhaka, and the University of Sindh. The first private university, a medical school, was established in 1983. However, access to higher education dramatically increased at the turn of the twentieth century, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The growth of higher education institutions in Pakistan (1947- 2008). (HEC, 2008)
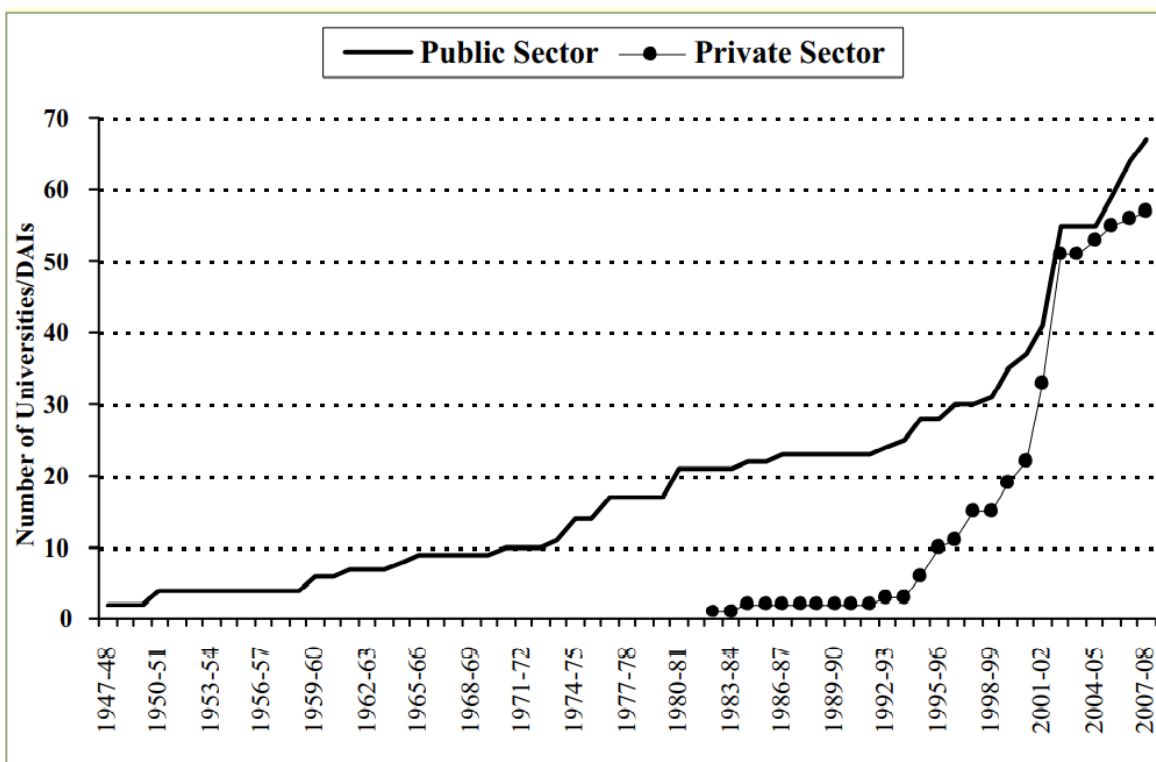
In 2002, the military government initiated a large-scale higher education reform to transform the national economy into a knowledge-based economy. The former University Grants Commission (UGC) was abolished to institute a new Higher Education Commission (HEC). The Commission was formed as an autonomous body with vast administrative and financial powers. It has been responsible for the rapid growth in establishing new public and private universities during the last two decades.

According to the Commission's report, between 2010 and 2015, the country witnessed a 78 percent increase in HIEs and a 174 percent increase in student enrollment in public and private universities (Mahmood, 2016). There are 213 HEIs in the country, with 130 universities in the public sector and 83 in the private sector (Commission, 2020). In addition, there are 102

sub-campuses of universities, of which 75 are in the public sector while 27 are functioning in the private sector (GoP, 2021). The distribution of higher education institutions shows uneven growth based on geographical locations and administrative units. Punjab has the largest number of universities, followed by Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan. In Punjab, there are 73 HEIs (45 public-sector and 28 private-sector universities), while in Balochistan, there are nine public universities in the province (PHEC, 2020).

Due to the establishment of new universities and the encouragement of private providers, the gross enrollment rate in HE has improved across all the provinces. In 2002, the total number of students enrolled in HEIs in Balochistan was merely 4384, and reached 38,282 students in 2020 (Commission, 2020). (See Figure 4.)

To improve the quality of teaching and research in universities, the HEC introduced a broad structure of monetary incentives. The university teachers' pay scales were upgraded, and financial rewards were given to research publications and research supervision. A large number of scholarships was also made available. A tenure-track system was instituted for the first time. Faculty promotions were tied to research publications. To motivate teachers, a wide range of civil awards were announced for university teachers. A university ranking system was also introduced to measure research progress and academic achievement.

Figure 4. Enrollment by region in 16 years of degree programs. (Huma, 2016)
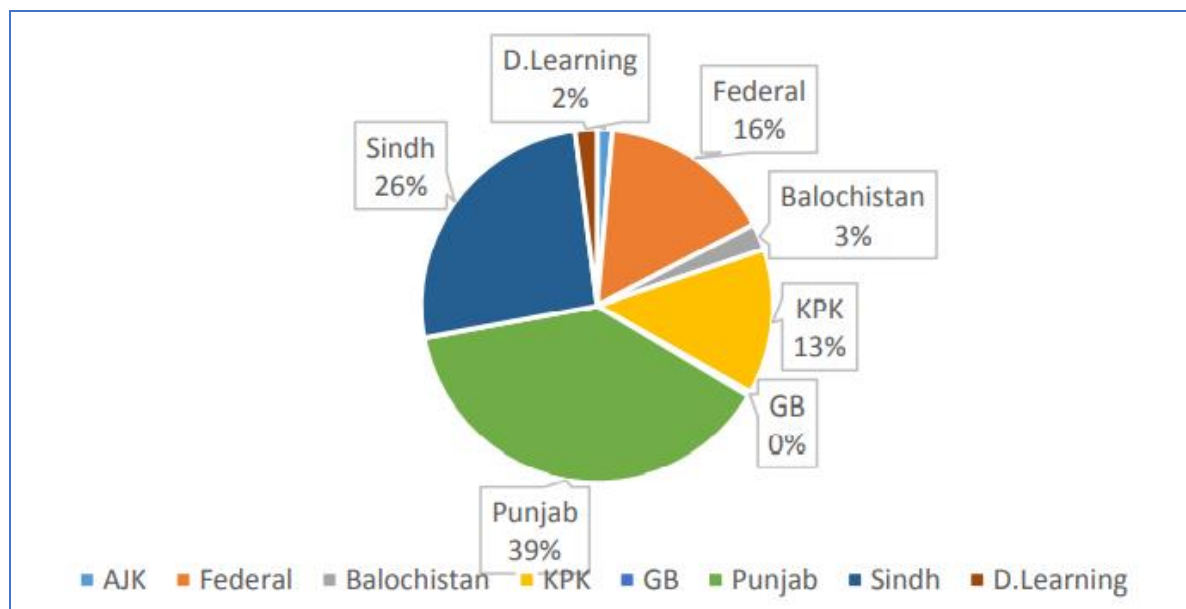
The outcome of the reforms was significant. The number of research journals and publications increased manifold. The annual publication of research papers rose from 949 in 2002 to 20,292 in 2020 (Banuri, 2020). The number of Ph.Ds. produced increased astronomically during the last two decades, from a couple of hundred in 2002 to more than twenty thousand in 2019 (Commission, 2020). These statistics also reflected on the university rankings as a handful of the national universities found their place in the global rankings. (See Figure 5.)

Notwithstanding the quantitative matrix heralding the success of reforms, concerns were raised about the array of academic malpractices. Critics have highlighted widespread practices of academic corruption (Hoodbhoy, 2009a, 2009b, 2020). In 2019 alone, 400 Pakistani researchers published their work in clone journals (Yousafzai, 2022). The issue of plagiarism, friendly authorship and publication of low-quality research became an institutionalized academic practice

(Hoodbhoy, 2013). In addition, the large number of Ph.D. enrollments led to the issue of unemployed doctorate degree holders.

Figure 5. PhDs produced by HEIs. (HEC, 2020)
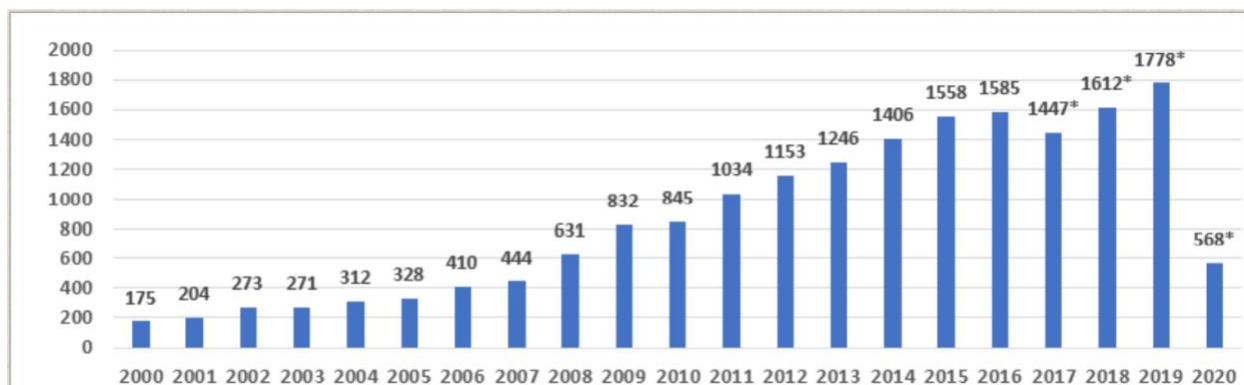
Higher Education in Balochistan

When Balochistan gained provincial status in 1970, the province did not have higher education institutions. The first university, the University of Balochistan (UOB), was established in 1970 and remained the only HEI in the province until 2002. The university began functioning with the three departments of Physics, Chemistry, and Geology but gradually added more departments and centers. Currently, there are 46 departments and centers organized under seven faculties. Besides being the oldest university, it is also the largest campus in the province, with more than 500 faculty members and accommodating around 17,000 students.

In Balochistan, the number of universities grew from a single university in 2002 to nine universities in 2022 (see Table 1). The Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering, and Management Sciences (BUITEMS) was established in 2002. The BUITEMS was initially conceived as an engineering and technology university, but it later added social sciences and humanities faculty. The campus has six teaching faculties and 31 departments and

hosts 11,000 students and more than 700 faculty members. The province also got its first exclusively female university when Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University (SBKWU) was established in 2004. Another university, the Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences (LUAWMS), was established in the coastal region of the province in 2005. LUAWMS was the first campus based outside the provincial capital Quetta. Two more universities, the University of Turbat (UOT) and the University of Loralai (UOL), started functioning in 2012 and 2013. Mir Chakar Khan Rind University is the newest campus, and began classes in 2018.

It is important to note that the provincial government also upgraded one engineering college and one medical college into universities. Currently, there are nine universities in the public sector, and two universities[7] in the private sector.

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[7] Both the private universities are small campuses, having only a few hundred students.

Table 1. List of Public-Sector Universities in Balochistan

	Name of Institution	Year Established	Departments	Number of Faculty	Number of students	Degrees offered	Location (city)
1	University of Balochistan (UOB)	1970	46	600	16,000	BS, MS/Phil, PhD.	Quetta
2	Balochistan University of Engineering and Technology (BUET)	1994	5	125	3500	BS, MS	Khuzdar
3	Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS)	2002	31	700	11,000	BS, MS/Phil, PhD.	Quetta
4	Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University (SBKWU)	2004	27		9000	BS, MS/Phil	Quetta
5	Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences (LUAWMS)	2005		200	4000	BS, MS	Lasbela
6	University of Turbat (UOT)	2012	12	80	3000	BS, MS	Turbat
7	University of Loralai (UOL)	2013	10	70	1000	BS	Loralai
8	Bolan University of Medical & Health Sciences (BUMHS)	2017	3			MBBS, BDS	Quetta

| 9 | Mir Chakar Khan Rind University (MCKRU) | 2018 | 13 | 1700 | BS | Sibi |

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The current study is in the broader field of Education in Emergencies (EiE henceforth)[8]. It is a comparatively new, broad, and vibrant field of inquiry. The field of EiE lies at the intersection of peace and conflict studies, development studies, and international education. It has gained considerable attention from researchers, national and global policymakers, development practitioners, and peace activists. A wide range of actors is involved in the field of education in fragile contexts ranging from academics and researchers, global think tanks, international organizations, development agencies, and local and international non-governmental organizations.

The field of EiE emerged in the backdrop of changing nature of conflicts (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000), the new form of geopolitics at the end of the Cold War during the 1990s, exacerbated by the global security challenges in the aftermath of 9/11 (Cardozo & Novelli, 2018; Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2015), and the gradual shift in a global discourse about the role of education from maintenance of peace among nations to a more right-based approach seeing education as a factor of individual development and conflict as an infringement upon fundamental human rights (Lerch & Buckner, 2018). These are the three distinct lines of

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[8] It is sometimes used interchangeably with the Education in Conflict-Affected Contexts. However, it must be noted that the former is broader in scope and includes emergency situations resulting from natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, and famine as well as human-made conflicts.

reasoning regarding the origin of the field, each informed by different theoretical traditions. Due to the nature of the field rooted in the emergence of internal conflicts, the major focus has been on the ethnic dimension of the conflict. The fixity on ethnic conflict has often come at the cost of neglecting other important factors that contribute to the conflict. The political economy approaches have partially addressed this issue by highlighting the discriminatory social structures that give rise to inequalities on ethnic, gender, religious, or sectarian lines, hence, serve as the enabler of the conflict. Although the negative effects of neoliberal policies on the state's capacity to deliver social services have been highlighted in the literature, the role of the post-colonial state as a factor in conflict is yet to be addressed. This has been a major concern in this study.

Therefore, I will begin by tracing the intellectual roots of the field of EiE to establish the reasons for the state not getting proper attention as an actor in the internal conflict. This section is followed by an overview of the field and its major areas of investigation. After a brief exposition of the field, I explore the neglect of the higher education sector as an area of investigation in the field of EiE and highlight its reasons. Once the field has been introduced and gaps in the literature established, I turn towards delineating the theoretical approaches used to understand the main research question. This part dwells on the explanation of the main theories adopted in this study, i.e., the theories of peacebuilding (Galtung, 1969, 1976; Galtung & Fischer, 2013a) and the interpretative framework of the 4Rs (Novelli et al., 2019; Novelli et al., 2017).

Tracing the Intellectual Roots of the Field

The second half of the twentieth century is marked by the changing nature of conflicts from inter-state wars to intra-state conflicts. During the last quarter of the previous century, there have been increasing armed struggles within the national borders. Local groups were engaged in brutal wars and, in many cases, resulted in the genocide of minority groups. It was noted that during the 1970s, there were 18 states which had considerable internal unrest and turmoil; however, the number increased in the 1990s, with more than 74 states facing some internal conflict and armed struggle (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). In 2021, around 76 countries were reported to have internal conflicts and faced armed resistance against the state (Uppsala, 2021).

One of the salient features of these internal conflicts is that it involves cultural or religious identity as a critical factor around which conflicts are mobilized. Bush and Saltarelli (2000), in their pioneering work *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*, argue that in the majority of cases, ethnicity has emerged as one of the most critical factors of conflict in society. These contemporary forms of violent conflicts are not bound by international regulations or oversight and are often overlooked by the international community. Furthermore, identity-based conflicts are dirtier because they can be directed against any member of the "other" group who is not directly involved in the conflict, including the most vulnerable population, like women and children.

Since the 1990s, there has been a growing realization that a large part of humanity lives under such conditions described as fragile contexts. During the final decade of the twentieth century, 113 million out-of-school children were reported, out of which 82 percent resided in crisis and conflict situations (Smith & Vaux, 2003). With the global commitment to Education

for All (EFA) in 1990 and Millennium Development Goals in 2000, the biggest challenge came

from the countries affected by internal war and conflicts, where more than 75 million children

were facing the issues of access to quality education (ECW, 2019).

The crisis also affects the vulnerable population disproportionally, with young girls and

people with disabilities facing far more significant risks than any other segment of society. Girls

are reported to be two times more likely to quit education due to a lack of security and fear of

sexual violence (ECW, 2019). Conflicts also destroy schools and educational infrastructure and

result in a prominent number of refugees and internally displaced people, killings of educational

staff and teachers, recruitment of students as child soldiers, and sexual crimes against female

staff and students. States having internal conflicts also incur substantial financial burdens due to

the prioritization of security over the development sector. Due to these challenges, education in

emergencies got increasing attention from global bodies, the development sector, and donor

agencies, not only to assist fragile states in developing their education sectors but also to

understand the complex role of the education sector in acting as a catalyst in conflict and to

explore the peacebuilding potential of the education system in crisis settings.

However, this view of tracing the field's emergence in the changing nature and intensity

of the conflicts is contradicted by other accounts rooted in world society theory (Meyer et al.,

1997). This alternative account privileges the world culture or ideation factors as key to

explaining the emergence of the field of education in emergencies. Lerch and Buckner (2018)

highlight the changing global view about the role of education from maintaining international

peace to a new understanding of education as an agent of individual human development. Since

the end of the Second World War, the vision of schooling has been tied to its role in preventing

international wars and promoting harmony among nation-states. Thus, schools were conceived as "instruments of socialization for international understanding" (Lerch & Buckner, 2018, p. 28). Although this socialization aspect of education, embodied in subjects like human rights education, still exists in the literature on education in emergencies, its impact has mostly faded away.

Through the study of UNESCO documents published between 1945 and 2015, Lerch and Buckner (2018) observe a shift in the discourse regarding peace, conflict, international understanding, individual human person, and education. The authors note that the concept of education for "international understanding" in UNESCO documents has wholly disappeared, indicating the retreat of the socialization paradigm. At the same time, there has been a growing emphasis on conflicts rather than peace alone. The study also reveals a subtle shift in focus from human rights education to the rights and needs of individuals. This normative shift reframed the individual as both the bearer of rights and the locus of action (Lerch & Buckner, 2018). In their own words, the authors write:

> The dramatic rise of a focus on the individual human person has shifted global educational emphasis away from peaceful inter-state relations and towards the educational needs and rights of young people in conflict and crises. As a result, peace has become re-envisioned as a necessary condition for the protection of education, rather than being an ultimate end, and the focus has shifted to conflict and emergencies as threats to education. (Lerch & Buckner, 2018, p. 38)

Lerch and Buckner note an evolving understanding and shifting focus of education's role in keeping peaceful international relations to a view of empowering individual persons through education and human rights. From this perspective, peace is not merely an outcome of the education process but also a necessary condition for education to take place. This shift allowed the scholar to reconceptualize the link between education and conflict in whole new ways

ranging from education amidst natural disasters, fragile states, conflicts and post-conflict settings, refugee education, reconstruction of education, peacebuilding education, etc.

The emergence of the field of education and emergencies is also traced to the changing geopolitical order of the world after the end of the Cold War, with an added dimension of global security threat in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks. In the global development agenda, the end of the Cold War marked the shift of focus away from the war allies to the least developed nations (Novelli, 2010, 2013). During the Cold War confrontation, the highly partisan and political allocation of aid witnessed a shift towards other pressing areas and world regions. This focus shift manifested in a high-profile 1990 conference in Jomtien, Thailand, which resulted in Education for All (EFA) commitment that was later incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) agenda for 2015. The 1990s also saw the consolidation of the global neoliberal economic agenda, which was initiated through structural adjustment programs by the World Bank and the IMF a decade earlier (Dale et al., 2007; Hill & Kumar, 2012).

At the same time, the post-Cold War period witnessed the unchallenged U.S. hegemony and increased Western interventionism in various world regions from the Balkans to Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan, Iraq, and Afghanistan. These interventions were often presented and justified as "humanitarian interventions" (Cardozo & Novelli, 2018; Novelli, 2010, 2013, 2017). Critics argue that the discursive framing of interventions as humanitarian efforts that are motivated by the intention of promoting human security, human rights, freedom, and democracy around the globe presents a new form of U.S. imperialism.

The attacks of 9/11 precipitated a realization that the insecurity and conflict outside the global north can have security implications inside the home. In the wake of the terrorist attack in

New York, there was an increased push to merge the development agenda with domestic security requirements. Thus, the international aid and development projects were largely subsumed under the overarching security concerns of global powers, as was projected by USAID's 3D (2012) approach, which combined defense, diplomacy, and development as the way forward. As a result, the Overseas Development Assistance (ODI) increased considerably during 2000-2006, with aid to countries in the EU's list of fragile countries nearly tripled.

The centering of the development agenda in conflict zones also took education as a critical strategy for human development and framed it as part of the humanitarian response in emergencies. The Machel Report (1996) was one of the first efforts focused on children in armed conflict zones, with particular emphasis on the importance of education in the lives of children. In 2000, the Inter-Agency Network of Education in Emergencies (INEE) was established as a broad network of UN agencies, NGOs, donors, governments, think tanks, and universities to promote education in emergencies. In 2007, the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee established a Global Education Cluster under UNICEF and Save the Children to uphold education as a fundamental human right and a core component of humanitarian response in conflict and emergencies. These organizations and networks have contributed significantly to the advancement of knowledge and the emergence of the field of education in emergencies.

A Brief Overview of the Literature

Most of the literature in the field of EiE can be categorized under three overarching issues or areas of exploration, i.e., (a) effects of conflict and violence on education; (b) education's role in promoting social conflict; and (c) how education can promote peace and mitigate conflict (Novelli et al., 2014; USAID, 2006).

The first issue is grounded in a growing realization and concern among international organizations, development agencies, and INGOs, as well as academia, as around a quarter of the world's population, or two billion people, currently live in conditions that are characterized as fragile or conflict-affected (Bank, 2018). The United Nations reported around 66 million people have experienced forced displacement, including 21 million refugees worldwide (UNHCR, 2016). Climate change and natural disasters have added to the humanitarian crises, exacerbated food insecurity and shortages, and caused people to migrate. These have profound implications for the education sector. Seventy-five million children live in conflict-affected contexts and do not have access to quality education (ECW, 2019). Children are exposed to high risks ranging from recruitment as soldiers in rebel armies to girls subjected to sexual violence and torture (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; UNESCO, 2011). Worst still, more than two million children have been killed during the last decade in conflict situations (Buckland, 2005).

With the global commitment to EFA, MDGs, SDGs, and the recognition of education as a fundamental human right, ascertained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), the provision of physical security to millions of vulnerable children in emergencies, particularly girls and children of minority groups, providing them educational access, and rebuilding school infrastructure emerged as a big challenge for the international community. Studies have focused on various aspects and issues to understand how conflicts affect schools, ranging from protection of schools from attacks, occupation of schools by warring factions, rebuilding education infrastructure, education

financing and international aid, teachers recruitment and training, and education for internally displaced people and refugees (Cerna, 2019; Dryden-Peterson, 2011, 2016, 2017; Ferris & Winthrop, 2010; GCPEA, 2014a; INEE, 2010; Kapit-Spitalny & Burde; Miller-Grandvaux, 2009; Milton et al., 2021; Novelli & Selenica, 2014; O'Malley, 2007, 2010; Rutter & Jones, 1998; Smith, 2005; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).

However, most of the literature focuses on the latter two issues, often referred to as "the two faces of education." The role of education as a double-edged sword in conflict settings is well-established in the research literature (Buckland, 2005; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2010; Smith & Vaux, 2003; Sommers, 2002; Tawil & Harley, 2004). Education is seen both as a perpetrator of violence as well as an essential element in promoting social cohesion and sustainable peace in various phases of crises. Studies of various conflict contexts have revealed different levels of schools' engagement with conflict and violent acts. Research has shown schools as potential sites where conflicts and violent acts occur in corporal punishment, bullying, sexual violence, and rape (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Kirk, 2007; Miller-Grandvaux, 2009). In fragile contexts of conflict, with little or no accountability measures and oversight, the practices of sexual exploitation may range from the abuse of girls in return for grades to torture and rape by militias and rival groups. In many situations, girls' vulnerability to sexual crimes results in parents' refusal to send children to schools and instead preferring early marriages to offer girls protection (Kirk, 2007).

Studies have also revealed how schools can feed violence through their capacity to promote narrow nationalistic ideologies, which results in the "othering" of minority groups (Smith, 2003). Education often becomes a powerful tool of cultural repression in many conflict-

affected societies through the language of instruction, control over curriculum, and the textbooks' content (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). A narrowly constructed curriculum focused on transmitting knowledge rather than learning outcomes can be a dangerous tool for ideological and religious indoctrination (Davies, 2010; Miller-Grandvaux, 2009; Smith, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2011). In Afghanistan during the 1980s, textbooks were used as a tool to recruit children for so-called "jihad" against the USSR (Dale et al., 2007; Kirk, 2007; Novelli & Cardozo, 2008). Through $51 million supplied by USAID, the University of Nebraska published special textbooks in the Dari and Pashto languages which explicitly promoted violence and militarism among Afghan youth (Dale et al., 2007). In Pakistan, the textbooks of social studies, civics, and Pakistan studies are the primary carriers of the state's religious ideology, which promotes hatred towards other religions and ethnic groups, glorifies military achievements, and articulates masculine national identity (Durrani, 2013; Durrani & Dunne, 2010; Khoja-Moolji, 2018; Lall, 2008; Mattu & Hussain, 2010; Naseem, 2010; Naseem et al., 2016; A. Nayyar & A. Salim, 2010; A. H. Nayyar & A. Salim, 2010).

Education can also be a source of conflict if its access is restricted to certain groups of society. Bush and Salterelli (2000) argue that restricted educational access

> should be viewed as an indicator of deteriorating relations between groups. As such, it should be viewed as a warning signal that should prod the international community to initiate what the World Bank would call a "watching brief" so that it might anticipate and respond to further deteriorations before it is too late. (p. 9)

It was most evident in the case of Rwanda, where the Catholic missionary schools, established under Belgian colonial administration, became instrumental in fomenting conflict by discriminating against the Hutu majority while giving the Tutsi minority privileged access to post-secondary education (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Hilker, 2011; King, 2005; Sayed et al.,

2018). In the prestigious Astrida College, known for colonial training administrators, around 90 percent of students came from Tutsi elites, although they formed less than 15 percent of the total population (Hilker, 2011).

Because education plays a crucial role in economic, political, and social development, its uneven distribution, segregation, or system differentiated by quality leads to social stratification and an increasing gap between various segments of society. Numerous instances have been documented where inequitable access to educational resources, segregation of schools along ethnic, class, or religious lines, and use of the curriculum as a tool of cultural repression acted as a catalyst for conflict in countries like Nepal, South Africa, Rwanda, Kosovo, Sudan, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and many other regions of the world (Cardozo, 2008; Durrani et al., 2017; Higgins et al., 2016; Hilker, 2011; King, 2005; Lopes Cardozo & Maber, 2019; Pherali, 2013; Sayed, Badroodien et al., 2018; Sayed & Novelli, 2016; Shah & Cardozo, 2019).

Conversely, education can promote peace and stability and create a sense of normalcy in conflict zones. Providing equal access to education can contribute to peace and social stability as it increases the state's legitimacy, reduces social inequalities, and builds social cohesion (Burde, 2014; Greeley & Rose, 2006; Mosselson et al., 2009). Equitable provision of education is critical, as countries that are unable to provide their growing youth population access to education are more likely to face instability and violence, though mediated by other factors as well (Barakat & Urdal, 2009; Collier & Hoeffler, 2004; Østby et al., 2019).

For example, in Sierra Leone, the youth with no access to education were reported as nine times more likely to engage in violence than those who attended schools (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2008). Studies have also revealed that a good quality inclusive education can provide

opportunities to reintegrate former youth combatants as productive members of the society (Davies, 2010; Degu, 2005; Schwartz, 2010), as can special initiatives that impart skills under Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs (Milton, 2017; Muggah, 2005). The Education and Fragility framework (USAID, 2006) has identified education's potential to mitigate the root causes of fragility and its ability to contribute to stability, improve good governance, and develop better life chances for individuals in crisis and conflict contexts.

Due to education's potential to mitigate fragility, promote state-building, and build the resilience of institutions (Barakat et al., 2008; Bird, 2009; Tebbe, 2009), emphasis has been growing on recognizing education as integral to humanitarian aid and considering it the fourth pillar of humanitarian response (Barakat et al., 2008; INEE, 2004; Machel, 2001). It is also critical to note that educational intervention in emergencies can cause harm if not sensitive to the context. Thus, *conflict-sensitive education*, informed by contextual factors, minimizes negative impacts and maximizes the positive effects of education policies and programs in the fragile states (INEE, 2013).

Given the nature of the subject matter, the major focus of the field has tended to be on the development and implementation of policy frameworks and intervention guidelines to respond to the educational needs of children in the context of crises and emergencies. It involves the engagement of various stakeholders, including national governments, global institutions, non-government organizations, and research institutions, in a collaborative effort to develop policies and strategies to address the challenges such as ensuring inclusive educational access, providing a safe school environment, and exercising cultural sensitivity in teaching methodologies, educational content, and recruitment policies.

