

Identity Politics

A Case Study of Afghanistan

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| Content | Page No |
|---|----------------|
| Abstract | <i>i</i> |
| Introduction | |
| <i>The Issue in Identity Politics</i> | <i>1</i> |
| <i>The Significance of This Research</i> | <i>3</i> |
| <i>The Structure of the Thesis</i> | <i>4</i> |
| CHAPTER I | |
| Literature on Identity Politics | |
| <i>Identity in Identity Politics</i> | <i>7</i> |
| <i>The Causes of Identity Politics</i> | <i>9</i> |
| <i>Does Identity Politics Matter?</i> | <i>13</i> |
| Chapter II | |
| Identity Politics in Afghanistan: A Historical Perspective | |
| <i>Afghanistan: A Rainbow of Ethnic Groups</i> | <i>16</i> |
| <i>The Causes of Identity Politics in Afghanistan</i> | <i>21</i> |
| <i>Identity Politics in the pre- Communist Coup</i> | <i>23</i> |
| <i>Identity Politics in the post-Communist Coup</i> | <i>28</i> |
| Chapter III | |
| Identity Politics in Post-Taliban State-Building | |
| <i>Why State-Building?</i> | <i>41</i> |
| <i>Identity in Post-Taliban State-Building</i> | <i>43</i> |
| Conclusion | |
| <i>Lessons Learnt</i> | <i>57</i> |
| <i>Recommendations for Future Research</i> | <i>59</i> |
| Appendices | |
| <i>Appendix A: The Durrani Dynasty (1747-1978)</i> | <i>61</i> |
| <i>Appendix B: The Sunni Mujahidin Political Parties</i> | <i>62</i> |
| <i>Appendix C: The Shi'a Mujahidin Political Parties</i> | <i>63</i> |
| Bibliography | <i>64</i> |

Abstract

Identity politics is a complex concept. However, it is rarely studied in the context of weak non-Western states. This study seeks to study identity politics in Afghanistan with a focus on ethnic and sectarian identities. *The central hypothesis is that the manipulation and instrumentalisation of ethnic and sectarian identities as sources of political legitimacy have significantly constrained efforts towards state-building in Afghanistan.* By taking a historical perspective, it shows that identity politics is not a new phenomenon in Afghanistan and that a weak historical state and widespread culture of poverty have caused, sustained and reinforced ethnic and sectarian identity politics over time. It will also demonstrate that ethnic and sectarian identity politics have been a dominant feature of Afghanistan's post-Taliban state-building. Ethnic and sectarian identity politics have seriously undermined the process of state-building as they have prevented, amongst other things, a meaningful national reconciliation and the development of an effective state-society relation and a national identity in Afghanistan in the past decade.

Introduction

The issue in identity politics

'Identity politics' refers to a series of political actions ranging from multiculturalism, the feminist movements, gay and lesbian movements and recent violent ethnic and sectarian conflicts (Bernstein, 2005 and Cressida, 2009). It is widely studied in the Western world, and broadly speaking, literary scholarship on identity politics is focused around three issues. First, the nature of 'identity' is central in understanding identity politics. That is to say that individuals and groups have 'multiple' identities (Smith & Hutchinson, 1996); that 'subjective' self-identification is not necessarily identical with one's 'objective' characteristics (Bilgrami, 2006; Hobsbawm, 1996; Shoemaker, 2006, Friese, 2002 and Apiah, 2006) and that there exists a complex relation between subjective and objective identities depending on the context as well as the position of the researchers and practitioners (Moya, 2006).

The second issue is the causes of identity-based political actions. Some scholars have emphasised the material causes (Sanchez, 2006 and Bondi, 1993) and others have argued for social, cultural, linguistic, religious and technological factors (Kaufmann, 1990; Sawyer, 2006 and Inglehart, 1981). Finally, the debate on identity politics is on whether it really matters in a society. There are those who defend identity politics as the politics of 'recognition' (Brunt, 1989) and the politics of 'differences' (Young, 1990) with the potential for 'mutual' recognition of 'self' and 'other' and for respecting social, cultural and ideological differences (Honneth, 1995). There are others who support identity politics as a 'political space' for creating an 'agent' of change against the hegemonic domination (Sanchez, 2006). However, it has also received enormous criticism as 'negative' force which further exacerbates social exclusion and social divisions (Wolin, 1993; Brown, 1995 and Bourne, 1987).

The Western contexts in which identity politics are studied have their own historical traditions, cultural practices and social conditions. Generally speaking, they have a functioning state capable of providing security, welfare and a functioning legal system for their citizens. They are also able to protect and defend the sovereign rights and the interests of their state. They have a relatively stronger central authority compared to most of the developing countries (Herring & Rangwala, 2006: 4). The Western states also have developed stronger relations between the state and society (Sorensen, 2004). Therefore, state fragility and state failure are rarely perceived as mechanisms with a potential of causing and reinforcing identity-based political actions in the existing literature on identity politics.

Some scholars, though, have studied identity-based conflicts in the non-Western context. Idris (2005) studied the political conflict in Sudan; Hintjens (2008) studied the ethnic conflict in Rwanda and Herring and Rangwala (2006) studied the ethnic and sectarian conflict in Iraq. There are also a group of scholars who have studied the political conflict in Afghanistan (Maley & Saikal, 1992; Maley, 2009; Rubin, 2002 and Marsden, 2005) and others have studied ethnic-based 'revivals' in general (Smith & Hutchinson, 1996). These scholarly works make a good foundation for the purpose of the current study because they provide in-depth information on the nature of those conflicts and the different contexts in which they take place. However, there is a tendency towards generalising about the behaviour and characteristics of members of an ethnic, religious or sect group without taking into account that each member, while he/she might show some characteristics of the collective identities of his/her group, is also unique as an individual. A study of the relations between and within the ethnic and sectarian groups of Afghanistan, from the perspective of identity politics, has the potential to avoid such generalisation.

Moreover, the place of identity politics is also rarely studied in state-building. State-building which encompasses reconstructing state institutions and improving state capacities (Tilly, 1975) is perceived as a response to state fragility since the 1980s (Edward, 2004 and Wennmann,

2010). For many years, it used to be an ‘exogenous’ or a ‘top-down’ process in which the external forces have dictated the forms, types and conditions of state institutions (Edward, 2004). In the exogenous state-building process, often the interests of the donor states and organisations were prioritised over the local needs and traditions. In addition, the ‘top-down’ model of state-building, through its stress on developing ‘formal’ institutions, has substantially ignored the role of ‘informal’ actors as well as the place of local cultures, identities and traditional values in the process of state-building (Debiel & Lambach, 2010). There is, therefore, a need for understanding the place of identity politics in state-building processes because it has the potential to prioritise the local context over the interests of donor states as well as to examine whether ethnic and sectarian power relations foster or constrain the process of state-building.

The significance of this research

This paper studies identity politics in the context of a ‘weak’ and non-Western state, Afghanistan, by focusing on two forms of identity: ethnic and sectarian. It will explore the relations between and within different ethnic and sectarian groups by undertaking a historical perspective. *The central hypothesis is that the manipulation and instrumentalisation of ethnic and sectarian identities as sources of political legitimacy have significantly constrained efforts towards state-building in Afghanistan.*

It is expected to show the specific nature and causes of identity politics in Afghanistan. It will show that a ‘weak’ central state and a widespread culture of poverty have caused, sustained and reinforced the reliance of the Afghan people on local networks like family, kin, tribe, locality and ethnic and sectarian groups. By taking a historical perspective, it will highlight that identity politics is not a new phenomenon in Afghanistan and that it has emerged as a *tribal-oriented* identity politics, then took the form of *ideological-oriented* identity politics in the post-‘communist coup’ of 1978 and finally changed to more *ethnic-oriented* identity politics in the

1990s. This shift, however, took place without a complete replacement of one form of identity politics with the other. In contrast, identity politics in Afghanistan was widened and became multi-dimensional over time.

This research will also demonstrate that ethnic and sectarian power relations have been a dominant feature of the state-building processes in the post-Taliban decade. Specifically, it has strongly influenced the process and outcomes of the Bonn Agreement of 2001 and the subsequent political development including the two presidential elections as well as the relation between and within the Afghan civil society. Afghanistan's new socio-political context has also added *gender-oriented* and *internet-oriented* social divisions to existing fragmented ethnic and sectarian relations.

It will be shown that the Afghan state, in order to be responsive, requires a representative and responsible government. In the past decade, however, a strong interest has emerged amongst the Afghan people for an exclusively representative government which has prevented the development a polity for political debates about the needs of the people and the policy development. Such a growing interest, amongst other things, has reduced the resource and capability of an already weak central authority to perform its survival and expected functions. The Afghan government has shown little capacity in policy development and performing its functions. Moreover, identity politics has prevented a meaningful national reconciliation and has undermined the development of a national identity. Thus, it will be demonstrated that identity politics has seriously undermined the process of state-building in the past decade.

The structure of the thesis

Chapter I provides a detailed review of identity politics literature. It is expected to highlight the three major issues which have dominated much of the scholarly debates on identity politics in the past. It is divided into three sections. First it shows that 'identity' is central in comprehending and analysing identity politics because of the complex nature of identities.

Then, it discusses the factors which have caused and sustained identity politics by dividing it into two groups of what is called in this study as *material* and *non-material* factors. The final section assesses the most central issue in identity politics and that is to say whether it really matters in a society.

Chapter II examines the specific nature, causes and evolution of identity politics in Afghanistan. It commences with an outline of Afghanistan's ethnic and sectarian compositions and then examines the two factors, a historical weak state and widespread culture of poverty, which have caused the ethnic and sectarian identity politics. Then, it will assess the evolution of identity politics from the time of the formation of the Afghan state in 1747 until the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 which will be divided into two periods of pre and post-Communist Coup of 1978. This historical perspective will allow us to understand that identity politics is not a new phenomenon and that a combination of material and material factors has caused, sustained and widened ethnic and sectarian identity politics in Afghanistan.

Chapter III provides an explanation of the nature and role of identity politics in the post-Taliban state-building in Afghanistan. The first section examines the existing theoretical frameworks on the state-building and is expected to provide the context for why state-building was perceived as a solution to the fragility of the Afghan state after the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. Then, it will study the nature of ethnic and sectarian identity politics in the Bonn Conference of 2001 as the conference was the foundation of the post-Taliban state-building. In order to understand the subsequent processes of state-building, it will study the nature of identity politics in the two presidential elections and amongst the internet-based Afghan civil society. The internet-based civil society is chosen because this represents an important change in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime and the ease of access to their materials, reports and publications. The overall objective of this chapter is to highlight that ethnic and sectarian identity politics matters in Afghanistan because it has the potential to foster and/or constrain the process of state-building.

Finally, the conclusion to this study will provide an outline of the major findings of this research. It will be shown, for instance, that identity politics is not a new phenomenon in Afghanistan and it is caused by a weak central state and is sustained, reinforced and widened by a widespread culture of poverty. It will be demonstrated throughout this study that ethnic and sectarian identity politics matter because it has seriously undermined the process of post-Taliban state-building by, amongst other things, preventing a process of national reconciliation and undermining the development of a national identity. It also has diluted the confidence of the Afghan people and the international community in the capability of current Afghan authority. Finally, some recommendations will be provided for future research on identity politics.

CHAPTER I

Literature on Identity Politics

This chapter provides a detailed review of identity politics literature. There is a general consensus amongst the scholars on the significance of identity and its features in identity politics. However, they differ significantly on the causes of identity politics and on whether it really matters in a society. Regarding the causes of identity politics, some scholars have emphasised material factors while others stressed the role of social, political and cultural factors. Moreover, scholars are also divided on the issue of whether identity politics really matters in a society. There are those who defend identity-based political actions as an instrument for ‘social recognition’ and social ‘inclusion’ and those who criticise it as a reinforcing mechanism for social ‘exclusion’ and social ‘divisions’. This chapter is, therefore, divided into three sections to provide a detailed overview of the dominant features of scholarly debates on identity politics.

Identity in identity politics

Identity politics was used for the first time in social science and humanities by Renee R. Anspach in 1979 to define ‘social movements which seek to alter the self conceptions and societal conceptions of their participants’ (Anspach, 1979: 765). The hub of this conception of identity politics is self-perception and the ways one seeks to change such perception.

There exist ‘multiple’ identities for an individual and a group (Smith & Hutchinson, 1996: 8). For example, a person can be identified as a woman, a sister, a daughter, a member of a women’s movement, a worker, a singer and so forth. Furthermore, members of a group can be described ethnically ‘Pashtun’, religiously ‘Sunni Muslim’, socially ‘tribal’ and geographically ‘urban’ or ‘rural’. According to Eric Hobsbawm (1996), these multiple identities for a person/group make the analysis of identity politics much more difficult because human beings

often do not choose between the various characteristics that define them. On the contrary, their actions are the product of a combination of their characteristics.

