

**The Network Politics of International Statebuilding: Intervention  
and Statehood in Post-2001 Afghanistan**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on international intervention and statebuilding in post-2001 Afghanistan. It offers an alternative lens, a network lens, to understand the complexity of internationally sponsored state re-building and transformation. It therefore analyses how political power is assembled and flows through political networks in statebuilding, with an eye to the hitherto ignored endogenous political networks. The empirical chapters investigate the role and power dynamics of Afghan political network in re-assembling and transforming the post-2001 state once a political settlement is reached; how everyday political network *practices* shape the nature of statehood and governance; and subsequently how these power dynamics and practices contribute towards political order/violence and stability/instability.

This thesis challenges the dominant wisdom that peacebuilding is a process of democratisation or institutionalisation, showing how intervention has unintentionally produced the democratic façade of a state, underpinning by informal power structures of Afghan politics. The post-2001 intervention has fashioned a 'network state' where the state and political networks have become indistinguishable from one another: the empowered network masquerade as the state. This study suggests that a new political order is emerging in post-2001 Afghanistan where political stability is a function of patron-client relations, opportunistic practices of bargaining and expropriation of public resources for political network gain as well as the instrumentalisation of identities. In light of this analysis, it concludes with the implications of the research findings for the future of Afghanistan. It posits that a successful international military exit from Afghanistan and post-2014 state survival may depend primarily on the political stability of the empowered political networks.

This research is based on extensive fieldwork, including participatory observation and interviews (more than 130 interviews) with key informants over 16 months in Afghanistan.

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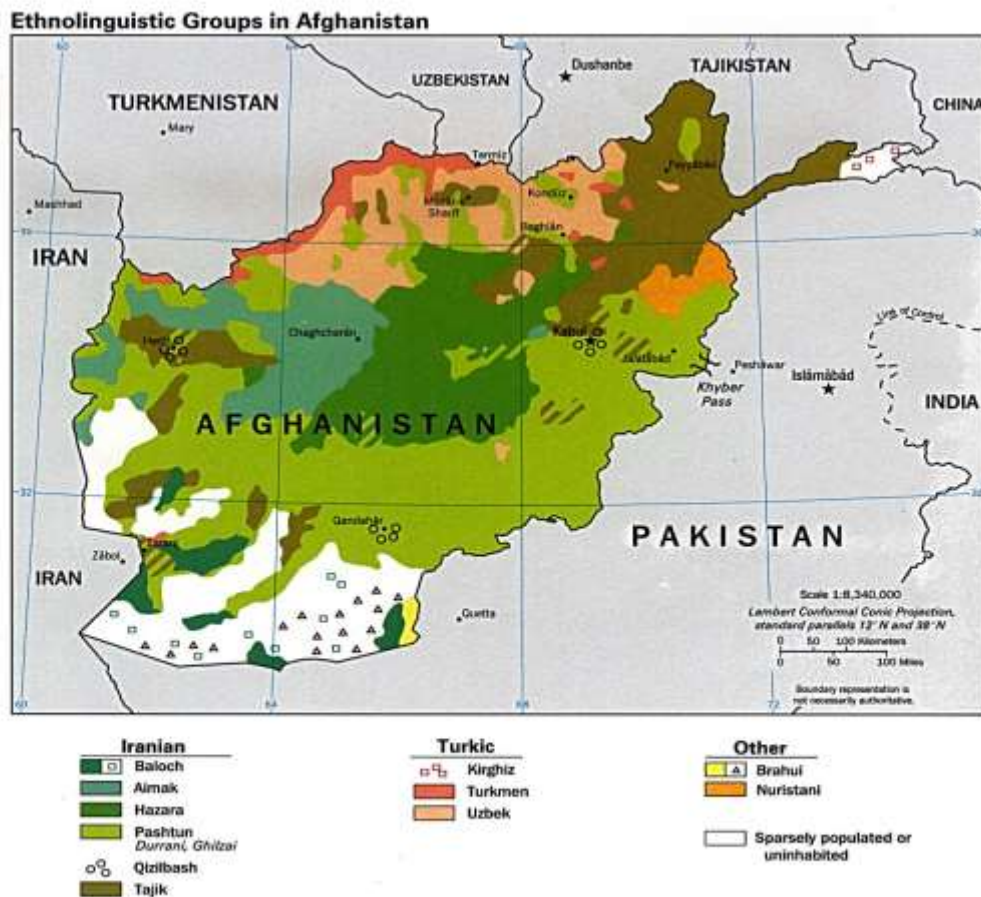
## Abbreviations

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghanistan Relief
ACSF	Afghanistan Civil Society Forum
AGO	Attorney General Office
ANSF	Afghanistan National Security Force
APAP	Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistant Project
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
AWN	Afghanistan Women Network
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DfID	Department <i>for</i> International Development
DI	Democracy International
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
HRW	Human Right's Watch
IAEC	Interim Afghan Electoral Commission
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDLG	Independent Directorate for Local Governance
IECC	Independent Electoral Complaints Commission
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organisations
IRI	International Republican Institute
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JEMB	Joint Electoral Management Body
NA	Northern Alliance
NATO	the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OAA	Office of Administrative Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PG	Parliamentary Groups
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
SC	Special Court
SEAL	Support for the Establishment of the Afghan Legislature
SIGAR	Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
SRL	Support for Rule of Law
TAF	The Asia Foundation
UF	United Front
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNTAG	United Nations Transitional Assistance Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

**Map 1: The Political Map of Afghanistan**



**Map 2: Ethno-linguistic Groups in Afghanistan**



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

“More questions? Your team was here just three months ago. What benefit would your questions bring to me? The river is completely dry and all our crops are destroyed. We have nothing to eat,” Baba Kohisaaf uttered, looking straight into my eyes with suspicion but also, a longing for compassion. Baba Kohisaaf was over sixty but looked much older as years of war and poverty had left their mark.

The Yamchi village in the Sayyad District of Sar-i-Pul province of Northern Afghanistan is an ethnic-Uzbek village, located on a dry barren hilltop. The agricultural land around the village is predominately *Lalmi* (rain-fed) and rises over a plain of stepped, terraced fields with a few irrigated lands at both sides of an ephemeral river-stream. The village is home to roughly one hundred families. The influence of the famous ethnic-Uzbek strongman, Abdul Rashid Dostum, is visible in Sayyad district and in the village itself through the district governor and several commanders who occupy key positions. In 2008, Afghanistan experienced one of the most devastating droughts in the post-2001 international intervention. My Afghan colleagues and I were sent by Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), an independent policy research organisation based in Kabul, to the Yamchi village in order to carry out fieldwork research for the “Livelihood and Food Insecurity” project. Our task was to interview as many households in the village as possible.

Baba Kohisaaf’s household provided an excellent case study due to their never-ending battle with poverty, a backdrop to the struggle for his daughter’s divorce approval. For this he was required to manoeuvre around local district and provincial government procedures while exhausting every means, legal or illegal, to achieve his goal. On one hot Sunday afternoon, I found myself taken aback by Baba Kohisaaf’s recent sufferings. It was mesmerising to hear him articulate, in broken Dari-Persian dialect, the details of his struggle. He spoke of how he had regularly bribed provincial judges, failed to comprehend the complex bureaucratic rules and procedures, and felt cheated by almost every official he had dealt with. Although he was defeated by the formal system, he

was able to obtain a letter from the powerful Uzbek-ethnic strongman, General Abdul Rashid Dostum, using a distant informal kinship connection to a neighbouring village commander. The letter, of which Baba Kohisaaf did not know the content, as he could not read and write, terrified the provincial judge who instantly approved the case.

As I went through the questionnaire which was related to the household livelihood standards and their coping mechanisms, I asked him for his thoughts about the last theme, international intervention and aid effectiveness. His short reply was profoundly affecting to me, as a young post-graduate student coming back to the country of his birth. After a long pause, sighing, he said: "Two months ago a German doctor came to the village clinic. Hearing about his presence, the Taliban descended from the mountains and killed him. The Germans, a week later, distributed a sack of wheat and ten-kilos of cooking oil per household in the village." Whilst looking at the children playing by the mosque, he added, "I hope the Taliban kill another German so we get wheat again."

Arguably Baba Kohisaaf's extreme cynical reply should be expected in this context, where local people's expectations of the post-2001 international peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts have not been met. One could also argue that it is in the embedded "cynical reasoning" (Yurchak 1997) and "hidden transcript" (Scott 1990) of these villagers that one may understand the complex relationships between ordinary Afghans and international intervention organisations. On that hot afternoon in Yamchi village I realised that one has to go beneath the veneer of formal institutions to observe the more important informal aspects of international statebuilding and governance in Afghanistan. Baba Kohisaaf's stories also revealed an important puzzle to be solved. I had to ask the question: how could the post-2001 Afghan state survive when state institutions were corrupt, weak and fragmented along political-economic and identity-based divisions, and struggling to provide basic functions for its citizens. The classic liberal peace choice theory expects post-conflict states either to reform by pursuing shock-therapy democratisation, principally through multi-party elections, or collapse following

an intervention. It asserts that for the state to survive it must provide certain basic services to its citizens, exercise autonomy and possess coercive capacities. The post-2001 state remains stable despite failing in respect to all these factors. The obvious answer seems to be that the ongoing presence of the international coalition forces is required in the country. Yet, in large areas, such as the Sayyad district international military forces have little noticeable presence. Whilst this explanation may be partially valid, it does not explain how and why the post-2001 Afghan state remains effective in performing as the state as this thesis reveals and powerful in the everyday life of ordinary Afghans. The story of how the post-2001 Afghan state came to be assembled and survives sheds light on the processes and outcomes of international peacebuilding and state formation efforts.

This chapter introduces the key research questions, objectives, concepts and arguments of the thesis. Section I provides a brief critique of the current discussion on the post-2001 state and the nature of statehood in Afghanistan. It proposes a political network approach to the study of international peacebuilding and state formation. Section II outlines a new explanation for the relationship between informal endogenous political networks and the state, one that makes explicit the co-constitutive and network *character* of peacebuilding and state formation, discussed below. The latter part of this section offers a conceptualisation of political networks in statebuilding. Section III details the research design and methodology. The final section provides a summary guide to each individual chapter.

## **I. The Post-2001 Afghan State**

The September 11 Al-Qaida attacks in the US triggered an international peace support intervention in Afghanistan. The interventions and peacebuilding efforts, which followed, were part of a multilateral and multi-dimensional process involving the dominant forms of peacemaking and peacebuilding favoured by leading states and international organisations. On the 5<sup>th</sup> December, shaped by rapidly evolving events on the ground, the international community as well as the four main Afghan political groups

invited to the internationally mediated Bonn Conference concluded an agreement about provincial arrangements pending the re-establishment of permanent government institutions (known as the Bonn Agreement).<sup>1</sup> The Bonn Agreement provided a political framework for re-assembling and transforming the post-2001 state. Through a grand power-sharing bargain at Bonn, the former Mujahedeen tanzim (military-political network forms of organisations) leaders and commanders, who had assisted in temporarily defeating the Taliban and who possessed the necessary coercive organisational capacities, were given the task of re-assembling the state and establishing the interim government. The Bonn Conference gave legitimacy to this power structuring because of the agreed logic of a “light footprint” approach to peacebuilding (Suhrke 2009);<sup>2</sup> however the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was only deployed to Kabul, leaving the periphery unassisted. By 2008 this intervention was one of the most intrusive, long-lasting and costly missions since the early 1990s. At its peak in 2009, it involved approximately 140,000 international coalition troops on the ground.

The recent shift in emphasis from peacebuilding to statebuilding has made ‘the state’ the central object of international intervention. However, there has been no single authoritative account of the post-2001 Afghan state. Many studies (Ottoway & Lieven 2002; Ghani et.al. 2005; Rubin 2006) of post-2001 international intervention and peacebuilding efforts discuss the state either partially or in passing. Moreover, these studies generally attempt to address the role and impact of international efforts to build formal state institutions. Maley (2002 & 2006) and Goodson (2003) highlight the failure of the

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<sup>1</sup> The first group was the Northern Alliance (NA) Jihadis, a loose coalition of former Mujahedeen groups who had fought one another during the civil war (1992-6) but had formed a united front to counter the Taliban offensive. Among them, the most dominant political network was Jamiat Tanzim (political-military structures) which in turn was dominated by its military wing, the Panjsheri of Shura-yi-Nizar. The Rome group was associated with the former King, Zahir Shah. The Peshawar group was linked to Gilani, supposedly representing the old seven Sunni Mujahedeen groups in Pakistan. The final group – known as the Cyprus group – was associated with Humayoun Jareer in Iran. The Rome group was selected to balance and represent the Western interests, the NA were the winners against the Taliban while the two smaller groups were arguably selected to please Afghanistan’s neighbours, in particular Iran and Pakistan.

<sup>2</sup> Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN envoy to Afghanistan explained a light footprint approach as: “the [UN] interventions should avoid the creation of parallel institutions and dual systems which undermine local authority, hinder coordination and precipitate competition” (2007: 4).

international community at Bonn to resolve elites divisions and their impact on state re-building. Suhrke, examining the impact of the international peacebuilding effort, suggested that donors have created a “rentier state” because of their “tight embraced” approach to statebuilding (2009: 243-4). She argued that the Afghan state has become closely tied to the power of foreign troops and capital, which essentially undermines the legitimacy of the state. Ghani et al. (2005) asserts that the Afghan state suffers from a “sovereignty gap” because of its primary dependence on donors, a condition characterised as “quasi-sovereignty” by Jackson and Rosberg (1982). Both of these studies condition the survival of the state to the continuation of international funds and military presence. In another critique, Johnson and Leslie (2004), both practitioners with years of working experience in Afghanistan, argue that the perceptions, strategies and objectives of international intervention conflict with the Afghan people’s understanding of their country, which subsequently undermines the creation of a democratic state. They argue that the international interveners risked manufacturing a “narco-state” which maintains itself through the drug trade. As the planned 2014 NATO-led withdrawal approaches there is more emphasis on the regional aspect of the Afghan state, the “bad neighborhood” effect.

Many of the above analyses characterise the post-2001 Afghan state as “weak”, “fragile”, “corrupt”, and even as a “narco-state”. This characterisation of the Afghan state is consistent with the dominant liberal peace evaluation, which measures success in terms of the state’s formal institutional capacities to exercise autonomy and sovereignty.<sup>3</sup> According to this institutionalist approach to statebuilding it is hardly surprising that many of the above analysts are skeptical about the survival of the state in post-2014 Afghanistan. Key figures in statebuilding studies have argued for the establishment of strong state institutions that should contain inter-elite competition (Chesterman 2004; Paris 2004; Fearon & Laitin 2004). As noted by

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<sup>3</sup> A state is usually considered ‘strong’ if it possesses a combination of state *autonomy* and *capacity* (Evans et. a. 1985; Migdal 1988). It must have both infrastructural and despotic power (Mann 1986). Autonomy is often referred to as the state’s ability to formulate interests of its own, independent of societal forces. Capacity is defined in terms of the state’s ability to implement strategies to achieve economic, political and social goals (Barkey & Parikh 1991: 526).

Heathershaw in relation to peace in post-conflict Tajikistan, sceptics have few resources with which to explore the nature of peace when it does not imitate the ideal 'liberal peace' (2009:2). The same can be said about the nature of the statehood in Afghanistan where it does not conform to liberal democratic statehood assumptions and criteria. Statebuilding approaches which focus on the role of formal institutions and organisations in providing a structural framework of incentives neglect the more important informal politics of statebuilding: the role of endogenous informal political networks their daily practices such as patronage, illegality and opportunism.

A number of studies have attempted to address these inadequacies by employing various micro-level analyses to explain the nature of statehood in Afghanistan. Giustozzi (2004 & 2007) and Mukhopadhyay (2009) have highlighted the role of "warlord politics" and "strongmen politics", which they argue have guaranteed stability. Bhatia and Sedra (2007) expose the central role of local commanders and powerbrokers in the constitution of the Afghan army. A more insightful account, Goodhand (2010), underlines the role of a war economy in supporting the Afghan state. Recent policy studies have crudely positioned the Afghan state alongside the predatory elites and their corrupt practices (Cordesman 2010). A more comprehensive account of the post-2001 state and statehood is provided by Coburn (2011b) who examines the dynamics of endogenous social groups in the small Afghan town of Estalif, north of Kabul. In this ethnographic work, he tries to explain how peace is maintained at a local level in rural Afghanistan where the state seems to be a mere "useful fiction".

This thesis builds on these studies to address the puzzle of how the Afghan state survives. In doing so, it offers an alternative lens, a network lens, to understand post-2001 international peacebuilding and state formation efforts in Afghanistan. Whilst most of the studies mentioned above frame Afghanistan's three decades of conflict and development in relation to the role of elites, this study contends that elites must be understood first and foremost in relation to the political networks they constitute and represent, as discussed in section II.II. This thesis thus employs a different analytical approach, a

*political network approach* by examining the role and power dynamics of informal endogenous political networks of organisation (political networks) in statebuilding and state formation. This approach will also analyse the impact of the power dynamics and practices of political networks on state survival and the political order. Political networks are understood as *distinct open-hierarchical structures whose members are interdependent on each other's power and resources for political outcomes in an informally structured and continuously renegotiated arrangement*. A more detailed conceptualisation of political networks is provided in section II.III.

There are two main driving rationales for this approach. First, the post-2001 state re-assembling process cannot be reduced to the formal agreement in the Bonn Conference. Whilst the Bonn political settlement had serious consequences on state re-assembling (Chapter 5), the post-2001 state cannot be detached from Afghanistan's continuous historical struggle for state formation and statehood. This analysis adheres to the recent view that post-conflict states are never built entirely by either internal or external actors but are subject to ongoing processes of formation (Herring & Rangwala 2006; Heathershaw 2012; Bliesmann de Guevara 2008). Berman and Lonsdale distinguish state-building as a 'a conscious effort at creating an apparatus of control' from state formation, which is 'an historical process whose outcome is a largely unconscious and contradictory process of conflicts, negotiations and compromises between diverse groups whose self-serving actions and trade-offs constitute the "vulgarisation" of power' (1992: 5). As Chapter 4 highlights, Afghanistan's last forty years of violence have been dominated by a pattern of war-making, peace-making (the 2001 Bonn Conference was the only most recent example of an internationally mediated and highly flawed political pact), intervention and statebuilding (first by the Soviet Union and then by the Western countries).<sup>4</sup> The post-2001 state and statehood must be understood by analysing the continuities and changes in the power dynamics of local political networks during this period, which is discussed in Chapter 4.

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<sup>4</sup> Previous political settlements since 1989—the 1989 Rawalpindi Accord, the 1991 Peshawar Agreement and the 1992 Macca Accord—have all fallen short of resolving the problem of political network competition.

Second, the post-2001 state must not be treated as a unitary entity, exhibiting an unproblematic and uniform organisational structure. We must contend with the recent studies of the anthropology of the state in Central Asia, which sees the state as a “contested field” subject to material and symbolic competition and conflict between rival political forces (Collins 2002; Schatz 2004; Reeves 2009; Rasanayagam 2011; Reeves, Rasanayagam & Beyer 2014). The post-2001 state in Afghanistan is essentially a “complex strategic terrain”, to use Jessop’s (2000: 4-9) phrase, where competing local political networks occupy key strategic parts then attempt to expand their power and interests. As such, the role and power dynamics of local political networks and their day-to-day practices are fundamental to our understanding of peace and statehood in post-conflict situations. This thesis addresses two principle research objectives: (a) what are the impacts of power dynamics within political networks on the process of state formation over a medium term once a political settlement is reached; and (b) how political network *practices* contribute towards state survival/collapse and peace/violence. This study is therefore explicitly concerned with the role of endogenous political networks in peacebuilding rather than the international peacebuilding impacts on the local. The *how* rather than *why* question is important. To ask the *why* question requires one to control all the variables and explanations (e.g. the explicit role of external actors such as NGOs, private firms, donors and their level of investment) including those that are ‘external’ to this specific research context (e.g. the formal hegemony of state sovereignty in international politics). However, by asking the *how* questions, this thesis incorporates these actors into the analysis through the proposed political network approach, bringing the focus to bear on their power dynamics and daily performances. How is the post-2001 state re-built and transformed as the result of power dynamics between competing endogenous political networks? How political order and state stability is achieved? How are informal political networks embedded in formal state institutions? A focus on informal political networks raises questions about the processes and outcomes of international statebuilding and state formation which go beyond the case of Afghanistan.



## **II. The *Network* Politics of International Statebuilding: A Neglected Element**

In the last decade the focus among students of international peacebuilding has shifted from peacebuilding to statebuilding, prioritising institutionalisation over liberalisation (Paris 2004; Chesterman 2004; Doyle & Sambanis 2006). Statebuilding is generally considered a particular approach to peacebuilding. Chesterman defines statebuilding as “constructing or reconstructing institutions of governance” (2004: 1-2). Paris and Sisk refer to statebuilding as the “construction or strengthening of legitimate government institutions in countries that are emerging from civil conflict” (2009: 1). It involves imposing a set of practical measures designed to shape society and its polity by introducing democratic practices, an open market economy, re-building and modernising the state and its institutions (Paris 1997). From the late-1990s, some critics have pointed out the failure of “liberal peace” to address the root causes of war (Duffield 1999; Paris 1997 & 2000; Doyle & Sambanis 2000), the impact of peacebuilding missions on societies in which they operate (Heathershaw, 2008; Bliesemann de Guevara, 2012), and the aims and motives of the actors involved in sponsoring and implementing peacebuilding activities (Richmond 2004; Chandler 2010).

The more recent critical literature (Richmond 2011A; MacGinty 2011b) has shown how statebuilding practices depart from liberal peace discourse and objectives, and produces a “hybrid peace” as the result of international-local contestation and compromises. Most of these works are considered major breakthroughs in the field, as reminded by Heathershaw (2009: 3); such keen responses in fact reflect the weakness of the field of inquiry. They have not only overlooked the informal aspects of international statebuilding, but also the role of local forces in shaping the strategies and practices of statebuilding. Whilst the “hybrid peace” literature has provided a significant shift in

incorporating endogenous actors, institutions and structures into statebuilding processes, Richmond's framing of hybrid liberal-local structures remains implicitly oppositional. Also, the hybrid peace approach reduces the examination of local actors to analysis of the failures of the elites whilst also treating the liberal peace as a homogenous discourse and practice. A systematic account of the co-constitutive and intertwined international-local power dynamics has yet to be produced with a particular focus on the *network character* of statebuilding as well as with an eye to the hitherto ignored endogenous political networks and their role in the process of re-assembling and transforming the post-conflict state.

This thesis analyses how political power is assembled and flows through political networks in statebuilding processes. The complexity of international statebuilding and statehood cannot fully be captured by international relations lenses of macro-categories of nation-state and civil society or by conflict resolution lenses of conflict management. Most statebuilding literature would acknowledge the existence of networks but would see them as a means to an end – the progressive accumulation of national sovereignty by a hierarchical organisation (the state). They also generally treat networks as a residue of state and civil society. Against these, this thesis suggests that networks are an enduring and constitutive part of international statebuilding. A focus on networks goes against the state-centric, elite-centric and object-subject analyses which dominate the literature. In a context where the state is either fragile or eroded and economic-political and cultural-political divisions govern local politics, a network approach enables us to go beyond the methodological constraints which limit power politics to opposed dichotomies of state-society, visibility-invisibility, formal-informal, and public and private. It helps us to better understand how complex political-economic (both licit and illicit) and identity networks connect a diverse web of politicians, insurgents, drug traffickers, arms smugglers and local powerbrokers in constituting and transforming the post-conflict state and producing the state effect. A network approach to statebuilding offers a more nuanced way to account for everyday politics and practices that often go unexamined in statebuilding. A further conceptualisation of political networks is provided below (section II.III). A

network approach to statebuilding and state formation makes two conceptual moves in the literature: (1) from the institutional and structural effect to the informal *network character* and (2) from the behavioral aspects of peacebuilding and state formation to its daily *performance*, discussed in section II.III.

The purpose of the below first section is simply to show the network *character* of international statebuilding, addressed by some recent scholarly work (Ohanyan 2008; Natsios 2005; Evans & Davies 1999) before presenting the core argument of this thesis. It merely attempts to show that international networks (e.g. policy, service implementing networks) have become an integral feature of post-conflict statebuilding.

### *II.I. International Networks and Statebuilding*

The re-building and transformation of the post-conflict state is the outcome of interactions between a diverse set of international actors and institutions and their distinct objectives and practices. The peacebuilding industry imports and assembles a varied network of administrative expatriates (e.g. experts, technicians and politicians), international aid agencies (e.g. the World Bank, UN agencies), service delivery Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and ethical discourses (e.g. human rights, freedom of expressions, child labour) into the post-conflict space. This complex and crowded field is best described by Paris as a 'loosely structured network', because it constitutes a system that is neither a 'market', where interaction is based on pursuing individual goals with little sense of sharing common objectives, nor a 'hierarchy', a system of top-down command management (2009: 61). International peacebuilding missions like those in post-2001 Afghanistan suffers from a lack of joint planning and coordination, information-sharing and most importantly a hierarchical command structure. In such a confused and rapidly transforming setting, statebuilding actors and organisations are tied into a network of interdependency without being properly coordinated. Both international and local actors recognise that their purposes could not be achieved independently and thus all actions became mutually interdependent.

Formations such as the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), Independent Election Commission (IEC) and National Solidarity Program (NSP) are essentially network assemblages, exported from one post-conflict context to another.

The privatisation of tasks through the integration of state-non-state actors, including intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), NGOs and private transnational firms, has become a key feature of post-conflict statebuilding (DeMars, 2005; Richmond, 2005; Natsios, 2005)<sup>5</sup>. Collaborative governance literature suggests that international organisational structures are becoming more network-based to deal with globalised challenges (Mandell 2002; Stone 2000; Schneider & Hyner 2006). Ohanyan (2008) found that network linkages and relations have deepened collaboration among donor governments and their aid agencies which helped to formulate policies and coordinate program objectives in Afghanistan and Bosnia. Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (2009: 233) asserted that governments in international arenas are more likely to operate under network structures when 1) issues call for quick action; 2) uncertainty is pronounced; 3) their preferences differ from rival domestic agents; and 4) there is a desire to avoid spoilers. These conditions are often fulfilled in armed conflict/international intervention contexts. Network collaboration based on interdependency produces network structures which help to share information, increase governance capacity, reduce differences and integrate diverse approaches and strategies (Slaughter 1997; Khagram 2006). The Peacebuilding Commission is one such permanent network structure, set up with the aim of filling a hole in the institutional arrangement of peacebuilding by bringing greater coherence to the myriad activities of agencies both inside and outside the UN. In post-2001 Afghanistan, donors regularly set up ad hoc network policy formations such as the 'donor discussion group' and 'coalition coordination committee' to better achieve their objectives.

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<sup>5</sup> In the 1970s government resources going directly to developing countries accounted for 70 per cent, presently this number has reversed to 15 per cent. The other 85 per cent flows through non-state actors (USAID 2006 in Ohanyan 2008: 1). Similarly, the European Union Commission Humanitarian Aid Office relied on NGOs to channel 60 per cent of its finance (Reindrop, 2001).

Service delivery and implantation network structures are also expanding. NGO network formations like the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), Afghan Women Network (AWN) and Afghanistan Civil Society Forum (ACSF) are established to facilitate coordination mechanisms, organise common objectives, share information and promote interests. Natsios (2005) highlighted the significant role of NGOs in implementing organisations for IGOs, serving as institutional extensions of the liberal peace statebuilding process. Their strategic position in international statebuilding as expert organisations (e.g. Human Rights Watch), democracy promotion (e.g. Democracy International, National Democratic Institute), microfinance (e.g. Danish Refugee, Care International, Aga Khan Foundation) define their power in peacebuilding network governance. In post-conflict settings, the IGO-NGO network structures act as bridges between local-international actors and organisations. Evans and Davies (1999) highlighted their important role as “policy transfer networks” transferring administrative and institutional knowledge and memory from one post-conflict state to another. Ohanyan (2008) has also documented this policy transfer from Bosnia to post-2001 Afghanistan in the microfinance sector.

Network collaborative structures in statebuilding are sites of power politics for domination and influence. Although interdependent on each other’s efforts, international donors and their aid agencies often do not share a common policy strategy to statebuilding. Each international donor has its own institutional bias and orientation which results in a highly fragmented implementation process (Caplan 2005). This is evident in post-2001 Afghanistan, where statebuilding is pursued in multiple and fragmented forms producing multiple competing institutional arrangements. In Afghanistan, more than forty international donors contributed towards security provision and sub-national institutional-building efforts, each pursuing their own priorities, approaches and implementation policies in their region.<sup>6</sup> Several studies have

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<sup>6</sup> In the north and northeast, the Germans are mainly responsible for security and peacebuilding efforts, in Helmand the British and in Kandahar the Canadians. A closer look at the security sector reform is revealing. Whilst the Germans in the north have advocated a longer-term approach in training the Afghan civilian police, in the south the Americans have focused on establishing a counter-insurgency police force with as little as two weeks’ training.

shown that among NGOs these power politics arise over specific programmatic orientations and priorities (Ohanyan 2008), policy implementation (Stone 2001) and competition over funds (Rigby 2001) which have a significant effect on the statebuilding process. Rigby (2001) found that network collaboration does not always help resolve coordination problems nor produce optimal results. Ohanyan (2008) established that inter-organisational conflicts and power contestation produced fragmented policies in Bosnia and Afghanistan and in many cases loss of policy control by individual IGOs and their supporting states. The heterogeneity of network statebuilding efforts refutes the dominant claim that liberal peace is a homogenous discourse and practice. Network power contestation in international statebuilding is further complicated when one adds the power dynamics of endogenous political networks to the equation.

### *II.II Endogenous Networks and Statebuilding<sup>7</sup>*

The liberal peace approach to peacebuilding has been criticised for failing to realise that post-conflict liberalization can engender further local inter-elite battles while failing to tackle the root causes of conflict (Paris 1997; Duffield 1999). Stedman (1997) defined the role of non-cooperative elites in the implementation of peace settlements as spoilers, and advocated the strategies that international “custodians of the peace” can adopt to induce, socialize or coerce into the terms of the political settlement. Leading figures, since then, have argued that the post-conflict state must be constituted through strong formal institutions (Chesterman 2004; Paris 2004). In recent years, Richmond (2011) and MacGinty (2010) have brought our attention to the contextual role of endogenous actors and their power relations with international statebuilding in producing a local-international hybrid peace. Similarly, Barnett and Zurcher (2009) have argued that existing approaches

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Similarly, in the area of counter-narcotics, the Germans and Dutch have advocated the legalisation of the poppy, Americans have favoured a complete eradication while the British have employed a soft strategy of limited coercion combined with introducing alternative livelihoods. Interesting – one might wonder if the interventionist forces are dividing rather than uniting the state with these divergent policies.

<sup>7</sup> The local here is understood as anything that is not international (e.g. nation-state, sub-national, and regional).

are systemic-centric, focusing on international actors, treating domestic politics as “constraints” and thus failing to incorporate fully the preferences and strategies of local actors, thereby ignoring domestic politics. In their recent work comparing Afghanistan with Tajikistan, they argued that both cooperation with an accommodating elite, and conflict with spoilers are the two least likely outcomes for an international peacebuilding mission from a total of four possibilities. They argued that state and sub-national elites are often able to protect factional interests whilst retaining a veneer of stability – an outcome of “compromised peacebuilding”. A further option is that of “captured peacebuilding”, where “state and local elites are able to redirect the distribution of assistance so that it is fully consistent with their interests” (Barnett & Zurcher 2009: 24-25). These conclusions provide better explanations for post-2001 political order in Afghanistan, and they raise important questions about who and what has compromised or captured peacebuilding processes beneath the surface of formal politics.

This thesis shares Barnett and Zurcher’s concerns yet starts from the position that post-conflict political elites must be understood first and foremost with respect to their political networks and the hierarchical authority structures that they both constitute and represent. Local politics cannot be reduced only to an analysis of elites and their orientation for or against an internationally mediated political settlement. Three of the four main political groups gathered at the 2001 Bonn Conference were mainly representatives of the former seven Sunni groups and eight Shia Afghan Mujahedeen groups (known as tanzims); they originated in the 1980s and fought one another between 1992-2001. These tanzims were at best network forms of political organisations because of their open-hierarchical structures. Sinno (2008: 1) described them as highly decentralized and continuously renegotiated arrangements involving field commanders who provided their loyalty, support and assistance to a party in return for the resources necessary to maintain their resistance activities. These tanzims were able to perform a number of essential tasks such as coordinating military actions, mobilising resources for providing services and manipulating information to achieve their objectives of defeating the Soviets. They built extensive webs of connections with tribal chiefs, village

mullahs, commanders and community leaders in the region under their control (Roy 1990). According to Sinno (2008) the tanzims' network structure and their modes of operation made them a formidable resistance force against Soviet intervention and were ultimately responsible for their success.

In the post-2001 setting where the state institutions and structures were eroded, and indeed some were missing, the international intervention and statebuilding organisations found themselves relying on these former Mujahedeen tanzims to re-assemble and found the interim government (Chapter 5). Following the 2001 Bonn Conference power-sharing arrangement these political networks came to occupy a strategic part of the state through which they expanded their power and interest by constituting the state administration and bureaucracy. As Chapter 5 shows the state and political networks became undistinguishable from one another in post-2001 statebuilding wherein the established networks masqueraded as the state. However, in the post-2001 period these former tanzims underwent a process of re-structuring in terms of their organisational capacity, internal structure and power relations. Since, they have further splintered into smaller sub-networks whilst new ones have also emerged with stronger links to international statebuilding organisations. To understand the post-conflict statehood and the state we must pay particular attention to the informal role of these political networks and the impact of power dynamics amongst them.

### *II.III Conceptualising Political Networks in Post-2001 Statebuilding*

What, though, are “political networks” whose everyday practices this research studies? To locate the work theoretically within an existing diverse and fast-expanding literature on network and organisational studies requires some conceptual clarification. While the study of social and policy networks has developed over the last half of the century, a focus on political networks has largely been neglected. In fact, this might be the strength of this study.



The network as a concept is confusing.<sup>8</sup> However, as Rhodes (2006: 434) commented, the large number and variety of articles published on networks, especially on organisational networks and policy networks testify to the continuing usefulness of the term. One can identify two dominant types of network in most studies: network-as-relations and network-as-governance. The network-as-relations discourse focuses mainly on the individual level relationships and the structure of these relationships within the network. Early anthropologists (Mitchell 1969; Kapferer 1972) explored how individuals and groups were linked together and how their relational characteristics affected social outcomes using such concepts as positions, density, centrality and links. In the 1990s sociological studies broadened the focus from a concern with individual relationships amongst actors to the structural characteristics of networks, introducing concepts such as 'structural holes' (Burt 1992; Wasserman & Faust 1994), 'social capital', 'brokerage' and 'enclosure' (Burt 1992 & 2005). For instance, the term network was used to explain how elites occupy important positions within organisations and how this helps/hinders access to political and economic opportunities (Powell & Smith-Doerr 1994; Podolny & Page 1998; Granovetter 1974; Burt, 1992) and how agencies coordinate and integrate their activities for better outcomes (Heinz et. al.,).

Recent studies in public policy (Rhodes 1997 & 2006), public management (Provan & Kenis 2008; Kickert et al., 1997; Kooiman 1993), organisation theory (Powell 1990) and international relations (Kahler 2009; Martinez-Diaz & Nagaire 2009) have employed the concept of the network as a mechanism of coordination, or what has often been referred to as network governance. The network-as-governance conception considers networks as an alternative mode of operation between the Weberian hierarchical state and neoliberal theories of delivering public services through private markets. Networks are treated as units of analysis. In one of the early influential papers in economic sociology, Powell (1990) argued that networks are distinctive forms of co-

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<sup>8</sup> The network as a concept has been understood variously as a 'theory' in early anthropology (Barnes 1972; Mitchell 1969), a 'metaphor' in international relations and politics (Emirbayer & Goodwin 1994), a 'method' in social network analysis (Scott 2000; Wasserman & Faust 1994), and as an analytical tool in organisational theory in sociology (Powell 1990; Podolny & Page 1998).

ordinating economic activity. He questioned the dominant paradigms that conceptualise networks as a hybrid of market and hierarchy. Rhodes (1997) asserted that an emerging form of governance is replacing the traditionally hierarchical structures that are network-based. He stressed the task of governance being carried out by flexible and diverse self-organising and self-regulating inter-organisational networks (Rhodes 1997: 15). In these terms governance is therefore about managing networks.

This study builds on these network-as-governance studies to conceptualise informal endogenous political networks in statebuilding processes. As defined above, political networks are informally arranged open-hierarchical structures whose members are reliant on one another's resources, subject to continuously renegotiated arrangement. Political networks are treated as autonomous political structures with their own structural characteristics, modes of conflict resolutions, and bases of legitimacy. In post-2001 Afghanistan both the former Mujahedeen political networks and the newly established ones are hierarchically arranged entities around a charismatic leader while retaining network-like structures in terms of their institutional arrangements, patterns of exchange, flows of resources and reciprocal lines of information. Therefore political networks are conceptualised as hybrid forms of network and hierarchy, which is elaborated in Chapter 3. This is consistent with recent public management literature (Agranoff & McGuire 2003; Koppenjan & Klijn 2004), which assert that a distinction between these concepts is superfluous and misleading. Agranoff and McGuire (2007: 83) understand networks both as open-hierarchical arrangements and collaborative, which they term 'collaborarchies'. A key feature of political networks in statebuilding is the ability of their members to exit the network at any time if he/she does not find it advantageous. In fact the flexibility, fluidity and constantly re-negotiated arrangement of political networks in post-2001 statebuilding is their strength, as pointed out by Granovetter in his path-breaking thesis, "the strength of the weak ties" (1974).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The concept of the "strength of weak ties" suggests that loose-knit networks can have greater resource-gathering potential for the individual (ego) than close-knit networks, because the members of dense networks are shaken down more quickly, and the reach to other

Some of the most important aspects of political networks are their power dependency relations. In post-2001 international statebuilding in Afghanistan, where political networks have constituted the state (Chapter 5), resources and power-dependency relations have determined the structure of relationship between nodes both *within* a political network and *among* political networks themselves. Power lies in the strategic positioning of nodes within a complex web of interdependencies in building, sustaining and strengthening links across international-local actors and organisations. In relation to the politics of networks, Lake and Wong (2009: 129) have argued that nodes are (1) cognizant actors able to formulate and carry out utility-improving choices; (2) alternative outcomes which have distributional implications for nodes, favouring some over others; and (3) variable in the power or influence they possess.

Rhodes and Marsh (1992) and Rhodes (2007) model of power-dependency is particularly useful to this analysis. They argue that structural relationships between political institutions are based on patterns of resource-dependency relations, often with conflicting interests, goals and strategies. The relationships are shaped by an asymmetry of power dynamics in which those who are resource rich within the network tend to dominate those who are resource poor. Various forms of negotiation such as persuasion, bargaining and 'power games' take place among these networks, where they maneuver with one another (Rhodes 1997: 11). These are game-like interactions, rooted in trust and regulated by the rules of the game, which are negotiated and agreed by network participants (1997: 53). Klijn and Skecher (2007: 598) referred to this as the 'instrumental conjecture' on networks, that powerful actors increase their capacity to shape and deliver public policy. Bargaining is seen as key to the functioning of political networks (Rhodes 1997; Agranoff & McGuire 2003). Chapters 6 and 7 shows how these power-dependency

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potential sources of support is more circumscribed. Weak ties, on the other hand, are often bridges into other social realms and potential sources of support. The "strength" part of the argument is contained in the following two propositions: 1) Weak ties facilitate the flow of information from otherwise distant parts of a network; 2) Weak ties help integrate social systems.

relationships work based on practices of bargaining and exchange, which help political networks to expand their power and interest within the post-2001 state.

There are, however, a number of caveats that we must place on this political framing of political networks and our study of post-conflict state and governance in large. First, Rhode's model reflects a well-functioning Westminster model of government and stable inter-governmental policy networks. In post-2001 Afghanistan, the role of political networks must be analysed within the context of re-assembling and re-building the state. We must ask the question, how do political networks constitute the state and subsequently how do conflicts among them produce order/disorder and stability/instability? Given the fiercely contested and conflictive space of the state in the immediate intervention and statebuilding period, one has to analyse the power dynamics of political networks during moments of conflicts and contestations. Second, the principle focus of the above public and policy management literature is the formal inter-governmental networks which overlook the role of informal networks. A study of informal political networks in statebuilding brings our attention to the notion of network effectiveness, discussed further in Chapter 3. Network effectiveness is critical for our understanding of the power dynamics of political networks and their impact on the post-2001 state. However, network effectiveness in post-2001 statebuilding in Afghanistan means examining the day-to-day network *practices* that are often illegal, informal and opportunistic (Chapter 6 and 7).

Third, in post-2001 Afghanistan, the constitutive nature of political networks within the state makes it almost impossible to differentiate between administrative and bureaucratic networks. We need to consider political networks as a 'competent boundary-spanners', a concept proposed by Agranoff and McGuire (1997) and Williams (2002). A boundary-spanner moves within and across all levels of the state, leading to questions about the boundaries of the state. Fourth, much of the literature on policy networks struggles to account for the changes occurring over time. They concentrate on static snapshots of particular networks at any one moment. Recent work by

Bevir and Rhodes (2004) has addressed this shortcoming by providing a 'decentred approach', a bottom-up approach to network analysis. The political network approach offered here examines the dynamics and processes of political network transformation over time within different contexts, documenting continuities and changes. Finally, an analysis of political networks requires exploring not only the power relations and practices *within* and *among* competing political networks, but also their *links* to local communities. Political networks are embedded in social contexts that they claim to represent (or manipulate). Therefore, we must analyse the relationship between political networks and the wider local communities they attempt to manipulate to consolidate the bargaining positions within the new political order (Chapter 6).

### **III. Research Design and Methodology**

A political network approach to post-conflict statebuilding and state formation is different from the dominant approaches in network and organisational studies because it focuses on day-to-day network performances. Most network studies analyse either the types of networks (Sinno, 2008), the internal structure of networks (Knoke 1990; Burt 1992), or strategies used in managing networks to explain outcomes (Kickert et al, 1997; O'Toole 1997). This thesis stresses that although the basic make-up of political networks is important, it tells us little about the impact of their day-to-day practices on the post-conflict state. With this in mind, the thesis employs ethnography, including participatory observation and in-depth interviews, in order to collect data and develop the main framework. Ethnography provides a rich inductive approach within which to frame the analysis as well as allowing for immersion in the field over a long period of time.

Conventionally, ethnography was defined as the overt or covert participation of the ethnographer in "the daily lives of the people who are his/her subjects for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions, collecting whatever data is available to throw light on

the issues that are the focus of the research” (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 1). Ethnography is therefore equated with participant observation as the defining method. However, a number of ethnographic studies have gone beyond this simple account, highlighting the role of “hidden transcripts” (Scott 1985 & 1990), questioning the validity of people’s claims, suggesting that ethnography’s core value is its ability to “peel the onion skin” of reality (Allina-Pisano 2009), and probing whether there is any such thing as reality separate from the researcher that is discoverable (Wedeen 2004). Studies that examine daily political performances argue that what is discovered is the “type of performance” that the subject provides to the researcher. As argued by Wedeen (2004), the key principle is not about whether the ethnographer is an insider or outsider, or how accurate or inaccurate participants will be; rather that each voice should be interpreted as what perspectives, practices and assumptions it reveals. Combining the conventional and new approaches to political ethnography, Schatz argues that ethnography requires first “immersion” and then “sensibility” to the meaning people under study attribute to their social and political reality (2009: 7-8).

Schatz’s understanding has been the central premise on which this fieldwork was carried out. In divided societies like Afghanistan, where trust is low and uncertainty high, people’s positions and sub-texts constantly shift as settings change and events unfold. Early on in the fieldwork, I became conscious of this on a rainy day in early March 2011, sitting in the back seat of a shared taxi. A conversation about pollution in the city started among the three other passengers as the rain intensified. The middle-aged woman who had been offered a front seat by the young Panjshiris passenger, abiding by the society’s gender segregation norms, claimed that over-population was the main reason for the pollution in Kabul city. The discussion deepened when she complained with irritation that it was the fault of immigrants arriving from the provinces, commenting, “I am from Kabul but I don’t go to live in Kunar or Panjshir”. Offended by her comment, the young Panjshiri passenger indignantly responded, “Kabul is the capital city, it is for all Afghans.” The driver, a government employee, who claimed to be from Kabul, wholeheartedly supported the woman’s position. As the debate heated around

identities and who was entitled to live in Kabul city, the other passenger and I listened quietly to the debate. The conversation suddenly took a different twist, as soon as the woman got off. At the time of her departure the driver looked at the young Panjshiri passenger and I and uttered, “Ei zan ajab kalla kharab bud [What a big-headed woman]”. The gossiping continued.