Due to the embeddedness of the scholarship in the development agenda, the literature in the field of education in emergencies narrowly focuses on the need of national and global policy actors. The literature exploration reveals that the field's policy orientation imposes certain limitations on asking questions that are more of a sociological nature. In this regard, one of the critical issues, which is often ignored in the literature, is the absence of discussion about the role of the post-colonial state in the conflict. The state is often assumed to be a neutral agent that serves the interests of all if provided with the right set of policy guidelines. This, however, is not the case in most post-colonial societies where the state has been central to the conflict. Thus, the existing literature reduces the possibility of critically evaluating the state regarding its role in conflict and education policymaking.

This study contributes to the field by showing that the state's role is not adequately addressed in the literature on education in a conflict context. It emphasizes the need for a more nuanced understanding of the conflict in which the analysis of the state is not marginal but centrally located.

Higher Education and Conflict

Most of the literature on education in conflict contexts has focused on primary and secondary education, with an exploration of the peacebuilding potential of the higher education sector during the conflict and in the post-conflict recovery stage relatively ignored (Milton, 2017). In a society recovering from conflict and crisis, "much of the energy and resources of the international community have been directed at primary education, while education authorities have been left to their resources to deal with the needs of the other subsectors" (Buckland, 2005, p. 63).

The long-standing neglect of the higher education sector in conflict settings can be explained with the help of shifts in three contextual factors during the post-World War II period, i.e., the articulation of higher education within the development framework as an engine of growth, the emergence of the field of education in emergencies, and the conventional model of reconstruction of conflict and post-conflict societies (Milton, 2017). In the post-World War II period, *development* was understood as a modernization process of "traditional" societies (Rustow, 1968, 1970). The development model framed a linear path for the "rest" to catch up with the West, with HE as an essential driver of the process. HE was often conceived as a political instrument of nation-building and national economic development within the newly formed post-colonial countries. However, during the late 1970s, the optimism around achieving nationalist goals started to fade away due to the expansion of HE with falling public subsidies, a mismatch between HE and the market needs that resulted in high unemployment among graduates, falling academic standards, deteriorating facilities, campus unrest, and shortages of trained staff (Atteh, 1996; Milton, 2017; Salmi, 1992).

Another factor that led to the weakening of support for higher education was its de-prioritization by the donor agencies. The adoption of the "rate of return" (Psacharopoulos, 1972, 1995) interpretation of human capital theory (Becker, 1962; Schultz, 1971) by the World Bank resulted in the marginalization of the higher education sector within the development agenda, as returns on spending public money were found to be higher in primary education than in higher education. The rate of return analysis had a profound impact on the Bank's lending policies (Bennell, 1996). During the period of structural adjustments in the 1980s and 1990s, the higher

education sector featured prominently in budget cuts (Milton, 2017), worsening the conditions of universities in the developing world (Robertson, 2009).

In the late 1990s, the rates of return analysis were increasingly challenged from within the World Bank, culminating in the influential publication of *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise* (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000). A growing realization emerged about the unbalanced approach towards educational development, leading to the neglect of higher education and the narrow economism associated with understanding the education sector. Also, a shift in economic thinking has occurred due to large-scale structural changes in the global economy, technological advancement, and innovations, where knowledge is appropriated and increasingly conflated with *capital* under the new paradigm of the knowledge-based economy. Thus, the higher education sector is regaining its importance in contemporary economic thinking as "alongside capital and labour, knowledge and education are now widely viewed as growth drivers" (Milton, 2017, p. 11).

The peacebuilding role of HE has remained largely unexplored in the literature on education in emergencies. The existing literature mostly follows the same distinct categorization of (a) the effects of conflict on HE and how to protect and rebuild universities in conflict zones, (b) the role of HE in promoting conflict, and (c) how HE can contribute to peacebuilding, and reconstruction in the conflict and post-conflict societies (Barakat & Milton, 2015; Dillabough et al., 2018; Hanley, 2020; Millican, 2017; Millican et al., 2021; Milton, 2017; Milton & Barakat, 2016; Milton et al., 2021; Pacheco & Johnson, 2017; Pherali & Abu Moghli, 2021). Higher Education can be harnessed as a catalyst for the recovery of war-torn countries by supplying the

skills and knowledge needed to reconstruct shattered economies and physical infrastructure, restore collapsed governance systems, and foster social cohesion (Barakat & Milton, 2015).

The potential of HE to positively influence society is wide-ranging and spans all the phases of conflict, from stabilization and securitization, to reconstruction, state-building, and peacebuilding (Milton & Barakat, 2016). Through its tripartite function of teaching, researching, and providing community and social services, universities are equipped to provide a research-based understanding of the conflict, offer academic-led and disciplinary-specific responses to the conflict, offer support to the community, and engage students in activities to prepare them for future leadership (Millican, 2017).

Supporting the higher education sector was more challenging than basic education during the war and post-war period. The latter got more attention and support from the local and international community. Supporting HE in conflict settings requires more significant financial backing, a higher skill level, and more sophisticated management to function, which is often challenging to achieve (Milton & Barakat, 2016). The issue gets compounded because money gets diverted towards the immediate concern of establishing a law-and-order situation during the conflict. At the same time, HE is often regarded as a long-term concern, thus undermining the peacebuilding capacity of tertiary education (Barakat & Milton, 2015; Milton & Barakat, 2016). Universities are also more vulnerable to attacks than schools due to their manifestly political role (GCPEA, 2014b). It was reported that over 40 percent of the total number of attacks on education institutions between 1980 to 2010 were carried out on universities, followed by colleges/high schools (16.5 percent), secondary and middle schools (17.5 percent), and primary schools (12 percent) (Bradford & Wilson, 2013).

In conflict zones, university campuses become very sensitive areas, and faculty members and university students often take a leading role in the conflict (Milton & Barakat, 2016; Pherali & Lewis, 2019; Sahar & Kaunert, 2021). In many cases, universities are captured by rebel forces or state militia and are transformed into military camps. Due to the significant presence of youth, which is often seen as a potential source of conflict due to lack of economic opportunities and political participation, campuses in many conflict areas have become militarized zones. Governments reassert their authority by increasing university governance and policy field control (Dillabough et al., 2018). Faculty surveillance, victimizing critical voices, patronizing loyalists, and in worse cases, target killings and forced disappearances by the state authorities pave the way for institutionalizing corrupt practices (Dillabough et al., 2018).

Political Economy Approach to Peacebuilding and the 4Rs

Political economy (PE) is a broad area of study consisting of various theoretical approaches and methodological concerns, ranging from narrow neoclassical economics and neo-institutionalism to a very broad cultural political economy approach (Grindle, 2004; Robertson, 2012). This study is informed by the broader critical cultural political economy approach toward the understanding of peace and peacebuilding. The critical political economy (Jessop, 2004; Robertson & Dale, 2008; Robertson & Dale, 2015; Sayer, 2001; Sum & Jessop, 2013), eschews disciplinary parochialism, and hence provides a very useful framework to approach the field of EiE, as the latter is located at the intersection of peace and conflict studies, development theory, and educational research (Lopes Cardozo & Shah, 2015; Novelli et al., 2014). It allows scholars to situate the education system within its social context and is sensitive to the influences of political and economic interests on education policies and interventions.

It also pays attention to the issues of power and raises the question of who gets to decide the policies, how they are determined, and with what effects and outcomes. The approach avoids "methodological nationalism," which tends to focus on states' policies as an ultimate explanation of educational policies, practices, and outcomes, but instead integrates global, national, regional, and local actors and factors into the educational analysis. In the context of education in emergencies and crises, the political economy critique emphasizes the need to address the broader social-economic and political forces that are responsible for the conflict to emerge in the first place and focuses on education's capacity to contribute to those underlying causes of the conflict.

Peace and Peacebuilding.

The understanding of peace and peacebuilding is rooted in the work of Johan Galtung, one of the pioneers of peace and conflict studies. Galtung (1969, 2008, 2011; Galtung & Fischer, 2013) offers rich conceptual tools to understand negative and positive peace and his conceptual differentiation of peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. Galtung (Galtung & Fischer, 2013b; Galtung & Höivik, 1971) categorizes violence as *direct, structural,* and *cultural*. The direct form of violence refers to war, armed conflict, genocide, and torture in which people directly engage in violent acts. The structural form of violence refers to discriminatory social structures like racism, patriarchy, and class division, which work to generate social inequalities based on race, ethnicity, gender, and income. Cultural violence is defined as violence inflicted through discriminatory discourses, ideas, stereotypes, behaviors, or prejudiced worldviews.

By distinguishing between three forms of violence, Galtung (1969, 2008, 2011; Galtung & Fischer, 2013) calls negative peace a state of peace that is described as the absence of a direct

form of violence only. Positive peace takes the cessation of hostilities between warring parties as a necessary, albeit insufficient condition and emphasizes the need for addressing the enabling factors of violence. Therefore, building positive peace requires long-term efforts and commitment to transform conflict's underlying structural and cultural causes.

Galtung (1976) also delineates the different forms of peace activities as *peacekeeping, peacemaking,* and *peacebuilding*. Peacekeeping involves using force and coercive mechanisms to stop acts of violence from happening. Peacemaking is a strategy of engaging in dialogue and negotiating over contentious issues to establish peace. Peacebuilding, however, is a more comprehensive and ongoing project which involves an array of processes and approaches aimed at transforming the root causes of conflict for a more just and sustainable peace (Galtung & Fischer, 2013b; Galtung & Höivik, 1971; Lederach, 1997)

The dominant approach to peacebuilding, which is reflected in the practices of global peacekeeping bodies including the UN, has remained focused on the cessation of hostilities and establishing security. This security-first agenda of peace is often referred to as the liberal peace model. According to this view, once security is established, the liberal peace approach prioritizes introducing liberal democracy and functional markets to move forward in the post-conflict development stage. It is assumed that once elections are held and markets become operational, greater economic opportunities will be available for the people who were previously engaged in armed conflict. The peace dividend through macro-economic activities of foreign direct investment and economic growth will "trickle down" to the lower levels of society.

However, the liberal peace thesis has been criticized for its limited scope and rootedness in a hegemonic neoliberal economic development model. Critics have highlighted that the

prioritization of markets and security often leads to the marginalization of other areas of development, particularly the provision of essential services like health, education, and social welfare. In this model, education is not seen as a critical element in peacebuilding processes; rather, education's peacebuilding capacity is often underestimated or goes unrecognized. The liberal peace approach is also criticized for its focus on keeping security without addressing the root causes of instability and conflict; thus, as Galtung (1969, 2008, 2011; Galtung & Fischer, 2013a) points out, it helps maintain only the negative peace while the structural and cultural causes that underpin violence remain unaddressed.

This research study acknowledges the importance of establishing security in the conflict context as the priority and emphasizes the need to create a more positive peace that is long-term, sustainable, and based on the structural transformation of the causes of the conflict. To address the underlying social, political, cultural, and economic causes of conflict for building peaceful societies, this study relies on the conceptual framework of the 4Rs developed by Novelli et al. (Novelli et al., 2017, 2019; Novelli & Sayed, 2016).

The 4Rs Framework.

The 4Rs approach is central to the study because it is being used to answer the main research question, i.e., exploring the peacebuilding agency of the University of Balochistan in the conflict context of Balochistan. The peacebuilding agency is understood as the capacity of the institution to promote political participation, address economic inequalities, acknowledge cultural diversity within its institutional setup, and be instrumental in promoting these values in the larger society. The peacebuilding agency is theorized using the analytical framework of the 4Rs.

The "4Rs" (Novelli et al., 2017) is a theoretical and analytical framework built upon the social justice agenda of social transformation, aiming to address structural causes of social inequalities for making sustainable peace. The framework is critical of "security-first" and "liberal peace" approaches and calls for a holistic approach in the conflict and post-conflict contexts that does not marginalize the crucial provision of essential social services, including education and health, at the cost of establishing markets and liberal democracy. It is also critical of an economistic understanding of conflict, which sees wars and armed conflicts as an outcome of human greed (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004) rather than a result of structural inequalities, historical discrimination, and injustices in society. The 4Rs framework is consistent with the explanation of the Horizontal Inequality (Stewart, 2009, 2016) as a factor of war, which suggests that the outbreak of war is strongly correlated with the actual or perceived inequalities between social groups, thus rejecting the view of armed conflict as a result of rational economic actors engaging in violence to maximize their benefits.

The framework is inspired by Galtung's (1969, 2008, 2011) conceptualization of positive peace, which implies not only the absence of violence but the guarantee of peace. It emphasizes addressing violence in all its political, cultural, social, or economic manifestations as a precondition for building sustainable and peaceful societies. The framework also serves as a heuristic device to bring education into conversation with the peacebuilding theories and strategies by exploring education's potential to bring social justice into and through the education system. Thus, the framework has a normative agenda of structural transformation by addressing the root causes of conflict and understanding education concerning its role in mitigating or contributing to these underlying causes of social conflict.

The framework combines the principles of social justice and transitional justice to deal with both the drivers of conflict and the legacies of conflict. The social justice part is built on Fraser's (1995, 2005b) concept of *Redistribution, Representation,* and *Recognition*. To address the legacies of conflict, a fourth "R" of *Reconciliation* is added to develop the framework as a more comprehensive analytical tool.

Redistribution focuses on the economic dimensions of causes of conflict. In war and post-war contexts, it allows us to think about the myriad ways the education system gets involved in processes that result in mitigation or further increasing economic inequalities in society. *Redistribution* draws attention to equal educational opportunities without discrimination, equitable distribution of educational resources among groups and individuals, public support of education through funding and decent salaries of educational staff and teachers, and equal development opportunities for teachers and students, etc. *Representation* focuses on educational stakeholders' participation in institutional governance and policymaking spaces at all levels, ranging from curriculum setting to the larger issue of democratic control of the education system. *Recognition* deals with the problems of status inequalities in education. It can be thought of as cultural barriers at schools, the status of the teaching profession, language of instruction, acceptance of diversity inside the class, teaching staff and administration, etc. *Reconciliation* provides a way of dealing with the issues of past wrongs, injustices, and historical memory by drawing attention to the role of schools, teachers, pedagogy, curriculum, textbooks, etc., in fostering social cohesion and building social trust. (See Table 2.)

Table 2. Analyzing Education Systems Using the 4Rs: Potential Indicators (Smith et al., 2016)

Redistribution (addressing inequalities)	Vertical and horizontal inequalities in education inputs, resources, and outcomes (quantitative data)
	Redistribution in macro education reforms or policies (e.g., the impact of decentralization and privatization on different groups and conflict dynamics)
Recognition (respecting difference)	Policies on the language of instruction
	Recognition of cultural diversity and religious identity in curriculum
	Citizenship and civic education as a means of state-building
Representation (encouraging participation)	Participation (local, national, and global) in education policy and reforms
	Political control and representation through education administration
	School-based management and decision-making (teachers, parents, and students)
	Support for fundamental freedoms in the education system
Reconciliation (dealing with injustices and the legacies of conflict)	Addressing historical and contemporary injustices linked to conflict
	Integration and segregation in education systems (e.g., common institutions)
	Teaching about the past and its relevance to the present and future
	Vertical trust in schools and education system, and horizontal trust between identity-based groups

Conclusion

The 4Rs framework provides a valuable tool to analyze the university's peacebuilding agency in the context of crisis and conflict. It enables us to explore different dimensions of the conflict and integrates the local, national, and global aspects into a holistic framework of analysis. The 4Rs of representation, redistribution, recognition, and reconciliation eschew a flat ontology but allow exploration of the influences of economic, cultural, and political factors on

the institution's peacebuilding capacity at the multi-scalar level of the global policy environment, national policy frameworks, and the local space of policy implementation.

The four peacebuilding dimensions incorporated in the framework are not analyzed in isolation from one another's influences. While dealing with the *redistribution* dimension of peacebuilding, which focuses on the economic issues of vertical and horizontal inequalities, this approach informs us that the economic inequalities do not exist in a vacuum but interact and contribute to other forms of cultural and social inequalities operating both at the domestic and global level. It helps to integrate the influences of global neoliberal ideology with the local political and economic structures, hence, giving a comprehensive understanding of a redistributive aspect of peacebuilding. Similarly, horizontal inequalities, i.e., inequalities existing between social groups, cannot be addressed without acknowledging the multiplicity of identities, which is central to the analysis of the *recognition* dimension of peacebuilding.

The framing of peace as negative and positive is useful in interrogating the *reconciliation* aspect of peacebuilding. Reconciliation builds upon the concept of positive peace, which does not simply mean the cessation of hostilities but making peace that endures. The sustainability of peace does not imply going back to the pre-conflict period but rather it requires the restructuring of social relations based on social justice. It involves strategies for moving forward which do not erase past injustices but bring them front and center. Thus, the political-economic approach, combined with insights into peacebuilding theories, provides a deeper understanding of the conflict and peacebuilding.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study is a work of interpretation and is located within the broader category of qualitative research. Qualitative research consists of a range of practices and techniques for observing subjects in real-world settings, involving tools like interviews, field notes, memos, photographs, recordings, and other representations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The qualitative inquiry begins with the theoretical assumption, used as an interpretative framework, to understand the meaning people and groups ascribe to social problems (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Its knowledge claim does not rest on the belief of an objective representation of reality but acknowledges research as the "voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change" (Creswell, 2013, p. 44). The study is epistemologically and ontologically grounded in the critical realist philosophy that eschews a radical social constructivist position by acknowledging the existence of reality, albeit its understanding as subjectively determined (see Chapter Three).

Study Rationale

In 2014, a terrorist attack on Army Public School inside the military cantonment in Peshawar City left more than 140 people dead, including 138 schoolchildren and their teachers. The incident led to the All-Parties Conference and the subsequent adoption of the National Action Plan:a concerted effort to fight the menace of terrorism. Between 2009 and 2012, at least

838 attacks were carried out on educational institutions inside Pakistan, the highest number recorded worldwide (GCPEA, 2014). The attacks included the destruction of school buildings and property, target killing of teachers and students, abduction of teachers and staff, and enforced disappearances of faculty members and student leaders.

The attacks were not confined to the schools only. Numerous attacks and bombings of university campuses occurred across the country, particularly in the troubled regions of Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The first incident of such a kind happened in 2009 at the heart of the federal capital Islamabad when two suicide bombers targeted the girls' and boys' campuses of International Islamic University, which left scores of students dead and injured. Next year, the University of Khuzdar was the blast's target, claiming the lives of two students and injuring dozens more. In 2012, the bus carrying university students in Quetta City became the target of a suicide car bomber, which left four students dead and 72 injured. In 2013, a bomb blast inside the SBK Women's University Quetta was followed by a shooting in the adjacent hospital, leaving 25 people dead. As I write, the news of a female suicide bomber–an MPhil scholar in the education department at Karachi University, blowing herself up and killing three Chinese faculty members—is making national headlines.

Despite the catastrophic fallout of conflict on education, the literature focusing on the topic is limited. In the aftermath of 9/11, the education system in Pakistan attracted significant global attention due to the issues related to growing extremism and intolerance in society (Ahmed, 2018). The education system, particularly the religious madrassahs, was seen as a nursery for preparing the jihadi mindset (Hearing, 2007; Kean & Hamilton, 2004). The 9/11 Commission Report declared poverty, a poor education system, and the religious schools

(madrassahs) as the "incubators of violent extremism" in Pakistan (Kean & Hamilton, 2004, p. 367). (See Table 3.)

Table 3. Terrorist Attacks on Universities

University	Date of Attack	Province
International Islamic University, Islamabad (Boys Campus)	October, 2009	Federal Capital
International Islamic University, Islamabad (Girls Campus)	October, 2009	Federal Capital
University of Engineering and Technology, Khuzdar	March 2010	Balochistan
Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering, and Management Sciences.	June 2012	Balochistan
University of Peshawar	Jan. 2013	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa
Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University	June 2013	Balochistan
Bacha Khan University	Jan. 2016	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa
Balochistan Policy Training College	Oct. 2016	Balochistan
Agricultural University Peshawar	Dec. 2017	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa
Karachi University	April 2022	Sindh

Most of the literature focusing on education's role in peacebuilding was embedded within the global discourse of the so-called "war on terror" and fighting international terrorism, which framed civilizational and religious values to be the cause of terrorist acts. The literature overly focused on the nexus of religion and education in Pakistan as the root cause of terrorism. In addition, many of the studies implicating religion as the root cause of violence, while not addressing the issues of imperialism, racism, patriarchy, global capitalism, and so on, were

conducted by think tanks in the global north (Bajoria, 2009; Curtis, 2007; Group, 2002; Singer, 2001).

Another category of research is informed by the issues of education's embeddedness in the postcolonial nation-building project in Pakistan. Studies have explored the nexus between the national identity based on religion and education's instrumentalization to propagate these ideas through national curricula and textbooks. Numerous studies have investigated the prejudicial nature of the curriculum and the textbooks, which are designed to inculcate religious nationalism and patriotism (Durrani, 2013; Durrani & Dunne, 2010; Lall, 2008; Saigol, 2005, 2014), promote militaristic values (Naseem, 2005; A. Nayyar & A. Salim, 2010), encourage masculine identity (Durrani, 2013; Khoja-Moolji, 2018; Mattu & Hussain, 2010; Naseem, 2010; Saigol, 1995), and instill hatred against other religions, sectarian and ethnic identities (Kumar, 2001; Lall, 2008; Naseem et al., 2016; Nayyar, 2010; A. H. Nayyar & A. Salim, 2010; Saigol, 2014).

The literature shows that scholarship exploring education and its relationship with conflict in the context of Pakistan is an under-researched area (Halai & Durrani, 2018). Few studies eschew a meta-theoretical lens, which frames the issue in a linear fashion of education promoting religious fundamentalism leading to violence and conflict in society. Studies that have used a more sociological approach have focused on investigating textbooks (Durrani, 2013; Durrani & Dunne, 2010; Khoja-Moolji, 2018; Kumar, 2001; Lall, 2008; Naseem, 2010; Naseem et al., 2016; A. H. Nayyar & A. Salim, 2010; Saigol, 1995, 2005, 2014), peace and human rights education programs (Ahmed, 2017, 2018; Ahmed & Shahzad, 2021; Begum, 2012; Cromwell, 2019), securitization of education (Ford, 2017; Lall & Saeed, 2019; Sameer, 2020), youth and citizenship (Cromwell, 2019; Kadiwal & Durrani, 2018; Lall & Saeed, 2019; Lopes Cardozo et

al., 2016), and the role of teachers in building peaceful societies (Durrani et al., 2017; Halai & Durrani, 2016, 2018; Sayed & Novelli, 2016).

Only a handful of studies focus on the conflict-affected region of Balochistan to understand how higher education interacts with fragility. In addition to geographical specificity's limitations, research studies have also exclusively focused on primary and secondary education. No investigation was identified during the literature search that took the higher education sector as its primary subject. The literature review revealed that research on the higher education sector in the conflict context of Balochistan is almost nonexistent. Even though during the last two decades the number of higher education institutions has increased exponentially from one university in 2001 to more than seven universities in 2021, the higher education sector has hitherto been unexplored.

Furthermore, during the insurgency in the province, universities became the key sites of contestation between various ideological and identity groups. Thus, the current study will add to the existing literature by focusing on the relatively unexplored conflict-affected context of Pakistan's largest territorial unit, i.e., Balochistan. The research will also contribute to the literature by studying the higher education community, which has not been examined thus far.

Research Question

The study focuses on the relationship between the higher education sector and peacebuilding in Pakistan's conflict-affected region of Balochistan. The study explores two major areas of investigation. First, it focuses on ethnic conflict in the region and explores how it has contributed to shaping the higher education sector in Balochistan. Second, the study explores

the nature of higher education reforms and their implication on higher education's capacity to promote peace and social cohesion.

To explore these issues, the study takes the University of Balochistan (UOB) as a case. The university is the oldest and largest higher education institution, established just after Balochistan got provincial status in 1970. The institution has played a significant role in the education sector of Balochistan and is often referred to as a "mother institution." It plays a key role as a feeding mechanism for the government teaching services at primary, secondary, higher secondary, college, and university levels of education. It provides affiliation to the colleges, conducts exams, and issues certificates. Many of the newly established universities started as regional campuses of the UOB. It has also played a key role in providing human resources to the growing administrative services of the provincial and federal governments.

Thus, the study seeks to explore Balochistan's regional conflict and higher education reforms, and how these two factors have shaped the university's peacebuilding agency. The key question guiding the study is:

"How has the university's peacebuilding agency evolved in response to the higher education policies and the local security challenges in the conflict-affected context of Balochistan?"

The Extended Case Method

A case study approach typically focuses on particular instances to illustrate a more general point (Cohen et al., 2011). There is a debate among scholars about the nature of case study research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Some researchers argue that a case study is not a way of doing research but is defined by the choice of studying a case(s) bounded by time and space

(Stake, 2005; Thomas, 2015); thus, it is "defined not so much by the methods that you are using to do the study, but the edges you put around the case" (Thomas, 2015, p. 21). However, this view is contrasted by other scholars who emphasize case study as a distinct method of doing research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2014) and characterize case studies as an exploration of a

> real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observation, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes.
>
> (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 96–97)

This study builds upon the foundation of the extended case method (Burawoy, 1998, 2009), which emphasizes the need to use a theory in social inquiry. It eschews the positivist position of taking a detached view of what is being observed and frees itself from the requirement of maintaining an "unbiased" view to meet the scientific standards of objectivity, replicability, and generalizability. In contrast, the extended case method rejects the "positive objectivity based on 'sense data' in favor of a commitment to the 'rationality' of theory–cognitive maps through which we apprehend the world" (Burawoy, 1998, p. 5). Burawoy (1998) calls this "dwelling in theory" method the reflexive model, which uses engagement and interaction between the researcher and the participants not as an inescapable necessity but as the right path to knowledge.

The reflexive model takes a multilayered approach, consistent with critical realism, which begins with a dialogue between the observer and the observed. This engagement is embedded within a dialogue between the local processes and the external forces, which can be synthesized only through an expanding dialogue of theory with itself. The model delineates four

dimensions of the inquiry; intervention, process, structuration, and reconstruction. The *intervention* relates to the positioning of the researcher not as a detached observer, but as one who actively intervenes in their research context, through the extraction of data, which is deemed important, informed by the theoretical framework, and within a specific context. The *process* requires the unpacking of situational experiences of the observed by moving along their framework of time and space. It pays attention to the multiple readings of the single case but involves aggregation and reduction of these into a social process. The *structuration* connects the social processes with broader social forces, with a dialogical understanding that one shapes and is shaped by the other. The *reconstruction* substitutes the positivist notions of generalization and representativeness with an idea of advancement of theoretical understanding.

I have multiple reasons for selecting the University of Balochistan as a case. One has to do with my personal interest emanating from my association with the institution, first as a student and later as a faculty member. My relationship with the institution in various capacities, which spans over two decades, had a major influence on my decision to select that institution as the subject matter of this study.

Secondly, the significance of the university stems from the fact that it is the oldest and the largest university in the province. It was the only institution of higher learning in the province of Balochistan until 2002, when the government decided to increase higher education access and encourage private actors. In addition to my personal association with the institution, as a teacher, I observed a radical transformation of the university in the wake of new higher education reforms and the onset of ethnic conflict in the province. Together, these provided the foundation for my decision to take the university as my case study.

Data and Interpretative Framework

This study is based on the collection of primary data and the analysis of policy documents. The primary data was collected through individual and group interviews. The research population consists of university faculty, management, and student leaders. This includes currently employed teachers, either permanently or on a contract basis, or who have retired from their positions. In addition to faculty members, the study also includes university management working in various administrative positions. Participants of the study also include the leaders of student organizations. (See Table 4.)

Table 4. Research Population

Faculty Members	Teachers, Departmental Heads, Deans
University Administration	VC & Pro-VC, registrar, student affairs, finance officers
Statutory Bodies	Members of Syndicate, Senate, and Academic Council
Elected Bodies	Academic Staff Associations (ASA)
Student Leaders	Members of student organizations

In total, 18 individual interviews and 3 focus groups were conducted using the Zoom online platform. The individual and group interviews' total duration was 23 hours and 40 minutes. The interviews were conducted between January and July 2022 in two local languages, i.e., Urdu and Pashto. All the data was saved on a local drive, and the names of the research participants have been kept in strict confidentiality.

In addition to interviews, the research also uses policy documents to explore the issues relating to higher education and security policies. A list of documents is shown in Table 5. The data was analyzed using Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), which involves the "empirical,

methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification" (Mayring, 2000). It entails the exploration of distinct themes and categories within the data about the research question being asked (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In qualitative research studies, themes within the data are often identified inductively, i.e., the categories emerge from the data itself.

Table 5: List of Documents Included in the Research

Focus Area	Documents included
Higher Education	*Education Sector Reform 2000*
	Task Force Report on Higher Education Reforms 2002
	HEC Annual Reports (2002–2020)
	University of Balochistan Ordinance 1970
	University of Balochistan Act 1996
	Universities of Balochistan Act 2022
Peace and Security Frameworks	*National Security Policy 2022*
	National Internal Security Policy (2018–2023),
	National Internal Security Policy (2014–2018)
	National Counter Extremism Policy Guidelines 2018

However, researchers are always influenced by prior literature relevant to the field of their inquiry, thus, it is neither feasible nor supported to begin with a purely inductive approach to the data analysis (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). Therefore, the analysis will take an approach that starts by using the themes deductively, i.e., based on the existing political economy literature on education in emergencies. The identification of categories or themes was guided by the use of the 4R framework (Novelli et al., 2017) to explore the university's peacebuilding agency, defined as

their ability to influence their conflict-affected surroundings, measured around the critical areas of redistribution, representation, recognition, and reconciliation.