Some identities are 'primordial' or 'intrinsic' in nature while others are 'instrumental' (Smith & Hutchinson, 1996: 8; Bilgrami, 2006; Hobsbawm, 1996; Shoemaker, 2006, Friese, 2002 and Apiah, 2006). Primordial identities means that they are 'fixed, neutral and static', like relationships to a parent or child, while 'instrumental' identities are 'social constructs' which change according to the socio-political context as well as the purpose they serve (Smith & Hutchinson, 1996: 8). For instance, depending on the socio-political context, members of an ethnic group may utilise their ethnicity/ sect to unite their members to create a political alliance with other ethnic group(s).

Lastly, an individual and a group hold 'subjective' and 'objective' identities. Subjective characteristics refer to the perception of an individual or a group's own self-image, values, traditions and their 'sense of belonging to a group' (Hobsbawm, 1996: 40 and Moya, 2006: 97). Subjective self-perception illustrates an 'imagined community' which is socially constructed and imagined by members of a particular group (Anderson, 1991). For instance, members of an ethnic or sectarian group constantly define and re-define their 'communities' and imagine an 'insider', *self*, in relation to an 'outsider', *other*, because 'without outsiders there are no insiders' (Hobsbawm, 1996: 40).

Objective identities are the perception of a group from others' perspectives and it is often contradictory to one's own self-perception (Bilgrami, 2006). For example, members of the Hazara ethnic group of Afghanistan define themselves as Shi'a Muslim. The Taliban, however, perceived them as 'non-believers' (Rashid, 2000). These contradictory perceptions created the basis of their conflicting relations since the emergence of the Taliban in power in 1994. The existence of subjective and objective identities makes an observer of identity politics extra

cautious as the instrumentality of identity is no longer dependent on one's own perspective but also on how others see such an individual or group (Bilgrami, 2006: 7-10).

Moya (2006) provides an analysis of the specific relations between subjective and objective identities of a group. She argues that a researcher/practitioner can take an 'essentialist', 'idealist' or 'realist' position in regard to identities. The essentialists assume that the relationship between objective- or 'ascriptive' in Moya's terminology- and subjective identities is one of 'absolute' meaning that if someone is a member of a group then 'his or her propensity for violence [and] personal characteristics' are like that of such group. The idealists believe in the full separation of ascriptive and subjective identities with no major relationship between the two aspects of one's identities (ibid).

The 'realists' see a 'dynamic' relationship between subjective and objective identities because they assume that identities are 'relational', 'contextual' and an 'epistemic resource'. Relational denotes that the same identity can play different roles in different places and times. Contextual means that the knowledge about identities is a 'situated knowledge' which requires an understanding of the political, historical and cultural contexts in which it takes place. Finally, epistemic resource implies that identities must be made 'visible' (Alcoff, 2005) or, in other words, it is important to understand the diversity and differences of various social groups (Moya, 2006: 100-102). Because of these characteristics, subjective and objective identities are sometimes in harmony and sometimes in conflict with each other.

The causes of identity politics

Material-based Perspective

The material-based perspective is also known as the 'anti-humanist' approach to identity politics. It is strongly influenced by and associated with Marxism (Bondi, 1993: 82). Mary Bernstein (2005), in her literature review, identifies what she calls the 'New-Marxist' approach

to highlight the material causes of identity politics. She asserts that the proponents of this approach study identity politics at a 'macro-level'. The core of such a structural problem is the economic relations which advantage the capital class, or more accurately those who own the means of production, and simultaneously alienate workers and other marginalised groups in a society. Based on such social relations between haves and have-nots, economic power is assumed to be more important than other forms of power which dominate social and political relations. In other words, economic disparity is the cause of social exploitation and oppression (Bernstein, 2005: 49 and Bondi, 1993).

The solution to such structural problems lies in the social movements which are able to alleviate economic inequality and to end social oppression (Bernstein, 2005: 49). Influenced by this idea, Rosaura Sanchez (2006) rejects 'all types of idealisms' and focuses on a 'materialistic account of identity formation'. In her view, identity politics has 'a strategic rationale' which is to develop a 'critical political agency' (p. 33). It is the rationale for a critical political agency that defines a particular role for identity politics: that is to generate a political agency capable of 'creating critical spaces from which to resist and contest the hegemonic shaping and definition of 'reality'' (Sanchez, 2006: 31). For instance, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) emphasised the structural economic inequality as a cause of poverty, disparity and political alienation in Afghanistan. Therefore, in order to change it, they organised a coup against President Daud (Neale, 1981) and ended the 230 years of dynastic rule (Barfield, 2010)

There are two points which stand out in Sanchez analysis which are strongly relevant to the purpose of this study. First, identity is formed as a result of 'internal and external' conditions and factors (ibid) or in other words external and internal forces are behind the development of identity politics in the first place. This helps to understand, for example, that how the Afghan PDPA, which was backed by the Soviet Union, was in odd with the Chinese-backed Afghan communist group, Sitam-e Milli (National Oppression), during and after the communist coup of 1978 (Halliday, 1978: 28). Second, that political actions based on identities do not always share

similar objectives and approaches to change the structural problems. Some pursue more 'transformative' while others engage in 'reformist' agendas (ibid: 33) such as the Khalq and Parcham factions of the PDPA respectively (Halliday, 1978: 28).

The proponents of the material perspective of identity politics emphasise that role of structural economic inequality and economic exploitation as the causes of identity-based political movements. The solution to such structural inequalities comes from developing an agent that is capable of altering such a structural problem in order to ensure social justice. They, however, acknowledge that the structural economic inequality has an external and internal dimension which requires 'transformative' and 'reformist' agendas to be changed. From this perspective, identity politics has attached to it a 'normative' claim suggesting that it is an instrument of social change and social justice.

Non-Material Perspective

In contrast to a material-based perspective, the non-material or the 'humanist' (Bondi, 1993: 82) views culture, social values, traditions, belief systems, language and technology as sources of identity politics in society. The humanist perspective rejects the idea that economic power is more central in social interactions and argues that social differences such as differences in belief systems can also cause or at least exacerbate identity-based political actions (Bernstein, 2005: 49). Paul Sawyer (2006), for example, examines the role of symbolic authority, speech and language in identity-based political actions. He specifically examines Martin Luther King's role in the civil rights movements in the United States (US) and argues that King's objection to the Vietnam War and towards the 'structure of oppression' was 'both moral and material'. Sawyer, in contrast to Sanchez who prioritised the role of material aspects of identity formation, focuses on the role of religious beliefs such as the concept of 'calling' in King's speech, 'A time to Break Silence', language and charismatic authority in identity formation (Sawyer, 2006:

69-77). In other words, religious beliefs, language and charismatic authority influence the decision and behaviour of individuals and groups.

For instance, the Afghan Mujahidin, or 'resistance' groups, justified their political actions and used their Islamic identity as a unifying mechanism against the Soviet Union (Sinno, 2008: 129). These political parties used mosques as a rallying point and made extensive references to the early *Jihad*, the Holy wars, which took place between the Muslim community and others in the early days of Islam (Barfield, 2010). While united against the foreign 'other', these groups were deeply divided on ethnic, sectarian and linguistic lines to the extent that they could not form a government and subsequently engaged in a civil war in the early 1990s (Sinno, 2008: 129).

The proponents of a non-material approach to identity politics distinguish between the class-based movements of the 1950s and 1960s and the contemporary social movements. It is because the context of study, or the nature of the Western countries in which these studies took place, has shifted from industrial to post-industrial societies (Bernstein, 2005) which also caused a 'breakup of traditional authority structures' in these societies (Bell, 1975: 171). An understanding of such shift in the nature of society is important because it explains that the aims and the tools of modern social movements are so different to the social movements of some decades ago.

For instance, contemporary social movements aim to strengthen social values like democracy, environmental protection and peace rather than to be only concerned with economic survival (Inglehart, 1981). The contemporary social movements are political practices 'to fight to expand freedom, not to achieve it; they mobilise for choice rather than emancipation' (Cerulo, 1997: 393). There is also a recent growth in the internet-based civil society in the post-Taliban Afghanistan which exemplifies some similarities with some of the modern social movements in the Western world. They use the internet as a tool for communications. Their social relations

and political behaviours are influenced by their ethnicity and sectarian associations as well as their access to the internet. Similar to that of the material factors, non-material forces- like ideology, ethnicity, culture, technology and social values- play significant roles in the emergence and development of identity politics in a society.

Does identity politics matter?

Some scholars argue that identity politics matters significantly and they defend it as an instrument for social change (Sanchez, 2006), for social ‘recognition’ (Brunt, 1989) and for respecting social ‘differences’ (Young, 1990). Sanchez believes that identity politics matters because it has the potential to create and develop an ‘agent’ of change capable of altering structural power relations (Sanchez, 2006: 31-33). Brunt suggests that it matters because it allows members of a society to acknowledge and recognise various social groups. Building on Brunt’s idea, Axel Honneth (1995) argues that recognition has three phases: demand for love, demands for rights and demand for recognition. The demand for love implies that the basis of identity politics is building ‘self-confidence’; the demand for rights is about recognising others as equal human beings and the demand for recognition is about mutual respect and social tolerance.

Young (1990: 130-131), in a similar line of reasoning, defines identity politics as ‘the politics of differences’. According to her, the politics of differences necessitates the recognition of ‘self’ and ‘other’ as well as taking ‘the differences’ of groups seriously in assessing social and political relations. Taking differences seriously has, at a minimum level, the potential of leading to social diversity in which members of various groups develop a mutual and a more ‘comprehensive understanding of issues’ concerning the entire society. In contrast, there is another group of scholars who criticise identity politics as an opposition to liberal universalism and a force that creates more social exclusion and social differences (Wolin, 1993 and Brown, 1995). The critics of identity politics see no future for identity politics and no ‘triumph over the

pain they embrace' (Hekman, 2004: 88). In Bourne's words, 'identity politics is all rage. Exploitation is out (it is extrinsically determinist). Oppression is in (it is intrinsically personal). What is to be done is replaced by who am I' (Bourne, 1987: 1).

The review of literature on identity politics highlights three issues. First, the concept of 'identity' and the position of researcher as an essentialist, idealist or realist are central in understanding identity politics. Second, there are various approaches to identity politics which, if combined, explain it as the product of both material structures and non-material factors like belief systems, ideology, values and historical genealogies. All factors which cause, exacerbate and constrain identity politics have internal and external dimensions. Third, that identity politics are studied generally in the context of Western societies referring to the activities of minority groups, interest groups and political activists.

The Western contexts in which identity politics are studied have their own historical traditions, cultural practices and social conditions. At the minimum, they have a functioning state capable of providing security, welfare, economic resources and a legal framework for their citizens. They are also able to protect and defend the sovereign rights and the interests of their state. In other words, they have a relatively stronger central authority than most of the developing states (Herring & Rangwala, 2006: 4). Some scholars have studied identity-based conflicts in Sudan (Idris, 2005); in Rwanda (Hintjens, 2008); in Kosovo (Duijzings, 2000); in Iraq (Herring & Rangwala, 2006) and in Afghanistan (Maley & Saikal, 1992; Maley, 2002; Rubin, 2002; Saikal, 2004 and Marsden, 2005). Others have studied ethnic-based revivals in general (Smith, 1981 and Smith & Hutchinson, 1996). These scholarly works make a good foundation for the purpose of the current study, but fail to specifically look at the issues concerning ethnic and sectarian groups in each of these states from an identity politics perspective. Thus, there is sometimes a tendency towards generalising about the behaviour and characteristics of members of an ethnic, religious or sect group without taking into account that each member, while he/she

might show some characteristics of the collective identities of his/her group, is also unique as an individual.

This paper aims to study identity politics in the context of a 'weak' non-Western state, Afghanistan, by focusing on two forms of identity: ethnic and sectarian. It will explore the relations between and within different ethnic and sectarian groups by undertaking a detailed study of the political situation in Afghanistan. It is expected to identify the specific nature, causes and evolution of identity politics in Afghanistan. It also aims to examine the place of identity politics in state-building in post-Taliban Afghanistan. The central point is that the manipulation and instrumentalisation of ethnic and sectarian identities as sources of political legitimacy have significantly constrained efforts towards state-building in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER II

Identity Politics in Afghanistan: A Historical Perspective

This chapter examines the nature, causes and evolution of identity politics in Afghanistan. As shown in the previous chapter, identities are central to the study of identity politics regardless of the context in which the latter takes place. The initial part of this chapter highlights the ethnic and sectarian compositions of Afghanistan and the two dominant factors, the weak Afghan state and a widespread culture of poverty, which have caused and sustained identity-based political actions over time. Then, it will assess the evolution of identity politics from the time of the formation of the Afghan state in 1747 until the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 through dividing this historical period into two periods of prior to and after the communist coup of 1978.