Understanding the fluid and shifting performances of the actors and the attributed meanings they offer is challenging. On several occasions I found myself falling into the trap of “ethnographic seduction” described by Robben and Nordstrom (1995: 83), in other words being led astray by informants. I found that political actors (e.g. politicians, government officials, tribal elders) constantly employed strategies of persuasion, manipulation, deception and concealment to function within a system based on patronage and opportunistic practices. Clients often exaggerated what they knew and how well they were connected to others and on some occasions simply lied for symbolic and material gains. This was evident in the *Wolesi Jirga* during the 2010-2011 Special Court crisis (Chapter 7) and the 2009 presidential election (Chapter 6) where political actors constantly employed such strategies to undermine their opponents and to conceal their illegal and opportunistic practices. This ambiguity and strategy of concealment was the primary cause of difficulty whilst trying to draw a clear line as to who is connected to whom and at what levels, except at the network core. Overcoming this challenge meant supplementing the participatory observations with multiple interviews (more than 130 interviews), and waiting for events to settle before a reliable account could be determined.

One of the key criticisms levelled against political ethnography is the effect of the researcher, generally referred as “the researcher bias”. Positivists have argued that an explicit standardised set of experiments and interview procedures help minimise the researcher bias, therefore improving the validity of data. I contend with recent ethnographic studies (Wedeen 2009; Pachirat 2009; and Walsh 2009) which argue that validity is bound to be affected given the level of ethnographer’s immersion in the context. However, they have asserted that an ethnographer’s role is not so much to produce knowledge as

to provide new ways of seeing and thereby challenging existing categories of practice and analysis (Schatz 2009: 15). My experience in the field revealed that the ethnographer's effect differed from one context to another. Attending a large event or a campaign rally was different to conducting observations in a small village where one's presence was noticed immediately. In some contexts, I was overly immersed in local areas, actively participating. As an Afghan researcher, I was expected and even sometimes manipulated into participating in political discussions. And in a society where kinship-based relations are strong, where cultural obligation and reciprocity dictates most actions, I found myself often acceding to my informant's demands, whether to check a youth movement's political template, to comment on a political statement or to attend dinner gatherings for a related government official. In some cases I found myself being the subject of interrogation, as my informants would ask me about the on-going US intervention, their goals and objectives. My own age, sex and ethnicity as an ethnic-Hazara might have arguably affected the data collection. Certainly, I had better access to men and their spaces and ethnic-Hazara informants were more receptive to my questions. In a country where gender-segregation is strictly practiced the data collection was constrained by gender imbalances. My access to women and their spaces was partial and limited. However, given that most of these political networks cut across ethnic boundaries I seldom had problems in accessing key figures within different networks.

On a practical level, the fieldwork was a mix of covert and overt ethnographic study. For observations in the *Wolesi Jirga* (Lower House) or candidates campaign headquarters during the 2009 presidential election, the fieldwork was covert. However, during interviews, informants were told clearly about the aims and objectives of the research. The covert element was necessary because requesting formal access in most occasions would have been rejected immediately. First, the concept of research often has negative connotations in the Afghan context and the majority of the population are not aware of academic research and how it is used. Once a distant family friend innocently asked me to help him get employed in the British intelligence services, assuming that that's what research meant. In another incident, an



MP understood my research to be similar to NGO work carried out for the purposes of spying for donors. In one occasion, a female journalist thought I was the son of Mohammad Mohaqqueq, the leader of one of the political networks, whose surname meant “researcher” in Persian. Second, with the high level of corruption and illegality in Afghanistan most informants wouldn’t want to be exposed by speaking to me. To gain access meant establishing rapport with an extensive network of connections including the gate security guards, secretaries and election campaign officers, some of these were MPs and state officials who informed me of key events, house gatherings, corrupt dealings and illegal practices. In addition to my own friends and work colleagues in the parliament, media, government and civil society organisations this extensive network helped me gain access to places, people and events.

The fieldwork was always subject to elements of unpredictability and uncertainty. For example it was almost impossible to schedule timely observations in the *Wolesi Jirga* (Lower House). Political ethnography requires adaptability to fieldwork uncertainties and taking contingency measures. I was once held for five hours in a sub-campaign office because the organisers could not find enough people to transport to the main event. Eventually, when we arrived, the campaign had ended. The fieldwork was not without its risks in war-torn Afghanistan. During the 2009 presidential election, as I entered Abdullah’s election campaign office in North Kabul, I saw two men being assaulted by security guards. They had been accused of spying for the Karzai team. One of the guards approached to search me. Panic took hold as I had my morning notes in my pocket. Luckily, I was rescued by another guard, who I had befriended, telling him I was “one of them”. Henceforth, I took extreme precautions for my safety as well as the identity of my informants. During the last months of my fieldwork, when I moved into a new house, I was dumbfounded when an Afghan Intelligence Officer paid me a visit and enquired about my identity. I was safe but I knew that I was being watched.

The formal PhD ethnographic research on which this thesis is based was carried out over fourteen months in Afghanistan between March 2011 and June 2012. Political ethnography was carried out mainly in Kabul city; however, several trips were made to the cities of Mazar-e-Sharif in the north and Jalalabad in the east. Both observation and interview methods (more than 130 interviews) provided the primary data for this study. The data for Chapter 5 draws mainly on interviews with key political informants. Chapter 6, which examines the dynamics of political networks during the 2009 presidential election, is based on the author's two month long ethnographic fieldwork in three districts of Kabul city (Dasht-e-Barchi, district 13; Chaharrah-i-Sarsabzi and Khairkhana, district 11; and Kart-e-Naw, district 8). The data for this chapter was collected before I began my dissertation research. Observation in the two main presidential candidates' headquarters was complimented with more than twenty interviews and a few focus discussion groups. Chapter 7 builds on the author's four months of observation in the *Wolesi Jirga* (Lower House) between June 2011 and October 2011 during the 2011 Special Court (SC) crisis. During this time I interviewed over forty MPs, political network leaders, powerbrokers, international donors and government officials. To ensure the interviewees' safety, I have kept their identities anonymous throughout this thesis. However, I have included the list of interviews and informants in the Appendix (Table 1). Indirectly, this research benefited from four years of professional work experience in Afghanistan, where I was involved with several research and policy organisations, including the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) and the UK Department for International Development (DfID).

Chapter 5 explores the consolidation of power by Karzai in the centre and Gul Agha Shirzai and Atta Mohammad Noor in the periphery. It highlights the key network practices that have enabled political networks and centres of power to consolidate their power. Noor and Shirzai are excellent cases to observe how the post-2001 state was re-assembled but also to explore the complexity of the relationship between political networks in the centre-periphery. The 2009 presidential election and the political economy of the *Wolesi Jirga* through the case of 2010-2011 Special Court (SC) crisis provides an excellent window to

observe power dynamics among competing political networks in a moment of network mobilisation, formation and re-formation. These cases serve as a microcosm for the broader examination of governance and statehood in the post-2001 statebuilding period. The 2009 election shows how power dynamics was at play during a moment of contestation which provided a further platform for their negotiation and re-negotiation with two candidate-patrons, namely the incumbent Karzai and Abdullah. The SE crisis highlights the political economy of the *Wolesi Jirga* to witness the display and active utilisation of network practices of patron-client relations, opportunism, bargaining and the instrumentalisation of identities in one of the most important institutions of post-2001 international statebuilding. The latter two cases are similar in that they pertain to the institutions of democratic politics. However, the selection of these cases were by chance in that they were the main central moments of political network contestation at the time of fieldwork.

#### **IV. Overview of the Thesis**

This thesis is structured into two major parts. Part 1 provides a literature review of post-conflict peacebuilding accounts and theories (Chapter 2), and offers the analytical framework in which I explain the impact of the power dynamics of political networks on statehood and state survival (Chapter 3). Part 1 also highlights the process of state formation and its key features of statehood since its formation in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century (Chapter 4). Part 2 provides empirical evidence showing how competing political networks came to constitute and transform the state (Chapter 5) and explores the power conflicts, contestations and compromises between rival political networks during moments such as the 2009 presidential election (Chapter 6) and the 2010-2011 Special Court crisis in the *Wolesi Jirga* (Chapter 7).

Chapter 2 provides an overview and critique of the main theoretical and policy discussions involved in peacebuilding literature since the end of the Cold War. It situates these discussions around three paradigms: the transformative peace, the critique peace and the hybrid peace. The aim of this chapter is to

advance our understanding of peacebuilding by bringing the focus explicitly to the network *character* of international peacebuilding, before paving the ground to address the central questions of this thesis: how and what peacebuilding is constituted of and how the co-constitutive power dynamics of international-local shapes peace/violence and order/disorder. This chapter maintains that international peacebuilding must pay especial attention to the role of *informal* actors and organisations, particularly to the *endogenous* political network forms of organisations. It asserts that the relationship between international statebuilding and these endogenous political networks is not necessarily conflictive or competitive but “co-constitutive”.

Chapter 3 offers an analytical framework, one that is substantiated in the analysis of endogenous political networks constituting the post-conflict state. It theorises the relationship between political networks and the state. As such, it attempts to provide an explanation to the central role of endogenous political networks in the process of state formation and transformation once a political settlement is reached, and their essential role in constituting a complex peace. The analytical framework hypothesises that political stability and state survival in post-conflict spaces depends on the power dynamics and network practices of interdependent political networks within the state. A political network is likely to survive and political order is most likely to be established if political networks performs at least two of the following features of network practices effectively: (a) Patron-client relations in expanding their clientele, (b) opportunism and illegality to accumulate wealth for distribution, and (c) instrumentalisation of identity-based divisions to maintain links with the constituencies they claim to represent. The analytical framework hypothesises that the power dynamics among competing yet interdependent political networks produces three possible outcomes in relation to political order and stability; these are (1) balanced-network equilibrium, (2) co-optation by the dominant network (regime), and (3) relapse to conflict. The most ideal outcome is balanced-network equilibrium and the least is relapse to conflict. The post-2001 Afghanistan provides an excellent case to test these hypotheses and propositions.

Chapter 4 details the historical processes of state formation and statehood in Afghanistan since its modern formation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The rationale is simple. To understand the post-2001 state we must consider Afghanistan's continuous historical struggle for state formation and statehood, which has a much longer heritage and far greater implications than are often discussed in the literature. It illustrates that the present logic of network governance and statehood in Afghanistan has emerged historically and sociologically over the preceding centuries. This chapter details this history through the lens of the network in order to establish the historical precedents of the empirical chapters. It shows how the founder of the Durrani Kingdom in the 18<sup>th</sup> century set up a "network kingdom" as a model which his successors subsequently built upon and expanded. This chapter argues that the main reason for the vicious cycles of violence and state collapse in Afghanistan was the failure of Afghan rulers to maintain a balanced equilibrium among rival political networks. Network practices of personalised loyalties, patron-client relations and manipulation of identities were key historical features of state formation and governance in Afghanistan at this time. The second part of the chapter shows how Afghanistan's last three decades of violence have been shaped by power struggles between different Mujahedeen tanzims, and concludes by arguing that post-2001 international statebuilding and state formation in Afghanistan must be understood within the context of these continuities and changes in power dynamics.

The empirical chapters demonstrate how the theoretical propositions and hypothesis described in the earlier chapters can be applied. Chapter 5 shows how international interveners 'rented' peace and stability by empowering the main former Mujahedeen tanzim leaders and commanders in helping to re-assemble the state within a built-in war economy. It details how the 2001 Bonn conference and its power-sharing arrangements set in motion an internal war (2002-2009) between rival networks over the state. Between 2002 and 2004, Karzai and his largely Western-educated Pashtun technocrats used their positions in the internationally sponsored state to co-opt or coercively remove their rivals from power. Following the 2004 and 2005 presidential and parliamentary elections, the balance of power shifted from

technocrats to the former Mujahedeen networks. The latter part of Chapter 5 details how Gul Aga Shirzai and Atta Mohammad Noor consolidated their power in the periphery, building extensive centres of power in their region. Chapters 6 and 7 reveal how the power dynamics among rival political networks was played out during moments of contestation and crisis, such as the 2009 presidential election and the 2010-2011 Special Court crisis. They show how political networks maintained themselves within the new political order by building extensive patron-client relations, engaging in illegality and opportunism as well as manipulating Afghanistan's identity-based divisions, particularly along ethnic lines in order to mobilise support and maintain some degree of legitimacy. Both chapters suggest that the dynamics of political networks have further exacerbated inter-network conflict and the identity-based division and client-based features of Afghanistan's state and society.

The concluding chapter (Chapter 8) explores some of the implications that stem from the theoretical and empirical claims made in this thesis. It deals with the question of state survival and political order in the context of post-2014 international withdrawal. It rejects many of the current claims that the Afghan state is likely to collapse and argues that a successful international exit from Afghanistan is contingent on the stability of the empowered political networks that currently constitute the Afghan state as well as the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and the outcome of the ongoing reconciliation and negotiations with the Taliban. It contends that the Afghan state is likely to survive, more or less in its present form, in the post-2014 period because of the power dynamics of political networks which have interlocked them in a complex bargaining and exchange system, such that any attempts by political networks to destabilise the status quo would essentially undermine their own interests. A reduction in external resource flows (e.g. military contracts and aid programmes) will affect the magnitude of exchange and bargaining but arguably will not weaken their relative abilities to buy loyalty, given their control over the Afghan economy (both licit and illicit). The last section of this chapter will consider the implications for future studies.



## **Chapter 2: Peacebuilding Paradigms and Practices: The Network Politics of Peacebuilding**

### **Introduction**

With the end of the Cold War, international peacebuilding has become one of the most dominant theoretical and policy issues in the international arena. The current international peacebuilding debate within academic and policy circles has been centred on the nature and effectiveness of peace and the aims and motivations of the peacebuilders. The primary focus has been on assessing the actions of external actors and how to improve the effectiveness of their practices. A serious consequence of such framing has been the neglect of politics and political power, more seriously the role and power dynamics of endogenous political forces.

This chapter maps out the theoretical and policy discussions in post-conflict peacebuilding since the early 1990s, investigating the gaps and shortcomings of the current debate. It situates the intellectual and policy debates in peacebuilding within the following three main evolving paradigms: (1) the transformative peace, (2) the critique peace, and (3) the hybrid peace. This chapter is structured as follows. Section I discusses the emergence of transformative peace, exploring the various discourses that attributed to the founding principles of 'peacebuilding' as articulated by the UN. Section II provides an overview of the critique peace paradigm, highlighting and critiquing the practical/operational and normative aspects of post-conflict peacebuilding. It argues that a fundamental failure of the critique studies has been the neglect of the local. Section III explores the shortcomings of the recent debate offered by the hybrid peace, which suggests that the interaction between international-local produces a 'liberal-local hybrid peace'. It shows that whilst the hybrid peace makes a significant contribution to peacebuilding in their attempt to incorporate endogenous forces in their study, their analysis remain implicitly oppositional. Section IV demonstrates how this study's analysis departs from the hybrid peace thesis by brining the focus to the



network character of international peacebuilding. It highlights the co-constitutive aspect of the international-local dynamics in re-assembling and transforming the post-conflict state and argues that these intertwined relations and their network mode of operations are fundamental to our study of international statebuilding.

## **I. The Transformative Peace**

The end of the Cold War saw an increase in the number of peace operations. Between 1988-1993 the UN carried out a total of twenty peace missions, more than it had conducted during the Cold War (Bellamy & Williams 2011). While some of these missions followed the logic of traditional peacekeeping—mainly ceasefire monitoring—others exhibited a more comprehensive transformative operation known as post-conflict peacebuilding. Peace missions expanded to include a significant civilian component to transform state-society relations, a break from traditional peacekeeping missions of non-interference in the domestic affairs of a host nation. The traditional peacekeeping missions were restricted by the international principle of ‘national sovereignty’ and non-intervention. The UN article 2 (7) of the Charter prohibited the organisation from intervening in matters “essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state”. However, the 1989 Namibia mission (UNTAG) mandate envisaged a more comprehensive and transformative operation including monitoring elections and the Disarming, Demobilising and Rehabilitating (DDR) of former combatants (Weiss et. al, 1994). The emerging post-conflict peacebuilding missions rapidly moved away from the normative guiding principles of consent, impartiality and the minimum use of force (Diehl 1994; Durch 1994). In 1992, the UN in Bosnia and Somalia deployed troops in the midst of ongoing civil wars with the authorisation to use force, if necessary. Monitoring elections, considered as the most effective way to contain failed states and their disorderly elites thus became an integral part of UN missions.

The early successes of UN missions in Nicaragua (1990) and Namibia (1990) were recognised by Boutros-Ghali in 1992 with the publication of the report,

An Agenda for Peace. The report provided a new taxonomy of peace operations for the post-Cold War world order and outlined the categorical distinctions in peace missions between peacekeeping, peace-enforcement and post-conflict peacebuilding.<sup>10</sup> It provided the UN with a new visionary role as a progressive autonomous agent of peace, development and global justice after years of marginalisation (Sabaratnam 2011:15). Post-conflict peacebuilding, as a more comprehensive mission, was defined in pragmatic terms as “action to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid relapse into conflict” (Boutros-Ghali 1992:11). By the late 1990s, post-conflict peacebuilding emerged as the dominant mode of conflict management. The Brahimi Report in 2000 sealed the dominance of peacebuilding with its comprehensive definition: “activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war.” As a result, the sustainability of peace came to require a longer term deployment of multinational forces to provide security, assist and monitor elections and disarmament, protect human rights, reform and strengthen government institutions, and promote political participation through liberal democracy.

The broadening of the international peacebuilding agenda as a comprehensive peace programme was the result of three main interlinked developments in the fields of democracy, security, and development in the 1990s, associated with the liberal peace discursive and practical framework (Paris 1997; Duffield 1999; Richmond 2005). This is investigated below in detail. Heathershaw (2008) and Richmond (2008) conceptualised liberal peace as a set of normative frameworks rooted in liberal principles of representation, accountability, and market economy, which are projected onto post-conflict societies by external actors. Heathershaw (2008:7-8) further deconstructed the liberal peace theoretical developments into three discursive

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<sup>10</sup> The report defined peacemaking as the deployment of military and/or police personnel, subject to the consent of all the parties concerned. Peace-enforcement was defined as a heavily contingent force authorised to use force for other than self-defence (Boutros-Ghali 1992:11). However, in recent years the distinctions between peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding have become increasingly blurred.

components: (i) peacebuilding-via-democratic reform (the original configuration which he refers to above as 'democratic peacebuilding'), (ii) peacebuilding-via-civil society ('civil society'), and (iii) peacebuilding-via-statebuilding ('statebuilding'), which reflect the below agendas.

### *Liberal Democracy*

The end of the Cold War and the triumph and spread of liberal democracy had a profound impact on the expanding and broadening of the peacebuilding agenda. It reinforced the hegemonic liberal internationalist ideas in the new world order (Fukuyama 2004; Held 1998). Liberal democracy was conceived as the most effective political system to govern the world population. In an influential article, Michael Doyle (1983) claimed that democratic states seldom engage in war with other democracies, a theory which came to be known as the 'democratic peace thesis'. In another study, Oneal and Russett (1999) found that liberal economic policies contribute to peaceful relations among democracies. The democratic peace theory made a compelling argument asserting that liberalism is intrinsically peace-promoting because of its internal democratic forms of government and their relations to the wider world. Liberal democracy is thus promoted as the best political framework, and statebuilding as the best tool to address the root causes of conflict. 'Democratic validation' of peace agreements reached by competing political leaders is seen as a necessary step and a critical turning point in the peacebuilding process in arbitrating and regulating political, social, economic and ethnic tensions that could threaten peace (Reilly 2002).

The long-lasting benefits of democracy for peace were noted by Boutros-Ghali in his 1992, *An Agenda for Peace*, report when he proclaimed, 'there is an obvious connection between democratic practices – such as the rule of law and transparency in decision-making – and the achievement of true peace and security in any new and stable political order' (Boutros-Ghali 1992: 34). Creating the conditions for democratic change became a fundamental policy framework for the UN, upon which lasting peace can be built. One of the leading scholars in the field reminded, "there is simply no more just or

legitimate way to peacefully manage differences among contending social groups than democracy, however difficult it may seem to move from violent to electoral competition” (Sisk 2001:786). Subsequent US and European development aid agencies (i.e., USAID & DfID) have included the fostering of democratic practices as a central cornerstone of their program objectives.

### *Security Studies*

The securitisation of failed states in the early 1990s played a significant role in expanding the peacebuilding agenda. The early 1990s experienced a significant change in the nature of conflicts from interstate to intrastate. Before 1989, only 5 of the 15 UN missions dealt primarily with intrastate conflicts. From 1989 to 2000, there were 38 UN peacekeeping missions, all but five of which, were deployed in regards to an intrastate conflict (Bellamy & Williams 2011:94-96). Kaldor (1999) and Duffield (1999) highlighted different fundamental characteristics of these wars, dubbing them as the “new wars”.<sup>11</sup> These readings of conflict and insecurity corresponded with the publication of three foreign policy books, *The Coming Anarchy* by Robert Kaplan (1994), *Saving Failed States* by Helman and Ratner (1992) and William Zartman’s (1995) edited volume, *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, which dictated the 1990s security studies intellectual and policy climate. They asserted that “failed states” have replaced “rogue” and “conquering” states as the main security and developmental threats to the Western liberal world. Helman and Ratner (1992: 3) characterised failed states as “a disturbing new phenomenon”, spreading from Africa through the Middle East and Central and East Asia and called for the international community to take an “ethical responsibility” to intervene in these places (1992: 3).<sup>12</sup> In 1994, the US Central Intelligence Agency’s Directorate of Intelligence created a “State Failure Task Force” to empirically monitor the

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<sup>11</sup> Stathis Kalyvas (2001: 99), on the other hand, has compellingly argued that the distinction drawn between post-cold war conflicts and their predecessors may be attributable more to the “demise of readily available conceptual categories than to the existence of profound differences”.

<sup>12</sup> Helman was the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva and Deputy to the Secretary of State for political affairs in the 1990s. Ratner, at the time, was a US State Department’s legal advisor.

performance of states around the world and create new legibility based on specific liberal categorisations. The failed states discourse was incorporated in the UN General-Secretary Boutros-Ghali report, Supplement to the Agenda for Peace (1995: Section 13). The September 11 attack on the US in 2001 reinforced further the securitisation of the failed states, which was reflected in The 2002 US National Security Strategy, “America is less threatened by conquering states than by failing ones”.

The problem of global insecurity, poverty, underdevelopment, war and conflict are alleged to be found in the widespread existence of dysfunctional states. The lack of state capacity was seen as the principle reason for state failure and collapse by both neo-institutionalists (Jackson 1990; Krasner 2004) and neo-functionalists (Zartman 1995; Rotberg 2002). This new focus on state capacity within the donor agencies and policy communities has produced an extensive set of guidelines and frameworks to engage with fragile states (USAID 2005; DfID 2006). For instance, the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) defines “fragile states” as lacking “either the will or the capacity to engage productively with their citizens to ensure security, safeguard human rights, and provide the basic function for development.” Crocker (2003) demonstrated how it is possible to proactively engage in building the capacity of states to address the causes and symptoms of state failure. The introduction of the USAID Fragile States Strategy program was the result of such change in focus.

In their review of state capacity literature, Hanson and Sigman (2011) identified three underlining dimensions of state functions: extractive capacity, coercive capacity and administrative capacity. Zartman (1995) highlighted four functions of the state as key to state success: (1) effective government and the rule of law, (2) the state as a symbol of identity, (3) territorial control, and (4) an effective economic system. In another study, Jackson (1990) made an important distinction between ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ sovereignty. He argued, while negative sovereignty relates to the formal legal conditions under which states enjoy rights of non-intervention, positive sovereignty relates to capabilities of the state to provide political welfare for its citizens. Many post-

colonial states did not acquire their sovereignty internally as a result of any evidence of capacity to rule ('empirical statehood'), but externally from the state-system conferring them juridical qualifications ('juridical statehood').

Such focus on state capacity has had a profound impact on the normative framing and practices of peacebuilding. This discursive power enables liberal peace to place developing countries' states onto a continuum progressive order on which Western liberal states are labelled as "strong" while developing countries' states are widely characterised as 'neopatrimonial' (Medard 1982), 'weak' (Migdal 1988), 'quasi' (Jackson 1990), and 'pre-modern' (Cooper 2003). According to Chandler (2010) such conception of sovereignty has essentialised on the one hand "sovereignty-as-capacity" and on the other "sovereignty-as-responsibility". Thereby, the formal political and legal right of self-determination has been conflated with the question of state capacity (Chandler 2010:48). Such articulation of securitisation of failed states places the blame firmly on failed states, thereby, concealing the failure of the international system and its illiberal practices, therefore legitimizing international intervention and statebuilding (Chandler 2010).

### *Economic Development*

The third development, which broadened the peacebuilding agenda, emerged from economic development. While scholars and policy-makers in security and peace studies were preoccupied with peacebuilding and state failure, the economic development community was also beginning to move in a similar direction (Sabaratnam 2011:18). In the 1990s, prompted by concerns over the effectiveness of aid and stagnant underdevelopment in developing countries, the Bretton Wood institution concluded that the principal cause for underdevelopment is the lack of institutional capacities of the state. The World Bank, therefore, stretched its policy frontiers by endorsing "good governance" framework as a core element of its development strategy. The World Bank (1992: 1) defined good governance as the "manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources

for development.”<sup>13</sup> This was a significant shift in the Bank’s focus from traditional financial and economic aspects of the market activities to the politics of development (Santiso 2001). Subsequently, the Bank proposed a number of policy reforms to condition aid, which became essentially an extensive “governmental and social reengineering” (Santiso 2001:3). The 1997 World Bank’s World Development Report and its 2000 strategy report, *Reforming Public Institutions and Strengthening Governance: A World Bank Strategy* (WB 2000) and the 1999 policy paper, *Governance Matter* by Kaufmann et. al., outlined the centrality of good governance conditions and objectives in these debates. A key consequence of such framing has been the merging of security agenda and the development agenda (Duffield 1997 & 1999).

To recap, the intimate marriage of democracy, development, and security agendas in peacebuilding as part of a single discourse on humanitarian intervention (Richmond, 2004; Heathershaw, 2008) has become the most significant transformative paradigm shift in peacebuilding. The totalising reach of this discourse is evident in Boutros-Ghali’s 1993 speech: ‘without peace there can be no development and there can be no democracy. Without development, the basis for democracy will be lacking and societies will tend to fall into conflict. And without democracy, no sustainable development will occur; without such development, peace cannot long be maintained’ (1993:271). The Responsibility to Protect document by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) set the legal basis for international intervention. This effectively situated sovereignty in its ‘positive’ and ‘empirical’ sphere making intervention a necessitating force (Chandler 2010: 3). As such, the transformative peace has justified a more aggressive intervention and peacebuilding in the new global order.

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<sup>13</sup> The World Bank Report identifies the following six dimensions of governance: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption.

## II. The Critique Peace

Failed peace missions in places like Rwanda, East Timor, and Bosnia raised serious questions about the effectiveness of peacebuilding missions and its liberal peace normative assumptions.<sup>14</sup> A critique literature emerged exposing the key practical and normative shortcomings of peacebuilding missions. Although, it is beyond the scope of this chapter to detail the diversity of the critique peace, two main strands of the literature stand out: (1) the problem-solving, those studies questioning the practices and effectiveness of peacebuilding; and (2) the critical studies, those questioning the normative assumptions of the so-called liberal peace, and the motivation of its powerful actors.<sup>15</sup>

### *The Problem-Solving Literature*

The first set of peacebuilding critique literature, from an operational/instrumental level of analysis, questions the rapidly expanded mandate of the UN peacebuilding missions to deliver humanitarian and political projects. Featherstone (2000) highlights that there is often a gap between the statebuilding practices and theory, which led to the failure of UN missions. Diehl (1994) questions whether the UN has actually been able to develop a truly comprehensive approach to deal with complex political emergencies. Others explicitly charge that the expanding mandate of peacebuilding missions are undermined by the UN's under-resourced capacities (2000 Brahimi Report; Hampson 1996; Chesterman 2004; Chopra 2000). Operation-wise, some critics in East Timor, Kosovo and Sierra Leone advocate more assertive interventions, while others prefer a more 'light footprint' approach like the one in Afghanistan (United Nations, 2002:11, Chesterman 2002).<sup>16</sup> Croker et al. (1996) and Olson and Gregorian (2007)

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<sup>14</sup> The debate on the usefulness of peace operations is ongoing; however, the general feeling among many scholars is that peace operations overall make a positive difference to peace (Doyle and Sambanis 2004; Fortna 2003).

<sup>15</sup> For a good review of the diverse categories of liberal peace literature see Meera Sabaratnam (2011).

<sup>16</sup> In post-2001 Afghanistan, the UN mandate was limited to providing technical, humanitarian, and financial assistance to the newly formed indigenous government with a few thousand



explored the importance of overcoming the coordination problem in peacebuilding while Jeong (2005) investigated the possibilities of a more systematic approach, exploring the themes of peacebuilding design, operational imperatives and coordination with the local and endogenous dynamics.

The discussion offered by the problem-solving literature locates the failure of peacebuilding missions in various technical and practical deficiencies and inadequacies. However, as argued by Paris and Sisk (2009:11-12) this argument is “superficial with no substance”. Zurcher (2011) finds that none of the above arguments are systematically associated with success or failure across a substantial number of cases. Instead, Paris (2004) and Doyle & Sambanis (2006) offered a more insightful explanation for the failure of peace missions. Doyle and Sambanis (2006) highlight that the “quick fix” and “short-term” nature of the transformation in post-conflict settings cannot stabilise and overcome conflict dynamics. They argue that the proposed policy approach of holding quick elections combined with “shock therapy” economic liberalisation has a destabilising affect. Paris (2004) proposed greater ‘institutionalisation before liberalisation’ as he argued that aggressive economic liberalisation policies often destabilise post-conflict countries where state institutions are either non-existent or fragile. Influenced by the broader institutionalist theorists in economic development (Knack & Keefer 1997; North 1990) and international relations (Jackson 1990; Krasner 2004), Paris and other institutionalists in peacebuilding played an instrumental role in shifting the peacebuilding theoretical and policy focus towards statebuilding as the dominant approach to peacebuilding. Since then, the focus of peacebuilding has shifted away from the bottom-up “civil society” approaches to statebuilding: the re-building of state institutions and capacities.

The functionalist-institutionalist explanations have come under heavy criticism for reducing post-conflict statebuilding to technical and objective processes

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ISAF forces in Kabul. Many policy analysts contend that the “light footprint” was a key factor in the current political instability and insecurity in Afghanistan (Chesterman 2004; Chopra 2002).

(Hameiri 2007). This is essentially a form of anti-politics (Ferguson 1995) ignoring the more important political dynamics of peacebuilding (Cousens & Kumar 2001). Richmond (2004) and Chandler (2004) pointed out that the formulation offered is one of peace-as-governance– in which peace is a methodological challenge for the international community. In an attempt to provide a more nuanced explanation for the failure of peacebuilding missions, analysts have highlighted in recent years the underlying tensions and contradictions in post-conflict statebuilding (Paris & Sisk, 2009; Jarstad & Sisk, 2008). Barnett, et. al., (2007) asserts that intrinsic tensions and divergences within peacebuilding make peace operations challenging.

In a more detailed and influential edition, Paris and Sisk (2009) identify the following five tensions and contradictions in statebuilding which raises more questions than it attempts to answer. First, no matter what the intentions are, statebuilding by liberal peace is an intrusive process, which could inflame anti-foreign resentments. Second, intervention would favour some local forces over others, thereby fuelling tensions. Third, the liberal peace values are bound to clash with local values, traditions and practices. Tajdbakhsh (2011) in her comprehensive survey finds how this was the case in Afghanistan.<sup>17</sup> Fourth, statebuilding cannot make a clean break from the past; therefore, it results into hybrid forms of political and social organisation, which often generate conflicts and transformation tensions. Finally, there are tensions between long-term imperatives of peacebuilders and short-term imperatives of local elites (spoilers), which could hamper economic reconstruction, security reform and transitional justice. These tensions highlight an important dimension of post-conflict peacebuilding, the power dynamics between international-local actors, organisations, and networks. As the empirical chapters in this thesis suggest, (Chapter 5 in particular) although the relationship between international-local is much conflictive and oppositional, it

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<sup>17</sup> First, it turned out that many Afghans did not understand the concept at all. 'There is no peace in Afghanistan' was a common reaction, so 'why talk about liberal peace? It is a fantasy.' Then the dichotomy between the liberal model with tradition and religious values was highlighted and the inherent tension between collectivism and individualism in Afghani society. Many respondents told the interviewers that Islam offered a much better solution. With democracy as an imbibed value in Islam, liberal peace may well go fine with religion. But there are reservations; certain limitations have to be kept.

is also co-constitutive. It is this important aspect that often goes unexamined. This is discussed in more detail below in section IV.

### *The Critical Studies Literature*

The critical studies literature (Richmond 2004; Duffield 1999; Pugh 2004; Chandler 2006; Heathershaw, 2008) asserts that problem-solving approaches are found upon particular normative assumptions and values that are problematic in the first place.<sup>18</sup> It highlights the dynamics of power in peacebuilding, particularly, its discursive power and thereby the primary motivations and goals of the actors involved. A critical perspective points out that peace operations attempt to create and recreate a distinct type of international order which works to maintain the status quo: the hegemonic domination of the liberal peace. In this view, liberal peace intervention is an attempt to create legibility in parts of the world that have been over-coded.

Duffield (2007) in his new book, *Development, Security and Unending Wars*, develops on his earlier work on the merging of security and development, highlights the regulatory mechanisms of the global governance of 'liberal peace' through interventionist management of the behaviour of those deemed 'at risk'. Jabri (2010) suggests that the standardised components of the liberal peace essentially represent a Western imposition of its values and liberal goals on the context that it intervenes to transform, which is essentially Western ethnocentric. Williams (2005) shows how liberal peace is using illiberal means in its promotion of liberal values, a key finding of this thesis too. To neo-Marxist scholars like Pugh (2006), liberal peace is a political mechanism employed by the capitalist global political economy to exploit the periphery. According to Pugh, peace operations are an integral part of the

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<sup>18</sup> Tajdbakhsh and Richmond (2011) maps out the variety of analytical frameworks which critical perspective draws upon as follows: (1) communitarian critiques problematise liberal assumptions of liberal values, (2) social constructivist critiques criticise peacebuilding literature for treating it as technical and depoliticised whilst ignoring the role of values and identities, (3) critical international theory approaches highlighting the hegemonic power relations and interests in peacebuilding, (4) post-modern frameworks highlighting the universality of the liberal peace as a single form of modernity, and (5) post-colonial critiques challenge the division between the global and the local, focusing on the local context and highlighting the hybrid nature and outcome of interventions.

world ordering project that engages in ‘aggressive social engineering’, whereby the private sector is privileged over notions of the common good, often with profound human consequences (Pugh 2006: 153). Chandler (2006) characterises statebuilding missions as the practice of “empire in denial” in which external actors colonise non-Western institutions.

In recent years, the critical literature has moved beyond the suggestion that liberal peace is a problematic construct projected onto post-conflict contexts, in exposing how it is a site of contestation and conflict between diverse international and local forces. Heathershaw (2008) and Richmond (2005) have unpacked the hegemony of liberal peace to show the contested and unstable nature of the peace hidden by contemporary hegemonic discourse of liberal peace, propagated at many levels by a myriad of Western actors, institutions and organisations. Heathershaw (2008) reveals the inherently contentious nature of peace both with regard to its general rationales and specific modes of operation. Richmond (2005 & 2007) questions the treatment of liberal peace as a monolithic entity by dis-assembling ‘peace’ to illustrate the variety of peace on offer: victor’s peace, constitutional peace, institutional peace and finally civil peace, which he argues have been evolving over the centuries in the liberal European imagination and found recent expression in peacebuilding.<sup>19</sup> He develops the concept of ‘positive peace’ and ‘structural violence’ and expands these concepts – through a broad-ranging discussion – to offer an interpretation of ‘peace’, which is simultaneously indebted to critical security theory and critical theory.

The critical studies literature has made significant contributions to our understanding of the assumptions and processes of peacebuilding and statebuilding. However, it has remained a state-centric and system-centric approach. More importantly, the expanding debate on the liberal peace, as

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<sup>19</sup> Victor’s peace derived from, amongst other things, Europe’s experiences with fascism in the Second World War. Militarism and military strength does play an essential and instrumental role in underpinning the other components of liberal peace. Constitutional peace emphasises the importance of democracy, trade and cosmopolitanism in fostering peace. Institutional peace refers to the normative and legal frameworks of international institutions that regulate their behaviour. Finally, civil peace focuses on citizens, participation and human rights as conditional for peace.

pointed out by Paris (2011) and Sabaratnam (2011), has become increasingly distant from the concerns of the policy discourse. Paris (2011) suggests that peacebuilding studies have reached an 'impasse' because the debate on liberal peace has increasingly departed from the study of international intervention. It seems that the critique is driven by "a life of its own, only vaguely related to the analysis of policy practices and implementation and seemingly happy to squeeze every problem of peacebuilding and statebuilding into the framework of the critique of the liberal character of interventions" (in Campbell, Chandler & Sabaratnam 2011: 3). As Paris maintains, peacebuilding has effectively become 'ghettoised' and cut off from the field of international relations (2000:27-44). Moreover, critical peacebuilding has downplayed the diversity of approaches, priorities and power dynamics amongst the international interveners that often dominate the multi-actors and multi-dimensional operations assembled in places like Afghanistan. Finally, both problem-solving and critical approaches overlook the complex power relationships between international-local forces in statebuilding. The critical literature has come under criticism for its neglect of the local.

### **III The Hybrid Peace**

The hybrid peace literature (Richmond 2011b; MacGinty 2010) has emerged as a response to address the above shortcomings in peacebuilding by incorporating an emerging literature that attempts to 'bring the local back in' (Lederach 1997; Sending 2011). These studies criticise peacebuilding for its failure to engage with local dynamics and processes. Richmond (2011b: 227) notes that the international peacebuilding debate is internationalised rather than localised in failing to engage with everyday life other than in basic emergency and narrow security terms. Barnett and Zurcher (2009) argue that existing approaches are systemic-centric, treating domestic politics as "constraints," and thus failing to fully incorporate the preferences and strategies of local actors. Other studies ask to pay more attention to the contextual processes (Sriram 2009; Jeong 2005; Berdal 2009). Sriram (2009) offers an engaging case study, highlighting how contextually-sensitive forms

of justice have been articulated; demonstrating how 'justice' has diverged from broader peacebuilding ends and thereby dismissing the notion that justice is a cure. These studies argue that policy reports, such as the ICISS's 2001 report on 'Responsibility to Protect' and Anderson's 1999 doctrine of 'Do No Harm' are essentially mere lip service to ideas of local participation and ownership. These policies and practices do little to emancipate the general population (Jacoby 2007: 536–537). They essentially see this as a romanticisation of the indigenous local elements that often employs slogans of 'ownership', 'participation' and 'sustainability' which cannot be conceived as cure-alls (MacGinty 2010).

In recent years, a number of leading analysts have suggested that the interface between international-local produces a "liberal-local hybrid" peace (MacGinty 2010, 2011; Richmond 2011). Richmond (2011a) offers an insightful framing of hybrid peace drawing on subaltern and post-colonial studies. He asserts that the literature has treated local forces and its elites as either powerless with no agency of itself or has blamed them for their predatory and pathological behaviour and for failing to understand the benefits of liberal peace (Richmond 2011a: 3). He observes how liberal peace, as the dominant discourse, has dominated the local by de-politicising the local influences, cultures, customs, and histories as well as its political, social and economic systems. The liberal peace, as a "knowledge system and epistemic community", has its own bias reflecting the narrow interests, norms, institutions, and techniques of the dominant actors (2011a: 3). He argues that the local which has its own agency, interests, values and objectives resists the liberal peace hegemonic dominance, therefore exposing the goal of international intervention. These tensions inevitably create "hybrid forms of peace" where the local-liberal tensions shape and reshape statebuilding. In effect, local and international actors (not discrete categories) are rarely able to act autonomously. He further points out that a hybrid peace is an "everyday form of peace" as it represents both the capacity of international liberal and local peacebuilding actors and projects to engage with each other for the benefit of the local version of peace (Richmond 2011a: 17). In Richmond's analysis hybridity is an emancipatory outcome for the benefit of the local.

In another interesting work, MacGinty (2010, 2011a) suggests that the process of hybridisation is the result of macro-level and micro-level processes of peacebuilding, both top-down and bottom-up interaction of actors, and powers and interests. He questions the vertical 'silos' of interaction whereby there is a straightforward top-down chain of power and resources from the international actors to national governments, to local communities and individuals in society (2011:211). Subsequently, the agency of the local actors and their power, which could lead to subversion, exploitation and resistance, has been overlooked. He develops an analytical framework for the study of hybridity. In MacGinty's conceptualisation (2011a: 67-69), the process of hybridisation occurs and re-occurs as a result of four contributing interaction elements: (1) the coercive power of the liberal peace to impose their version of peacemaking; (2) the incentivising power of the liberal peace by offering an attractive narrative of emancipation and progress; (3) the ability of local communities to resist, negotiate with, and subvert the liberal peace (the point is to recognise the agency of local actors); (4) and the ability of local communities to create and maintain alternatives to liberal peace which could reflect their needs, interests and power relations. This is a dynamic framing in which all four elements interact to constrain and distort the activities of the others. Hybrid peace, thus, is in a constant state of flux and reflects a multilevel and multi-issue exercise of cooperation and contestation. This is because hybridisation takes place across all aspects of the peace process and implementation, and will differ from issue to issue and context to context, resulting in the emergence of different forms of hybridity (MacGinty 2011).

The hybrid peace literature is a significant shift from the previous transformative and critical studies paradigms in incorporating the endogenous elements. However, the hybrid peace suffers from a number of shortcomings. Some have charged against the very essence of the hybridity asking whether these relations actually result in hybrid forms. In Hameiri's words, these are "new forms of political rule and statehood" (2012: 197). Others like Chandler (2010) has pointed out that a focus on the outcome of relations between international and local misleads us in overlooking what really matters, which is

the illiberal peacebuilding practices leading to the failure of missions. Severine Autesserre (2010) finds the failure of peacebuilding not in liberal-local tensions/divergences but in the culture of internationals- embedded in their social routines, practices, discourses, and the technologies they use. Autesserre concludes that the internal culture of UN staff in Congo blinded the peace mission to properly emphasise the local causes of conflict.<sup>20</sup>

Although Richmond (2011:229) explicitly asserts that he is opposed to “new binaries”, his framing of liberal-local hybrid peace implicitly remains oppositional. As Heathershaw (2012) noted, MacGinty’s hybrid framework remains constrained by his analytical framework which is essentially a bifurcation of an ideal-type of local-indigenous and international-liberal. The proposed binary is both reductive and partial. The post-2001 international peacebuilding experience in Afghanistan questions the dichotomy drawn by the hybridity literature. It suggests that the power dynamics between international-local is *co-constitutive* as much as it is conflictive or oppositional. As such, it is the intertwined power dynamics between international policy and service networks and endogenous political networks as well as their network mode of operations that is fundamental to our understanding of international peacebuilding. A focus on the co-constitutive power relations between these brings our focus to the network character of international statebuilding, which is briefly discussed in the following section.

#### **IV. The Network Character of International Statebuilding**

As outlined in the introduction, international peacebuilding is a “loosely structured network” and a “collaborative process”. The post-conflict state is therefore being re-built as the result of intimate interaction between a diverse set of international and local actors, organisations and practices. Political power in peacebuilding is assembled in and flows through international

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<sup>20</sup> The peacebuilders are trained to work on superstructures and are socialised to focus on predefined tasks and performance guidelines which means that they can inevitably identify conflict at national and regional levels, thereby, overlooking the local dynamics of conflict.



administrative and policy networks and local political networks. Peacebuilding imports a mass group of expert organisations and practices onto the post-conflict setting to help re-assemble the state. These actors and organisations are tied to one another in complex resource interdependency relations whose mode of operation is network-based. They depend on each other for information sharing to improve coherence and coordination, and to develop and implement strategies and objectives to achieve ends. Service delivery and implementation network structures are therefore an expanding feature of post-conflict statebuilding. At the same time, at local level, endogenous political organisations come to play an essential role in helping constitute and transform the post-conflict state, following the power-sharing agreement. As argued in the introduction and discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, in prolonged conflicts like Afghanistan, local organisations are at best “network forms of organisations” (political networks) because of their distinct open-hierarchical structures, interdependent flows of resources and exchange of information.