My understanding of the institutional peacebuilding agency was informed by the 4Rs framework (Novelli et al., 2017, 2019). The framework was used to explore the University of Balochistan's capacity to promote representation, reconciliation, redistribution, and recognition in and through its institutional setup. Table 6 explains the focus of each *R*.

Table 6: The 4Rs and their Potential Indicators (Smith et al., 2016)

Redistribution (addressing inequalities)	Vertical and horizontal inequalities in education inputs, resources, and outcomes (quantitative data)
	Redistribution in macro education reforms or policies (e.g., the impact of decentralization and privatization on different groups and conflict dynamics)
Recognition (respecting difference)	Policies on the language of instruction
	Recognition of cultural diversity and religious identity in curriculum
	Citizenship and civic education as a means of state-building
Representation (encouraging participation)	Participation (local, national, and global) in education policy and reforms
	Political control and representation through education administration
	School-based management and decision-making (teachers, parents, and students)
	Support for fundamental freedoms in the education system
Reconciliation (dealing with injustices and the legacies of conflict)	Addressing historical and contemporary injustices linked to conflict
	Integration and segregation in education systems (e.g., common institutions)
	Teaching about the past and its relevance to the present and future
	Vertical trust in schools and education system, and horizontal trust between identity-based groups

Novelli (2017) emphasizes the need to pay particular attention to the local context while adopting the 4R framework. It is recognized that during its "application in policy, programming,

or research, the concepts of the 4Rs model must be translated in particular conflict contexts into the local understanding of redistribution, recognition, representation, and reconciliation (Novelli et al., 2017, p. 27). In the postcolonial context of Pakistan, these *Rs* are embedded in and shaped by the nation-building project and the struggles between political actors and the army. Thus, its indicators need to be aligned with contextual factors.

Table 7 elaborates on the translation of the 4Rs as informed by the local and national contexts. It organizes the key indicators of peacebuilding around the aspects of university governance, teachers, and students, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Interpretative Framework for Data Analysis

	Representation	*Redistribution*	*Recognition*	*Reconciliation*
Governance	Centralization vs Decentralization (vertical) Concentration or diffusion of power (horizontal) Institutional Autonomy (protection from political power)	Education and economy Access to higher education Higher education funding	Campus diversity Recruitment policy curriculum aligned with cultural, economic and political context	Community service Quotas in jobs and admissions Peace & Conflict study programs
Teaching	Participation in decision-making processes Teachers' union Academic freedom and autonomy	Job security Financial stability Social mobility	Teacher status	Research, seminars, public lectures, conferences, etc.
Students	Students' participation in decision-making Students' union	Equality of opportunity Affordability of higher education	Quality of education Cultural activities	Institutional and legal support for students Protection of

| Freedom of thought, assembly, and association | Employment and jobs prospects | | students from arbitrary arrest and abduction |

Data Analysis

The research data consisted of group and individual interviews with former and current university administrators, faculty, and student leaders. In addition, data also included archival records, higher education policy framework, and national security policy documents. The analysis of the national security policy framework was carried out using NVivo software. Guided by the theoretical framework of the 4Rs (Novelli et al., 2017) and the peacebuilding theory (Galtung, 2008; Galtung & Fischer, 2013), the analysis of the national security framework was performed using both open and closed coding techniques. Particular attention was given to the issues of the *actors in the conflict, dimensions of the conflict, drivers of the conflict,* and *the understanding of the role of education in conflict.* The deductively formulated four-fold categorization allowed the researcher to focus on issues relevant to the study objectives.

The higher education policy framework was analyzed using open and closed coding techniques guided by the study's theoretical framework. Particular attention was given to the ideological underpinning of the reforms, the rationale of higher education, and the strategies adopted to achieve the objectives of the reform efforts. These overarching categories facilitated the coding process and enabled the researcher to focus on relevant issues.

The analysis of the data collected through individual and group interviews was performed using the constructs of redistribution, reconciliation, recognition, and representation as guiding categories. To measure the institutional capacity to promote peacebuilding and trace its development through time, specific indicators were defined for each of the 4Rs. Furthermore, the

indicators were further categorized to capture the three distinct aspects of university governance, teaching and academics, and student politics.

Data were analyzed by developing analysis charts specifically designed for this purpose. These charts enabled the researcher to trace the evolution of the university's peacebuilding agency along each R and on the dimensions of university administration, academics, and student politics. Each R was analyzed longitudinally and cross-sectionally to allow for the emergence of distinct patterns and characteristics in the data. Based on this, three distinct phases of the development of the university's peacebuilding agency emerged from the data. Use in the study of the national security framework and higher education policy framework further corroborated the analysis of the primary data.

Sampling Technique

The difference between qualitative and quantitative methods can be best illustrated through the different logics employed in their sampling techniques (Patton, 2015). In the quantitative method, a relatively large representative sample is selected through random processes with the aim of producing generalizable knowledge. However, the logic underlying the qualitative method is not to reach a general statement but to have a deeper understanding of a particular case(s). Therefore, the different logic of each approach warrants different sampling techniques. Whereas in the quantitative method a statistical procedure is adopted to reduce human judgment, in the qualitative method, human judgment takes a central position. Thus, what is considered a weakness in the quantitative method in the form of "sampling bias" becomes the strength of the qualitative method (Patton, 2015).

The study adopts a purposeful sampling technique, defined as the selection of "information-rich cases to study, cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated" (Patton, 2015, p. 264). The central logic of purposeful sampling is to strategically select cases that align with the study's purpose and the research questions being asked (Morse, 2010; Patton, 2015). The information-rich case allows the researcher to learn a great deal from the participants. It yields an in-depth analysis and understanding of the concerned issue rather than ending in generalizations. Using a purposeful sampling approach, the researcher will locate the pivotal actors working in higher education institutions across the province.

The selection of a purposeful sampling technique is more aligned with the requirements of qualitative studies, which aim to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, instead of reaching generalizable conclusions. Because the intent of this study is not to produce knowledge that can be replicated and applied to other contexts, the selection of probability sampling[9] techniques were not warranted. It is important to note here that the representative nature of the research sample is the founding principle of probability sampling techniques. Since the current study does not intend to produce knowledge of such a nature, the representativeness of the sample is of less importance than selecting information-rich cases for data collection.

Several types of purposeful sampling techniques exist, depending on the nature of the research question and the characteristics of the study population (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). All types require the setting of a specific criterion or a set of criteria for the selection of cases; hence, purposeful sampling is also known as criterion sampling (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

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[9] A broad set sampling technique that ensures that each member of the research population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample, such as simple random sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling, or stratified sampling technique.

Maximum variation sampling involves selection of participants with the aim of including the maximum diversity in the study population. In contrast, *homogenous sampling* involves selection based on the similar characteristics of the research participants. The *expert sampling technique* is a type of sampling in which the expertise of the subject under investigation serves as a criterion for selecting the research participants. *Snowball, network,* or *chain* sampling is based on the initial selection of a few participants, who then serve as a link for further recruitment of the cases.

Adopting the purposeful sampling technique to select information-rich cases, the specific criteria used for selection in this study was the engagement of the participants in the university's governing practices and decision-making process at different levels and in various capacities. The criteria consisted of the participants' experiences as university administrators, teachers, and student leaders, whether in the past or present.

Network or snowball sampling techniques were used to recruit the research participants based on the abovementioned criterion. Due to the researcher's familiarity with the study context, a few participants were initially identified and contacted for the interviews and focus groups. Based on the recommendation of the original participants, new cases were identified and contacted for research recruitment. Developing a network of participants continued until data saturation was reached.

Positionality and Reflexivity

Because the researchers are not neutral or detached actors but part of the society they want to study, it is critical to be conscious of the latter's influence on the former (Hammersley & Paul, 2007). Reflexivity is a continuous exercise of being conscious of the self and of the self

with respect to others and being aware of the influences these have in shaping one's understanding of the world (Milner, 2007). Unlike in quantitative research approaches, where the researchers take a detached view of the social world, reflexivity in the qualitative paradigm is crucial because the researcher is centrally located in the process of knowledge creation. Thus, being conscious of personal experiences, the limitations of one's knowledge, and belief systems become relevant while approaching the research topic.

My interest in the topic stems from my personal experience and, later, my exposure to the field of education in emergencies during my doctoral studies in the United States. By the time I enrolled in the University of Balochistan for my undergraduate degree in the early 2000s, resentment among the ethnic nationalist groups against the state's neoliberal policies had already been seething. There were sporadic attacks on the state's installations and buildings, which ultimately blew into a full insurgency after one of the leading ethno-nationalist leaders and a province's former governor was killed in a military operation in 2006. In 2008, I joined the University of Balochistan as a lecturer. This was when the armed resistance against the state was at its peak, making the campus a hub of political activities amidst accusations of radicalizing the Baloch youth.

My views on the conflict were shaped by my personal and professional experiences and as a member of an ethnic minority group that was not at war with the state. I was conscious that the province was the most underdeveloped region of the country despite being richly endowed with mineral resources that the central government had exploited for decades under majoritarian setups and military rule. At the same time, I was inherently opposed to violence and armed resistance. To be reflexive of my views on peace, it mostly revolved around better

accommodating the marginalized groups in the existing political and economic systems. I considered greater educational opportunities as key to the socio-economic mobility of minority groups, which is characteristic of the human capital view of education (Becker, 1962; Schultz, 1971). I also recognized my previous understanding of the conflict as rooted in a neoliberal model of peace, which frames individual behavior as a problem, rather than discriminatory social structures which give rise to inequalities, hence enabling conflicts to occur.

However, the political economy literature on conflict, development, and education offer a better alternative to understanding and provides a framework for social change. The literature produced in the field of education in conflict-affected contexts, mainly through the lens of cultural political economy, enabled me to see things from a completely different perspective. It allowed me to transcend a narrow framing of conflict as driven by greed, education only as human capital, and development as Western modernization. With the agenda of social transformation for sustainable peace, informed by redistribution, recognition, representation, and reconciliation principles, I seek to critically examine the higher education sector in the conflict context of Balochistan.

Ethics of the Research

Research ethics require a commitment to a range of values, including but not limited to: getting informed consent from study participants, protecting their identity, minimizing the possibilities of risk and harm, and complying with institutional standards. In this section, I address the issue of research ethics, with a particular focus on the questions of informed consent, the risk involved, and the issue of maintaining confidentiality.

Before I began engaging in this research, I submitted the study proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Loyola University Chicago. The institution follows strict ethical principles of doing research and requires researchers to complete a mandatory Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course specifically designed for this purpose. After receiving IRB approval, I sent recruitment emails to the study participants along with the Informed Consent Form (see Appendices E and F). A summary of the consent form was also repeated orally, and participants' verbal consent was obtained before recording the interviews.

To minimize the potential risk to the study participants, the researcher maintained strict confidentiality of the data. To protect the identity of the participants, I retained only the audio files of the interviews while removing all the video recordings. All the data was kept in a local drive and was password protected. Each participant was anonymized, and the file linking data to the participants was kept separately. I was also conscious of the issues involving accidentally revealing the participants' identity, particularly when citing excerpts of the interviews in the main text. I paid attention not to reveal the titles and status of the teachers and administrators or the organizational affiliation of student leaders.

Conflict sensitivity while conducting the research was another major ethical concern in the conflict context of Balochistan. I was aware that research participants held divergent views on the issues, such as the causes of the conflict and peacebuilding measures. I was also conscious that many of the participants viewed the conflict as a legitimate struggle for independence while others looked at the conflict as an insurgency backed by foreign countries. Many participants had political affiliations and were emotionally invested in the issues discussed in this study. In a few

cases, particularly the student leaders, the participants had been previously exposed to physical harm due to their sympathies with the political cause and engagement in ethno-nationalist politics. Thus, I exercised my utmost ability to be conscious of all these ethical challenges stemming from the sensitivity of the research topic.

Validity and Triangulation

Triangulation is a method of checking validity threats in qualitative research (Denzin, 2017; Fielding & Fielding, 1986; Maxwell, 2012; Patton, 1999). It is used to establish the validity of the research by reaching the same conclusion through different methods and data sources (Patton, 1999).

> This [triangulation] involves using different methods as a check on one another, seeing if methods with different strengths and limitations all support a single conclusion. This strategy reduces the risk that your conclusions will reflect only the biases of a specific method, and allows you to gain a more secure understanding of the issues you are investigating. (Maxwell, 2012, p. 104)

Various kinds of triangulation are used in qualitative research, based on the use of multiple methods, theories, data sources, and investigators (Denzin, 2017; Patton, 1999). Method triangulation involves using multiple methods (archives, depth-interviews, surveys, observations, etc.) in a single study. Data triangulation uses various data sources, i.e., collecting data from different individuals, families, social groups, occupational groups, etc., about the same phenomenon. Theory triangulation employs other theories to evaluate and interpret the same data. Investigative triangulation involves the participation of more than one researcher in the study of the same phenomenon to enable them to compare their observations for increased validity. Through various triangulation techniques, a researcher can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the social phenomenon (Patton, 1999).

For this study, I used method triangulation and data source triangulation. The study relies on the use of individual and group interviews and the analysis of policy documents (see Table 5). The use of interviews and policy documents allows the researcher to develop a broader understanding of the topic and establish the study's validity. Furthermore, the use of multiple data sources, which is not restricted to faculty members only but involves the participation of administrative staff and student leaders, provides various perspectives on the same phenomenon (see Table 4). The use of the method and data source triangulation will contribute to developing a comprehensive understanding of the topic and add to the study's validity.

Limitations

No study can be expected to explain all the complexities of the subject being studied in its entirety (Fujii, 2010). Like all other research endeavors, this study is also bounded on several counts. The study is focused on one of the four political/administrative units of Pakistan; thus, its findings cannot be extended to other contexts of conflict within the country.

It is also important to note that conflict is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. In Pakistan, conflict manifests in various forms, most notably ethnic conflict, religious fundamentalism, and sectarian violence. Furthermore, these conflicts are not mutually exclusive but overlap. In Balochistan, the two major forms of conflict are ethnic and sectarian. However, the current study pays attention only to the ethnic dimension of conflict. I do not imply that other forms of conflict are less important. The only reason for focusing on the ethnic dimension of conflict is to narrow down the scope of the study and make the research more manageable.

The focus of study on Balochistan is primarily due to the researcher's familiarity with the context, his experience in the region, his desire to understand education's embeddedness in the

conflict, and his wish to contribute, in whatever little capacity, to social change. This also raises

the question of researcher bias and his implicit values that might shape the conducting of

research and analysis of the data. Regarding this, the researcher does not claim any neutral

position. But on the contrary, the theoretical framework used in the study acknowledges the

values of social justice and human rights as means of social change.

The study is also limited by its focus on higher education only. Thus, it does not concern

itself with primary, secondary, higher secondary, and technical education in the conflict context

of Balochistan. Using in-depth interviews and focus groups as primary means of data collection

is based on feasibility. However, it is also acknowledged that the fieldwork could have yielded

richer insights. However, the final decision to use depth-interviews and focus groups was based

on its practicality and feasibility, most notably the researcher's inability to travel because of the

possible restrictions imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, uncertainty regarding the grant of

visa, and environmental, time and financial concerns.

A methodological limitation also exists for the study. While tracing the evolution of the

university's peacebuilding agency through different historical periods, one major challenge was

the absence of written policy guidelines for the two initial historical phases. Regarding higher

education policy, the first comprehensive policy framework delineating the role, scope, and

function of higher education was developed in 2002, when a task force was constituted to

propose higher education sector reforms. The task force report was the first comprehensive

document that provided a blueprint for the sectoral reforms, which led to the creation of the

Higher Education Commission in the same year. Before this period, the higher education policy

framework was nonexistent due to the neglect of the sector.

This is also true for the state's security framework. The first comprehensive security framework was developed after the attack on Army Public School in 2014. In the aftermath of the attack, the government revived the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and entrusted it with formulating a comprehensive plan to fight terrorism and extremism. The first National Internal Security Policy (NISP) was framed in 2014, which became instrumental in legitimizing the security agencies' role in the education sector. Given these constraints, the researcher had to rely on the use of primary data (narrative interviews) and archival records (various Acts of the University and University Grants Commission) for the initial two phases of the history.

The researcher is also conscious of the limitations imposed by his lack of experience in doing practical research. Engaging in an empirical study without prior experience can be exciting and challenging, with all possibilities of mistakes and shortcomings. These challenges are particularly evident in defining the breadth of the research and the use and understanding of the theoretical framework. It has also been realized during this process that research is an ongoing process, with trials and errors and moving back and forth at each step. The researcher takes this opportunity as a learning exercise with openness to commit new mistakes and avoid repeating the old ones.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS

Introduction

The task of this chapter is twofold: to delineate the analytical framework used to answer the main research question, i.e., exploring the evolution of the university's peacebuilding agency in the conflict context of Balochistan, and second, to present the key findings of the study. To achieve this objective, the chapter is organized into two sections. The first section presents the interpretative framework of the 4Rs that is used to understand the institutional peacebuilding agency of the University of Balochistan. The second part presents the study's key findings, organized into three distinct phases of the evolution of the university's peacebuilding agency.

Adopting the Framework

In the methods section (Chapter Four), I presented a general framework of the 4Rs as developed by Novelli et al. (2017; 2019). The peacebuilding agency is measured as the institution's capacity to promote redistribution, recognition, reconciliation, and representation within its limits and play an enabler role for the larger society. The *representation* focuses on the political dimension of the conflict by highlighting the issues of inclusivity and participation in the decision-making processes as key peacebuilding factors. The *redistribution* pays attention to issues of economic and wealth inequalities in society both at the individual and the group level and emphasizes the redistributive role of education as a major peacebuilding mechanism. The

recognition pays attention to issues of cultural diversity and acknowledgment of the multiplicity of identities in society as means of promoting peace and social cohesion. The *reconciliation* focuses on the goal of achieving sustainable peace through trust-building, promoting mutual understanding, and addressing past and present injustices that enable the conflict to happen in the first place.

Although the 4Rs is a comprehensive framework, encompassing the political, economic, and cultural aspects of conflict, it needs to be sensitive to the conflict dimensions of the context in which it is used. This translation was partially carried out in the methodological section; however, I am presenting it in more detail here.

The issue of representation of ethnic minority groups in a democratic setup is a major challenge in the postcolonial context of Pakistan. It is bedeviled by majoritarian democracy under the shadow of military authoritarianism. On the redistributive dimension, society is marred with extreme economic inequalities, which often overlap with ethnic and geographical boundaries. Representation is another major factor in the conflict, as the nation-building project has historically sought to erase the cultural identities of the local population and tried to replace them with religious identities. The reconciliation efforts have been informed by the ideology of the security state, which sees the conflict through the prism of a foreign conspiracy. While there were some genuine efforts at reconciliation during the political governments, such as the 18th Constitutional Amendment and increasing the fiscal share of provinces in the federal revenue, these efforts were rendered largely ineffective due to the military's involvement in politics.

To make the 4Rs framework context-sensitive and use it to explore the institutional peacebuilding agency, I pay particular attention to the domains of the university's governance, teachers, and student body and how they intersect with the dimensions of the 4Rs. My primary

concern here is to develop a framework that would help explain how the university promotes representation, recognition, redistribution, and reconciliation through its governance and serves as an instrument to promote these values in the larger society. Table 8 presents the details of the framework.

Table 8. Data Analysis Framework

	Representation	*Redistribution*	*Recognition*	*Reconciliation*
Governance	Centralization vs. Decentralization (vertical) Concentration or diffusion of power (horizontal) Institutional Autonomy (protection from political power)	Education and economy Access to higher education Higher education funding	Campus diversity Recruitment policy Curriculum aligned with cultural, economic and political context	Community service Quotas in jobs and admissions Peace & Conflict study programs
Teaching	Participation in decision-making processes Teachers' union Academic freedom and autonomy	Job security Financial stability Social mobility	Teacher status	Research, seminars, public lectures, conferences etc.
Students	Students' participation in decision-making Students' union Freedom of thought, assembly, and association	Equality of opportunity Affordability of higher education Employment and jobs prospects	Quality of education Cultural activities	Institutional and legal support for students Protection of students from arbitrary arrest and abduction

Analyzing Peacebuilding Agency

In this section, I return to the main research question of how and in what ways the university's peacebuilding agency has been formed in the crisis context of Balochistan and present the study's key findings. Three distinct phases of the evolution of the university's peacebuilding agency emerge from the data. I describe these phases as *the era of bureaucratic authoritarianism (1970-88), the era of politicization (1988-2002),* and *the era of securitized neoliberalism (2002-present)*. It must be noted that the categorization of the history based on distinct features of the university's capacity to promote peace is not fixed, and there are no sharp and mutually exclusive boundaries between the various phases of the university. While exploring each phase around the concepts of *representation, recognition, reconciliation,* and *redistribution*, I pay particular attention to the domains of the university's governance, teachers, and students.

Tracing the evolution of the institution's peacebuilding agency reveals that the four dimensions of peacebuilding are not evenly influenced in each historical phase. The reason for the uneven effects on the four dimensions can be interpreted as the differences in the approaches adopted by the policy actors towards political participation, developing economic policy, and peacebuilding strategies. Table 9 depicts the peacebuilding dimension affected, negatively or positively, during each historical phase.

Table 9: Peacebuilding Dimensions Affected during Various Phases

	Representation	*Redistribution*	*Recognition*	*Reconciliation*
Era of bureaucratic authoritarianism	✓	✓	✓	
Era of politicization	✓		✓	
Era of securitized neoliberalism	✓	✓	✓	✓

The Era of Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism (1970-1988).

The first phase of the university roughly corresponds to the period when the political system was under the direct military influence. This phase is characterized by an authoritarian model of university governance, with civil-military bureaucracy playing critical roles in university administration. The nationwide ban on student unions follows the inhospitable environment for campus politics in 1984. Teachers are excluded from any role in university administration. The academic staff association remains unrecognized by the university administration, largely dormant throughout the period. The societal function of the university strongly correlates to the government services sector, with industrial sector jobs marked by its meticulous absence.

The study of the University of Balochistan Ordinance 1970 reveals that the administration was founded on the bureaucratic principle, which is based on a top-down governing structure with most of the powers concentrated at the top level. The provincial governor served as the chancellor of the university and enjoyed vast administrative and oversight powers. He was also the appointing authority for the vice-chancellor. The two offices of the

chancellor and the vice-chancellor (VC) dominated the entire university's administrative structure, excluding teachers and students.

Under the Ordinance of 1970, institutional authority was divided among various statutory bodies. These included the university Senate, Syndicate, Academic Council, Selection Board, and Finance committee. A degree of disbursement of authority existed within the institutional framework. However, the Ordinance also granted the chief executive officer of the university, i.e., the vice-chancellor (VC), sweeping powers. The VC was bestowed with authority to set the agenda and chair the meetings of all statutory bodies. This made the VC the most powerful individual in the decision-making process, second only to the Chancellor.

The composition of these statutory bodies also reveals the dominance of the vice-chancellor. All the members of statutory bodies, except the Secretary of Education and Director of Education, were to be nominated by the VC. The non-democratic nature of the statutory bodies enabled the smooth functioning of the authoritarian model and ensured that top-down decision-making did not meet any resistance from the teachers and students. In addition, the VC's authority to nominate members of statutory bodies empowered him to recruit only those who were expected the least to show any form of resistance. Thus, on the dimension of *representation*, the university governance depicts an exclusionary model of decision-making where authority is not shared with all the educational stakeholders and power is concentrated at the top level.

The social functions of the university closely corresponded to the administrative needs of the government. Data reveals that the primary motivation among university students was to join the elite civil services. The civil service refers to the bureaucratic organ of the state, instituted during British colonialism but continuing to exist in the postcolonial period. It is a major source

of prestige, political power, and social status. These are the most coveted positions within the

government-sector jobs, hence making them the primary motivation of university students.

> So, there is a one-point agenda for any educated youth: to get a job through the public service commission [recruitment agency of civil services] by any means. It has many benefits. First, it is a magic wand. The moment you pass the exam, your social class changes–from nobody you become an elite all of a sudden. You get social power, financial power, and administrative power all of a sudden. (Participant 8)

> But these positions are scarce and only a few students are able to get into civil service.

Thus, most of the students settle for other jobs within the public sector. These jobs include the

lower bureaucracy and teaching jobs at primary, secondary, higher secondary, and college levels.

Teaching jobs are not usually preferred due to the low salaries and social status attached to the

profession, yet they offer job security and a steady stream of income. Thus, many of the students

settle for teaching jobs as a last resort.

> But what are their job prospects? Nothing. So, what they do, they do one degree after another, and after that, another. If a person could not find an engineering job, he [sic] will do BS education to become SST [secondary school teacher]. If a person does not find any job, he becomes a teacher. (Participant 8)

The economic utility of a university education was mostly tied to public-sector jobs. The

UOB was wedded to the provision of human resources for the expanding government

departments. One of the reasons for this functional coupling with the government sector can be

explained through the dependency model of economic development. The region of Balochistan,

due to its abundant mineral resources and low population, was developed as a periphery that

produced the raw materials for the consumption and development of the urban centers in the

militarily and politically dominant province of Punjab. Due to the core-periphery relationship

between Balochistan and the central government, the former remained deindustrialized and

dependent on federal grants. Thus, the issue of UOB's relationship with the economy and individual productivity never arose in the first place.

> I will give you a small example. Muslim-Bagh [sub-administrative unit] produces Chromite[10]. But we don't have a processing plant in Balochistan. Now, how ironic is this: I also did a small research project on it, the chromite is sold almost free of cost to the [name withheld] Group, which is then transported to China. After processing, the same thing is imported back to Pakistan for use in the Karachi Steel mill. So, the value addition or value chain you are talking about is simply not there. (Participant 23)

Looking into the issue of university funding, the UOB was overwhelmingly dependent on federal grants. The federal funds were transferred through the erstwhile UGC, which mostly accounted for the recurrent expenditure. The university's own revenue consisted of examination fees and tuition, which were quite meager to meet the financial requirements of the institution. In addition to the federal grants, a portion of the university's financial needs was met through a provincial grant. Thus, the federal government was the major provider of public funds, followed by the provincial government, with a small portion of revenue coming from the university's own resources.

From the *redistributive* perspective, my analysis suggests a limited economic function performed by the university. The economic utility of higher education reflected on an individual's productivity and/or contribution to the economy seems to be circumscribed by the postcolonial condition. The university's function was closely associated with the training of youth for public-sector jobs in various administrative and services departments, including the governing teaching service.

The university campus has been culturally diverse since it started functioning in the early 1970s. The campus hosted teachers and students from various geographical regions and different

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[10] Mineral resource which is used in the manufacturing of steel.

cultural and class backgrounds. The list of staff published along with the University Ordinance 1970 shows that most teaching and administrative staff were appointed from outside the province, mainly Karachi city and the province of Punjab. There are two accounts for understanding this pattern of appointments. The first account points to the fact that there was only a handful of locally qualified candidates, while the other account highlights the historical bias of policymakers towards the local population. Ethnic tensions among teaching faculty and students were not salient during this phase of the university but became a major challenge during the 1990s, when democracy was restored after eleven years of Zia's dictatorship.

> No, no. I had Punjabi teachers, I had Pashtun teachers, and I had Baloch teachers. But they were teachers first and then whatever they were. They never gave us the impression that they treated us in a different way, or they had a soft corner for some ethnic group, etcetera. We never experienced such type of an attitude from our teachers. (Participant 9)

The university offered permanent jobs to its teaching and non-teaching staff. The teaching staff shared a pay-structured arrangement commensurate with the officer cadre of government servants, albeit with significantly less social prestige and financial perks and privileges. The teachers were recruited to a permanent position with entitlement to the pension fund after retirement at the age of sixty years. Thus, the university teaching profession offered a decent livelihood opportunity and reasonable financial stability to its members.

However, teachers were excluded from the university governing system. The statutory bodies did not have a representative character and were dominated by government officials. A handful of teachers were appointed as members of these bodies through nomination by the vice-chancellor of the university. Thus, the governing institutions did not genuinely represent the teaching community, and their voices were silenced through autocratic administrative machinery. The academic staff association came into existence in the late 1970s but was not recognized by

the university administration. It did not play any significant role in teachers' mobilization and was mostly dormant until the end of the military dictatorship in 1988.

The faculty responsibilities consisted solely of teaching. Although the Ordinance described the institution's function as "advancement and dissemination of knowledge," practically, it focused only on the latter. The university had adopted an annual system of evaluation where exams were held once at the end of each academic year. The university offered sixteen years of education in a variety of disciplines. In 1970, the university started with only three departments: i.e., Physics, Chemistry, and Geology. However, new faculties were soon added, and the number of departments reached seventeen by the end of the decade.

Despite the expansion of the university, the research component of UOB was missing from the beginning. The university curriculum did not include research as a subject in any of the academic departments. Furthermore, the university did not offer any program of higher learning. Faculty members seeking higher degrees such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. were required to go to other provinces. Because faculty promotions were based on the bureaucratic principle of seniority, higher qualifications did not offer any incentives for the majority of the teaching staff.

