Ethnic Conflict, Politics and Pakistan's Security Dilemma: What Went Wrong

Nasreen Akhtar [*] | Inamullah Jan [+]

Abstract: *The ethnic political card has been influential in Pakistan's political history. Political and military leadership, in the past, have been dealing with political issues on the basis of ethnicity-for political objectives. Pakistan's four provinces have their own ethnic identity; they promote regionalism instead of nationalism. Balochistan, the most troubling area, is experiencing unrest due to constant insurgency based on ethnicity. Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), a new ethnic group, has taken root since 2018. PTM has been posing a new challenge to the state and security establishment. This paper examines the adverse impact of ethnic conflict and politics on national politics and security in the country. The new movement under PTM in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and one of the national political parties in Sindh have posed a grave challenge to the state and its security establishment. The central question of this paper is; why does ethnic conflict pose a security threat? And what are the new trends in ethnic politics?*

Introduction

Pakistan's contemporary politics is dominated by ethnic group (s) and parties. Pakistan gained independence as a Muslim state from Britain in 1947. Within a few years, in the 1950s, the newly born Muslim state gravely experienced ethnic division and political resentment between East Pakistan (present Bangladesh) and West Pakistan (present Pakistan). Muslim ethnic groups in Pakistan, ideologically, were not divided in the United India-they had only one identity, that was 'Islam', which differentiated them from other religious groups (Hindu and Sikh). Muslim ethnicity itself was not an important factor before independence. But Islam, as a major force, remained at the centre of post-independence political dialogue in Pakistan. Pakistani state (elites) has been an instrument in increasing ethnic conflict and excelled in ethnopolitics in the country (Amin 1988,60). Presently, Pakistan's great challenges are the Constitutional rights and ethnic identity of the several ethnic groups-those have shaped their identity as "ethnonationalism" and resisted the state's policies.

Baloch and Pashtun communities are more dynamic in demanding their Constitutional rights-economic and political. In Sindh, the Mohajir community has established its own political party, Mohajir Qomi Movement (MQM).MQM has become a dominant and influential party in Sindh which has challenged the Sindhis' political interests. These ethnic groups are the result of the state's policies- state instrument has been influencing and dividing the ethnic communities. Mainly, erroneous policies of the state's elites helped in increasing the ethnic groups-those challenged the government and the security establishment. In this paper, we will discuss and analyse how ethnic nationalists have augmented security threats to Pakistan's sovereignty. And what exactly went wrong?

All social groups- in the old and modern

[*] Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and International Relation, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: nasreen.akhtar@iiu.edu.pk *(Corresponding Author)*

[+] PhD, Department of Politics and International Relation, International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan.

world- have been using language, culture, religion and geography to construct their ethnic paradigm. In Pakistan, ethnic groups have dominated politics, and they have – effectively- constructed their national narrative of a separate identity-ethnic group. Owing to these prevailing ethnic groups, the nature of Pakistan's Constitution has always been questioned within the state- democratic or authoritarian, federal or central–evoking the different social (ethnic) groups that actively influenced and, often, challenged the security and survival of the state. Inequity and unjust policy "distribution of national power dissatisfied" (Rais 2018:2) the multi-ethnic groups demanded to preserve their ethnic identity – when the political and military governments failed to comply with their demands, ethnic groups used coercive methods and implored for foreign assistance without hesitation.

Pakistan is a politically polarised and multi-ethnic state- religiously divided into sects. Major political parties, military rulers, and traditional Islamists have been defining state, society, and political affairs (Jalal 2009; Haqqani 2005). Ironically, democratic and authoritarian regimes- the civil and military rulers and their policy fondness, provided a strong gap to the ethnic groups and helped them to be an influential force in the country though. These powerful ethnic groups have political representation and established their ethnopolitical identity but conflict with the core state's stakeholders (military establishment) is not over. For instance, Baloch nationalists and a new emerging PashtunTahafz-e -Movement (PTM) are a great challenge to Pakistan's security and sovereignty. In contemporary Pakistan, the trend of ethnic politics has changed – PTM has augmented the security dilemma. New-ethnic group, PTM, is increment and poses a threat to the security establishment-it has adopted new measures to pressurise the state and security establishment (Akhtar 2019). Pashtun youth has changed the dynamics of ethnic politics in Pakistan- We will discuss the new trends of ethnic politics in contemporary Pakistan. This paper will investigate these questions; how and why did the state's policies augment ethnic groups? Has the democratic system in Pakistan disseminated ethnic identity or defused it?