Afghanistan: a rainbow of ethnic groups

Masih Oruzgani (2011) titled his book *'Afghanistan: A Rainbow of Ethnic Groups'* to symbolise the diversity of ethnic groups in Afghanistan. It is to recognise, acknowledge and understand Afghanistan as a heterogeneous society in which the population is made up of Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aymak and other minority groups (Ahady, 1995: 621). Each of these ethnic groups is assumed to have a common ancestry, common homeland, shared memory, perhaps the same religion and a sense of ethnic solidarity (Smith & Hutchinson, 1996: 6-7). For instance, the majority of Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Aymak and Baluch are Sunni Muslims while the majority of Hazaras are Shi'a Muslims. This distinction is in no way comprehensive or representative of the enormous complexity (Marsden, 1992: 11) of Afghan society, because the sectarian divisions cross the boundaries of ethnic groups. The Pashtun Turi clan and the Tajik Qezilbash are Shi'a, while a small percentage of Hazaras are Sunni Muslims (Ahady, 1995). Linguistically, the majority of people understand Dari, the Afghani Persian

dialect, while Pashto is used exclusively by Pashtuns. However, both Dari and Pashto are recognised and taught as official languages implying that a section of population is bilingual (Ahady, 1995; Marsden, 1992; Rubin, 2002 and Newel, 1989).

According to Smith and Hutchinson (1996), members of each ethnic group have multiple identities, as they belong to ethnic, sectarian and linguistic groups. Each individual in the country defines him/herself with a set of personal identities too, reflecting his/her relationships, profession, gender, place of birth and so forth (Smith & Hutchinson, 1996: 8). Dorronsoro (2005) discusses specifically this characteristic of Afghanistan's ethnic groups. He states that, 'in Afghanistan, the identity of each individual is defined by a series of affiliations' such as being a member of the Islamic community, a member of a regional group and a member of their family (Dorronsoro, 2005: 10).

Similar to other ethnic groups, members of Afghanistan's ethnic groups feel a sense of belonging to their respective group without any formal legal duty and responsibilities and often their identities create the common bonds and define their relations to the 'other (s)' (Friese, 2002: 1). In such self-image, there is a sense of 'sameness' with people within, and a sense of 'otherness' with those who are outside their imagined boundaries (Friese, 2002: 1 and Hobsbawm, 1996: 40). While each of these ethnic groups identifies themselves in particular ways, their sense of self-hood is not necessarily in line with the ways the others view them (Bilgrami, 2006: 5). In other words, subjective and objective self-hood sometime contradict each other.

There are many aspects of ethnic-based identities in Afghanistan that can help us to understand the contradiction between a subjective and an objective self-hood. Every ethnic group has a genealogy about the origin of their group. For instance, the Pashtuns of Afghanistan and

Pakistan claim a common ancestor, known as Abdul Rashid Qais; have a shared social code of Pashtunwali defining their duties and responsibilities and a common language, Pashtu (Ahady, 1995). While there is no agreement on their origin (Mohan, 1846), they strongly claim to be the indigenous population of Afghanistan. In viewing themselves as the indigenous population, they define other ethnic groups as people who began to reside in Afghanistan in different times of history but certainly arrived after their own ethnic group.

In contrast, the other ethnic groups reject the Pashtun's claim of being the indigenous population of Afghanistan. Whereas disagreeing with each other, they have their own genealogy of claiming indigenesness in Afghanistan. For instance, some Tajiks stress the change of Afghan identity, which literally represents Pashtuns, to Khorasani identity for all Afghanistan's ethnic groups (Kamjo, 2007). Moreover, some Hazaras believe that they are not of the Turkic Mongolian ethnic group, as it is claimed by the Pashtun, but are the descendants of Kushani Empire who built the Buddha Statues in Bamyán Province in 350 AD. Most recently, some Hazaras have argued that, according to Zoroastrian book, Avesta, they are the indigenous people of Afghanistan (Keyani, 2011).

There is no end to these subjective claims of self-hood by *all* ethnic groups of Afghanistan. In fact, some scholars argue that an existing genealogical myth for an ethnic group is not an unusual phenomenon but is necessary for a nation and an ethnic group to live by (Mayall & Simpson, 1992: 10). Nonetheless, four aspects of these claims are major concerns in this study. First, every ethnic group claims indigenesness in Afghanistan at the expense of the history of other ethnic groups. Second, every ethnic group disagrees with each other and members of one ethnic group disagree within their respective group on the origin, evolution and development of their history. Within such a context of indigenesness claims, tracing the origin of each claim

seems beyond the capacity of this study and an impartial analysis is hard to find on issues that concern all these ethnic groups.

Third, as argued by Alcoff (2005), ethnic and sectarian identities of Afghanistan's ethnic groups are relational and contextual. The relational describes identity as a dynamic concept, which highlights that the same identity might be mobilised for different purposes in different contexts. For instance, when the Taliban took control of Kandahar Province of Afghanistan in 1994, they used their Pashtun ethnic identity to legitimise their group amongst the Pashtuns and used the same identity to crush oppositions from other ethnic groups, especially against the Sunni Tajik and Uzbek. Their ethnicity as well as their Sunni religious identity influenced their political actions against the Shi'a Hazaras, who in the Taliban's interpretation were regarded as non-believers (Rashid, 2000). The context in which identities are utilised as political instruments is significant in understanding the behaviour of individuals or groups (Alcoff, 2005 and Dorronsoro, 2005). The implication of such characteristics of identity is that one certainly can expect different behaviour from the members of same ethnic group in Afghanistan. Fourth, the existing ethnic-based claims in Afghanistan matter significantly because identities are 'knowledge situated', which requires an understanding of the history, society and politics and the factors that caused and sustained identity politics in this country over time (Moya, 2006: 100-102).

It is important to analyse those forces thoroughly because the existence of multi-ethnic groups does not in itself explain the reliance of Afghan people on ethnicity and sect to pursue their political objectives. It is because identities are neutral, in the sense that they are neither inherently positive nor negative but they could be used for different purposes in different contexts. There are practical models in which different ethnic groups coexist *peacefully* with each other, as is shown by the experience of Sweden, or where they came into violent conflict

in countries such as the Sudan (Idris, 2005); Rwanda (Hintjens, 2008); Kosovo (Duijzings, 2000); and Iraq (Herring & Rangwala, 2006) just to name a few. Identity politics in Afghanistan might show some similarities with countries like the Sudan, Iraq and Kosovo as being home to various ethnic, sectarian and linguistic groups but “those elements needs to be investigated, documented rather than assumed” (Barfield, 2010: 2).

The major difference between Sweden and countries like the Sudan is the capacity of their state. The former has a strong while the latter has a weak central authority. Migdal (1988) describes the characteristics of a strong state as one that has the ‘capacities to penetrate society, regulate social relations, extract resources and appropriate or use resources in determined ways’ (Migdal, 1988: 4). To understand such characteristics, Fukuyama (2004) provides a comprehensive analysis in what he calls the ‘missing dimensions of stateness’ (p.1). He distinguishes between the scope and strength of a state in which the former encompass the range of functions that a state is required to perform, and the latter explains the capabilities of a state to execute such functions. The required functions for each state are to provide security and order; to defend its sovereignty and national interests; to respect the rule of law and to provide the basic needs of its population (Fukuyama, 2004: 6-7). The scope of all states is to a large extent similar, but their capabilities to execute their required functions differ significantly. In a continuum, some are strong, while others are weak states (Fukuyama, 2004).

Georg Sorensen (2004), in his discussion of the least developed states, describes a weak state. He asserts that, nationally, their institutions are ineffective; globally, powerful states ‘constrain, influence and direct [their] policy measures’; and locally, various groups seek to get access to state resources and international aid. The relationship between state and society is very weak in the sense that people ‘know very well that the state is a source of pillage, threat and exploitation’ (ibid: 80); the majority of people are not included in government and ‘no coherent

national communities exist' (Sorensen, 2004: 79-80). A weak state is incapable of providing security, managing its affairs and is always subject to internal instability and interference from external powers. People in such circumstances, instead of relying on the state bureaucracy, find local networks to survive whether they are their family, kin, tribe, ethnic and/or religious groups.

The causes of identity politics in Afghanistan

There is a general consensus amongst the experts on Afghanistan that it has had a weak central authority or weak state (Saikal, 2006; Maley, 2002 & 2009; Barfield, 2010 and Weinbaum, 2006). Maley (2009), for instance, has focused on the dominant relations between the rulers and the ruled and the weak legitimacy of the former in the perception of the latter (Maley, 2009: 12-16). Weinbaum (2006: 125) has talked about the limited scope and depth of the Afghan central authority in delivering the basic security needs of its citizens. Saikal (2006) and Barfield (2010) have explained how a weak Afghan state has paved the way for external interference and influences by both regional and global powers in the affairs of this country. Rubin (1992 & 2002) has used the expression rentier state to depict the weakness of the Afghan state which, on the one hand, has been dependent on aid from the outside world, and has shown little capability to use its despotic / coercion power, and infrastructural power effectively (Rubin, 2002: 12-15).

Afghanistan's weak central state has forced its people to rely on local networks for security and survival. Local networks like tribe, clan and religion dominate political rivalries and, to a large extent, reduce the likelihood of strong 'bonds of right and obligations' between state and people (Sorensen, 2004: 98). In such a society, a moral economy develops in the state in which an individual does not rely on state institutions for survival but instead seeks help from relatives, clans and tribe for finding jobs, paying school fees and providing daily expenditure. In a weak state, such as Afghanistan, the moral economy strengthens over time and provides 'social

insurance [for the people] in the absence of state welfare programs' (Ndegwa, 1997: 601 in Sorensen, 2004:99).

Sorenson (2004: 100) summarises the impact of a weak central state by arguing that in such a state 'neither the community of citizenship nor the community of sentiments' develops. The social, legal and political relations between society and state are weak and national identity does not develop. Instead there is an increase in the importance of ethnic identities in society (Sorenson, 2004: 100). Thus, the weak capacity of the Afghan state to perform its required functions is central in the development of identity-based political measures.

The weak central state of Afghanistan has led to a widespread culture of poverty. Hamzeh Waezi (2002) borrows the term 'culture of poverty' from Oscar Lewis (1996) and argues that Afghanistan is not *only* economically poor but a culture of poverty is widespread in this country (Waezi, 2002: 73). This culture of poverty has material and non-material dimensions. Materially, it shows that there is deep income inequality between the rural and urban population and between the elite group and the mass. Socially, people are disengaged from state institutions; have a sense of hopelessness, despair and fear and often feel they are marginalized, discriminated and silenced. They are hostile to the government institutions, rarely trust the police and are 'certain potential for protest and for entrainment in political movements aimed against the existing order' (Lewis, 1966: 4-7).

Sorenson (2004) argues that the policies of any weak states are influenced; constrained and directed by external powers (Sorenson, 2004: 80). External manipulation of a divided society like Afghanistan is one of the dominant features of its political history. The specific interests and interference of various global powers, like Tsarist Russia, Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States, and of different regional players such as the interference of Iran, Pakistan and

others are well-documented by many scholars on Afghanistan. In most of these literary works, the major factor for external interference is regarded to be the geo-strategic geography of Afghanistan in Central Asia (Maley, 2009; Saikal, 2006; Marsden, 1992, Rubin, 2002, Rashid, 2000 and Crews & Tarzi, 2008). While its geostrategic position plays a role, Afghanistan's weak central state and internal division create the conditions for external interference in its political affairs.

The weak central state and widespread culture of poverty have caused the Afghan people to pursue political actions that are entirely rooted in their ethnic, sectarian and tribal identities. However, the evolution of identity politics in Afghanistan is a dynamic process, which has two interrelated periods: before and after the fall of Taliban regime in 2001. The first period, the time before the fall of Taliban regime, will be divided into two sections, pre and post Communist Coup of 1978, and will be assessed in the remaining section of this chapter. Such periodical division is expected to show that identity politics have always existed in Afghanistan and that they have strengthened and broadened over time.

The evolution of identity politics in Afghanistan

Identity politics in the pre-communist coup

In the pre-communist coup of 1978, identity politics in Afghanistan was largely *tribal-oriented*. The Afghan state is made up of tribal confederations (Saikal, 2006: 4) in which political rivalries for the leadership position took place between and within some tribes. Due to these characteristics, polygamic practices had been widespread amongst the elite groups for the purpose of making tribal alliances, since the establishment of modern Afghanistan in 18th century (Saikal, 2006). The tribal confederation is also best described as having a deep gap between the ruler and the ruled, which led eventually to a hierarchal political culture in the country. The ruled were always distanced and kept away from the centre of power to a point

where the general population was never thought to become a serious challenger to the ruling elite groups. In fact, one observer explained this as a lack of involvement by the subject population in political affairs (Barfield, 2010: 4). The rulers, then, always came from a professional ruler class; men from the descendants of a particular tribe or their allies (ibid).