The student body was diverse and representative of the rich cultural, linguistic, and sectarian diversity of Quetta city and that of the larger province. Most of the students came from different regions of Balochistan, while there was also a substantive presence of students from other parts of the country. Using the vernacular categorization of population, the student body consisted of *locals*–Baloch, Pashtun, and a small minority of ethnic Hazaras, and *settlers*–people from other provinces, mainly ethnic Punjabis, Seraikis, and Muhajir (a term used to refer to the Urdu-speaking migrant community from India).

However, just like the teaching faculty, students were also excluded from taking any part in university administration. There was only one reserved seat for the students in the university syndicate, which was to be occupied by the vice-chancellor's nominee rather than the elected member of the student union. Thus, the governing structure of the university rested on the exclusion of the two major educational stakeholders.

The university administration was also hostile toward student politics. Before the proclamation of martial law in 1977, student politics was thriving on university campuses throughout the country. Progressive student unions such the National Student Federation (NSF) and Pakistan's Progressive Students Alliance (PPSA) represented a major challenge to the military dictatorship of General Zia. At the University of Balochistan, all the major student groups were united under the umbrella of PPSA. Ethno-nationalism was motivated by left-leaning and anti-imperialist politics.

> They were mostly progressives. Yes, nationalists were there, but they were not subscribing to fundamentalist ideology. At that time, we were all supporting the Afghan [communist] revolution. So, I would say that it was a progressive movement, and ethnicity was not much involved in it. (Participant 11)

> You know, at that time USSR had entered Afghanistan; the Cold War was at its peak. So many books from Russia [USSR] came here. The communist literature–Trotsky, Mao, Lenin, etc. These books were available very cheaply– *How to be a Good Communist* [book]–so we would read this literature in hostels and [student study] circles. (Participant 15)

Concomitantly, the state was engaged in the U.S. imperialist project of recruiting "Mujahideen" [holy warriors] to fight the communist forces in Afghanistan. People were being brought to Pakistan from around the world, trained and armed to wage war against the Soviet forces. During the 80s, religious fundamentalism got official patronage and spread through a chain of Madaris (religious seminaries) established through U.S. funds. Owing to the challenge

emanating from the progressive forces, the military dictator imposed a ban on student unions in 1984. University campuses were completely depoliticized and, in some cases, only those student groups who were affiliated with religious, political parties were allowed to function on campuses.

In UOB, a retired army Brigadier was appointed as vice-chancellor, who served for ten years. He was known for his strict demeanor towards students and his antipathy towards student politics.

> When we were students, when we used to sit in a [student organization] circle, he [Agha Akbar Shah] could see us from his second-floor office. He would come down in the trees and canteen, ask us to leave, and tell us that we are sent here not to take tea and do politics. He would ask every single student about his department; if the student was for example from Economics or English department, he would take that student to his department, and tell him that next time if found in the circle, he would be rusticated [from the university]. (Participant 11)

At UOB, the student union disappeared. With the ban on PPSA and NSF, the alliance of student groups splintered into ethnic factions. This period was foundational in student groups developing closer ties with ethno-nationalist political parties. This link became instrumental in the development of the conflict in the region.

The university's peacebuilding dimension of *recognition* lends itself to multiple interpretations. Most of the participants described the campus environment as peaceful and better than the latter two phases of *politicization* and *securitized neoliberalism*. The teaching faculty was diverse, education quality was said to be better, and teachers enjoyed higher respect than in later periods. This is also corroborated by the official document showing that many teachers had international degrees, which is quite astonishing.

One way of looking at it is to attribute the peaceful campus environment to the powerful university administration. An efficient governing structure, headed by an ex-military man,

ensured the rule of law and the autonomy of the institution from political influence. The administration was able to enforce the rules impartially on the students and teachers, which allowed the smooth functioning of the institution.

However, from an alternative view, the campus's peaceful environment can be described as a negative peace, which was maintained through authoritarian governing practices. During this phase, faculty and students' politics were banned and dissent was suppressed. In this view, ethnic prejudices are not the cause of the problem, but the outcome of the state's exclusionary politics and exploitative economic policies. These policies continued and became instrumental in enabling the shift from the *era of bureaucratic authoritarianism* to *the era of politicization*.

The Era of Politicization (1988-1999).

The next phase of the evolution of UOB's peacebuilding agency spans eleven years period between 1988 to 1999. This phase overlaps with the period of democratic rule in the country, which ultimately ended in another military coup by General Musharraf in 1999. The *era of politicization* is characterized by two major shifts that influenced the university's peacebuilding agency. Both these shifts are reflected in *representation* and *recognition* but without having substantial effects on the *redistributive* and *reconciliatory* aspects of the peacebuilding agency.

The first major shift in this phase is the democratization, albeit without inclusivity, of the university's governance system. With the return of the elected government, the University of Balochistan Ordinance 1970, which was issued by the military governor of the province, was abolished and replaced with the Act of provincial assembly in 1996. The University of Balochistan Act 1996 allowed the greater participation of the faculty members in the university's

statutory bodies through direct elections, but the new law stopped short of reviving student

unions on the campus.

Secondly, this phase is marked by a political shift, with ethno-nationalism emerging as a

dominant form of student politics. The movement from the politics of *redistribution* towards the

politics of *recognition* also resulted in increasing tension among various ethnic groups, as each

tried to be better accommodated in government services which ethnic groups traditionally

dominated from other provinces. In addition, the influx of Afghan refugees, mostly ethnic

Pashtuns, also created a rift between Baloch and Pushtun as the former feared turning into a

minority in its own land.

After democracy returned to the country in the 1990s, the resistance to exclusionary

governing practices became more visible. The academic staff association (ASA), which was

mostly dormant during the dictatorial period, became active. The faculty spearheaded the

movement to democratize the governing structure and to make it more inclusive. With favorable

political conditions, the ASA managed to frame the first Act of the university, which was to

replace the Ordinance of 1970.

> Under this Ordinance, we saw that the VC was acting like a gangster. We saw that other
> universities did have their own Acts. We asked them–Punjab University, Quaid-i-Azam
> University, Peshawar University, [and] Sindh University–to provide us with their Acts.
> Then we formulated our own Act, and it was presented [in the provincial assembly] as a
> private member bill and was approved. Due to this, we got our representation in statutory
> bodies. The ASA became active and powerful because they are sitting in front of the VC
> asking for their rights. (Participant 2)

The University of Balochistan Act 1996 was a big achievement. It was a giant leap

toward the democratization of university governance. It replaced the principle of nominating

teachers in the governing bodies with direct elections. It changed the formation of the university

senate, syndicate, and academic council so that the majority of members were the representatives

of the teaching staff, making unelected bureaucrats into a small minority. The Act also provided

for the representation of the ASA in the governing bodies.

From the perspective of *representation*, there was a marked improvement in the

participation of teachers in university policymaking. The new law democratized governance by

replacing the principle of nomination with elections. Faculty participation was further increased,

as the academic staff association also got representation in the university's statutory bodies.

Despite its democratic character, the governance was not inclusive of all stakeholders as the

student union was neither revived nor represented in the university's decision-making structures.

Similarly, student politics also returned to the campus, albeit in a different form. In 1984,

General Zia imposed a ban on student unions throughout the country, which depoliticized

university campuses. In UOB, to survive the military regime's oppressive policies, student

politics increasingly depended on ethno-nationalist political parties for its survival. The close

association of student bodies with ethno-nationalist parties resulted in the former losing its

independence and becoming subservient to the interests of the latter. It becomes more obvious

from the fact that despite the return of political government during the 90s, the ban on student

unions was never revoked.

> Basically, the [political] parties which call themselves nationalists, they have made these pockets [student organizations]. These are all the subordinate wings of parliamentary parties. They are not autonomous. Their leadership is selected by parties. There is no democracy–in all of them. Apparently, they have council sessions, they have elections, and they have elected unit secretaries, but all this is a sham. Everything is done according to the will of political parties. So, all the diseases present in our national politics can also be found in student politics. (Participant 12)

Due to the ban on *student unions*, student politics was organized as *student organizations*. Each

ethno-nationalist party had its own student organization. These were instrumental in recruiting

new members for their respective political parties and influencing university administration in

getting favorable appointments and gaining other benefits. The close functional relationship with

the regional political parties played a crucial role in the conflict. It directly exposed the youth to

nationalist ideas, which served as a catalyst in the conflict to come in later decades.

Excluded from the decision-making forums, the student organizations mostly relied on

their nuisance value to increase their influence. Their strength was drawn not from the law but

from their association with powerful political leaders. The ethnic agenda gradually seeped into

student politics. The politics of "otherization" also resulted in the creation of polarization among

student organizations. This polarization was more visible while gaining access to government

jobs, which is the largest employer of graduates.

> People [from other provinces] would make fake domiciles [residency certificate of
> Balochistan]. Their parents would be working in railways, post office, comptroller office,
> accounts–whenever there would be any opportunity, we [locals] would never get to
> know–it would not be announced–they would invite their relatives from Punjab, make
> their fake domiciles overnight– because those who made domiciles were also their own
> people [in bureaucracy]. (Participant 16)

The heightened sensitivity to ethnic marginalization also questioned the university's

recruitment policies. As the majority of the teaching and administrative staff consisted of people

from outside the province, ethnic prejudices became increasingly salient on the campus. Due to

mounting pressure, the government decided to open the door for local recruitment in the

university. The act of diversifying the faculty resulted in a blatant violation of merit, as a large

number of student leaders were preferred over deserving candidates.

> In administration and teaching, around eighty people were appointed, all from the
> political background–they were all from [student] organizations—without documents,
> without any due process. And because of these appointments, the university really took a
> nosedive. (Participant 15)

The increasing social schism led to disillusionment among many that democracy had

failed to deliver its promises. Among the students, there was a greater realization that ethno-

nationalism of tribal elites did not work for the betterment of the ordinary people of the province. They became increasingly weary of parliamentary politics within the Pakistani federal system and suspected the tribal elites of serving their own narrow interests. A new kind of national imagination was emerging among the student organizations, which was more egalitarian and anti-tribal elites. This reimagination of a nation and its entitlement to statehood was a prelude to the conflict after another military takeover in 1999.

On the dimension of *recognition*, a hypersensitivity to ethnic belonging emerged during the politicization phase. The salience of identity politics was negatively reflected in the campus peace. Social harmony among the various groups started to decline among the teachers and students. The induction of teachers based on their party affiliation led to the decline of teaching status and education quality. The ethnicization of politics also resulted in increased campus violence among student organizations.

This phase can be seen largely as a reaction to the earlier phase and its effects were mostly felt in the representation and recognition dimension of the peacebuilding. In the aspects of redistribution and reconciliation, there were no significant changes. With the marked absence of the industrial or services sector in the region, the university's social function remained closely associated with the government services sectors. Not much can be reported on the dimension of reconciliation.

The Era of Securitized Neoliberalism (1999-2022).

The current phase of the university's evolution of its peacebuilding agency includes periods of both civilian and military rule. Two factors stand out as having formative effects on the university's peacebuilding agency in this phase: first, the higher education sector reforms

inspired by the neoliberal economic ideology, and second, the youth engagement in ethno-nationalist politics that led to the securitization of the University of Balochistan. These two factors profoundly impacted the institution, with the former reflecting negatively on the *representative* and *redistributive* dimensions and the latter undermining the *representation* and *reconciliation* aspects of peacebuilding.

With the university being part of the state's administrative structure, any change in the nature of the latter directly affected the former. Thus, the securitized neoliberal era reflects changes in the nature of the state both with respect to its adoption and application of economic logics in the higher education sector and the appropriation of social sectors by security forces. The securitized neoliberal era is characterized by the university becoming an extension of the national security apparatus. The student politics inspired by ethno-nationalist ideology and their struggle for independent statehood transformed the university into a security subject. This securitization was further augmented by the university reverting to the authoritarian model of governance which rested on the exclusion of teachers from the university decision-making process.

The securitization unfolded in tandem with the neoliberalization of the university. The neoliberal project was underpinned by the idea of achieving economic growth using knowledge as a factor in the production process. The project manifested in increasing higher education access, a gradual shift of funding responsibilities from the government to the individual universities, and partially linking public support with the research output of higher education institutions. All this was to be achieved without changing economic structures, which rested on a very low tax-to-GDP ratio and indirect taxes.

The securitization project. The adoption of a new form of ethno-nationalist ideas by the Baloch student organizations precipitated the securitized neoliberal phase. The student politics during the *bureaucratized authoritarian phase* was subsumed under left-wing ideologies and was largely mobilized by a few influential tribal elders. Owing to its nature, its reach was geographically circumscribed to the regions where tribal structures were intact. However, in the early 2000s, efforts started to unite the various factions of the Baloch student organizations. This resulted in the formation of the Baloch Student Organization United. This new generation of students was uninformed by the ideas of the left but strictly adhered to a modernist and egalitarian version of nationalism that was averse to tribal hierarchies and was also independent of the control of political parties.

The organization shunned the idea of a loose federation with more rights to the provincial government but called for nothing less than an Azad (independent) Balochistan. The nationalistic articulation of politico-economic exploitation greatly appealed to the Baloch youth. The organization was able to recruit youth from all social backgrounds regardless of their tribal affiliation or class and gender divide. It started to pose a great security risk as it provided political leaders to the movement and those willing to take up arms against the state. With the ground already set, the killing of Nawab Bugti–a former governor and chief minister of the province—only proved as a catalyst for a full-scale insurgency in the province.

> You are asking me how these problems entered the university; I am saying that the planning to create those problems was carried out inside the university. Those strategies were being conceived inside the university because their main recruits were the students–either from [Government] Degree College, Balochistan University, or Polytechnic College, so they got their initial workforce for mobilization from there. So basically, what I mean to say is that this university became a place from where these [plans] were made. [The] University was never isolated to start with. (Participant 14)

The conflict prompted a strong reaction from the security apparatus and transformed the university into a militarized zone. A large contingent of paramilitary forces was deployed inside the campus. Political activities and student organizations were banned inside the university. A system of surveillance was put in place to track information regarding all activities inside the university premises. Student leaders, faculty members, and university staff, who were suspected of their engagement, politically or militarily, in the separatist cause were tracked down. A systematic policy of enforced disappearances, torture, and custodial killings ensued.

> The VC has no value. Students were picked up from the hostels of Balochistan University. Cameras captured everything. Balochistan university's vice chancellor said that he could do nothing in this matter. When I was abducted, the next day [the] chief minister was approached. He said that he could do nothing. Chief justice [name omitted] [Balochistan high court] said he could do nothing. So, what is the worth of [the] VC or the registrar? (Participant 17)

To make the university more governable and efficient in tackling the crisis, a new law was contemplated, which was finally approved by the provincial legislature as the Universities of Balochistan Act 2021. The Act restored the autocratic form of university administration with all powers concentrated at the top. The new law struck down all the democratic features of the university administration. It revoked the principle of direct election for all governing bodies of the university and reintroduced the vice-chancellors' authority to nominate the members of these bodies. The Act also eliminated the representation of academic staff associations from all bodies. Another feature, which did not exist in the Ordinance of 1970, was also included in the Act, which directly exposed the VC to political influence by making the office answerable to the provincial education minister.

> Now there is a mini-martial law. The VC has been given unlimited powers. Now there is no ground left for the teachers. Look, the syndicate is your highest body; how can a subordinate dean argue with the VC? He can't. Earlier, there were debates, and disagreements, we had a say, and now the door is wide open. Now whatever decision he

[VC] takes–legal or illegal—there is no stopping him. Now it is not impossible for them to terminate the teachers. I believe that the Act they have imposed has fully destroyed the university. (Participant 12)

Although the launch of a military operation against the dissident students, teachers, political workers, intelligentsia, and armed fighters led to the creation of negative peace, it has also resulted in heightened insecurity and a lack of trust among all stakeholders. In retaliation, the teachers of Punjabi ethnicity were particularly targeted and killed, including the vice-chancellor of the university in 2008. Many of the teachers migrated back to their provinces during the conflict. The use of blatant force left a deep scar that has been felt in all sectors of life, with a heightened sense of identity, "otherization," and lack of social trust.

> These political dissensions have created dissensions in all the departments including education. Earlier there were no such things. When Musharraf conducted an [military] operation, now this divide is not only visible but intensifying in every segment of society–you find Baloch students, Baloch teachers, Baloch doctors, Baloch lawyers, and Pashtun lawyers, etc. This is now very visible wherever you go; even doctors have got this feeling. Even the [civil] administration has [gotten] problematic. People from one ethnic group avoid going to the area of another ethnic group. (Participant 9)

The securitization project unfolding in the University of Balochistan is consistent with the national security framework. The state's counterterrorism and extremism policies present ethnicity to be a major conflict dimension along with religious and sectarian militancy. Ethnic conflict is mostly seen through the prism of "conspiracy theory," which attributes the cause of ethnic conflict to the misguided youth who have succumbed to enemies' propaganda.

> Fringe-violent sub-nationalist tendencies have been exploited by hostile intelligence agencies that have provided support and sanctuary to subversive elements. The ideological undercurrent for violent sub-nationalisms exploits socio-economic disparities and governance gaps. (National Security Policy, 2022, p. 30)

> There is also a need for countering propaganda of the terrorists that rests primarily on imagined grievances, exaggerated accounts of victimhood and irrational justification of use of violence. (National Internal Security Policy, 2014, p. 37)

Examination of the security framework reveals the integration of education as a central element to fight ethnic and religious militancy. Education is subsumed under the counterterrorist strategies and works as a security instrument for delivering the National Narrative against extremist, terrorist and nationalist ideologies.

> Constructing a robust national narrative on extremism, sectarianism, terrorism, and militancy is the cornerstone of an ideological response to non-traditional threats. Such a narrative is essential for coming up with common ideological denominators in a diverse society. Religious scholars, intelligentsia, educational institutions and media are the key stakeholders for constructing and disseminating the National Narrative. (National Internal Security Policy, 2014, p. 94)

The neoliberal project. During the same period, the state also pushed for reforms in the higher education sector. The reforms took place under an overarching ideology of a knowledge-based economy. The key idea behind the reforms was to achieve economic growth by using knowledge as a productive force. Thus, the Knowledge-based Economy (KBE) discourse emphasizes the need to recalibrate the higher education sector to meet the country's economic needs. The reforms characterized the national economy as one which is based on the production of basic food and agricultural products, which are considered low-value and less knowledge-intensive products. For Pakistan to excel in the global marketplace, this area was acknowledged to provide a competitive edge to the nation, given that the country developed sufficient scientific and technological capabilities. The task-force's report on the reforms of the higher education sector mentions this:

> Pakistan may have another chance with the new wave of Services-production globalization, which kicked off in the 1990s and is likely to accelerate during this decade. Companies in the US and UK are just starting the restructuring of their domestic services "production facilities" and re-locating them to countries which offer trained personnel and cost advantages. These white-collar "professional services" jobs, from technology development to financial transactions processing, rely on "brain power" (i.e., university educated workforces) and communication links and not much more. Pakistan can compete here. And if Pakistan can match other developing countries, such as India, in

producing this "raw material" of university-educated professionals in high enough quality and quantity it can become a "Services-export Tiger" rivaling the growth rates of the fastest growing Asian economies. (Task-Force, 2002, p. 21)

The idea of developing a knowledge economy provided a uniform vision statement for all the public-sector universities. To achieve this end, a centralized mechanism was introduced to govern the higher education sector. The Higher Education Commission (HEC), with a vast administrative, fiscal, and regulatory mandate, was established in 2002, replacing the much weaker body of UGC. In a bid to align research with the economic sectors deemed advantageous for the national economy, the HEC instituted a uniform curriculum for the public- sector universities. The imposition of a centralized curriculum directly clashed with UOB's autonomy and its ability to frame curriculum through its own Academic Council. It also violated the University of Balochistan Act 1996, which empowers the university to design its curriculum through a participatory process, beginning at the departmental level and finally approved by the academic council.

The decision rendered the academic council irrelevant and undermined the teachers' ability to control what was being taught inside classrooms. It was a counterintuitive step that reversed the process of fostering the teachers' agency and transformed them into mere agents of delivering the content.

A steadily declining budgetary allocation accompanied the increased administrative and political control by the sector's federal body. The data shows that despite the increase in higher education access, funding to the sector remained under one percent of the GDP during the last two decades. It is also important to note that the tax-to-GDP ratio of the country is one of the lowest in the world; thus, higher education funding consists of a "very small piece of a very small pie" (see Figure 6). Without enhancing the state's capacity to generate revenue through

progressive taxation, it was expected that the competition among the universities would make them more entrepreneurial, hence self-sustaining.

There is a marked trend of shifting funding responsibility to individual universities. The HEIs were encouraged to engage in businesses, enter partnerships with commercial entities, and launch commercially viable research projects. The Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) was established in each university to enhance its revenue-generating capacity. Furthermore, to make universities more competitive, part of the funding was tied to the research output of the universities. At the same time, universities were encouraged to be financially self-sustainable by increasing their tuition fees.

Figure 6. Tax to GDP Ratio–Pakistan. (OECD, 2022)
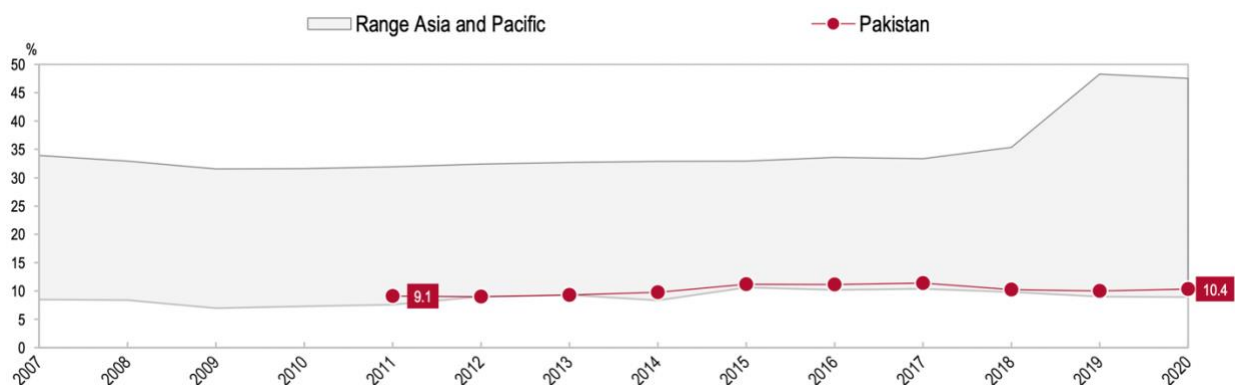
Interview data reveals a complete disconnect between the reforms and Balochistan's socioeconomic and political context. The University of Balochistan remained functionally associated with the provision of human resources to the government administrative and teaching services.

> The highest thing, you must have observed, for the students to think of is CSS [central superior services] got admission in economics, why? Because I want to do CSS; got admission in physics, why? Because I want to do CSS. A medical doctor would also be

thinking of CSS. We teachers, our university teachers also tell our students–dear, study hard, study well; After completing your degree, don't sit idle–you have to prepare for a commission [recruitment agency for civil services]. In this scenario, how can one expect to bring a knowledge economy? (Participant 1)

The data also suggests the continuity of the economy based on the extraction of mineral resources. Harnessing the capabilities of the province to produce more raw materials has been a major factor that contributes to the conflict. Thus, the local economy continued to depend on mineral resource extraction without any growth in the industrial or services sector outside of the government.

> We are adding new universities, but there is no economic base in Balochistan, right? All the universities we have established, what they produce is only unemployed graduates. It is not that we fail to perform our jobs, but when these students enter the job market, there are no opportunities available to them; neither government creates any opportunity for them. (Participant 13)

> Let me share the newspaper advertisement from yesterday. Barrick-Gold is a company. It wants to work on Reko-Diq[11]. It was written that the 50 percent [profit] share will go to the company, 25 percent to Balochistan, and 25 percent to Islamabad. For this Reko-Diq, Baloch people have laid down their lives. And what is more interesting: they are planning to take the raw material directly to the port, and it will be refined in Austria. In the twenty-first century, you won't find such examples. Coming back to the nationalist narrative [of internal colonialism], the state proves it right every single day. (Participant 17)

In a series of steps, the neoliberal reforms pushed the University of Balochistan towards a perpetual financial crisis. As a result of HEC's new policy of partially tying its funding to the universities' research output, UOB started to lose part of its funding due to competition with other universities. In addition, with the increasing number of HEIs and stagnating public support for the higher education sector, the money was more thinly distributed among the universities.

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[11] One of the world's largest undeveloped gold and copper mines. https://www.barrick.com/English/operations/reko-diq/default.aspx

Since 2013, federal support for UOB has started to decline gradually. Currently, the grant from HEC covers less than forty-four percent of total university expenses. The university's capacity to be financially self-sustainable through tuition and other resources remains very limited. Due to the gap between funding and expenditure, the university is faced with a dire economic situation. In fiscal year 2020-21, the university budget noted its largest shortfall of Rs. 846.127 million, which constitutes twenty-six percent of its total recurrent budget estimates. Between 2019 and 2021, the university of Balochistan was shut down on several occasions due to the strike on account of non-payment of salaries to the teachers and staff.

The financial crunch has also forced the administration to shift its recruitment policy in favor of hiring visiting faculty instead of permanent teaching staff. This study has found a consistent rise in tuition fees and hostel accommodation during the past two decades (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. The Annual Rise in Tuition.
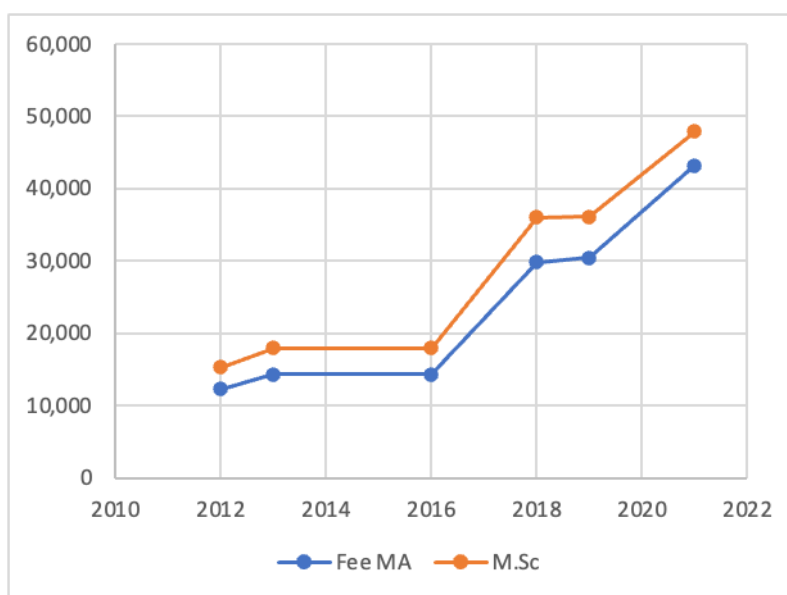
The securitized neoliberalism. Although securitization and neoliberalism are informed by different sets of ideas and have different objectives, in practice, securitization played a key role in enabling the neoliberalization of the university. The elimination of student politics from the campus ensured the steady increase in tuition and allowed the rising cost of higher education. Student politics was viewed through a security lens, and their struggle was conflated with the threat to national security. The securitization also enabled the administration to reassert its authority over the teachers. Consequently, the promulgation of the Universities of Balochistan Act 2021 brought all the public sector universities in the province under a single law. The law struck a fatal blow to the democratic nature of university governance and restored the hierarchical nature of governance to be easily controlled by the state's security apparatus.

However, one of the most important characteristics of the securitized neoliberal phase of the university's peacebuilding agency is marked by the erosion of trust in the state and its institutions. The security agencies violated its constitutional limits and rendered the judiciary ineffective. The human rights violations by the security forces and the court's inability to hold them accountable eroded the very legitimacy of the state, which is direly needed to end the conflict. The use of force has led to the establishment of relative peace in the region and inside the campus. However, the underlying factors that enable the conflict to erupt remain unaddressed. With the issues of missing persons unresolved and continued extrajudicial killings, it can be described as the phase of negative peace with all the possibilities of erupting into another round of conflict.

Conclusion

Exploring how the University of Balochistan's peacebuilding agency has been historically formed, this study reveals three distinct phases of its evolution. Based on its characteristics, I have described these phases as the *era of bureaucratic authoritarianism, the era of politicization,* and *the era of securitized neoliberalism.* These phases do not exhibit mutually exclusive features but have considerable overlap in the dimensions of representation, recognition, reconciliation, and redistribution.

The era of *bureaucratic authoritarianism* has influenced the university's peacebuilding agency in the dimension of representation, redistribution, and recognition. The distinctive feature of this phase is an exclusive mode of governance, with a hierarchical power structure, where power is exercised mostly by retired governance functionaries from the army or civil bureaucracy. The university mostly functions as a teaching academy to prepare students for various government-sector jobs. All forms of political activities are banned, and the campus environment is mostly described as peaceful and diverse in terms of faculty and student body.