How has ethnic politics destabilised the democratic development in Pakistan?

The sponsorship of ethnic groups and parties- during the military and civilian rule for political interests was an institutional approach. Two military rulers (General Zia-ul-Haqand and General Pervez Musharraf) exploited ethnic groups for political purposes and supported a new ethnic party, MQM, in Sindh merely to maintain power and contain their rival political parties (Rizvi 2008)-we will discuss it when examining the case of Mohajir (migrated) ethnic identity in Sindh, Karachi. Throughout military rule, the sponsorship of ethnic politics was expected because "the military rulers needed the support of ethnopolitical parties to balance and equalise the mainstream national democratic parties" (Zahir 2020), mainly Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Since 2008, political and democratic rule has taken place in the country, but ethnic conflict and politics have not been defused or limited. However, the neo-ethnic movement, PTM, has emerged.

PTM, a neo-ethnic group, emerged during the general elections in 2018 in Pakistan. PTM secured two seats in Parliament. PTM's leaders and its followers believe and blame state security as being the main irritant in increasing terrorism in their tribal areas. PTM's elected parliamentarians are critical of the role of the army in tribal areas- consequently, the PTM's legislators have been arrested when they challenge the writ of the security establishment (Khattak & Sirajuddin 2020). PTM was established in South Waziristan, the most troubling area and the hideout of the Pakistani Taliban. This new ethnic movement was established to protect the rights of Pashtun victims and establish peace in the troubling areas which have been controlled by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)- the military used force to eliminate the Pakistani Taliban. PTM claims that the Pashtun community, in a troubling area, is being neglected, and the state has failed to provide justice and economic dividends to the people who suffered due to the military operations in North Waziristan in 2014. A local political activist, Manzoor Ahmad Pashteen, raised an offensive slogan against the army. Whereas PTM's parliamentarians overtly asked the United States and

Afghanistan to help PTM in removing the army from Waziristan (Waqar 2019; BBC 2020).

PTM, explicitly, has been showing its connection with Pakistan's rivals –Afghanistan and India (Ticku 2020), which annoyed the Pakistani security establishment. Likewise, PTM has gained political support from the mainstream national political parties-PPP and Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N). The PTI government launched an anti-corruption move in the country, which annoyed major opposition political parties-PPP and PML-N. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari decided to support PTM. Meanwhile, PPP's leadership played Sindh ethnic card to pressurise the PTI government and sideline MQM. Ethnic group (s), Baloch and Pashtun, are using force and posing a great security challenge to Pakistan.

Pakistan is a federal state, and its nature of federalism has been questioned and challenged by the powerful ethnopolitical leaders- Sindh, Balochistan and now in the troubling province KPK- by PTM. All the democratic governments since 2008 (PPP, PML-N, PTI) have attempted to defuse ethnic alienation from Sindh, Balochistan and KPK, but their political performance and personal preferences would not satisfy the ethnic political parties which have been claiming equal shares in accordance with federal constitution (Leeza 2019). PPP's former President offered an apology and economic package to the angry Baloch leaders (nationalists), but the package was rejected as the separatist Baloch leaders considered it a "price" of their struggle (Kasi 2009). In Sindh, Sindhi, Mohajir and Pashtun increased violence during the PPP's government from 2008-2012. PPP is the only party which has dominated Sindh province for the last thirty years (Ahmar 2020), and ethnic factor plays a significant role.