The elite group itself was divided into a core tribe and a periphery tribe. The core group consists of four Pashtun tribes known as Popalzai, Barakzai, Alikozai and Sadozai representing the long history of the Durrani dynasty who ruled Afghanistan from 1747 until 1978. The periphery group refers to the Ghilzai tribes who took power in the coup and ended the 230 years of dynastic rule (Barfield, 2010: 6). The Durrani kings (all from Popalzai and Barakzai tribes) and Ghilzai leaders were from the province of Kandahar in Southern Afghanistan (Saikal, 2006 and Barfield, 2010). It is a claim of this paper that what could be termed the official history of Afghanistan, which has been taught to its population over many generations and told to the outside world, is a manifestation of identity politics representing the historical dominance of tribal Kandahari Pashtun confederations. The name and period of each Durrani ruler are provided in Appendix A, clearly indicating continuous rule of the country from 1747 until 1978 with the exception of 9 months in 1929 in which a Tajik ruler, Habibullah Kalakani, rose to power (Appendix A).

While all the kings were from the Durrani tribes, there is no consistency in their internal and external policies. Some, like Amir Abdul Rahman, tried to consolidate power by force and by crushing all opposition (Ibrahimi, 2009: 2). Amir is regarded by the Western scholars and the majority of Pashtuns as the architect of modern Afghanistan. Backed by the British, he built a relatively stronger central state than his predecessors through brutally crushing opposition from every walk of life including Pashtun rival tribes and other ethnic groups (Saikal, 2006: 5). For example, he killed many of the Nuristani ethnic group as Kafirs, or non-believers; massacred

about sixty percent of Hazaras in Uruzgan Province and forcefully took the land of Hazaras and ordered thousands of Durrani and Ghilzai tribes to settle on those lands (Farhang, 1988: 404 and Dawlatabadi, 2006). As a result of series of confrontation between Amir and the Hazaras in the Behsud district of Ghazni Province, the area lost an estimated sixty eight percent of its entire population (Temorkhanov, 1993: 261 and Ibrahimi, 2009: 5).

Amir's Pashtun ethnicity cannot explain his political actions. Rather, his decisions and behaviours towards the 'others'-whether Pashtun tribes or non-Pashtuns- are the product of his multiple identities (Hobsbawm, 1996). Amir constructed many 'selves' and 'others' and, in each of those, one aspect of his identities created the justification for his policies. In his efforts to extend his rule over the country, he relied on his tribal, ethnic and sectarian identities to construct the 'other' and influenced his policies towards the others. For instance, he utilised the Durrani tribes to defeat the Ghilzai tribes; the Pashtun ethnic group to defeat the non-Pashtuns and the Sunni Muslim to defeat the Shi'a (Farhang, 1988: 423). Viewing his behaviours as products of his multiple identities has the advantage of avoiding generalisation about his policies towards the 'others' and makes it possible to understand how identities are context specific, serving different purposes in different contexts.

Other Durrani rulers, like King Amanullah, took a more progressive measure to consolidate their powers. King Amanullah pursued a sustained effort towards social change, development and modernisation. His radical reforms paved the way for rapid social change as well as social revolts, particularly instability due to power rivalries in the dynasty family (Saikal, 2006: 58). Despite the differences in the rule of different Durrani rulers, there are certain features that define the characteristics of the Afghan state including weak central authority and the deep divide between the rulers and the ruled.

In Kabul in the 1950s and 1960s, for instance, the elite group had an exclusive monopoly of power and access to economic resources. The remaining population was dependent on daily income from work in a few industries and in some government institutions. In rural areas, the landlords, Khans, had the prominent role in society as they owned a large amount of the land (Neale, 1981). Barfield (2010) uses the analogy of the leading Muslim scholar, Ibn Khaldun, to show the inequality, differences and divisions of desert civilisation and sedentary civilisation in Afghanistan. Members of the desert civilisation, generally the rural population, are dependent on subsistence farming, agricultural products and pastoralism. Members of the sedentary civilisation mainly live in the urban areas. The rural groups are strongly linked with each other through kinship, family, tribe and a strong bond of social solidarity while the urban people have much more hierarchal social classes (Ibn Khaldun in Barfield, 2010: 11). While Afghanistan is not geographically in the Middle East and many aspects of societies have changed since Ibn Khaldun's writing, Barfield, believes that Afghanistan has 'always been two worlds, interacting but unintegrated' with each other (ibid) in a manner common to other Middle Eastern societies. These two worlds are the relatively well-off urban population (particularly in the capital, Kabul) and a poor rural population.

Sanchez (2006) reminded us that structural economic inequality is a cause of identity politics. This is demonstrated with the experience of rural and urban Afghans in the 1950s and 1960s. For example, when education opportunities improved in Kabul in the 1950s and 1960s, rural youth mobilised accordingly. When they arrived in the capital, Kabul, they found that a corrupt elite group had an exclusive hold of economic resources. The core elite group, in their view, had a monopoly of power; had extracted financial resources from within the country through the primary tax system and from the outside world in the form of foreign aid. They found that the ruling class, like most of the Third World states of the time, had a judicial sovereignty within the international community but lacked the governmental capabilities to provide basic

services for its population (Jackson, 1987: 519-50 in Smith, 1992: 8). This young educated population saw a political system in which the state was not accountable for its policies towards the population and was experiencing a low level of legitimacy amongst the general population (Maley, 2009: 12). In other words, the legitimacy of an already poor state was declining (ibid: 14).

Education plays a dynamic role in the ethno-nationalist movement as people became more educated. It is often simplified because often scholars have focused on the positive outcomes of educational strategies in developing a sense of nation-hood. However, Mayall and Simpson (1992: 7) argue that this is a misleading representation of the role of education because it might have the opposite effects too. It is very possible that education raises and reinforces the collective consciousness of an ethnic group against the corrupt ruling elites particularly in a society in which there is a strong culture of poverty. The education of the younger population in Kabul University is a case in point of the latter point about the role of education prior to the Communist coup of 1978 in Afghanistan.

The social movements of the 1960s in Afghanistan are further examples of this analogy. Influenced by the social movements in other Islamic countries and in the rest of the Third World of the time, the educated students in Kabul University sought to challenge the existing dynastic order in Afghanistan. They came from every walk of life to change their country, to ensure economic equality, greater people's participation and a more open political system (Barfield, 2010: 3 Marsden, 1992: 11; Halliday, 1980 and Neale, 1981). However, they could not agree on the forms, directions and ways to bring such social change (Barfield, 2010).

Some sought to bring change through building an Islamic state in which Shari'a provides the foundation of the legal and political systems. These Islamist groups were strongly influenced by

Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. The other group, the communists, was influenced by the Soviet Union and sought to bring social change through economic reform and a separation of state political institutions from religion (Barfield, 2010). President Daud, the first President of Afghanistan and the last member of the Durrani dynasty, allied himself with the communist group and pursued policies to prevent and limit the growth of the Islamist groups. To a large extent, they initially succeeded in such efforts. After consolidating his power, Daud made a shift in the policy towards the communist group and decided to defeat and marginalise them too. In such efforts he failed, and the communist group then developed as the PDPA ending the dynastic rule in April 1978 (Barfield, 2010: 3; Marsden, 1992: 11; Halliday, 1980 and Neale, 1981). In their long lasting effort, the Pashtun Ghilzai tribes overthrew the dynasty of Pashtun Durrani dynasty. This represents the dominance of tribal-based identity politics influenced by a weak state, a culture of poverty and external interference in this country since 1747. The coup of 1978, therefore, gave a new dimension to the existing tribal-oriented identity politics in Afghanistan.

Identity politics in the post-communist coup

The communist coup of 1978, or the 'Sour Revolution' as it is regarded by the PDPA, changed the existing tribal-oriented identity politics to a more *ideological-oriented* identity politics in Afghanistan. Based on Marxist ideology, communist groups viewed the problem of Afghanistan as a structural problem. For them, economic structure was a prominent issue because of the high level of poverty, inequality between the rulers and the ruled, the gap between haves and have-nots and the marginalisation of the poor. In other words, economic inequality was believed to be the source of exploitation and oppression of people (Bondi, 1993 and Bernstein, 2005). The PDPA was also concerned with economic structural problems which, in their view, was exclusively put the Durrani tribe and the beneficiaries of their government on an advantageous position compare to the rest of Afghan people. The dominance of the Durrani

tribes initially united the communist party against the existing order but the same factor also divided them. Those Afghan communists, who thought that the Durrani tribe but not all Pashtuns were the cause of the structural political problem, were from the Pashtun Ghilzai tribes and were divided into two groups of Khalq (people) and Parcham (banner). The leaders of Khalq were exclusively Pashtun while the leaders of Parcham were ethnically Pashtun and non-Pashtun. Parcham and Khalq formed the PDPA in 1977 (Halliday, 1978: 25-29; Sinno, 2008: 122-23 and Barfield, 2010: 225-227).

Those communist members, who thought the structural political problem was the historical dominance of the Pashtun, formed a new group called Sitem-e-Milli (National Oppression). Members of this group were entirely Dari speaking Tajiks and viewed the Khalq and Parcham as the symbols of Pashtun domination and agents of Pashtun ruling class (Halliday, 1978: 28). The division between PDPA and Sitem-e-Milli and within each group reflects the expected contradiction between one's own self-perception and in the perception of others. It also highlights the internal and external influences which have reinforced the political divisions between and within the various Afghan communist parties. The PDPA was pro-Soviet while Sitem-e-Milli was pro-China and each was respectively backed by the Soviet Union and China in its efforts to counter their Cold War rival, the US. The Soviet Union and China became hostile to each other and sought to influence the political landscape of Afghanistan for their own political interests (Halliday, 1978).

The purpose of their struggle was to end those structural problems. In fact, the rationale for identity politics in such circumstances is to build and develop a critical political agent that is capable of creating political space to resist and change the existing order (Sanchez, 2006: 31). The widespread culture of poverty in Afghanistan provided a space in which the population was unhappy about the existing order and created a potential force for bringing change (Lewis,

1966). A Left-oriented scholar, in his analysis of the reasons for and the promises of the Sour Revolution, argues that there was cause enough for a revolution (Neale, 1981). Those causes included 'the poverty, the corruption, the brutality, the arrogant local tyrannies of the khans, the very present secret police, the beatings, the torture, the starvation, the strafing of the people, the degraded lives of the women, the oppression of the nationalities, the low wages and appalling conditions of the workers: all cried out for revolution' (Neale, 1981). Such conditions and the possible external support from the Soviet Union helped the PDPA to end the regime of President Daud and 230 years of dynastic Durrani ruling (Barfield, 2010: 6 and Sinno, 2008).

The Sour Revolution was regarded as a new opportunity for the PDPA. The Great Revolution, as it was called by the PDPA, was the first time where the rulers of Afghanistan sought to reach out to the rural population and to make a representative government from all ethnic groups (Urban, 1992 and Barfield, 2010). From the perspective of the PDPA, their revolution was a promise to end political and economic structural problems and to ensure economic equality and social justice. The population of Afghanistan had a mixed reaction towards the coup. It was unacceptable for the Durrani elite group; their close allies and beneficiaries of their government. The Ghilzai Pashtun tribes rose to power but were divided into two groups as Islamist and Communist. The former group perceived the end of dynastic rule as a positive step but was generally unhappy about the dominance of their rival group, the communist groups, during and in the aftermath of the coup (Barfield, 2010). The minority ethnic groups like Hazara and Uzbek were optimistic and saw the coup as an end to the dynastic rule of Durrani confederation and a potential opportunity to end the Pashtun domination (Ibrahimi, 2009: 5). These mixed reactions represent the feelings of elite groups amongst the Durrani tribe, the Ghilzai tribe and even amongst the minority groups like Hazaras. The general population perceived the coup as an uncertain time and had no knowledge of its causes and consequences except that it was orchestrated by the Soviet Union (Maley, 2009 and Marsden, 1992: 24).

Sanchez (2006) argues that some political agents pursue transformative processes and others pursue more radical policies to bring structural changes in a society (Sanchez, 2006: 33). Influenced by their Marxist ideology, the Khalq and Parcham were also divided on their approach to change their society. The former pursued a more radical change by building a united front from the working class while the latter wanted to transform Afghanistan more gradually (Halliday, 1978: 25). Due to the initial dominance of Khalq, the PDPA introduced and implemented radical economic policies, such as a ceiling on landholdings and reducing rural indentures (Marsden, 1992: 24), to transform Afghanistan's 'backward' society (Urban, 1990: 279). Socially, they set a minimum age for marriage, ignored the cultural sensitivity of Afghanistan and pursued an anti-clerical tone and made education compulsory for girls and boys in mixed classes. They demanded women not wear the veil in public areas and brutally crushed their opposition from every walk of life including intellectuals, religious leaders (Mullahs) and tribal elders (Marsden, 1992: 24; Barfield, 2010: 231). These measures were taken in order to reduce inequality, to break up the tribal-based political structure, and to transform the social, economic and political structures (Barfield, 2010: 231).