The *era of politicization* is characterized by reactionary politics emerging from the economic marginalization and political suppression of the earlier phase. This reaction is mostly felt in the dimensions of representation and recognition. The authoritarian governing structure was dismantled and replaced with a more inclusive and democratic system of rule. Student politics was revived and organized as student wings of ethno-nationalist political parties. These organizations emerged as de facto policy-making actors that exercised immense influence over the university administration. The student body's close association with political parties became instrumental in "ethnicizing" the campus environment; thus, this phase is marked by increased ethnic tension and a decline in campus harmony.

The era of *securitized neoliberalism* affected the institutional peacebuilding agency of all four dimensions. The major factors that emerged to have formative influences on the peacebuilding agency are the higher education reforms and the security forces' increasing control of the university and its policymaking. It was revealed that the reforms introduced in the higher education sector were inspired by the neoliberal economic ideology, which manifested in increased administrative control of the universities and decreased financial responsibilities by the government. Higher education access was increased without increasing the state's capacity to fund public services. Funding responsibilities were increasingly shifted towards individual universities and part of the funds were also made contingent upon research production. This series of changes has pushed the University of Balochistan toward a serious financial crisis.

At the same time, students' engagement in ethno-nationalist politics transformed the campus into a militarized zone. Education infrastructure was occupied by the security forces and a surveillance system was set up. This period is also marked by human rights violations and the migration of teachers belonging to ethnic Punjabi groups. To deal with the security challenges, a strict ban was imposed on the students' political activities and new legislation was introduced which restored the authoritarian character of the university administration. Thus, the securitized neoliberal phase has precipitated crises in all four dimensions of peacebuilding.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ERA OF BUREAUCRATIC AUTHORITARIANISM

Introduction

Investigating the University of Balochistan's peacebuilding agency across the dimensions of representation, recognition, redistribution, and reconciliation reveals three distinct phases of its evolution. I have described these phases as the *era of bureaucratic authoritarianism, the era of politicization,* and *the era of securitized neoliberalism.* The first phase began in 1970 when the university was established and ended in 1988. This phase includes a brief period of civilian government (1972–1977), followed by eleven years of General Zia's dictatorship. The bureaucratic-authoritarian phase was succeeded by the politicization phase, which includes the ten years of civilian rule, i.e., 1988 to 1999. The final phase started in 1999 when another military coup was launched by General Musharraf and continues to the present time.

This chapter focuses on the first phase of the evolution of the university's peacebuilding agency, i.e., the *era of bureaucratic authoritarianism*. It uses narrative interviews with a wide range of educational actors, including former faculty members, administrators, and student leaders. The archival record also augments the interview data. The data reveals that the university emerged as an extension of government administration during the initial phase. It inherited a governing structure modeled on colonial administration where authority is concentrated at the top. The university's social function was closely aligned with the need to

expand the government sector. Hence, it served the role of preparing the youth to take up various roles in government-sector jobs, including administrative jobs and teaching services.

Before the declaration of martial law in 1977, the campus represented a vibrant public space. It hosted a diverse teachers' community, progressive student organizations, and a union. However, faculty and student politics remained outlawed during the eleven years of military dictatorship. The army's rule became instrumental in shaping national and regional politics through its policies of Islamization, propagation of right-wing ideologies in support of Afghan jihad, and depoliticization of university campuses.

This chapter begins by outlining the governing model of the university and how it has shaped the *representation* aspect of peacebuilding. It is followed by detailing the funding mechanism of the university. The next section explores the social function of the university and provides an account of its close association with government administrative and teaching services. The final section details the issues of students and campus politics on the university campus.

The Governing Apparatus of the University

In 1970, the discrete administrative units comprising the various regions of Balochistan were merged into a single province. In the same year, the province also got its first university through an Ordinance issued by Governor Riaz Hussain–a serving general in the Pakistan army. Article 5 of the Ordinance chalked out a new jurisdiction for the university, which included control over the conduction of examinations, an inspection of schools and colleges, affiliation and recognition of colleges, conferral of degrees, etc., in the whole province. Earlier, these functions were performed by Punjab University. Similarly, the university's jurisdiction also

extended to the secondary and intermediate level of education, which later ended after the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Balochistan was founded. Thus, one of the university's primary objectives emerged from the practical necessities of the new province, giving an administrative character to the educational institution.

The university administration was established on a bureaucratic foundation. It was an authoritarian structure with all administrative and decision-making powers concentrated at the top. Article 9 declared the provincial governor to be chancellor of the university, having ultimate authority over matters pertaining to the university, including the appointment and accountability of the key office holders. The chancellor could initiate an inquiry or inspection with respect to all matters of the university. The chancellor had the authority to advise the university Syndicate, and in matters of dissatisfaction with a decision taken by the latter, the former could "issue such directions as he [sic] thinks fit, and the vice-chancellor shall comply with such directions" (Article 10(4)). In case of non-satisfactory performance or action inconsistent with the Ordinance or university rules by any office holder, the chancellor could issue show-cause notices to the office holders, including the vice-chancellor. The chancellor also had an exclusive right to appoint the vice-chancellor (VC), who was next in line of authority and held sway in the routine affairs of the university.

The VC was to be the university's principal executive and academic officer. It was their job to ensure that all rules, regulations, and provisions of the Ordinance were faithfully observed. The office of the VC was empowered to appoint, punish, and dismiss university employees in accordance with the provision of the statutes and Ordinance. The VC presided over the meetings of all statutory bodies and was responsible for the appointment of its members. The chancellor

and vice-chancellor were the two central pillars within the governing structure, with all-encompassing authority over the university's affairs.

Despite being created after three decades of independence, the university's governing structure was based on the colonial model. Many of the features of the Ordinance can be traced back to the Punjab University Act (Amendment) Ordinance 1954, which itself is founded on the prior Punjab University Act 1882, and Indian Universities Act 1904. The division of the university's authority is consistent with the prior Acts, which provides for:

- Syndicate

- Academic Council

- Board of Studies

- Selection Board

- Finance Committee

- Committee for Advanced Studies and Research

- Planning and Development Committee

The way the members of these bodies are recruited reflects the non-participatory and authoritarian nature of the university's administration. All the statutory bodies, including the Syndicate, Board of Studies, and Selection Board were chaired by the VC, and their membership consisted of local bureaucracy and the chancellor or vice-chancellor's nominees. The non-representative nature of statutory bodies ensured the unitary structure and represented the continuity of the exclusionary model of governance since the colonial period. The discretion to appoint the members of statutory bodies was often used to extend patronage, which also created an "obligation" for the members to reciprocate the favor to the appointing authority.

The statutory bodies of the university–syndicate, senate, and others–all these bodies were made on the personal choice of the VC. These were not democratic institutions where faculty or students are represented. VC would appoint the dean of arts or the dean of science and make them sit beside him–and these people would be personal friends. So, everything was under his control. No, we can't call it democratic by any means–political activities were outlawed for faculty and students, and no one could dare to be politically active. (Participant 2)

The history of appointments of the institutional head reveals an interesting pattern. The data shows that during military dictatorships, teachers were always ignored for the position of the VC. Instead, retired army officers, civil servants, and justices were preferred over the university faculty. Due to colonial entanglement, administrative jobs are bestowed with high prestige in society. The teachers are often considered unfit for administrative jobs, which reflects their low social status. (See Table 10.)

Table 10. List of Vice-Chancellors

	Vice-Chancellors	Profession	Dates
Military Dictatorship	Dorab Patel	Retired Justice	1970–1972
Civilian Government	Karrar Hussain	Professor	1972–1976
Military Dictatorship	Agha Akbar Shah	Retired Army Officer	1976–1986
	Hassan Baloch	Retired Civil Servant	1986–1990
Civilian Government	Shaukat Baloch	Professor	1990–1991
	Muhammad Khan Raisani	Professor	1991–1993
	D. K. Riaz Baloch	Professor	1993–1997
	Bahadur Khan Rodeni	Professor	1997–2001
Military Dictatorship	M. A. Rasheed	Retired Justice	2001–2004

Ghulam M. Taj	Retired Civil Servant	2004–2006
Agha Ahmed Gul	Retired Army Officer	2006–2008

The data also shows that the vice-chancellors, with their ability to impose a strict disciplinary code on the campus, were often remembered with fondness. The most interesting case is that of Agha Akbar Shah, who remained vice-chancellor for ten years during Zia's dictatorship. Many of the interview participants recalled him as a good administrator, although he seemed to have no stomach for campus politics. He represented an ideal type of a "colonial administrator"–a "tough guy" who wanted to educate the people without letting them be socially engaged and politically organized.

> He was a different kind of person. You would not believe, when any outsider would come, he would grab him by his collar—"What are you doing here?" He would not allow anyone to enter [university]. He would not allow anyone to sit on the benches [student circles]. (Participant 15)

> He had a very harsh attitude. One day–let me share an anecdote. I was walking with the chairman of BSO [Baloch Student Organization] [name withheld]. So, we were standing there when he came [VC] and grabbed him and took him to the office. After the incident I asked him what happened; "Yeah, he was angry that I don't let students study: don't do such activities on campus." (Participant 11)

From the perspective of *representation*, the university governance presents a model which mimics the postcolonial government administration. It rests on the bureaucratic principle of hierarchy, where authority flows from top to bottom. The data reveals that the administrative authority was not shared among all the educational stakeholders but was restricted to the administrative staff of the university. At the top of this hierarchy were the chancellor and the vice-chancellor, who dominated all aspects of the university's functions. Although the Ordinance

provided for the distribution of authority among various statutory bodies, its membership was restricted to bureaucrats and the chancellor's and vice-chancellor's nominees.

University Funding

In Pakistan, education has been a lesser-priority subject throughout history. The education budget, particularly for the higher education sector, had remained very low. Historically, the education budget has hovered around one percent of the GDP, with higher education making up only a fraction of the total education budget. Similarly, the tax-to-GDP ratio of the country is also one of the lowest in the world. Thus, the government is not only spending a small portion of its earnings on education but is also unable to generate a sufficient amount of revenue through taxes. As a result, the education sector has been in perpetual crisis.

However, access to higher education during the 1970s and 1980s was very low. There were only a handful of public-sector universities in the country. The funding for the public sector universities was provided by the federal government through the University Grants Commission (UGC). The UGC's role was mostly that of disbursement of public funds to individual universities, with very restricted regulatory or administrative authority over individual universities. Thus, the public-sector universities in Pakistan were financially dependent on the federal government, while in other matters, provincial governments had exclusive authority over the establishment of universities, making appointments, and framing rules and regulations for the higher education institutions.

Due to very low access to higher education, government funding was sufficient to meet the requirements of the universities. The University of Balochistan started with only three departments in 1970. But many new departments were added in the next two decades. Despite its

expansion, the university staff was less than five hundred, and funding was not a big challenge. The university was financially dependent on grants from the federal government, with the provincial government also contributing to its finances. The federal funds were channeled through the UGC, which was responsible for financially supporting the university and maintaining standards in teaching and research.

The university had few sources to support itself financially. The biggest and most sustained source of earnings was through the registration and exam fees charged to private candidates. The tuition fee and the hostel charges for the regular students were low, thus making higher education affordable to many students. However, the income generated through the university's sources was also very low, and it overwhelmingly relied on federal and provincial government grants.

University and Government Administration

The data shows that the social role of the university was closely associated with the production of human resources for the postcolonial state apparatus. It is almost common sense that a university degree leads to a job in the government sector. This is primarily due to the political and economic factors of the region. As stated in previous chapters, Balochistan remained the provider of various kinds of raw materials extracted and consumed in other regions of the country. Due to the nature of economic development, the industrial sector failed to emerge in the region, and the government sector remained the largest provider of jobs.

In terms of socio-economic mobility, the university offered few incentives. In most cases, the data revealed a lack of students' motivation and career planning.

> There was no such thing as career counseling, right? Everybody, you know, used to take admission in whatever faculty he could find chances of getting admission. And thereafter,

once he [completed] his degree, he would hunt around and go around and find out that wherever he could find a job he would try his luck. (Participant 9)

Ah, nothing special! Some of the students would go for political science, social science, IR; they would have a craze for CSS and PCS [federal and provincial bureaucracy]–I want to be an Assistant Commissioner, I want to be a DSP [Deputy Superintendent Police]; that was the main target. Overall, for example, most of the students join [university] departments by chance. To be on the safe side, they apply in three different departments [for admission] at a time. They go where they get a chance–just to be part of a university education. This is also considered a big achievement. No motives, no future plan, except for [a] few who are planning for CSS. (Participant 2)

However, within government-sector jobs, the motivation to join civil services emerged as a common factor driving students toward the university in each era. Civil service refers to the officer cadre of the government administrative machinery, which offers high social status, political clout, and financial stability through various means. Due to these factors, it appeared as the most desired job for the students of UOB. But civil service jobs are very limited. Most of the students end up taking other jobs, most notably the teaching service.

Those students who are competitive and good, those whose background, schooling, and college education are good, they are able to do CSS [central superior services]. So, there are no objectives of the students as such in Balochistan, that if I am doing a degree in Physics [I] will find a job in my related field. After doing the Master [undergraduate], the main job they get is to become a lecturer in the college, if you are a position holder then you might join the university faculty, if not then the school teaching. (Participant 2)

The study shows that the *redistributive* aspect of the university's peacebuilding agency was very restricted and was almost exclusively tied to employment opportunities in the public sector. The data does not make explicit reference to the economic utility associated with getting a university degree; however, there are many references to the role of universities in raising political consciousness (see Chapter Eight).

University Faculty and Academics

The teaching faculty during the initial phase of the university was appointed mainly from outside the province. The majority of teachers were from Pakistan's port city of Karachi, followed by the Punjab province. One of the major reasons given for the appointment of non-local teachers was the lack of availability of qualified local candidates.

> When the university was founded in 1970, people we call locals–Baloch and Pashtuns—the literacy rate was quite low among them. The main reason was that they had to do even Matric [high school diploma] from outside the province. For B.A. [Bachelor of Arts] and M.A. [Master of Arts], they had to go to Punjab University. (Participant 2)

In 1980, there were seventeen teaching departments in the university with a total strength of ninety-five teaching faculty. Out of these, at least twenty-five teachers had foreign qualifications from advanced industrial nations, including the UK and USA. Sixteen of the faculty members had doctoral degrees. Interview data reveals that these teachers were highly regarded during the initial phase of the university.

> Prof. Karrar Hussain [VC] was a very respectable person. When he became a vice-chancellor, he brought most of the staff from Karachi–Prof. Mujtaba Hussain, Prof. Dr. Ahsan Farooqi, Dr. Bande-Hassan, and other prominent names. They laid the foundation of the university. You won't believe how good was the environment back then. In the evening, we would gather with our respected teachers in the university colony. It was so romantic; it was so friendly [environment]. (Participant 7)

The data suggests that the appointment policy was largely based on the meritocratic principle. However, the outcome of this policy was that the majority of the teachers who joined the university were not from Balochistan. This, however, did not emerge as a major challenge during the foundational period of the university but became a challenge during the politicization phase. The campus environment was described as very peaceful and based on mutual respect.

> Yeah, they [appointments] were mostly according to the procedure. You know in Pakistan, people do influence–it existed earlier, and it exists now, but I would say that the earlier period was better–more competitive people–which we don't find now. Just look at

the quality of education–the quality of education should improve with time, but it has deteriorated. The faculty we would find in the 70s, we don't find them anymore–we have more local teachers, but they are very weak. (Participant 2)

As far as the university is concerned, I succinctly remember that it was very good. There was love and a feeling of belonging among the teachers who were from Karachi, and those who had come from Punjab. There was respect for teachers. And the student union; it gradually disappeared after the end of the Bhutto period, and party-based unions became more visible, due to which there was some tension. But overall, the environment was favorable. (Participant 7)

The issue of harmony among teachers and students and the absence of ethnic prejudices can be interpreted in at least two ways. On one reading, this can be attributed to a strong university administration that kept politics out of the campus. The all-powerful vice-chancellor was able to maintain a strict disciplinary code in the university, which did not allow ethnic biases to enter the campus. The administration was also able to resist political influences while maintaining a meritocratic policy in university recruitment. Thus, a strong and powerful administration allowed a peaceful campus environment and better education quality.

However, this can be an ahistorical reading of the earlier phase of the university, which is based on the colonial logic of unruly people requiring a strong administration to govern them. An alternative explanation is that during the foundational period, access to higher education was very limited. There were enough government jobs available to accommodate the majority of the students. This, however, changed with the passage of time, and public-sector jobs became an increasingly rare commodity. As we enter the phase of politicization, the conflict over jobs becomes one of the major challenges, which ultimately resulted in replacing the meritocratic principle with the principle of political appointment.

The University of Balochistan was founded as a teaching and research institution. The Ordinance stated the university's objective as the "*promotion* and *dissemination* of knowledge in

the province," but its function was primarily confined to disseminating knowledge. This was despite the university having sufficient human resources to support research activities. This, however, did not happen. The curriculum adopted by the university from the beginning had no research component. Research as a subject of teaching and practice was not integrated into the curriculum adopted by the university. The subject was not taught in any of the departments. Furthermore, the programs of M.Phil. and Ph.D. were not included in university education until 2001.

One way to understand the university's inability to develop into a research institution is to pay attention to the functional link developed between the university and government services. Historically, the province of Balochistan and the University of Balochistan came into existence in the same year. The establishment of new government machinery required a large number of human resources, which the university came to provide naturally. This developed a close functional association of universities with public-sector jobs.

> I told you when it [Balochistan] became a province, so it was a new province, the entire [government] secretariat was being built–[government] jobs were plentiful. It wasn't a problem. Many people from Punjab had also vacated the positions, so there was a vacuum. But later the population increased, and so [did] the competition. But it wasn't a competition as such, but nepotism and recommendations. (Participant 7)

> It [education quality] was good, very good. Until 1986, what I observed, it was very good. Let me tell you one thing—there was cheating, no doubt, there was cheating, but the university produced many good people. They would join different departments. Out of my own fourteen classmates, only one started a cloth shop; all the rest got good government jobs. (Participant 15)

The public-sector jobs did not require the development of particular kinds of skills. The examination to get into government services consisted of English essay writing, General Knowledge, Pakistan Studies, and Islamic Studies. The exam is primarily based on the rote learning model, which was antithetical to the development of critical skills. Due to the functional

coupling, there were no efforts by the university administration to reorient its curriculum towards higher learning; they remained wedded to the government services exam.

Students and Student Politics

The data shows a shift in student politics during the first phase of the evolution of the university's peacebuilding agency. Student politics, organized under the progressive student bodies and student unions, had their presence in all public-sector universities across the country. Pakistan's Progressive Students Alliance (PPSA) and the National Student Federation (NSF) were very active on campuses and had a huge following among the youth. These student bodies represented youth from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. This, however, was to end after the Islamization project launched by General Zia, which also coincided with Pakistan's engagement in Afghan jihad during the 1980s.

In the University of Balochistan, a student union existed on the campus but was not recognized under the University Ordinance of 1970. The university governing apparatus meticulously excluded the representatives of the student unions. In the university syndicate, one seat was reserved for a student, who was to be nominated by the vice-chancellor. Thus, students were not genuinely represented in any of the governing bodies.

The nature of student politics at UOB during the 1970s and 1980s represents a gradual shift from left-wing ideology to more identity-based politics.

> [laughs] Yeah, we were idealists at that time. At that time politics was at its peak. Afghan [communist] revolution was in the background. So, in our minds, it was not what I want to become; we wanted to bring revolution; we wanted to liberate the country. (Participant 15)

> An alliance was made at that time–it was called PPSA–Pakistan Progressive Students Association. All the progressive-minded people were part of it. It was throughout

Pakistan. Here, we would celebrate Afghanistan Day–police would come, then there [would] be a baton charge, then running, and hiding. (Participant 11)

Although student groups were organized around ethnic identities, their politics was informed by progressive ideals. This was reflective of the larger political milieu of Pakistan during the 1960s and 1970s. At that time, all the major ethno-nationalist political parties had formed a coalition under the leftist National Awami Party. The progressive ideology also found its expression in student politics. At the University of Balochistan, the ethnolinguistic student groups were working under the larger umbrella organization of PPSA, which gave students unity and strength. Ethnic tension inside the campus was also described as far less salient than in the 1990s and 2000s.

The participants also alluded to the quality of student leadership during the earlier phase of the university's peacebuilding agency. Regarding the question comparing the quality of student leadership in the earlier period to that of the 1990s, two of the participants responded,

> I think that, if you compare my time as a student [early 80s] with the current period, I will say the leadership of PSF [Pashtun Student Federation], Baloch organizations, and others; they were very mature. I used to live in a hostel. You would not believe me that their members would take second-time classes–of every subject. They have designated students who would teach others who were academically weak. When I recall that time, I always say it was a wonderful time. After university, there was a Metropolitan hotel on Jinnah Road. We usually went there–and there would be a lot of political debates.
> (Participant 11)

> You know, the class environment here; Prof. [name withheld] would tell us stories only. They did not like us doing politics. So when in the canteen, we would discuss this thing [politics]; when in the hostel, we would discuss this thing [politics]. And these leaders [of student organizations], many of them are now MNA or MPA, they would encourage us to study. They would ask us not to miss the class; have the expertise of your subject and then do the politics. (Participant 15)

However, after the military coup in 1977, the progressive student unions were confronted with a threat emanating from the military's ideological project of Islamization. Thus in 1984,

General Zia imposed a nationwide ban on student unions and started a crackdown against the student and political leadership. The public-sector universities were purged of all kinds of political activities. In some cases, the student groups associated with the Islamist political parties were allowed on the campuses. The regime encouraged the spread of right-wing ideologies through these student groups.

Zia's military rule was instrumental in radically transforming society through its Islamization project. The regime engaged itself in an imperial war and turned the country into a training camp to launch "jihad" in Afghanistan against Soviet forces. The regime systematically crushed progressive movements and political parties.

> The anti-revolutionary elements in Afghanistan were brought here as refugees. They were in huge numbers, more than fifteen lac [1.5 million]. They were given training; they were given arms. Dollars were also poured in. The progressive forces [in Pakistan] were crushed because they were supporting the communist revolution there [Afghanistan]. That's why western powers supported General Zia to stop the communist influence in the region. Zia got eleven years and he changed the entire political geography of the country. He introduced madrassah culture; he introduced Kalashnikov culture. (Participant 11)

At the University of Balochistan, a strict ban was imposed on all kinds of political activities. The top hierarchy of the university administration consisted of military personnel, including the chancellor and the vice-chancellor, who ensured that no such activities took place inside the campus. The military dictatorship during the 80s played a pivotal role in transforming the nature of student politics and their organizations. On the one hand, the regime embraced the ideologies of political Islamism and supported student groups associated with religious, political parties, while on the other hand, it suppressed the nationalist and secular forces in the country.

The effects of Zia's policies were far-reaching. The ban on progressive student unions, the patronage of right-wing politics, and the engagement in the imperialist project of launching jihad in Afghanistan left indelible marks on the country's society and politics. It marked the

polarization and radicalization of society. In Balochistan, the influx of Afghan refugees, who were mostly Pashtuns, created ethnic division among the local population and led to the salience of identity politics. Student organizations forged a closer alliance with the ethno-nationalist political parties for their survival and became instrumental in "ethnicizing" the campus. Thus, the stage was set to transform the *era of bureaucratic authoritarianism* into the *era of politicization* once democracy was restored in the country after 1988.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the distinctive features exhibited by the university's peacebuilding agency during its initial phase of evolution. I described this phase as bureaucratic authoritarianism, in which the institutional peacebuilding agency was influenced by the dimensions of representation, redistribution, and recognition. On the dimension of *representation*, the data shows a hierarchical model of governance with most of the authority concentrated at the higher level. The authority was dispersed among various governing bodies; however, a closer look reveals the domination of the top administrators in each body. The composition of these statutory bodies revealed their exclusive nature. The membership of these bodies mostly consisted of government officials and the nominees of the vice-chancellor. Thus, the two key stakeholders–teachers and students–were excluded from all decision-making forums. Furthermore, this authoritarian setup was oftentimes headed by a retired bureaucratic army officer or a justice, hence giving the institution an overwhelmingly bureaucratic-authoritarian look.

On the *redistributive* dimension of peacebuilding, the study shows a limited role played by the university, primarily due to its close connection with public-sector jobs. The primary

reason for the functional coupling of the university with government employment is the lack of industries and the absence of the private sector in Balochistan. Data pointed to political economy factors and the state's development model pursued in Balochistan to be the main cause of the region's underdevelopment, which will be discussed in Chapter Eight in more detail.

On the dimension of *recognition*, the campus represented a diverse and largely peaceful environment. The decade of the 1970s shows that the recruitment policy was mainly based on merit, which resulted in more people coming from other regions of the country. This, however, did not result in causing ethnic tension among the faculty members. The academic staff association was founded in the 80s but was mostly dormant due to the military government.

Although the faculty mobilization was mostly dormant, student politics witnessed a radical transformation during this phase. During the 70s, the campus hosted multiple student organizations. The boundaries of the student bodies mostly overlapped with their ethnic identity. But their politics was more informed by left-wing ideologies. During the military dictatorship of the 1980s, they were working under the larger umbrella of the Pakistan Progressive Student Alliance. This, however, did not go well with the military regime, which was highly invested in spreading religious fundamentalism in society. Consequently, progressive student unions were uprooted, and a ban was imposed on student unions in all public-sector universities. At the University of Balochistan, the ban became instrumental in forging a closer alliance between students and ethno-nationalist political parties. This became a prelude to the politicization phase of the University of Balochistan.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ERA OF POLITICIZATION

Introduction

The era of politicization coincides with the period of restoration of democracy in the country (1988–1999). This phase of the evolution of the university's peacebuilding agency reflects the reaction to the exclusionary form of politics during the previous decade of military dictatorship. The reaction to the policies of the previous regime is mostly felt on the dimensions of *representation* and *recognition*, without significantly influencing the *redistributive* or *reconciliatory* aspects of peacebuilding.

The increased intensity of political activities on campus characterizes this phase of the university's peacebuilding capacity. The politicization phase witnessed an expansion of teachers' rights and their participation in university governance. The subjugation of university administration accompanied the growing influence of the teaching community by the academic staff association and student organizations. Another important aspect of this phase was the return of student politics, albeit in a different form: i.e., the student organizations getting morphed into student wings of ethno-nationalist political parties. With the salience of ethnic identity as a significant form of political mobilization, the closer ties between the student and political parties became instrumental in bringing ethnic tensions and prejudices inside the campus. This chapter begins by outlining the factors that emerged as instrumental in transitioning from the

bureaucratic-authoritarian phase to the phase of politicization. It is followed by exploring the university on the dimension of representation and the changing governing system in the wake of the new legislation. The next section highlights the nature of student politics and its implications on the campus environment. The final section presents the crisis of learning precipitated by hyper-nationalist student politics.

Towards the Transition

The shift from the bureaucratic-authoritarian era to the politicization phase represents the movement from one extreme to another. During the former, the university administration enjoyed all-encompassing powers over the university's affairs. The institution was being run as a dictatorship of one man. The authority was not shared, nor was it representative of the critical stakeholder of the higher education institution. The campus environment was also hostile to any form of political activity, coupled with the ban on student unions.

However, two major changes directly affected the university's peacebuilding agency and facilitated the transition from one phase to another. The first significant issue that emerged during the 1980s was the influx of Afghan refugees in Balochistan. During the so-called Afghan jihad, the Pakistani state hosted over three million people from Afghanistan. Many of them were indoctrinated, trained, and armed to fight Soviet forces in Afghanistan. But a large number of them stayed in Pakistan and were integrated into the local market by performing menial labor.

The overwhelming majority of these refugees were ethnically Pashtun. Their settlement in Balochistan in large numbers resulted in changing the local demographics. It created fear in the Baloch ethnic group of being turned into a minority in their own land. Thus, the inflow of refugees made the identity issue central to Balochistan's politics. The Pashtun ethno-nationalist

parties supported the refugee settlement in Balochistan, seeing it as an opportunity to increase

their political power. At the same time, the Baloch ethno-nationalists saw it as an existential

threat to their identity and survival. Thus, the crisis became the major factor in the rise of

identity-based politics, and the gradual decline of left-wing ideological politics.

> It was obvious. They [Baloch] felt threatened by a large number of [Pashtun] refugees. They came to cities and everywhere. Definitely, Baloch felt that they are going to be a minority. Because they were in large numbers and were not living in refugee camps only. They were everywhere. (Participant 15)

Another important factor accompanied the changing nature of politics. The repression of

student politics and the ban imposed on student unions facilitated the development of a closer

working relationship between student organizations and political parties. This resulted in the

gradual transformation of student organizations into student wings of ethnic political parties.

Thus, the student organizations essentially became political parties' instruments for extending

their influence and recruiting new members on campus. This link played a key role in the

"ethnicization" of the university faculty and students. Ethnic politics was nowhere more visible

than in the university appointments, which will be discussed later.

> There is one more [important] thing. I must say this thing because it's a matter of research. In Balochistan, you look at everyone: "Buddy, how many Balochs have been appointed, how many Pashtuns have been appointed?" What I mean to say is that when you appoint teachers on linguistic ties, just to give more jobs to your own people, it destroys the institution. (Participant 1)

Democratizing the Governance

During the bureaucratic-authoritarian phase, the university administration represented a

hierarchical structure of governance, which government officials and the nominees of the vice-

chancellors dominated. The university's vice-chancellor headed all the statutory bodies of the

university. The administrative structure rested on the exclusion of university faculty and students –the two most important stakeholders of the higher education system.