A neo-ethnic group has emerged in Pakistan. In January 2018, an incident occurred in the cosmopolitan city of Sindh, Karachi. A young Pashtun man (Naqeebullah Mehsud) was killed. The police officer who killed Mehsud was closely associated with a national political party. This incident triggered the Pashtun youth in South Waziristan, and they established a new ethnic movement to fight against injustice and oppression in tribal areas. It is interesting to know that, unlike other ethnic groups, PTM has never received any support from the state or security establishment owing to its anti-state [establishment] slogans and policy-PTM is referred to as a 'hybrid war' instrument by the security establishment (Malik 2019). Pakistan's political history shows that socioeconomic deprivation immensely contributed to instigating ethnopolitics and conflict- when a group has failed to gain socioeconomic due to the state institutions, the sense of deprivation increases (Gurr 1971). Two major factors triggered the Pashtun youth, and PTM was created a) a young Pashtun's murder by a police officer and b) the ongoing military operation in Waziristan, Federally Administrative Tribal Agencies (FATA). Waziristan has been a hub of terrorists. Socioeconomic grievances and clash of interests forced the Pashtun youth to establish PTM to protect their constitutional rights.

Democracy and Ethnic Dynamics in Old and New Pakistan

In this section, we will discuss how united Pakistan was divided – the dismemberment of a new state of Pakistan and the establishment of Bangladesh would help us to understand the root cause of the present ethnic waves in Pakistan. Pakistan emerged as a Muslim democratic but polarised state in the world. The political elite, after Jinnah's death [founding father], failed to develop a democratic system and institutions in the country -their preferences and erroneous policies divided the nation into various ethnic groups. Democratic failure encouraged the military to intervene, and the country faced the first military coup in 1958 (Muhammad 2011). The united Islamic state, East and West Pakistan, were divided into two Muslim states (Bangladesh and Pakistan) in 1971. Ethnic dynamic in East Pakistan, advanced misperception and a gigantic gulf between Bengali politicians and powerful Punjabi rulers [in West Pakistan]. Bengalis [politicians] were considered incompetent and untrustworthy (Quraishi 2020). The authors have the opportunity to talk to a Bangladeshi professor during his stay in Pakistan. He narrated that "Bengali was not included in cabinet and decision making; they were less patriotic according to the Pakistani elites; the sense of

humiliation and deprivation caused the ethnic conflict between East and West Pakistan" (Islam 2019). Therefore, a sense of deprivation - political and economic disparity divided a sovereign state [Pakistan]. Indeed Pakistan's rival exploited internal political chaos in East Pakistan. The first military ruler, General Ayub Khan, also provided space to Pashtun in Karachi to counter his political rivals and attempted to change the demography of urban Sindh. In fact, Pashtun immigration in Sindh threatened Mohajir and Sindhi's socioeconomic conditions (Trofimove 2009).

Ayub Khan's rule ended in 1969. He handed over power to another military General Yahya Khan. General Khan decided to hold elections in 1971. Subsequently, two prominent leaders, Shaikh Mujib and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto emerged in East and West Pakistan. Mujib was the leading Awami National party in East Pakistan. Bhutto's party, PPP, had won the election in West Pakistan. These elections divided East and West [Pakistan] on the bases of ethnic politics and conflict. Bengali leader wanted their legitimate share in power, but Sindhi political leader [Bhutto] was reluctant (Rokhshanda 2020). As a result, civil war occurred and united Pakistan disintegrated – East Pakistan.

The post cessations Pakistan created more ethnic fault lines-Sindhi, Balochi, Pashtun and Mohajir [in Karachi]. West Pakistan emerged as a new Pakistan. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto assumed power-Bhutto was a Sindhi feudal who promoted Sindhi ethnicity to curb the two main rival ethnic groups Mohajir and Pashtun (Quraishi 2020). These ethnic groups had the potential to alter the political map of Sindh, and Bhutto did not want to share political power with non-Sindh in Sindh (Ayesha 2020). In 1977, Bhutto's elected government was overthrown by the then Chief of the Army Staff, General Zia-ul-Haq. General Zia desired to suppress the PPP that obsession forced him to support the development of an ethnic group-to counter Bhutto's party PPP in Sindh MQM (Malik1998, 81)-the military rule in Pakistan has revitalised ethnic feelings and prevented ethnic marginalisation (Zahir 2020).