The PDPA's radical policies had three general outcomes for Afghanistan. First, the radical rural reforms and widespread oppressive measures against their opposition, immediately paved the way for a rural backlash against their policies. The rural uprising exemplifies the two aspects of a society with a widespread culture of poverty, that is to say that the rural poor are disengaged from state institutions and are potential for dramatic protests (Lewis, 1966). Second, as the situation got out of control, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in September 1979 few months after the coup in order to protect the pro-Soviet regime of Kabul (Urban, 1990: 278). Subsequently, the internal power struggle was exacerbated between Khalq and Parcham to a point where the Khalqi leader, Hafizullah Amin, was replaced by his Parcham rival, Babrak

Karmal and finally Najibullah, the former head of the secret service, KHAD, took the leadership position. As a consequence of existing unease with the PDPA in rural areas, the invasion of the un-Islamic Soviet Union and the increasing decline in the legitimacy of the PDPA rulers, the Afghan resistance force was formed (Barfield, 2010: 225-230).

The rise of the resistance force, also known as the *Mujahidin*, reinforced ideology-oriented identity politics. The resistance force was a diverse group made up of different ethnic, sectarian, tribal and local groups (Barfield, 2010: 240). Some of the groups, like Jamiat-e- Islami (Islamic Society), had its roots in the earlier student movements in Kabul University pursuing the building of an Islamic state based on Shari'a. Others were formed in exile, in neighbouring states, like Pakistan and Iran. The Pakistani-based Mujahidin groups were Sunni Muslims, from Pashtun and Tajik ethnic backgrounds, and were strongly backed, trained and provided with money and military equipment by the United States as part of President Reagan's war against the 'evil empire' and by regional states like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (Sinno, 2008: 183-185). Those who were based in Iran were Shi'a groups from Hazara, Sayyed, Qizelbash and one, Harakat- e- Islami, from a Pashtun ethnic group (Sinno, 2008 and Ibrahimi, 2006). For details of their names, associated leadership and external links, refer to Appendix B (Sunni Mujahidin) and Appendix C (Shi'a Mujahidin), an excerpt of that provided by Sinno in 2008 (Sinno, 2008: 129).

The US supported some of these resistance groups as part of its efforts to counter its rival, the Soviet Union. The CIA provided the Mujahidin group with \$2 billion worth of weapons in 1984 alone, and the US used its political influence over the Arab Gulf States to continue and increase their financial support for the Afghan resistance force (Sinno, 2008: 105). The Shi'a Iran and the Sunni Saudi Arabia respectively backed the Shi'a and Sunni Mujahidin groups due to their rivalry over the leadership of Islamic world. Pakistan has continuously developed a complex set

of policies to defend its territory and national identity from the fear of Afghanistan's emphasis on Pashtunistan debate which is centred on the issue of the Durand Line. The Durand Line was drawn in 1893 between Afghanistan and the then British India. Prior to the existence of this line, two current provinces, Baluchistan and North Western Frontier Province of Pakistan, used to be under Afghan rule. The Durand Line not only marked the border between two geographical territories but also divided the Pashtuns and the Bloch ethnic groups on both sides. For Pashtuns, the debate around Pashtunistan is about reclaiming their lost territory and to reunite the Pashtuns on both sides of the border. In other words, Pashtunistan debate is a question of identity for Pashtuns to create a Greater Pashtunistan, encompassing the current Afghanistan and part of Pakistan along the Durand Line. It is also an issue of identity for Pakistan in order to defend its territorial sovereignty and national identity (Khan, 2003; Qaseem, 2008 and Siddiqi, 2008).

Since its formation, Pakistan strongly backed a pro-Pakistani regime in Kabul. In the 1990s, it backed the Islamist group Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and then the Taliban regime because it perceived these groups to be more religion-oriented rather than Pashtun nationalists (Sinno, 2008). From Islamabad's perspective, a pro-Pakistani regime in Kabul has the advantage of providing a strategic depth against the Hindu India, and has the potential to prevent any desire for a separatist movement by the ethno-nationalist Pashtun and Bloch ethnic groups, respectively, for Greater Pashtunistan and Greater Baluchistan (Rubin, 2002; Barfield, 2010; Maley, 1995, 2009; Sinno, 2008 and Dorronsoro, 2005).

Despite different organisational structures and capacity (Sinno, 2008: 1-3), the Mujahidin groups were united in two fronts. First, they were all adherents of Islam, against the non-Islamic Soviet Union, and their leaders were predominantly religious figures. They interpreted their resistance to the people of Afghanistan as 'Jihad' or 'holy' war, encompassing an intense

religious duty to go to war against the non-believers, the Soviet Union, and to free the Muslim lands (Roy, 1995). Their religious identity, Islam, made them demarcate an imagined boundary of Islamic self against the un-Islamic other. It also helped them to demarcate an insider against the outsider (Hobsbawm, 1996 & Friese, 2002). In such a view of insider against the outsider, any insider who pursues political actions that are in line with the policies of the outsider is also an enemy and the people were told that they are not Muslims (Friese, 2002). Based on such justification, the Mujahidin resistance took place on many fronts.

The resistance had an internal front highlighting the tribal, ethnic, sectarian and ideological divisions within Afghanistan. For instance, the initial resistance was formed by the Tajiks in the north and the Hazaras in central 'Hazarajat' against the non-Islamic and oppressive policies of Pashtun-led PDPA, despite that fact that PDPA members were the citizens of Afghanistan (Barfield, 2010: 229-233 and Ibrahimi, 2009). Within each ethnic group, the Mujahidin were also divided on the basis of their locality and on whether to adopt radical or progressive reforms. Ibrahimi (2009) provides an example of such internal divisions between the Hazara Mujahidin, which reflects the intensity of division as well as the disagreement on leadership. Ahady (1995) argues that the Pashtun's domination declined since the 1970s because of the internal division of Pashtuns in communist and Islamist groups to the extent that six of the seven Mujahidin groups in Peshawar were Pashtuns.

With the invasion of the Soviet Union, the Mujahidin resistance was directed towards a non-Islamic external enemy. The religious leaders of the Mujahidin groups relied on Islamic texts, sayings and radical speeches to mobilise the people. They used mosques as rallying points and frequently made reference to the Prophet Muhammad's wars against the non-Muslims in the early days of Islam (Barfield, 2010). They relied on the Afghan tribal value of honouring one's land and family to protect them against the rule of an external other, the Soviet military and

civilian forces. Relying on religion and traditional cultural values increased the legitimacy of Mujahidin among their tribes, locality and ethnic groups because they had shown strong capacity to relate with the population socially, culturally and religiously. This manifests the point about the causes of identity politics which emphasises the role of speech, charismatic leadership and cultural values in identity-based political actions (Kaufmann, 1996 and Sawyer, 2006). As Connor argues, speeches are important in social mobilization, including identity-based political actions, because ‘it is not what is but what people perceive as is that has behavioural consequences’ (Connor, 1992: 50).

The intensification of resistance had two major consequences for Afghan politics. On the external front, it became a cause of the Soviet Union withdrawal in 1989. It is important to note that the intensification of resistance was *a* cause of Soviet Union’s decision not *the* cause. In fact, a combination of well-managed resistance by the Afghan Mujahidin (Sinno, 2008: 109) and a weak central economy, social instability, the development of ‘New Thinking in Moscow’ under the leadership of Gorbachev (Mendelson, 1993) and an increase in US aid for the Mujahidin (Rubinstein, 1988) forced the Soviet Union’s withdrawal from Afghanistan. Withdrawal from Afghanistan combined with internal political and economic instability caused the disintegration of Soviet Union into smaller independent states and changed the bipolar nature of world politics (Sinno, 2008 and Idris, 2005). This made the US more reluctant to support the Afghan Mujahidin to form a workable government. Afghanistan, therefore, became a vacuum for political rivalries between the Mujahidin elite groups.

Because the resistance had an internal front, it repeated a chapter of Afghan history. That is to say that the Afghans had shown capabilities on many occasions to defeat their external common enemies (British in the 19th century and Soviet Union in 1989) but that they had failed to maintain their unity afterwards. For this reason, some people argued that Jihad against the

Soviet Union raised a sense of nationhood amongst Afghans but it also paved the way for demarcation of boundaries between many internal selves and others (Waezi, 2006 and Maley, 2009). Nazif Shahrani argues that the primary reason for the Afghans' failure to resolve their political economy problems was the 'unwillingness and inability of the leadership to shift from a tribal culture anchored in person-centred sovereignty-based politics to a broader, more inclusive, participatory national politics based on the development of modern institutions and rules of governance' (Shahrani, 2008: 161). In other words, whenever the common enemy disappears, the personalistic desire for power prevails over the collective management of affairs.

The Mujahidin, for example, did everything they could do to overthrow the communist regime of Najibullah in 1992 (Barfield, 2010). However, three historical issues prevented the Mujahidin groups from forming a representative and functioning government: the historical Pashtun domination in government; the personalistic-based desires for power and long time ethnic cleavage in the country (Shahrani, 2008). The Mujahidin Interim Government was formed in Pakistan prior to the fall of Najibullah's government in Kabul. When the Mujahidin arrived in Kabul and took control of the capital they faced new challenges (Maley, 2009: 164). For the Pashtun Mujahidin, the dominance of a Tajik-dominated government by a Tajik leader, Burhanuddin Rabbani, was simply unacceptable because of their long held view of Afghanistan with a Pashtun leader. Due to their relative majority and historical domination, the Pashtun Mujahidins regarded themselves as the legitimate replacement for the Pashtun-led communist group (Ahady, 1996). For other ethnic groups, the dominance of the Pashtun was a structural problem that they had wanted to change since the 1950s.

For a successful settlement to take place, a country requires 'elite convergence, elite restructuring and elite settlement' (Higley & Burton, 1989 in Maley, 2009: 164). Elite

convergence implies that there needs to be a step-by-step process of reconciliation through peaceful means; elite restructuring means that a fundamental change in power structure needs to happen in a way to make an inclusive government for all, and elite settlement encompasses some form of negotiations to resolve their disagreements (Maley, 2009: 164). In the context of Afghanistan, a series of negotiations took place within the country and outside the country, but was without productive outcome because of the unwillingness of Mujahidin elites to make workable compromises (Maley, 2009). Elite divergence, not elite convergence, occurred and the Mujahidin elites eventually decided to resolve their problems with force instead of dialogue. The outcome was a civil war from 1992 to 1994 in which every ethnic group and sect played some role with different proportions of involvement. In line with the international context of the 1990s (Idris, 2005), the Afghan civil war changed the ideological-oriented identity politics of 1980s to a more ethnically-oriented identity politics in the 1990s (Dorransoro, 2005).

The civil war killed thousands of people, destroyed the already poor physical infrastructure of the state and displaced about six million people, of which a large proportion took refuge in Iran and Pakistan, while some made their way to Western countries (Maley, 2009; Barfield, 2010; and Rubin, 2002). It also reduced the level of social trust (Maley, 1995 & 2002) and challenged the historical dominance of Pashtuns (Ahady, 1996). It provided a condition for the rise of a new political force in the country, the Taliban regime (Rashid, 2000 & Crews & Tarzi, 2008). One observer of Afghan politics, Ahmed Rashid, titled his book, *Taliban: The Story of Afghan Warlords*, in order to make this point that the severe Afghan civil wars led to the rise of the Taliban regime in power (Rashid, 2000).

The Taliban was an ethnic-dominated Pashtun group whose leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, was from Ghilzai tribe of Uruzgan Province. The Taliban were recruited from Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan and promised a much more radical agenda to establish a strict Islamic state.

Initially, they promised order, security and stability for Afghanistan, which legitimized their rule in Kandahar. Then, they appealed to the Pashtun to reunite them. Their appeal was interpreted as a new beginning for Pashtun domination in Afghanistan (Rashid, 2000; Ahady, 1996).

In fact, the Taliban crushed all opposition, particularly the Hazaras, Uzbeks and anyone who was against their rule (Rashid, 2001). They massacred the Hazaras in Mazar and Bamyan Provinces; 210 people were killed in Yakawlang on 8 January 1992 (Rashid, 2001: ix). They banned women from public spaces and made every effort to maintain the male-dominated social structure of the country. They brought relative order initially, but at the expense of people's privacy, freedom and political beliefs. In their search for legitimacy, they tried to distance their political position from other existing Islamic parties, Pashtun and non-Pashtun, (Rashid, 2001 and Crews & Tarzi, 2008) which emphasizes that there was not one view of Islam but many interpretations of Islam in Afghanistan. In other words, Islamic-identities are socio-cultural construction with a dynamic and changing role in politics (Smith & Hutchinson: 1996).