The interaction between the international-local actors and organisations create complex and wide-ranging networks that connect local businessmen, private security firms, international contractors, military commanders, custom officials, criminals and even insurgencies to the flow of exchanges, bargains and even opportunism in statebuilding as shown in Chapter 6. In a post-conflict setting where state institutions and structures have become eroded or disappeared following a civil war international intervention and statebuilding finds itself depending upon local political networks to re-assemble and transform the post-conflict state and its modern institutions. The hybrid political order thesis is informing (De Waal 2009). De Waal suggests that the international-local power dynamics takes the form of a “patrimonial inclusive buy-in” (2009:103). He showed how international peacebuilding creates network relations with local patrimonial networks in support of agreed constitutional provisions and power sharing. In his analysis, the relationship between international-local resembles a “patrimonial marketplace” where loyalties are negotiated and bought within an “auction of loyalties” (2009:103). He argued that this often takes place without international statebuilding

realising that it is involved in the political marketplace, helping the winner to take it all while de-legitimising the losers' claim to any share of national patrimony.

Indeed, as Chapter 5 shows, the post-2001 state emerged as the result of such a contract, a “grand bargain” characterised by Goodhand (2010) between international donors and the four main invited political networks at the Bonn conference in 2001. International interveners ensured peace by making bargains with local political network leaders and commanders. This way, the former Mujahedeen networks and their clientele came to play a significant role in international statebuilding processes. However, the empirical chapters in this thesis highlight a more complicated and fluid dynamics than the one offered by the rationale choice “marketplace” hybrid order thesis. Individual interests and rational thinking do not always dictate political actions. As the case of Afghanistan uncovers, political actions are governed by complex rules of exchange, societal code of conduct, and complex hierarchies of power which cannot be rationalised (Goodhand 2005; Coburn 2011). They are reinforced through series of different strategies including interfamilial marriage, gifts, partnerships, and societal reciprocities bases on identity-based divisions such as ethnicity, tribe, clan, and kin.

The network character of international statebuilding is consistent with several recent studies that have showed international statebuilding does not fundamentally change the dynamics of power relations at the local level, but it often reconfigures and re-articulates pre-existing political networks and their practices (Narten 2009; Sending 2011). In Kosovo, Jens Narten (2009) found that international statebuilding negotiated peace with local elites, which subsequently helped maintain existing state-society relations. In fact, as the experience of Afghanistan reveals power dynamics and practices are driven by pre-existing governing political network relations and practices such as patron-client practices, opportunism and informal bargaining. The entrenched endogenous political-economic networks were compounded with corruptions and opportunism, spanning across a complex web of local and international connections, the result of three decades of war and conflict. In fact, illegal and

opportunistic practices are not mere 'shadows' (Nordstrom 2001), 'informal' (Roitman 2003) or 'extra-legal' (Duffield 1999) as suggested by some scholars. As this thesis uncovers, these are a key component of everyday statebuilding practices, fundamental in producing a complex peace, discussed in detail in Chapter 3. Studies in other regions have found that international intervention and global linkages enable local criminals and politicians to divert intervention in their favour (Nordstrom 2001; Roitman 2003). Pugh (2006) highlighted how international statebuilding provides substantial economic benefits to local political-economic networks and their elites and multinational corporations. The empirical chapters in this thesis will try to show how historically grounded informal institutions of patronage, rent-seeking and corruption have been adopted in post-2001 statebuilding, contributing to political order and stability.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I outlined and critiqued the main theoretical and policy debates in international peacebuilding in the last two decades. I showed how these discussions have evolved since the early 1990s within three paradigms: the transformative, critical studies and hybrid peace. One of the key shortcomings of transformative and critical studies has been their neglect of the local and its power dynamics. Although, the hybrid peace has made a significant contribution in filling this void, it has overlooked the co-constitutive and network relations between the international-local. The latter section provided an explanatory analysis on the network character of peacebuilding. A focus on networks in international statebuilding helps us make a conceptual shift from the institutional and structural affect to the informal network character of statebuilding. Seeing post-conflict statebuilding through a network lens enables us to better analyse the transformative process of peacebuilding.

The main purpose of this chapter was to highlight the network character of international peacebuilding and emphasize the important role of endogenous political forces in statebuilding which is often overlooked in the literature. As outlined in the introduction, this thesis is less about the role of international

networks on post-conflict statebuilding but more about the explicit role of endogenous political networks on international statebuilding and state formation. What and how the post-conflict state is constituted and how this composition produces (not produces) peace and order should be central to peacebuilding studies. It is important to theorise the power dynamics between endogenous political networks and the post-conflict state. This is discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3: Political Networks and the Post-Conflict State**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is an attempt to theorise the relationship between the power dynamics of political networks and the post-conflict state. In doing so, it offers an analytical framework, one that is grounded in the analysis of informal political networks to explain how peace and political order is constituted. It hypothesises that political order and stability is a function of power dynamics and network practices among interdependent political networks within the state. This chapter begins by situating the post-conflict state in the broader theoretical discussion. Section II then draws a clear distinction between political organisations and political networks. Section III identifies three mutually re-enforcing network levels of analysis: individual network, whole network and community level, and describe how the functioning of political networks affect network effectiveness (section IV). Section V details three main features of network practices which it argues contribute towards sustaining political networks: (1) patron-client practices, (2) opportunism and illegality, and (3) instrumentalisation of identity-based divisions. The final section, suggests that the power dynamics among competing political networks produces three possible political outcomes in relation to political stability: (1) balanced-network equilibrium, (2) co-optation by the dominant network (regime), and (3) relapse to conflict.

### **I. Re-assembling and Transforming the Post-Conflict State**

Conflict management and peace studies literature suggest that political settlement and power-sharing amongst the warring groups have a major impact on conflict dynamics and subsequently the success of peace (Hampson 1996; Sisk 1996; Reilly 2002). In settings where the international statebuilding follows a political settlement arrangement, endogenous political forces play a vital role in re-building the state. Following an agreed power-sharing framework, political groups come to control strategic parts of the

state, thereby filling in the state administrative apparatus and the bureaucracy. In Afghanistan, the new international statebuilding environment enabled former Mujahedeen tanzims to constitute the post-2001 state, further helping them to consolidate power (Chapter 5). As such, the state institutions (i.e., constitution, parliament, elections, human rights commission) and arrangements (i.e., electoral law, financing arrangements) emerged as the result of contestation, negotiation and bargain among competing political networks across multiple administrative levels (Chapter 5). In post-conflict countries where the state institutions are missing or eroded, the state bureaucracy arises to exist in the shadows of and in subordination to political networks because the structural details of state bureaucracy emerge out of the political process as they are connected to the strategies and motivations of political networks that exercise public authority. The underlying organisation of expanding bureaucracy thus becomes thoroughly political.

The politicisation of bureaucracy and administration produces further dependencies and bargaining as political networks come to constitute the post-conflict state. The re-assembled post-conflict state is far from the international statebuilding's objective of building a Weberian rational-legal bureaucratic state, differentiated along vertical organisational lines, based on rationality and division of labour. In such complex web of interdependencies, a ministerial or intergovernmental reshuffle, even at the low level, translates into a significant restructuring of network power dynamics within several ministries. This means that the state re-assembling takes place in a fragmented and divisive way, reflecting the diverse and often conflictive interests of political networks who exploit every opportunity to pull the direction of the statebuilding in their favour (Heathershaw & Lambach 2008). The fragmented nature of the re-assembled state is against the dominant functionalist-institutionalist and structuralist analyses that see the state as a cohesive homogenous entity driven by its own singular interest.

Once having taken custody of key state positions, political networks limit access and privileges to members only. This is what Douglas North (2009) terms the limited-access state. North's framing of historical state order is

informing for our analysis of the post-conflict state. North (2009) identifies two historically different social orders, which he argues have shaped the historical state formations in most countries: the limited-access state and the open-access state. North asserted that the limited-access state has been the natural default social order because it aligns the interests of powerful individuals to forge a dominant coalition in such a way that limits violence. Elite members within the coalition agree to respect each other's political and financial privileges and resources. By limiting access to privileges of the empowered political networks (i.e., patronage, rent-seeking), they create credible incentives to cooperate rather than fight each other, knowing that violence will reduce their own rents (2009:19). Rent creation is a fundamental contributing factor to stability. North (2009:19) understands rent as a return to an economic asset that exceeds the return that asset can receive in its best alternative use. He treats the state as a single entity or a super-organisation run by a coalition of smaller organisations, which work to safeguard political order and stability.<sup>21</sup> According to North, most Western states are open-access, where the state has been transformed from its natural state as a result of the development of a strong social capital upon which civil societies thrive and formal institutions take roots (North 2009:7). One serious shortcoming of liberal peace international intervention and statebuilding is that it treats post-conflict states with an open-access state logic, which is far from realities on the ground.

Douglas North's historical framing could be applied to our understanding of the relationship between the endogenous political networks and the post-conflict state. However, we need to explain explicitly how political networks maintain themselves within the state and how power dynamics among them shape political order and peace. Before addressing this, we need to make a distinction between political networks and political organisations.

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<sup>21</sup> According to North (2009:7), organisations are perceived as tools that individuals use to increase their productivity, to seek and create human contact and relationships to coordinate the actions of many individuals and groups and to dominate and coerce others.

## **II. A Distinction Between Political Networks and Political Organisations**

Political networks in post-conflict statebuilding are hybrid forms of networks and hierarchies. Organisations were conventionally considered hierarchical whilst networks were seen as horizontal and everywhere. In orthodox public management literature, organisations were defined as “patterns of precisely defined jobs organised in a hierarchical manner through precisely defined lines of command and communication” (Morgan, 1986: 27). However, as Powell (1990) suggests it would appear less useful in the twenty-first century to compare hierarchy and network when hierarchies look less like an organisation at this time of emerging bureaucratic organisation. Recent public management literature (Agranoff & McGuire 2003; Kickert & Koppenjan 1997; Koppenjan & Klijn 2004) suggests that a clear-cut distinction between organisations and networks is superfluous and misleading. These analysts argue that inter-organisational networks are open-hierarchical arrangements and collaborative. Agranoff and McGuire (2007:83) term them ‘collaborarchies’. They argue that we must go beyond the simple generalisation that networks are managed non-hierarchically and could be found everywhere.

As detailed in the introduction, political networks in post-conflict statebuilding are hierarchically arranged entities while remaining network-like structures in terms of their institutional arrangements, patterns of exchange, interdependent flows of resources, and reciprocal lines of information. They are self-organising entities with their own distinct open-hierarchical structures. These are informally structured whose members are interdependent on each other’s resources and power relations, which facilitates their collaboration. In the immediate international intervention in post-conflict countries when the formal state institutions are either missing or eroded, existing political networks as alternative modes of organising and governance play an important role in helping re-build the post-conflict state. As Swedberg (1994:25) pointed out networks offer an effective alternative mode of organising in facilitating political activity in circumstance where there is no central authority.



Table 3.1: Distinctions between Political Networks and Political Organisations

	<b>Political Organisations</b>	<b>Political Networks</b>
Organisational settings	Single authority structure	Hybrid form of hierarchy and networks, divided authority structure, interdependency, exit anytime,
Goal structure	Activities are guided by clear goals and well defined interests	Various and diverse set of goals and interests
Authority	Hierarchical, clear command and control structure	Dispersed authority, hybrid authority (vertical and horizontal), mediator, trust and reciprocal relations, bargaining
Management	Centralised planning and guiding organisation	Co-managing, co-steering and co-guidance
Flow of information	Built-in mechanisms of hierarchical information sharing/ subject to manipulation	Higher information sharing capacities, thicker information, the strength of the weak ties

Political networks in post-conflict statebuilding are managed differently from political organisations in regards to differences in the form of authority and the direction of the flow of authority (Agranoff & McGuire 2003). In a political organisation, planning, designing and leading is centrally controlled by and through a clear command and control structure. In political networks, authority is dispersed in hybrid forms (vertical and horizontal) and may not necessarily flow through a precise command and control mechanism. Authority in a political network is collective. In a political network, a single central authority, a hierarchical ordering and a single organisational goal do not exist. Political networks in statebuilding are fluid entities and membership fluctuates as events unfold, moments of rent-seeking arise, and crisis occurs; however, they generally present themselves as a unitary actor in political arenas. Authority might be centralised around a charismatic leader in a political network; however, the task of a political network leader is to guide interactions, set rules of the game, manage and direct actors and resources, and arbitrate conflicts and disputes. The central node has as much authority as the network members allow him to Possess. The important role of political networks is discussed in section IV.

Power-dependency is a central feature of political networks, highlighted in the introduction of this thesis (Rhodes & Marsh 1992; Rhode 1997). Members *within* a political network as well as political networks *among* themselves exist with one another in a resource and power-dependency relations. In this interdependent relationship, some actors sit in positions of an extensive opportunity context which provides them with greater access to knowledge, financial resources and authority (Burt 1992). In post-conflict contexts like Afghanistan, this intense politicking enables critical nodes to raise the prospect of their bargaining among interested parties and constantly negotiate pacts. The distribution, and types, of resources within a network explains the relative power of actors (individuals and organisation). Knoke (1990) in one of the most comprehensive studies of political networks argued that power in a political network is inherently 'relational' and 'situational'. Power is a relationship of one social actor to another and it is specific to a situation. It is dynamic and potentially unstable (1990:2). Power is not an end in itself but a tool to achieve goals. Given that each individual within a political network and each political network collectively have its own agency, there is an intense power politics involved in deciding, shaping and implementing policies and strategies. Contest, negotiation and bargaining over policies and decisions among the varied political networks become a routine practice in statebuilding.

This raises the prospect of increased bargaining among interested parties as opposed to organisations (Bogason & Toonen 1998: 205). This is because political networks are goal-directed structures in which actors 1) are able to formulate and make utility-improving choices; 2) alternative outcomes have distributional implications for actors, favouring some over others; and 3) actors vary in the power or influence they possess (Lake & Wong 2009:129). In such conditions political actors manipulate others in the network to produce desired outcomes. Political networks are evolving structures that are reinforced, renewed and reproduced " to borrow Bourdieu and Passeron's phrasing (1977). In post-conflict spaces, the immediate success of political networks depends on collaborating with one another in re-assembling and re-

building the state. This might change in later stages if one political network emerges as the dominant player and if others weaken.

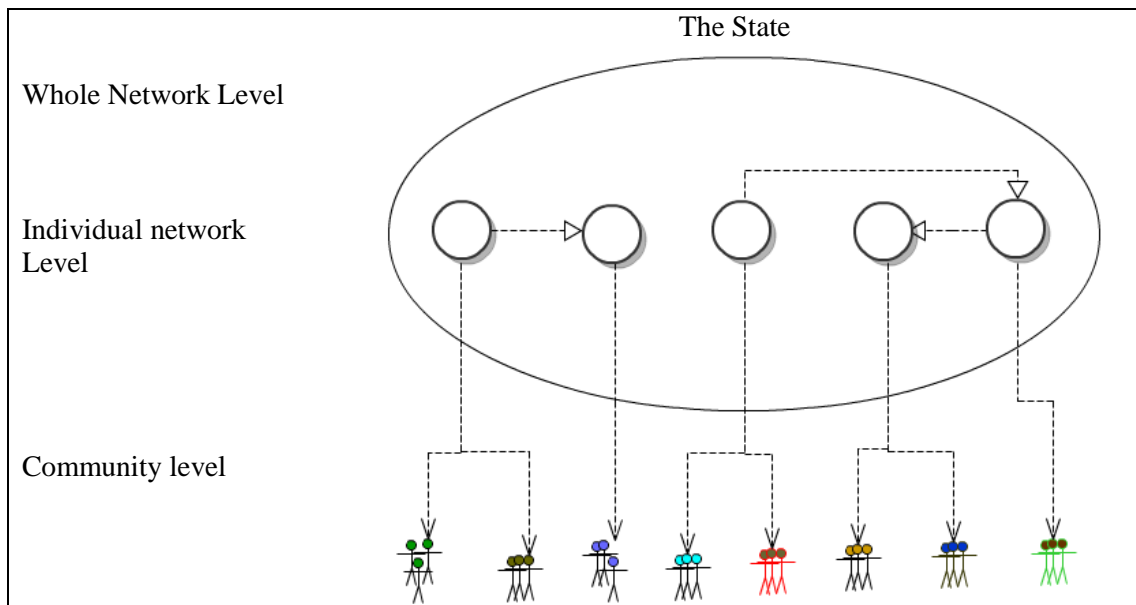
High information-sharing capacity is another key aspects of political networks in post-conflict statebuilding, enabling political networks to translate decisions into actions quickly as shown in business studies (Powell 1990; Uzzi 1997). Organisations on the other hand exhibit built-in mechanisms of hierarchical information sharing, which could be subject to manipulation by the leadership. In political networks, information is dispersed and readily available because of the logic of “strength of the weak ties” (Granovetter 1974). Kaneko & Imai (1987) found that information passed through networks was thicker than that obtained from the market and organisations. Powell (1990:304) asserted that the most useful information is not the one that has flowed down the chain of command; rather it is the one that is obtained from someone with whom one had dealt in the past and found it to be reliable. In business studies, Alter and Hage (1993) argued that networks not only provide opportunities to access information as shared sources, but they also provide opportunities to transform information into new learning and adapting opportunities. Finally, exit is another important feature of political networks in post-conflict statebuilding. Political networks are voluntary with entry and exit determined by the actors themselves rather than mandated by any “higher” authority. In an organisation, individuals find it difficult, either for formal or informal reasons, to exit, whereas in political networks, even those with some degree of sanctions, exit is easier. This is particularly useful in conditions of flux like post-conflict settings, where uncertainty is high and network practices of opportunism, bargaining and rent-seeking are the rules of the game.

### **III. Network Effectiveness and Levels of Analysis**

Recent studies in public management on network effectiveness have broadened our focus from a concern with individual relations among network members to an examination of the multiple interactions that comprises full networks (Milward & Provan 2000; Provan et. al. 2005; Provan & Kennis 2008). Provan et. al. coined the term, *whole network*, which he defines as “a

group of three or more organisations connected in ways that facilitate achievement of a common goal...formally established and governed and goal directed rather than occurring serendipitously” (2008:480). They argued that network effectiveness must be measured at the “whole network” level in relation to its multiple interactive components rather than the organisational level of analysis (Provan et. al. 2008: 480). This is reflective of recent network studies that suggest networks must be analysed in a multi-level and multi-theory dimension (Monge & Contractor 2003). This rationale could guide in our analysis of the complex network relations in post-conflict settings like in post-2001 Afghanistan (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Levels of Analysis



In post-conflict settings, political networks exhibit a three-level interaction, involving (1) the whole network, (2) the individual network, and (3) the local community level, depicted in Figure 3.1. Each level is mutually interdependent on the other for their ability to influence political outcomes. The whole network is comprised of several competing individual networks connected to one another by a complex set of resource and power-dependencies. While each individual networks might be part of a whole network of common interests or

opportunism, they constantly compete with each other over influence, allegiances, state positions and resources.

Within a situation of interdependency of resources and asymmetry of power, each individual network competes, negotiates, and bargains over the statebuilding political and financial resources in an attempt to pull the direction of statebuilding and state formation in their favour. Individual networks are embedded in communities they claim to represent. This is not to say that each community is tied to a single individual network; however, several individual networks might compete in the same community along identity-based divisions (e.g., ethnic, linguistic, religious and tribal) for material and symbolic gain. This was the case during the 2009 presidential election in Afghanistan where opposing networks competed in different districts to gain community votes (Chapter 6). Individual networks play the critical role of gluing the whole network together. They ensure internal cohesion within their individual networks, maintain ties with local communities and provide connections across individual networks within the state, represented by vertical lines and horizontal arcs respectively. In essence, they function like an intermediary or broker, connecting a wide spectrum of actors, networks, and organisations at the local and international levels.

In moments of rupture and bargains like the 2009 presidential election (Chapter 6) or the 2010-2011 Special Court crisis (Chapter 7), these embedded individual networks play an instrumental role in manipulating identity lines to mobilise local communities to get the vote out, thereby expand their bargaining power. The individual networks may choose to ally with or be co-opted by different whole networks, especially the dominant one, to ensure the maintenance of their privileges and property within the state. Or they may harness the power of the masses to mobilise against opposing political networks. While individual networks tend to be relatively stable with occasional potential for splintering, whole networks are often temporal, fluid and spatial. Whole networks forms, re-forms and re-structure as events unfold, crisis continues, local socio-political balances change, and positions and resources shift. This is best seen during the 2010-2011 Special Court

crisis in the *Wolesi Jirga* (Lower House), where two distinct whole networks around the crisis was formed one centred on President Karzai and the ad hoc Support for Rule of Law (SRL) around Haji Zahir. Both the SRL and the President Karzai whole network were composed of many individual networks and centres of power stretching from the centre to the local community level. Chapter 5 shows how between 2002-2004 Karzai was able to pursue a mix policy of coercion and accommodation in removing the key former Mujahedeen individual network leaders while co-opting their network clientele to his whole network in expanding and consolidating his power, but then from 2007 onwards he brought them back to power at the expense of his allied technocratic elites. However, the case of the 2010-2011 Special Court (Chapter 7) in the *Wolesi Jirga*, on the other hand, demonstrated that Karzai's whole network was successful only to the extent that powerful individual networks allowed him to be. During the crisis, confronted by these influential political networks, Karzai eventually backed down from his decision to remove 63 sitting MPs from the *Wolesi Jirga*, a year of prolonged parliamentary crisis.

#### **IV. Political Network Effectiveness and Network Practices**

The success and failure of post-conflict statebuilding and state formation depends on the effective functioning of *both* whole networks and individual networks. Most network studies focus on the properties of networks: what networks are, how they are structured, how they operate, and how they develop. Network effectiveness is hardly discussed. O'Toole's (1997) asserts that if we are to take networks seriously, we must understand whether they work. In this thesis, network effectiveness is considered in terms of their ability to survive and expand their power within the state. Network effectiveness is achieved if political networks are able to (1) maintain and consolidate political power within the post-conflict state, (2) accumulate financial gains for resource exchanges, and (3) maintain strong ties with their local communities. The ability of political networks to perform these functions is bound to vary. Some political networks might have excessive financial wealth but low political power base (constituency mobilisation power) while others might enjoy higher

mobilisation power but low financial wealth. For a political network to be effective it needs to achieve at least two of the above functions.

In post-conflict statebuilding, particularly in those that have experienced a prolonged war, network effectiveness is a function of the following three main features of network practices: (a) patron-client relations for political expansion; (b) opportunism and illegality for wealth accumulation; and (c) instrumentalisation of identity-based divisions for political mobilisation. As discussed in Chapter 2, existing informal network governance logics and practices such as patronage, illegality, and rent-seeking do not disappear in post-conflict statebuilding but are re-articulated and re-configured. Evidence from several post-conflict countries reveals that informal network practices in fact intensify with international intervention and statebuilding (Narten, 2009; Sending, 2011). The empirical evidence in this thesis suggests that the post-2001 Afghan state is constituted as the state by its appreciation of the above identified network practices. However, what one needs to acknowledge is that these practices are closely combined and interlinked with political networks.

Examining the everyday practices of political networks in determining political outcome is different to the dominant approach in network and organisational studies that analyse either the types of networks (Sinno 2008), the internal composition of the network (Knoke 1990; Burt 1992), or the strategies employed to manage the network (Kickert, et.al. 1997; O'Toole 1997; Agranoff & McGuire 2003). Although these aspects of political networks are important, they inform us little about the political outcomes in statebuilding. In the context of intervention and international statebuilding, a focus on network practices sheds light on how political networks compete to perform as the state. It helps better understand not only how competing networks constitute the post-conflict state and produce political stability (or instability) but also how they "enact" the state. According to Reeves, enactment is the process in which state officials, those who claim to possess legitimate authority, enact themselves to represent the state (Reeves 2007). For instance, how does an army commander, a tribal elder, a village National Solidarity Program member, and a regional strongman whose loyalty is to his/her political

network, come to make a meaningful claim to an authority that is external to him. Through this act of “impersonation,” network members on a daily basis produce an effect of the state as a singular and vertical entity. The state effect concept is further discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis. The key features of these practices are discussed below.

### *Patron-Client Practices*

With the sudden increase in international fund in statebuilding and the constitution of the post-conflict state by political networks who gain access to these funds, patron-client ties linking the leaders and sub-leaders of various political-economic and identity networks, proliferate. Political networks come to enact and impersonate the state from top government officials to district police commanders, to community leaders, and to local teachers through informal bargains of patron-client relations. A patron-client practice is an exchange relationship of some private and personal nature where players have reciprocal needs and expectations, but unequal power and status (Johnson & Dandeker 1990). This relationship is a dyadic one, characterised by unequal status, reciprocity and personal contact that is arranged hierarchically (Scott, 1972: 92). Such relationships in post-conflict settings link political network members in the centre with their local clients (e.g., tribal leader or district police chief) to the state.

Patron-client practices are driven by political economy and political culture aspects. Goodhand (2004), in his study of war-to-peace economy, shows how patronage in post-2001 Afghanistan involves complex socio-cultural and political as well as economics of exchange and association. Patron-client practices are often reinforced through strategies of interfamilial marriage, partnerships, and gifts. Moments of rupture and contestation like the presidential elections provide an excellent opportunity for network elites of all levels to seek rents and exchange. As Kitchelt and Wilkinson (2007) found, it is the contingency of targeted benefits, not the targeting of goods taken by it, that constitutes the clientelistic exchange in most electoral politics. In one of the early works on patronage, Alex Weingrod (1968: 379) defines electoral



patronage as a “way in which party politicians distribute public jobs or special favours in exchange for electoral support.” Voters pledge their votes instrumentally – that is, to politicians who promise to deliver specific goods or who have already delivered a particular mix of goods and services. As Shahrani (1998) points out in the context of Afghanistan, patron-client practices are often contingent upon the shifting boundaries of the community within the changing context of various political network struggles within or between contending groups. This is what he calls the “political ecology of particular times, places and spaces” (1998: 220). Thus, patron-client practices must be understood within their own political ecology context, which in a post-conflict situation means understanding the intensification of interaction between international statebuilding and local political networks, which then generates opportunism and rent-seeking.

Once seizing a key strategic part of the post-conflict state, following internationally mediated power-sharing arrangement, each political network attempts to consolidate their power by offering state resources to their clients in order to maintain and co-opt key embedded local leaders, district governors, Mullahs, state officials and businessmen into their bargaining network. The ability of political networks to provide privileges, positions and bargains determines their authority, power and legitimacy within the re-assembling state. The ties of loyalty and reciprocity—whether economic, political or moral—between the political network and its clients within the network and across other political networks are conceived in interpersonal dyadic terms and subject to constant negotiation. The availability of numerous patrons and the clients’ ability to defect provides the client considerable leverage within the political network. As Sinno argued mid-level patrons can always challenge their own patron if he/she cannot continue to supply them with the resources they need, or if they develop a large clientele, or they sufficiently accumulate the resources that their patron once supplied (2008:39).

## *Opportunism and Illegality*

The sudden increase in international aid money creates opportunities for political networks and their clientele. The availability of several networks and the ability of clients to exit in post-conflict statebuilding means maintaining a political network can be extremely costly. In most post-conflict countries like Afghanistan, where community power structures are driven largely by a bargaining system and controlled by political networks, financial acquisition and then distribution plays an instrumental role in helping the network to sustain itself in competition, otherwise members would be co-opted by the rival. Post-conflict countries that exhibit strong patron-client practices often move towards creating a deeply “entrenched economy” where small intertwined political and economic elites come to govern the economy and the politics.<sup>22</sup> Empirical studies that analyse the effect of political connections and rent-seeking activities on firm performance (Faccio 2006; Fisman 2001) suggest that such connections represent an integral firm asset. Burt (1992) and Granovetter (1985) found that these connections have a social capital component, which affects both firm strategic choices and their performance in the market. This could be applied to political networks in statebuilding. Studies in other contexts have confirmed that opportunism and criminal economic practices are fundamental in maintaining political networks and the state functioning (Roitman 2003).

In his study of illicit border crossing in the Chad basin, Roitman (2003:192-193) found that illegal resource extraction by state officials was seen by many (both by the local and state officials) as a “legitimate mode of the exercise of power”, fundamental to the survival of the state. Roitman criticised those that he argued misleadingly refer to such practices as “informal economy” or “shadow economy” (Nordstrom, 2001) or “parallel economy” (Reno, 2001), because these activities are fundamentally linked to the state. In post-conflict spaces, illegality is neither parallel nor captured to the legal as suggested; it is an integrated and inseparable process that shapes the nature of governance

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<sup>22</sup> For recent studies of economic entrenchment theory see Faccio, 2006 and Fisman 2001.

in these spaces. Cheng and Zaum (2011) in their edited volume proposed that corruption might actually be necessary to meet the objectives of peacebuilding. They argued that in post-conflict settings, where the state is captured by rent-seeking factions, corruption does indeed have a corrosive effect on political stabilisation. This challenges the conventional wisdom that argues corruption and peacebuilding are fundamental opponents. However, as Reeves (2007) asks in relation to the Fergana valley, is this, then, simply a story of corruption? Reeves suggests illegality is not simply a deviation or corruption of the state; neither is it incidental to its constitution, but it is an everyday functioning (2007:134). Political networks and the state as a whole thrive on illegality. In places like post-1998 Bosnia (Le Billon 2008) and post-2001 Afghanistan, resource extraction through illegal means such as violence, extortion, and land grab by members of political networks are fundamental to their political survival. In Afghanistan, through their political client links within the state (e.g., access to information, financial assets, and coercion) and licit and illicit business links (e.g. Kabul Bank, drug trade, private security firms), and access to development aid and contracts, political networks accumulate and distribute wealth to maintain and expand their political networks.

An interesting area, which is often overlooked, is the link between criminal networks and politicians. In post-conflict spaces like Afghanistan, these two are intertwined and entrenched. Illegality and rent-seeking practices work best when using a combination of weak and strong ties. Podolny and Page (1998) found that networks enable criminals to build positive relations with the political groups they depend on for protection, and build functional, mediated, and varied connections with non-criminal actors whose expertise is of value to them. For instance, traffickers use strong intimate ties with local residents to maintain an inward trust base to build the trafficker's leadership role while limiting the local roles of weakly tied state officials; but, still using contacts to those officials to obtain funds and build political support. In international relations, Kahler (2009) found that in order to reduce risk and uncertainty, traffickers form social connections with government officials. They often enter into a mutual exchange process where the illicit entrepreneurs provide partners with a range of resources, including money, votes, property, and

other enticement. They try to exploit state power and create an alternative political space that tolerates, even supports and legitimises their activities.

However, wealth accumulation is not an end for itself for those political networks that engage in illegality and opportunism, but a means for political ends in purchasing loyalties and expanding political support. The combination of patron-client practices and illegality interlock political networks and their clientele into long-lasting interactions. Most political networks attempt to maintain a close tie with their local communities to ensure they survive during moments of crisis. While wealth might help buy loyalties, political networks still need communities as an additional bargaining card in political exchange, especially in moments of high contestation like the elections.

#### *Instrumentalisation of Identity-Based Divisions at Community Level*

Political networks are embedded in communities that they represent (or manipulate). Studies of community elite networks and collective actions suggest that community elites are strongly affected by their proximity in the network of informal social relations (Laumann & Pappi 1976, Laumann, Marsden & Galaskiewicz 1977). Network effectiveness at the community level means the ability of networks to satisfy the needs and expectations of their constituency to gain political legitimacy. Suchman (1995) suggests that legitimacy is key for long-term survival of political organisations, their status and viability.<sup>23</sup> Legitimacy in post-conflict statebuilding is often achieved along with a combination of service provision and traditional means such as religious, tribal and ethnic support. Coburn (2010) found that most communities in Afghanistan considered their members of parliament first and

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<sup>23</sup> There are two types of legitimacy, internal and external. External legitimacy is bestowed by international intervener's support to political networks. The international invitation of several networks to the Bonn Conference in 2001 provided Jihadi political networks with the necessary external recognition they needed. External legitimacy is gained on a daily basis in the process of statebuilding. Tsai (2001) argued that external links are crucial to the survival and expansion of networks. As outlined in Chapter 5, external support and legitimacy was a key factor in enabling Karzai and his emerging political network to pursue repression and accommodation policies.

foremost as an extension of their local patronage system whose primary role is to connect them to the patronage aid provision of international statebuilding.

In divided societies, identities provide a powerful mean through which political networks and their clients could mobilise communities. In post-conflict spaces like Afghanistan where prolonged conflict has produced an environment of “complex security dilemmas” (Kaufman 2000:441) along identities, ethnic and tribal divisions provide opportunities for political networks to claim representation to communities that they are embedded. In such conditions, the appeal of identity elites further accentuates identity affiliations as the two together provide a rationale for the perpetuation of identity divisions. This produces a symbiotic relationship between political networks that wish to advance their own bargaining position within the state, and their constituency who fear political domination. The empirical chapters support the theory that politicisation of identities provide a powerful mask for political networks to conceive their illegal and rent-seeking practices, whether it is to elect a new parliament speaker, subcontract a project, or distribute land in a district. However, this is not to imply that identities are fixed and stable in post-conflict countries. Identity is not a quality of a social group, but a relationship between social groups (Barth 1969). Mitchell’s (1969) network approach to ethnicity is informing. He argued that ethnic identities are both a “situational” and a “negotiated” phenomenon (Mitchell 1969: 241). Individuals are self-categorised or categorised by others depending upon different types of social relationships in different situations (1969: 32). As such, identities are multiple and overlapping forms, crosscutting families, villages, regions, and etc. In post-conflict spaces like Afghanistan, identities provide a powerful terrain on which political battles could be contested among political networks. In Afghanistan, whilst none of the political networks came to power through identity structures, once in power they pursued every effort to maintain a certain degree of influence over the ethno-regional and tribal systems (Wimmer & Schetter 2003; Roy 1995; Dorrnsoro 1995; Simonsen 2004).

To sum up, in post-conflict divided societies, identity-based solidarity provides a particularly powerful bond for network construction and political

organisation, thus promoting patron–client linkage building. In post-conflict statebuilding, patron-client practices, opportunism and illegality, and politicisation of identities mutually help political networks to maintain themselves in the state, subsequently, ensuring peace and political stability. The survival of political networks depends on their ability to effectively perform at least two of the above features of network practices. For instance, a combination of patron-client practices and illegality interlock political elites and their clients into long-lasting mutual interaction during times of stability but might not be effective in times of major crisis and internal wars. A mixture of patron-client relations and political networks' strong links with their communities at the local level, on the other hand, might be more effective in times of crisis or moments of contestation like the 2009 presidential election (Chapter 6), however, to some extent less relevant in times of political stability.

## **V. Political Networks and the Institutional Context**

Political networks operate within a given institutional context. This analysis simply draws on the neo-institutional theory to explain that repeated interactions between actors over a long period of time produce institutions that enable actors to regulate behaviours and practices (Hodgeson 2004; North 1990; Ostrom 1990). This analysis employs Douglas North's definition of institutions as "humanly devised constraints that structure human interaction. They consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct), and formal constraints (constitutions, laws, property rights)", or simply, the "rules of the game" (1990:1-2). Networks and institutions mutually shape each other (Scott 2008; Owen-Smith & Powell 2007). While institutions shape the strategies and intentions of political networks and help them coordinate complex interaction between them, networks generate the categories and hierarchies that help define institutions and contribute to their efficiency or make them vulnerable (Owen-Smith & Powell 2007: 603).

In post-conflict statebuilding, informal institutions take precedence over formal institutions in regulating the pattern of political network practices and behaviours. Helmke and Levitsky (2004) maintain that informal institutions are socially shared and usually unwritten, created, communicated and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels. Political networks in post-conflict statebuilding have every incentive to preserve the old rules of the game, which had helped them survive during the warring years. Informal rules such as rent-seeking, corruption and bargaining are enduring and resilient institutions which do not disappear with the arrival of international intervention and statebuilding. Even new rules are often built onto existing ones (Narten 2009). This is especially the case in contexts where state institutions are failing (Ostrom 1990).

## **VI. Political Network Cohesion**

A vital aspect of political network effectiveness is network cohesion: what holds a political network together. Public management literature provides four different explanations to describe what holds a network together. These are: trust, common purpose, mutual interdependency, and network leadership. This analysis finds network leadership as the most important explanation for network cohesion at individual network and the resource dependency at the whole network level.

At the individual network level, trust is a defining feature of network cohesion. However, trust plays a lesser role at the whole network level. Trust imposes obligation, expectations, and commitment to others in the network (Barber 1983). Axelrod's (2006) concept of "the shadow of the future" points to a broader conception of self-interest in which individuals pay attention to the long-term prospect of their reputation. Anthropologists have long argued that strong ties based on kinship, families and friendship build trust and facilitate high-risk activities. High trust helps build consensus and a sense of understanding and partnering (Agronoff & McGuire, 2007:121). Political network members in post-conflict statebuilding are also motivated by a

common purpose for maintaining and expanding their political network power within the state. Tsai and Kilduff (2003) argued that a goal-directed network is highly structured around a leader or set of leaders who articulate the goals of the network. Although common purpose might be important, it is the least contributing factor to network cohesion in statebuilding settings, particularly at the whole network level.

At the whole network level, mutual dependency is the most important factor in bringing the whole network together and to a lesser extent in the individual network level. This explanation was advanced by Rhodes and Marsh (1992) and Rhodes (1997) who argued that networks are resource-interdependent because they cannot attain their goals by themselves, but need the resources of other actors to do so. Interdependency is based on the distribution of resources over various actors, the goals they pursue and their perceptions of their resource dependencies. At the whole network level, in the immediate post-conflict situation, competing political networks find it advantageous to strategically collaborate with each other in re-assembling and transforming the post-conflict state in their favour and once the state is re-assembled to continue working together in maintaining the status quo. It is this manifestation of the rational behaviours that could ensure political order in post-conflict statebuilding.

Leadership in post-conflict settings is the single most important factor in keeping the network together, especially at the individual network. This analysis draws on recent public management literature that suggests the success of political networks depend mainly on the good management of the network leader (Agranoff & McGuire 2003; Huxham & Vangen 2005; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000). In post-conflict statebuilding, political leaders, as the “central node”, must build critical linkages externally whilst simultaneously managing the network internally. Internally, a political network leader needs to know who has the resources within the network (e.g., money, information, expertise, and legitimacy) and how to employ them. The role of a political leader at the whole network level is to steer processes for the common good. Kickert and Koppenjan (1997) identified five steering processes which he

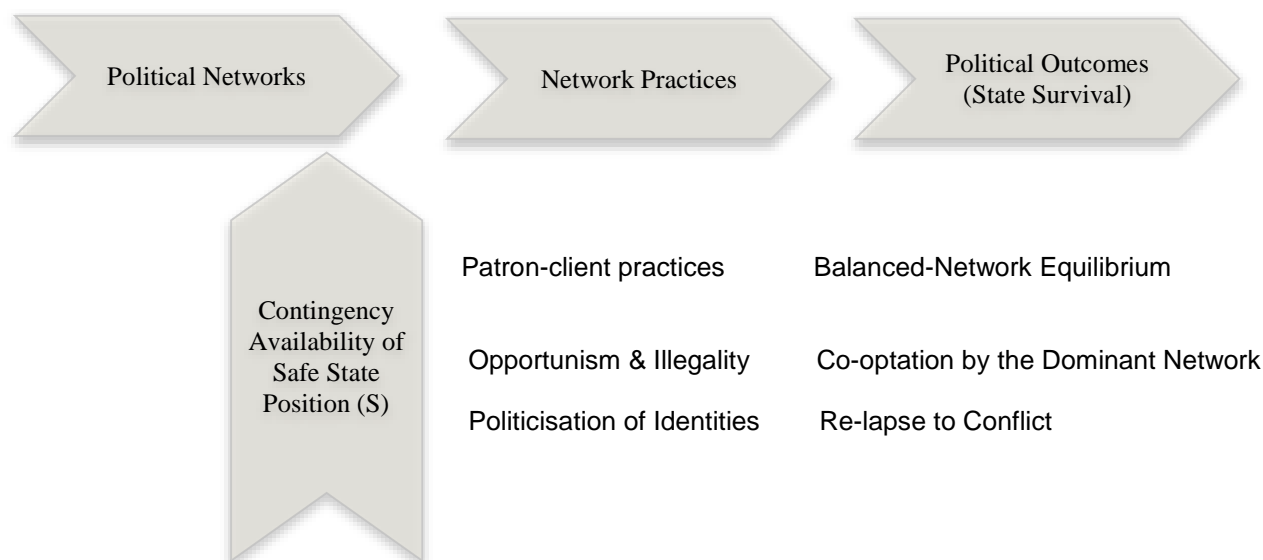


argued a network leader must pursue: 1) activating networks to tackle particular problems or issues (activation); 2) establishing ad hoc organisational arrangements to support interaction (arranging); 3) bringing together solutions, problems and parties (brokerage); 4) promoting favourable conditions for joint action (facilitation); and 5) conflict management (mediation and arbitration). The most effective role for an individual leader in a situation of asymmetry of power and resources is to play the role of a “powerbroker” and “facilitator”. For instance in post-2001 Afghanistan, individual networks are centred around a charismatic leader who plays the role of both patron and powerbroker client enabling the network to span across “structural holes” within the state and society, negotiating bargains and exchanges and mobilising support at community level.<sup>24</sup> However, a key weakness of individual network leaders is that they allow little diversification of authority and connection. That is why, the loss of a charismatic leader often results into splintering, weakening, and even the collapse of the network. In post-2001 Afghanistan, the splintering of former Mujahedeen tanzims into several sub-networks following the death of the leader seems a common feature. Major former Mujahedeen tanzims have fractured into several smaller networks including Jamiat-i-Islami, Hizb-i-Islami, and Wahdat-i-Islami (see appendix table 1). At the whole network level, while a network leader coordinates and facilitates actions, rarely, the real authority is granted to him/her across the network as a whole. Such a move is neither possible nor feasible. Each political network brings and keeps its own authority, thus managing together. In this situation network governance is more of a process of “co-managing, co-steering, and co-guidance” (Kooiman 1993:6).

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<sup>24</sup> Burt (2005) provides a rich account of social capital in networks. He shows how brokers span across structural holes to connect different clusters, help bridge differences and work towards cooperation. Network entrepreneurs identify rewarding structural holes in a market or organisation, and have an advantage in managing the work of bridging the hole. A structurally autonomous group has a strong reputation mechanism aligning people inside the group, and a strong vision advantage from brokerage outside the group. They have a creative view of valuable projects, who to involve, and who they work together with to make it happen.

Figure 3.2: Political Networks and Post-Conflict Political Stability Framework



## VII. The Safe State Position(s) Contingency

The contingency that would have a significant influence on political network performance is the network's control of a safe state position(s).<sup>25</sup> A safe state position(s) refers to the political network's strategic control of a key position within the state (i.e., presidency, vice-presidencies, ministerial positions, directorates, governors) from which it could contest against potential rivals both materially and symbolically. The safe position is important because it provides political networks with the necessary legitimacy to make a claim to the state. Once in power, political networks could utilise state resources and the legitimacy given to them by the state to expand and consolidate their power within the state (Chapter 5). The state provides them with the opportunity to accumulate wealth, gain access to international projects and contracts, shape policy, and more importantly offer them with first-hand access to information. For instance, once a friend working for President Karzai's office explained how knowing about the government's policy of building new housing nine months prior to releasing the policy to the public

<sup>25</sup> The idea of a safe position contingency draws on Sinno's framing of organisations at war where he refers to safe heaven contingency (2008).

had enabled a particular construction company which belonged to the first-vice president to make the preparations to win the contract. Safe positions are rarely safe for long because in a situation of “contested field” dictated by the asymmetry of power and resources, competing political networks try their best to undermine their rival’s safe position. Empirical evidence suggests that in post-2001 Afghanistan, with the loss of a safe position political networks often take an anti-government position and in some cases join the insurgency, contributing towards the re-emergence of conflict.

### **VIII. Political Order and State Survival**

The power dynamics of political networks and their practices are likely to produce three different potential political outcomes in relation to political order and state survival in post-conflict statebuilding, particularly relevant once the international military withdraws from the host country. These outcomes are: 1) a balanced-network equilibrium; 2) co-optation by the dominant network (the emergence of a regime); and 3) relapse into conflict and instability.