An Overview of Ethno Centralism

Pakistan has experienced ethnic conflicts and insurgencies due to centralism,

authoritarianism and the lack of democratic maturity. In the past, Pakistani rulers have gained power through doubtful [undemocratic] ways and re-employed dubious means to protract their power (Rais 2007). And there are others who come to power through legal and constitutional means but perpetuate their rule by subverting all routes for orderly and legitimate political change-General Ayub Khan, Bhutto and General Zia all used unfair means to increase their power-political and economic disparity were the main irritants in East Pakistan (Hussain 2002, 114; Baxter1985:313; Ali 1970:26). Same old grievances have motivated PTM and other ethno-political factions. The same ideology, sect, and religion failed to resolve the sentiment of the Bengali separatists-they did not trust and Punjabi elites (Quraishi 2020).

The ethnic outlook between East Pakistan and West Pakistan deeply increased after the elections of 1954, when all the opposition parties [regional and national] had united and emerged as a binding force, the "United Front" (Sayeed 1966:22). They defeated the major political party, Muslim League, [Muslim League, under Muhammad Ali Jinnah, had attempted for a separate state, Pakistan]. The victory of the United Front increased violence between Bengali and non-Bengali workers, which provided a justification to the government for dismissing the United Front government. The central government established the Governor's rule in East Pakistan and banned the Communist Party. This dismissal amplified further resentment amongst the Bengali population and Communist Party (Sayeed 1966:62). The Governor's reliance on the politically dominated Punjabi elite expanded the gulf of mistrust between East and West Pakistan (Sayeed1966). The Bengali leaders demanded an independent province and encouraged other ethnic groups in West Pakistan, particularly in Sindh-which had to have different languages and cultures. Non-Sindhi ruling class was considered alien by the Sindhi nationalists. G.M Syed [Ghulam Muhammad], a Sindhi nationalist, also demanded a separate homeland. He formed a political block in 1953, Sindh Awami Mahaz (Sindh People's Front). He demanded full autonomy, except for defence, currency, and foreign affairs (Solangi 2005:

This movement also opposed the settlers (Mohajir) in Sindh and urged the government to stop the influx of outsiders (Dawn 2010). The movement was a group of regional parties joined by some groups in Balochistan and NWFP- they demanded to dissolve the "One Unit" policy of General Ayub Khan, who amalgamated all provinces into One Unit – called West Pakistan. In NWFP and East Pakistan, Pashtun and Bengali leaders Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan and Awami League formed an anti-One-Unit Front, which was joined by the prominent elite from the other provinces (Amin1988:92-93).

The image of West Pakistani's ruling elite was

negative in East Pakistan. Punjabi political elites' behaviour played a pivotal role (Quraishi 2020). It is a strong scholarly perception that common Bengali did not want separation before the military operation in 1971 (Rokhshanda). An Indian Scholar who lives in the US views the separation of East Pakistan differently. He says, "The demonstration for Bengali identity and autonomy began after the independence of Pakistan when Punjabi rulers discriminated and dominated Bengali people-the governments' prejudice, and discriminative attitude greatly damaged the Bengali's self-respect and sentiment (Kannan 2019).

Re-Emerging Ethnic Conflict and Politics

Three of four provinces, ethnically, are dominating factors in Pakistan's politics. It is the dilemma of Pakistani politics that politicians have been increasing ethnic conflict to gain political support. Punjab's people and ruling elite never used ethnic cards, and neither did the people of Punjab support ethnic-based calls- but during the election campaign in 2018, the former Speaker of the National Assembly said: "any Punjabi who votes for Imran Khan or PTI would be shameful. We are honourable people and will prove it"(The News 2018). As compared to the other provinces people of Punjab are not deprived economically and socially like Sindh, Balochistan and KPK. They may not be exploited by the politicians-elections 2018 has proved that PML-N- than the incumbent party - would not reduce PTI's vote bank on an ethnic basis(Khan 2018).