The Taliban's oppressive policies after decades of socio-political conflicts changed the already weak state of Afghanistan into a failed and ungovernable space (Edward, 2010 & Singh, 2004). The clerical state (Dorronsoro, 2005: 272) of Afghanistan during the Taliban, like the time of Mujahidin, failed to deliver services and perform the minimal role of a functioning state (Singh, 2004 & Weinbaum, 2006: 126)). Increasing brutality of the Taliban towards the people of Afghanistan paved the way for their loss of internal legitimacy and, because of such domestic oppression, they came under heavy international pressure including global political isolation and United Nations sanctions in 2000 (Dorronsoro, 2005: 307-308). In response, the Taliban relied heavily on aid from the Arab Gulf states and the Al-Qaeda networks led by Osama Bin

Laden. They chose radicalised policies towards increasing internal and external pressures, such as the destruction of the Buddha statues in Bamyan Province in 2000 representing their religious hatred towards a non-Islamic symbol and the subsequent breakup of the regime with the international community (ibid, 308-311).

It was in the context, of the Taliban struggling for survival that the event of 11 September (9/11) 2001 occurred in the US. The US accused the Al-Qaeda network of being responsible for the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon building in Washington. Since the Taliban provided Al-Qaeda a safe haven in Afghanistan, both Al-Qaeda and Taliban were regarded as the target of any US response to the 9/11 event, which targeted the heart of American supremacy (Maley, 2009: 211-216). The US swiftly used increasing unease with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in the Western countries as well as in neighbouring states of Afghanistan to launch a military response against the Taliban regime (Maley, 2009: 223). The military response against Taliban was part of the US strategy of the war on terrorism which led to the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. While the precise outcome of the US military response remains to be seen, the fall of the Taliban dramatically changed the political landscape of Afghanistan. Understanding identity politics in the new political landscape of Afghanistan deserves a separate section, which will be discussed in the following chapter with a particular focus on the role of ethnic and sectarian identities in the process of so the called post- Taliban state-building.

Before turning to examine the place of identity politics in state-building, it is important to briefly outline the major points of this chapter. It was shown that identity politics is a historical phenomenon in Afghanistan and that it was changed from tribal-oriented identity politics in the pre-communist coup to ideological identity politics and then ethnic-oriented identity politics after the communist coup. This shift, however, does not represent a complete replacement of

one form of identity politics to another but highlights that it became multidimensional- tribal, ethnic and sectarian- over time. Unlike the claim of some scholars that identity politics is a symbolic strategy (Bernstein, 2005), it was shown that identity-based political actions had the potential to develop strong political agents for changing the structural power relations in Afghanistan. Identity-based political actions during the tribal confederation, the communist coup of 1978, the subsequent civil wars and the rise of the Taliban to power changed the already weak state of Afghanistan to a failed state and a fragmented society.

CHAPTER III

Identity Politics in Post-Taliban Afghanistan

This chapter examines the nature and role of identity politics in the post-Taliban state-building in Afghanistan. It begins with a discussion of theoretical frameworks on state-building in order to provide the context for why state-building was perceived as a solution to the 'failure' of the Afghan state after the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. Then, it will assess the nature of ethnic and sectarian identity politics in the Bonn Conference of 2001, in the two presidential elections and amongst the internet-based Afghan civil society. It will show that the ethnic and sectarian identity politics have been a dominant feature of post-Taliban political development and, combined with other factors, have seriously undermined the process of state-building in Afghanistan.

Why state-building?

State-building refers to the construction of a functioning state. It involves constructing new state institutions and improving state capacity to deliver services for its population (Tilly, 1975). Western Europe experienced the initial phase of state-building (Tilly, 1975 and Fukuyama, 2004). In the 1950s and 1960s, a mass mobilisation formed against the European colonial powers in Africa, Asia and Latin America seeking independence, and leading to the formation of many new states. The rulers of these new states, instead of building strong state capacity, generally sought a personalistic style of leadership. As Sorensen (2004: 132) puts it "the new rulers were by no means insulated from society; they were closely connected to it via ties of clan, kinship and ethnic affiliation" (Sorensen, 2004: 132-133).

In addition to these trends, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the US government introduced the 'Washington Consensus' which 'emphasised a collection of measures intended to reduce the degree state intervention in economic affairs' (Fukuyama, 2004: 5). As a consequence of internal personalistic rulers and external structural pressures on these new states, many of them experienced civil war, famine, poverty and economic disparity, and some changed to fragile and ungovernable spaces (Edward, 2004). Afghanistan was never entirely colonised although its affairs, like every other weak state, were dictated, controlled and constrained by external forces (Sorensen, 2004). The previous chapter has shown the decades of conflict which destroyed Afghanistan's already poor physical infrastructure and changed it to an ungovernable space in the late 1990s.

Since the 1980s, state-building is perceived as a response to the problems of fragile states like Afghanistan. The OECD Principle for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations asserts firmly that 'state-building is [their] central objective....in fragile states' in order to build 'effective, legitimate and resilient states' (OECD, 2008: 7). Moreover, a change took place in global governance discourse in the 1990s which altered the meaning of state sovereignty from a 'right [of states] to prevent interference' to a 'responsibility to protect (R2P)' (Edward, 2004: 971). R2P was incorporated rapidly in the internationally dominant institutions and regimes such as the UN Commission on Global Governance in 1995 (Debiel and Lambach, 2010).

The R2P was recognised as an international norm by members of the UN in response to a growing understanding in the world to prevent and halting 'Mass Atrocity Crimes' in the 2005 World Summit (UN World Summit, 2005: 31). Due to changes in technology and means of communication, human actions in one place have transnational repercussions (Rosenau, 1995: 13) and if the domestic authority is incapable of protecting its population, the international community has 'the responsibility/right to tackle the problems of ungoverned space' (Debiel & Lambach, 2010: 3 and Edward, 2004: 971-972). In other words, if the domestic authority is

incapable of protecting its citizens, the 'international community has the responsibility to assist the state by building its capacity and if a state is manifestly failing,..., the international community has the responsibility to intervene at first diplomatically, then more coercively and as a last resort, by military force' (UN World Summit, 2005: 31).

Alan Whaites (2006) produces responsive and unresponsive models of state-building. A responsive model involves three processes of 'political settlement, survival functions and expected functions' which respectively describe elite agreement and cooperation; minimum security, revenue extraction and the capability to rule through law; and the expectation of how a state *should* perform (Whaites, 2006: 7-10). An unresponsive model of state-building is one in which the elite cannot settle their competing issues peacefully and are unable to collect and distribute the state revenues effectively. In Afghanistan, the PDPA could not settle their internal disagreement and also failed to make a workable concurrence with their rival group, the Islamist parties. This experience was repeated again in the early 1990s when the Mujahidin groups came into violent conflict with each other as a result of major disagreement between various ethnic and sectarian groups. Therefore, it is important to examine the place of ethnic and sectarian identities in post-Taliban Afghanistan which will be discussed in the remaining section of this chapter.

Identity in post-Taliban state-building

Similar to the pre-Taliban period, the power relations between ethnic and sectarian groups have dominated much of the political development in post-Taliban Afghanistan. As was explained in the previous chapter, the fall of the Taliban regime came as a consequence of the US military response to the event of 9/11. The Northern Alliance, made up of non-Pashtun ethnic groups, was backed by the US and played a significant role in the Taliban's defeat in 2001 (Maley, 2009: 219-220). When the Taliban regime fell, the question of who should be the next ruler of Afghanistan became a prominent issue because it required an internal political settlement

between various ethnic and sectarian groups of Afghanistan and an external consensus between global powers as well as Afghanistan's neighbouring states (ibid, 224).

Bringing various Afghan groups together, while so central to ensure an internal process of state-building, proved to be a difficult process. Due to decades of conflict and war, they could not come together without external mediation. Realising this problem and backed by the US, the UN appointed Lakhdar Brahimi as the UN Representative with a 'widened mandate entailing overall authority for the humanitarian political endeavours of the United Nations in Afghanistan' (United Nations, 2001d: para. 2). A series of meetings took place between the various Afghan factions of which the Bonn Conference (the Conference) of 2001 provided the major breakthrough in establishing primary political settlement amongst the Afghan delegates. The Conference symbolises the first major step towards state-building in Afghanistan because it provided a space for dialogue and influenced the subsequent political settlement between the Afghan delegates.

The Conference was hosted by the UN and strongly backed by the US and its allies (Singh, 2004: 546). It brought together various ethnic and sectarian Afghan groups such as the Northern Alliance, King Zahir's Rome Group, Pir Gailani's Peshawar Group and Houmayon Jareer's Cyprus Group. The Northern Alliance sent delegates to the Conference from Tajik, Hazara and Uzbek ethnic groups led by a Tajik, Yonus Qanooni. However, their leader Burhanuddin Rabbani, still formally the President of Afghanistan, moved to the Presidential Palace in Kabul after the control of the city by the Northern Alliance group and did not attend the Conference, insisting that any decision for the future should take place inside Afghanistan (PBS, 2001). The Rome Group was a Pashtun group loyal to King Zahir highlighting the influence of the Durrani tribe in post-Taliban Afghanistan. The Cyprus Group was made of up exile Afghans loyal to Iran and the Peshawar Group represented the Pashtuns loyal to Pakistan (ibid). The presence of these groups at the Conference highlights a continuity of ethnic and sectarian identity politics as

well as a manifestation of interference by external powers in shaping the Afghan society and politics.

The Conference also provided an opportunity for Afghan women's representation (Maley, 2009 and PBS, 2001). The political history of Afghanistan, since its formation, has been dominated by Pashtun males. Afghan women were invited to the Conference and their presence, while limited, added a gender dimension to identity politics in Afghanistan. Prior to the Conference, it was possible to understand ethnic and sectarian identity politics in Afghanistan without taking into consideration the role of Afghan women. In post-Taliban, however, a *gender-oriented* identity politics has developed, which reinforces the recognition of women and their role in Afghan politics and society. It exemplifies the point made by Brunt (1989) that identity politics has the potential for recognition of a group, in this case Afghan women, and for inclusion of different social groups.

The Conference was not a smooth process due to lack of political agreement amongst various ethnic groups. A prominent Pashtun delegate, Abdul Haq, and a Hazara delegate, Karim Khalili, felt that the Conference was not representing their interests and concerns. They walked off from the Conference and General Dostam, an Uzbek leader, did not take part at all (Maley, 2009: 224). At this stage, the Conference was in danger of disintegration because of the personalistic desire of some of the Afghan delegates and the absence of a prominent delegate who could be trusted by all groups. Despite such challenges, the Afghan delegates signed the 'Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan Pending the Re-establishment of Permanent Government Institutions' on 5 December 2001 (ibid: 225). This achievement was mainly thanks to strong pressure from Zalmay Khalilzad and James F. Dobbins, the US representatives at the Conference, for a final agreement between various Afghan groups at the meeting (ibid).

The Bonn Agreement, an outcome of the Conference, laid the foundation for an Afghan Interim *Administration* (AIA) not an interim *Government* (Maley, 2009: 225). The Agreement was not a peace agreement - the Afghan delegates were not at war at the time of the Conference - but a potential road map for re-establishing an interim authority. The text of the agreement was focused around four issues. First, it expressed an appreciation of the Afghan Mujahidin's resistance to the Soviet Union. Second, it asked President Burhanuddin Rabbani to transfer power to a new interim authority in Kabul. Third, it focused on strengthening of the Afghan state institutions in order to ensure a sustainable transition process. For this purpose, it approved the establishment of a representative Emergency Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) 'to approve the structure of the Transitional Authority' and to craft a new constitution for Afghanistan (Singh, 2004: 548). Finally, it requested the assistance of the international community to help Afghanistan in establishing and training of the Afghan security force (The Bonn Agreement, 2001; Maley, 2009: 224-228 and Dorronsoro, 2005: 329).

Selection of the interim administration members (henceforth Members) was a difficult process. There was a general perception amongst the Afghan delegates and delegates from other countries that a Pashtun should be chairman. This consensus highlights the historical domination of the Pashtun ethnic group in Afghanistan. However, there was a disagreement on who among the Pashtun could be trusted by the majority of the Afghan delegates. Abdul Haq, a Pashtun, was a likely candidate because he was perceived to be capable of uniting the Pashtun against Mullah Omar. Abdul Sattar Sirat, a loyal Pashtun to King Zahir, was another likely candidate reflecting the historical domination of Durrani rule in Afghanistan. He, however, criticised the Northern Alliance for their movement to Kabul and taking control of the Presidential Palace. Therefore, Hamid Karzai, a non-delegate Pashtun from the Durrani tribe, was named as the chairman of the interim administration (Maley, 2009: 228). The other members were predominantly former Afghan Mujahidins, and the Tajik delegates took control

of key ministries like the defence, interior, external affairs and the intelligence service (Starr, 2006: 111).