With the civilian government in charge of the province, the University of Balochistan Ordinance 1970 was repealed, and a new law was introduced in the provincial legislature. The University of Balochistan Act was finally approved in 1996 and implemented in the same year. The Act retained many features of the Ordinance, such as the provincial governor serving as the university's chancellor. This shielded the university from the political executive's direct influence, i.e., the chief minister. The Act also retained the division of authority among various statutory bodies and expanded it. The Senate was added as the highest decision-making body of the university.

The most striking feature of the Act was its democratic nature. The Act allowed participation of the faculty in all governing bodies. Seats were reserved for each category of teachers, i.e., professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and lecturers. The Act replaced the vice-chancellor's authority to nominate teachers to the statutory bodies with the principle of direct elections. Thus, the teaching community allocated reserved seats to the faculty through voting. In addition, the Act also allocated two seats to representatives of the academic staff association.

The Faculty's Triumph

The data reveals that the resistance to the exclusion of the faculty from the decision-making processes started in earnest during the decade of the 1990s after General Zia's rule had ended. The teachers' representative body–the academic staff association (ASA), was originally founded in 1978 but remained largely inactive during the earlier history of the institution due to

unfavorable political circumstances. The university administration was too powerful to be challenged given the military dictatorship, the authoritarian governing structure of the university, and that, too, headed by a former army officer. However, as the civilian government returned, so did teachers' politics.

The teaching community became more politically organized for their rights and for a greater say in the university's affairs in 1988. In 1995, the ASA charter was approved, which was a prelude to a much greater victory the abolition of the University Ordinance of 1970 and the promulgation of the new Act for the university. The faculty leaders played a crucial role in providing a new legislative foundation for the university. The legal framework was submitted to the provincial assembly as a private member bill and was approved in 1996 by the University of Balochistan Act 1996.

> Every university [in Pakistan] was being run through Acts. But no one felt that we are under a dictatorial ordinance. It was a one-man show. Governor and vice-chancellor did everything. Statutory bodies had no role. Then we sat with the law department, studied other Acts, and framed our own Act. (Participant 15)

The Act was a big step forward toward the democratization of the university governing system. It introduced direct elections for membership in all statutory bodies, including the Syndicate, Senate, and Academic Council. The Act also provided for the membership of a representative of the Academic Staff Association in the governing bodies. By changing the composition of governing bodies, and replacing the principle of nomination with the election, the Act was responsible for shifting the decision-making power away from the Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor toward the representatives of the teaching faculty.

> The entire administration was useless; all inept people sitting in the offices–registrar, deputy registrar, controller; no need to mention their names. They did not even tolerate the faculty. They would make teachers visit their offices for years to get things like promotions, increments, or any facility, but still, their work would not be done. [After the

Act] the Academic Staff Association [became] active and powerful. They are sitting in front of the VC–an elected person— asking for their rights. (Participant 2)

However, this also meant a weak administration susceptible to partisan pressures. The data reveals that the empowerment of the teaching community and the academic staff association did not translate into the betterment of the university administration. Its politics was narrowly constructed in such a way that eschewed discussion of more significant social issues. For the most part, the ASA politics was wedded to in-campus issues revolving around promotions, getting increments and allowances, and other favors; as a former university official noted,

> But the ASA made the institution worst off. We became over-politicized. We are not allowing VC to do anything. Every work is done [by ASA] by hook and by crook. One day [name of ASA leader withheld] came to me; he had some demands. I told him that "I will accept all your demands, but tell me one thing–you have been a faculty member for more than fifteen years, just tell me that during this period, did you ever take [i.e., teach] a single class?" He was silent. (Participant 2)

The democratization of university governance and greater participation of teachers in decision-making created its own problems. The data highlighted the challenges emanating from the administration's weakening and the rise of student and faculty politics. The academic staff association was often accused of protecting its narrow interests at the cost of the institutional interests. But one of the major challenges of democratization, which emerged during the politicization phase, was faculty appointment.

From the perspective of *representation,* the era of politicization marks a big achievement in increasing the participation of the teaching community in university governance. The reservation of seats in the statutory bodies and direct election of these reserved seats contributed to the strengthening of democratic values. However, the data also suggested that this exercise was far from perfect. The dominance of academic staff associations over the university administration also led to the weakening of accountability mechanisms. The data showed that the

academic staff association oftentimes served as a refuge for incompetent teachers who were appointed on a political basis

The Politicization of the Students

The salience of identity politics and student organizations mutating into recruitment wings of ethno-nationalist parties emerges as one of the most important elements that shaped the era of politicization. The study shows that the interests of student bodies got subsumed under the interests of ethnic elites. The inter-organizational elections of students started to be manipulated by their parent political parties. Student bodies became the instruments of expanding the political reach of their respective parties by influencing university administration, particularly in matters of recruitment of staff and faculty.

The study shows an ideological shift in student organizations from a commitment to progressive ideas toward more identity-oriented politics. With the onset of Afghan jihad during the 1980s, the progressive forces were systematically eliminated from the public space. The university campuses were depoliticized, student unions got banned, and right-wing student organizations were encouraged on campuses. Furthermore, the influx of Afghan refugees, mostly ethnic Pashtuns, precipitated fear in ethnic Baloch of being turned into a minority in their own province. This deepened the schism between the two major ethnic groups in the province.

The gradual salience of identity politics also impacted the students' organizations. The Pakistan Progressive Students Alliance (PPSA)–an umbrella organization under which all student organizations were united against the military dictatorship, became increasingly irrelevant as a result of the changing local and international politics. To varying degrees, the student organizations gradually morphed into inward-looking organizations, with an emphasis on

the fair distribution of the resources among the ethnic groups, rather than the overthrow of the system.

The divisions within the ethnic-nationalist elites were directly reflected in the campus environment through the presence of student wings of political parties. The loss of autonomy and the interference of nationalist elites in the internal matters of student organizations led to a decline in the quality of student leadership. The political parties openly interfered in the elections of the student organizations to support their favorite candidates.

> Our earlier leadership, be it [names omitted], they were highly educated people. Their knowledge level was very high. They were the cream. Those who would become chairmen [of student organizations], they would be the political cream. They would have impeccable character. But after that [the 80s], they neither had character nor knowledge. They were merely concerned with elections, votes, and petty issues. What had become of their politics–getting degrees [avoiding red-tapism], appointing peons, appointing lecturers, giving people jobs, blackmailing, cheating – their politics fell to this level. (Participant 17)

The data also suggest the manipulation of inter-organizational elections by political parties. The patronage of the ethnic or tribal elites emerges as one of the critical elements in the election of organizational leadership.

> I don't think they [student organizations] are democratic more than five or ten percent. I mean only those students get [leadership] positions in the organization who are acceptable to the party leadership. It does not matter if they are acceptable to the students, but they must be acceptable to the party leadership. So, democracy is controlled here. Due to this, many students got wasted, and a new cadre of political leaders could not emerge. (Participant 18)

With close ties and a functional relationship with the political parties, the student organizations emerged as the most powerful actors in the organizational setup. The link with political elites put them in a position where they could easily dominate the university administration and influence policymaking.

They were democratic but not positive for the institution. They were working within a narrow political circle. To improve the image of the university and to make it a better place, increase scholarship, and improve the quality of education – these were not their activities. Their activities were purely political. So, they created more problems. The result was that even a vice-chancellor could do nothing in front of them. (Participant 21)

These organizations had occupied the hostels. They influenced everything–appointments, leave appointments, admission–they would provide VC with this list of candidates for admissions. Without their will, no one could secure admissions. They would have a list of their preferred candidates. The VC would call the head of the department–"Why are you creating trouble for me? Give them admission." (Participant 10)

The politicization phase also reveals the decline in campus harmony and the deterioration of student organizations' relationships. Fighting over petty issues between student organizations became more common. The most common ground of inter-organizational conflict was the allocations of the hostels and getting favorable appointments in university administration and teaching faculty.

These things [conflicts] entered the university–when hostel blocks were occupied by student organizations–this is your block, this is my block, and fighting on these issues, firing, and closure of the university; this is Baloch, this is Pashtun, this is Sindhi–these things really paralyzed the institution. (Participant 21)

Exploring from the perspective of *recognition,* the changing nature of student politics negatively affected the campus environment. University administration succumbed to the growing influence of student organizations. Increased consciousness of ethnic belonging created rifts within the student and teaching community. As a result, campus violence also increased during the era of politicization. However, the biggest setback for the university was the politicization of faculty recruitment, which I will discuss next.

The Deterioration of Quality

In the previous chapter, I explained that the university was initially founded to create and disseminate knowledge. However, the *knowledge creation* component was never included as an

integral part of the university's function. The data showed that the subject of research methodology was neither included in the curriculum nor taught in any of the departments. Furthermore, the higher learning programs were nonexistent, and the university offered no postgraduate degree in any discipline. Thus, the university was predominantly a teaching institution to prepare students for public-sector jobs at various levels, sectors, and departments.

The university's character as a teaching institution and its functional coupling with the public-sector jobs continued in the *era of politicization.* However, the *era of politicization* emerges as significantly different from the *era of bureaucratic authoritarianism* in one important respect–teacher quality. During the former phase, recruitment policies were mostly based on merit, and the outcome of such a policy was that most of the teachers were appointed from other regions of the country. Most teachers belonged to the Muhajir ethnic group, followed by the Punjabis. These two ethnic groups were already privileged and well entrenched in the power structure of the Pakistani state, the former dominating the bureaucracy, while the latter controlled the army and political power through a majoritarian democratic setup.

However, after the end of the military dictatorship in 1988, the university's recruitment policy came under increasing pressure from both political parties and student organizations. With government jobs becoming increasingly scarce and universities producing local graduates, the pressure was building to accommodate local youth in government jobs. This resulted in a shift of policy to give preference to local graduates in university jobs. However, this was not done by prioritizing the meritorious students from local ethnic groups, but by abandoning the principle of merit altogether.

In an ethnically charged political environment and with student organizations enjoying power through their association with political bosses, merit was replaced with the principle of

political loyalty. In 1988 alone, just after the end of the military dictatorship, more than seventy

people were appointed to various administrative and teaching positions.

> So, at that time, there was no specific procedure for faculty appointment, and student unions [organizations] had a strong influence over university administration–"Yeah, we completed our degree, we have no jobs," so the administration would appoint them under pressure. The [name withheld] created some posts like teaching assistants, and research assistants; in this way, he appointed around sixty or seventy student leaders from all groups. (Participant 11)

> He [VC] would appoint people on a chit [of paper]. So, I and [name withheld] also went [to meet VC]. I told him that I want to join the sports [department]. He told me no and asked me about my subject. I told him that [subject name withheld]. He replied, "I will appoint you as a teaching assistant." I said, ok. So, he gave me [the position]. Our [appointment] orders were issued, and they sent us to the classroom. I jumped; told them that we are not ready for the class. (Participant 15)

The interview data shows the nature of political appointments during the era of

politicization to be overtly political. It demonstrates the influence of "ethnicized" student unions

over the university administration and its policies. It also shows the nationalist narrative being

employed to serve the narrow political agenda of student organizations and their respective

ethno-nationalist political parties.

> It was in front of my eyes. [The] university made appointments on a pure party basis. It was the period when politics was at its height. [The] VC could do nothing against the will of student organizations. If [the] VC regrets [accepting their demands], then students, who were present in hostels in large numbers, would reach his office, threaten him, and go to strike. (Participant 2)

> These people [political appointees] are now sitting in the positions of deans and chairpersons–these weak and politicized people. To this day, they have shown no progress academically. So, politics was very strong at that time. (Participant 10)

Conclusion

The *era of politicization* reflects the changes in the *representation* and *recognition*

dimension of the university's peacebuilding agency. This phase was characterized by the

democratization of the university's governance and increased participation of teachers in statutory bodies. The University of Balochistan Act 1996 replaced the University Ordinance of 1970, and the Act provided direct elections for the membership in statutory bodies and reservation of seats for academic staff associations.

One of the important features of this era is the rise of ethnic politics and its infiltration into campus life. Student politics became subsumed under the agenda of political parties. The student organizations lost their independence status on one hand while gaining considerable political strength through their close working relations with nationalist elites. They emerged as the most potent force on the campus, influencing the university administration and its policies. Student politics became more conflict prone as they drifted towards exclusive identity narratives.

Student organizations exercising influence over university appointments emerged as a significant challenge to education quality. The abandonment of merit and adoption of political affiliation as criteria for appointment allowed diversity in teaching faculty but at the cost of educational decay. This also had a repercussion on the politics of the academic staff association, as it started shielding its members from accountability and provided refuge to incompetent teachers.

More broadly, the return of democracy after the prolonged military rule did not deliver on its promises. The era of politicization became a victim of political instability and internal fights among ethno-nationalist and tribal elites. Many of these conflicts had an ethnic character. These political conflicts became institutionalized in the university through the student wings of these parties. Disillusioned from the nationalist politics dominated by tribal elders and other elites, the era of politicization became a prelude to a new form of nationalist imagination that was free from tribal hierarchies and independent of the control of ethnic leaders. It was more radical in its

objective and modernist in its outlook, which ultimately became the reason for the shift from the

era of politicization to the era of securitized neoliberalism.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ERA OF SECURITIZED NEOLIBERALISM

Introduction

The *era of securitized neoliberalism* began after another military coup in 1999 and continues to the present. This phase of the evolution of the university's peacebuilding agency included seven years of General Musharraf's military dictatorship (1999-2007) and fifteen years of civilian rule (2008-2022). Despite the change of regimes, there seems to be an adherence to the same set of security and economic policies during this phase.

The *era of securitized neoliberalism* is characterized by a profound change in the university's peacebuilding agency across all the dimensions of *representations, reconciliation, recognition,* and *redistribution*. The data reveals that the policies adopted by the government to restructure the higher education sector were underpinned by neoliberal economic ideology. The reforms negatively affected the *redistributive* aspect of peacebuilding. The study also suggests that the ethnic conflict in Balochistan resulted in university becoming a security subject, adversely impacting the peacebuilding's *representation, reconciliation,* and *recognition dimensions*.

During this phase, the university went on a downward slope toward a deep financial crisis. This phase is characterized by the administration's inability to pay its staff and faculty salaries and disburse pensions. The prolonged delays, often extending several months, in

salaries' disbursement are accompanied by the rising cost of higher education for students. There has been a continual rise in tuition with a rate of ten percent, which is the maximum allowed under the University of Balochistan Act 1996. The university's recruitment policy has also shifted, with more priority monies allocated to hiring visiting faculty instead of permanent teaching staff.

At the same time, the university came under the direct influence of security and intelligence agencies of the state. The re-articulation of the nationalist ideology along modernist lines spawned a movement for achieving independent statehood for the Baloch nation. The campus was transformed into a space for political mobilization and recruitment for the separatist movement, with the Baloch Student Organization as its vanguard. The movement led to the securitization of the university and elevated the security forces as higher education policy actors.

The chapter begins by outlining the major shift in student politics as a factor driving the securitization of the university. The following section delineates how the securitization project manifested in various aspects of university life, particularly in relation to student politics. The next section touches upon how education actors talked about the university's role in promoting conflict. The final section dwells on the issue of higher education reforms and their implications on the university's ability to sustain itself financially.

Towards Securitization

In the early 2000s, efforts started to unite the Baloch Student Organization (BSO) factions. Earlier, there were various factions of BSO, each associated with a different political party. With the ban on campus politics through the 1980s, the student organizations mainly assumed the form of student wings of nationalist parties for all practical purposes. These

organizations would serve as a campus recruitment body and provide a leadership cadre, albeit on a limited level, for their parent political parties. The political differences and conflict of interests among the nationalist elites often transpired into student clashes and violence on campus. Between 1985 and 2000, student politics was deeply divisive and marred in conflicts and violence.

The efforts to unite the various factions of BSO were not completely successful but resulted in a larger group called BSO Azad (Independent). The BSO Azad adopted a more inclusive form of nationalism that was not fractured along tribal lines or political affiliations. It was independent of the control of any political party and embraced an egalitarian ideology that stood for equality among all Baloch people regardless of cultural, tribal, or class status. This view is a complete contrast to the earlier forms of Baloch nationalism which tribal elders dominated.

> Yeah, earlier the nationalist struggle was on a tribal basis. People were mostly uneducated. So, it was dominated by tribal elders–whatever they told, people just followed. We don't find ideological commitment. If I compare it to the present nationalist struggle, I think the educated Baloch youth are knowingly and consciously participating. They understand why I am doing it, what is my history, what is a national question, what is the national struggle, and behind this national struggle, what is the historical perspective. You will find structure and organization. The plus point is that you don't find personalities; women's participation is there; and educated people are there. (Participant 6)

The BSO Azad was ideologically committed to the nationalist struggle for independent Balochistan. It explicitly rejected the political scheme of remaining in the federation while struggling for greater provincial autonomy. It called for nothing less than an Azad (independent) Balochistan. The nationalistic articulation of politico-economic exploitation greatly appealed to the Baloch youth. The organization and its members were also less tolerant of the tribal

hierarchies and espoused more egalitarian values. BSO Azad recruited youth from all social

backgrounds regardless of their tribal affiliation or class and gender divide.

> The [BSO] mobilization, the efforts they put in for this movement, was very systematic like they have done proper research and homework. For example, from 2000 to 2004–you call it their mobilization phase or recruitment phase, what they would do was to slide pamphlets under the doors of Baloch students around 3 a.m. or 4 a.m. You would never know who is doing this. They would make you realize that you are a very suppressed, and oppressed nation and you have to raise your voice. The pamphlet would contain previous incidents of state oppression. It continued for many years until Nawab sahab [Bugti] was killed. (Participant 14)

The establishment of BSO Azad also denoted a shift in their student politics. The group

tried to reorient its politics toward national issues, rather than serving as a tool to perpetuate the

interests of political elites. Between 2000 and 2009, the organization emerged as a potent

political force. It had distanced itself from the common issues of student politics, like influencing

the administration to get favorable appointments, resolving issues of admissions, hostel

allotments, etc., and focused more on mobilizing youth around nationalist ideology and its

entitlement to statehood.

> To me, the rebirth of BSO was when chairman [name withheld] laid the foundation of United BSO [in 2000]. They had united all the factions of BSO. And now they were talking about [nationalist] ideology–not the degree, not cheating, not jobs, but ideology. When I got involved, we had strict instructions not to approach [the] VC for any job; you would talk about admission policy, you would talk that our kids should get a good education, and you would talk about larger political issues. And at one point, our ideology had become so strong, that when Pashtun [students] would engage us in a fight, we would not retaliate. We would avoid it because it was not part of our ideology. We had instructions that our journey is long–we can't afford to engage in these petty things. (Participant 17)

The data revealed that the issue of economic exploitation, the fear of cultural extinction,

the state's repressive policies, and the forced annexation of Balochistan to Pakistan were at the

heart of their nationalist narrative. The issue of ownership of the natural resources and their

exploitation by the state that ethnic Punjabis control emerged as one of the major concerns.

Now people are realizing that the first university in Punjab was established in 1882, and we got it after ninety years. People are realizing that [natural] gas was discovered [in Balochistan] in 1952 but it has still not reached our homes; instead it has reached Punjab and Sindh. Now people are realizing that there is Sandak [gold mine], Reko-Diq [gold and copper mine], and access to the sea–people are coming from Sindh and fishing here, but our fishermen are dying of hunger. (Participant 17)

Natural resources are transported to all corners of Punjab. From the place they are extracted, they get nothing. There is international law and there is a national law that states that the first beneficiaries are the local community. But if we question them, they say you are a rebel. (Participant 6)

Although the issue of economic exploitation is central to the nationalist struggle, it is often subsumed under the issues of identity, culture, and historical memory. This was echoed in the interviews of former student leaders and rights activists. This represents a subtle shift in the national narrative emphasizing the question of identity more than economic exploitation. There is a greater fear of cultural extinction of Baloch people, particularly due to the mega projects linked to the Chinese one-belt-one-road initiative. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) connects the western Chinese regions to the Arabian Sea via Balochistan's small fishing town of Gwadar. The economic project is directly linked to the fear of cultural extinction.

People are talking about resources and access to the sea–but it's more about national identity. I will talk of Gwadar [deep seaport]. You know the issue is that they are planning to settle seven million people [from other provinces] in Gwadar. You know occupation has two types–military occupation and settler occupation. You are purposefully changing the demographic to wipe us out. (Participant 13)

The identity-based narrative pays more attention to the historical memory and the issues of past injustices by the state. The issue is framed as that of a national struggle against the colonizer, in this case, the Punjabi-dominated Pakistani state. This framing of the conflict made the economic issues secondary to the issue of nations' struggle for self-determination.

The discussion will not start with the issue of resources. The real discussion will start with the fact that Balochistan was an independent state which was occupied by Pakistan. It has been made a colony of Pakistan. After forced annexation, they launched the first

[military] operation in 1948, then in 1952, then in 1958, then in the 70s, and now the fifth one. (Participant 6)

The BSO Azad assumed the role of ideological vanguard of the separatist movement, providing it with political support and helping new recruits fight for the independent state. Its leadership was diverse, and it chalked its own agenda instead of being guided by the tribal elites alone. It envisioned Baloch as a modern nation, incorporating the principles of equality, secularism, and women's participation, thus, entitled to the right of self-rule. The movement gained considerable strength and found support across class, regional, and linguistic lines. With the ground already set, the army's killing of Nawab Bugti served only as a catalyst to begin an armed struggle to achieve a separate homeland for the Baloch people.

The insurgency brought the UOB to the center of security concerns. The campus became highly charged politically as a result of the killing of the tribal chief and a leader of a political party. The majority of recruits of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and other armed groups were former members of BSO Azad. The militant groups targeted not only military installations but also the civilians whom they accused of spying and being "agents" of the army. The BLA claimed responsibility for killing many teachers, including the Vice Chancellor of the University of Balochistan in 2008, who belonged to the Punjabi ethnic group. Many of the teachers also left their jobs during this period to return to their native province of Punjab in search of security.

The Securitization of the University

Securitization implies the appropriation of the political sphere as a security subject, which demands heightened attention, more resources, and lesser public scrutiny. The securitization project in Balochistan unfolded as the suspension of the state's legal and constitutional framework took place to enable the rule of security agencies. The data suggest a

comprehensive project of securitization going on in the province of Balochistan, particularly the

University of Balochistan. Numerous instances in the data point to the project of securitization

transcending into the larger society.

> Let me tell you: in Pakistan, the head of every institution comes with their [security forces'] consent. All institutions–what do you think–that [the] Prime Minister is sitting without their consent? No. The chief minister is sitting without their consent? No. Governor is sitting without their consent? No. So what to talk of the vice-chancellor, it's a small thing. Now their maneuvering power has further increased. And Balochistan University is not an isolated island. (Participant 2)

The project of the university's securitization has manifested in various forms. The first

aspect of securitization is the army's influence over higher education policy and key

appointments. There has been a noted shift in the exercise of the army's influence over the

university from the era of bureaucratic authoritarianism to the era of securitized neoliberalism. In

the case of the former, the army's control over the institution was direct; however, in the latter's

case, the army's control is indirect but more pervasive. But, nonetheless, both reflected

negatively in the *representative* dimension of peacebuilding.

The security forces' greater role in the education sector is also confirmed by an analysis

of Pakistan's security framework. In the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Army Public

School, which left at least one hundred forty students and teachers dead, the government initiated

a *National Action Plan* against terrorism. The plan established military courts for speedy trials,

lifted the moratorium on the death penalty, and vowed to initiate radical reforms to meet the

challenge of terrorism and extremism. The plan resurrected the National Counter Terrorism

Authority (NACTA) to devise a holistic counterterrorism and extremism strategy. The Authority

produced a series of policy documents focusing on the security challenges and strategies to

eradicate the menace of terrorism. This study reveals that the security framework integrated the education sector as a critical tool to fight the rising tide of societal extremism.

The policies framed the exclusionary identity narratives to be one of the key dimensions of terrorism in the country:

> The heart of the extremist movements are their narratives which operate in the ideational domain. The gains made through the concerted efforts mentioned above must be utilised to challenge the ideological underpinnings of the violent narratives that create a mindset vulnerable to taking up arms against the state. (NACTA, 2018, p. 9)

> There is adequate evidence that radicalisation and militancy is no longer limited to Madrassas alone. Young people from relatively affluent and middle-class backgrounds, educated in mainstream universities and schools, are also vulnerable to extremist ideas and narratives. (NACTA, 2018, p. 19)

The national security policy elevated the status of security forces as a legitimate education policy actor. The security framework creators proposed to construct a *National Narrative* as an ideological response to counter security challenges, which was to be implemented through a formal education system.

> Constructing a robust national narrative on extremism, sectarianism, terrorism and militancy is the cornerstone of an ideological response to non-traditional threats. Such a narrative is essential for coming up with common ideological denominators in a diverse society. Religious scholars, intelligentsia, educational institutions and media are the key stakeholders for constructing and disseminating the National Narrative. (NACTA, 2014, p. 94)

Corroborating the study of policy documents with the interview data, the data shows a high degree of skepticism about the appointment of the vice-chancellor. The level of distrust was shared among most of the research participants. This, however, cannot be interpreted as evidence for the actual practice, but only the perception about the procedure for the appointment of vice-chancellors and the degree of distrust in public institutions. Interviews suggested that the appointments are made mostly on the security agencies' recommendations.

> The vice-chancellors are apparently appointed by the governor but on the orders of the Cantt [cantonment]. So, if the VC is appointed from the Cantt, and the university is occupied by security forces, just imagine the plight of the students. Can you make a scholar through the barrel of a gun? (Participant 18)

Due to the close connection of the university administration with the state's security agencies, there is also a realization of the university administration being complicit in the human rights abuses that have occurred. It gives credence to the claim that the university administration is merely a civilian instrument of the security apparatus.

> When there are so many security personnel and so many cameras, how come students get disappeared? And to this day we don't know whether they are dead or alive. The administration does nothing. The VC did not even bother to go and meet the students who were on strike. (Participant 12)

Another aspect of the securitization of the university is the institutionalizing of surveillance practices. The university's link with the local community was severed and its services, such as access to the grounds or library, were discontinued. The campus was transformed into a closed space, with all entrances to the campus either closed or heavily manned by security forces. Walk-through gates were installed at each entrance, and body searches were routinized. Under the safe campus project, dozens of security cameras were installed throughout the campus to monitor all activities.

In addition to the surveillance practices, the security forces also occupied institutional facilities. The data revealed that a large number of paramilitary troops were stationed inside the university. The students' sports complex was transformed into a military barracks and interrogation center, and the pro-vice chancellor's house became the residence of the station commander. Paramilitary forces launched a long and brutal campaign against those suspected of harboring sympathies for the separatist groups or who were directly involved in the movement. The students and political activists who were suspected of involvement in the nationalist struggle

were subjected to a range of tactics, including harassment, torture, targeted killing, and

disappearances.

> They took the students' hostel under their control. The sports complex is still occupied by them; many have heard cries [torture] coming out from the complex. They closed all the gates of the university. Admin[istration] was given to them. Examination [branch] was given to them. There was a time that FC [paramilitary] personnel would sit in each department. And those personnel, after completing their duty, would come in plain clothes and engage in lewd activities. (Participant 18)

However, the most negative aspect of securitization was the systematic implementation

of the policy of torture, custodial killings, and enforced disappearance. The gross human rights

violations issue has been well-reported and is one of the leading causes of the unending conflict

in Balochistan. Conflicting reports abound about the actual number of missing persons. The

government's Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearance reported that the total number

of cases filed with the commission is seven thousand. Although exploring the issue of forced

disappearances is beyond the scope of this research, data suggested widespread human rights

abuses of students, teachers, political activists, and those engaged in the separatist movement.

> Those students who were politically engaged would receive threatening calls from private [scripted] numbers. After that, they would be abducted. After that, some would die due to torture, some would falsely confess to end the torture–I myself was tortured and I know how hard it is. Those who were genuinely involved in armed struggle would be killed anyway. So, your question about the stick, it is this–abduct, torture, kill and dump. (Participant 17)

> Among my twelve close friends, only three are alive – I, Prof. [name withheld], and [name withheld]. So, my nine close friends were picked and killed. (Participant 17)

The securitization project culminated in 2021 when the provincial government repealed

the University of Balochistan Act 1996 and replaced it with a new act. The new law–the

Universities of Balochistan Act 2021—ended the democratic nature of the university

administration and restored the former autocratic model governance, enshrined in the University

of Balochistan Ordinance 1970. The new Act ended the principle of direct election for the university's statutory bodies and also excluded representation of the academic staff association from these bodies. The former powers of the VC to nominate members of statutory bodies, and its overbearing influence on decision-making processes, is restored. At the same time, the university's autonomy is also weakened by placing it under the direct influence of the provincial government.

Approaching the securitization project from the perspective of *reconciliation*, the study data shows a deep skepticism about the legitimacy of the state and its institutions. The security forces' engagement in an educational institution and its bypassing of the state's legal institutions such as courts and police forces have raised serious questions about the nature of the state. The securitization project was enabled only through the suspension of state law and the constitution. Although these actions have contributed to the establishment of negative peace, at the same time it has seriously eroded the very legitimacy of the state.