The best ideal outcome that would benefit all political networks is collaboration and the creation of balanced-network equilibrium, where each political network respects the other network’s spheres of influence, resources and power. This is aligned with Douglas North’s framing of limited-access state where the elites establish a coalition through which they limit access to privileges of the empowered political networks, therefore, creating incentives for cooperation rather than trying to out-manuever each other. The logic is simple: violence reduces political network’s rents especially with regard to the international aid. Of course, there will be tensions and competition over key strategic state positions and resources in a situation of asymmetry of power but these do not translate into conflict as the evidence from the 2009 presidential election and the 2010-2011 Special Court crisis uncovers. This fits with the logic of the game theory that cooperation will produce outcomes that are more favorable to parties involved than when the parties compete (Axelrod 2006). Collaboration is perceived as the management of differences

between competing networks (Williams 2002:115) or a continuous “negotiating process” (Bardach 1998:232) between them over key policies, objectives and strategies within the state. Agranoff and McGuire suggest that network collaboration raises the potential for more rational decision-making (2007:157). Thus, in this particular scenario, rather than vying for dominance, political networks share power to achieve mutually obtainable objectives. A balanced-network equilibrium situation provides a greater degree of discretion and flexibility among political networks over key decision-making processes and goals.

The second ideal outcome is the cooptation of individual networks and their clientele by an emerging powerful political network. I content with Sinno (2008:55) that co-optation is a strategy employed by a more powerful party to offer positive sanctions to key members of other threatening networks in return for accepting the norms of interaction desired by the dominant party. In post-conflict statebuilding where there is an asymmetry of power and resources, the resource-rich individual networks or whole Networks repeatedly attempt to co-opt their opponents’ key members. Co-optation is often very costly especially within an environment of multiple alternative networks. The empirical evidence in this thesis uncovers the astonishing amount of bargaining paid to purchase loyalties (Chapter 6 and 7). However, as Piattoni (2001) highlighted the best resource buyer in a patron-client network is usually a political actor close to government resources, most often the incumbent authorities. In Afghanistan it is the Karzai network that has been able to consolidate its power through a combination of repression and co-optation strategies. In Iraq, it is the incumbent Al-Maleki who has built an extensive political network, moving towards dictatorship (Dodge 2012). Once the power of one individual network exceeds the power of all political networks, the likelihood of the emergence of a regime becomes imminent. Cambodia (Cock 2010) and Iraq (Dodge 2012) are such political outcomes. Both of these political outcomes tend to produce political stability and subsequently state survival, even though in some cases this is achieved with a significant reliance on coercion and force.

The worst political outcome is the re-lapse to conflict. This happens when political network distrust reaches a level that leaves no room for collaboration and when there is no dominant network that could co-opt opponents. Post-1992 Afghanistan and Congo are examples of such situations. The eventual outcome of this scenario is state collapse and conflict.

## **Chapter 4: The Process of State Formation and Statehood in Afghanistan: A Political Network Perspective**

### **Introduction**

This historical chapter is an attempt to provide a political network perspective to study the process of state formation and the dynamics of statehood in Afghanistan since its modern formation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The aim of this historical chapter is to illustrate that the current logic of network governance in Afghanistan has emerged historically and sociologically over the preceding centuries. This chapter retells that history through an explicit network lens in order to establish the historical precedent of the findings of the empirical chapters. This is consistent with recent studies in peacebuilding that have aptly argued that post-conflict states are never fully built by international interveners but are subject to an on-going process of formation (Herring & Rangwala 2006; Bliesmann de Guevara 2008). This chapter situates the post-2001 intervention and statebuilding along its continuous struggle for state formation which is dominated by a vicious cycle of violence and state collapse, characterised by Cramer & Goodhand (2002) as “try again, fail again, and fail better”.<sup>26</sup> Analysing these key historical patterns is crucial to our understanding of the post-2001 statebuilding. Afghanistan’s historical process of state formation is analysed along three main variables: (1) the competition and conflict between rival political networks over the control of the state; (2) the global-international dimension and the subsequent role of colonial conquests and international patronage; and (3) the political network practices of personalised loyalties, patron-client practices, and manipulation of identities.

This chapter begins with a brief background to the emergence and decline of the Durrani Kingdom (1747-1880). It examines the power dynamics of socio-

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<sup>26</sup> Of the nineteen pre-Hamid Karzai rulers of Afghanistan (excluding Mullah Omar), except three (Ahmad Shah, the founder of the Durrani Kingdom, his son Timur Shah, and Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, 1880-1901), the rest were either violently deposed or assassinated. Both Dost Mohammad Khan and Shah Shuja ruled twice. The former was first deposed by the British but then reinstalled by them.

political organisation of a small group of entrenched tribal lineage that came to constitute the Afghan state and competed over its control. This section is considerably lengthy because it attempts to show how the founder of the Durrani Kingdom (1747-1773) established a “networked kingdom” as a model to which his successors built upon and subsequently, expanded. It argues that the primary reason for the vicious cycles of political instability and state collapse was rooted in the failure of its rulers to effectively balance power dynamics among rival political networks within the state against its founding logic of a “network state”. State formation and statehood was further influenced by successive governments’ discriminatory policies targeting specific identity-based divisions, further raising tensions. Section II highlights the global-international dimension of state formation in Afghanistan with a specific focus on the role of international patronage on political stability. It highlights the consequences of the Anglo-Afghan wars (1839-42 & 1878-80) on Afghanistan’s state formation. Section III explores the power struggle between competing political organisations since the 1970s, first between the Soviet-sponsored political factions (the Khalq & Parcham factions), and after the collapse of the Soviet-sponsored regime in 1991, between different Mujahedeen tanzims over the state. It concludes by suggesting that the post-2001 period must be understood in the continuities and changes in the power dynamics of these former Mujahedeen tanzims and their network practices.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *A Note on Historical Sources*: First, historical data and information on Afghanistan and its people, as noted by Gregorian, are at best “fragmentary, scattered, and negligible” (1969:4). Most recent historical works, except a few (cf, Noelle 1997; Hopkins 2008), have dealt primarily with the elementary task of reconstructing the bare bones of the historical narratives on the basis of thin and contradictory data (Noelle 1997:xv). These works are overwhelmingly state-centric and Pashtun-centric, excluding the people of the margins (Mousavi 1997; Dolatabadi 2001; Hopkins 2008). Second, colonial writers, travellers and intelligence agents influenced the bulk of these histories. As Hanifi (2004) shown, colonial Orientalist works still dominate the hegemonic construct and help theorise the genesis of the Afghan state and its people. One of the most influential sources on the early Durrani kingdom and the people living under their rule is that of Mountstuart Elphinstine who visited Shah Shuja’s court in the early nineteenth century. Ironically, most of his observation was based on what he had heard at the royal court and saw in Peshawar city, the summer capital of the Durrani kingdom. This source alone has provided the scholarly template for subsequent colonial scholarship on Afghanistan (Hopkins 2008). Historically, this trend has promoted a tribal, stateless and Pashtun imagery of Afghanistan (Mousavi 1997; Hopkins 2008). This was aptly exposed by Hanifi’s study (2004) of the historical myth and invention of Loyi Jirga (grand council).

## I. The Emergence and Decline of the Durrani Kingdom (1747-1880)

The geographical territory, today called Afghanistan, was a borderland between various empires that ruled from India, Persia and Central Asia. In sixteenth century, the region was the battleground between various Turko-Mongol empires- Safavids in today's Iran, Mughals in India and Shaybanid Uzbeks in Central Asia. The decline of these empires paved the way for the emergence of the Pashtun Durrani Kingdom and subsequently, the modern Afghanistan.

### I.1 A Historical Overview (1747-1880)

The Durrani Pashtuns owe their special position to the policies of the Safavid Empire and later to Nadir Shah Afshar. In 1589 the Safavid ruler entrusted Sado, the leader of the Sadozai subdivision of Abdali tribe (later Durrani), with the protection of the Kandahar and Herat highroad. In return for their services, they received prominent positions and service grants in the form of lands around Kandahar and the cities of Herat (Noelle 1997:233). The Abdali tribe's help for Nadir Afshar in defeating their rival Pashtun Ghilzai tribe put them in a privileged position in the Afshar dynasty (1736-1747). With the sudden assassination of Nadir Shah Afshar in 1747, the Eastern part of his empire fell into the hands of his 26-year-old Abdali general, Ahmad Khan. Allegedly, after his return to Kandahar, the Pashtun tribes and other ethnic groups including the Hazara, Qizilbash, and the Baluchis organised a *Loyi Jirga* (ground council), choosing Ahmad Khan as their ruler and giving him the title of Shah. However, the account of Ahmad Khan's peaceful and consensual accession to the throne has been questioned.<sup>28</sup> The kingdom and the Abdali tribes were

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<sup>28</sup> The dominant view asserts that the Pashtun tribes organised a traditional *Loyi Jirga* to elect the future ruler of the kingdom. Hanifi (2004) and other prominent historians (Mousavi 1997) reject this account. They claim that none of the Persian sources at the time confirm this account. Pre-colonial sources including the 1773 official court history of Ahmad Khan Abdali, *Tarikh-e-Ahmad Shahi*, by Mahmud Al-Hussaini (re-printed, Moscow, 1974) contains no reference to a coronation, election, consensus, Afghanistan, Pashtuns, or *Loyi Jirga* (Hanifi 2004; Mousavi 1997). In fact, the Al-Hussaini reveals that Ahmad Khan's accession was surrounded by much violence and armed conflict between his supporters and opponents. Hanifi (2004) in his detailed study of the myth of *Loyi Jirga* compellingly shows that this account is inspired by various whimsical, oriental and colonial representations of local people.



named Durrani, supposedly after the title he adopted – Durr-i-Durran ('pearl of pearls') (Vogelsang 2008:233).

Ahmad Shah was fortunate when he captured a caravan transporting Nadir Shah's taxes from India to Persia. The fund enabled him to build an expansive patronage network across tribes and various ethnic communities for his conquest, particularly for his military expeditions in India (Gregorian 1969). He conquered most of the territories of present Afghanistan. By 1762, the young kingdom had reached its height when it expanded to Kashmir, Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan. Timur Shah (1773-93), Ahmad Shah's son and successor, ruled for the next twenty years without major upheavals. However, he failed to pass power peacefully to his 24 sons, which subsequently brought two decades of power struggle amongst rival royal family lineage, mainly between the Sadozai and Mohammadzai sub-tribal divisions.<sup>29</sup> The outcome was the disintegration of the Durrani Kingdom into several principalities and significant loss of territories in India.

The Sadozai lineage rule was effectively ended in 1826 when Dost Mohammad Khan (1826-38 and then 1842-63), the youngest of the Mohammadzai, seized power in Kabul. Dost Mohammad Khan's reigns coincide with the British invasion of Afghanistan, known as the first Anglo-Afghan war (1839-42). Lack of revenue became a major obstacle for Dost Mohammad Khan and his successors, making the Durrani Kingdom more and more dependent on foreign aid and subsidies. During Dost Mohammad's second reign (1842-63), foreign aid from Qajar Iran and British India enabled Dost Mohammad at times to subdue the people and extract taxes from them, but his control remained precarious (Noelle 1997). The British provided weapons in appreciation of his neutrality during the Indian revolt of 1857-59. Dost Mohammad Khan's death brought the country back to five years of civil

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Such representation of the Orient is based on the European understanding of the state, a modern phenomenon, introduced through colonialism (Shahrani 1990; Baiza 2013). Interestingly, in later Afghan historical writings, the coronation of Ahmad Shah has been portrayed as an exclusive Pashtun process, excluding the role of other ethnic groups.

<sup>29</sup> Shah Mahmud of Barekzai's tribe came to power between 1800-1803/ 1809-18. The Sadozai heir, Shah Shuja managed to hold onto power from 1803-1809 but then was overthrown and was eventually forced into exile in India.

war as his sons (27 in total from 16 wives) fought one another over accession. Eventually, Sher Ali Khan (1863-1866 & 1868-1879) seized power. He pursued an ambitious modernisation program attempting to build a professional army and administration. He also followed a multi-ethnic accommodations approach to government in an attempt to broaden his power base and create national cohesion (Saikal 2006:33-35). Vartan Gregorian (1969:93) has termed Sher Ali's initiative as the "beginning of a new Afghanistan". However, reforms were once again hampered by rivalries among different political factions within the royal family who mobilised tribal communities against the king (Saikal 2006; Gregorian 1969). Sher Ali was overthrown by the British in the second Anglo-Afghan war (1878-1880) bringing Afghanistan further under colonial control.

### *1.II The Constitution of the Durrani Kingdom (1747-1880)*

Gregorian (1969:48) suggests that the constitution of the Durrani Kingdom during this period resembled closely a confederation of tribes and khanates than a centralised monarchy. The kingdom was a collective power-sharing enterprise, a "network kingdom".

Noelle (1997) provides an interesting account of the tribal constitution of the Durrani Kingdom in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. She argues that the Pashtun rulers created an *entrenched leadership* clique who came to constitute the core of the Durrani Kingdom. The Sadozai and Mohammadzai subdivision within the Durrani and Hotak and Tokhi tribal subdivision among the Ghilzai emerged as the "entrenched leading lineage" to rule the kingdom collectively (Noelle 1997). She divided the Pashtun tribal structure into the following three categories: 1) *border tribes* who display the dispersion of power typical of segmentary lineage organisation (e.g., tribes in the Khyber pass area and some Ghilzai in Ghazni); 2) *tribal aristocracy* superimposed on a local population of heterogeneous population (e.g., Yusufzai and Tarklanri in Swat, Bajaur and Dir areas); and 3) *entrenched leadership*, which had crystallised

under Safavid/Mughal patronage (Noelle 2007:122-223).<sup>30</sup> Noelle (1997) suggests that it was only the latter that constituted the core of the kingdom. She compares their role and their service to that of the medieval European institution of the *feudum*.

Ahmad Shah and his successors could only maintain their claims to supremacy over the population by making tribal chiefs, especially the ones from the entrenched leading lineage, privileged partners of his expansionist policies. As Ghubar (1981), the Afghan historian aptly summarised, the tribal chiefs were *Sharik-o-Dawla* (partners to the state). Ahmad Shah had to consult with a council of nine tribal chiefs called *sardars* (“Amir-i-Lashkar”, the head of army) (Gregorian 1969: 48). These tribal chiefs were like “little kings” as described by Ghubar, who were permanent tribal commanders with their own tribal and ethnic army units, collecting revenues from the provinces under their control and receiving a substantial part of it as *jazia* (patronage), while sending only the assigned amount to the king (1981:574). The *sardars* essentially acted as political entrepreneurs (see section leadership) who were able to manipulate identity-based divisions as a convenient basis for building political alliances and, at times of war, challenging rivals. This way, different sections of the “entrenched lineage” came to constitute different parts of the Durrani Kingdom. This was essentially a “network kingdom” where competition and conflict over its control by rival tribal leaders shaped the very nature of politics and statehood during this period.

### *I. III. The Sources of Political Instability in the Durrani Kingdom*

The Durrani Kingdom was marred by vicious cycles of political instability and violence. Explanations are abound about the sources of political instability ranging from those who blame the country’s resilient socio-cultural diversity of “micro-societies” (Saikal 2006), to Afghanistan’s difficult topography in making it difficult for rulers to subjugate its population (most colonial writings), to

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<sup>30</sup> The internal organisation of these tribes was shaped as the result of interplay between kinship structure, ecological conditions and the power of the adjoining sedentary states affecting tribal organisations (Tapper 1983; Barfield 1990).

Afghanistan's strategic position in world power competition (Kakar 2006; Ghubar 1981), to rivalries within the ruling dynasties (Saikal 2006), and to those who blame successive government's discriminatory policies (Mousavi 1997; Shahrani 1990). Although most of these explanations are valid, they do not hold because most countries around the world have experienced similar situations, yet the state has survived.

The most compelling explanation is provided by historical anthropologists (Noelle 1997; McChesney 1991; Barfield 1990) and some political scientists (Rubin 1995; Hopkins 2008) who identify the main source of political instability in the tribal dynamics of social organisations of Pashtun rulers. Drawing on the theory of segmentary lineage organisation proposed by Evans-Pritchard, Sahlins and Gellner, they assert that the internal Pashtun tribal organisational dynamics interlocked the ruling groups down in a vicious cycle of political instability and violence. They point out that the dynamics of Pashtun tribal lineage is "segmentary", which means that cooperation or hostility between groups is determined by the scope of the problem at hand (Barfield 2012: 78). Tapper found the Pashtun tribal structure as the most "pervasive and explicit segmentary lineage ideology on the classic pattern, perpetuated not only in written genealogies but also in the territorial framework of tribal distribution" (1983:43).<sup>31</sup> The segmentary dynamics in Afghanistan have followed a pattern of cousin rivalry (*tarburwali*), or jealousy among brothers and half-brothers (Barfield 2012; Rubin 1995; Saikal 2006). This reflects the famous Pashtun saying that "Me against my brother; my brothers and me against our cousins; my brothers, cousins, and me against the world" (Barfield 2012:78). In such dynamics, once a charismatic leader dies or loses influence, the divisive character of the segmentary tribal system impedes the smooth transition of power. The ruler cannot have the power to command because he is 'first among equals' (Barfield 2012:79). Every political pretender has to build and maintain his personal and individual clientele and his own political network.

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<sup>31</sup> In Afghanistan, there are two main Pashtun tribal confederacies, the Durrani and Ghilzai who trace their origin to Qays, allegedly the common ancestors of all Pashtuns (Caroe 1958). Pashtun groups are composed of lineage. Most rulers of modern Afghanistan belonged to Durrani tribes and to Sadozai (1747-1826) and Mohammadzai (1826-1973) lineages. The Pashtuns in Afghanistan adhere to *Pashtunwali* as their code of conduct.

Tapper argued that the relationship between tribe and the state are not necessarily conflictive as they mutually work together in maintaining a single system (1983: 5-6). State control is clearly an important determinant of a tribal political organisation (Tapper 1983). Glatzer (1983) proposed that the degree of hierarchisation within a tribe is directly linked to the intensity of its contact with the state. Barfield (2012) observed an inherent tension between the egalitarian Pashtun tribal system and the centrally and hierarchically organised Turko-Mongol government system which the Durrani rulers adopted from the Safavid and the Mughals.<sup>32</sup> While the actual units of social organisation among the Turko-Mongols were based on loyalty to successful warrior chieftains, among the tribal Pashtuns it was based on their specific genealogical descent. Barfield infers that the egalitarian Pashtun tribal organisation is prone to rejecting the centralisation of power because of the instrument of segmentary division.

The theory of segmentary lineage organisation is a compelling analysis. However, as pointed out by Shahrani (1990) one must not externalize the problem of state-building. The above analysis should not simply equate the social organisation of the tribal Pashtun society with social and political fragmentation and opposition to any kind of centralised rule, independent of the policies and practices of the government (Shahrani 1990:42). This study contends with Dorronsoro (2012) that the initial strategies and policies employed by the Afghan rulers were instrumental in the survival and political relevance of the tribes. In fact the emergence of the “entrenched lineage” was the result of these policies in the first place (Noelle 1997). When fully entrenched, *sardars* and tribal khans were able to successfully manipulate tribes at moments of rupture for bargains. Tribal networks served as a blueprint for rulers and political entrepreneurs to expand and consolidate their power through network practice of patronage and manipulation of identities. This is discussed below.

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<sup>32</sup> Barfield (2012) identified two different cultural traditions in Afghanistan: (1) the hierarchical Turko-Mongol tribal structure which had dominated the political landscape since the first millennium in Central Asian, Iran, Turkey and India; (2) and the egalitarian Pashtun tribal structure.

### *I.V Government's Policies and Practices*

The *strength* of the Durrani ruler and tribal chiefs to maintain an expansive web of personal loyalties was a function of his abilities to remunerate the services rendered (Noelle 1997; Gregorian 1969).

Noelle (1997: 220-222) identified four different types of patronage allowances during the reign of Dost Mohammad Khan, which were practiced until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. These were: 1) *tankhayi wilayat* (provincial allowance), given to sardars; 2) *jagir* (service grant), assigned to the khans, 3) the village headsmen received an allowance called *malikana*; and 4) an allotment of grants and cash known as *wazifa* was generally set aside for the support of the religious establishment. The provincial allowance formed the largest amount followed by jagir. For instance, in Jalalabad 37% of revenue was given out in the form of *tankhayi wilayat*. This did not include the amount of land that was given as patronage to tribal chiefs. Noelle also provides another interesting observation regarding the *sardar's* patronage position. The *sardars* were bound to the king by some sort of contract. The appointment of provinces took place in a bidding process in which the contenders often accused the current officeholders of embezzlement and promised to submit greater net revenue in order to gain the appointment (Noelle 1997:254-256). For instance, Haji Hassan Kakar, the chief of Kakar Pashtuns and governor of Bamiyan, was awarded a two-year contract to collect the revenue of the Behsud area, the trade route between Kabul and lesser Turkistan. According to Masson (1974II: 305-316), after the payment of his government dues, he was estimated to have a yearly income of 150,000 rupees for himself.

Until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the regular military campaigns into the rich Indian provinces for plunder provided the Sadozai kings with the necessary wealth for redistribution (Dupree 1973; Gregorian 1969; Saikal 2006). However, with the loss of the Indian territories, the Durrani kings had to rely on internal revenue for distribution to maintain the royalty of tribal *sardars* and khans; this meant levying heavy taxes on non-Pashtun communities as well as grabbing

their lands for redistribution to buy loyalty. During Dost Mohammad Khan's second reign, maintaining the army had become so difficult that the army had to do without regular salaries during difficult times and on many occasion maintained themselves through looting and plundering (Noelle 1997). In 1863, during the siege of Herat, Dost Mohammad Khan rewarded his army by allowing 4,000 soldiers, chosen deliberately for the purpose of looting, to carry out the plundering of the city (Noelle 1997: 265).

The politicisation of identity-based divisions was another active government policy and practice. Although, Ahmad Shah's and even his successor, Timur Shah's rule, were more inclusive in following the Turko-Persian pattern of governance, they cultivated the seeds of discriminatory policies and the supremacy of the Pashtuns.<sup>33</sup> The country become known as Afghanistan in the late nineteen century based on the ethnonyms of "Afghans" and "Afghanistan" used to denote a particular ethnic group, the Pashtuns.<sup>34</sup>

Their successors followed a policy of rule and divide and manipulated Afghanistan's religious, tribal, and ethno-linguistic differences to expand their rule (Emadi 2010: 5). Shahrani suggests that the Durrani Empire further strengthened their tribal and ethno-linguistic entities by using them as units of administration, principally for the recruitment of *Lashkar* (popular army) for its war of expansion (Shahrani 1990:44). These discriminatory policies, manifested through patronage and privileges, gradually led to tribal and ethnic

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<sup>33</sup> Historically, empire-building in this region was traditionally an inclusive project as the cases of Turkic Ghaznavids, the Ottomans and Mughals has shown. The exclusion of non-ruling ethnic-groups from power is a modern European phenomenon related to European perception of tribal and ethnic nationalism. I am indebted to Dr. Yahia Baiza for his comments.

<sup>34</sup> Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the territory of today's Afghanistan used to be called "Khurasan". In the two main texts from this period there is no mention of Afghanistan (Griffiths 1967:17-32). Elphinstone who visited the country in 1809 noted that the people did not call their own land "Afghanistan" but were aware that others did. Elphinstone himself described the "Afghauns" as the Pashtun ethnic group, which he divided into east and west. He referred to other parts of today's Afghanistan as dependencies of the "kingdom of Caboul". The Pashtuns, in particular, held the colonial imagination at the expense of other ethnic groups. This was in line with the colonial strategy in selectively using race to maintain nation-states under their territory (Marx 1998). Imposing a model of Afghanness ultimately privileges Pashtun property interest. Even today, most images coming out of Afghanistan portray the whole country from the point of the Taliban and insurgency, whereby the image of Afghanistan, as a multi-ethnic country is lost.

stratification and conflicts (Shahrani 1990; Noelle 1997; Saikal 2006). While the Pashtuns were exempt from paying any taxes, as they regarded themselves rulers not as citizens or subjects, other ethnic groups had to pay heavy taxes.<sup>35</sup> The Durrani and some Ghilzai leading hereditary tribes regularly received crown lands (khalisa) as military pay for past services. As a result, Kandahar city and its surroundings became completely 'Durraniized' during Ahmad Shah's rule, forcing the local indigenous populations' of Farsiwans, Hazaras, Kakars, and Baluchis to move (Vogelsang 2008: 233; Noelle 1997: 161).<sup>36</sup>

#### *I.IV The Durrani Leadership*

The Durrani kings were first and foremost tribal leaders, *primus inter pares*, one among equals (Dupree 1973). Effective leadership meant the ability to balance tribal and lineage family interests within a complex web of loose allegiances and loyalties. Rulers had to constantly build and expand their networks, rather than possess power. Power did not reside in any one person or structure but in fluidly structured networks of influence. As soon as doubts concerning the ruler's political power or even physical health arose, allegiances tended to shift in favour of another contender for power who showed greater promise of securing adequate advantages for his followers (Gregorian 1969; Barfield 2012). Successful successions meant raising the broadest coalitions of tribes and ethnic communities. For instance, Dost Mohammad Khan's seizure of power in 1826 was mainly due to his ability to build an expansive coalition from the Pashtun tribes, the Kohistan Tajiks and the Shi'a Qizilbash (Noelle 1997). Elphinstine made an interesting observation in the early nineteenth century that power struggles between various Sadozai princes were relatively small, never exceeding 10,000 men on either side (1972II: 103-5). Most of these battles were decided by shifting allegiances rather than bloodshed. Another interesting observation from an organisational

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<sup>35</sup> The Ghilzai of Kabul at the time were paying 1/10 of their harvest as tax, whereas the Tajiks of Kabul had to pay 1/3 of their harvest (Starchy, "Revenue and Trade", fs, 21, 134). In Jalalabad, the Khugiani paid revenue on the basis of Jam-i-qalandar khan and most Ghilzai villages submitted no revenue whatsoever (in Noelle 221).

<sup>36</sup> According to Raverty, the Durrani Pashtuns moved to the Kandahar region during the reign of the Turko-Mongol Timurid ruler Shah Rukh (1404-1447) (1888: 53).



network perspective is that only those rivals, who had a territorial base, were able to effectively challenge the centre.<sup>37</sup>

The *sardars* (tribal chiefs) were acting as “powerbrokers” mediating between the king and tribes. For the king, the *Sardars* had to collect tax, provide soldiers in times of war, and to maintain order in their regions. For his followers, he had to liaison external political relations and adjudicates disputes. This is referred to as the ability to ‘tie the knot of the tribe’ (Galtzer 1983:134). Azoy (1982) points out that in a tribal society, leaders must prove that they possess two important qualities: 1) *Haisiyat* (character) and *itibar* (credit). The first is established by the behavioural display of “piety, generosity, and wisdom”. The second is achieved by his ability to get things done for the community and to create a followership for himself (Azoy: 1982: 35-36). A tribal chief (*Sardar* or *khan*) must provide its followers, if not with booty, at least with lavish entertainment and hospitality; otherwise they may abandon him and support the rival, even the chief of another tribe (Tapper 1983: 55).

To sum up this section, the Durrani rulers of Afghanistan founded a “network kingdom” surrounded by a small clique of leading lineage families. In moments of rupture and crisis, they manipulated clientelistic and identity features of the Afghan society in order to sustain and expand their power within the state. Tribal chiefs were skillful in mobilising rebellion as a political tool to remind the ruler that he was one among other equal players in the game, and therefore needed to continuously put his claim to test. Thus, the power of rulers depended very much on maintaining the support of tribal chiefs and maintaining balanced-network equilibrium amongst them.<sup>38</sup> The stability of the first two Sadozai kings (Ahmad Shah and his successor, Timur

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<sup>37</sup> For instance, Shah Shuja, who had a rightful claim to the throne, made several attempts to gain power but failed (Darlymple 2013). Similarly, in the quest for power during the civil war of 1818-1826, Pur dil Khan and his brothers were able to threaten the Kabul rulers because they had control of Qandahar and Peshawar as safe heaven where they could mobilise the tribes.

<sup>38</sup> Elphinstone observed in early nineteenth century that “the king is in great measure dependent on the good will of the Dooranee chiefs, and is obliged to conciliate that order by bestowing on it a large portion of power and honour, though in reality he views it with jealousy, and is continually employed in indirect attempts to undermine it” (1972II: 104).

Shah), and the first Mohammadzai king, Dost Mohammad Khan, rested greatly on their ability to maintain the balance among competing networks. Rulers like Shah Shuja, Zaman Shah and Ali Sher, who either tried to centralise power by undermining tribal chiefs or failed to maintain a balanced-equilibrium among them, paved the way to their own downfall. The rulers themselves exacerbated identities and political-economic tensions with their policies of social and political fragmentation and discrimination. Interestingly, similar power dynamics are at play in the post-2001 international statebuilding period, (Chapter 7) where parallel features of statehood and governance are visible.

## **II. International Patronage and State Formation (1839-1974)**

With the first Anglo-Afghan war, Afghanistan's historical state formation became enmeshed with international intervention and international patronage. International patronage was gradually consolidated as a political mean for state formation in Afghanistan, paving the way for Afghan leaders to rely on international aid for survival.

### *II.1 Anglo-Afghan Wars and Their Consequences*

The Anglo-Afghan wars (1839-42 and 1878-80) introduced a global-international dimension to state-building in Afghanistan. It brought the country into closer interaction with the European colonial powers, particularly with Great Britain and Russia. Most historians consider the geopolitical calculations within the context of the "Great Game" as the principal reason for the first British intervention. However, Hanifi (2011) has compellingly argued that economic considerations took priority for the East India Company.<sup>39</sup> The outcome of the first Anglo-Afghan war (1839-42) was an embarrassing defeat

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<sup>39</sup> Hanifi (2011) provides the following explanation for his reasoning. First, British India did not yet border Afghanistan. The Sikh kingdom was a buffer between the two sides. Second, concern about whose goods would dominate this trade network was more significant than the hypothetical Russian military threat to India. Third, and most telling, the British were initially motivated by a much more ambitious plan for economic development that would link the overland trade networks coming out of central Asia with a new maritime route utilising ports to be constructed along the Indus River.

for the British. The outcome of the second Anglo-Afghan war was the signing of the Treaty of Gandamak, which gave Great Britain full control of Afghanistan's foreign affairs. A few years later, Amir Abdur Rahman Khan agreed to the British and Russian demarcation of the territory of Afghanistan, creating a buffer state between them. The outcome of the Anglo Afghan wars had direct and indirect long-term consequences on future political instability and violence in Afghanistan. It made Afghan rulers dependent on foreign subsidies and weapons, which they used to suppress their people. It paved the way for building local-imperial power alliances (Emadi 2010). In addition, it weakened and de-linked Afghanistan's trade networks, connecting the Indian Sub-continent and Central Asia and weakening the Afghan economy (Hanifi 2011). The British occupation gave impetus to Afghan nationalism and xenophobia. Even today, these sentiments feed Afghan national feelings against the on-going post-2001 NATO-led intervention. Finally, it brought ethnic boundaries more strongly into profile (Noelle 1997). During Amir Abdur Rahman Khan's reign, in one of the worst genocidal attack, the Shia Qizilbash and Hazara pro-British stand and the Baluchis, Brahius and Turkic groups neutrality provided the Amir with an excellent pretext to mobilise the Sunni population against the Shi's in order to fully subjugate them.<sup>40</sup> This is discussed further in the next section.

### *II.II. The Centralisation of Power by Abdur Rahman Khan and the British Aid (1880-1900)*

The reign of Abdur Rahman Khan (1880-1901) witnessed a significant transformation in state-society relationship. He pursued a coercion-intensive path to state formation, which earned him the title of "Iron Amir" (Rubin 1995:48). What made centralisation possible, something that his predecessors had failed, was international aid money from the British in the form of grants and subsidies. In 1882 the British granted the Amir a yearly subsidy of 1.2 million Indian rupees, which was increased to 1.8 after the

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<sup>40</sup> During the second Anglo-Afghan war the Hazara and Qizilbash had actively supported the British intervention (Saikal 2006). When the resistance took place, other mentioned ethnic groups maintained their neutrality.

formal demarcation of the Durand Line in 1893 (Saikal 2006:30; Rubin 1995: 49). From this money Abdur Rahman Khan built a discipline and capable army, which enabled him to increase direct tax revenues on merchants, landlords and farmers (Rubin, 1995:49). He was against large-scale industries such as transportation and communication as he feared this might expose the country to imperial invasion (Hanifi 2011). Only industries like arms, which were politically needed for his centralization, were pursued (Saikal 20006:36).

The means employed to achieve centralisation was brutal, absolute and genocidal (Saikal 2006; Emadi 2010; Mousavi 1997).<sup>41</sup> Louise Dupree (1969) dubbed it, “internal imperialism”. The Amir used every means to eliminate his rivals; including force, bloody reprisals, divide and rule, matrimonial alliances, bribes and intrigues (Gregorian 1969). The brutality of Amir’s centralisation is best demonstrated with his suppression of the Ghilzai, Nuristan and Hazara communities. Like his grandfather, he assumed the title of “Amir-al-Muminin”, “Commander of the Faithful”. In crushing the Nuristanis and Hazaras, he employed Islam as a powerful institution to mobilise the tribes (Gregorian 1969). When suppressing the Hazara revolt he appealed to the Sunni tribal Pashtuns, Kohistanis and even the Uzbek with the offer of land, property and slaves (Mousavi 1997).<sup>42</sup> According to some estimates, over half of the Hazara population was either killed or enslaved and most of their lands were redistributed to Pashtun tribes (Dolatabadi 2001).<sup>43</sup> The state gained the largest share from the selling of Hazara slaves, which became a significant source of their revenue (Emadi 2010; Mousavi 1997). Abdur Rahman Khan’s centralisation policy had a major consequence on the long-term political instability in Afghanistan. His oppressive policies traumatized state-society

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<sup>41</sup> A British citizen at the court of Amir wrote, “the Amir sent for me to the palace, and was eating ice cream in an upper veranda. For hundred mutinous soldiers from Herat were marched in. The Amir ordered to ‘poke their eyes out’ and they did it there and then. I couldn’t finish my ice-cream, but the Amir gulped his.” (Lt. General Sir George MacMunn, *Afghanistan from Darius to Amanullah* (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd, 1929). 245. In Emadi 2010: 16).

<sup>42</sup> This was not the first “religious war” documented in modern Afghan history. In 1803 a Shia-Sunni conflict broke out in Kabul with the Shia-Qizilbash and Hazaras who had supported the Mohammadzai Sardar Shah Mahmud in one side, and the Sunni population of the city who had sided with the Sadozai Sardar, Shah Shuja, on the other. The attack took 400 lives on both sides. See *Siraj-ul-Tawarikh* by Fayz Mohammad Kateb for a full account of this incident.

<sup>43</sup> An indication: “Out of the 200,000 families of Behsud only 64,000 families in total and only 60 families of the Sultan Mohammad clan survived the war” (*Siraj-ul-Tawarikh*, 1858: 1031).

relations, which arguably to this day haunts Afghanistan. As one famous Afghan analyst put it “he set into motion the seeds of ethnic conflict which exploded ninety years after his death”.<sup>44</sup>

### *II.III Ideological Difference: Modernising the Afghan State (1901-1929)*

The reign of Habibullah Khan (1901-1919) and Amanullah Khan (1919-1229) reconciled with the broader nationalist and pan-Islamist movements in the Muslim world in Persia, Ottoman Turkey, Egypt and the Indian subcontinent. These political divisions would eventually dominate politics and political ideology in the latter half of the twentieth century. In contrast to his father, Habibullah Khan introduced pragmatic reforms and opened the country to new ideas. According to Gregorian (1969), three different ideological networks emerged and competed within the government, all of them anti-British and pro-Turkish in their sympathy: 1) The conservative-clericals who sought the re-emergence of Islam; 2) the moderates who wanted a Turkish style modernisation with caution; 3) the modernist-nationalist who wanted a rapid modernization. Habibullah’s assassination was the result of his failure to accommodate the demand of these opposing factions (Gregorian 1969).

By the late 1910s, the modernist-nationalist had emerged as the dominant network centred around Ghulam Mohammad Tarzi, a prominent scholar who had studied in Damascus and Istanbul. Once in power in 1919, Amanullah Khan, a member of the modernist-nationalist group, pursued a radical modernisation and an independence programme (Poullada 1973). First, he declared Afghanistan independent and waged jihad against the British. Exhausted from the recent World War One, the British acceded to his demand. Then he pursued a radical modernisation programme which failed.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Author’s discussion with Ashraf Ghani in 2011.

<sup>45</sup> These social, political, military, and cultural reforms were comprehensive. The first Afghan constitution was promulgated in 1923; according to which even the king’s actions were, in principle, subordinate to the law (Poullada 1973:94). Measures were taken to centralise and improve the effectiveness of administration. A new tax law was introduced and the legal system unified. Universal conscription was imposed. Social reforms included the introduction of universal citizenship, expansion of the education system including women; the mosque schools reforms and the banning of polygamy and child marriage. He established the first girls’ high school in 1921 and even sent girls to study in Turkey and Switzerland, which

According to Poullada (1973) two reforms in particular, taxation and conscription, aimed at reducing the power of tribal chiefs triggered mass revolt against his rule. The reform was designed to limit the allowances paid to Mohammadzai elites and religious leaders, reducing their tax collection and conscription capacities. The tribal chiefs and religious leaders organised a combined revolt giving the revolt Islamic sanctions. The seizure of Kabul by Habibullah Kalakani, a Tajik-rebel from Kohistan, North of Kabul, was significant because for the first time in Afghanistan's modern history, a non-Pashtun had become ruler.<sup>46</sup> The ability of Habibullah Kalakani to rule for almost a year with the Pashtun tribes failing to unite around a leader is seen as a confirmation of the segmentary political dynamics of Pashtun tribal societies (Poullada 1973). The tribe eventually united around Nadir Khan, a former Mohammadzai *Sardar*, who had arrived from exile in France. Habibullah Kalakani's defeat brought a new dynasty, the Musahibans, which lasted until 1973, the longest period of political stability in Afghan history.

#### *II. IV The Rise of a "Rentier State" and Pashtun Nationalism (1929-1973)*

The Musahibans adopted the old policies of buying loyalties through patronage and bargain in an attempt to create an extensive political network, this time, exclusively around Pashtun nationalism (Saikal 2006; Gregorian 1969). Having come to power with the help of tribal chiefs and the religious establishments, Nadir Khan gave them high-profile position in the government (Dupree 1969:276).<sup>47</sup> He appointed his brothers and family members in key government positions (Saikal 2006:104-5). His successor, Zahir Shah (1933-1973), pursued similar policies and turned to international systems for resources that could enable him to gradually enlarge a state-dominated economic development and political control without confronting tribal chiefs (Rubin 1995:59).

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shocked the Afghans (Poullada 1973:70-73).

<sup>46</sup> Habibullah is often referred to in historical books as a *Bache Saghoa* (the son of a water-bearer) downgrading his social status.

<sup>47</sup> For instance, Mojaddadi's brother who had declared jihad against Amanullah was appointed the minister for justice (Dupree 1969: 276).

The Musahibans continued with the reforms, albeit with pragmatism, caution and adherence to Pashtun nationalism (Gregorian 1969). Modernisation was aimed explicitly to empower the Pashtun constituency (Saikal 2006; Emadi 2010). Influenced by Nazi Germany and their German advisers, the 1930s and 40s saw the emergence of Pashtun nationalism. The state development projects were exclusively targeted in the Pashtun regions in order to create Pashtun development symbols of progress to be emulated by non-Pashtun communities (Emadi 2010). Efforts were also made to hegemonise the state, society and culture through Pashtun nationalism. Attempts were made, albeit unsuccessful, to Pashtunise the pre-dominantly Persian-speaking civil servants (Rubin 1995:66). Pashto was declared the official language in 1936. The *Pashtu Tulana* (Pashto Association) was established in 1937 to conduct research on the Pashto language, culture, traditions, history and way of life. The names of historical cities, towns, and streets were changed.

The internationalisation of state-building through “rentier state” provided another important source of political stability in Afghanistan (Rubin 1995; Saikal 2006; Gregorian 1969). Prime Minister Daod skillfully manipulated Cold War rivalries between the opposing superpowers, which led to an “accelerated course of modernisation” but at the cost of transforming the country into a “rentier state” (Saikal 2006:117). The country received grants, military supplies and loans from the Soviet Union and the US. From 1956 to 1973, foreign grants and loans accounted for 80 per cent of Afghan investment and development expenditure (Rubin 1995:65).<sup>48</sup> However, the Afghan state had no control over its aid money, fluctuating all the time (Rubin 1995). It also meant that the foreign patrons could build and expand mutual networks of connections with different networked elites and their organisations, reinforcing the rentier network state (Emadi 2010) (see next

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<sup>48</sup> Between 1950-1959 US assistance totaled 148.3 million while Soviet assistance came to 246.2 million (Arnold 1985:39). Most of the Soviet aid was long-term loans whereas the US aid was in the form of outright grants. The US built the Kandahar-Kabul highway while the Soviets built the Kandahar-Herat highway and Salang Tunnel, which connected the South and North of Hindu Kush. Aid money enabled the regime to expand government expenditure to build schools, universities, hospitals and etc. According to Rubin (1995:65), from 1958-68 and again in the 1970s the state financed over 40 percent of its expenditure from revenues accruing directly from abroad.

section). For instance, while West Germany sponsored the Police Academy, Turkey and the Soviet Union sponsored the Military academy, enabling them to penetrate different segments of the Afghan armed forces (Saikal 2006:123). Moreover, an increasing number of students were given scholarships to study in the Soviet Union, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, the US, and Europe. By 1979, some 6,000 civilian specialists and 4,000 military officers were trained in the Soviet Union. It was these trained officers that organised the coup against the king, toppling the 250 years of Durrani rule.

In summary, a key feature of statehood in this period (1880-1974) was international patronage. This played a key role in Amir Abdur Rahman Khan's ability to centralise power as well as ensuring a long-term political stability for Musahibans rulers. Amanullah's failed modernisation attempt was partly the result of British termination of subsidies. However, what really cost him his throne was his policy of curbing the power and finances of powerful tribal chiefs. In contrast, the Musahiban rule was sustained because they co-opted key tribal leaders and rival family members within the government, pleased their constituencies by exclusively targeting economic development projects to Pashtun tribes, promoting Pashtun nationalism to consolidate their tribal legitimacy, and obtaining international patronage from foreign sources without undermining tribes.

### **III. The Power Dynamics of Political Organisations**

The two hundred thirty years of the Durrani rule ended on 17 July 1973 when Daod Khan, the former Prime Minister and a cousin of the king, in partnership with the communist *Parcham* faction of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) staged a bloodless coup and overthrew the monarchy.<sup>49</sup> The coup brought an end to the historically powerful class of Durrani monarchs, landed gentry (e.g. tribal chief and khans) and mullahs

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<sup>49</sup> The Soviet involvement in the coup is difficult to prove, but most analysts (Kakar 1997; Saikal 2006 and Arnold 1985) contend that the Soviets had at least prior knowledge of the coup.



(Dorransoro 2012: 40). It also saw a significant shift in the concentration of power from Durrani to Ghilzai Pashtuns. Although this power transformation had taken place before the leftist coup due to the expanding nature of the Afghan state and economy, Daod Khan's death sealed their faith (Rubin 1995:91-92). The state authority was thus no longer threatened by powerful tribal chiefs- the traditional model of uprising against the ruler in which chiefs manipulated identities (Dorransoro 2012: 40). Instead the threat would originate from political organisations and the internal factional infighting within them. The power dynamics among political organisations that shaped politics for the next three decades is discussed below.

### *III.1 The PDPA Rule & Factionalism*

In 1965 the leftist groups officially founded the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Only after eighteen months of its establishment, the PDPA split into two hostile *Khalq* (people) and *Parcham* (banner) factions led by Nur Mohammad Nur and Babrak Karmal respectively. Both factions were of the belief that the revolution should be carried out from above through the agency of a strong state (Arnold 1985). Given that PDPA lacked the capacity to carry out a grassroots' revolution, the army provided the quickest way to organise a revolution (Arnold 1985). Their infiltration of the army and bureaucracy provided them with the necessary institutional base to carry out two successful coups (Guisstozzi 2000; Emadi 1991:5-12). The first coup was in partnership between Daod Khan and *Parcham* in 1973 which did not last long. Feeling threatened by *Parcham's* expansion within the army and the bureaucracy, Daod removed them from the cabinet posts and declared that he was opposed to any party that served the interest of foreigners (Guisstozzi 2000; Arnold 1985). In 1977 he arranged a *Loyi Jirga* that elected him for a six-year term. The new constitution prescribed a strong presidency and a one-party system that paved the way for his political party, the National Revolutionary Party (Hizb-e-Inqilab-e-Mille), to gain full power (Arnold 1985). The establishment of NRP as the only legal party forced both *Parcham* and *Khalq* factions of the PDPA to re-unite in 1977 (Arnold 1985). A year later, the PDPA organised a successful coup, killing Daod and his entire family. The

demise of Daod was ultimately rooted in his attempt to eliminate rivals without first consolidating his power sufficiently.