The praise of the Mujahidin and the domination of key ministries by the Tajiks heavily influenced subsequent political development in Afghanistan. The praise of the Mujahidin groups in the Bonn Agreement meant a failure of the delegates to recognise and acknowledge the destructive roles played by various Mujahidin in the Afghan civil war of the early 1990s. It also blocked a meaningful reconciliation process consisting of peace and justice with the potential for a society to reflect on their past collective failures and to ensure political accountability (Wilson, 2001). Like every transitional society, Afghanistan was and still is in need of dealing with its past memory of hatred, conflict and war in order to ensure justice (De Brito et al, 2001: 17). The international community and the Afghan delegates prioritised peace over justice via praising the role of the Afghan Mujahidin, and in the Bonn Agreement, as observed by the then UN Representative in Afghanistan, Lackhdar Brahimi. (Edward, 2010: 977). This is to an extent understandable as the country was in need of security for further political development. However, such a focus on peace without a process to ensure justice proved to be a huge flaw in the process of state-building because it placed the past victimisers in an advantageous position compared to the victims. In other words, the praise of Mujahidin in the Bonn Agreement blocked the development of any meaningful efforts towards a national political reconciliation.

The praise of Mujahidin also led to the formation of a divided government (Dorrnsoro, 2005: 236). It was divided on an ideological front, between the Afghan technocrats and the Mujahidin. Afghan technocrats, having been absent from country for many years, pursued a rational-legal legitimacy that emphasised their personal qualifications and capabilities, while the legitimacy of Mujahidin was rooted in the resistance of these groups against the Soviet Union (Maley, 2009: 235-236 and Dorrnsoro, 2005: 236). The Afghan technocrats were trying to play a major role because they perceived themselves as a group of Afghans who had the

skills and knowledge of how to develop state institutions. The Mujahidin were critical of the Afghan technocrats and defended their commitment to the war against the Soviet Union. From an identity politics perspective, this division amongst the Members was expected, another illustration of the contradiction between a group's subjective and objective characteristics.

The domination of key ministries by the Tajik ethnic group exacerbated the division within the Members. The Tajik domination was not acceptable for all Pashtuns including Hamid Karzai and other technocrat Pashtuns (Starr, 2006). The eastern and southern Pashtuns felt marginalised in the interim authority and reinforced their tribal networks to pursue their political objectives. Three tribal factions currently vie for control of Kandahar in which Gul Agha Shirzai took the position of governor and was challenged by Mullah Naqibullah, a former member of Jamiet-e-Islami who was supported by the Northern Alliance, and Ahmad Wali Karzai, the President's half brother (Dorransoro, 2004: 332). While divided amongst themselves, these Kandahari Pashtuns were united in their efforts to reject the domination of Tajiks in central government. These political divisions reflect a continuity of tribal-oriented and ethnic-oriented identity politics from pre to post-Taliban Afghanistan.

Managing such divisive political issues is central in the state-building process (Weinbaum, 2006: 127) and requires developing a level of trust (Maley, 2009: 232). The failure of the new interim administration to develop a trusting relationship among various ethnic groups explained much of the subsequent lack of political development in Afghanistan. The presidential elections of 2004 and 2009, while a success story in a country that never experienced elections before, became the political space for ethnic and sectarian rivalries. In fact, in the presidential elections of 2004, Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun, won the majority of votes followed respectively by a Tajik and a Hazara candidate (Afghan Election Commission, 2011). The 2009 presidential election produced a similar result despite claims of fraud by various candidates including Hamid Karzai (King, 2010) and his closest Tajik rival, Abdullah Abdullah (Partlow & Constable, 2009).

The outcome of the two presidential elections discloses two important points. Afghanistan's community of citizenship is in its infant stage (Sorensen, 2004: 83-84). The majority of the people prefer to show more loyalty towards their respective ethnic group. It is because the memory of decades of war and conflict still dominates much of the civilian population's thinking and decision making. In such a context, voting for their respective ethnic candidate has the advantage of supporting an insider member against an outsider (Friese, 2002). For instance, the majority of Hazaras vote for the Hazara candidates because they are perceived to be from their own ethnic group. In other words, the community of sentiment, or belonging to linguistic, ethnic and/or sectarian identities, still dominates political decisions.

Interestingly, the leading presidential candidates chose their vice-presidents from other ethnic groups, or women. In the presidential election of 2009, Karzai chose a Tajik, General Fahim, and a Hazara, Karim Khalili, as his vice-presidents (Afghanistan Online, 2009). There are, though, questions on whether General Fahim and Karim Khalili represent the majority of the Tajiks and Hazaras respectively (Singh, 2004 and Buda, 2010). Hence, the downside of the politics of recognition is that it can further divide ethnic and sectarian groups (Wolin, 1993 and Brown, 1995) and much of the debates in elections are centred on ethnic and sectarian representations rather than policy issues.

The growing interest in ethnic and sectarian representations in government influenced the process of state-building. It has led to a lack of policy in the Karzai government which made it a subject of criticism for internal and external forces. Externally, donor countries especially the US, Britain and other NATO members demand the Karzai government tackle the issue of widespread corruption and to improve state governance and the rule of law. The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton branded Afghanistan a narco-state and argued that it was 'plagued by limited capacity and widespread corruption' (Clinton reported in BBC, 2009). After the 2009 presidential election, President Obama and the then British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, also put pressure on Karzai to develop credible institutions, to tackle illegal drug trafficking and to

make security a priority by extending his government's efforts towards peace dialogue with the Taliban and other insurgents (BBC, 2009). Internally, the majority of people feel disappointed about the lack of policies from the Karzai government on many issues including security, electricity, education and peace dialogue.

However, the Afghan state system is not the only actor in Afghanistan (Maley, 2009: 237). In fact, there are other key players of importance, for example non government organisations (NGOs). There is no doubt that NGOs play an important role in Afghanistan; the Human Rights Watch records and reports on past human rights violations (The Afghanistan Justice Project, 2001). However, NGOs also lack proper coordination and often perform important administrative roles in the country. They provide services for the Afghan people but, by doing so, undermine the role of the central government. The Afghans, instead of seeking assistance from their government, often rely on NGOs to respond to their needs and demands. Additionally, NGOs hire the most educated and professional local people by offering high salaries. The downside of such a practice is that the government agencies remain under staffed or hire people with a very low level of skills. In addition, the high level of corruption discourages investment in Afghanistan from those abroad (Dorronsoro, 2005: 335). The consequence of this for state-building is a continuous poor relationship between state and society and a low level of people's confidence in their state institutions.

Fange (2010) suggests that there is an imbalance in the distribution of aid between and within regions and provinces and that there is an overpopulation of the Afghan government ministries with foreign advisors and consultants who know little about the priorities of the local context. The implication of such widespread presence of foreign advisors is that they are highly paid from aid assistance and that the local citizens are further alienated from the state (Fange, 2010). Fukuyama (2006) identifies other problems in the position of the US in Afghanistan's state-building. He asserts that the objective of the US was not clearly defined prior to the attack on the Taliban and, because of such confusion, the Bush Administration failed to coordinate

effectively the relationship between its civilian and military forces on the ground. As a result of the low level of coordination, an interagency mistrust developed between the Pentagon, the State Department and the intelligence community. Furthermore, the Afghan state reconstruction was influenced by the involvement of the US in Iraq and the subsequent high level of attention that Iraqi state-building received from the US (Fukuyama, 2006: 8-10).

Lastly, the exclusion of the Taliban from the Bonn Agreement led to a Taliban revival in 2005 (Starr, 2006: 113). After the fall of the Taliban regime, the general assumption was that this group was defeated and the international community as well as the Afghan delegates in the Bonn Conference did not see the need for the inclusion of the Taliban in the state building process. The Taliban's exclusion provided them with an opportunity to reorganise their groups in Pakistan as well as in the eastern and southern provinces of Afghanistan. Despite some divisions between the Haqqani, Hekmatyar and Quetta networks, Mullah Omer still remained leader. The Taliban allied them with Hekmatyar and further emphasised the role of Islamic ideology- or a much harder interpretation of Islamic Shari'a, in their efforts to fight against the foreigners as well as the Kabul central authority (Dorrnsoro, 2005: 339).

The Taliban reorganised their members in Pakistan to stop the process of state-building in Afghanistan (Dorrnsoro, 2005: 339). Their continued pressure on the Afghan government and guerrilla-like attacks on the US and NATO-led ISAF forces shifted the position of the Afghan government. They still threaten the existence of the central state and the security of the Afghan people (Maley, 2009; Dorrnsoro, 2005; Goodson, 2006 and Weinbaum, 2006). Their continued attacks on Afghans and foreigners alike have given rise to a sentiment of doubt about the ability of the Kabul government to provide security and stability. In response to such attacks, the US also has increased its military operations to capture and kill key members of the Taliban group. As a result, a UN report estimated that the level of violence in Afghanistan in 2011 is more than 30 percent higher compared to the level of violence at the same time last year (BBC, 2011).

There is generally strong support for peace talks with the Taliban in the Karzai team as well as in the international community. To achieve this, prior to any other steps, the Taliban identity needed to be changed in order to legitimise the process of peace talks in the eyes of the Afghan population. An example of such a change in the Taliban's identity is the distinction between Pakistani and Afghani Taliban. From the Kabul perspective, the Afghani Taliban is perceived as 'upset brothers' while the Pakistani Taliban is defined as the enemy of the Afghan people and peace (Yasa, 2011). However, Kabul's perception of the Taliban is not the same as to that of Taliban's own self-perception, which reflects a clear distinction between subjective and objective identity (Bilgrami, 2006). On the contrary, the Taliban group has never publicly acknowledged any distinction between their members in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The growing interest in representative government has highly radicalised different ethnic and sectarian groups, particularly those who feel that they are excluded from power sharing and especially since the last presidential election in 2009. For instance, some of the Tajik leaders-like Abdullah Abdullah-former Foreign Minister and one of the presidential candidates and Amrollah Saleh, former Chief of the Afghan National Security- feel excluded from power arrangements, and accuse the Karzai government of Pashtunisation of the country and incapable of defending the interest of Afghanistan (Saleh, 2011).

This is also a sentiment widespread amongst members of the internet-based Afghan civil society. Afghan civil society is made up of different groups and has played a major role since 2001 in writing, documenting and reporting various social and political issues. It has also written many criticisms of the Karzai-led government. Freshta Hazrati (2009) asserts that the 'Karzai government is a reflection of a poor culture of tribe' which is as much responsible as that of the Taliban group for the problems of Afghanistan since 2001. It is because the culture of tribe produces 'violence, discrimination against other ethnic groups and poverty'. Furthermore, some of the Hazara intellectuals have argued that Karzai and his team lost an important opportunity since 2001. Instead of focusing on strengthening democratic systems and

institutions; they pushed for the re-establishment of Pashtun domination in Afghanistan (Zardari, 2010).

The Afghan civil society uses modern media like the internet as a tool for communication. The advantage of modern communication tools is that the message has the potential to reach out easily and with much less cost to many people inside Afghanistan and around the world. The disadvantage of such a means of communication is that some members of Afghan intelligentsia are deeply sidelined from the mainstream Afghan society, which does not have access to or lacks the knowledge of how to use the internet. The intelligentsia seems to represent a new social division in Afghanistan which is rooted in the *internet-oriented* identity.

The internet-oriented Afghan groups is best described by Burhanuddin Rabbani, former President of Afghanistan and one of the Mujahidin warlords, as the *facebooki* groups. The Facebooki Afghans are different from mainstream Afghans and often represent the liberal voices and the younger generation of the Afghan society. Because of such characteristics, the facebooki Afghans are regarded as an 'other' for conservative members of Afghan society and elites to the extent that Rabbani, in one of his latest speeches in Kabul, warned about the emerging role of facebooki groups and the danger that they pose to traditional Afghan values (Rabbani reported in Qahramani, 2011). The facebooki Afghans represent new social categories and deep social divisions between those who have and do not have access to the internet. It also highlights a deep and widening generational gap in Afghan society. It is hard to find a united vision for future direction for Afghanistan amongst the facebooki Afghans because of their associations with different ethnic and sectarian groups and their past experiences in Afghanistan or in exile.