> The university is no longer an educational institution. It's a prison. Asking questions [is] prohibited. If you ask a question, you have committed a sin; you have committed heresy. They want to teach us Pakistan Studies, their subject, in which Baloch and Pashtuns are traitors and infidels, and they [Pakistanis] are Muslims and our owners. And if anyone questions it, he [sic] becomes a traitor, he will be implicated in false cases, and even get disappeared or somewhere his mutilated body might be found. (Participant 18)

Higher Education and the Balochistan Conflict

My exploration of the university's peacebuilding agency reveals that the structural causes of the conflict remained unaddressed. As noted above, various accounts of the causes of the conflict range from individualistic explanations to a more structurally informed analysis. The latter approach considers the individual a rational actor who engages in the conflict to maximize its benefits. However, this approach ignores the structural causes such as colonialism, racism,

patriarchy, etc. The approach of the 4Rs is more sensitive to the structural causes which enabled the conflict in the first place.

My analysis shows that the state ignored the structural causes underpinning the Balochistan conflict. The dominant approach of peacebuilding was underpinned by what is known as "conspiracy theory." The data pointed to the fact that the government sees the causes of conflict not to be historical, cultural, and economical but as the result of a foreign conspiracy. This was also evident in the security framework. The dominant approach in the security framework is to use ideological indoctrination and the enemy's propaganda as the major explanatory variable. The overarching narrative is that of an ideological warfare between Pakistan and its enemies, where the latter is using various techniques to misguide the Pakistani youth, particularly those on its peripheries.

> Fringe-violent sub-nationalist tendencies have been exploited by hostile intelligence agencies that have provided support and sanctuary to subversive elements. The ideological undercurrent for violent sub-nationalisms exploits socio-economic disparities and governance gaps. (National Security Policy, 2022, p. 30)

The foreign conspiracy as an explanatory variable was more pronounced in the interview data. It emerged both as a critique of the security approach and as a matter of "fact"; however, the former was more pronounced.

> Now in this present time, the university has become the focus of security forces, and the main reason behind this is that this Kalbushan Yadav [Indian spy], who was caught later on, so this Kalbushan Yadav would come to the campus, he would meet with the students, he would talk and plan with the students. (Participant 22)

> Their [army's] version is very simple. They say that this is all the making of India, right? They have no other version. (Participant 13)

> When you talk to them [army], they say it's a foreign-funded international game against Pakistan. They believe it's India, Israel, America [USA] behind this–they want to make Muslims fight with one another. The Baloch are simply working on their agenda to break Pakistan. (Participant 12)

While considering the role of higher education institutions in peacebuilding, the study data reveals that the ideological and authoritarian nature of the state circumscribes the function of higher education. There is a realization that the state that explicitly adheres to an ideology and makes it a duty of the army to protect it has little or no space for higher education. In the context of Balochistan, higher education is conflated with the consciousness of political oppression and nationalist struggle, which the state cannot afford to provide.

> I think if you look at the [public] spaces opened up through people's struggle during the past fifteen or twenty years, either through media, or education, or social media, now the government is trying to seal those spaces through draconian laws. Now the Act [Universities of Balochistan Act 2022) they want to introduce, so basically, their intent, across the board, is how to use it as a tool for social control or political control. So, make [higher education] highly bureaucratized, remove the stakeholders and end their say in financial matters, administrative matters, and academic matters. You minus the primary stakeholders–teachers and students—and replace them with retired bureaucrats or blue-eyed people. So, I believe, there is a mindset behind this [about] how to control education, particularly higher education. To control it, you make it autocratic, non-participatory, and linear. (Participant 3)

The study points to the conflict of interest between the politically conscious youth and the dominant political order, with the army occupying an apex position. This was echoed in many interviews with the teachers and student leaders.

> As I told you earlier, if we have autonomous institutions, to regulate them and control them, it's not very easy. Instead, if you put them in the same mold, it becomes easy to control them. It is clear that we are not talking about improving higher education or making its environment better. It's about control. They [security establishment] think of it as a potential source of political consciousness, a potential source of mobilization; thousands of young people come here –boys and girls. So controlling this space is very important for them. (Participant 5)

> The more you make universities, I think when young people go there, get some education, … it develops a critical and political consciousness. So, of course, they will go and in a way, it will add fuel to the conflict. Even if we look now, most [of the insurgents] are university graduates. For deradicalization, you have to address deprivation first. (Participant 25)

It has also been noted that education alone cannot solve the conflict in Balochistan. Despite many efforts to increase higher education access and provide better opportunities, peace has remained elusive in the province. During the current phase of securitized neoliberalism, the number of higher education institutions has multiplied manyfold. The number has reached more than nine from a single University of Balochistan until 2001. This raises serious questions about the role of higher education institutions in the conflict context of Balochistan.

> I don't think there is a direct connection [between higher education and peace]. The reason for the conflict is not that there is no university. The primary reason is—let me tell you that there is a study done by SDPI, which says that out of Pakistan's bottom-line twenty districts, seventeen are in Balochistan–the least developed district. And these are those districts that produce gold, oil, and gas. So, you have deprived them throughout history. It is because of this that they revolt. (Participant 3)

Reflecting on the university's role from the perspective of *participation, recognition, and reconciliation*, some serious questions arise that require a deeper understanding of the issue, particularly with reference to the role of the state in promoting conflict. One of the implicit assumptions in the interview data is that of the state as an actor in the conflict. The state is not assumed to be a neutral but a partisan actor which uses conflict to further the extent of its control. Paying attention to the nature of the postcolonial state and the university as its extension, the peacebuilding role of the institution seems very unlikely. However, this requires further investigation and is beyond the scope of this study.

Neoliberalism in Higher Education

Neoliberalism is rather a loose and shifting concept (Brown, 2015). How neoliberalism is approached and understood has been in flux both temporally and geographically. Its discursive manifestations, policy recommendations, and material practices have also varied. From a neo-

Marxist perspective, neoliberal ideas seek to promote global capitalism through a reduced role of the state in providing social services, increased privatization of state-owned enterprises, and deregulation of markets, including removing trade barriers (Harvey, 2007). From a governance perspective, it is conceived as a distinct form of societal management and the production of human subjects based on the "economization" of social relations (Foucault et al., 2008). Historically, it originated as an economic and political reaction to democratic-socialist ideals and Keynesian economics. In addition to the multiplicity of understandings, neoliberalism's form across different countries, regions, cultures, sectors, etc., also remained quite varied (Brown, 2015).

In the higher education sector, neoliberal policies have manifested in a variety of forms, from both economic and governance perspectives. It has led to the adoption of competition to achieve efficiency and quality, outcome-based approaches to education policy, and marketization of the higher education sector (Ball, 2015, 2021; Taylor, 2017). Neoliberal policies encourage private actors in education provision, furthering public-private partnerships, and the development of university-industry relationships (Kauppinen, 2012; Rizvi, 2006; Schulze-Cleven & Olson, 2017; Slaughter et al., 2004). They also emphasize institutional autonomy, reduced dependence on government funding, and increased tuition fees from the end users.

In Pakistan, neoliberal ideas inspired a wide range of reforms in the higher education sector. In 2002, The Boston Group—a group of Pakistani academics and practitioners based in the U.S.—was tasked with providing a blueprint for HE reforms in Pakistan. The task force outlined a comprehensive reform package aimed at redefining the university-society relationship and transforming the governing logics and practices of the HEIs in the country (Task Force, 2002). The recommendations were not confined to the traditional understanding of neoliberal

reforms in the education sector, such as deregulating the education sector or encouraging private actors, but also include the adoption of new rationales for higher education, techniques, and logic governance.

> If students are billed … merely a few hundred rupees for a year's worth of university education, that is likely to be the value they place on it. At the very least, disclosing the true cost of the education to the students would make them respect that education more. At best, it will spur them to demand better quality from the university itself (Task-Force, 2002, p. 50).

The task force recommended a new governing body with a greater mandate and financial power to manage the HE sector. Consequently, in 2002, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) replaced the existing University Grants Commission (UGC) through a presidential ordinance issued by the then-military dictator General Pervez Musharraf. The KBE-inspired planning put higher education institutions at the center of economic development. Under this banner, universities started to be seen as places of wealth creation, and the knowledge and entrepreneurial skills embodied in human persons as the key factors in this process.

On the discursive level, my study of higher education policy documents shows the idea of transforming the national economy from one dependent on agricultural production to one based on high-value goods and services as a major policy discourse. The country was imagined as an agricultural economy that relies on producing basic food items, like wheat, cotton, rice, and livestock, and exporting textile goods, leather products, sports items, surgical goods, and fruits. The economy was described as dependent on low-intensity and low-value items. Competing in the global economy would require focusing on the nation's competitive advantage in the agricultural sector by focusing on value addition through scientific knowledge and technological advancement.

> In order to transform Pakistan from an agriculture-based economy to a knowledge economy, specific projects and programs have been identified as national priority programs, [which] include transition of [the] agriculture sector to high value-added agricultural produce, information technology, biotechnology, engineering sciences, pharmaceuticals, material sciences, basic sciences, social sciences, economics, finance and other disciplines. The curricula have already been modified in consultation with subject experts and the private sector to make them relevant to market demands and the needs of the society as well as emerging international opportunities. (HEC, 2003-04, p. 2)

The drive towards forming a KBE was to be achieved through increased access, maintenance of higher standards in education, and the promotion of high-quality research. The higher education budget was increased to facilitate the establishment of new universities and to upgrade the infrastructure of existing ones. The fields of science and technology were prioritized over the social sciences and humanities. New departments like the Quality Assurance Department (QAD), Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC), and Faculty Training and Development Center (FTDC) were added to the governing architecture of the universities.

> The country needs a major shift to science and technology. Without that, it cannot achieve any technological advancement. The enrollment in science and arts is 30:70. With this trend, Pakistan cannot achieve any technological progress. Selected institutions should be created in emerging disciplines such as, Information Technology, Bio-technology, Material Science and Metallurgy. (Education Sector Reforms, 2000–03, pp. 60-61)

The policy discourse of the knowledge economy led to the adoption of a uniform objective for higher education institutions. The economic rationale became a vision statement for all the public-sector universities that were to be imposed through a centralized body of HEC. The commission, with its overarching authority over public-sector universities and control over finances, became instrumental in undermining the autonomy of higher education institutions. The centralization of decision-making made the statutory bodies of the public universities, such as the senate, syndicate, and academic councils, irrelevant. Furthermore, aligning the higher

education sector with the need to enhance the nation's competitive advantage in the global marketplace led to adopting a uniform and centralized curriculum. This further eroded the autonomy of public-sector universities and individual faculty members.

Using the University of Balochistan as a case, this study shows that neoliberalism in the higher education sector unfolded as a process of increased administrative control of the universities and centralization of the policy, coupled with the gradual renunciation of financial responsibility by the state. The increased political control manifested in the imposition of the KBE as a uniform objective of the universities, a centralized accountability mechanism, and monopolization of the curriculum by the higher education commission (HEC). On the funding side, the neoliberal process was marked by initial public investment in the sector, followed by a gradual abdication by the state from providing public support to the universities.

Neoliberal Reforms and the Funding Crisis

Exploring the institutional peacebuilding agency on the dimension of *redistribution* reveals a continuity of policies, albeit with one important exception. The study shows that employment opportunities outside of the government sector remain a major challenge for the youth of Balochistan. There is also a continuity of functional coupling of higher education with the government services sectors, mainly the administration and teaching service. The major motivational factor among the students remained their desire to join the civil services, which denotes the consistency among all the three evolutionary phases of the university's peacebuilding agency.

> There is mob psychology working here. If [one person] goes in any direction, everyone else follows. Even today you ask the student about the future, they only have a few answers. For those students who are serious and take education seriously, their target is to do PCS or CSS [exams for the provincial and federal bureaucracy, respectively]. Those

who are weak, move in different directions–it's all by default, not by design. [Participant 23].

Let me give you an example. The students who enroll with us in the Education Department, generally, they are those students who already have degrees in other disciplines. Now, I have some students with engineering degrees, and some with MPhil in Chemistry and Pharmacy. They were supposed to become engineers, chemists, or pharmacists, which they could not become. So, their personal choices or academic training do not matter at all in finding jobs. (Participant 24)

The strict hierarchy of government-sector jobs remains intact in this phase, with civil services at the top and teaching services at the bottom. Thus, the status of teachers remains one of the major challenges in the phase of securitized neoliberalism.

People who become teachers are those who fail to get powerful positions [civil services]. And yes, it's by chance [not choice]. I have never seen an Assistant Commissioner leave his [sic] job to become a teacher. But I have seen countless examples of an assistant professor becoming a Tehsildar [mid-tier bureaucrat]. Just like during the British colonial period, the political agent was the king of the district, so today it is Tehsildar who is acting like a king. (Participant 3)

The economic development model based on the core-periphery relationship also extends to this period. Data points to the continuity of the previous mode of economic development in Balochistan, which is mainly based on the extraction of mineral resources.

The condition of Balochistan is such that they take a marble stone from Chaghi or Killa Saifulla [mining districts] and take it seven hundred miles away in Karachi to refine it– the processing plant is in Karachi. So, in the economy, there is no space for educated people. (Participant 24)

Despite the continuity of past policies and practices on the dimension of *redistribution,* the study finds one important exception, i.e., a shift in the policy of public support to the higher education sector. In 2000, the Education Sector Reform Plan vowed to increase the higher education budget from 0.39 percent to 1 percent of GDP within a two-year period. It also pledged to increase the higher education budget to reach 2 percent of GDP by the end of the decade.

During the twenty-first century's first decade, the higher education sector received large sums of money from the government. The increased budget allocation was used to establish new universities and infrastructural upgradation of the existing ones. This public investment led to rapid growth in the sector, with new universities established both in the public and private sectors. The number of higher education enrollments also skyrocketed from one hundred thousand in 2000 to 1.5 million in 2015.

However, the increased budgetary allocation was not accompanied by increasing the state's capacity to support public services. It was revealed that the tax-to-GDP ratio of the country was consistently low and remained hovering near 10 percent, which is one of the lowest in the world. Thus, the increased allocation to the sector soon met with the structural constraints of the economy. The result was that the ambitious target of allocating 2 percent of the GDP to the higher education sector was never realized, and stagnation of public support followed. (See Figure 8.)

Figure 8. Tax to GDP ratio in comparative perspective. (OECD, 2022)
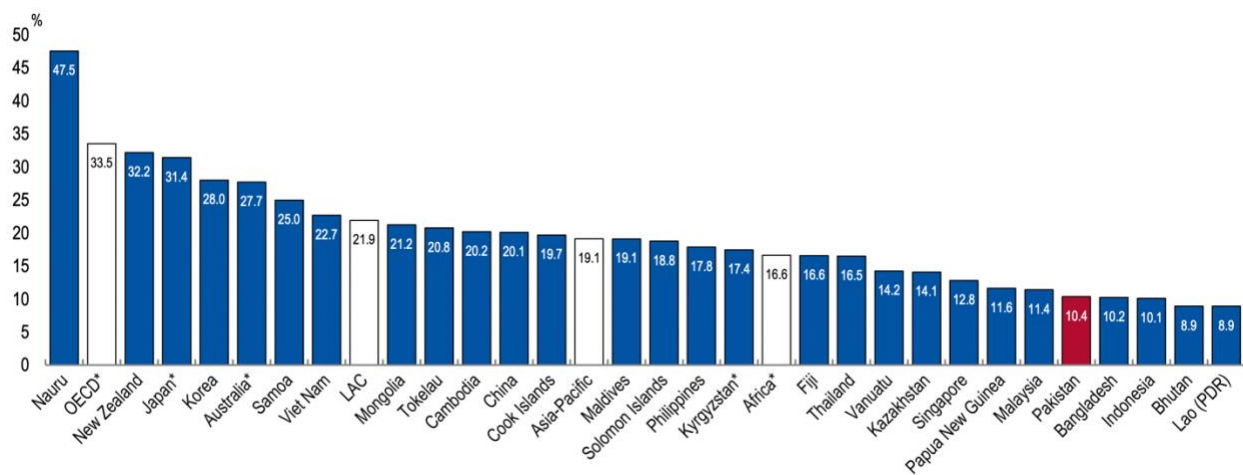
As the number of HEIs increased without addressing the state's inability to fund its public services, the existing universities were increasingly pushed towards economic crisis. The government allocation to the sector started to be more thinly distributed among the ever-increasing number of universities. This disproportionately affected the older and larger universities like UOB because of their greater financial obligations and responsibilities.

The data also revealed a marked shift in the pattern of higher education funding. There is a growing trend of shifting funding responsibilities towards individual universities. One aspect of this policy was enabling universities to generate revenue and become more entrepreneurial. Thus, the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) was established at each public-sector university to encourage universities to undertake commercially oriented projects and develop links with the market. This further aggravated the financial crisis of the University of Balochistan.

> Earlier, there had [been] fifty universities; now we have two hundred. Now more funds are required. It's out of their [HEC] control. Now they are telling us that universities should generate their own resources. Brother, from where do we generate? What product are we making? That we can't do, we don't have that level, neither [do] we have any links with the industry. This is how universities are run. Now the only option left for us is to raise the fee. (Participant 2)

Another feature of the changing financial policy was to make funding contingent on the research output of the universities. To increase accountability and improve higher education quality, HEC decided to link fifteen percent of its dwindling resources to the research production of HEIs. This contrasted with the University Grants Commission policy, which determined university funding based on the needs of the individual institution. However, the criteria for funds allocation was changed, and fifteen percent of the grants were disbursed according to the research output of HEIs. The logic of incentivizing the universities to engage in research had a

perverse effect on the University of Balochistan. This meant a further cut of its fast-depleting resources and rise in its ever-increasing demand.

The government's neoliberal policies contributed to pushing the University of Balochistan into a perpetual financial crisis. Since 2013, federal support for the UOB has gradually declined. Currently, the HEC grants cover less than 44 percent of total university expenses. During the same period, the university was forced to shut down on several occasions due to non-payment of salaries to the staff and faculty. Pension funds were also withheld on many occasions.

University strikes, blockades of roads, and boycotts of classes and examinations became a recurring feature of campus life. In 2019–20, the university was on the verge of financial collapse, only to be rescued by an interest-free loan extended by the provincial government to pay the salaries and pensions. The financial crisis continues to aggravate as the 2020–21 university budget noted its largest shortfall of Rs. 846.127 million, constituting 26 percent of its total budget estimates.

To meet the budgetary shortfall, the university started to shift the burden onto the students. The tuition has been continually rising at the rate of 10 percent each year, which is the maximum allowed under the University Act. At the same time, there has been an increasing precarity of university jobs. Due to the financial crisis, the administration has looked towards employing visiting faculty instead of hiring permanent faculty, which incurs high costs and pension liabilities.

It is also noteworthy that this has been happening against the backdrop of the securitization project. The securitization project has rendered the student and faculty mobilization capacity nearly ineffective. Student mobilization is seen through the lens of national

security and the presence of paramilitary troops inside the campus precluded any form of student agitation. Securitization in this context emerged as a key enabler of the neoliberal project and often worked hand-in-glove in allowing the state to shift the burden to the end users and enabling the state to relinquish its responsibility of public funding of education.

Concomitantly, the HEC also got a big setback. In 2019, HEC's autonomy was ended through a presidential ordinance and was placed under the federal education ministry. Its funding was also significantly reduced by the Ministry of Finance. An official letter from the Ministry of federal education and professional training to the finance division stated that:

> The recurring grant allocated to the HEC since the financial year 2016–17 has remained almost stagnant and its share as a percentage of GDP has kept on declining to the level of 0.14% in CFY [current fiscal year, 2022]. Public sector universities are currently facing a severe financial crunch and unable to pay full salaries/pensions. Allocation of 30 billion [rupees] is, unfortunately, lower than what was given five years ago and it would hit the higher education sector adversely. (MOFEPT, 2022)

The government's neoliberal policies have negatively impacted the *redistributive* dimension of peacebuilding. These policies have resulted in increased access to higher education but have also made it less affordable. They have also affected the teaching profession as more teachers are being hired on a visiting and contract basis. And finally, the reforms have pushed the university into a deep financial crisis.

Conclusion

The *era of securitized neoliberalism* was marked by an increasing political centralization coupled with increasing financial decentralization. The current evolutionary phase of the university's peacebuilding agency is characterized by the university becoming an extension of the state's security apparatus. The university witnessed a concentration of administrative authority and the restoration of the authoritarian model of governance, which rested on the

exclusion of students and faculty. The securitized neoliberal phase also witnessed the suppression of student politics on campus.

In addition, the restructuring of the higher education sector also negatively reflected on the redistributive dimension of peacebuilding. The institution is facing a dire financial situation. The cost of higher education has continued to rise. The financial policy pursued by the government has made the cost of education the responsibility of the end users. The financial crisis has also led to the formalization of the teaching profession.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this study, I investigated the peacebuilding role of the higher education institution in Pakistan's conflict-affected region of Balochistan. Using the University of Balochistan as a case, I addressed the question of how the institution's peacebuilding agency has evolved since its founding in 1970, particularly with reference to the ethno-nationalist struggle in the region. A set of ideas and theoretical frameworks guided the study.

Galtung's (2008) theory of negative and positive peace informed the understanding of "peacebuilding." The former implies the absence of direct forms of violence, while the latter focuses more on the structural causes that underpin violence. The theoretical lens traces the causes of conflict not to the individual but locates them in unequal social structures. Galtung's theorization of violence provides a framework to explore violence not only in its direct form but also enables us to investigate its cultural and structural forms and manifestations.

The peacebuilding agency of the institution was theorized according to the framework of the 4Rs (Novelli et al., 2017, 2019). The analytical frame of the 4Rs attempts to address the structural causes of conflict and theorize education in relation to its role in contributing to those causes. The analytical lens incorporates conflict's cultural, political, economic, and social dimensions and proposes a holistic strategy for building sustainable peace. Thus, the university's

peacebuilding agency was measured through its ability to promote *representation, redistribution, recognition,* and *reconciliation* both within its institutional setup and the larger society.

Three Evolutionary Phases of Peacebuilding

Data analysis reveals three distinct phases of the development of the university's peacebuilding agency. Depending on the characteristics exhibited on the dimensions of the 4Rs, I have called these *the era of bureaucratic authoritarianism, the era of politicization,* and *the era of securitized neoliberalism*. These categorizations do not present mutually exclusive characteristics but are based on some distinctive features, not all. They do not imply a disconnect between various historical phases either but are framed as a change in continuity. For example, there is a continuity of policy and practices on the dimension of *redistribution* from the *era of bureaucratic authoritarianism* to the *era of politicization;* however, both periods exhibit radically different characteristics on the dimension of *representation*.

The Era of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism (1970-1988).

The foundational phase of the development of the university's peacebuilding agency covers the initial eighteen years of the institution, beginning during the military dictatorship of General Yahya Khan and ending with the restoration of civilian government in 1988. The university policies and governing practices during this phase shaped the institutional peacebuilding agency on the dimensions of *representation, recognition,* and *redistribution*. An examination of the university governing apparatus and practices reveals a centralized decision-making mechanism, which is dominated by the government functionaries and is headed by the vice-chancellor.

The university authority is distributed among various statutory bodies such as syndicate, academic council, board of studies, selection board, finance committee, etc. However, these bodies do not have representative character and are dominated by government officials. All the statutory bodies are headed by the vice-chancellor, which works to countervail the principle of division of authority. The university's policymaking and governance are largely out of bounds for the faculty and the students. University teachers are included in the statutory bodies on the vice-chancellor's recommendation.

From the perspective of representation, the university governance excluded the two most important education stakeholders from participating in the affairs of the university. The decision-making was non-representative, hierarchical, and dominated by civil servants. The division of authority was a sham, as the vice-chancellor headed all the statutory bodies. In addition, the data also showed that, for the most part during this phase, the university was headed either by a retired army officer or a judge. And the concept of institutional autonomy, implying protection from political influence, was also nonexistent from the beginning; instead, the university functioned as an extension of the administrative department of the provincial government.

The university's *redistributive* role was rather limited. The social function of the university was closely associated with the provision of personnel to the government's administrative and teaching services. This also shaped students' motivation toward higher education, which mostly revolved around finding a place in the postcolonial bureaucracy. The university's role in the development of human capital and its input to the regional economy was completely missing. The failure of industrial development in Balochistan was mainly attributed to the exploitative policies of the federal government, which uses the region only for the

extraction of natural resources without investment in the industrial sector. Some participants also described it as internal colonialism.

On the dimension of *recognition*, the campus hosted a diverse student body and teaching faculty, and the environment was mostly described as peaceful. The faculty and staff appointments were made mainly on a merit basis, which allowed people from other regions, mainly Karachi City and Punjab province, to get recruitment. University faculty was well regarded, and teaching quality was described by the research participants as better than in the latter phase of politicization. Ethnic tensions were also said to be less salient.

Student politics was organized around ethnic lines, but they were strongly influenced by progressive ideologies. During the 1970s, the student bodies were very active on campus and were united under Pakistan's Progressive Students Alliance. This, however, was completely reversed once the country engaged itself in the so-called Afghan jihad under the rightwing military dictator General Zia. In a drive to "Islamize" the state and society, campuses were purged from progressive politics, and a ban was imposed on all student unions. At the University of Balochistan, student activities mostly disappeared during the 1980s. The ban on student unions precipitated the growing influence of the ethno-nationalist parties on student politics. This connection was instrumental in the transition to the phase of politicization.

The Era of Politicization (1988-1999).

The era of politicization covers a brief period of the return of civilian rule in the country. This phase represents the period of political instability, marked by a reaction to the oppressive rule of General Zia and rivalries among the political elites. In Balochistan, ten chief ministers

were changed during this politically turbulent period. This phase also witnessed the increased salience of ethnic rivalries.

The data shows the radical transformation of the university on the dimensions of *representation* and *recognition* while representing continuity in the aspects of *redistribution* and *reconciliation*. The end of military dictatorship heralded the return of campus politics with increased intensity. The formerly dormant academic staff association became active against the administrative dominance of the university and challenged its authoritarian governing structure. The faculty leadership played a critical role in providing a new legislative foundation for the university.

In 1996, the private member bill was presented in the provincial assembly of Balochistan and was approved as the University of Balochistan Act 1996. On the dimension of *representation*, the Act was a big step toward representative and democratic governance. It increased faculty membership in the university's statutory bodies and introduced a principle of direct election for those positions. It was a radical break from the previous era of bureaucratic authoritarianism, in which decision-making was authoritarian and non-representative. Despite being democratic, the university governance remained exclusive to students.

The era of politicization was marked by increased political activities on campus and a changed nature of student politics. The ban on student unions during the 1980s became instrumental in making student politics subservient to the interests of ethno-nationalist political parties. The student organizations were increasingly transformed into on-campus recruitment bodies of nationalist parties. This also hampered the democratic processes within student

organizations. The inter-organizational elections were manipulated, and student leadership was handpicked by the nationalist elites.

This strongly influenced the university on the dimension of *recognition*. The retreat of progressive politics due to the changing national and international political environment resulted in the increased salience of ethnic identity as a major form of political mobilization. The inter-party rivalries of ethnic and tribal elites became rivalries between student bodies. The growing ethnicization of politics and hence that of the campus was a setback for the campus environment. Thus, this phase is also marred in campus violence and clashes between rival student groups, mainly over the issues of university appointments, admissions, hostel allocation, and other issues.

The Era of Securitized Neoliberalism (1999-2022).

The final phase of the development of the university's peacebuilding agency covers the period between 1999 and 2022, which included both military and civilian rule. Despite the change in the forms of government, the data shows the continuity of policies and practices across the four dimensions of peacebuilding. Two major factors emerge from the data to have formative effects on the peacebuilding agency in this phase. First are the security concerns emanating from the youths' engagement in ethno-nationalist politics, which affected the *representation*, *recognition*, and *reconciliation* dimensions of peacebuilding. And second is the higher education reforms underpinned by neoliberal ideology, which is reflected in the university's *redistributive* aspect of peacebuilding.

In the early 2000s, a group of student leaders, who were disgruntled by the nationalist politics dominated by the tribal elders and dismayed by the majoritarian democracy under the

influence of the military, worked to unify the various factions of the Baloch student organizations. Their efforts led to the creation of BSO Independent. The new organization was radically different in its adoption of egalitarian notions of nationalism, its rejection of status hierarchy based on tribalism, and its explicit objective of achieving independent statehood for the Baloch nation. With the organization's growing popularity came the unrest in the province, which ultimately blew into a full-scale insurgent movement after a former chief minister of the province was killed in a military operation.

The conflict marked the beginning of the securitization project of the university. The data showed that the project of securitization unfolded in different forms and manifested in security agencies elevated to the status of de facto policymaking actors, occupation of physical space of the university by security agencies, and institution of surveillance practices. The securitization project profoundly influenced the peacebuilding process on the dimensions of *representation*, *recognition*, and *reconciliation*.