Once in power, *Khalq* and *Parcham* factions began a fragile partnership. Initially, the strength of each faction was carefully balanced within the cabinet, central committee and the politburo (Rubin 1995:127). The *Khalqis* held the nominally top positions of Prime Minister (Noor Mohammad Taraki), and Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hafizullah Amin). Although, the *Parchamis* had occupied top positions in the Ministry of Defense and Interior, the *Khalqis*, under the influential network of Amin had more middle-ranking officers in the armed forces (Arnold 1985:72). The social composition of the middle and lower ranking officers were mostly Ghilzai Pashtuns from rural Afghanistan, which gave *Khalq* a recruiting advantage over *Parcham* (Rubin 1995:105).

The PDPA came to constitute the state apparatus and bureaucracy. Once occupying strategic positions within the state, each faction then tried to fill the ministries with their members. By 1979 a third of the party membership worked within the state, reaching 82,000 by 1987 (Guisstozzi 2000:16). Militarisation of the party was also an unavoidable consequence. As early as 1983, more than 50% of party members were in the armed forces (Arnold 1994:51). Data gathered by Rubin (1995: 91-92) on the tribal and ethnic composition of elites during different periods of *Khalq* and *Parcham* rule also reveals a significant shift in the concentration of power from Durrani to Ghilzai tribal Pashtuns. While the *Parchamis* were predominantly urban (mainly Kabul) and Persian-speaking (both Pashtun and non-Pashtuns) elites, the *Khalqis* were largely rural, Ghilzai and Paktia Pashtuns.

The party ultimately suffered from its own lack of internal cohesion and factional infighting, which contributed ultimately to the Soviet intervention (Arnold 1985; Rubin 1995; Giustozzi 2000). The differences between them were political and strategic rather than ideological. After July 1978, the *Khalqis* started pursuing a policy of Khalqisation, removing their opponents from power, especially from the army (Giustozzi 2000; Arnold 1985). The removal of key *Parchami* generals and officers significantly weakened the

army. According to Bradsher, of 62 army generals from the old regime, 60 were killed, removed or forced to retire (1999). Once the *Parchamis* had weakened, internal division within the *Khalq* faction emerged between Nur Mohammad Taraki's (the general secretary of the party) and Hafizullah Amin's (Prime Minister) political networks. In a failed attempt by Taraki to assassinate Amin, Amin staged a successful coup and killed Taraki, removing his supporters.<sup>50</sup> During the *Khalqi* rule, particularly under Amin, violence emerged as the determining factor in state-society relations (Kakar 1997). The state provided the political framework for factional infighting, where each faction was using state coercion and violent capacities to eliminate their rivals. The demise of the *Khalq* was further attributed by their radical, social, and economic reforms to transform the countryside which was badly formulated and implemented, alienating the Afghan countryside and fuelling insurgency (Rubin 1995).<sup>51</sup>

### *III.II. The Soviet Intervention and Statebuilding (1979-1989)*

The rapid disintegration of the new client-regime was a serious blow to the Soviets. Using provisions of the Soviet-Afghan Treaty of 1978 as their justification, the Soviet intervened on 27 December 1979 removing Amin and instead, installing Babrak Karmal as the new President. The intervention marked the beginning of a decade-long occupation. The Soviets pursued a policy of accommodation and compromise both in relation to the *Khalqis* and the rural countryside, at the same time accelerating efforts to rebuild the state institutions (Giustozzi 2000). Most of Amin's social and economic policies were repudiated. At the party level, some of the *Khalq* members were co-opted in the central committee but *Parcham* retained two-thirds of key government positions (Rubin 1995:127). Despite this, the *Khalq-Parcham* factional divide continued and even intensified. Each network-faction was working hard to undermine the other in the eyes of their Soviet political advisers and using their Soviets patrons to manipulate the other (Rubin 1995).

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<sup>50</sup> For the detailed account of the coup see Arnold (1985) and Kakar (1997).

<sup>51</sup> These included land reform, equality for women, the abolition of marriage payments, and the cancellation of many types of rural debts (Giustozzi, 2000).

On many occasions, the *Khalqis* in the army behaved passively, sabotaging the initiatives of the centre and sometimes even cooperating or deserting with the rebels (Giustozzi 2000:82). A KGB officer visiting Afghanistan in the early 1980s reported that it was almost impossible to create a single effective army unit because of factional infighting (Giustozzi 2000:83).

The need for a charismatic leader who could pursue serious reforms before the Soviet planned exit brought Najibullah, the head of the country's secret police, to power in 1986. However, Najibullah's policies to bring change in the organisation of the state, the army, and the economy, accentuated the ethnic realignment (Rubin 1995:150-153).<sup>52</sup> Within *Parcham*, this divide was between those non-Pashtun *Parchamis* allied to Karmal and Pashtun *Parchamis* allied to Najibullah. This was a shift from organisational lines along political party affiliation to network lines along ethnic and tribal interconnections crossing party organisational boundaries. In an environment of generated uncertainty and survival with the announced Soviet withdrawal, national and regional officials sought to build links with various political networks and social groups outside the state (Rubin 1995: 148). Army officers, provincial and district governors and field commanders were carving autonomous principalities, striking alliances of convenience with disregard for ideological differences. The political process disintegrated into direct bargaining by primary groups. This was best manifested in the 1990 *Khalqi* Defense Minister Shahnawaz Tania, who organised a coup with support from Mujahedeen Hizb-i-Islami tanzim and Pakistan's ISI (Giustozzi 2000). Najibullah ordered the arrest of 127 *Khalqi* military officers (Rubin 1995:151). Twenty-seven of those fled to Pakistan where they appeared at a press conference with Hikmatyar, the leader of Hizb-i-Islami Mujahedeen tanzim. According to Rubin, the failure of the coup and its inability to mobilise sections of the military in the hands of *Khalqis*, indicated the loss of organisational coherence amongst the *Khalqis* (1995:152).

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<sup>52</sup> Najibullah appealed to the *Khalqis* on the basis of Pashtun solidarity while balancing their power in the army with non-Pashtun militias outside the regular chain of command (Rubin 150). As noted by Rubin, Hizb continued to play the Pashtun fear that the northerners would capture power and that both Pashtuns within the government and the opposition should unite to take power before it was too late (1995:271).

The Najibullah government found itself in a permanent state of siege, with the countryside almost completely beyond their control. In order to ease this, the regime gradually came to rely more and more on *qawm*-based militias for its survival (Giustozzi 2000).<sup>53</sup> The militias were responsible for closing the Mujahedeen's infiltration routes, maintaining security in their region, and limiting the movement of resistance groups. Najibullah justified his policy by arguing that one-third of Ahmad Shah's forces were tribal forces (Giustozzi 2000:201). The relationship between these militias and the regime was based on patronage and bargain.<sup>54</sup> They evolved into powerful strongmen for regional and ethnic demands in post-1992 Afghanistan. For instance, Juma Khan led the Andarabi militias, Sayyed Mansur Naderi led the Ismailia Hazara militias, and Abdul Rashid Dostum controlled the Jawzjan Uzbek militias. The support from these militias was a significant reason for the Najibullah government's survival three years after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989.

The primary reason for the collapse of the PDPA and the state was internal divisions within the parties. Each faction competed over Soviet intervention policies, programmes and resources in order to expand their power and interest within the state. The state provided the political framework for factional infighting. The Najibullah regime survived nearly three years after the Soviet withdrawal due to his ability to balance the disparate factions as well as building an extensive patronage-based *qawm*-militia support system that constituted his power base. Its sudden collapse was not due to the strength of the resistance Mujahedeen tanzims but because of the sudden cut in the Soviet fund after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Sinno 2008). The collapse of the Najibullah regime resulted into the fragmentation of the Afghan state and society (Rubin 1995). It brought about ten years of civil war between

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<sup>53</sup> Most Afghans belong to a more extended kinship-based solidarity group known as *qawm*. Ordinary Afghans use the concept of *qawm* as a mark of distinction vis-à-vis outsiders; it designates solidarity groups of varying sizes (Bacon 1958). It is commonly used to refer to any segment of society bound by close ties. It can signify different meanings in different contexts, depending on the social/spatial distance between the informant and the person questioning (Bacon 1958).

<sup>54</sup> In 1988 of 55,000 troops in Herat, 30,000 were militias. The 17<sup>th</sup> infantry Division, counted 3,400 regular troops and 14,000 militiamen (Giustozzi 2000: 213-224).

competing tanzims (political-military Mujahedeen networks) over the control of the state and the emergence of the extremist Taliban. A new dynamics of power politics emerged and consolidated whereby political networks run by Jihadi commanders, warlords and mullahs came to dominate Afghan politics.

### *III.III The Mujahedeen Tanzims, the Fragmentation of the State and the Civil War (1992-2001)*

In the early 1970s, the Muslim Youth Organisation (Sazman-i-Jawanan-e Musulman) was formed with strong roots in the Sharia Faculty of Kabul University. After a failed coup attempt against Daod Khan in 1973, the Islamists escaped to Pakistan. By the mid-1980s seven major Sunni-tanzims in Pakistan and eight Shi'a-tanzims in Iran were functional, financed by the US, Pakistan, Iran and other countries in the war against the Soviets (see appendix for a list of key Mujahedeen tanzims). Islam, the only umbrella that could unite all communities in Afghanistan, provided the Mujahedeen with a powerful symbolic tool against the PDPA and the Soviet invasion (Roy 1990). The causes of insurgency varied from one part of the country to another (Shahrani & Canfield 1984). Political and economic motives shaped tanzim differences more than ideological and theological reasons (Roy 1990). In an environment of political uncertainty and increase in funds, some insurgency networks were driven purely for personal gains and exchange. For instance, in 1987 about one hundred so-called Mujahedeen insurgency commanders signed contracts with the regime to fight in the *Ghudni Qawmi* (ethnic militia) and *Militia Sahard* for the regime (Giustozzi 2000:205).

Except for the *Hizb*, the Mujahedeen tanzims were de-centralised political-military network forms of organisations (political networks) because of their open-hierarchical structures and their operational mode. They were fragmented along ethno-linguistic, tribal, sectarian and personality-lines (Dorransoro 2012). The Mujahedeen insurgency was essentially a “network insurgency” (Mendel 2010:734). Arquilla and Ronfeldt used the term “Netwars” to describe networks in conflict, because of their network organisational structure and their network operation mode and communication

lines (1996:33). At the ground level, given the Soviet and communist regime's harsh and brutal retribution, local insurgency activities were carried out through trustworthy and reliable personal associates. Their command, coordination, and communication could only be implemented through informal social structure of personal network ties. Therefore, tanzims had to build an extensive web of connections with tribal chiefs, village mullahs, commanders and community leaders to coordinate actions and achieve military objectives (Roy 1990). Sinno (2008) concluded that tanzims' network structure and network mode of operation was a principal factor in making them a formidable resistance force against the Soviet intervention and was ultimately responsible for their success.

According to Roy, Mujahedeen tanzims suffered from a growing discrepancy between a would-be-state from below (the field commanders) and a would-be-state from above (the Pakistan and Iran political leadership and bureaucracies) (1990: 92-94).<sup>55</sup> The civil war that followed the communist regime (1992-2001) was thus the result of tensions and infighting between a fledgling state rising from below and an imported state, both manned by young intellectuals (Roy 1990: 95). The local commanders saw themselves as somehow independent agency bound more to the population of the district in which they fought than to the leadership in Peshawar (Roy 1990). Once in Kabul, the power dynamics among tanzims interlocked them in a power struggle over the control of the state. None of the tanzims could maintain military hegemony and none was willing to compromise with its rival. The result was three years of intense civil war in Kabul between rival tanzims over the control of the city (Dorransoro 1995). Several attempts were made to reach a political settlement (the Rawalpindi accord of 1989, the Peshawar Accord of 1992 and the Mecca Accord of 1993) among the warring Mujahedeen groups. However, the diversity, fragility and loose nature of tanzims made any chance of political settlement unlikely. None of the tanzims had a national profile or attempted to appeal to the entire Afghan population.

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<sup>55</sup> These tanzims performed administrative tasks for millions of Afghan refugees using the prerogatives of the former central state (Roy 1990). For example, there were committees dealing with health, culture, and education. In some instances, they were collecting taxes using their own judicial power and issuing passports.

They were divided along ethno-linguistic, sectarian, religious and tribal lines. Their distrust and personal rivalries meant that each saw all politics as war. It was in this context that the 2001 Bonn Conference, aimed at achieving a compromise among warring political networks, took place (discussed in the next chapter).

The inter-Mujahedeen wars over the control of the state brought Afghanistan 10 years of civil war and led to the emergence of the Taliban as the hegemonic group from 1996 to 2001. All parties in the war committed atrocities and human rights violations. The civil war had several major consequences on governance and statehood in Afghanistan, which significantly influenced the post-2001 international statebuilding. Firstly, the war further fragmented the Afghan state where each tanzim commander and warlord was controlling different strategic regions of the country (Rubin 1995). For instance, in the immediate collapse of the Najibullah regime, in Balkh province, Wahdat, Junbish and Jamiat tanzims commanders fought one another for the control of the provincial state. A “bargaining settlement” was eventually reached in which state administration and its resources were divided among the rival tanzim commanders based on their military strengths. By 1994, General Dostum emerged as the undisputed strongman of the North. His strategic control of the Northern provinces bordering Central Asia and its airports, roads, and fuel depots financed his army and provided salaries and career prospects to many different groups including the former communist generals and officials (Rubin 1995:275). The same scenario was in place in different parts of the country with Ismail Khan, a Jamiat-i-Islami commander, controlling the West, Wahdat-i-Islami controlling the Central regions, and Hizbi-Islami dominating part of the South and South East.

Secondly, the war further served to solidify the link between political networks and specific ethnic and tribal communities, instrumentalising and bringing Afghanistan’s historical hostilities along identity-based divisions into the forefront of Afghan politics (Roy 1995; Simonsen 2004; Wimmer & Schetter 2003; Maley 1998; Dorronsoro 1995). Political tanzims utilised ethnic markers for instrumental ends (Wimmer & Schetter 2003). The intense war and its



violent consequences— the Etihad-i-Islami and Jamiat-i-Islami’s massacre of Hazaras in Afshar neighbourhood in Kabul in 1994, the *Junbish* massacre of the Taliban in Mazar-e-Sharif in 1997 and the Taliban massacres of Hazaras in 1998 in the same city— created conditions proximate to an “ethnic security dilemma” (Kaufmann 2000: 441). In such conditions, the appeal of tanzims further increased conflict and accentuated ethnic affiliations as the two together provided a rationale for the perpetuation of ethnic divisions. Therefore, this produced a symbiotic relationship between tanzims, who wished to advance their own positions and their constituency who feared political domination. Moreover, the civil war further strengthened the emergence of a complex set of power relations based on patronage networks both within and between tanzims clientele and powerbrokers in Pakistan, Iran and beyond (Maley 2002).<sup>56</sup> Given that Mujahedeen leaders were clients of rival international and regional patrons of resistance, the civil war intensified the regional aspects of the Afghan war. The regional dimension of the current insurgency conflict in Afghanistan related to this regional power rivalries and competition. It is widely alleged that Pakistan is actively sponsoring the Taliban in Afghanistan.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter provided a historical account of the process of state formation and the nature of statehood in modern Afghanistan (18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century). It illustrated that the current logic of network governance and statehood is rooted in Afghanistan’s historical and sociological development over the last two centuries. It argued that the Pashtun rulers of Afghanistan founded a “network state” which was substantiated by power dynamics among competing tribal lineage networks, producing brutal cycles of violence and state collapse. Political disorder always rested on a combination of personalised patron-client practices and instrumentalisation of identity-based divisions. For the Durrani rulers, the stability of their rule depended very much

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<sup>56</sup> For instance, Gulboddin Hikmatyar was supported by Pakistan’s Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI), Abdur-Rab Rasul Sayyaf by Saudi Arabia, Ali Mazari by Iran and General Dostum by Uzbekistan and Turkey.

on maintaining the support of tribal chiefs and maintaining a balanced-network equilibrium among them. The state always provided the political framework for network competition, where each political network or factions within them used state coercive and violent capacities to eliminate their rivals.

From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, international patronage proved akin to drug addiction for Afghan rulers. The Mohammadzai lineage ruled from 1826 to 1973 through a mix of patron-client network relations provided mainly by foreign aid. Foreign aid was vital to Abdur Rahman Khan's centralisation of power. His repression policies brutalised Afghan society beyond repair, which still haunts local communities. Amanullah's attempt at centralising the state without foreign aid failed against the re-emerging tribal networks. The Musahibans (1929-1973) did not attack tribes but tried to encapsulate and divide them, using resources from the international system that enabled them to last the longest. With the emergence of political organisations (e.g. the PDPA & Jihadi tanzims), the rentier state brought about rentier revolutionaries and rentier Jihadis. Like all previous governments, the PDPA regime collapsed not because of the strength of the resistance groups but because of its own internal division and segmentation. The power dynamics of Mujahedeen tanzims interlock them in a vicious power contest over the control of the state, which led to a decade of civil war (1992-2001) empowering commanders, warlords and mullahs. The civil war subsequently consolidated the link between Mujahedeen tanzims and ethnic and tribal communities, further instrumentalising identity-based divisions within the Afghan state and society.

Most of the historical features of statehood and the power dynamics of political networks over the control of the state are still visible in post-2001 Afghanistan. As such, the post-2001 international statebuilding must be understood in terms of continuities and changes in the power dynamics of former Mujahedeen tanzims since the 1980s. The following three empirical chapters explore the power dynamics among competing networks (*both* former tanzim networks and new emerging ones) in constituting the post-2001 state (Chapter 5) and thus shaping the processes and outcomes of

statebuilding in Afghanistan. Chapter 5 shows how rival political networks consolidated their power using the state coercive powers and financial resources and funds. Chapter 6 and 7 shows that the post-2001 period has further provided a platform for political network pact-making and renegotiation. This is best manifested in moments of contestation and crisis like the 2009 presidential election (Chapter 6) and the 2010 to 2011 Special Court crisis (Chapter 7). Patronage practices, horse-trading, opportunism and illegality seem to be far more important factors in the emergence of political stability and political order than election, democracy, justice sector reform, the strength of the national security forces and civil society development. In the following empirical chapters, the thesis addresses these practices and interventions.

## Chapter 5: The Post-2001 State, The Re-Assembling and Transformation

The more we can get people who have occupied positions of *force* and *strength* in the past but who now say ‘we’re committed to a political process’ and the more we can close off the options for people who resort to violence, the *better* the future of Afghanistan will be. (*Jack Straw, the British Foreign Secretary in Lucy Morgan Edwards “the Afghan Solution”, 2011: 148*)

### Introduction

Four weeks after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US, the Operation Enduring Freedom began to topple the Taliban from power. The operation was carried out by the CIA and a small deployment of US military Special Forces, and subsequently implemented by the Northern Alliance (NA) on the ground- a loose coalition of several anti-Taliban Mujahedeen tanzims who had fought one another during the civil war of 1992-1996 but then formed a coalition against the Taliban.<sup>57</sup> In less than two months the entire country had been liberated from the Taliban. The country was firmly in the hands of Mujahedeen tanzim leaders and their militias by the time the Bonn Conference took place in early December in order to agree to transfer power to the Afghan Interim Authority. In the sudden vacuum created, Mujahedeen tanzims who had the necessary coercive organisational structures came to constitute the post-2001 state administration and bureaucracy. At the same time, in the periphery, the main tanzim commanders established councils and shared power as part of a local political settlement (discussed in section II & III).

The decision to employ a “light footprint” approach to statebuilding at Bonn meant relying on tanzims and their military organisational capacities to provide security and administration staff. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a contingent of a small military force, was only deployed to Kabul city leaving the periphery to its fate. Busy with the ‘war

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<sup>57</sup> In Lucy Morgan Edwards (2011) “The Afghan Solutions: The Inside Story of Abdul Haq, the CIA, and How Western Hubris Lost Afghanistan.”

against terror' campaign, international military forces, in particular the Americans pursued a strategy of purchasing peace and security from indigenous anti-Taliban forces. Subsequently, the same Mujahedeen political networks that were once defeated by the Taliban emerged as the winners and played an instrumental role in the composition and transformation of the peripheral state. In fact, the post-2001 state re-building was closely associated with tanzim re-assembling, albeit with their restructuring (discussed below). International statebuilding provided opportunities for re-building and expanding new links among and across tanzims under a novel logic of collaborating with one another to re-assemble the state. The internationally sponsored statebuilding that followed began within an extensive build-in element of conflict, deeply rooted in the last two decades of war and violence, characterised by Suhrke et. al. (2004), as 'conflictual peacebuilding'. The early post-2001 period resembled the situation in post-1992 Soviet-sponsored regime, a "fragmented" state where competing tanzims controlled different regions of Afghanistan whilst keeping their own army, police, and revenue-extracting structures in place (Rubin 1995).

This chapter attempts to show how the Afghan state came to be re-assembled following the international intervention, and subsequently transformed as the result of their power dynamics. The first section considers the consequences of the 2001 Bonn political settlement, its exacerbation of political network fragmentation and inter-network conflict. The following sections show how the historically grounded "network state" was re-build around key political networks and centres of powers in the centre (e.g., Karzai) and in the periphery (e.g. Atta Mohammad Noor & Gul Agha Shirzai) through bargains and exchanges. It is argued that as the post-2001 international statebuilding re-build the Afghan state, it concomitantly build political networks and patronage relations. International statebuilding and political networks thus consolidated a non-state form of authority based on a long-standing patron-client system promulgating by identity-based divisions, opportunism and illegality.

## **I. The 2001 Bonn Political Settlement and Its Consequences**

Political settlements are aimed to provide a framework for ending hostilities among opposing political organisations and a guide to post-conflict containment of failed states and their disorderly elites. With these aims in mind, on 5 December 2001, the international community gathered the four main anti-Taliban political networks in Bonn, Germany, to agree on provincial arrangements in Afghanistan pending the re-establishment of permanent government institutions. The first group was the Northern Alliance (NA, Etihad-e-Shamal) Jihadis, a loose coalition of several Mujahedeen tanzims who had fought one another during the civil war but then established a coalition against the Taliban. Among them, the most dominant political network was the Jamiat-i-Islami tanzim which in turn was dominated by its military wing (the Shura-i-Nizar) Panjshir valley commanders. Secondly, the Rome group was selected to balance and represent Western interests and was associated with the ousted King, Zahir Shah. Thirdly, the Peshawar group was linked to Pir Gilani, the leader of Mahaz-i-Millie tanzim. The final group-known as the Cyprus group- was associated with Humayoun Jareer in Iran. The NA was included as the winners against the Taliban, while the two smaller groups were arguably selected to please Afghanistan's neighbours, in particular Pakistan and Iran.

The Bonn Agreement, named after the Bonn Conference, outlined the legal framework for the building of a unitary state in Afghanistan, which became an internationally supported four-year liberal-peace regime political process. It included the holding of an Emergency *Loyi Jirga* (Grand Council) in June 2002 to elect an interim President to lead a transitional government, which in turn would ratify a new Constitution in 2003. This would then be followed by a presidential election in October 2004, which elected Hamid Karzai as President, and legislative elections a year later. However, the Bonn Conference was driven by the opposing network forces of massive external pressure to produce a stable and preferably liberal-democratic regime in the aftermath of September 11 attacks and an internal political environment which was particularly ill-disposed to compromise. There was a shift in the

compositions and positions of the ruling political networks and their elites as the Taliban were driven out and some prominent former tanzim leaders and commanders (e.g. Ali Mazari, Abdul Haq & Ahmad Shah Massoud) were killed to be replaced by new ones. Also, a new political network emerged around the Western-educated technocrats with closer links to international statebuilding. However this change was not significant in terms of the composition of the tanzim elite and the nature of their power. Maley (2002:197) characterises the Bonn Conference as an exercise in “elite restructuring” that came about when the carrots and sticks of international donors produced a reshuffling of national network elites, rather than the elimination of political networks or a fundamental change in the nature of their power. This reshuffle of the pack, which characterised the Bonn settlement, returned to power the same tanzim political networks which were responsible for the civil war and some of its worst brutalities, instead of auguring the transitional justice for which many Afghans had hoped. Bonn had three main principal consequences for post-2001 statebuilding and state formation in Afghanistan.

Firstly, the power-sharing process was hasty and shaped by urgent Western security concerns. Negotiations on the structure of the new government were strongly influenced by the changing military situation on the ground (Jalali 2003:175). It has been argued that Bonn was a “home-grown” settlement, which benefited from a clear transitional framework and granted substantial ownership of the transitional process to Afghans (Papagianni 2005). However, international donors mediated the process to achieve a deal which satisfied their counter-terrorism agenda and allowed them to fill the military vacuum that was created in Afghanistan with a new and friendly regime. The decision on who could attend, which political network elites should be excluded and how they should be accommodated was made in the first place by the interveners. The senior advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moradian remarked that “The Bonn Agreement did not reflect the Afghan people, but reflected the American policy and interests.... both Khalilzad [the US envoy] and the Northern Alliance hijacked the conference as both parties

decided on the outcome.”<sup>58</sup> Much like previous Afghan political settlements which following the Soviet-backed regime in 1992, international coercion shaped the process and led to a formal agreement, which was all set to be undermined by the fully and partially excluded political networks and interest groups. In this sense, the Bonn Agreement can best be seen as a “security and patronage pact”, or as labelled by Goodhand a “grand bargain” for an “externally driven division of the spoils among a hand-picked group of stakeholders who were on the right side of the War on Terror” (2010:582).

Secondly, the Bonn Conference was not inclusive enough of competing political networks and the micro-societies they claimed to represent. It excluded the Taliban and the Hizb-i-Islami tanzim who were reluctant to line up behind Karzai. The representatives of various political networks disagreed on the rules of the game and the worth of the proposed political institutions. President Rabbani saw the conference as an attempt to replace him whilst he continued to preside over the government which occupied the UN seat. President Rabbani refused to attend. There was tension between him and his powerful Shura-i-Nizar of the Jamiat-i-Islami (the military wing of the tanzim) who were present at the conference (e.g. Yunus Qanuni & Abdullah Abdullah). Karim Khalili, the Hizb-i-Wahdat tanzim leader, Haji Abdul Qadir, an influential leader of Pashtuns in South East, and Abdul Sattar Sirat, Rome delegate leader complained about the lack of representation of their particular interests and international intervention. Rashid Dostum, the leader of Junbish-i-Islami tanzim (predominantly Uzbek ethnic group) officially questioned the inclusiveness of the conference as only a handful of Uzbek delegates were in attendance out of thirty-two. According to Ghulam Muhammad Aylaqi, the Former vice-chairman to Karzai’s Interim Administration and the former deputy minister to Ministry of Trade and Commerce, “several participants did not sign the agreement. Sirat, Khalili and Haji Qadir had walked out. Enayatullah Wasefi, Sayyaf’s representative, Abdullah Wardak and I did not sign it”.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Interview 129, 12 June 2009, See Appendix: List of Interviews and Meetings

<sup>59</sup> Interview 130, 17 June 2009



Thirdly and most importantly, the conference created real winners and losers. The political network representation did not necessarily reflect the political power of the political networks, but the internationally funded military successes of the Northern Alliance (NA). Bonn thus set the stage for further distrust, exclusion and alienation of certain political network elites. De jure, the four main Afghan political groups agreed to a “broad-based, multi-ethnic, politically balanced, freely chosen Afghan administration representatives of their aspirations” (United Nations 2001). De facto, power was largely dominated by the NA and within the NA, the military wing of Jamiat tanzim, predominantly ethnic-Tajiks of the Panjshir valley (see table 5.1). The NA took 17 of the 30 government positions, which included the Security ministries and Foreign, Planning and Commerce. Only the Presidency and the Ministry of Finance were beyond their reach. Qasim Fahim also became a vice-chairman to Karzai. This was proximate to a “winner-takes-all” scenario in which the NA who had liberated Kabul and were in possession of two thirds of the country, were awarded the lion’s share of posts. Ethnically, Tajiks were over-represented, whereas Pashtuns, Hazaras and Uzbeks suffered under-representation. Karzai was surrounded in his own cabinet by powerful NA political elites, who made sure that his authority remained weak and circumscribed. In the country, as the next section shows, Karzai’s authority was limited to Kabul city as regional leaders and warlords took control of the provinces where they had their own militias, sources of income and autonomous administrations. This exacerbated the fragmentation of central authority in Afghanistan rather than promoting its consolidation, fuelling a legitimacy problem from the start. It was these short-term security initiatives which now continue to hinder state-building efforts.

**Table 5.1:** Power-sharing at Ministerial level among the 4 invited groups at the 2001 Bonn Conference<sup>60</sup>

Departments	2001 (Interim Government)	End of 2004 Cabinet
Defense	M. Qaseem Fahim	Abdul Rahim Wardak
Finance	Hedayat Amin Arsala	Anvar ul Haq Ahadi
Foreign Affairs	Dr Abdullah Abdullah	Dr Abdullah Abdullah*
Interior	Younous Qanooni	Ali Ahmad Jalali
Planning	Mohammad Mohaqeq	Ramazaan Bashardost
Commerce	Seyyed Mustafa Kazemi	Hedayat A. Arsala
Mines & Industries	Muhammad Alem Razm	Mir M. Saeq
Small Industries	Aref Noorzai	Removed---
Information & Culture	Raheen Makhdoom	Raheen Makhdoom
Communication	Abdul Rahim	Amirzai Sangeen
Labour & Social Affairs	Mir Wais Sadeq	Sayed Ekramuddin Agha
Hajj & Auqaf	Mohammad Hanif Hanif Balkhi	Namatullah Shahrani
Martyrs & Disabled	Abdullah Wardak	Sediqa Balkhi
Education	Abdul Salam Azimi	Noor M. Qarqeen
Higher Education:	Sharif Faez	Amir Shah Hassanyar
Public Health	Suhaila Seddiqi	Mohammed Amin Fatemi
Public Works	Juna Mohammad Mohammadi	Suhrab Ali Safari
Rural Development	Abdul Malik Anwar	Hanif Atmar
Urban Development	Abdul Qadir	Eng. Yusuf Pashtun
Reconstruction	Amin Farhang	Amin Farhang
Transport	Ishaq Shahryar	Enayatullah Qasemi
Water and Electricity	Shaker Kargar	Ismail Khan
Refugees	Enayatullah Nazeri	Mohammad Azam Dadfar
Agriculture	Seyyed Hussein Anwari	Ubaidullah Ramin
Irrigation	Mangal Hussein	Combined---
Justice	A. Rahim Karimi	Sarwar Danish
Air Transport & Tourism	Rahim Wardak	Removed--- Combined to Tmasport
Border Affairs		Mohammed Karim Brahoye
Women's Affairs	Sima Samar	Ms. Masouda Jalal
Economy		Amin Farhang

## II. The Constitution and Transformation of the Post-2001 State in the Centre

The outcome of the Bonn Conference set the stage for further inter-network conflict based on patron-client practices and identity politics. Ali Ahmad Jalali, an Afghan academic and the former Interior Minister, (2003: 176) argued, “monopolization of power [by the NA factions] precluded the

<sup>60</sup> There were 26 ministries and 4 vice-chairman positions, totaling 30. The light grey represents the NA ministers and the dark grey represents the Rome ministers.

emergence of an ethnically balanced post-Taliban government.” With the sudden evacuation of Kabul city by the Taliban, the ethnic-Tajik Panjshiris in Jamiat-i-Islami of Shura-i-Nizar council of the NA who had seized control of the city immediately dominated the main bureaucracy (Jalali 2003: 175). Data collected by the Office of Administrative Affairs (2006) confirms that monopolisation, not just at ministerial level, but at all levels of the Afghan government – bureaucracy, army and police – was consolidated under Bonn.<sup>61</sup> It evidences that network practices of patronage and identity divisions came to shape daily politics in post-2001 international statebuilding (see below). Given that, during the civil wars (1992-2001) political networks came to be structured along ethno-regional identities, the following data proves, at least numerically, the Constitution of the post-2001 state administration and bureaucracy along political-economic and identity networks.

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 show that even in 2006, after the formal elimination of most NA political network elites from the top government position, ethnic-Tajiks comprised 53% of the government bureaucracy at grade 3 and above, compared to Pashtuns at 34% and Hazaras and Uzbeks respectively at 4% each. This is a significant over-representation of Tajiks and a serious under-representation of Hazara and Uzbek ethnic groups when compared to the estimated overall ethnic composition of Afghanistan, with Tajiks constituting (between 20-25%), Pashtuns (35-40%), Hazaras (15-20%) and Uzbeks (8-10%) of the population.<sup>62</sup> The ethnic composition of the four main ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Interior and Finance also confirm this point about the over-representation of certain Tajik elites in the early Bonn period, where the Panjshiris in Shura-i-Nizar controlled the first three ministries from 2001-2004 (Figure 5.2).

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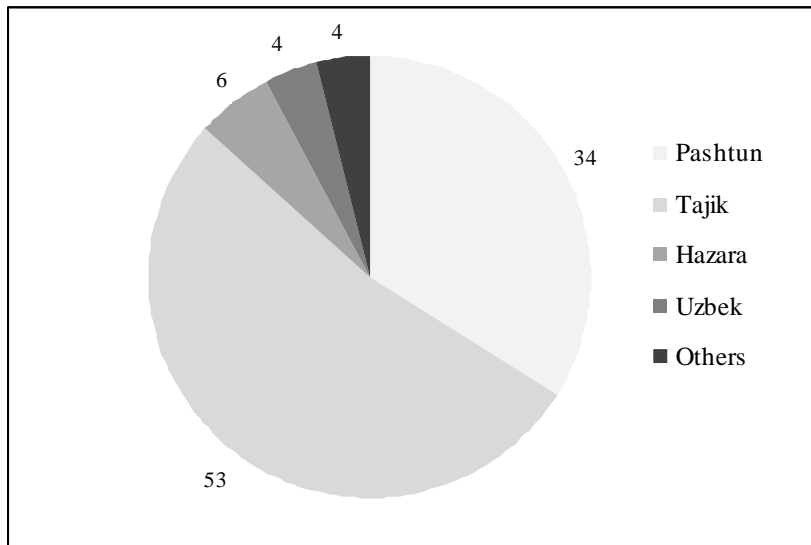
<sup>61</sup> The Office of Administrative Affairs collected the data in 2006. Afghan bureaucracy is categorised into six main grades, one being the highest position and five the lowest position. The margin of error is estimated at 10%.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Ethnic Minority at Risk data (2004-6)’, available at: <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/data.asp> accessed 27 December 2010. However, It is worth noting that Afghanistan has never had a complete census, and statistics, especially those relating to population, are wildly discrepant depending on sources.

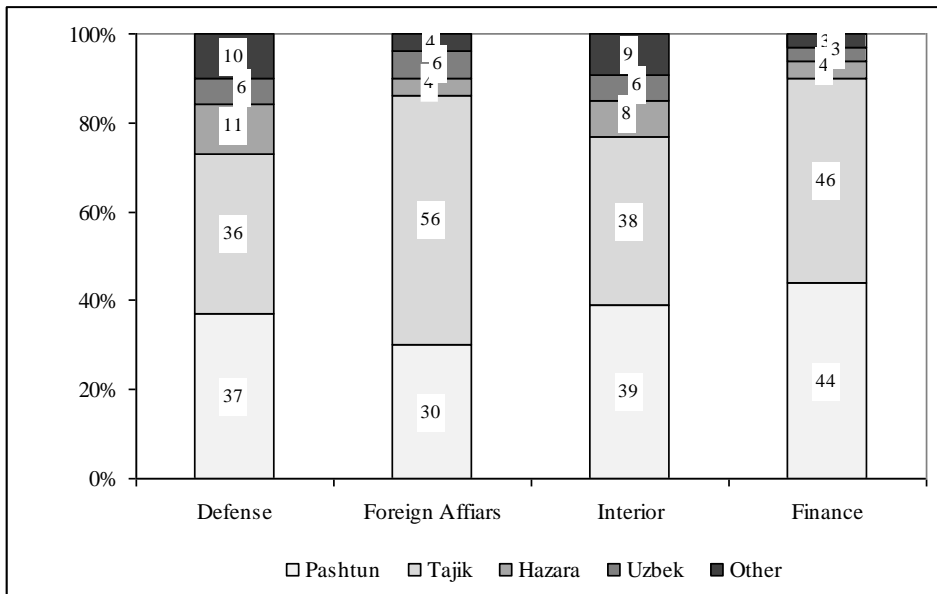
The “security gap” that resulted from the International Security Assistance Force’s (ISAF) light-footprint approach to intervention, meant that provision of security relied heavily on indigenous anti-Taliban forces (numbering about 100,000) under the command of various powerful commanders (Goodson 2003: 15). From 2001 to the removal of Qasim Fahim and Yunus Qanuni in 2004 from the Ministry of Defence and Interior respectively, Afghanistan’s National Army and Police were dominated by one individual political network and one sub-network, the Tajiks of the Panjshir Valley (see Figure 5.3). Under the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) program, a key international statebuilding benchmark, the *Jamiat* tanzim was able to re-integrate their militias in the army and his commanders in the Ministry of Defense and Interior staffing structure (Giustozzi 2008). While most non-*Jamiat* factions were de-militarised and put in non-military integration programs, *Jamiat* faction had the highest re-integration in the Afghan National Police (Giustozzi 2008; Bhatia & Sedra 2008).

This is reflective of Afghanistan’s historical state constitution and bureaucracy staffing shown in Chapter 4, grounded on political patronage and identity divisions, which have used solidarity-based affiliations as a basis of state distribution of resources – whether economic, educational or political. Subsequently, this shaped popular perceptions that in the new era, Afghan politics were once again to be operated along network practices and that democratic representation and a fair balance of political networks were only found in the rhetoric of international statebuilding.

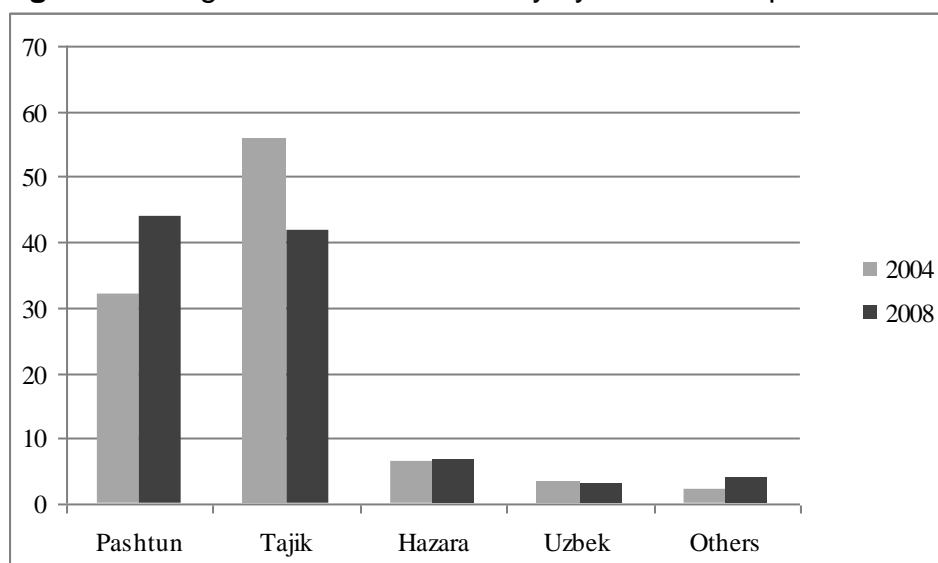
**Figure 5.1: Ethnic Composition of Government Bureaucracy at Grade 3-1 (%)**



**Figure 5.2: Ethnic Composition of 4 Top Ministries at Grade 3-1 (%)**



**Figure 5.3:** Afghanistan National Army by Ethnic Group



The post-2001 state was thus re-assembled as a result of political competition, compromise and accommodation between rival political networks. Once again the foundation of the Afghan state bureaucracy became thoroughly political, as the officials' allegiance were not to the state but to the political networks that had helped them secure the position in the first place. This way, using their positions and the dependencies created within the state, they were able to further expand their interests, thereby each political networks and sub-networks pulling the direction of international statebuilding and state formation in their favour. Although, it was beyond the scope of this thesis to carry out a detailed fieldwork to observe how the power dynamics of political networks affected the day-to-day functioning of the bureaucracy, numerous informants highlighted how constant competition over the state resources (e.g., positions, employment, strategies, projects and contracts) at all levels of the state is negatively affecting policy-making, programmes and objectives. For instance, the former Director of Policy Research at the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock detailed how positions such as his were subject to fierce competition among rival networks in 2010.<sup>63</sup> The interview with the senior advisor of the Ministry of Trade and Commerce

<sup>63</sup> In that particular incident, it emerged that while the minister had his own man for the job, Karzai's chief of staff, Karim Khurram, had called the directorate demanding to appoint his candidate, an Afghan expatriate living in France, whilst the director trying to get the job for a friend of his. Interview 24, 24 September 2011.

is revealing about how these negatively affect the daily functioning of the government.

During my job at the ministry [last three years] there has been two ministerial reshuffle which had resulted to an immediate restructuring of all top positions. When the previous minister left he took with him the entire senior officials and when the new one came he brought most of his colleagues from the Ministry of Finance. This meant a significant loss of knowhow. With every minister we had to write a new trade policy.<sup>64</sup>

It is these political power dynamics that international actors often overlook when re-building the post-conflict state. As the next section will highlight how Karzai and his network clientele consolidated a new network, which came to dominate state power in post-2001 Afghanistan.

## **II.I The Consolidation of Power by the Karzai Network**

The power-sharing agreement at Bonn set into motion fierce competition between different political networks within the state. The newly formed Western technocrats circled around President Karzai, whose power was limited to Kabul, pursued a combination of *repression* and *accommodation* policies to consolidate their power across the country.<sup>65</sup> What follows below is not a detailed fieldwork analysis of Karzai's consolidation of power. It draws mainly on secondary sources which has addressed this aspect extensively.

### ***Karzai Network's Repression Strategy***

With the ostensible legitimacy accrued by Karzai in his indirect election as the head of Transitional Administration in the *Loya Jirga* (Grand Assembly) of 2002, Karzai and his clients skilfully used their positions in the internationally aided state, and their access to state resources, to coercively remove the

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<sup>64</sup> Interview 15, 17 August 2011.

<sup>65</sup> Elsewhere, repression and accommodation are denoted as control and co-optation. See Byman (2002) for a survey of this literature. Middlebrook & Sedra also use the term "accommodation policy" (2005:8).

leaders of individual networks while co-opting their middle-ranking network nodes to his whole network. At the end of 2002 Karzai began to work towards the exclusion of the main Mujahedeen network elites from the cabinet as well as playing one powerful commander against another in the periphery. International perception of the state as a unified and consolidated body largely gave both material resources and legitimacy to the Karzai network as the state, and therefore to Karzai's actions as the figurehead of that state. It is fair to characterise the period between 2002 to 2004 as a network contestation over the control of the state between a largely Western educated Pashtun technocratic network led by Karzai and his close allies Ali Jalali, Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and Anwar-ul-Haq Ahadi (at the time) who stood on one side, and the overwhelmingly Northern Alliance Mujahedeen networks, who had come to dominate the immediate post-2001 state, on the other. The difference here was clearly the international support, which shifted decisively to Karzai and his predominantly Pashtun allies and thus fomented the network conflict that came to dominate the post-2001 international statebuilding.

A careful analysis of changes in the cabinet between the Post-Bonn and the post-2004 Presidential election cabinet supports this point (table 5.1). By the end of 2004 there was only one main NA political figure left in the cabinet, Abdullah who was replaced in 2006 by Dadfar Spanta, a Pashtun technocrat from Herat. The NA network elites were effectively replaced with predominantly Southern Pashtuns and Western-educated technocrats in Defence (Rahim Wardak), Finance (Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi), Interior (Ali Ahmad Jalali), Reconstruction (Hedayat Arsala), Economy (Amin Farhang) and Rehabilitation and Rural Development (Hanif Atmar).

Karzai's repression policy is best visible in the periphery. His policy came in the form of playing one commander against another. This was a high-risk strategy which led directly to significant outbreaks of political violence in the periphery. In Herat, the President provoked and helped Amanullah Khan, a powerful Pashtun commander in Shindand district, and other commanders like the commander of 17<sup>th</sup> division, Zahir Nayeبزادا to challenge Ismail



Khan as these fought throughout 2003 (Dietl 2004). As part of the Disarmament, demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme, these conflicts gave the opportunity to President Karzai to issue a decree that officials could no longer hold both military and civil posts, therefore, removing Ismail Khan from his role as the military commander of the Western Afghanistan. In March 2004 violence erupted between forces loyal to the regional warlord Ismail Khan and Afghan army's 17<sup>th</sup> division units under General Zahir Nayeبزادا, a Pashtun, after a failed assassination attempt on Ismail Khan. In the battle Ismail Khan's son and the Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Mirwais Sadiq, was killed. In August 2004, in a final battle between Ismail Khan and the pro-Karzai commanders, the government sent more than 1,000 members of the US-trained national army and 300 German-trained police to Herat, subsequently forcing Ismail Khan to accept a government position in Kabul (Dietl 2004). This effectively distanced Ismail Khan's direct link with his constituency in Herat and in the West.