Due to their access to the internet, the Facebooki Afghans have demonstrated potential to communicate with both Afghans in exile and the rest of the world. This communication has influenced their ideas and thinking in various degrees and different forms. The Facebooki

Afghans have found an opportunity to learn new knowledge and skills; and to widen their world views. It suggests a positive and a promising experience. However, the same experience also further sidelined them from other groups and has widened the gap between them and the general population. In the past, there used to be a gap between the rulers and the ruled in Afghanistan. In the post-Taliban decade, a new dimension is added to this experience because a new gap is developing between the intelligentsia and the rest of the Afghan people, including the political and religious elites.

Paul Sawyer (2006) reminds us about the role of symbolic authority in identity formation and identity politics. Influenced by such an idea, some of Afghanistan's ethnic groups have tried since 2001 to produce a hero from their co-ethnic group who symbolically has the power to unite them. Ahmad Shah Masoud, Abdul Ali Mazari and some of the past kings are regarded as heroes for the majority of Tajiks, Hazaras and some Pashtuns respectively. The production of heroes has the potential to unite members of each ethnic group. However, it reinforces and exacerbates social divisions because most of these heroes lack national legitimacy. Subsequently, in the context of producing ethnic heroes, the energy and intellect of some of the Afghan intelligentsia, while needed for a future vision and direction, were spent on writing an ethnic-based version of Afghan history. In the ethnic-based history, there is a shared sentiment that 'we' are good and 'they' are bad. The insiders belong to while the outsiders are excluded from their respective group. Guns used to be the tool of such social divisions between and within different ethnic groups in before and during the Taliban regime. Today, however, the tool of social division is the pen of writers and intellectuals.

In summary, many features of the ethnic and sectarian identity politics still dominate political development in Afghanistan. The initial foundation of the Afghan state-building, the Bonn Conference, was dominated by rivalries between and within the various Pashtun, Tajik, Hazaras, and Uzbek ethnic groups. The Conference also provided an opportunity for representation of Afghan women, which added a new gender-oriented identity politics in

Afghanistan. The subsequent political developments have followed similar road maps in the sense that the majority of the Afghan people still show more loyalty towards their ethnic, sectarian and linguistic groups. The community of sentiments, while fragmented on the various fronts, has overruled the development of a community of citizenship and has undermined the development of a national identity.

As a consequence, there is a growing interest in Afghanistan in representative rather than responsible government. It helps the Afghans to recognise other groups including women and the younger generation. However, it also runs the potential risk for further social divisions and the lack of proper policy debates and policy development. It has shown the potential to undermine the role of Afghan government in performing the survival as well as the expected functions required for a functioning state. The Afghan government has shown little capacity in providing the basic security and basic needs of the people. Therefore, its legitimacy is declining internally and externally.

The growing interest in representative government also radicalised the educated younger generation. Access to the internet became a new force for social division within Afghanistan, which has led to growing internet-oriented Afghan groups. The internet facilitates communication within the various facebooki Afghan groups and between them and the wider world. However, the same mechanism puts them at odds with each other, with the more conservative members of their society and increasingly with the rest of the Afghan people. There is, therefore, a generational gap developing and deepening rapidly.

The final outcome of the state-building in Afghanistan remains to be seen in the future because of the ongoing conflict and war with the Taliban and other insurgent groups. In the past decade, however, identity politics has seriously undermined the process of state-building in Afghanistan. It has undermined the potential for a meaningful reconciliation and the development of a community of citizenship and a national identity. It has added a new gender-

oriented and an internet-oriented social categories to the already fragmented relations between the various ethnic and sectarian groups. The process of state-building after a decade faces the same problems as that of a decade ago. Additionally, the process of state-building is challenged with widespread government corruption, lack of resources, lack of coordination between and within donor states and the NGOs and finally with a weak economy heavily dependent on drug exportation and foreign aid. Identity politics, combined with other factors, has undermined the process of state-building the post-Taliban decade.

Conclusion

Lessons Learnt

Identity politics is a complex concept because it includes so many political actions ranging from multiculturalism in the West to the violent ethnic and sectarian conflicts elsewhere in the world. The scholarly debate on identity politics is centred on three major issues. A comprehension of a group's identities is crucial in understanding of identity politics because of the multifaceted nature of identities. A combination of material forces, like structural economic inequality, and social, cultural and political factors are behind the emergence and development of identity politics. Finally, it matters in a society regardless of which aspect of a group's identities dominates their political behaviours and decisions and of the socio-political context in which identity politics takes place.

The Afghanistan case also highlighted that an understanding of ethnic and sectarian composition of this country is essential in understanding and analysing their social and political relations. However, it was shown that there is a clear distinction in the causes of identity politics in Afghanistan compared to the causes of identity-based political actions in much of the developed state in which identity politics has been previously studied. In particular, a historical weak state has led the Afghan people to rely on and to strengthen tribal, ethnic, sectarian, linguistic and regional groups. The weak Afghan state has paved the way for external interference and has caused a culture of poverty which in turn exacerbated, sustained and widened ethnic and sectarian identity politics over time.

By taking a historical perspective, it was shown that identity politics is not a new phenomenon in Afghanistan. It has been there since the formation of Afghanistan's state in 1747 and has changed from tribal-oriented identity politics in the pre-communist coup of 1978 to ideological-oriented identity politics in the 1980s and then ethnic-oriented identity politics in the 1990s.

This shift, however, does not represent a complete replacement of one form of identity politics to the other but shows that identity politics widened and became multidimensional over time.

Throughout this study, it was also demonstrated that there exists a clear distinction between the subjective and objective perceptions which has a potential to create the basis for conflicting relationships between and within various groups. The PDPA, regardless of their internal divisions, perceived themselves as a political group representing the interest of the Afghan people. They saw the Pashtun Durrani tribal confederation as a cause of economic structural problems, rural poverty and political alienation of the Afghan people. With such perception, they overthrew the regime of President Daud and ended the 230 years of Pashtun Durrani domination.

However, PDPA's communist ideology and radical policies were seen by the Afghan Mujahidin as threats to the very core of social and cultural values of the Afghan society. The Mujahidin, therefore, justified their political resistance against the Soviet-backed PDPA on the basis of their Islamic ideology. Like the PDPA, the Mujahidin were also divided internally on ethnic, sectarian, linguistic and regional lines. The differences in the perception of self and others (internal and external), combined with existing economic inequality, made the foundation for the conflicting relationship between and within these various Afghan groups which led to Afghan jihad, holy war, against the Soviet Union, the Afghan civil wars and subsequently the rise of the Taliban regime in power. The Taliban regime with their attempt to strengthen the Pashtun domination and to make an Islamic state, based on their own strict interpretation of Islamic Shari'a, reinforced tribal-oriented, ideological-oriented and ethnic-oriented identity politics in Afghanistan.

Ethnic and sectarian identity politics have continued to be a dominant feature of Afghanistan's society and politics in the post-Taliban decade. It was shown by the ethnic and sectarian composition of the Bonn Conference in 2001, the presence of ethnic and sectarian loyalty in the

presidential elections and in the relations of internet-based Afghan civil society. However, ethnic and sectarian identity politics have taken new dimensions with the presence of Afghan women in politics and the growing Afghan civil society. In other words, ethnic and sectarian identity politics also became gender-oriented and internet-oriented.

The dominance of ethnic and sectarian identity politics in post-Taliban decade reinforce that they matter significantly in the process of state-building. It matters because it has undermined a meaningful national reconciliation and the development of a community of citizenship and a national identity in Afghanistan. It also has led to a political situation where there is a growing interest amongst the Afghan people for representative government rather than responsible government. This growing interest has reinforced, amongst other things, an ethnic-oriented documentation of history, of composition of executive power and of the distribution of resources. It has also radicalised the young generation and has undermined the development of state capacity to perform its survival and expected functions. It has diluted the confidence of the Afghan people and the international community in the capability of the Afghan central authority. In other words, ethnic and sectarian identity politics, combined with other factors such as continued security threats from the Taliban and other insurgent groups, have seriously undermined the process of state-building.

Recommendation for future research

The Afghanistan case might show some similarities with other weak states. However, this case by itself cannot provide a general theoretical framework capable of explaining the nature, causes and consequences of ethnic and sectarian identity politics in other weak states. Any future research can improve the scholarly debate on ethnic and sectarian identity politics in two ways. First is to conduct interviews with the Afghan people within Afghanistan something which was not possible at the time of this study because of security reasons as well as being beyond the financial means of the researcher. This will allow hearing directly from the Afghan

people about their ideas and experiences. Second, to undertake a comparative study of the ethnic and sectarian identity politics with similar weak states made up of many ethnic and sectarian groups.

Appendix A
The Durrani Dynasty (1747-1978)

| Name | Ethnicity/Tribe | Reign to Power | Reign Ended |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Ahmad Shah | Pashtun/Popalzai | 1747 | 1772 |
| Timor Shah | Pashtun/Popalzai | 1772 | 1993 |
| Zaman Shah | Pashtun/Popalzai | 1993 | 1801 |
| Mahmud Shah | Pashtun/Popalzai | 1801 | 1803 |
| Shujah Shah | Pashtun/Popalzai | 1803 | 1809 |
| Mahmud Shah | Pashtun/Popalzai | 1809 | 1818 |
| Ali Shah | Pashtun/Popalzai | 1818 | 1819 |
| Ayub Shah | Pashtun/Popalzai | 1819 | 1823 |
| Dost Muhammad Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1826 | 1839 |
| Shuja Shah | Pashtun/Popalzai | 1839 | 1842 |
| Akbar Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1842 | 1845 |
| Dost Mouhammad Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1845 | 1863 |
| Shir Ali Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1863 | 1866 |
| Mohammad Afzal Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1866 | 1867 |
| Mohammad Azam Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1867 | 1868 |
| Sher Ali Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1868 | 1879 |
| Mohammad Yaqub Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1879 | 1879 |
| Abdul Rahman Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1880 | 1901 |
| Habibullah Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1901 | 1919 |
| Nasrullah Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1919 | 1919 |
| Amanullah Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1919 | 1929 |
| Inayatullah Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1929 | 1929 |
| Habibullah Kalakani | Tajik | 1929 | 1929 |
| Mohammad Nadir Shah | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1929 | 1933 |
| Mohammad Zahir Shah | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1933 | 1973 |
| Daud Khan | Pashtun/Barakzai | 1973 | 1979 |

Appendix B

Major Sunni Mujahidin Political Parties

| Name | Leader | Ethnic Composition | External Support | Ideological Orientation |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Hizb-i Islami | Gulbudin Hekmatyar | Ethnically mixed but with a Pashtun majority | USA, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, independent Islamists, Initially Egypt and Iran until 1985 | Islamist, Pragmatist |
| Hizb-i Islami | Yunis Khalis | Pashtun | USA, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia & Independent Islamists | Traditional Islamist |
| Ittihad | Abdula Rasul Sayyaf | Pashtun | Saudi Arabia, independent Islamist, Pakistan and USA | Purist Islamist, Salafi |
| Jamiet-i Islami | Burhanuddin Rabbani | Mainly Tajik, some Uzbek and Sunni Hazara | China, France, USA, Pakistan and Iran | Moderate Islamist |
| Ahl-al-Kitab wal-Sunnah | Jamil al-Rahman | Pashtun | Saudi Wahhabi Groups and Saudi Arabia | Wahhabi, Purist Islamist |
| Harakat-i Inqilab Islami | Mohammad Nabi | Pashtun | USA and Pakistan | Sufi, Traditionalist |
| Jabha-i Nijat-i Milli-i Afghanistan | Singhatullah Mujaddadi | Pashtun | USA and Pakistan | Sufi Naqshbandi tendencies, Royalist |
| Mahaz-i Milli Islami | Pir Sayed Ahmad Gillani | Pashtun | USA and Pakistan | Qadiri Sufi, Royalist |

*All these parties are led by Pashtuns except Jamiet-i Islami which was lead by a Tajik.

Appendix C

Major Shi'a Mujahidin Political Parties

| Name | Leader | Ethnic Composition | External Support | Ideological Orientation |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Shura-i Ittifaq Islami | Ayatullah Sayyed Behishti | Hazara and Sayyed | Iran | Traditionalist Shi'a |
| Sazman-i Nasr | Karim Khalili | Hazara | Iran | Iran-style Shi'a Fundamentalist |
| Harakat-i Islami | Asif Mohsini* | Hazara, Pashtun and other Shi'a | Iran | Traditionalist Shi'a |
| Sepah-i Pasdaran | Akbari and Sadiqi | Hazara and other Shi'a | Iran | Radical Islamist |
| Hizbollah | Sheikh Wasiqi | Hazara | Iran | Iran-style Islamism |
| Hizbi-i Wahdat | Abdul Ali Mazari then Karim Khalili | Hazara and other Shi'a | Iran | Moderate Islamism and Hazara Nationalism |

*Asif Mohsini is a Shi'a Pashtun from Kandahar.

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