As one dimension of *representation*, the University of Balochistan Act 1996 was abolished, and a new law was promulgated which restored the bureaucratic-authoritarian model of governance of the first phase. The participatory governance and electoral processes were terminated for the statutory bodies, and the university was directly placed under the provincial political executive. On the aspect of *recognition*, the campus witnessed the worst human rights abuses, ranging from intimidation, forced disappearances, torture, and target and custodial killings. Many faculty members left for their home provinces in search of security. From the perspective of *reconciliation*, the unannounced abeyance of the constitution and suspension of the state's legal framework undermined the very foundation of the state's legitimacy and further

eroded trust in the state's institution. The securitization brought a semblance of order to the campus but at the cost of further aggravating the structural drivers of the conflict.

Concomitantly, the higher education reforms introduced in the country perversely affected the *redistributive* aspect of peacebuilding. The reforms were inspired by the economic imperative of transforming the economy from an agricultural-based to a knowledge-based economic production. The idea of knowledge as a productive force brought universities into the focus of economic policy. Universities began to be seen as the engines of economic growth, hence leading to a manyfold increase in the number of publicly funded higher education institutions in the country.

However, the increased number of HEIs did not come with an increase in the state's capacity to generate revenue through a progressive taxation system. The study results showed that despite the manyfold increase in access, the tax-to-GDP ratio remained below eleven percent since 2000. As the number of institutions grew, the state's capacity to provide funds further shrank. Furthermore, the study results also showed that funding responsibility was increasingly shifted from the government to the individual universities. For this purpose, the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) was established in each public- sector university to facilitate them in generating their own resources. In addition, the HEC also partially linked university funding to their research output.

The outcome of these reforms was catastrophic for the University of Balochistan and pushed the institution toward a financial crisis. Since 2013, the university has been facing difficulties in meeting its financial obligations toward staff and faculty. The payment of salaries and pension funds is often delayed for months. Strikes, boycotts of classes and exams, and

blockades of roads by the administrative and teaching staff have become recurring features of

academic life. At the same time, the reforms have also caused the rising cost of higher education.

The study results noted the rise in tuition fees by more than ten percent, which was a violation of

the former University Act of 1996. To meet the budgetary shortfall, the administration has also

looked towards hiring more visiting faculty who incur less cost and have no pension obligations.

Reflecting on Peacebuilding Dimensions

The study results showed that not all aspects of peacebuilding were affected in each of

the three phases. During the first phase of developing the university's peacebuilding agency, the

changes were mostly confined to the *representation, redistribution,* and *recognition* dimensions

of the 4Rs. The second phase marked changes in *representation* and *recognition* with continuity

in the *redistribution* and *reconciliation* dimensions. In the third phase, all four dimensions of the

4Rs were affected. Understanding these differences between phases requires the investigation of

the larger socio-economic, political, and cultural factors responsible for shaping the institutional

peacebuilding agency.

As an extension and part of the government sector, the institution has been directly

exposed to the political influences and policies of the incumbent governments. Tracing the

evolution of the institution's peacebuilding agency reveals a profound imprint of the power

struggle between the army and political forces on the one hand and the struggle among political

actors on the other. Furthermore, the exploration of the institutional agency along the 4Rs shows

that the influence of power struggles among various actors on representation, recognition,

redistribution, and reconciliation is far from being even. The reason for the disproportionate

effects on the four dimensions of peacebuilding can be interpreted as the differences in the

approaches adopted by political forces and the army towards political participation, developing inclusive identity, and peacebuilding strategies.

The study results reveal that the quest for domination between civil and military elites is reflected more on the issue of representation (political participation) and reconciliation (being flexible, less prone to the use of force, belief in dialogue, etc.) than on redistribution (economic and development policy). On the dimension of recognition (acceptance of societal diversity), there has been a conflict of interests between ethno-nationalist political forces and mainstream political parties; the former sees Pakistan as a multi-ethnic nation, while the latter subscribes to the view of Pakistan as a homogenous Muslim nation.

In the era of bureaucratic authoritarianism, which coincided with military rule in the country, the government policies were averse to political participation (representation) and insisted on a homogenous national identity based on religion (recognition). The economic potential of higher education (redistribution) was not fully realized, as universities mostly functioned to provide human resources to the government's administrative machinery.

Several important political, economic, and cultural changes in the society marked the beginning of the era of politicization. The two most important factors were the restoration of civilian government and the influx of Afghan refugees in Balochistan. The former resulted in the education stakeholders' greater participation (representation) in the university's governing system, while the latter reflected increased ethnic tension (recognition) between the two local groups. Because most Afghan refugees were ethnic Pashtuns, the settlement of refugees in the province precipitated the fear in ethnic Balochs of being transformed into a minority group.

The era of securitized neoliberalism was characterized by reinvigorated ethno-nationalism in Balochistan and the state's aggressive pursuit of neoliberal economic policies. In the case of the latter, the government's decision to launch the so-called mega development project of Gwadar deep seaport in Balochistan, which would connect the western Chinese region to the Arabian Sea, further added to the anxiety of the Baloch population. The port was to host a huge population of migrant workers, thus adding to the existing fears of cultural extinction among the local communities. With the increased salience of ethnic identity and mass participation in ethno-nationalist politics, the ground was once again set for the violent conflict in the troubled region of Balochistan.

The conflict negatively affected the institution's peacebuilding agency on all four dimensions. The previous model of authoritarian governance (representation) was restored at the University of Balochistan. The conflict resulted in campus violence and the killings of staff, teachers, and students belonging to different ethnic groups (recognition). The violations of the laws and constitutional provisions by the security apparatus and the perpetration of human rights abuses undermined the legitimacy of the state and eroded trust in public institutions (reconciliation). And the policy of shifting funding responsibilities to individual universities resulted in a financial crisis in the university (redistribution).

Security Framework, Conflict, and Peacebuilding

The study corroborates the primary data with the investigation of the state's security framework. My investigation of the security documents to reveal the dimensions of conflict, its underlying causal factors, and peacebuilding strategies yields interesting insights (see Appendix

A). There is consensus that extremism, terrorism, sectarianism, and sub-nationalism (ethno-

nationalism) are the major challenges facing the country.

My analysis of the documents reveals that the dominant approach toward explaining the

causal factors of extremism and ethnic militancy traces the issues to individuals' behavioral and

attitudinal factors. Ontologically, it shares the liberal theoretical assumption of looking at the

individual, rather than social structures, to explain the nature of the conflict. However, it also

diverges from the liberal approach in a significant way. Unlike the liberal framework, which sees

the conflict as an outcome of rational individual actors working to maximize their economic

interests, particularly when large economic stakes are involved like an abundance of natural

resources, the Pakistani security framework points to the individual actors not as rational agents

but as ones who are susceptible to ideological manipulation.

> The heart of the extremist movements are their narratives which operate in the ideational
> domain. The gains made through the concerted efforts mentioned above must be utilised
> to challenge the ideological underpinnings of the violent narratives that create a mindset
> vulnerable to taking up arms against the state. A comprehensive National Narrative
> covering various facets of the Pakistani nation along with its dissemination strategy is
> also being developed by NACTA to enhance national cohesion. (National Internal
> Security Policy, 2018, p. 9)

Thus, the framework uses ideological indoctrination and the enemy's propaganda as the

major explanatory variable of the conflict. The overarching narrative is that of an ideological

warfare between Pakistan and its enemies, where the latter is using various techniques to

misguide Pakistani youth, particularly those on its peripheries. This has also been corroborated

by the interview data. A recurring theme emerged that cites the imagined grievances,

exclusionary identity narratives, exaggerated accounts of victimhood, and the enemy's

propaganda to be the major causes of the conflict. Based on this understanding of conflict,

constructing a counter-narrative becomes the major peacebuilding approach, which is embodied in a National Narrative. Education, in this context, is subsumed under the counter-terrorist strategies and works as a security instrument for delivering the national narrative against extremist, terrorist and nationalist ideologies.

Another major approach to understanding the causal factors is to trace the conflict to the weak government administrative machinery and security apparatus, and hence presents the bolstering of state institutions as means of peacebuilding. It is by far the most recurring feature of all security-related policy documents. The state's inability to impose its writ on the citizens features most prominently as the main underlying cause of the social breakdown. The lack of rule of law, weak governance, foreign involvement, lack of accountability, the weak criminal justice system, lack of service delivery, etc., all paint a Hobbesian state of nature-like scenario that requires the presence of an all-powerful state which can impose its order on the people.

> Of all the possible causes that allowed extremism and terror to foster in Pakistan, the prime cause may well have been the weakness and inability of State to enforce its writ over all its territory and people. A State by definition must be strong and effective with a monopoly over the possession and employment of force and the authority and obligation for providing basic socio-economic needs and good governance to its people. A responsible State is the bulwark against elements disseminating an extremist mindset and hostile conduct. The State machinery in order to ensure its writ has to act proactively to neutralize and bring to justice all anti-state actors. This provides the opportunity for peace and security which leads to the creation of an enabling environment where human resource development and peaceful resolution of disputes takes central stage. (National Internal Security Policy, 2018, p. 3)

According to this view, peacebuilding often takes the form of capacity building of the postcolonial state. Investing in government departments, particularly the security and law enforcement agencies, becomes the main strategy to combat terrorism and extremism, and to counter ethnic movements. It ignores the authoritarian nature of the state and its coercive policies

which actually contribute to the conflict but instead presents the state as a neutral agency working for the benefit of all citizens. It provides the rationale for further entrenchment of society by the security forces, and—in this case–makes education a new frontier to be governed.

The Neoliberal University in a Postcolonial State

Universities are often understood as autonomous institutions, having a tripartite function of knowledge dissemination, knowledge production, and provision of social services. However, in this study I shed light on an institution that takes a radically different trajectory in terms of its nature and societal functions. The notion of the university as a teaching and research institution that serves the needs of the local community becomes a conceptual constraint in the postcolonial context of Pakistan. The University of Balochistan was founded in 1970 through an Ordinance by General Riaz Hussain, during the military dictatorship of General Yahya Khan. The concept of institutional autonomy was nonexistent from the beginning, as the university was under complete control of the provincial governor who served as the chancellor of the university. The university was also run through a bureaucratic model, with a hierarchical governance structure with most power concentrated at the top. For all practical purposes, the institution was an extension of the administrative arm of the state and ran on the same bureaucratic principles.

The function of the university was also not academic but administrative. The institution did not engage in knowledge creation activities but remained predominantly a teaching institution, and research was not part of the institutional core functioning until 2002. The social function of the university was also closely associated with postcolonial administrative machinery. The data showed that the university served as a feeding mechanism for the growing administrative and teaching services within the government sector.

The university, as an institution having economic functions, was realized under the narrative of a knowledge-based economy. As scientific knowledge and technological advancement got closely associated with the country's economic prowess, universities began to be seen as an engine of economic growth. The KBE ideology prompted large-scale reforms in the Pakistan's higher education sector. It was believed that increased access to high-quality higher education would lead the country onto the path of economic prosperity.

The neoliberal framing of the universities as a potential source of wealth creation was presented as a revolutionary idea and provided the nation with the hope of a better future. The growing youth population with the right knowledge, skills, and entrepreneurial attitude was believed to create its own economic opportunities without the need for the state to invest directly in the economy. The state's only requirement was to establish a competition-enabling environment in the higher education sector. Thus, setting up an incentives-structure to motivate the interest-maximizing agents became an issue of central concern in higher education policy.

By focusing on the individual's scientific and technological knowledge and entrepreneurial skill as a source of economic development, the neoliberal ideology freed the state from the responsibility of addressing larger economic questions of historically constituted inequalities and economic exploitation. Reforming universities became an "ideological fix" for the failure of neoliberal policies pursued by the state.

The neoliberal agenda also emerged as having a remarkable ability to adapt to the postcolonial condition. In the conflict context of Balochistan, this ensured the continuity of the political and administrative control of the university, while at the same time, enabling the state to shift the funding responsibility towards the university. The neoliberalization of higher education

unfolded as a process of increased authoritarian control by the state coupled with decreased financial responsibility.

By using the analytical framework of the 4Rs, I have shown that neoliberalism has undermined the state's capacity to fund its public institutions, including the universities. This directly reflects on the *redistributive* aspect of peacebuilding. The policies have not only resulted in pushing the University of Balochistan toward an economic crisis but also have narrowed down the possibilities of asking critical questions about the continuity of the historically constituted unjust economic and political system.

Contribution to the Field

Education in emergencies is a relatively new but vibrant field of scholarship. It is a multidisciplinary field that lies at the intersection of development studies, peace and conflict studies, and international education. Due to its multidisciplinary nature, methodological diversity and theoretical heterogeneity add to the vigor of the field. In terms of utility, the scholarship has yielded important insights for national policymakers and international development actors about rebuilding the education system in conflict-affected contexts.

In terms of scholarly focus, the ethnic dimension of the conflict remains the primary area of investigation in the field of education in emergencies. In fact, the field's emergence can be traced to the changing nature of conflict from inter-state wars to intra-state conflicts, which are mostly fought along ethnic lines. The shift from international wars between states to civil wars between social groups also shaped the scholarly contours of the field of education in a conflict context. The literature produced in the field explored the causes of conflict and the peacebuilding approaches from various theoretical standpoints. The liberal approach offers a narrow

explanation that locates the causes of the conflict in the individuals' greed. With its ontological fixation on the interest-maximizing individual agents, the liberal approach fails to account for the larger social forces at play that enable the conflict.

Similarly, the liberal approach also offers a narrow peacebuilding framework during the post-conflict recovery phase. It emphasizes the need to establish functioning markets as a means of promoting peace. The underlying assumption is that once markets have been established, economic activities will generate better livelihood opportunities, and hence will result in establishing sustainable peace. This approach, however, marginalizes the agenda of social services provision as a means of establishing sustainable peace in the post-conflict phase.

The political economy lens offers valuable insights into the causes of conflict and provides an alternative peacebuilding framework which is critical of the liberal peacebuilding model. It does not reduce the causes of conflict to individual greed but is sensitive to the political, economic, social, and cultural causes of conflict. It is also critical of the liberal peacebuilding approach which relies on market forces to generate peace. The political economy literature emphasizes the need to bring the provision of social services, including health and education, to the center of the peacebuilding process, rather than being treated as peripheral agenda.

However, both liberal and political economy approaches suffer from the limitation imposed by their inability to account for political dispensation as part of their explanation of the causes of conflict and peacebuilding measures. This study contributes to the field by highlighting the need to bring the nature and role of the political organization into conversation with the analysis of the causes of conflict and processes of achieving sustainable peace. Paying more

attention to the nature of the state, and its historically constituted governing practices, is critical both with reference to its role in enabling conflict as well as in approaches to achieve peace because the recent history of conflict resolution shows a shift from internationally negotiated peace settlements between warring groups to peace established through military force. Thus, the authoritarian state apparatus plays a critical role, both as an enabler of conflict and as the actor to establish peace, but this aspect of the state is largely ignored in the literature.

My in-depth analysis of the case of the University of Balochistan in the conflict context of Balochistan reveals the complex nature of the ethnic conflict, which goes beyond the strained or violent relationship between two social groups. In exploring the dimensions of the conflict and its implications for the higher education institution, I found that the Pakistani state's authoritarian nature emerged in a prominent role in the conflict. What emerged from the data was the very complex nature of the conflict, which involved not only the majority and minority ethnic groups but the active participation of the "state" as an actor in the conflict.

Although problematizing the state's role is beyond this study's scope, data pointed toward its central role in the conflict. My analysis of interview data revealed that the distinction between the state and the majority ethnic group was quite blurred. Public institutions, particularly the army, bureaucracy, and judiciary were interchangeable with the ethnic majority group (i.e., Punjabi). The data revealed that the state and its institutions were often conceived as an "ethnic other" in the conflict. The ethnic character of the state becomes the biggest challenge in restoring the legitimacy and social trust in public institutions, which are crucial for peacebuilding efforts.

The perception of the "ethnicized" state also becomes a major impediment while delivering social services as means of establishing peace. The data suggested that even genuine efforts to achieve peace succumb to a lack of trust in the state's institutions. It leads to the outright rejection of anything offered by the state. However, this dimension is not adequately addressed and needs further investigation in the scholarship on education in emergencies. Given the complex nature of the conflict and the role of the state therein, the study contributes to the field by highlighting the need to problematize the role and nature of the political setup in conflict contexts.

This study of education in the Pakistani context shows a greater need to diversify the actors and factors of the conflict. The political economy approach is useful in bringing the underlying cultural, political, social, and economic aspects of the conflict; however, it fails to address the institutional aspect of the state as an enabler of the conflict. Researchers need to pay attention to the nature of the state, the continuity of historical practices, and the state's relationship with its citizens.

Building on this argument for the inclusion of the organizational and institutional setup of the state in the analysis of education in a crisis context, researchers must also pay more attention to the audience of the research. Most of the literature is narrowly focused on the national policymakers and development actors as its target audience. Although the field positively contributes to our understanding of the nature of conflict and the multifaceted role of education in promoting or mitigating crises, its scholarship is largely policy-oriented. The underlying assumption of the policy-centric approach is the notion of the state which is impersonal and

neutral and is working for the benefit of all the citizens. This approach presupposes that with the help of social scientific knowledge, states can solve the issues of education in emergencies.

However, this approach ignores the partisan nature of the state in conflict contexts. Oftentimes, what emerges from the data is not a well-intentioned state lacking the proper understanding of the issue, but a state whose interests are directly opposed to those of ordinary citizens. Thus, it is not the lack of knowledge to improve the situation, but the entrenched interests of the state and its functionaries that emerges as a major factor in the conflict. In this context, the utility of policy-oriented scholarship in the field of education in emergencies is often reduced by not addressing the "right" audience.

While eschewing the liberal notion of a neutral state governed through impersonal laws, and founded on the social contract, this study questions the utility of the policy-centric approach adopted in the literature. The study results highlight the need to be sensitive to the illiberal roots of the states in non-western contexts and emphasize the need to broaden the scope of the research audience. The study points to the need for a discussion involving the issues of who is creating knowledge, for whom it is being created, and who will benefit from it. These issues are central and require rethinking and re-orientation of the field towards the inclusion of other stakeholders as research audiences, such as political actors, social movements, student unions, and ordinary people.

Thus, the study contributes to the literature by highlighting the need to integrate institutional and organizational aspects of the state into the analysis of education in a conflict-affected context. This is in addition to the four dimensions of political representation, economic redistribution, cultural diversity, and addressing the root causes of the conflict. Additionally, the

research also emphasizes the need for diversification of the research audience by not merely focusing on the national and international policy actors, but also including political actors, social movements, student and labor unions, and ordinary citizens.

Conclusion

This study represents an effort to understand the development of a higher education institution in Pakistan's troubled region of Balochistan. The primary focus of the study was to investigate how the university's peacebuilding agency evolved in response to the higher education policies and the local security challenges in the conflict-affected context of Balochistan. The peacebuilding agency was measured using the framework of the 4Rs. The analytical framework of the 4Rs focuses on the issues of political participation, economic inequalities, cultural recognition, and building social trust by addressing the root causes of the conflict. These principles are embodied in the aspects of representation, redistribution, recognition, and reconciliation. Thus, the institutional peacebuilding agency was measured through its capacity to promote the 4Rs within its institutional setup and to be instrumental in promoting these values in the larger society.

The study relied on the use of individual and group interviews and archival data, as well as he analysis of security and higher education policy frameworks. Participants were selected using a purposeful sampling technique, which is based on the selection of information-rich cases. The participants included the former and current university faculty, staff, and student leaders. The total number of research participants was twenty-five. Interviews were recorded using the online platform Zoom and saved in a local drive. Due to the sensitive nature of the study, strict confidentiality was maintained throughout the study.

The analysis of data showed three distinct phases of the development of the university's peacebuilding agencies. The initial bureaucratic-authoritarian phase was characterized by the hierarchical nature of the university governance, which rested on the exclusion of teachers and students from the decision-making processes. The university administration was hostile to political activities. During this phase, the faculty association was inactive, and there was a ban on the student union. The development of the politicization phase of the university was marked by a reaction to the earlier phases and represented a radical difference in the dimensions of representation and recognition. During this phase, the university governance was dominated by the teaching faculty but, more importantly, the student organizations. The student politics was organized as student wings of nationalist parties and had fully embraced the ethno-nationalist ideas.

Due to the close links developed between the student organizations and political parties, rivalries among nationalist elites also infiltrated student organizations. This phase was marked by tensions and violence among various student bodies. The period of politicization ended with another military coup in 1999. The era of securitized neoliberalism was marked by the complete dominance of the campus by security forces. Student politics was once again uprooted. The period also dealt a blow to participatory and democratic university governance. Another feature of this phase was the financial crisis along with the rising cost of higher education.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title:	**Higher Education, Neoliberalism, and Conflict: A Case of the**
	University of Balochistan in Pakistan

Researcher:	Syed Amir Shah, Ph.D. Student at Loyola University Chicago, USA.
Research Advisor:	Dr. Tavis D. Jules
IRB Project No.	3512

Introduction:
You are being asked to take part in a research study conducted by Syed Amir Shah as part of his doctoral research, under the supervision of Dr. Tavis D. Jules in the School of Education at the Loyola University of Chicago. You are being requested to participate because you are/were a faculty member/administrator/student at the University of Balochistan. This study plans to interview former and current faculty members, administrators, and students of the university with the aim of exploring institutional history, understanding the implications of the conflict on the institution, and investigating the outcome of the neoliberal reforms in the higher education sector in the province.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to explore the higher education sector with regard to its role in supporting peacebuilding efforts in the conflict-affected context of Balochistan. The research is a case study of the University of Balochistan. The study plans to gain insights from education experts, faculty members, university administrators, and student leaders through semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus groups about the said purpose of the study. In addition to interviews, the research will also include the study of the archival record.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in a 60-120-minute, individual video interview (or a focus group) with Syed Amir Shah. Interviews/focus groups will be conducted and recorded using the Zoom platform.

Risks/Benefits:
There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. There are no direct benefits to you from participation, however, your participation in the research will greatly help in expanding our knowledge about the implications of higher education reforms on the University of Balochistan.

Confidentiality:
The identity and the information gathered from the participants will be kept confidential. All the recordings will be kept locally, will be password protected, and will not be used for purposes other than research. Data will be accessible only to the researcher, and to the research advisor(s)

for their potential inputs and guidance. To maintain anonymity, only audio tapes of the interviews will be retained, and pseudonyms will be assigned to all the participants before conducting data analysis. The researcher will also be cautious while using the titles, designations, or departmental affiliation in order not to provide any hint that may lead to the identification of the participant(s). All the files/records containing information about the research participants will be destroyed after the research/degree program.

Voluntary Participation:
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. If the participant is a colleague or has any other relationship with the researcher, the decision to participate or not to participate will not affect the current relationship.

Contacts and Questions:
If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Syed Amir Shah at sshah@luc.edu or the faculty advisor Prof. Tavis Jules at tjules@luc.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent:
I affirm that I have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. I am also aware that the interview/focus group will be recorded, and the audio file will be retained for the research purposes.

You will be asked for a verbal consent at the beginning of the interview/focus group about (i) your voluntary participation in the research project, and (ii) your consent to record the interview in audio format.

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Subject: Research Project Opportunity

Dear [name],

Hope this email finds you in the best of health. My name is Syed Amir Shah. I am a doctoral student at the School of Education, Loyola University Chicago. I am conducting a research study on the University of Balochistan to explore its history and understand the implications of the regional conflict on the institution. In this regard, you are requested for an individual semi-structured interview/focus group discussion with me. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to share your views and experiences working in the higher education sector of the province. The interview/focus group will take place using the online platform Zoom. The duration of the interview/focus group will be between 50 to 120 minutes.

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. The identity of all research participants will be kept completely confidential.

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact me at sshah@luc.edu or the faculty advisor Prof. Tavis Jules at tjules@luc.edu. A request for further information does not obligate you to participate in this study.

I would really appreciate your interest and participation!

Best regards,

Syed Amir Shah
Ph.D. [candidate], School of Education, Loyola University
Chicago, USA.

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY TABLE

	Representation	Redistribution	Recognition	Reconciliation
The Era of Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism (1970-1988)	Top-down bureaucratic form of governance Teachers and students are excluded from decision-making processes Teaching association dysfunctional Student unions banned	University closely associated with public sector jobs Employment opportunities *mostly* in the government sector Low student motivation	Diversity in the campus (Mostly) Peaceful campus environment and harmony among different social groups	No community access Local history, culture, economic and political aspects mostly ignored in the curriculum
The Era of Politicization (1988-1999)	Increased participation and democratization of university governance Restoration of campus politics Weakening of university governance	Mostly same	Increased ethnic tension Violence among student organizations Decline in education quality	Community access restored

The Era of Securitized Neoliberalism (1999-2022)	Authoritarian governance restored Security forces as policy actors Teachers and students are excluded from decision-making processes Campus politics banned	Mostly same, but in addition: Reduced public support for the university The onset of financial crises Increased job precarity Increased cost of higher education	Militarization of campus Gross human rights violations *against* students and teachers Heightened distrust among ethnic groups	Campus as a securitized zone Institutionalization of surveillance Erosion of states' legitimacy University administration facilitating human rights *abuses*

APPENDIX D

ANALYSIS OF SECURITY FRAMEWORK (A)

	National Internal Security Policy 2014-18	National Internal Security Policy 2018-23	National Counter Extremism Policy Guidelines 2018	National Security Policy 2022-26
Conflict Dimensions	Extremism Terrorism Ethnic militancy Sectarianism	Extremism Terrorism External threats (ISIS, Taliban) Sub-nationalism	Extremism Terrorism Sub-nationalism Sectarianism	External involvement Violent Sub- Nationalisms Sectarianism
Drivers of Conflict	Imagined grievances and exaggerated accounts of victimhood Youth unemployment Parallel education system	Youth alienation and frustration Exclusionary identity narratives Lack of justice Weak governance Regional disparities Lack of accountability Foreign involvement Political exclusion Failure of education	Lack of service delivery Erosion of community and culture Urbanization Ideological propaganda Misuse of media	Horizontal Inequalities Divisive discourse around ethnic, religious, and social differences External involvement Violent Sub-Nationalisms

Peacebuilding	Dialogue with all stakeholders	Promotion of democracy	Rule of law	Economic security and inclusive economic growth
	Isolation of terrorists from their support systems	Rule of law	Service delivery	Territorial integrity through defense, deterrence, astute diplomacy, and the building of robust space and cyber capabilities.
	Capacity building of the security apparatus	Inclusive growth and social safety nets	Capacity building of Law enforcement agencies	
	Developing a robust National Narrative	Respect for diversity	Citizen Engagement	Good governance; rule of law and strengthening of institutions
	Infrastructure development	Improved coordination among government agencies	Media Engagement	
	Improving criminal justice system	Offering incentives to the militants	Integrated Education Reform	Preserving national identity, Islamic character and cultural heritage.
		Research focusing on causes of terrorism	Promotion of Culture	
			Rehabilitation and De-radicalization of convicted terrorists	Foster patriotism and social cohesion through national values and ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversity.
		Improving governance and service delivery		
		Reforming the education system	Construction of a national narrative	Promote interfaith harmony and minority rights.
		Initiating madrassa, mosque & media reforms		
		Increasing tourism and cultural activities.		
		Comprehensive National Narrative based on Islam, vision of Jinnah, and Constitution		

Education	Integrating madrassahs into mainstream education system Technical and vocational education for youth Creating jobs and offering soft loans to youth	Curriculum reform in schools and madrassahs to bring it in conformity with the new national narrative. Restoration of physical infrastructure of schools in troubled regions. Higher education to do high quality, nuanced and localized research focusing of national security Equal emphasis on social sciences and humanities with that of STEM Madrassah integration, registration and financial audit Adoption of national curriculum Expanding vocational and technical training to provide skills to unemployed youth.	Integrated System of Education Subjects focusing on fundamental rights, civics and community engagement, minority rights, and women rights be included in curriculum Teachings of Islam Creating citizens well versed in national values. Creation of textbooks repositories Education to enhance the resistance to labels and categorizations and showing how original and special each of us is. Mainstreaming madrassah Madrassah registration and financial audit Counter Narrative library Promoting critical thinking	Shift from knowledge consumption to knowledge creation through rising standards of higher education Focus on science, engineering and smart technology Promotion of marketable skills

APPENDIX E

ANALYSIS OF SECURITY FRAMEWORK (B)

	Theoretical approaches in the literature	Pakistan' Security framework	
		Social and political factors according to Pakistan's security framework	Relationship between Education and conflict according to security framework
Conflict	Greed vs Grievance. Individual vs structural drivers	Identity politics Foreign involvement Youth alienation Weak governance and accountability Economic disparities Failure of education	Parallel education system Lack of oversight on Madrassahs Ideological indoctrination

Peace	Liberal peace (peace with liberal democracy and functional markets / trickle down peace) Vs state's investment in social service including education (addressing root causes of conflict)	Democracy and rule of law Capacity building of state and security apparatus Improving service delivery Addressing economic inequalities Promoting culture of peace, tolerance, diversity, and minority rights National narrative based on Islam, culture, and vision of Quaid (Jinnah)	Integration of madrassahs into mainstream education Madrassah regulation and registration Technical and vocational training for youth One curriculum for all Equal emphasis on social sciences (civic education, HR education) Higher education to focus on conflict and peacebuilding research Education and media to deliver National Narrative
Development	Modernization Dependency Neoliberal approaches to development	Creation of more jobs Extending social safety nets	Technical and vocational training Focus on skills and entrepreneurship

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