In Balkh, the three main commanders, General Dostum, Atta Mohammad Noor and Mohammad Mohaqqueq battled over the control of the strategic city of Mazar-e-Sharif, the result of which was the gradual removal of General Dostum from his power base and its ethnic Uzbek constituents (Section IV.I). In an attempt to weaken Noor, Karzai issued a decree appointing Dostum who was the Deputy Defence Minister as his special adviser on security and military affairs. The main motive was to give power to Dostum to dismantle the powerful Army Corps No. 7 commanded by his rival Jamiat-i-Islami commander, Noor (Giustozzi 2004). In the last battle between them in May 2003, General Dostum initiated the attack with the promise of support from the central government (Giustozzi 2004). Once it was clear that Noor would emerge as the winner, Karzai switched his support to Noor, imposed a ceasefire and demanded the cantonment of heavy weapons. Whilst Noor gradually emerged as the strongman of Northern region (section IV.I), Dostum had to take a symbolic position in Kabul. Dostum's relations with Karzai deteriorated and in 2009 he was effectively exiled in Turkey after the

Akbar Bai incident.<sup>66</sup> In Kandahar, governor Gul Agha Shirzai, also had to take a position as the Minister for Urban Development in 2003 before being exiled to Nangarhar province as the governor. Karzai's strategy whilst weakening some political network leaders and commanders in the centre and periphery, it empowered others.

### ***Karzai Network's Accommodation Policy***

Rothschild (1970) argued that in the political settlement model, repression as a policy of domination over the periphery often fails in environments where societal forces are powerful and resilient. Therefore, Karzai's repression policy was supplemented by accommodation in the form of the co-optation of key political network leaders and peripheral commanders. During this period, his whole network's consolidation of power was propagated in the form of a patron-client system, linking powerbrokers and sub-leaders of various political networks within the state as shown in the next section. As the historical chapter uncovered, although, clientelism has been a historical feature of Afghan politics, its present nature and the level of its analysis is closely combined and interlinked with ethno-regional networks rather than an exclusive tribal one dominated by an entrenched lineage family. Historically, the authority, power and legitimacy of rulers were determined through a complex system of patronage and instrumentalisation of identities.

The post-2001 period has not been exempt from this. Several studies found and confirmed by ethnographic fieldwork in this study that under conditions of increased external resourcing of the state and inter-political network competition for the state, the clientelistic features and identity divisions have in fact intensified in the post-2001 period (Bhatia & Sedra 2007; Wimmer & Schetter 2003; Giustozzi 2005). While there was a shift of power between 2002 to 2004 from Mujahedeen political network leaders (e.g., General

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<sup>66</sup> The incident began late on 2 February 2008 when Dostum and his militias staged a raid on the home of a political rival, Akbar Bay, in Kabul. Akbar Bay was beaten up and his family members were assaulted. Akbar Bay is a former Dostum ally who broke away in 2007 setting up his own party, the Turkic Council of Afghanistan. Dostum's house was surrounded by police force for a few days. Reportedly after the Turkish embassy's intervention he was allowed to leave the country.

Dostum, Marshal Fahim, and etc.) and commanders (e.g., Mohammad Mohaqqueq, Ismail Khan, and etc.) to predominantly Pashtun and technocratic networks, this was reversed following the 2004 and 2005 presidential and parliamentary elections respectively when it became clear that certain former Mujahedeen political networks enjoyed a high degree of power base, necessary for winning elections, generated from their close connection with their ethno-regional constituencies (e.g., Mohammad Mohaqqueq, General Dostum, and the Arsala family in Nangarhar). It became clear that power could best be guaranteed if patron-client relationships go hand in hand with strong constituency linkages produced through manipulation of identity-based divisions (Chapter 6 and 7).

Evidently, Karzai's whole network allies gradually used their position in the state and state's resources in war-making so as to strengthen their own positions. As the political network, which acted as gatekeeper to the external resources supporting international statebuilding, the Karzai network was able to deploy these resources against other elite networks in their conflict over the state. Francesco Vendrell, the Special Representative of the European Union reminded how significant a change this has been for Karzai, "the authority of the central government of Karzai, which was reduced to Kabul at the beginning, has extended virtually everywhere, even if his commands are not always followed" (in Middlebrook & Sedra 2005:7). Since 2005, Karzai has relied on two types of political networks and its powerbrokers to expand his power: 1) individual network powerbrokers; and 2) middle-ranking provincial and district officials who had come to power through political networks, but within a new political environment their position had become more dependent on the centre, this being Karzai and his political network. Chapters 6 and 7 provide detailed evidence on the day-to-day functioning and network practices of political networks. Below is just an attempt to highlight how the consolidation of power by the Karzai network took place.

### *Political Network Powerbrokers*

Since 2005, Karzai has relied on powerful political networks and their leaders who act as powerbrokers. These included Ahmad Zia Massoud, the brother of the famous anti-Taliban commander Ahmad Shah Massoud for the ethnic-Tajik clientele, Karim Khalili, Mohammad Mohaqqueq and Sadeq Modabber among the ethnic-Hazara and the former Hizb-i-Wahdat tanzim members, Din Mohammad and Gul Agha Shirzai for the Eastern Nangarhar Pashtun connections, his brother Ahmad Wali Karzai for Kandahar and Akhundzada for Helmand links. General Dostum, the ethnic-Uzbek leader of the *Junbish* political network also provided some links until his relations deteriorated with Karzai in 2008 after the Akbar Bay incident. Other political network leaders such as Abdur Rab Sayyaf, the former leader of Etihad-i-Islami and an influential Member of Parliament, Sebqatullah Mojaddadi, the former Mujahedeen Interim President of Afghanistan in 1992 and the leader of the Upper House, and Pir Gilani, the leader of the Mahaz-e-Millie tanzim, were utilised by Karzai for their networking abilities and their connections among the religious groups. Some of these connections are a direct result of his repression and accommodation policies. Karzai might have had no choice but to accommodate them initially, as the next two chapters suggest, but this gradually became an active Karzai policy of interlocking them into the bargaining system and employing them in moments of contestation and crisis against his enemies. This is not to suggest these ethno-regional powerbrokers have lost their agency but that from 2005 onwards Karzai had the upper hand.

Fieldwork data suggests that reciprocal and resource interdependency relations are the primary reason for these relations. Possessing the financial and coercive resources of the state in hand, Karzai co-opted them by offering ministerial positions, licenses, government contracts and development funds as political resources for these clients, who could then distribute it to their individual network clients. The Killid Group (2012) research found how this reciprocal relationship is performed in respect to the appointment of governors in Afghanistan; the study found that individual network leaders are

given the authority to appoint their clientele as governors and other key positions (Figure 5.4). This is not very different from the initial Durrani governance system where tribal chiefs were given spheres of influence in the form of territorial regions to control for resource extraction and distribution as long as they remained loyal to the ruler. These individual network leaders acted like a mediator or powerbroker within the whole network providing material and symbolic resources, and in times of contestation like the presidential election, with popular votes (Chapter 6). In light of this, Karzai's was maintaining a complex and costly whole network based on a system of trading favours and exchanging resources. This is not to suggest that individual networks exhibited a clearly defined demarcation. As Chapters 6 and 7 suggest, they often overlapped as events unfolded, crises erupted, and bargains were offered and constantly contested and competed within the whole network.

Figure 5.4: The Political Networks and their clientele



### State Patron-Client Networks

The best-resourced buyer in a client-patron network is usually a political actor who possesses government resources, most often the incumbent authorities (Piattoni 2001). A second type of network through which Karzai has extended his whole network is the state network of provincial and district governors and officials. This network is not mutually exclusive of the former network but

overlaps with it at certain moments. The new Afghan Constitution gave the president excessive powers, which he made extremely effective use of it to expand his power. For instance, he has the authority to appoint one-third of the *Meshrano Jirga* (Upper House) representatives (Article 84 of the Constitution); but as the District council elections never happened in 2004, the president assumed the responsibility of appointing the other one-third. Presidential decree has been another important tool (article 76). He is responsible for the appointment of all provincial and district governors, which he exercises through presidential decree (Article 64:13). Through the same article he has been appointing and dismissing judges in the judiciary which is supposed to be independent. In fact for a year Karzai ruled by decree between 2003 to December 2004 when he sworn in as the president. To this date he has issued over 45 decrees, the last one being the election decree in 2013. As a result, Karzai's whole network has benefited immensely from the weaknesses of the formal system as they continuously award their allies and friends with state positions at all governance levels. As one senior Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) officer summarised,

These leaders have a stake in maintaining the status quo. It is more like a club, a corrupt political-business club that everyone eventually benefits from. While Karzai sells the state to the highest bidder, the client gets contracts, funds, state positions and etc. Everyone is a winner.<sup>67</sup>

The post-2001 state has become the major source of protection, security and employment for most network elites. This is most evident in Karzai's relationship with the Afghan Parliament. As Chapter 7 reveals, Karzai's network has maintained an expensive patronage system in the parliament where payments are made to MPs in order to pass a parliamentary bill or to appoint a new minister. The next two quotes from two influential MPs summarise the nature of patronage practices in Parliament, which is reflective of the overall nature of statehood and governance that is being propagated by this system of payments and promises. Further evidence is shown in Chapter 6 and 7, shedding light on political network practices.

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<sup>67</sup> Interview 1, 12 April 2011.

Most of them [MPs] supported the government. The opposition is weak and powerless. When opposition members like myself are threatened what can we do? Mawlawi Takhel [MP] rigged 50,000 votes before the election for Karzai [referring to the 2004 presidential election] and he later confessed saying I did it because I got money and lands from the government and also because Karzai is the only one who can provide me with security. Another MP [who] was supporting Karzai when asked why? He replied because I have been accused of killing 41 people so if I do not support him what guarantee is there that they would not kill me. He is in power.<sup>68</sup>

Even international holidays and trips are decided on the basis of which group you belong to. If you are not part of that group you can never go. Karzai has got 70-80 MPs on his side. They have their own special meetings. Even the ministers sit with them often bribing them as they are offered trips abroad, gifts, and positions for their relatives.<sup>69</sup>

In the tribal South, Karzai-network's coercive practices were pursued through playing one tribe against another. In the uncertainty generated by a regime-state where the rule of law is absent in most areas, the fear of punishment is quite high. Tribal leaders are consistently reminded that if they do not support the government and the Karzai network within the state they will be excluded from the local government: meaning jobs, aid money and privileges. Coghlan (2009) provides an insightful account of the rivalry between the different tribes (Noorzai, Alikozais, Alizai, and Ishaqzai) in Helmand province and portrays how both the Karzai network and the Taliban have used these rivalries to strengthen their power in the respected province. The network state patronage is pursued through the practice of reward/punishment by including those tribal elites who support the regime in the local government whilst excluding those tribal elites who do not co-opt in the system. Such a patronage system can explain, to some extent, the reason for the Taliban's success in the South. Both the Taliban and the excluded elites or tribes see that it is to their advantage to operate together, the former providing protection and the latter supplying recruitment.

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<sup>68</sup> Interview 131, 13 September 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Interview 116, 12 September 2009.



While the consolidation of a network state was taking place around Karzai and individual network leaders at the centre, the peripheral state was also being re-assembled around key strongmen. The following section shows the impact of Karzai's repression and accommodation policies on the peripheral state. It examines the consolidation of power by two of the most powerful regional strongmen in the periphery, Atta Mohammad Noor in Balkh and Gul Agha Shirzai in Nangarhar provinces.

### **III. The State Constitution and Transformation in the Periphery**

The re-assembling of the peripheral state in Balkh and Nangarhar provinces provide an excellent window to observe the centre-periphery relations as well as highlighting the processes and outcomes of state re-building in post-2001 international intervention. Balkh and Nangarhar are strategic regional commercial hubs with vibrant transit routes. Both provinces have a population of over a million with mixed ethnic and tribal demography. Balkh is populated mainly with pockets of Uzbek, Hazara, Tajik, Turkmen and Pashtun ethnic groups whereas Nangarhar is predominantly inhabited by three main Pashtun tribes of Khugiani, Shinwari and Mohmand and a small ethnic-Pashei community. In the post-2001 international space, Atta Mohammad Noor and Gul Agha Shirzai have established themselves as the undisputed regional strongmen of the Northern and Eastern regions, controlling a vast network of political and commercial networks stretching across several provinces. De jure, they have sworn allegiance to the central authority; however, the facto, they are relatively free of central control.

#### ***III. I Atta Mohammad Noor and his Consolidation of Power***

In the immediate liberation of Balkh province from the Taliban, a provincial military council was formed, which divided state administration and provincial revenues proportionally amongst the three main commanders- Atta Mohammed Noor, an ethnic-Tajik *Jamiat* tanzim commander, General Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek leader of *Junbish* tanzim, and Mohammad Mohaqqeq, the ethnic-Hazara commander of *Wahdat* tanzim- reflecting their control over the

stockpiles of military supplies, munitions, fuel, and food (Fishstein & Wilder 2012).<sup>70</sup> Having seized a large part of the city following the sudden retreat of the Taliban, Atta Mohammad Noor, took the position of 7<sup>th</sup> Corps commander, the most powerful military position in Northern Afghanistan. His *Jamiat* colleague, Haji Rahguzar, became the Governor of Balkh. According to the UN report, the Hairatan border custom, the primary source of revenue in Balkh, was shared amongst the competing commanders with Noor receiving 50%, General Dostum 37% and Mohaqqueq 12% (Rubin and Malikiyar 2003).

In the fierce battles that took place between Noor, Dostum and Mohaqqueq in 2002 and 2003, Noor emerged as the undisputed strongman of Balkh province. Noor's success was mainly the result of his network links with his powerful *Jamiat* colleagues in Kabul. Moreover, he had played an instrumental role in the Operation Enduring Freedom against the Taliban, successfully portraying himself as a reliable military commander to the international intervention. Given that Noor's *Jamiat* colleagues in Kabul had occupied powerful positions within the security ministries, his commanding position as the 7<sup>th</sup> Corps Division was secure. During the internal war with Dostum and Mohaqqueq he received political and military support and protection from the Ministry of Defense and Interior (Giustozzi 2004). In the last battle that took place in the fall of 2003 between them over the control of the peripheral state, reportedly, Karzai had provoked General Dostum into attacking Noor according to Junbish Deputy Chairman, Fayzullah Zaki.<sup>71</sup> However, once it became clear that Dostum could not win, Karzai switched his support to Noor, imposed a ceasefire and demanded a full disarmament

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<sup>70</sup> In the 1990s, the following Jihadi tanzims were active in Balkh: the *Jamiat-i-Islami*, *Wahdat-i-Islami*, and Junbish-i-Islami to a lesser extent the *Hizb-i-Islami* and *Harakat-i-Islami*. Junbish emerged in 1992 as a coalition of former communist politicians, army officers and Uzbek militias headed by the ethnic-Uzbek militia leader Abdul Rashid Dostum, as a response to the Jihadi tanzims' exclusion of Junbish from the 1992 political settlement. In Balkh, the three principal tanzim factions, *Junbish*, *Wahdat* and *Jamiat*, came to be associated with Uzbek-ethnic leader Abdul Rashid Dostum, Hazara-ethnic commander Mohammad Mohaqqueq, and Tajik-ethnic commander Mohammad Atta Noor. By 1994, General Dostum emerged as the undisputed strongman of the North. His strategic control of the Northern provinces bordering Central Asia and its airports, roads, and fuel depots financed his army and provided salaries and career prospects to many different groups including the former communist generals and officials (Rubin 1995:275). The region was relatively stable compared to the rest of the country before the Taliban occupied it in 1998.

<sup>71</sup> Interview 122, 14 September 2009. Giustozzi (2004) finds the same result.

of the warring groups. This then provided Noor with the pretext to remove his rivals' client commanders. According to US Embassy cables, Noor was reportedly involved in having planned and financed the assassination of 22 political opponents in Balkh between the years 2003 to 2005.<sup>72</sup>

Since then, unable to exert much influence, Karzai has allowed Noor to run Balkh like a personal fiefdom. Several attempts by him to weaken Noor have failed. The dispute that took place between governor Noor and Interior Minister a close ally of Karzai, Haneef Atmar, in 2009 is telling. In a politically motivated maneuver, the Minister officially dismissed three senior police chiefs in Balkh (Traffic Police Chief, Criminal Investigation Chief, and the Highway Police Chief) from their job. All three were believed to be Noor's clientele. In a show of loyalty governor Noor told the policemen not to leave their job. A month-long stand off between them ended with governor Noor emerging victorious in keeping his three clientele in their job, sending a clear message to Karzai that he is in charge.

### *Patron-Client Practices*

Noor's consolidation of power proliferated in the form of a patron-client system. Taking full advantage of his "hybrid authority", formal state position and informal network power, he appointed his clientele as state officials, provincial council members, district police chiefs, army commanders and so forth, while reshuffling and dismissing officials associated with his opponents (Mukhopadhyay 2009). With offers of state positions, access to legal and illegal commercial networks and other bargains, Noor co-opted his opponent's embedded commanders, mullahs, state officials and businessmen into his bargaining network (Hakimi 2012). This is best seen in the strategically influential provincial council and district governments in Balkh and even in the *Wolesi Jirga* (Lower House) in Kabul. Interviews with several provincial council members in 2011 uncovered that at least fifteen of the nineteen members in Balkh were Noor's networked clientele. Noor's

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<sup>72</sup> US Cables, 22 March 2006

exceptional influence was ostensible when members acceded to his wishes as to who the Chairman and his deputy should be. The deputy provincial council Chairman, Ghulam Abbas Akhlaqi, summarised this by stating, “Noor warned us that nobody should campaign in the internal provincial council election. He proposed Dr. Mohammad Afzal Hadid as the Chairman, I as the Deputy Chairman, and Mahbooba Sadat as Secretary.”<sup>73</sup>

Noor monopolised his state control over the use of violence and state capacities in the security sector (Mukhopadhyay 2009). Bhatia and Sedra (2008:229) found that in the immediate post-2001 period, to many soldiers, a commander’s strength was expressed less in terms of offensive capability against an opposing unit, rather than his ability to acquire supporting contracts, maintain armed units and to integrate them into official and quasi-official security structures. The Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) program provided an excellent opportunity for Noor to re-integrate his militias in the army and his network client commanders in the Ministry of Defense and Interior staffing structure within the province. His position as the governor and his earlier position as the 7<sup>th</sup> Corps Commander of Northern Afghanistan granted him the legitimacy to enact as the state, disguising his patron-client practices.

The following quotes reflect the undisputed power of Noor in Balkh province, the former by a provincial council member and the latter by the Head of Social Science department who was the head of the Union of Balkh Civil Society Organisation. It also illustrates how Atta’s combination of formal state authority and informal network power has given an image of an effective and efficient governance system to many Afghans when comparing it with the widespread corruption and mismanagement in the rest of the country.

We have an inclusive governance system in Balkh. For instance, to spend the municipality’s budget, the Provincial Council, in consultation with municipality and the Governor’s office, take decisions collectively on what our priorities are and how to spend the money. We then encourage the local businessmen to participate

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<sup>73</sup> Interview 99, 21 April 2012.

in the bidding process. If a line minister does not follow our decision, we would first give him a warning, then put additional pressure on him through the media and if this persists we would then inform the governor.<sup>74</sup>

In our last weekly meeting with the governor, we stressed the problem of female-student dormitory at the university. Governor Noor simply looked at Mr. Wahdat and said you pay 1,000 dollar, *Mostufiyat* (Ministry of Finance directorate) would pay 3,000 dollars, and so on. In that meeting he instantaneously collected 21,000 US dollars. He assigned the vice-Chancellor to write the proposal and promised to provide the additional cost from his own pocket. You see, this is a quick and efficient way to resolve problems. In Afghanistan, only those governors who do not follow formal rules and procedures are successful.<sup>75</sup>

### *Illegality and Opportunism*

Maintaining such an expansive patronage network is expensive. Interviews with several provincial council members revealed that Noor has been providing regular financial rent to the council. As one female PC member explained:

The current monthly salary of a provincial council member is around 500 USD per month. I have two bodyguards and one driver, which cost me around 800 dollars per month. I have to pay for fuel and guests. Once there was a conflict in my district. I had to accommodate twenty families who came to stay with me. How else could I cover my expenses?<sup>76</sup>

Interviews with several civil society activists and businessmen in Hairatan custom city revealed that resource extraction through rent-seeking has become a principle feature of governance in Balkh.<sup>77</sup> Mukhopadhyay (2009) also found that Noor has established a monopoly over licit and illicit trades, government contracts, and development aids. The involvement of commanders in business is not new. In the early 1990s, with external support rapidly fading, Jihadi commanders increasingly overcame the problem of

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<sup>74</sup> Interview 107, 21 April 2012.

<sup>75</sup> Interview 102, 18 April 2012.

<sup>76</sup> Interview 100, 24 April 2012.

<sup>77</sup> Interview 103, 104, 101, 15-19 April 2012.

funding their armies in the war economy (Goodhand 2004; Giustozzi 2005). In the absence of the central authority, local traders found protection in strongmen who would provide protection in exchange for fees or partnership in the business. In the built-in war economy of post-2001 international intervention, local commanders have re-connected with their old business partners to fund their militias (Goodhand 2004).

Interviews with businesses and MPs in Balkh have suggested that Noor, directly and indirectly, has shares in many of Balkh's lucrative construction and fuel trades. In the two-day observation that the author carried out specifically in the border town of Hairatan, most businessmen highlighted governor Noor's monopoly in the main key industries through his family members, particularly his son.<sup>78</sup> The below statement by a Transparency International officer working on Noor's connections was widely confirmed by businessmen in Hairatan.

To run your business you must have the blessing of the governor and pay his protection money. The risk is high. He has removed his key opponents like Ghazanfar Group out of the energy market. The reason that Ghazanfar and Hotek [the head of Azizi Bank] could not compete was because the governor was able to use the Hairatan storage facilities and his own security companies in reducing cost to win contracts. Most of the provincial government contracts are given to companies related to Noor like the AFTECH group which is run by his son. His son's partnership in Kabul Oil Group has won them massive international contracts worth millions to import petrol for the NATO forces.<sup>79</sup>

As this statement underlines Noor's business activities in Balkh connect him to broader political-economic networks in the rest of the country. For instance, in the fuel trade (import, storage and transport), Noor is reportedly one of the four main shareholders in the Kabul Oil Group, which has enjoyed a monopoly over the trade since 2009 (Rubin & Norland 2011).<sup>80</sup> Kabul Oil Group's other shareholders were Kamal Nabizada, Ibrahim Ghazanfar, and

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<sup>78</sup> Hairatan observation and interviews (95), 2-3 March 2012 18.

<sup>79</sup> Interview 103 & 104, 17 April 2012.

<sup>80</sup> The profit made by just one group, Ghazanfar Oil and Gas Group, which had shares in the Kabul Oil Group reveal the lucrativeness of some of these markets. Ghazanfar Oil and Gas groups reported in their website a net earning of over 475 million dollars in 2008 alone.

Sher Khan Farnood. The latter was Kabul Bank's former Chairman and main shareholder who had taken 504 million dollars in irregular and irresponsible loans from the Bank as his personal fund (Bijlert 2011a). The Kabul Bank case exposed the extent to which illegality has become a part of everyday life in Afghanistan. The Bank's corrupt practices involved several ministers, senior officials, more than 100 MPs, and etc. (Bijlert 2011a). Interestingly, most of these profitable contracts are linked to the current ongoing NATO-led coalition operation, which indirectly feeds illegality and illicit economic activities in Afghanistan.<sup>81</sup>

In this expansive system of opportunism, Noor has encouraged his rivals by offering them access to business opportunities in fuel and the property market. Interviews with several provincial council members and civil society activists exposed this aspect, which was detailed by the former head of civil society organisations in Balkh, "he has coopted and encouraged most of his opponents to get involved in the North's lucrative business. For instance, Abbas Ibrahimzada is now a business partner in petrol trade with the governor as well as having several Shahrak [property development projects] in Elmarab area. Ahmad Ramazan who accused Noor of assassinating his brother in 2005 has become his business partner, especially in the property sector."<sup>82</sup> The property market and land grab are other profitable sources of income for Noor.<sup>83</sup> Land grab provides an excellent sector to observe Noor's network co-optation in business (both licit and illicit). The author documented more than thirty land-grabbed sites associated with commanders-turned-politicians in Mazar-i-Sharif including Abbas Ibrahimzada, Alam Khan, Ibrahim Ghazanfar, Haji Abdu, Juma Khan Hamdard, Khalid bin Walid, Ashraf Ramadan, and etc. As once civil society activist aptly described:

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<sup>81</sup> See *Warlord, Inc.: Extortion and Corruption Along the U.S. Supply Chain in Afghanistan* (2010), Report was prepared by the Majority staff of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

<sup>82</sup> Interview 102, 18 April 2012.

<sup>83</sup> They purchase the lease of agricultural lands for fifty years at a minimum fee with certain privileges from the government then distribute it to people as settlement properties. Interestingly, the land settlement cases must be approved first at the provincial level, then by the relevant authorities in the centre including Ministry of Urban development and Agriculture and finally by the cabinet. This suggests that somehow a great number of government officials are involved in the process, which reveals the extent of corruption and patronage politics in Afghanistan.

Land grab provides a fast and efficient way to accumulate wealth and launder money. It is the most effective way for commanders-turned-politicians to legalise [Safed kardane pul] their corrupt money which they find through these trades.”<sup>84</sup>

The price of non-obedience is high. For instance, businessmen like Ibrahim Ghazanfar who joined Karzai’s camp in the 2009 presidential election not only lost his seat in the Parliament but also had to sell his shares in the Kabul Oil Group to Sher Khan Farnood.<sup>85</sup>

### *Instrumentalisation of Identities*

Identities are not the primary source of political practice in Afghanistan; however, given the ethnic and tribal demographic arrangements of the country, identities provide powerful terrain on which political battles could be contested among the political networks (Forsberg 2010; Simonsen 2004; Giustozzi 2005; Dorransoro 1995). Former Jihadi tanzim leaders and commanders like Atta Mohammad Noor and Gul Aga Shirzai did not come to power through identity structures; however, once in power they pursued every effort to maintain a certain degree of influence over the ethno-regional and tribal systems. In the post-2001 period, peripheral commanders have attempted to regain a degree of legitimacy by re-positioning themselves along identity lines. Even the *Junbish* tanzim, which enjoyed some degree of support among the non-Uzbeks, has become further ethnicised (Giustozzi 2005).

Discussions with ordinary people in 2012 in Balkh revealed that many local people perceived Noor’s hegemonic rule as ethnic-Tajik domination at the

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<sup>84</sup> Interview with civil society organisations, Interviews 103, 104, 116, 108, 15-19 April 2012.

<sup>85</sup> Ghazanfar, a former Member of Parliament, endorsed Karzai in the 2009 presidential election and became his Northern election campaign manager. According to a US cable report dating 12 July 2009, Atta confirmed that he had recently received two letters signed by Karzai asking the Balkh Customs Department to exempt Ghazanfar’s company from paying duty on the import of first 50,000 metric tons (MT) of fuel and then later, on another 30,000 MTs. Atta said the letters were cleverly worded to make the exemptions seem legitimate. The exemptions totalled USD 12.8 million in customs revenues. Atta suspected that some of that money would make its way back to Karzai himself in the form of campaign contributions from Ghazanfar.



expense of other ethnic groups. Excluded powerbrokers have interpreted their marginalisation along the historical grievances against their ethnic groups. These grievances are reflected widely by non-Tajiks who feel disadvantaged in a system where access to the state and the employment market is constrained for them. As one former director of a civil society organisation and a provincial council representative in Balkh put it respectively:

“There are 55 to 59 provincial directorates in Balkh that are supposed to be independent. However, one ethnic group has increasingly dominated these positions. The Hazaras have been given two or three of these positions, despite the fact they constitute between 35 to 40% of the Balkh population. Power is in the hand of one person and his Tajik commanders.”<sup>86</sup>

“We comprise at least 30% of Balkh’s population but we do not even have 3% presence within the state infrastructure. Of the nearly 60 line ministries we have only 2 or 3 directorates. The same is the case in the Afghan police and army infrastructure”<sup>87</sup>

Noor’s support for his former *Jamiat* colleague, Abdullah Abdullah, in the 2009 presidential election was seen by many Afghans as an ethnic-Tajik coalition to defy the expanding Pashtun Karzai hegemony. Arguably, Noor made a tactical calculation to align himself with Abdullah who received most of the Tajik votes (Chapter 6). Considering the nature of the ethno-regional vote in the 2004 election, this is indeed compelling. Reportedly, Noor financed most of Abdullah’s campaign.<sup>88</sup> Whatever his motives for his support to the Abdullah campaign, discursively, Noor provided an ethnic subtext to ordinary voters. Noor portrayed Karzai and his team as a destructive and divisive Pashtun force trying to destabilise the Northern region and even attempting to assassinate him, the last Tajik commander who had stood against the expanding Pashtun domination. The following subtext issued by Noor during the election mirrors his strategic appeal to his ethnic-Tajik constituency.

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<sup>86</sup> Interview 105, 19 April 2012.

<sup>87</sup> Interview 107, 21 April 2012.

<sup>88</sup> According to the US embassy cables, Noor had told embassy representatives that he is financing most of Abdullah’s campaign.

“Today we do not fear the *Zoorgu* (despotic) government anymore. The mask has been removed and our people can see the true face of the corrupt deceiver and dictator, who pursues divisive ethnic and tribal policies and plans.”<sup>89</sup>

#### ***IV.II Gul Agha Shirzai and his Consolidation of Power***

Gul Agha Shirzai established himself as the strongman of Kandahar province in the immediate post-2001 Afghanistan with financial and military assistance from the US (Giustozzi & Noor Ullah 2007).<sup>90</sup> Seeing Shirzai’s consolidation of power in his hometown as a direct threat to himself, as part of his repression policy, Karzai purged Shirzai from Kandahar in August 2003 by appointing him Minister for Urban Development. In 2005, Karzai appointed Shirzai as the governor of Nangarhar province.

#### ***Patron-Client Practices***

As an outsider in Nangarhar, Shirzai had to build a new political network. The state’s coercive and revenue-extractive resources as well as Nangarhar’s legal and illegal commercial networks were already controlled by local political network powerbrokers, particularly by the *Arsala* family and Hazrat Ali networks (Mukhopadhyay 2009; Giustozzi 2007). The *Arsala* family, the head of the powerful Jabbarkhel subdivision of the Ahmadzai tribe, has been the dominant force in Nangarhar since the early 1990s.<sup>91</sup> Both Abdul Haq and Haji Abdul Qadir, *Arsala* family members, were prominent Mujahedeen commanders among the Pashtuns who were killed in 2001 and 2002

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<sup>89</sup> A critical speech that Noor gave just after the election, on the Martyrdom day. September 2009.

<sup>90</sup> Gul Agha Shirzai was the governor of Kandahar after the collapse of the Najibullah regime in 1992. In 2001, the Taliban handed over the city of Kandahar to Mullah Naqibullah and Hamid Karzai. The latter became the governor but very soon Gul Agha reached the outskirts of the city and challenged both Mullah Naqibullah and Hamid Karzai. After long negotiations, during which Gul Agha threatened an all out war, he was finally once again appointed governor, Mullah Naqibullah backed down fearing US intervention on his enemy’s side (Giustozzi & Noor Ullah, 2007:172).

<sup>91</sup> The *Arsala* family is a prominent Ahmadzai from the Eastern Ghilzai Pashtun. Historically they have been Khans (similar to lords) of the Ahmadzai tribe. The great great-father of the *Arsala* family was known as the Redbeard who had earned himself the Governorship of Jalalabad for his slaughter of the British troops in the first Anglo-Afghan war in 1842.

respectively. Haji Qadir was Nangarhar's governor between 1992-1994 and 2001-2002. After his assassination, his brother Haji Din Mohammad became the governor until 2005. Hazrat Ali, the ethnic-Pashei minority commander who led the Northern Alliance (NA) forces in Nangarhar and the former Chief of Police of Nangarhar, was another key local leader. Although he was removed in 2004 and found protection in the new *Wolesi Jirga* (Lower House) as an MP, he maintained strong connection in Nangarhar through his network clientele. It was in this unfavourable context that Shirzai was appointed as the governor of Nangarhar.

However, with backing from the US and the Karzai network, Shirzai immediately asserted his supremacy, challenging the main local powerbrokers and their networks. Taking full advantage of his formal state position, he made wide-ranging administrative changes to strengthen his power. Using his power to dismiss and reshuffle district governors and police chiefs he had sent a clear message to local powerbrokers and state officials that he was in charge and that he now has the authority to decide on the future of their political careers (Hakimi 2012). In fact, the constant reshuffling of state officials at district level has been a key part of his strategy in maintaining a degree of control over his network clientele. For instance, in 2012, in one of the widest elite restructuring, he reshuffled eight of the twenty-one district governors without waiting for the Independent Directorate of Local Governance's (IDLG) approval.<sup>92</sup> The US cable further asserts that most of these officials are prominent tribal figures who have proven to be corrupt and ineffective.

Despite his ability to establish an expansive and costly patron-client system, Shirzai's power is far from absolute. As two prominent MP from Nangarhar described to the author, the former run for the presidency in the 2009 election.

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<sup>92</sup> Us Cable, 7 March 2009. This is despite the fact that IDLG have the legal authority to appoint and dismiss district and provincial governors.

There is no government in Nangarhar. People are bargaining to make money out of government ministry positions, contracts, corruption, development funds and etc. The governor works for himself to fill his own pocket while his opponent control different part of the government. These people do not want peace and stability because they benefit from insecurity. The government in Nangarhar is nothing more than a *Destgahe Muamela* (Bargaining Machine).<sup>93</sup>

You cannot have a high position job without protection from one of the warlords in Nangarhar. A friend of mine who was the commissioner of the Torkham border custom had to resign after three months in the job because different warlords wanted protection money from him. He was threatened by many different groups and interests that he had to resign from his job.<sup>94</sup>

The local powerbrokers have maintained a degree of political, commercial and military power. By 2006, even though the *Arsala* family's power had weakened in Nangarhar; however, they succeeded to position themselves as stern players at the national level.<sup>95</sup> As Chapter 7 shows, Haji Zahir emerged as Karzai's archenemy after the 2009 presidential election. He became the leader of the Support for Rule of Law coalition in the 2010-2011 parliamentary crises, which successfully challenged Karzai's authority over the Special Court (Chapter 7). Interviews with several provincial council members revealed that the *Arsala* family, the Haji Zahir faction in particular, have maintained powerful positions in Nangarhar through the formal institution of the provincial council.<sup>96</sup> A few days before the author's visit to Jalalabad in June 2012, a skirmish had taken place between Haji Jamal Qadir and Shirzai's allied businessman Haji Farough. As the Afghan Millet regional party leader explained to the author, "Jamal, the grandson of Haji Qadir had attacked Farough, a local businessman over money. Apparently, Farough had not paid enough money for the contract he had won. He is a dangerous warlord who takes money from people, grab lands, and kidnap businessmen. The *Arsala* family remains powerful." The fact that Haji Jamal had carried out

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<sup>93</sup> Interview 84, 13 April 2012.

<sup>94</sup> Interview 74, 21 February 2012

<sup>95</sup> In 2006 Haji Zahir was exiled to the Northern Takhar province as the head of Border Police.

<sup>96</sup> This is based on the author's discussion with the National Democratic Institute Programme manager in Nangarhar who has been working with political parties in the provincial council over the years and several other provincial council members (Interviews 75, 90, 91).

such an attack on Haji Farough's house illustrates the extent of power they enjoy in Nangarhar. A month later, following Shirzai's insistence, the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Interior arrested Haji Jamal in Kabul. However, he was released a few days later and was warmly welcomed by his supporters in the city (Foschini 2011). Interestingly, as one local Shinwari MP detailed,

On that same day that Haji Jamal was taken prisoner, thirteen cases were registered against him for kidnapping, extortion, land grab and etc in the Attorney General Office. A few days later he was released. A deal must have been struck between Haji Zahir [Haji Jamal's father] and Karzai. When he returned to Jalalabad people greeted him. This is not because they like him but because they fear him.<sup>97</sup>

Several studies have highlighted the increasing involvement of Gul Agha Shirzai and his network in illegality in order to maintain its patronage system (Mukhopadhyay 2009; Hakimi 2012). These studies have found that Shirzai owns construction, logistics and private security firms in Nangarhar (Mukhopadhyay 2009; Hakimi 2012). The US House of Representatives' 2010 Report, one of the most comprehensive investigative studies into the contracting of US funds, found that Shirzai was directly and indirectly partner with several logistics and security companies in Nangarhar which provided services to the Host Nation Trucking (HNT) contract. The HNT was one of the most lucrative contracts in Afghanistan, worth 2.16 billion USD dollars, split among eight Afghan, American and Middle Eastern companies to provide logistics (e.g., food, supplies, fuel, and ammunitions) for the NATO forces in the Eastern region.<sup>98</sup> The report concluded that most of the money had gone to the pocket of warlords including Gul Agha Shirzai and criminal networks. Jawad (2011) found that most of the NATO contracts in Nangarhar are won either by Shirzai's own companies or his close partners, Haji Farough, Gul Murad and Najib Zarab.

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<sup>97</sup> Interview 81, 12 April 2012.

<sup>98</sup> See *Warlord, Inc.: Extortion and Corruption Along the U.S. Supply Chain in Afghanistan* (2010), Report was prepared by the Majority staff of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

The sudden increase in development aid by the US military through the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) meant new roads, schools, clinics and housing estates. Shirzai, subcontracted most of these projects to companies related to him (Mukhopadhyay 2009). The author's professional work at Afghanistan Stabilisation Initiative (ASI), a USAID funded project, revealed corruption, failure and mismanagement in most of the projects that Shirzai and his clients benefited financially. In addition to these, Shirzai has employed a more draconian method of extracting revenues in Nangarhar. Since 2005, he has been collecting illegal tolls on freight entering via Torkham Gate, under the "Governor's Reconstruction Fund". The operation nets the governor \$1.5 million to \$4 million per month (Hodge 2012). He has also accumulated additional rents from the provision of municipal services and the illegal selling of electricity to residents of Jalalabad (Hakimi 2012). Most of this money ends up in foreign banks. In a revealing incident in early July 2012, Shirzai was detained for hours when entering Germany carrying three briefcases full of undeclared cash (Hodge 2012).

### *Manipulation of Identities*

Shirzai lacks a strong constituency support in Nangarhar and this is one of the main reasons for his vulnerability in power. He has to purchase constituency loyalty by relying on an extensive and expansive patronage system, discussed above, which has gradually worked to further weaken his position. While in Balkh, politicisations of identities were centred on ethno-regional divisions, but in Nangarhar this was tribal in nature. Unlike his local rivals, as an outsider, Shirzai could not rely on his own tribal network constituency. However, as the leader of the most dominant tribal group in Afghanistan with a long history of king-making, Shirzai relied heavily on the tribal system to expand his political network (Mukhopadhyay 2009). He pursued a strategy of "buying-in" the loyalties of tribal leaders to maintain stability and security in Nangarhar. Through patronage and bargains he has manipulated tribes, awarding those in his favour and marginalising those against him, from state resources to international development aid (Hakimi 2012). While he enjoys support amongst the Mohmand and Shinwar tribes,

he has received the least support amongst the Khugiani and Sherzad tribes (Mukhopadhyay 2009). His harsh counter-narcotics campaigns in the latter provinces, combined with the exclusion of key Khugiani tribal administrators from the provincial state, played a part in losing the support of these tribal groups (Mukhopadhyay 2009:17-18). A large part of the Khugiani tribe, led by the *Khales* family, has felt isolated from the post-2001 Kabul set-up and therefore joined the Taliban. These tensions have been greatly exploited by local powerbrokers that claim to represent the interests of these tribes.

Another fascinating area to observe the manipulation of identities is land grab and land disputes. In an excellent article, Fabrizio Foschini (2012) highlighted how local powerbrokers stirred up tribal tensions for their personal gain. The disputes over the Qasamabad area in the Behsud district in 2005 and 2007 are revealing. The dispute was between local residents and the ethnic Pashei community. The Pasheis enjoyed support from the security forces, then heavily under the control of Hazrat Ali, the former *Jamiat* member and Nangarhar Chief of Police in 2003-04. The locals, on the other hand, had the support of the former mayor of Jalalabad and a couple of other Jihadi commanders (Foschini 2010). During the Author's visit to the province in early 2012, a land dispute between Khugiani and Mohmand tribes led to a weeklong tribal conflict. Interviews with provincial council and *Wolesi Jirga* representatives uncovered that both the Haji Zahir network and the Shirzai network had exploited the tension to create chaos and further strife between the tribes. As one MP from the Ahmadzai tribe described,

“These incidents happen all the time. The Khugiani and Mohmand tribal dispute was over a Khugiani purchasing land in the Mohmand district. Haji Zahir used this issue to create rife between the two tribes. They manipulated the elders. It was an attempt to create chaos and instability and a way to find an excuse to threaten the governor Shirzai. The underlying incentive for these powerbrokers is economics.”<sup>99</sup>

Such incidents, which are manipulated by the local powerbrokers, have generated moments of instability in the periphery. Identity politics has

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<sup>99</sup> Interview 81, 12 April 2012.

mutually reinforced political network elites' claim to illegality and patronage on behalf of their communities.

In this new emerging political order, the international intervention and their sponsored statebuilding process had played a fundamental role in intensifying the historically grounded clientelistic and identity-based divisions of Afghan statehood. By supporting the civil war era Mujahedeen commanders and the new Western-educated technocratic elites, the so-called Western liberal intervention and statebuilding contributed much to the strengthening of political networks, and subsequently re-assembling the historically grounded network state. Since 2001, new political networks and centres of power have been critically strengthened over this period through the distribution of contracts by Washington and its allies among influential powerbrokers. This was one of the main conclusions of a House of Representative report which questioned the international intervention strategy of relying on warlords and their sub-contracting practices in helping warlords win contracts and accumulate wealth.<sup>100</sup> The NATO counter-insurgency strategy of “winning hearts and minds” played a key role in empowering Atta Mohammad Noor in Balkh and Gul Agha Shirzai in Nangarhar province. The American military and USAID poured millions of dollars of development aid into Nangarhar based on a misguided assumption that more aid would improve security (Fishstein & Wilder 2012). Most of that money went in the pockets of key political networks and their elites in the periphery.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter showed how the post-2001 state came to be constituted and transformed, shedding light on post-2001 international intervention and state formation. The consolidation of power by Karzai at the centre and Noor and Shirzai in the periphery, reveals that the post-2001 international state is constituted as the state around key political networks and centres of power.

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<sup>100</sup> See *Warlord, Inc.: Extortion and Corruption Along the U.S. Supply Chain in Afghanistan* (2010), Report was prepared by the Majority staff of the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.



The state has been re-assembled by former Mujahedeen political networks as well as new ones with closer links to international statebuilding. Network practices of patronage, opportunism, illegality, and instrumentalisation of identities has become the rules of the game through which political networks and centres of power maintain and expand their power. Political networks and their elites have skilfully used their positions in the internationally sponsored state and their access to state resources to coercively remove their opponents to further consolidate their power across the country. By enabling certain networks to control the country's economy and policy, the post-2001 international patronage, to a large extent, provided an opportunity for patronage politics, illegality and opportunism to prosper.

Karzai and Shirzai have maintained their power through expansive patron-client and illegal practices. Noor, on the other hand, in addition to these has established a strong tie with the population in the North, particularly with his ethnic-Tajiks, enjoying greater legitimacy. While Noor's power seems secure in post-2014 international military withdrawal, Shirzai's power remains vulnerable. Noor's open support for Abdullah in the 2009 presidential election and Karzai's weakness to remove him from his position after the election illustrates the strength of Atta's power and his network connections, establishing him as a national player. In a calculated effort, he helped most of his networked clientele in the northern region to win seats in the *Wolesi Jirga* in the 2010 parliamentary elections (Chapter 7). These MPs have played a critical role in promoting and strengthening Noor's relations with Kabul's key powerbrokers, state officials, shadow economic networks and international donors.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> These MPs have helped Noor expand his financial and political connections with the key political networks in Kabul. After the election, in an interesting account, Noor sent a delegation of MPs, provincial council members, elders and others to Kabul to reconcile with the key powerbrokers in Kabul. The lobbying seemed to have worked according to Balkh's deputy provincial council who was part of the delegation: "After the election, Atta sent me with other influential people in Balkh to visit Marshal Fahim and other ministries to reconcile. Fahim told us even though Atta had disrespected me by not welcoming me in Mazar I forgive him as he is one of us and that I will never allow another person except Atta and Tajik to control the North. A week later a delegation including governor Noor went to meet Marshal Fahim and Karzai. Governor Noor was clever to rebuild trust and restore his connection." Interview 99, 21 April 2012.