Ethnicity was consolidated in an undemocratic regime during the first military rule. The military ruler had two major objectives: centralisation of the state and a controlled [political] system (Zahir 2020). Basic Democratic System (limited franchise) introduced in the 1962 Constitutions (Rais 2003:7-17)- divided the society into various ethnic groups-Pashtun, Punjabi, Sindhi, Bengali, and Baloch-this set action by General Ayub Khan was mainly responsible for the creation of a separate state [Bangaldesh] for the separate Bengali identity. Over the past 74 years, the spectre of regionalism in Pakistan has been strengthened by alienated Baloch, Pashtuns (PTM), Mohajir, and Sindhi.

The Baloch (tribes) have a typical territorial realm by the tribal *Sardars* (Chiefs). Balochistan has been a troubling and more fragmented area than has been generally realised. Baloch nationalists raised Constitutional legitimate concerns under both the military and democratic governments- but their demands were ignored (Marri 2019). The former Chief of the Army Staff clarifies unrest in Balochistan: for decades, Baloch youth have been kept away from the Pakistan army; only a few years ago, they got the opportunity to be a part of the Pakistan army, even the Baloch regiment, a core unit of the army, remained without Baloch's representation and Punjabi have been serving in Baloch unit which increased serious alienation among the Balochi youth-this sense of insecurity also aggravated Baloch ethnicity (Beg 2019).

In Balochistan, ethnic politics always amplified insurgency and contributed to the disintegration of the federation. Balochistan shares its border with Afghanistan- another war zone area. However, anti- Pakistan forces exploit national separatist *ethnic fault lines* to disintegrate Pakistan (Ali 2017).

Ethno-insurgency increased in Balochistan in 2006, Akbar Bugti, a Baloch Chief nationalist, was killed by the security forces. The former military ruler, General Musharraf, was the only military ruler who was directly attacked by the Baloch separatists during his visit to the most troubling areas in Balochistan. Since Bugti's killing, Balochistan is experiencing insurgency. Owing to the permanent military's presence in Balochistan, many Baloch leaders exiled themselves and led

the movement against the state and security forces (Khan, 2020).

Perpetual Crisis in Balochistan: Increasing Security Dilemma

Balochistan province is a constant security dilemma; it has never been a peaceful province. Balochistan has witnessed many conflicts between state security and the political establishment. Baloch people always accused the state and its institutions-they have been ignoring the core issues-economic development, infrastructure, and lack of basic facilities, increasing the grievances of the people (Ahmad; Baloch 2015, 281-282). Constitutionally, Balochistan's demands are not undemocratic demands, including; ownership of resources and control over the local economy (Dawn 2009). During the author's visit to Balochistan, a young Balochi man said that sense of deprivation had caused insurgency and anti-nationalism (Waseem 2020). Balochistan has become a constant conflict zone- political and military establishments face grave security challenges. Three major conflicts (insurgencies) have occurred in Balochistan between the central governments and the army. However, the Shahi Jirga [Official Royal Consultative body] of the Baloch tribes established by the British decided to accept the new state of Pakistan. Khan of Kalat, a ruler of the princely state in Balochistan, declared independence. Khan's action was considered against the declared principles of the partition plan. His declaration for an independent state would jeopardise the federation of Pakistan. Therefore, the central government sent a force to put pressure on Khan to sign an agreement on April 11, 1948.

The second ethnic conflict took place between the Balochi people and Pakistan armed forces in February 1973 during the democratic government. Elected Prime Minister Bhutto dismissed the provincial government of Balochistan and accused Balochistan's provincial and Balochi leaders that they were establishing the Baloch army to separate from Pakistan and seeking help from Afghanistan against Pakistan (Hassan 2002) – Bhutto's action resulted in a guerrilla war which lasted for four years until Bhutto was sacked by the military ruler General Zia-ul-Haq (Hassan 2006:186).

The third conflict erupted in 2006 after the death of a Baloch chief, Nawab Akbar Bugti. The Musharraf regime confronted Bugti because he demanded an increase in royalty for natural gas that was explored from his province and utilised by the other cities of Pakistan (Dawn 2008). Post-Musharraf Balochistan became more troubling -Baloch nationalists [militants] took arms against the security forces, which resulted in target killings (Siddiqui 2019).

Ethnic Division and Conflicts in Sindh

Multiple ethnic groups dominate the largest city of Sindh- Karachi is an economic hub of Pakistan. As compared to the other provinces Sindh observes more ethnic division. During the third PPP rule (2008-20013), ethnic conflict increased. Most of the ethnic conflict occurred in the port city of Karachi; this city is considered the country's bone of economy and the financial and industrial hub (Siddiqi 2020) of Pakistan. Multi-ethnic groups have intensely influenced the politics of Karachi because this metropolitan city is dominated by different ethnic communities. Sindhis, indigenous people, are the only local groups. Another major group, MQM, was settled after the creation of the new state of Pakistan- a community called Mohajir (migrated) came to Karachi in large numbers at the time of partition in 1947. Native Sindhi consider themselves outsiders because they, Mohajir, have constructed their identity and influenced the old composition in urban Sindh (Ahmar 2020). A great demographic change has dramatically changed the political landscape in Karachi (Baig 2005,58) and Sindh.

The post-Bhutto PPP was dramatically reduced to a regional party of rural Sindh- the military ruler General Zia supported MQM to counter PPP. The elections in 1997 damaged the PPP's popularity, and this party failed to secure any seat in other provinces except Sindh. In elections in 2002, Benazir Bhutto, the party chairperson, was in exile, but her party secured representation in all provincial assemblies. In elections 2008, after Benazir's assassination, PPP emerged as the largest party in the country. The PPP formed the coalition government and marginalised the major ethnic political groups and parties (Kanwal 2017: 141) despite the major political differences.

The largest ethnic political party, MQM, has always received political support from military regimes. The military rulers financed and organised the MQM as a counterweight to the Sindhi separatism and PPP (Rais 2003). MQM party has been considered a fascist and militant organisation with a separatist ideology (Azahar 1997). One Pakistani Scholar has said that "the politicisation of an ethnic group generally gives rise to common demands which strengthen the political awareness of the ethnic group. Enlistment may construct "militancy, terrorism; or involve the community in a democratic process to effect a desired a political change" (Anayatullah1993:201).

Disruptive ethnic politics was openly employed by the state's institutions and used ethnic political allies (Rais2007) to retain power. The ethnic uprising in 2008-2012 created serious unrest in Karachi. Two ethnic political parties, ANP and MQM, blamed each other -they played ethnic cards to retain their influence in their constituencies. Due to ethnic conflict the real issues, poverty and development, remain unaddressed-Karachi is the capital of Sindh but dominated by MQM-PPP is a ruling party in Sindh for the last thirty years (The News 2015) but Karachi remains MQM's political domain. Mohajir and Sindhi politicians blame each other (Hussain 2020) for their mismanagement and unrest in Sindh.

Pashtun Ethnic Politics -New Emerging Pashtun Tahafze Movement-PTM

Pashtun is the largest ethnic community in Pakistan. Pashtuns are an important part of Pakistan and are located in a very significant area which shares its border with Afghanistan. Pashtuns are known as hardworking and devoted people to Islam. The Talibanization phenomenon has affected their identity, and tradition- TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) gravely damaged KPK and its people (Ali 2020). The Pakistani army eliminated the Taliban and their hideouts from tribal areas in military operations from 2009-2014 (Swat and Waziristan). These military operations left positive and negative perspectives in these areas. In North Waziristan, a new ethnic group has motivated the youth and people to mobilise against the security establishment- PTM played a pivotal role. Pakistani Pashtuns

believe that "all Pakistani Pashtuns have an association with Afghanistan, but they do not have the same ideology-Pakistani Taliban were Pashtuns, but they would not represent Pashtuns' customs and ideology; however, some Pashtuns have a close association with Afghanistan including the new party, PTM" (Rizwan 2020) and its two elected parliamentarians.