The next two chapters demonstrate how the power dynamics among rival political networks was played out during moments of contestation and crisis. These case studies reflect two different moments of competition, conflict and compromise which provided a further platform for their horse-trading and deal-makings. The 2009 presidential election (Chapter 6) explores power dynamics at the national level in a moment of high contestation where political networks compete to win constituency votes. The 2010-2011 Special Court crisis (Chapter 7) shows the political network conflicts and their day-to-day practices in the *Wolesi Jirga*, within the confinement of the state. It explores the political economy of the *Wolesi Jirga*, one of the most important institutions of liberal peace. Both these cases highlight how liberal peace institutions have become compromised by political network for their gains. The network practices help uncover the complexity of governance and statehood in post-2001 international statebuilding, shedding light on how competing political networks maintain themselves within the state and beyond, further expanding their power and interests.

## Chapter 6: The Power Dynamics of Political Networks during the 2009 Presidential Elections

### Introduction

One of the primary objectives of the international intervention and their sponsored peacebuilding is election. Free and fair elections are considered as the principal indicator of success for peace operations. The UNDP guidebook to Elections and Conflict Prevention noted that, “the ultimate guarantor of social peace is robust democratic institutions such as elections. Election that give voice to the people are in essence a critical means of social conflict management through peaceful deliberations and decision-making processes.” (2009: 1). This rationale has served the development of policy priorities in post-2001 international intervention in Afghanistan. The 2001 Bonn Agreement included the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections as one of its main four benchmarks. The Agreement instructed that “free and fair elections are to be held no later than two years from the date of the convening of the Emergency Loyi Jirga” (Section I: 4). This was mirrored in the 2002 United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA) which mandated “the extension of government authority throughout the country through the establishment of democratic, legitimate, accountable institutions, down to the local level” (in UNDP 2009: 28).

Towards this objective, the international intervention invested significant resources and efforts in Afghanistan to prepare the ground for elections. In the 2004 presidential election, the combined budget for both the voter registration and elections projects totaled over 203 million USD, excluding the provision of security by international military forces.<sup>102</sup> In the 2009 presidential election this increased to almost 500 million USD, with half of that money

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<sup>102</sup> Afghan Elections Project, Excel document entitled “Funding status 5 Oct 04.xls,” <[hWp://www.elec%ons-afghanistan.org.af/](http://www.elec%ons-afghanistan.org.af/)>.

20 United Nations Development Programme, 2004 Afghan Elections Project Budget, <[hWp://www.elec%ons-afghanistan.org.af/](http://www.elec%ons-afghanistan.org.af/)>.

donated by the US government.<sup>103</sup> The international peacebuilding industry put together a diverse set of actors and organisations to assist with developing the necessary legislative framework, building the institutional and operational capacity of the election institutions and promoting the engagement of the relevant stakeholder communities to conduct elections in the limited available time-frame. International organisations such as the UNDP, National Democratic Institute (NDI) and International Republican Institute (IRI) were assigned to provide technical assistance to draft the electoral law and strengthen the capacity of election organisations including the Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB) and the Interim Afghan Electoral Commission (IAEC). The UNDP, under ELECT project, was tasked with the administration of the election including voter registration. Other implementing organisations such as International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), The Asia Foundation (TAF), and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) were assigned to develop civic engagement programmes to train the key stakeholders in the elections. The role of these organisations was significantly evident in the 2009 presidential election as expectations increased within a deteriorating security situation.

Despite the international declaration of success in consolidating the democratisation process, both the 2004 and 2009 elections were marred by fraud and vote rigging. The Impartial Panel of Election Expert report cited more than 300 cases of abuse and intimidation out of a total number of 448 officially filed complaints in the 2004 elections. In the 2009 elections, the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC) disqualified 1.2 million ballots, of which, one million belonged to the incumbent President Karzai and 200,000 to Abdullah Abdullah. The same election also exposed the increasing division and rift between international donors when the UN's Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon dismissed the UNAMA deputy, Ambassador Peter Galbraith, who had clashed with the head of UNAMA, Kai Eide, over his forceful criticism of Karzai team's fraud and manipulation, further questioning and undermining the authority, the intensions and objectives of international

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<sup>103</sup> Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) (2010:1).

peacebuilding in the eyes of many Afghans. For example, one Afghan member of the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House) characterised the last two elections as follows, “if the 2004 election was a setback for democratisation in Afghanistan, the 2009 election essentially dug its grave.”<sup>104</sup> A 2012 Democracy International (DI) survey report found that most Afghans have more faith in informal institutions that represent their interests than they do in the formal institutions associated with the state. As this chapter uncovers, elections in post-2001 international intervention and peacebuilding has served, if anything, other than those of democratisation. Elections have largely aided the interests of political networks to further consolidate a rigid political order that serves their interests and that of their members.

The 2009 presidential election serve windows on the process by which political cultural and political economic network contestation and cooptation proceeded under the veneer of ostensibly liberal-democratic elections. These elections have provided new conditions within which political network pacts were re-negotiated. This chapter begins by providing an overview of the shifts in the power dynamics of political networks since 2004. It highlights a shift in balance of power from Western-educated technocrats back to political network Jihadis. Section II examines the inter-network conflict based on divisions of ethnicity during the 2009 presidential election. It is an attempt to show how opposing political networks tried to manipulate Afghanistan’s identity groups; in particular those based on ethnicity, in the symbols and rhetoric of their campaign strategies to win votes. Section III explores the propagation of patron-client bargains and exchanges linking network leaders and their clientele within two opposing whole networks, represented by Abdullah Abdullah, a former member of Jamiat tanzim, and by the incumbent President Karzai, to bring out the vote. It details three main clientelist linkages: 1) the individual network powerbrokers; 2) the tribal and community elders; and 3) the provincial and district government officials, upon which candidates relied on. The section before the conclusion provides a more substantive explanation for “corruption” at the 2009 poll, which focuses on the

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<sup>104</sup> Interview 131, 13 September 2009.

success or failures of formal institutions. The chapter concludes by suggesting that Karzai's political network continues to further consolidate its power by depending on patron-client practices and the use of identity politics to gain a semblance of legitimacy and to seek the consolidation of the Afghan state.

## **I. The 2004 and 2009 Presidential Election and Political Network Re-structuring**

The 2004 presidential election provided an excellent opportunity for newly splintered political networks (Chapter 5) and their elites to rearrange their structural composition and organisational power. For Karzai and his newly expanding network, the election offered an occasion to further strengthen their power. For the so-called Jihadi political networks and centres of power, it offered an opportunity to reinvent themselves as resilient ethno-regional client-networks (Bijlert 2009; Wilder 2005). Although Karzai won the election with 55 per cent of the vote, his three main challengers, Qanuni (ethnic-Tajik), Mohaqqueq (ethnic-Hazara) and Dostum (ethnic-Uzbek) received a considerable share of the vote at 16.3 per cent, 11.7 per cent, and 10 per cent respectively. Capitalising on the uncertainty provided by the absence of a valid census, they successfully mobilised a high voter turnout to establish the size of their power base. However, the strategic rhetoric that was used was an ethnic one, claiming to prove the size of their ethnic population relative to other groups. They appealed to their ethno-regional constituency by claiming to have defended the interests of their ethnic community in standing in the election, thereby characterising the general vote as an ethnic/tribal one. This reflected in the following quotes by the deputy Chairman of Junbish, Fayzullah Zaki, and Mohammad Mohaqqueq, the powerful ethnic-Hazara candidate.

“This was the first time in the history of this country that an opportunity had risen which gave ethnic groups like Uzbeks the chance to contest in the political process. Throughout history, the Turkic groups were deliberately estimated at only 2 or 3 per cent. Despite knowing we would not win, General Dostum contested in the election to prove the size of our ethnic group. Dostum won ten per cent of the vote, now,

nobody can deny that Uzbeks are any less than ten per cent in the country.”<sup>105</sup>

“The main reason that we contested in the election was to prove that we [the Hazaras] are one of the largest ethnic groups in the country. In the last three decades we participated in Jihad and fought against the Taliban and when democracy was introduced we actively took part. In this stage, to represent the Hazaras I stood in the election and people voted for me. Through democracy, we proved that this country belongs to all ethnic groups.”<sup>106</sup>

These ethno-regional political networks were able to send a clear message to Karzai that if he is going to maintain and strengthen his power he ought to take them seriously. This could explain, to some extent, the reason for Karzai’s shift in policy from repressing the Jihadis to accommodating their demands and interests within the system. From 2004 onwards the power balance between different networks had shifted away from the Western-educated technocrats and royalists such as Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai and Ali Jalali back to the former jihadi networks. A year later most of the Jihadi political network leaders and their clientele, except Rashid Dostum, found protection in the newly established parliament where they used it as a platform to maintain and consolidate their power (Chapter 7). The period from 2005 to the 2009 presidential election can largely be explained in terms of active state network extension by Karzai on the one hand, and efforts by these political networks to transform themselves into successful ethno-regional clients networks, on the other. Steadily, a new political order emerged in which the political networks’ sphere of influence within and outside the state became sharper and more transparent. Subsequently, Karzai extended its authority by relying on the former Jihadi ethno-regional networks, who largely acted as the mediator clients, to maintain a complex patronage system connecting commanders, tribal leaders, and local powerbrokers, stretching down to the village level (discussed below). These patronage connections functioned both ways, from top to bottom and vice versa.

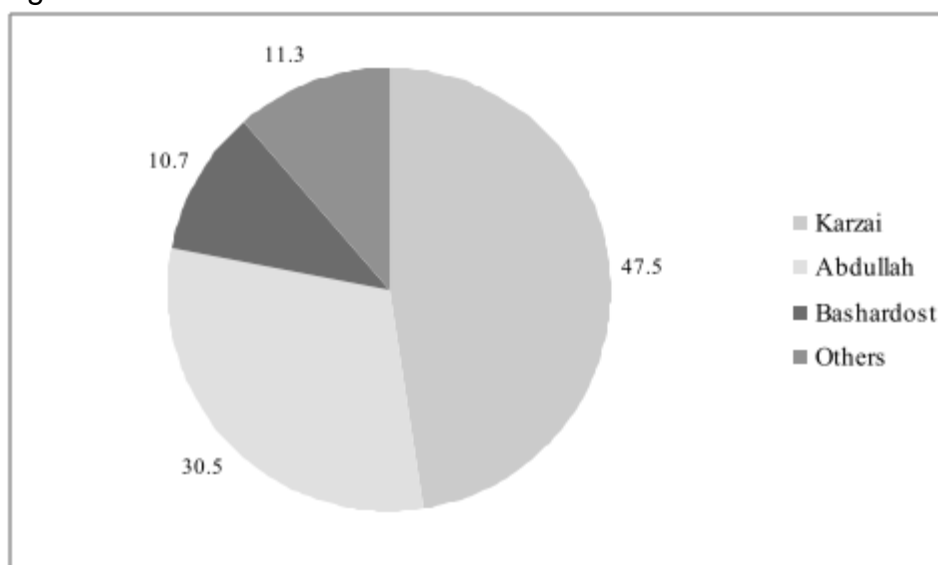
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<sup>105</sup> Interview 122, 14 September 2009.

<sup>106</sup> Interview 112, 30 August 2009.

It was within this emerging political order that the second presidential election took shape on 20 August 2009. Unlike the 2004 election, this election was administered and managed by the newly founded Afghanistan Independent Election Commission (IEC). The IEC, the ultimate authority on election, was formed with the Presidential decree (decree No.23) without a legislative approval. Karzai also appointed the IEC leadership. The final result, which was announced two months after the election, put Karzai at 47.5 per cent and Abdullah at 30.5 per cent (figure 6.1). It forced the need for a run-off as neither candidate had reached the threshold margin of 50 per cent. With Abdullah deciding not to run, Karzai was declared the winner.

Figure 6.1. The 2009 Presidential Election Result



The next section attempts to show how the two main candidates consciously manipulated Afghanistan's identity markers for their personal and electoral gains, but did so alongside nationalist appeals to unity. It demonstrates how political network strategies have further exacerbating identity politics in post-2001 period.

## II. Politicisation of Identities and the 2009 Presidential Elections

In this section, I use discourse analysis to show how the two main presidential candidates manipulated identity divisions to win the vote. Discourse analysis



of the two main presidential candidates' speeches, posters and advertisements during the election show how they used certain signifiers to position themselves in the Afghan society and in relation to their rivals. Candidates attempted to draw fixed lines of structure and order in terms of ethnicity, simplifying the complexity of the Afghan society. The ethnic dynamics of the Afghan society, which were always influenced and re-negotiated as opportunities emerged and tactics changed (Simonsen 2004; Galtzer 2002), were skilfully constructed as fixed by candidates. An analysis of the main candidates' speeches shows how both created a narrative of ethno-regional injustice by providing a particular and simplified reading of the last thirty years of Jihad and civil war, which amongst other things, precluded discussion of centuries of conquest, empire and state building. It is in the implicit and explicit messages in their rhetoric and representations that one can see the ethno-political features of their discourse and, by extension, their political strategies. The sub-text reveals the centrality of ethnicity in their campaign as a tool to mobilise ethno-regional support. Karzai's political adviser's comment illustrates the importance of ethnicity for securing votes,

Ethnicity was a significant factor in the election.... They [the two main candidates] did not use it in public discourse. They did it indirectly as a hidden mechanism in a way that the electorate could relate to."<sup>107</sup>

In the 2009 election, the two main candidates' campaigns were driven by the manipulation of identity-based issues rather than policy-centred issues. The little policy that was discussed revolved around ethnically-framed issues of political inclusion, social and political justice, and national unity. Substantive policy discussion was largely superfluous. For example, one of the main policy proposals of Abdullah was the transformation of the political system from presidential to parliamentary. However, in none of his speeches did he elaborate on the differences between the two or why the parliamentary system would be better for Afghanistan. As highlighted below in the rhetoric of Karzai and Abdullah, by contrast, each candidate targeted issues that were important to particular ethno-regional groups. For instance, issues such as the

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<sup>107</sup> Interview 123, 2 September 2009.

problem of the Taliban threat and security provision, the stay of foreign troops and the Durand line between Pakistan and Afghanistan were brought up for Pashtuns. To Hazaras, candidates addressed the Kuchi-Hazara land conflict, building of the Kabul-Bamiyan roads and the promise to make the two most populated Hazara districts of Jaghuri and Behsud into provinces. For Tajiks and Uzbeks, the issues of inclusion of Jihadis in the government and social and political justice came to the fore. Although, such regional strategies are common in any large democracy, in Afghanistan these strategies had a clear ethnic basis and conflictual aspect despite the rhetoric of 'national unity'.

### *The Karzai Narrative*

In Karzai's discourse a clear temporal division was drawn between the period of the civil war, associated with "factional fighting" and "disunity between different tanzims", to the post-2001 period of "authority", "peace" and "development". In making this distinction, Karzai established himself as the personification of this transition whilst downplaying his own ethnic identity and the role of ethno-regionalism in the constitution of elite authority in Afghanistan. This was evident from his election banners, which stated, "vote for Karzai, vote for stability", "vote for Karzai, vote for prosperity and a proud Afghanistan", "vote for Karzai, vote for peaceful Afghanistan". His two primary signifiers of this shift are national unity (Wahdat-e-Millie) and progress (Peshraft and Inkeshaf).

Karzai's emphasis on the notion of national unity is both personalised and explicitly anti-factional, which is evident from his speeches and posters around the multi-ethnic Kabul city: "Karzai is the symbol of national unity", "Afghanistan for all Afghans", "our way, the peace way". He drew a line between pre-Bonn tyranny and civil war and his post-Bonn network-building of inclusion and co-optation of main political networks to the state, which he projected as a significant progress towards national unity, contrasting with the Jihadi network of Abdullah, which is portrayed as seeking ethno-regional factional domination. Karzai positioned himself as a national figure who worked towards pacifying tanzim elites in the post-Bonn era by incorporating

them into his network-state. Such a discursive approach can be understood as the necessary outcome of his patronage politics (elaborated in section III), given that he has brokered political deals with most of the ethno-regional and local networks. In such a position he had to frame himself as a national figure who dissolved factional differences. Karzai's language employs dichotomies of differentiation and linking such as "peace" against "civil war" or 'stability" versus "factional fighting". Such official representations draw a clear distinction between government and opposition groups. They represent the government, more specifically his political network, above the conflict rather than being an active player in the current conflict. During the live television debate between the three main candidates before the election in August Karzai declared:

Seven years ago when I took office, this country was ruined; there was no government and no bureaucracy. The tanzims had fought one another and had destroyed everything. Look at this country now, it has become free and it has progressed. We must keep this. We should maintain this progress, the national unity, elimination of war and gun, and elimination of tanzim fighting, in order to have peace and unity for all Afghans.<sup>108</sup>

Karzai's narrative draws on little or no evidence to justify the claim to national unity. In his account, he takes the alliance with the main ethno-regional networks as evidence of democratic coalition building. "Democracy" and "national unity" substitute for any discussion of ethnically based factionalism: "vote for Karzai, vote for democracy and government by people." For Karzai, democracy and national unity are the symbols which conceal the bargains and exchanges made with the main network leaders, commanders, community leaders and state officials.

Progress was another important signifier constructed by both candidates, yet in different ways. Karzai's campaign capitalised on post-conflict reconstruction and argued that socio-economic progress has been uniform for all Afghans.

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<sup>108</sup> Hamid Karzai, TV Debate, Broadcasted live on Radio and TV of Afghanistan (RTA), on 16 August 2009 (5-7 pm).

Such a discursive mode links “peacebuilding” and ‘statebuilding’ to the person of the President as Karzai remarked in an August speech,

“Our biggest achievement of [the] last seven years, after three decades of war, is that today Afghanistan has become home to all Afghans. Refugees are returning home from all corners of the world. Today after war and bloodshed, Afghanistan has become home for every single Afghan. Today we have 75,000 students in universities, of which, 25,000 are women. We have roads, schools and clinics...We are moving towards a government by the people and a government for the people.”

<sup>109</sup>

These deployments of “progress” and “national unity” are misleading, however, given the continuance of fighting after the Bonn Agreement between political networks within the state and those outside the state fighting against the government (e.g., the Taliban and Hizbi-i-Islami). Karzai’s rhetoric went even further by creating the narrative of a helpless public, as if they have no other option but to elect him to power. He skilfully portrayed himself as a saviour knowing that those memories of the civil war and inter-network fighting are fresh in the minds of most Afghans, making them an emotive topic, ripe for exploitation. In this narrative, the civil war is identified as an era apart from the present. For Karzai inter-network fighting is a key generic signifier constructed as a direct threat to the ‘national unity’. Therefore, the line he established between “civil war” and “national disunity”, between ‘stability’ and “instability”, is effective in its rhetorical impact on ordinary Afghans. Civil war is associated with the Hobbesian state of nature where the state does not exist. Such representation of the regime idealises the existence of the state and the national progress as a managed process of statebuilding towards a unified and democratic state. The above rhetoric offered by Karzai essentially conceals the strategic partnerships he made with the same Jihadis that he blames for the 1990s wars. It conceals his deal-making with political networks in getting the vote.

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<sup>109</sup> Karzai, campaign speech in the Kayhan Valley, 6 August 2009

### *Abdullah's Narrative*

Abdullah provided a counter-narrative to Karzai that at once denied the President's claims whilst offering an alternative and no less partial construction of contemporary Afghanistan. Jihad was perhaps the primary signifier for Abdullah. Contrary to Karzai's "national unity", Abdullah's counter-narrative was centred on the notion of alienation and injustice. His main campaign slogan was "change" and "hope" which he subsequently named his whole network coalition after. However, this narrative was given plausibility through the symbolic currency of Jihad and martyrdom. Abdullah's campaign speeches typically start with praising the Jihadi martyrs: "Let me pray to the soul of all Martyrs, especially chief martyr Ahmad Shah Massoud."<sup>110</sup> Campaign posters such as "the martyrs' blood is the guarantor of freedom and sovereignty of the nation" and "by celebrating the splendour of Jihad we can rebuild the nation" were widespread across the city. He depicted his decision to stand in the election as an inclusive process among the United Front (UF) Jihadis, even though with the joining of Qasim Fahim as Karzai's first running mate, the UF had collapsed. Thus, he was indirectly targeting a specific ethnic constituency. Although this discourse brings memories of civil war, destruction and anarchy for many Afghans, for Abdullah and his supporters it appeals to the glorious days of Jihadis when he was a leading commander. In July 2009, in a campaign speech he declared:

"For the past three years we have been consulting with fellow Mujahedeens to re-establish the United Front. In the many meetings we had, we agreed to choose a Jihadi as a candidate. They put this burden on my shoulder."<sup>111</sup>

I promise to the Afghan people and to the Jihadi brothers that I will implement your wishes by bringing security and an atmosphere of brotherhood and social justice. I will guarantee the Mujahedeens the rights that have been denied to them.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Abdullah's Speech in Mazar-e-Sharif, 13 August 2009

<sup>111</sup> Abdullah's Speech in Mazar-e-Sharif, 13 August 2009

<sup>112</sup> Abdullah speech, Baghlan Province, 22 July 2009

This invocation of jihad signifies a different reading of Afghan history, one with different moments of promise and peril. Firstly, it represents the glorious days of Mujahedeen's battle against the Soviet regime and their eventual victory (1979-1992). Secondly it indirectly suggests the period of Jihadi domination during the civil war years (1992-6). In particular it invokes the hegemony of one ethno-regional political network, the predominantly ethnic-Tajik Jamiat network to which Abdullah belongs. Thirdly, it also denotes the immediate post-2001 international intervention when Jihadis, in particular the NA and the Jamiat, had control over the main government ministries including the security ministries (2001-2004). Finally it signifies the aftermath of that period in which these Jihadis, including himself, were excluded from power. Therefore, this narrative provides a different rendition of history, one grounded in an ethno-regional struggle against external powers and Pashtun hegemony. As such, Abdullah does not appeal to the wider population that are disenchanted with the Karzai government, but to a particular minority group in society.

Similar to Karzai, Abdullah deploys the notion of progress in his campaign speeches. However, in contrary to Karzai, he highlights the government's high level of corruption, despotism, and socio-economic exclusion of some ethnic groups such as the Tajiks from the political and economic process of statebuilding. In August 2009 in Parwan province he adopted "national unity" as a future prospect under his leadership to fulfil the promise of jihad, rather than an achievement of the current government.

"I promise you to bring education to young people; to give back your rights; to bring development and woman's rights; give rights to Mujahedeens [so] social injustice is established. [I promise] to bring national unity so that there is no difference between the North and the South, the West and the Centre; that there is no difference between Pashtuns, Farsiwans, Uzbeks, Hazaras and Turkmens."<sup>113</sup>

In Kabul stadium on 17 August, he again invoked "national unity" over power in the hands of one person. In his rhetoric he further linked Karzai's corruption

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<sup>113</sup> Abdullah, Parwan Province, 5 August 2009

to his relationship with the Western powers and played on Afghan disillusionment with foreign intervention.

“We don’t want power to be in the hand of one person, one family, one mafia and one drug dealer. We want power to be with you, the people. We want national unity and it does not matter which race, ethnicity, and religion you belong to. Today, the empire that is built by paper money [a reference to the US Dollar] is broken. Everybody is with us, the people are with us and so is God.”<sup>114</sup>

The sharply confrontational rhetoric and symbolism deployed in the campaign may not be unexpected in an election which is by its nature both competitive and based around the claims of particular individual to represent and lead the nation. Moreover, that ethno-regionalism remains an important sub-text to the symbolic order of Afghan politics and the conduct of the 2009 presidential election, should be of no surprise given Afghan history and the existing weakness of civic nationalism in the country. The symbolic importance of ethno-regionalism was immediately evident in the candidate’s choice of two vice-presidents to balance the country’s ethnic composition, or to appeal to different ethnic groups to win more votes. Karzai’s first vice-president was a Tajik and his second a Hazara. Being half-Tajik and claiming to represent largely Tajik former Jamiat tanzim, Abdullah’s first vice-president was a Pashtun and his second was a Hazara. As Abdullah’s second vice-president, Dr Ali Cheraq, bluntly put it and exposed Abdullah,

“I was personally chosen to represent the Shia people [Hazaras being largely Shia]...some candidates definitely used ethnicity, religion and old historical hostilities as a tool and abuse it. For instance, Abdullah in many places reminded people that his mother is Tajik and that he is a Jihadi and a close friend of Massoud...”<sup>115</sup>

The centrality of ethnicity in the candidates’ campaign was even evident from the banalities of the imagery deployed around multi-ethnic Kabul city. Hats and turbans were the two main ethnic symbols which were easily exploited. For instance, Karzai’s pictures in Dasht-e-Barchi area (predominantly Hazara) with a Hazaragi turban, in Khairkhana area (mostly Tajik) were with Karakul,

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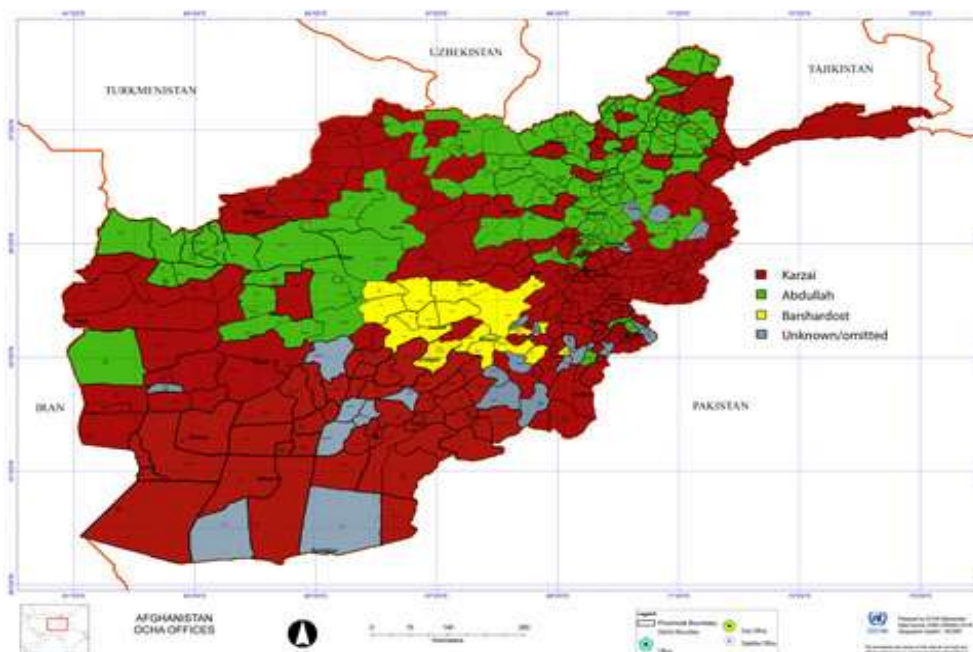
<sup>114</sup> Abdullah, Kabul Stadium, 17 August 2009

<sup>115</sup> Interview 127, 10 September 2009.

the hat that he wears most often, and in the Karte Naw area (Predominantly Pashtun) were with a Pashtun turban. Similarly, Abdullah wore a Pakol hat to appeal to his ethnic-Tajik supporters, a Pashtun Turban to appeal to Pashtuns and no hat or Turban to appeal to the wider public. However, despite this superficial playing of the national card, the candidates primarily gained support from their ethno-regional bases.

Election results at district level (Figure 6.2) illustrates that the narrative reflect an ethnic politics understanding of the election results, when compared to the ethno-regional geography of the country (See map 2 page 7). Whilst Karzai received most of his votes from the Pashtun south, Abdullah won most of his votes from the Northern and Western provinces. In the Central Highland provinces of Ghazni and Daikundi, the third candidate Bashardost got most of the ethnic Hazara vote.

**Figure 6.2:** The Ethno-regional Voting Map at District Level





These attempts to play national unity at one moment and ethno-regional cards at others may be quite expected. However, ethnic voting does not give us the full picture, concealing as much as it is revealing. These figures bring to our attention another significant feature of the 2009 presidential election, which complimented identity politics as the second key characteristic: the clientelistic bargains struck to bring out the vote. In the West, Ismail Khan, the former powerful Jamiat governor of Herat province and a regional network leader, who enjoyed sizable organisational and mobilisation power delivered votes for Karzai in the West (Figure 6.2). Similarly, in the central and northern regions, Karim Khalili and Mohammad Mohaqqueq political networks among the ethnic Hazaras and General Rashid Dostum network among the Uzbek population respectively won votes for Karzai (Figure 6.2). The role of the main political networks and their practices of opportunism and patronage in delivering votes are discussed in the next section.

### **III. Political Networks, Opportunities and the State**

This section investigates three types of clients which the two main presidential candidates, Karzai and Abdullah, used to gain votes. These were: 1) individual network leaders; 2) sub-network tribal and community elders; and 3) the provincial and district government officials.

#### *Ethno-Regional Network Leaders*

The 2009 presidential election suggests that patron-client relations, in its present form are closely interlinked with ethnicity. Abdullah and Karzai both sought the support of key powerful networks. To reiterate, whilst the candidates' pact-making on the surface might simply look as an elite level re-negotiation, this is not the case. As outlined in Chapter 3, it is the organisational capacity (e.g., money, information, expertise, and legitimacy) of the network in mobilising support as well as the role of the leader in maintaining network cohesion that ensures network effectiveness. It is the

network as a whole that allocates authority to the central node to build external links whilst simultaneously managing the network internally. The role of the leader is essential but this should not mean that we reduce our analysis to just political elites. The failure of the leader to perform this function properly could lead to cooptation by a rival in a contested field. This was the case with Harakat-i-Islami under the leadership of Sayyed Anwari during the election.<sup>116</sup> Moreover, as argued in Chapter 5, whole network leaders usually prefer to deal directly with individual network leaders, in order to maintain and control a complicated patron-client playfield. Below, I simply refer to these political networks by the name of their leaders.

Karzai was successful in coopting key political networks in his election whole network. Pacts were negotiated with the following ethno-regional leaders because of their constituency power base: Mohammad Mohaqqueq and Karim Khalili, for Hazara vote, General Rashid Dostum for Uzbek vote, Marshal Fahim and Ismail Khan for Tajik vote, Sher Mohammad Akhundzada in Helmand, Jan Mohammad Khan in Uruzgan, Haji Din Mohammed in Nangarhar, and his brother Ahmad Wali Karzai for Pashtun vote in Kandahar. Other national and regional powerbrokers like Abdur Rab Sayyaf, Sebqatullah Mojaddadi, Abdul-hay Ahadi, Gul Aga Shirzai, and Pir Gilani were recruited for their active networks rather than their popular support. For instance, Sayyaf, Mojaddadi and Pir Gilani were chosen because of their close connection with the country's conservative circles. Karzai successfully enlisted Marshal Fahim (an ethnic Tajik), the most senior former Jamiat tanzim commanders to run as his first vice-presidential running mate, thereby splitting the so-called United Front whole network. The United Front was a loose coalition of several jihadi networks who were sidelined as the result of Karzai's repression policy. Karim Khalili (an ethnic Hazara) remained with

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<sup>116</sup> An interesting case is that of Harakat-e-Islami political network under the leadership of Sayyed Anwari, which splintered into two smaller networks just before the election. While the leadership went with Abdullah, key members were co-opted by Karzai. As the spokesperson of Harakat, Sayyed Hadi Hadi, explained to the author on 9 September 2009, "If Mr. Kazemi and his followers like General Zafar and Amini have left us for their personal interests, that is their wish. Our leadership cadre that supports Abdullah is strong. Mr. Anwari who is the leader of the group did not see any problem for their departures". Interview 114, 24 August 2009.

Karzai as his second vice-presidential mate again. Karzai convinced several prominent Pashtun powerbrokers like Gul Agha Shirzai not to run (explained in Chapter 5). Interestingly, the decision to allow General Dostum, the leader of Junbish back in the country from exile in Turkey reveal that Karzai knew he could not win as he did not have the constituency power base. Dostum was forced to leave for Turkey when tensions between him and Karzai became unbearable in 2008.

Abdullah on the other hand struggled to recruit influential powerbrokers into his whole network. Both Atta Mohammad Noor, the governor of Balkh, and Burhanuddin Rabbani, the spiritual leader of Jamiat tanzim, were the most high profile recruit for the ethnic-Tajik vote, the latter did not publicly endorse him. His Pashtun, Hazara and Uzbek networks were mainly consisted of second-ranking political networks such as Sayyed Hussein Anwari network and Qorban Ali Irfani network. Abdullah's running mates were relatively unknown figures who were Humayoun Wasefi (an ethnic Pashtun) and Dr. Ali Cheragh (an ethnic Hazara) as first and second vice-presidential running mates. The Pashtun network clientele that Abdullah had managed to recruit around him including Farahi, Ulumi and Gulobzoy, soon felt alienated and excluded. As one Abdullah campaign insider commented:

The Pashtuns felt excluded from the campaign decision-making and finance. They were sidelined. When Farahi's brother was kidnapped I was told to write an article through Mandegar. They chose the title 'Az galla dur shavi robuda shavi' [if you leave the heard, you will get kidnapped]. These were short-sighted strategies and interests.<sup>117</sup>

These highly contingent strategic alliances were seen as an effective tool to win votes. Karzai's campaign manager in the Karte Naw district of Kabul city stated,

As a campaign manager I can tell you that there were a lot of political deals at all levels... this was an effective mechanism to gain votes. Deals with political parties, tribal elders, ethnic leaders, and provincial and

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<sup>117</sup> Interview 45, 16 January 2012.

district governors could gain votes for candidates and in this way they could win.<sup>118</sup>

Wider ethnographic research showed that such instrumentalism were widespread as network leaders demonstrated they were willing to sell votes rather than make enduring alliances or, much less, consistently support ethno-regional patrons. Although it was beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate the role of the economic business sector in the election, it was evident from interviews that businesses and economic considerations had played an important role in the outcome of alliance-building. In fact interviews with politician-turned-businessmen after the election suggested that the main reason for Karzai-Fahim grouping in the election was more to do with their families' business connections and interests than political calculations. Although this was difficult to substantiate, below statements by an MP in Faryab province and the National Coalition member reflects the importance of these financial connections.

Marshal Fahim's brother is one of the biggest traders in petroleum and gas in Afghanistan. Sayyaf has grabbed so much land in West Kabul that he has made millions. One of Karzai's brothers is a drug warlord while the other is a business partner with Marshal Fahim's brother in oil, gas, logistics, and construction sectors. Khalil's brother has also made millions out of land grabs in West Kabul. So should we be surprised that they are in the same team in this election. They literally own most of Afghanistan's resources and foreign aid. They might have spend millions in the election campaigns, but once elected they would make billions from government contracts.<sup>119</sup>

As far as I know, both Fahim and Karzai's brothers negotiated before the election. They have financial deals that reach over 100 millions dollars so it makes sense if they bring them [Karzai and Fahim] together. Their brother's position they occupy in the government brings them wealth and power. The continuation of their economic cooperation is essential for them to ensure their families are in power.<sup>120</sup>

Further research on the political economy of political networks and the state is needed to fully consider the role of business in the election and the wider

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<sup>118</sup> Interview 128, 5 August 2009.

<sup>119</sup> Interview 131, 13 September 2009.

<sup>120</sup> Interview 39, 18 December 2011.

statebuilding process. These networks are clearly based on the principle of reciprocity. While Karzai had promised ministerial positions, licenses, government contracts and development funds as political resources for these clients, network patrons like Mohammad Mohaqqueq had publicly demanded five ministries for its political network. In addition, Mohaqqueq had demanded the power to decide whom to appoint as well as establishing Jaghuri and Behsud districts into provinces. Similarly, General Dostum was promised two ministries. As an independent female MP from Kabul explained this relationship,

In the past these figures used to act like khans (chiefs), now they act like mediators between the candidate and the people. They and their *halaqat* [networks] are the key players within the system. They have money and resources including coercion power so they will win votes for the candidates. While the candidate pays the money to the main powerbrokers, they then distribute it down the chain to their cronies. He can also choose to appoint ministers as Mojaddadi did by supporting Karzai. His son is appointed as the governor of Kabul city. The same, Mohaqqueq is demanding four ministries and Dostum two.<sup>121</sup>

The demands of Qorban Ali Irfani, the leader of the Wahdat-e-Islami Millet political network who allied with Abdullah, are a good illustration of the kinds of requests, which were made. He summarised his terms publicly and as follows,

“Twenty per cent of the Hazara’s political, economic, social and cultural rights within the state, the construction of Central Highlands’ roads from Kabul to Herat, resolving justly the conflict between the Kuchi and Hazaras, and upgrading two districts [in Central regions] into province.<sup>122</sup>

These patronage and bargain practices were seen as mutually beneficial for both clients and patrons. The ethno-regional patronage relations elicited by the election have extensive ramifications not just for the nature of governance in Afghanistan but the politico-administrative shape of the state itself. This raises questions of statebuilding which will be returned to in the conclusion of this thesis.

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<sup>121</sup> Interview 115, 13 September 2009

<sup>122</sup> Observation, Irfani Speech in Kabul, 5 August 2009

These ethno-regional network pacts were ultimately carried out through local clients. District level election results confirm the important role these powerbrokers played in shifting votes, particularly in favour of Karzai. However, as the same data (figure 6.2) also reveals their power as individual network leaders were neither automatic nor consistent. While Dostum was quite successful in Jawzjan he was not in Faryab province. Mohaqqeq and Khalili did well in Bamiyan and Wardak (Behsud District); however, in Daikundi and Ghazni they could not deliver as Bashardost won most of the Hazara vote. Similarly, Marshal Fahim could not get the ethnic-Tajik vote out in his own hometown, Panjshir, and neighbouring Parwan provinces for Karzai. Given these uncertainties it was no wonder that candidates hedged their bets by striking bargains far and wide. The decision to allow Dostum to return from exile and his ability to deliver votes, at least in certain provinces, was crucial for Karzai. As one female MP from Jawzjan province put it, “I can say that Dostum’s arrival a day before the election had a major impact on his supporters to vote for Karzai. Most Uzbeks were unhappy with Karzai, yet, because he [Dostum] announced his support most Uzbeks followed. At least this was the case in Jawzjan.”<sup>123</sup> Karzai’s senior advisor also confirms this, noting that, “Dostum’s call did turn the tide for Mr. Karzai.”<sup>124</sup>

At local levels, client-networks such as Dostum publicly campaigned for their patron-candidates. In their active campaigning they manipulated the appropriate cultural symbols as well as articulating and advancing their ethno-regional groups’ collective aspirations, as they themselves defined them. Political leaders travelled widely across their regions to gather support in person. The day Dostum landed in his stronghold of Jawzjan province, he declared, “If you like me or not, this is your own personal choice. But when you come to Junbish, then support its decisions and its Muamela (political dealings). Lets stay united and do not let others exploit your sacrifices and your bloodsheds. Let us stay with Hamid Karzai; and I, as your leader ask you

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<sup>123</sup> Interview 111, 8 September 2009.

<sup>124</sup> Interview 132, 10 October 2009.

to come together and make sure that Hamid Karzai wins in the first round.<sup>125</sup> Similarly, Mohaqqueq told his supporters in Daikundi province, “if I knew among these 39 candidates a better one I would have identified and told you to vote accordingly, my millet (nation). I have two demands from you, first your full participation in the election and second to vote for Karzai.<sup>126</sup>”

Acting as a mediator or a campaign agent of the leading presidential candidates, political networks provided their own staff and resources to mobilise electorates. They used their own extended organisational patronage network at province, district and village level during the campaign. Campaigning usually involved assembling large gatherings, often with lunch and transport costs provided, private face-to-face meetings, organising rallies, distributing campaign materials, offering gifts like headscarf to women or money to a local mosque, and plastering posters around. For instance, the head of Cultural Affairs of Harakat-e-Islami under the leadership of Sayyed Kazemi described its network’s role as follows,

“We use our political network for a candidate by recruiting people and trying to mobilise support through establishing campaign headquarters in different provinces and districts. Currently, we are using our office as a campaign venue for Karzai both in Kabul and in the provinces. We have twenty offices in different provinces.”<sup>127</sup>

According to Karzai’s Deputy Campaign Manager, “while the central office was providing them with financial needs, it was left to each group to draw their own strategy and coordinate their efforts in implementing actions.”<sup>128</sup> The motivation for Karzai’s deputy campaign manager in West Kabul illustrates the extent of bargaining and exchange down the chain. She explained: “my motivation to join was political networking as well as achieving a higher career position. I was recruited through Modabber’s party [Karzai’s current head of Office of Administrative Affairs and the leader of Ensejam-e-Millie].... If I was

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<sup>125</sup> Obtained from local media

<sup>126</sup> Obtained from local media

<sup>127</sup> Interview 126, 6 September 2009.

<sup>128</sup> Interview 123, 2 September 2009.

not given money I would not have helped with Karzai's campaign."<sup>129</sup> After the election she complained bitterly that the client-network leader (Modabber) had not upheld his promise of either appointing her as the governor of Ghor province or giving her a senior position in the Afghan Embassy in Iran, which she was promised. Such promises are widespread, as many of the author's friends have fallen in the same trap. This reveals the uncertainty and temporary nature of some of these promises. It shows how inconsistent these patron-client linkages were at the time of the election.

In addition to their informal patronage network, political networks were also able to utilise other forms of resources that they had in their possessions. This included using TV and radio stations under their control to mobilise their supporters and broadcast a negative image of opposing contenders. Some of the most powerful networks have their own TV and radio stations including Khalili, Mohaqqueq, Dostum and Sayyaf. As Bashardost, the third-place presidential contender assertively commented, "before they had a Kalashnikov, and now they have a TV". He further complained: "One sentence in Khalil's TV killed my campaign in Bamiyan [province] broadcasting that I had said in my campaign in the South that I am not one of those that participated in the atrocities of Kabul."<sup>130</sup> Abdullah could rely on Noorin and Noor TV channels which are closely linked with the former Jamiat tanzim. Newspapers like Mandegar and Nokhost supported and advocated Abdullah.

The majority of the electorate's decision to follow their ethno-regional network leaders suggests that they are easily prone to identity manipulation. However, this solidarity emerges both from the structure and composition of Afghan society and the legacy of decades of violent political conflict. Of course, most of the population has no access to public information. According to the 2005 Millennium Development Goals report for Afghanistan an estimated 90 per cent of women and 63 per cent of men in rural areas of Afghanistan, where the large majority live, are illiterate. However, as argued by Scott (1969), in a condition where physical security, status, and wealth are

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<sup>129</sup> Interview 123, 2 September 2009.

<sup>130</sup> Interview 121, 27 August 2009.



precarious, subordinates seek to substitute this by attaching themselves to ethnic elites, warlords and powerful power brokers who are capable of providing protection and even advancement. These patron-client linkages provide a “personal security mechanism”.

### *Local Communities Opportunism and Business*

Network leaders particularly provided powerful linkages for network construction and political organisation; but this does not explain the whole picture. There were those local patrons, solidarity group (Qawm) elders and village chiefs or even businessmen who used their community support to bargain with the main candidates. Ethnographic research at the main candidates' Kabul campaign offices revealed that local leaders were regularly approaching different candidates offering their support in exchange for resources, development aid and even money, partially side-lining the ethno-regional individual network ties. Martine Van Bijlert found similar observation in her study of the election, as she noted, “communities, parties and solidarity groups go through several rounds of internal consultation and negotiation to make up their mind – in a process of communal decision making – about whom they will align themselves to. Representatives are sent to sound out the various candidates in search of the best alliance or the best deal in exchange for the votes on offer” (2009: 13).

In the course of the ethnographic fieldwork during the election, local villagers, tribal representatives, and various professional associations from the main cities like shopkeepers' association, carpet association, writers and artists associations, and youth associations would regularly visit each candidates offering blocks of votes and in return, asking for various demands like a new stadium, a social club or other types of financial support. For instance in one of the meetings a female group claimed: “we represent Dasht-e-Barchi women. We have 300 voting cards...we will continue [to work for] your campaign but we need your support [referring to financial support.”<sup>131</sup> In

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<sup>131</sup> A group of twenty women at Abdullah's Shar-e-Naw campaign headquarter. 15 August 2009.

another occasion a group of boxers offered support in providing security in the Election Day if the candidate financially contributed towards building their boxing club. Such assertions were common by various groups. It is difficult to confirm whether such payments would have been made, but the fact that various groups would even consider seeking bargains openly, indicate the degree to which such opportunistic practices were widespread.