After independence, the popular Pashtun leader, Abdul Ghaffar, wanted a third option for the Pashtuns; an independent state for the Pashtun community (Iqbal 2019). Khan told the senior leaders of the Congress, " you have thrown us to wolves and demanded the Pakistani government for the creation of Pakhtunistan, a semi-autonomous region for the Pashtuns but his demand was rejected (WanGchuk,2019). The Pashtun nationalists' movement- led by Ghaffar Khan and his son Abdul Wali Khan- lasted for more than two decades. Ghaffar Khan and his followers continued to achieve the cause of a separate state of the tribal areas along the Durand Line, which was demarcated by the British Mortimor Durand and the Afghan Amir, Abdur Rehman, in 1893. The main objective of the Durand Line was to maintain peace between Afghan and British India- After the British departure, Ghaffar Khan demanded the greater Pashtun state. The demand for Pashtunistan was encouraged and supported by Afghanistan, India, and the Soviet Union (Burke & Ziring 1990:35-38).

Unlike the Balochistan movement, the Pashtun movement never posed a serious threat to Pakistan's security because it would not receive broad support within the Pashtuns community-which, which marginalised and became Pakistan's nationalists (Rizwan 2020). The Pashtuns community has presented a classic case of integration through economic modernisation and political democracy. Pashtuns are the only ethnic group that has disproportionately excess representation in the armed forces (Kennedy 1985:30-35).

PTM: A Neo- Ethno Security Challenge and Dilemma

PTM is a new and unique ethnic group in Pakistan. It has a different approach to launching an ethnic movement. PTM is a group

of revolutionary people –they are aggressive toward the state's core institution [army]. The anti-army slogans made PTM recognised at the national level and attracted the international media. The leaders of previous ethnic groups and movements have never been confrontational vis-à-vis the state and the security establishment. Mainly ethno nationalists exiled themselves and criticised the institution from abroad. But PTM leaders live in a country and challenge the security apparatus. PTM believes that the Pakistani army is accountable for the conflict and poverty in tribal areas, particularly Waziristan- which has been the main hub of internal and external terrorists. Though Pakistan's army, during the military operation, has eliminated militants' hideouts from Waziristan still, this area remains troubling owing to its location-it sharing a direct border with Afghanistan (Chalk 2007:51-52).

PTM is an offshoot of the Mahsud Tahafuz Movement (MTM), which was founded in 2014 to protect the people of Waziristan- a war zone area. The military operation against TTP gravely affected the lives of the Mehsud tribe. The "2014 Operation Zarb –e-Azab military operation In North Waziristan, 500,000 people were forced to migrate *to different parts of Pakistan*– more than 3 million Pashtuns experienced dislocation" (Shah 2020: 267-268) due to war in the Tribal area. Dislocation greatly increased alienation in Mehsud tribes, consequently establishing MTM- this movement was marginalised in PTM- A young human rights activist, Manzoor Pashteen, emerged as a revolutionary young Pashtun leader and immensely inspired the Pashtun youth.

The murder of Naqeebullah Mehsud, a Pashtun young man, in January 2018 altered the localised MTM and converted it into a socio-political movement. A protest for the rights protection of the Mehsud tribe was planned at Dera Ismail Khan (DIK)- a remote area of KPK- the author has visited this area and found the people of this area poor and illiterate. They can be exploited by any party and group- that would raise their socioeconomic issues (Rizwan 2020). The response to the protest call over the Naqeebullah killing was massive and transformed into a long march from DIK to Islamabad (358.2km). The angry Pashtun force

staged a sit-in in Islamabad. The protest of PTM in Islamabad has been appreciated all around because of its peaceful and calm tactics. Imran Khan, then the opposition party leader, attended the protest and assured full solidarity with PTM (Siddiqui 2018). During the protest, Pashteen emerged as an active and vocal leader of PTM. The name of the movement became Pashtun Tahafuz Movement on the popular demand of Pashtuns who joined the protest (Shah 2020).

The following new demands were added to the previous three demands of the movement:

What Went Wrong? Direct Conflict between PTM and the Army

PTM is more vocal than the previous ethnic-groups-it has directly accused the security establishments of increasing violence and terrorism in Waziristan. Gulf widened between the PTM and security establishment when PTM's demands- to remove the security checkouts and formation of an independent Commission of Truth Reconciliation - were rejected. Their demands are not rational; if they are accepted, security dilemmas will increase in conflict zones (Shahid 2020). Many security and political analysts are of the view that "judges are not supportive and they already released some militants if the Commission of Truth and Reconciliation setup, it would be a great setback to the security establishment" (Shahid 2020); anti-establishment judges would facilitate the PTM and accuse the army which may create a negative image of Pakistan's army.

In 2019, a mob led by the elected parliamentarians of PTM attacked the army check post at Kharqamar in Banu in Waziristan, which resulted in a direct clash between the soldiers and local people-PTM legislators were accused by the anti-terrorist court (Dawn 2019).

PTM, like other nationalist Pashtun, became the victim of "Lar aw Bar Pakhtun". It started giving an impression of a separatist movement to the state. This slogan increased the strength of PTM as all Afghan Pashtuns started joining it widely throughout the world. It kind of became a movement for both sides of Pashtuns, apparently. Conflict augmented when PTM's central leader, Arman Loni, a

college professor, died during the protest in Quetta- PTM accused the police and the state (Khan 2019). Afghanistan's government provided funds for Loni's burial (Dawn 2019) which established an image that PTM was connected with Afghanistan's government.

PTM was the best chance availed by the Afghan government to demonise Pakistan on the international page. PTM leader gives anti-establishment statement- Pashteen is considered the man of Afghanistan. A number of supporting marches for PTM took place in Afghanistan and the former President, Ashraf Ghani, called for Pashteen's immediate release (Sirat 2020). President Ghani Tweeted to support PTM's movement, which Pakistan considered interference in internal affairs (Ticku 2020). The security establishment believes that PTM is receiving assistance from Pakistan's rivals- in his press conference, the Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) revealed how PTM received funds from Afghanistan and India (Dawn 2019). Whereas PTM always denies and never accepts charge sheet-it claims that the PTM has provided "the voice to the voiceless" (Shah 2020) people in KPK. In March 2020, two PTM legislators, Mohsin Dawar and Ali Wazir went to Afghanistan to attend the oath-taking ceremony of Afghan president Ashraf Ghani; both Dawar and Wazir received special protocol- that reinforced the state's narrative that "PTM fulfilling the vested agenda of India through Afghanistan" (Dawn 2020)-both were received by Afghanistan's top agency, National Directorate of Security (NDS). This special reception raised Pakistan's concerns as the same agency has been accused of protecting anti-Pakistan elements in Afghanistan (Daily Times 2020). At the time of writing this paper, the PTM leaders are in jails and being tried in the courts for multiple charges-threatening state security.

Conclusion

Pakistan is a politically polarised state', and elites have failed in marginalising all ethnic groups. Due to the state's undemocratic policies, ethnic conflict and movements have taken place in the country. As we have examined the brief history of ethnopolitics in Pakistan-it is a proven hypothesis that ethnic groups have been glorified politically and economically- and therefore overemphasised in national politics within Pakistan.

A weak democratic process, in Pakistan, does not guarantee a climate of reconciliation among the main ethnic groups, as witnessed in the PPP's government (the 1970s). Bhutto as a civilian leader and General Zia as military ruler (1980s), divided the ethnic communities between Sindhi and Mohajir, and they drew the line between hate and prejudice. Ethnic conflicts in Sindh and Balochistan continue and constantly increasing tension. Since 2018, a new ethnic group, PTM, has dramatically emerged and has the potential to upset the peace in Pashtuns tribal areas. PTM is the only ethnic group that has set the new trends-challenging the security establishment in tribal areas. Some national political parties have accommodated PTM and its leadership owing to their anti-military policies. We know that democracy provides the best framework under which various ethnic groups have found political space. To avoid ethnic conflict and politics, Pakistan needs more provinces at the administrative level, which may bring peace and stability to the country. Ethnic conflict is not inevitable; it can be resolved through political dialogues and economic parity. Ethnicity is a serious non-traditional threat to Pakistan's security. It was the ethnic factor that divided the united Pakistan- East and West Pakistan in 1971. Keeping in view the regional security environment statecraft should be rationally handled by the state.

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