Ethnographic fieldwork also uncovered that this is a two-sided bargaining process. While local communities were making their assessment of the main candidates as suggested, candidates were also making their calculation as to how and whom to seek support from. Candidates would first turn to their extended kin and family network for support. Once a campaign manager told the author that the main reason for his decision to assist the candidate's campaign, despite knowing that he would not win, was because he was a relative to whom he could not say no. In another case during the 2010 parliamentary election, the representatives of a district in Ghazni told the author that they decided not to vote for a female candidate who was from their districts because she was married to somebody in another district. This sense of *qawm*-based loyalty, obligation and reciprocity is stronger at the local level. Beyond this level, candidates sought the support of key political networks that had an extensive organisational capacity to win the backing of the key local leaders (e.g., tribal leader, mullahs, local businessmen, arbabs, village elders and etc) for the candidates. From a political-cultural perspective, two main candidates acted more like a traditional Khan who had to provide hospitality and show generosity in distributing funds and resources. Entertaining guests, providing meals and hosting regular parties were a key component of election campaigns.

With sudden increase in international aid and an occasion for deal-making with increasing number of patrons (both candidates and network leaders) available, opportunistic practices also intensified. The following quotes reveal the extent of opportunism generated at election time, which also confirms the author's observations. The former is from Abdullah's senior campaign officer, the second from an influential independent MP and the latter from the director

of Killid Radio, one of the most listened radio station in Afghanistan, which had significant coverage of election campaigns.

One hand operates over another [Dest balaye dest kar mekona – an Afghan proverb]. From the top to the bottom there is opportunity to make money. Most of these campaigners were there, not to make Abdullah win but to make money. It's like a business. Abdullah gets money from foreign countries, then he distributes it to his friends and cronies and they distribute it to others. Even the poor benefit...Everyday 1,000 people come here. I think they are all thieves and unemployed people who come from all provinces and their aim is to get Abdullah's money. I do not think any of them do any campaigning once they get the money.<sup>132</sup>

For some, the election provided the best opportunity to make money. Some rented a small place or a political party used its office as a campaign-office claiming to have spent so much money. Their campaign was simple: gathering people at an especial venue, in some cases paying them to attend or offering them food. Some of my own colleagues have received cars, money and gifts for their service.<sup>133</sup>

Of course there were some opportunist who wanted to make money out of these campaigns telling candidates that they have established a campaign headquarters in their districts or that they have distributed so and so many posters and leaflets, making fake invoices and receipts. Our reporters made a number of interesting observations. They were seeing the same person at one candidate campaign office one day and at another candidate's office the next day. These campaigns had a real business feeling to it.<sup>134</sup>

It seems that both patrons and clients felt the need to hedge their bets whilst no one was willing to assume support based on ethnic or tribal solidarity. The author observed representatives openly exchanging blocks of votes for up to 2,000 USD. To complete such a transaction local client-elites would be required to bring in a village's or a community's election cards. There were many cases of individuals from remote villages coming to Kabul headquarters providing dubious receipts and demanding reimbursement. One man showed a receipt saying "I have been in Kabul for six days. I have established several campaigns in different districts of Herat and I have spent 10,000 USD". These observations were widely noted by many Afghan and international news

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<sup>132</sup> Interview 109, 4 September 2009.

<sup>133</sup> Interview 118, 7 September 2009.

<sup>134</sup> Author interview with Najiba Ayubi, Kabul, 14 September 2009.

outlets including The Guardian.<sup>135</sup> Bijlert (2009) in her study of the election has highlighted similar opportunistic practices.

In this system of personal gain, it seems that everyone - from powerbroker to community and tribal elders, to village elders and businessmen- were attempting to exaggerate the size of their support, as well as the level of control they have over it, in order to elevate their own standing and increase the size of their payment. In many places campaign managers, power brokers and smaller community agents were giving people money to attend rallies to show the patron a high level of support, so to get more money and reward for their contribution. It has been credibly reported that when Mohaqqueq went to Daikundi, the local Tanzim members were paying people up to 3,000 Afghanis, providing transport and arranging lunch so to increase attendance in order to show sizeable support for the leader and to show that they have been doing their job accordingly.<sup>136</sup> In keeping with Bijlert's (2009: 14) findings, people were often invited to gatherings and conferences without knowing why they were there, simply to inflate the number of participants. These ethnographic observations illustrate the opportunism and uncertainty which determined voter support for candidates. Even local networks were complex and multi-layered, allowing individuals and groups to break from their patrons and sell electoral promises on the open market.

### *State Patron-Client Networks*

The third venue where the presidential candidates contested for clients was the state networks of provincial and district governors and officials. These networks are not mutually exclusive of the informal networks discussed above but overlap with them at certain moments. As argued in the previous chapter, in the post-2001 period, President Karzai has been able to appoint not only the provincial and district governors but also district and provincial chiefs

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<sup>135</sup> The Guardian, New Evidence of Widespread Fraud in Afghanistan election uncovered, Saturday 19 September 2009, (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/18/afghanistan-election-fraud-evidence>)

<sup>136</sup> Interview with a number of key informants from Daikundi province in Kabul.

through his network of ministers within the government. As shown in Chapter 5, the Karzai network has benefitted from this opportunity where they have continuously awarded their allies and friends in state position at all levels of governance. These regime-state networks pay off most at times of high contestation, such as the election. A senior official at the Independent Directorate for Local Governance (IDLG) explained to the author how provincial and district governors and police chiefs- many of them members of ethno-regional networks– were called to Kabul to reaffirm their allegiance and were even instructed on what measures to take.

Before the election there were a lot of meetings where most of the provincial and district officials were asked to come to Kabul to discuss the election. This was just a pretext. In reality, Asadullah Khalid and Jelani Popal, in coordination with Sadeq Modabber, were ensuring that these officials are loyal to the President. Those whose loyalty could not be guaranteed would be persuaded by offering positions for their relatives or tribes and even threatened. I had many officials, whose loyalty was to Abdullah, complaining to me that their staff salary has been stopped just before the election deliberately or that they have been pressured or even threatened.<sup>137</sup>

These three key network nodes, Asadullah Khalid, the Minister for Tribal and Border Affairs, Jelani Popal, the Director of IDLG, and Sadeq Modabber, Director of Office of Administrative Affairs and Council of Ministers, played a significant role in coordinating efforts at state level. Khalid had already established a strong network in the South and Southeast based on his tenure as governor in Ghazni and Kandahar, which was controversial because he ran his own prison and rendition system. He is well known for his intimidation in the region (discussed below). The only two governors that openly declared their support for Abdullah were General Atta, the governor of Balkh, and Haji Bahlol, the governor of Panjshir. Examples and allegations against government officials were widespread which suggests the important role of coercion-based patronage and subsequent fraud that followed for the re-election of Karzai in 2009, as the two incidents below reveal.

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<sup>137</sup> Interview 67 (13 March 2012) & Interview 68 (10 March 2012).

If he [Karzai] received votes in some districts of Faryab it is because he mobilised his cronies, mainly the provincial and district governors and police chiefs to coerce people to vote for him. For instance, the governor of Qormach district [Faryab province] rigged twenty thousand votes for Karzai by forcing people to vote for him. He [Karzai] has got votes from places and districts that people could not vote because of insecurity and the Taliban threat. He received votes from places that he cannot even visit, places where they would shoot his shadow.<sup>138</sup>

A reporter from Arman newspaper showed the author video footages of intimidation by a local district police in Wardak province where ballot stuffing was widespread in favour of Karzai. When the reporter inquired the district police chief, Mr Halim Fadai, he was intimidated for visiting the district without the Chief's permission. However, when he interviewed the local people, they informed him that Janan was following instructions from the police chief.<sup>139</sup> Bijlert (2009:16-17) found that local election staffs were often intimidated in cooperating with the local officials who rig votes for their patrons. The price of non-cooperation was high (e.g., detention, and even death) especially in the rural areas where it is more difficult to be anonymous and where district police networks, often linked to the local and central administration, tend to be the main channel of power and influence. Bijlert (2009:16), in her report, describes how people in the South were checked at bus stands and city entrances to verify whether they were carrying voter cards so that they could vote for Karzai. Those who did not have cards were reportedly fined' by the local militiamen. Before the election, tribal leaders were continuously reminded that if they did not vote for the government, they would be excluded from the local government: meaning jobs, aid money and privileges. According to a senior Kandahar Independent Human Rights Commissioner, the two main tribes in Helmand Province, the Noorzai and Achekzai, were threatened by Asadullah Khalid that "if they did not vote for Karzai [he] would appoint all the chiefs and governor from that other tribe."<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Interview 131, 13 September 2009.

<sup>139</sup> Interview 110, 7 September 2009.

<sup>140</sup> Interview 117, 5 September 2009.

These examples illustrate that the state provided a framework for inter-network conflict that ultimately ensured Karzai possessed an overwhelming advantage in terms of coercive and cooptive resources in the election campaign and overall votes. The multi-dimensional account of the role of political networks and identity politics sheds new light on both the election and post-election bargaining. The patronage system practiced during the election, when clients often try to exaggerate the size of their vote bank, suggests a more nuanced explanation to the one often provided in the media that Karzai and his network were largely responsible for the gravity of fraud and vote-rigging committed. Peter Galbraith has called this “wholesome fraud”.<sup>141</sup> Having made unrealistic claims regarding the clusters of votes, Karzai’s clients were bound to manipulate the results in order to deliver on their promises. This is an additional explanation for the nature of the fraud at all levels, especially in the South and South East, to the one offered in which Karzai and his team systematically rigging votes at all levels. Electoral ethno-politics were neither exclusively “top-down” nor “bottom-up”; neither entirely cultural nor exclusively instrumental. They were institutional, instrumental and contingent, that is if bargains were made of the networked relations between candidate-patrons and client-networks but they were often both immediately self-serving and subject to non-compliance. Indeed impossible promises were made by both patrons and clients. In the 2009 presidential election the Karzai network seemed to have offered to sell the state several times over with promises of posts, contracts and aid which it may never be able to deliver. Therefore, Karzai was left in a difficult position where broken promises had to be managed. The rejection of 70% of his cabinet nominees in early January 2010 was reported as a blow to his personal power and authority. However, a careful analysis shows otherwise. On the one hand, he met promises made to his clients by appointing their nominees in second-ranking cabinet positions; on the other hand, he made no effort in making sure they were approved by Parliament. Many powerful powerbrokers, including once-powerful individuals such as Ismail Khan (former Herat Governor and former Minister of Energy) were rejected. On the other hand, key client allies, largely southern Pashtuns

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<sup>141</sup> Peter Galbraith Radio Interview with On Point Radio, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2001, <http://www.onpointradio.org/2009/10/peter-galbraith-on-afghan-election-fraud>

were appointed to key ministries including Defence (Rahim Wardak), Interior (Hanif Atmar), Finance (Omar Zakhilwal), Foreign (Zalmay Rasul), Economy (Hadi Arghandival), Education (Farooq Wardak). With Karzai's main supporters in powerful government positions, he has further expanded his network through an effective patron-client system.

## **Conclusion**

The 2009 presidential election represent different aspects of the Afghan political life in post-2001 international intervention and statebuilding. During the election, the candidates' claims of national unity and progress were belied by implicit and, at times, explicit sub-texts of ethno-regional division and contest. In the discursive battle that ensued, competing political networks manipulated these divisions, as candidate-patrons had made pacts with ethno-regional network-clients to secure block votes. In this sense, ethnic and tribal divisions reflected part of the inter-network competition for the state whilst obscuring the fluid and non-ethnic aspects of elite networks. Therefore, these in themselves do not provide a full account of the power dynamics of political network as well as the reasons for corruption in the poll. As was shown, opportunistic local elites and groups also took advantage of the uncertainty generated by high-levels of inter-network contestation and low levels of institutionalisation to strike deals, many of which may never be honoured and which may have been fanciful from the outset. Yet the combination of ethno-regionalism and opportunism are still not adequate to fully explain the conduct of the election and why the results, whilst fraudulent, were ultimately accepted. The internationally sponsored state mattered as it provides a framework for inter-network competition and endows the political networks, which controls its various parts with symbolic and material resources. The political networks, and the regime they together represent, in turn constitute the state itself.

The 2009 presidential election exposed the tensions and divergence of interests among the international community. The resignation of Peter



Galbriath, the deputy to UNAMA chief, Kai Eide, over how to handle fraud uncovered the confusing nature of international statebuilding which questioning its core objectives of democratisation in Afghanistan. The failure of international donors, especially the UN to highlight some of the shortcomings such as the closure of 'ghost stations', more than 1,500 stations mainly in the South and South East, led to 'manufacturing of votes' as put by Galbriath.<sup>142</sup> Afghanistan's 2009 elections showed that elections ultimately serve the interests of political networks, further institutionalising network practices of resource bargaining, opportunism, back door deal-making and identity politics in post-2001 Afghanistan, rather than it achieving the liberal peace goal of democratisation. The election and its widespread fraud essentially undermined the integrity of the liberal peace international support and bred doubt and scepticism among the Afghan people about the future of the country. The next chapter further highlights the power dynamics of political networks in post-2001 international statebuilding by studying the political economy of the *Wolesi Jirga* (Lower house).

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<sup>142</sup> *ibid*

## **Chapter 7: The Power Dynamics of Political Networks in the Wolesi Jirga: A Case Study of the 2010-2011 Special Court Crisis**

### **Introduction**

The Constitutional Loya Jirga (ground council) which was convened in mid-December 2003, agreed on a bicameral parliamentary system with two separate chambers: a 249-member elected lower house (Wolesi Jirga, the House of People) and an indirectly elected and appointed 102-member upper house (Meshrano Jirga, the House of Elders). The Constitution also gave the Wolesi Jirga the oversight powers including the right to impeach ministers and approve cabinet appointments. The first legislative election in post-2001 international statebuilding took place on 18 September 2005 to elect the representatives of the Wolesi Jirga. Once established, international donors provided financial funds and technical support to strengthen the capacity of the newly established parliament and parliamentarians. For instance, the USAID awarded one of its biggest programmes, the 'Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistant Project' (APAP) to State University of New York/Centre for International Development to design legislative programs and put in place processes and procedures for a representative and functioning parliamentary institution. The APAP provided technical assistance in outreach efforts, communications and information technology use as well as advising MPs on legislative reform and national budget review. The UNDP 'Support for the Establishment of the Afghan Legislature' (SEAL) project offered assistance to develop both the technical and political skills of the members and the staff within the Parliament. However, as the political economy of the Wolesi Jirga below highlights, the externally supported (or often externally-imposed) structures have failed to recognise that such grand projects in modernisation are always subverted as much as they are implemented (Scott 1990, 1998). This subversion has taken place right under the nose of international statebuilding.

Understanding the political economy of the *Wolesi Jirga* over the last eight years is critical to our analysis of the power dynamics of political networks and

the nature of statehood in post-2001 international statebuilding. The Wolesi Jirga provides another excellent forum in which to observe network dynamics in action. In post-2001 period, it has functioned as an excellent 'assembling point' for political networks and their clientele outside the state administration, through which they attempt to expand their power and interest. It has become a strategic 'network-building arena' connecting the centre with the periphery-linking state officials, network leaders, local powerbrokers, jihadi commanders, influential community leaders, and licit and illicit commercial networks at local, national and international levels. As the empirical evidence below suggests, it provides protection, security and employment for political networks and their key members. Since 2005 key political network leaders such as Mohammad Mohaqqueq (former Minister of Planning and a former northern commander of Hizb-i-Wahdat), Yunus Qanuni (former Minister of Interior and former commander of Jamiat-i-Islami), and Haji Zahir Qadir (leader of the powerful Jabbarkhel Ghilzai sub-tribe) who were effectively purged by Karzai's repression policies have found protection in the new House. Andrew Wilder, in his paper for the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), found that approximately 133 of the 249 members of the newly formed house in 2005 had fought in the jihad, and about 113 belonged to or were affiliated with the former jihadi political networks (2011:6). He also found that they were better organised and better resourced than the newly formed liberally inclined parties. Of these, roughly 40 commanders were associated with armed groups, 24 members belonged to different criminal gangs, 17 were associated with drug trafficking, and 19 faced serious allegations of war crimes and human rights violations (Wilder 2005:6). According to Hussaini and Faizi (2010) report, since 2010, the number of MPs with background in Jihad, known as 'Jihadis', has further increased in the second Wolesi Jirga, which suggests a rise in the Jihadi political networks' influence in the Afghan Wolesi Jirga.

The 2010 parliamentary election result triggered a prolonged crisis in the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House) which came to be known as the Special Court (SC) crisis. The 2010-2011 SC crisis offers an excellent window to explore the political economy of the Wolesi Jirga and subsequently the wider context of

the continued power dynamics between rival political networks in post-2001 Afghanistan and their impacts on statehood. The SC crisis set into motion a fierce battle between competing political networks within and beyond the Wolesi Jirga. The conflict was between two opposing camps, namely President Karzai's network and the ad hoc Support for Rule of Law (SRL) coalition led by Zahir Qadir. The establishment of the SC and its verdict to disqualify 62 sitting MPs (one-fourth of the Wolesi Jirga) for fraud was seen by many analysts as a direct attempt by Karzai and his network clientele in the judiciary and the executive to exert their influence in the legislature. The SRL, a coalition of several smaller anti-Karzai political networks, was formed in the Wolesi Jirga against these attempts. It succeeded in declaring the court illegal, passed a vote of no confidence for the Attorney General and the Supreme Court judges and, at one point proposed the impeachment of the President. The crisis ended a year later when the two camps reached a compromise, in which just 9 of the 62 sitting MPs were replaced.

The aim of this chapter is to use the 2010-2011 Special Court crisis to shed further light on the nature of statehood in the post-2001 international intervention and statebuilding period. I begin by providing a descriptive background to the 2010-2011 Special Court crisis and the events surrounding it. The following two sections explore the opportunistic practices of bargaining, exchange and the consequent instrumentalisation of identities as the key aspects of political network dynamics. In the final section, this chapter suggests that the historically grounded "network state" is being consolidated with the legitimacy granted by internationally sponsored statebuilding. This chapter is based on the author's four-month ethnographic fieldwork inside the Wolesi Jirga between June 2011 and October 2011. The observation was complimented with more than forty interviews with key political informants.

## **II. The Special Court Crisis: A Background**

The final result of the 18th September 2010 parliamentary election was a major setback for the Karzai political network. Some of Karzai's network

nodes in the South, where Karzai's support was considered high, were either unable to win votes or were disqualified by the Independent Electoral Complaints Commission, including his first cousin Hishmat Karzai in Kandahar. In addition, not a single Pashtun candidate from the Ghazni province was elected because of the low turnout amongst the Pashtun population.<sup>143</sup> Fraud, vote rigging and insecurity further reduced Karzai network's vote bank. The Independent Electoral Complaints Commission (IECC), the organisation responsible for election complaints, received more than 3,000 complaints with significantly higher levels of ballot stuffing, voter fraud, collective voting and intimidation in the Pashtun South (Bijlert 2011b). Insecurity and Taliban threats meant that one-fourth of polling stations in the South and South East, where Karzai's political network influence is considered to be greater, were closed (Bijlert 2011b). The IEC ultimately disqualified 1.5 million ballots, an estimated quarter of the total votes and disqualified 27 winning candidates for electoral fraud- many of them being part of Karzai's political bases (Bijlert 2011b).

Immediately after the announcement of the election results, the Attorney General's Office (AGO) and Supreme Court- (the head of both organisations being members of the Karzai network) - demanded a recount and accused the Independent Complaints Commissions of being bias. The Director of Asset Registration at the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption characterised to the author the role of the Attorney General in Karzai's government as a "whip" that the Karzai regime uses "whenever the government wants to punish somebody."<sup>144</sup> At the same time, Karzai ordered the IEC to hold a new round of elections in Ghazni province to balance the ethnic composition of the province. In Ghazni, with overwhelming voter participation, the Hazara-ethnic candidates had won the eleven quota seats for the province; further reducing Karzai's influence in the South. Many analysts considered this as an attempt by Karzai and his clientele to change the election outcome in their favour. In

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<sup>143</sup> In 9 of the 19 districts in Ghazni, no votes were cast at all. See 2010 Election: Ghazni's Election Drama - It's the System (amended) (Afghanistan Analyst Network). <http://aan-afghanistan.com/index.asp?id=1361>

<sup>144</sup> Interview 29, 24 August 2011.

retaliation, the IEC certified the final election results on the 1st of December 2010, with the United Nations and other international donors promptly accepting them. Interviews with a number of IEC staff in Kabul uncovered that the IEC's decision was motivated by international donor support.<sup>145</sup> There were also accusations that the IEC head, Fazal Ahmad Manavi had some links with the opposition, however, this is difficult to verify. The Attorney General's Office issued an arrest warrant for three IEC staff, one of whom was a high-ranking IEC official, accusing them of orchestrating mass fraud (Ober 2011). With advice from the Supreme Court, Karzai issued a decree to set up the Special Court (SC) to re-investigate IEC's list of disqualified candidates and other fraud cases. Eventually on 26 January 2011, under intense pressure from international donors and disgruntled candidates (both those who won seats and those protesting), Karzai made a deal with the elected members to promptly inaugurate Parliament, if in return, the MPs agreed that the SC could implement any criminal cases identified by the court.<sup>146</sup>

Six months later, the crisis resurfaced when the SC issued its verdict on 23 June 2011 to disqualify 62 sitting MPs, one-quarter of the Wolesi Jirga. Karzai's blatant attempt to implement the SC's verdict was so alarming that Mohammed Mohaqqueq, the leader of one of the main political networks, described it as "an alarming danger" which went too far in "undermining all the Reshta [connections] built over the last ten years."<sup>147</sup> Two days later, in response, the Wolesi Jirga passed a resolution denouncing the creation of the SC as illegal. This was followed by a vote of no confidence against the Attorney General's Office and the Chief Supreme Court judges. To coordinate efforts, an ad hoc Support for Rule of Law (SRL) coalition was established. At one point, MPs even discussed the possibility of impeaching the President. After two months of political manoeuvring, discussed below, and failing to generate enough support through deal-making and exchange, Karzai and his team backed down, thus issuing a decree giving the IEC the final authority to

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<sup>145</sup> Interview 46, 8 Jan 2012.

<sup>146</sup> The New York Times, "Karzai Agreed to Seat New Parliament", 22 Jan 2011 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/23/world/asia/23afghan.html?pagewanted=all>)

<sup>147</sup> Speech in the House, Observation on 25 June 2011.

resolve the crisis. Ten days later, in a compromise, the IEC announced that only 9 of the 62 MPs should be disqualified (Bijlert 2011b). The head of IEC, Fazal Ahmad Manavi, in his interview with the BBC Persian confirmed that he was under a lot of pressure from circles within the government to take this decision: “This decision was taken on the basis of some Faysalahaye Siyasi (political agreements).”<sup>148</sup> The nine disqualified MPs were either relatively unknown or seemed to have lacked sufficiently strong backing from powerful political networks, whereas, the new MPs seemed to have had the necessary connections (Bijlert 2011c). At least four of them were former Jihadi commanders with links to powerful individual network powerbrokers.<sup>149</sup> On 3 September 2011, with the presence of heavily armed police and army, the 9 new MPs were sworn in whilst the opposition SRL coalition members were imprisoned in their offices, unable to enter the parliament building. The SRL coalition leader, Zahir Qadir, characterised it a “coup d’état” against parliament.<sup>150</sup> The next section seeks to identify some of the main types of clients which both the Karzai and SRL networks relied on in building an expansive whole network around the crisis.

Table 7.1: The Timetable of Events

18 Sept 2010	Parliamentary Election was held.
24 Nov 2010	IEC announced the results for 34 provinces except Ghazni. 1.5 million votes were disqualified and 27 candidates were disqualified.
24 Nov 2010	Attorney General’s Office (AGO) and Supreme Court demanded recount and issued arrest warrants for three IEC staff.
1 Dec 2010	In retaliation, IEC certified final election results.
21 Dec 2010	Karzai issues a decree forcing the creation of a Special Court.
26 Jan 2011	Karzai agreed to inaugurate the Wolesi Jirga, if in return, MPs allow the SC to prosecute those who committed fraud.
23 June 2011	SC issued its verdict disqualifying 62 sitting MPs.

<sup>148</sup> BBC Persian, 14 August 2011,

([http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/afghanistan/2011/08/110814\\_k01\\_manawi\\_bbc\\_iv.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/afghanistan/2011/08/110814_k01_manawi_bbc_iv.shtml))

<sup>149</sup> The new MPs were Hamidullah Tokhi, the former Zabul governor and a former Hizb-i-Islami commander in Gereshk; Moallem Mirwali from Helmand who is close to the Attorney General Aloko; Guli Pahlawan former rival of General Dostum in Faryab; and Ahmad Khan, the notorious former Junbish tanzim commander and former governor of Samangan.

<sup>150</sup> Interview 125, 10 September 2011.

25 June 2011	MPs passed a vote of no confidence against AGO and Supreme Court Judges.
5 July 2011	MPs proposed to impeach the President.
10 Aug 2011	Karzai backed down and issued a decree forcing the IEC to have the final say.
21 August 2011	IEC announced the list of 9 MPs to be replaced.
3 September 2011	The new 9 MPs were forcibly sworn in. The opposition called it a coup.

### III. The Power Dynamics of Competing Political Networks

#### *The Karzai Whole Network*

Having failed to secure a substantial gain in the parliamentary election, the Karzai network were quick to activate their key nodes such as ministers, governors, and ethno-regional powerbrokers to re-assemble an ad hoc political network around the crisis to strengthen their position. Ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with dozens of key informants reveal an interesting picture about how Karzai's network operated around a number of influential state officials. These were Humayoun Azizi, the minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal, the minister of Finance, Sadeq Modabber, the head of the Office of Administrative Affairs (Karzai's Cabinet Office), Rahmatullah Nabil, the then Director of National Directorate of Security, and Asadullah Khalid, the minister for Border, Tribal, and Ethnic Affairs. By utilising state resources, including its coercive power and financial wealth, the Karzai network negotiated deals and exchanges to co-opt MPs. Although difficult to substantiate and fully confirm, the picture drawn suggests that during the crisis the minister for Parliamentary Affairs functioned as a "liaison officer" and made deals inside Parliament. The finance minister sanctioned the extra patronage payment to the head of the Office of Administrative Affairs, who then distributed the bargained sum to the co-opted network leaders; the Attorney General Office and Supreme Court judges acted as the "executioners". During the parliamentary sessions many MPs were open about



highlighting how this procedure was in play, summarised below by statements from a Ghazni and a Samangani MP.

Intimidation was evident at all levels. If an MP was not ready to accept certain privileges then he or she was threatened by the Special Court and the Attorney General Office that they would be among the disqualified MPs. On the one hand, Karzai invite us to the *Arg* [palace] in an attempt to bribe us, and when we refuse, his ministers try to intimidate us.<sup>151</sup>

The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs has been lobbying hard in Parliament in favour of the executive branch. He acts as a facilitator while the Attorney General Office played the role of the prosecutor. Some of my colleagues who had relatives within the administration were warned if they did not support the Karzai team their family members would risk losing their position.<sup>152</sup>

The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs has been providing some MPs with bodyguards and houses. Some of this money has been allocated to them through the Ministry and the Estekhabarat [National Security Directorate] towards their guesthouse expenses, bodyguards, salaries and others. In provinces like Kandahar and Helmand, Khalid has been making Muamela [deals] with those that he can, whilst threatening others. I still receive calls from the Palace by Khurram [Karzai's Chief of Staff] threatening that they would do this and that to my family and I.<sup>153</sup>

The above quotes also highlight the level of intimidation used against some MPs. Several informants highlighted the key role played by the then National Directorate of Security, Rahmatullah Nabil, and the minister for Border, Tribal and Ethnic Affairs, Asadullah Khalid, in employing state coercive powers to threaten and intimidate opponents. Some opposition and independent MPs publicly claimed during parliamentary hearings that they had been warned that if they did not support the SC's decision, their families, relatives and even tribal colleagues would risk losing their state positions. It is widely reported in the Afghan media (Hakimi 2011) and confirmed by several seniors in the President's Office that some ethno-regional powerbrokers including Abdur Rab Sayyaf and Mohammad Mohaqqeq have been receiving regular extra security budget for up to sixty bodyguards per month as well as other expensive gifts like armoured cars for their support. As shown in Chapter 6,

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<sup>151</sup> Speech by a Ghazni province MP in the Wolesi Jirga, Observation on 24 August 2011.

<sup>152</sup> Speech by a Samangan province MP in the Wolesi Jirga, Observation on 24 August 2011.

<sup>153</sup> Interview10, 30 Jun 2011.

both Asadullah Khalid and Ahmad Wali Karzai (assassinated in mid-2011) have been instrumental in expanding and exerting Karzai's influence in the tribal South through intimidation and deal-making. Their control over key businesses, both licit and illicit, meant that they had the final decision as to who can gain access to state funds, services and contracts. As one MP from Kandahar confided to the author in relation to the level of coercion his colleagues have been facing in Kandahar.

In all honesty I am against the SC's decision. But if some of my friends don't support the government their commercial *ertebatat* [links] and ability to import goods from Pakistan would be significantly constrained. Ahmad Wali controls everything: the government, the customs, and the security. If others do not support Karzai, they will risk losing their business.<sup>154</sup>

Once again, the roles of ethno-regional network-client leaders were instrumental in connecting the top whole network patron with MPs in parliament during the crisis. However, this time around Karzai's clients were not as expansive as it were during the 2009 presidential election. With the disastrous presidential election outcome for both Dostum and Mohaqqueq in failing to deliver for their political networks, it seemed that their position in the Wolesi Jirga had relatively weakened. Moreover, in a system where votes are anonymous and exchanges high, the temptation is high among the MPs to attempt to make direct deals with the patrons rather than go through their political network. Karzai's main source of support was predominantly his ethnic-Pashtun MPs. The Hizbi Islami (Hizb) under the leadership of Abdul Hadi Arghandival proved to be the most loyal and biggest bloc to support the Karzai decision, with over thirty members as part of the Sabah parliamentary group in the Wolesi Jirga.<sup>155</sup> The strength of the Hizb is within its structural cohesion to function as an organised political entity. This became even more evident when the author visited Nangarhar province in early 2012. As commented by Arghandival's deputy, the Hizb's organisational cohesion enabled it to send 30 MPs to the Wolesi Jirga from limited regions (mainly

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<sup>154</sup> Interview 12, 24 July 2011.

<sup>155</sup> The 2010 Kabul Centre for Strategic Studies report identified the Hizb and its Sabah parliamentary groups as the most coordinated network in the House.

South East and Kabul), as they have been able to operate in Southern and Eastern provinces where regional strongmen exercise excessive coercive power. Abdur Rab Sayyaf's Dawat political network was another influential powerbroker that provided the necessary networking skills needed for Karzai to build his support in the Wolesi Jirga. In post-2001, Sayyaf has become Karzai's central connecting node in the House. Twice he stood for the position of the Speaker of the House to represent the Karzai group; both times he fell short by only a few votes. In addition to these ethnic-Pashtun powerbrokers, Karzai obtained the support of other ethno-regional powerbrokers in the parliament. Both Sadeq Modabber (the head of the Office of Administrative Affairs) provided support amongst the Hazara MPs.

In the post-2005 Wolesi Jirga, political network patrons have exercised some degree of control and hierarchy over their clients by establishing Parliamentary Groups (PG). The provision for the formation of parliamentary groups was established in 2005, the first year of the Wolesi Jirga, as a formal mechanism to encourage greater efficiency and organisation in plenary discussions (ICG 2006). De jure, a PG must have at least 21 members and be inclusive of all ethnic, religious and gender groups. The head of the PG has the advantage of attending the Wolesi Jirga's executive meetings to decide parliamentary agendas. De Facto, ethnographic fieldwork in some PG headquarters uncovered that the PGs are at best a form of patronage network centred around key political network leaders such as Abdur Rasul Sayyaf, Mohammad Mohaqqueq, Sadeq Modabber, Haji Zahir Qadir, Karim Khalili, and Abdul Hadi Arghandival. Each parliamentary group has an office/guesthouse close to the Wolesi Jirga where they host visitors, financially sustained and politically led by competing leaders. Various factors contribute to a MPs decision to join a PG; these being financial gains, political influence, ethnic and tribal affiliations, and legal and illegal business interests. A female MP asserted,

In the first month of the Wolesi Jirga, Haji Zahir Qadir [the head of Peace Caravan PG and the leader of Support for Rule of Law coalition] approached me to join his group. He told me that he knew that I live in a

rented house. He offered me 2000 US dollars per month if I joined his group.<sup>156</sup>

Financial fund is one of the central contributing factors to the survival of a political group. Wafaey and Larson (2010:9) found that the main reason for the disintegration of Khat-i-Sehum (Third Line) and some other earlier non-legacy/jihadi PGs was the lack of funds as well as internal divisions along identity-based rifts. For powerbrokers, the political and financial return is high (discussed in the next section), especially at moments of trading favours like electing a new Speaker or voting to approve a minister. Participatory observation and interviews with MPs revealed that during the crisis Sabah, Etemad and Dawat were the three main PG's that seemed to have provided Karzai with the necessary client-base. The patrons of these groups, Abdul Hadi Arghandival (the current Minister for Economy), Sadeq Modabber (the head of the Office of Administrative Affairs) and Abdur Rasul Sayyaf, have been key allies of Karzai in post-2001 period.

### **The Support for Rule of Law (SRL) Whole Network**

Since the contentious 2009 presidential election, the size of the so-called opposition or those willing to identify themselves as such has increased in the Wolesi Jirga. There were several reasons for this increase. First, with his considerable vote (33%) in the 2009 election, Abdullah Abdullah emerged as a serious alternative opposition-patron whom some MPs could rely on, thus exacerbating the demarcation between government and the opposition. In the parliamentary election, those associating themselves with his Hope and Change Coalition did relatively well in the election. Regional political strongmen like Atta Mohammad Noor in Balkh and Hajji Zahir Qadir in Nangarhar succeeded in sending more of their members into the Wolesi Jirga. Second, those ethno-regional network-clients who felt betrayed by Karzai's duplicity after the election in not delivering on his promises further identified themselves as opposition to the government. Third, there were some independent MPs who genuinely felt that Karzai's increasing level of

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<sup>156</sup> Interview 25, 8 September 2011.

corruption and intimidation must be stopped. Finally, there were some MPs who identified themselves with the opposition for various reasons to do with their local power dynamics. For instance, one or two MPs in Kandahar like Lalay Hamidzai took an anti-Karzai stance mainly because they had been effectively excluded from the provincial funds and power. For some Hazara MPs, the annual dispute between Hazara-Kuchi (Pashtun-nomad) had become a defining issue, who accused the government of not only failing to resolve the issue but also taking sides with the Kuchis. However, given the level of patronage and opportunism in the Wolesi Jirga, it is hard to draw a clear picture as to who was pro and who was anti-Karzai during the crisis.

Within this power dynamics, the Wolesi Jirga became divided into two main groups following the SC verdict: a pro-Karzai and anti-Karzai grouping. The main opposition whole network in the Wolesi Jirga was the ad hoc Support for Rule of Law (SRL) coalition. The SRL was formed immediately after the Special Court's decision to disqualify sixty-two MPs. While some MPs genuinely joined the SRL to defy the Court's decision, (which they considered to be undermining the integrity of the Wolesi Jirga), others joined fearing that they might either get disqualified or incriminated for vote rigging. Whatever the reasons, the following MPs justification captures the dominant rhetoric used for constituency consumption at the time: "the creation of SC, putting pressure on the IEC to change the election result, failure to nominate candidates for ministerial posts, and ignoring the Wolesi Jirga resolutions are some of the systemic actions by the President designed to undermine parliament."<sup>157</sup> For instance, the speeches on 16 August 2011 were dominated by the following rhetoric: "illegitimate government", "dictatorship", "mafia state", "corruption government and its *halaqat* [circles]", "*Jabbarkhan* and *Mostakbaran* [despotic rule]", and "*Hakemiyat-e-Sultani* [Sultan style governance]".

The Court's decision had affected the votes of two-thirds of parliamentarians who weren't sure whether a criminal case would follow. It is not clear how many MPs initially signed up for the SRL; however, the estimate varied from

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<sup>157</sup> Speech by a Kabul MP, Observation in the House on 10 July 2011.

140 to 180 out of 249 MPs. As the crisis prolonged, this number was substantially reduced and fewer MPs were directly associating themselves with the SRL. There were two main reasons for this reduction. First, most MPs initially signed with the SRL for fear of being prosecuted. The SC verdict not only disqualified 62 sitting MPs, it found nearly 200 MPs including those close to Karzai of committing fraud to a varying degree. At the start of the crisis, the Attorney General and Supreme Court Judges had warned those MPs found guilty of prosecution. However, as it became evident that no prosecution would follow a significant number of MPs dropped out of the SRL. Second, more MPs were gradually co-opted by the Karzai network through intimidation and offer of rewards, which is discussed below.

The most powerful central node in the SRL, around whom other dispersed anti-Karzai networks assembled, was Haji Zahir Qadir. He was the leader of the largest opposition Parliamentary Group in the Wolesi Jirga, the Peace Caravan, estimated to have had around forty MPs. Haji Zahir Qadir's background is revealing. He belongs to the powerful Arsala family, one of the most influential, affluent, and prominent families in the Eastern region. As the son of Haji Abdul Qadir, the most famed Pashtun jihadi commander among the Northern Alliance and the former governor of Nangarhar, assassinated in 2002, he held influential roles in Nangarhar including the head of border police. In 2005, Karzai, in an attempt to marginalise him in Nangarhar province, exiled him to Takhar province as the head of Border Police installing his close ally Gul Agha Shirzai as the strongman in the region (Mukhopadhyay 2009). Since 2009, he has established himself as a national figure in Kabul in opposition to Karzai. During and after the crisis, the Karzai network made several attempts to discredit him and his family by accusing him of being involved in drug smuggling, kidnapping and corruption. In January 2012, months after the crisis, he was elected the first deputy speaker of the Wolesi Jirga, winning 140 votes, further consolidating his power in the House. In 2013, the Minister of Finance, a close ally of Karzai, accused Haji Zahir Qadir of smuggling 269 million USD worth of flour from Pakistan. In response, the next day Haji Zahir Qadir declared to the parliamentarians that

he had more than 350 million USD in his bank account, reminding the MPs how he had financially maintained them during the crisis.<sup>158</sup>

The SRL succeeded in building a powerful network against Karzai. It managed to draw support from some state officials, powerbrokers and tribal elders who were either disillusioned with Karzai's corrupt practices or felt betrayed by Karzai's false past promises. Amongst these was Abdullah Abdullah, Karzai's main contender in the 2009 presidential election. Following his defeat in the election, he was quick to capitalise on his 30% voting-bank by establishing the Coalition for Change and Hope. A number of influential MPs, who are also members of Abdullah's Coalition, played a key role in the SRL coalition. Another important leader who supported the SRL, albeit privately, was the second vice-president, Karim Khalili. Given Khalil's formal position as the second vice-president as well as his influence within the Wolesi Jirga as the patron of Saday-e-Adalat (Voice of Justice) parliamentary group, his support provided confidence among the opposition. One explanation for his objection to the SC could have been that he knew the SC would reduce his clientele in the Wolesi Jirga, especially when Karzai demanded a re-election in Ghazni province. A closer look at the Court's disqualified MPs reveals that more of Khalil's network MPs was on the list than any other individual network leader. Since then, his relationship with the President has been strained.

The reasons for SRL's ability to defy Karzai's network was due to its internal organisational structure, which enabled better coordination effort, and the leadership of its two speakers Latif Pedram, a leftist MP from Badakhshan, and Asadullah Saadati, the MP from Ghazni. The SRL had an inclusive leadership council, a 17-member team, two speakers who proved skilful in establishing close relations with the main daily outlets, and more than ten established shadow committees such as Internal Affairs, Cultural Women's Affairs committees, with each network member belonging to a committee. Ethnographic research showed that the SRL was able to mobilise MPs,

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<sup>158</sup> Broadcasted live on the National Radio Television of Afghanistan ([Http://youtube.com](http://youtube.com) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nst8M0Ftec4>), 2013.

arrange discussions and debate, organise campaigns through the following three main parliamentary groups: Karvan-e-Solh (mostly ethnic-Pashtuns), Saday-e-Adalat (predominately ethnic-Hazaras) and the newly established Resalat (largely ethnic-Tajiks) with each having its own offices. At its height the SRL were posing a real threat in dominating Parliament, evidenced from the following description of the SRL's strategy to the author by its speaker, Latif Pedram.

The coalition presently controls 13 of the 18 select committees in the Wolesi Jirga and 3 Parliamentary Groups [PG]. The Parliament Executive Team [PET], which is responsible for determining the agenda of the parliamentary sessions, is compromised of both the head of Parliamentary Committees and PGs [*italic mine*]. We plan to create one or two more PGs in order to fully control the Wolesi Jirga's agenda and its PET.<sup>159</sup>

The SC crisis highlights two mutually reinforcing network practices as key features of post-2001 Afghanistan: 1) opportunism and bargains and 2) the instrumentalisation of identities.

#### **IV. Network Practices**

##### *Opportunism and Bargaining*

Chapter 5 argued that since the 2004 presidential election, Karzai has been maintaining an expensive and expansive patronage system in parliament with payments made to MPs to pass bills or to secure the approval of parliament for the appointment of a new minister. Coburn (2011) in his paper on the political economy of the parliament found that financial considerations of MPs played an important and growing role in determining how the parliament functioned. The SC crisis provided an excellent moment for opportunism and bargaining. Evidence available suggests that the bargaining took place with multiple actors and layers of patronage, offering powerbrokers bargains in exchange for their skills to buy-in loyalties and support. During the crisis most bargains were made for financial gain, yet political privileges were also

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<sup>159</sup> Interview 21, 21 September 2011.



considered. Offers of government positions, state contracts, licenses and gifts were widespread. Although, one cannot estimate the amount of financial reward offered to extend patronage, it was certainly extensive.<sup>160</sup> As one MP summarised it:

“The Jihadi leaders, ministers and governors would attend MPs houses to make deals. These offers could include anything really from a simple bribe, to covering the expenses of their guesthouses, to offer of gifts like cars, and to installing their family members in key positions. This is obviously negotiated and agreed upon.”<sup>161</sup>

Another female MP highlighted the expanding nature of these patronage practices stretching beyond Afghanistan’s key players to include regional and international countries (see below quote). In an attempt to expose a serious concern, the National Security Directorate in 2013 reported that almost one-third of the House is under the payroll of either Iran or Pakistan. A similar US Embassy cable in 2009 highlighted the same concern in saying Iran has financed a range of Afghan religious and political leaders, grooming Afghan religious scholars, training Taliban militants and even seeking to influence MPs. The same cable noted that Omar Daudzai, Karzai’s Chief of Staff at the time had asserted that, “in addition to financing Afghan religious leaders, Iran had provided salary support for some [Afghan government] deputy ministers and other officials, including ‘one or two’ even in the [presidential] palace.”<sup>162</sup>

“This is a crisis for those who sold themselves in exchange for Toman (Iranian currency), for Kaldar (Pakistani currency), for Dollars and Pounds. They have put the country into lilam (bidding). They will divide it further and gradually sell parts of it....Tell me, if you do not have an agenda, bring in your mohra (nodes) and stay committed like a man. The House has become a Buzkashi (goat-pulling)\* ground; whoever possesses more power and money abuses it....Tell me, is this the nation’s House, Mr. Karzai’s House, or Mr. Manavi’s [the head of Independent Election Commission] House? Is this the house of Zorgoya (despots), or the house of Iran, Pakistan or other embassies?”<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Accusation made by several MPs during the Author’s ethnographic observation in the House on 24 August 2011 and confirmed at the end of the session with several MPs.

<sup>161</sup> Interview, 5, 24 June 2011.

<sup>162</sup> US Cables, 3 February 2010.

<sup>163</sup> Speech by a female Kabul MP, Observation on 5 September 2011.

Noah Coburn's (2011) study of the political economy of the Afghan parliament documented similar layers of opportunism and bargaining among network-patrons and the network-client leaders. An informant reported to him that one powerbroker, usually considered of only moderate importance, "paid one car or 10,000 USD for each vote he could convince MPs to give to [a certain more influential MP]; [this influential leader] then gave this amount back to him" (Coburn 2011: 15). He also found that in some cases powerbrokers invested their own money knowing that they could get a higher return later from the patron.

Interviews with several senior officials at the Ministry of Finance and other line-ministries indicate the extent of appropriation of public resources for personal gain. In 2010, the Presidential Palace accounted for the highest amount of illegible (unaccounted for money) budget spent in the country at around 300 million dollars followed by parliament at around 50 million dollars.<sup>164</sup> Although it is difficult to establish how this money is being spent, one could plausibly summarise, based on the key informant's statements, that a substantial part of this money is spent for buying loyalties and making bargains. The two quotes below, by senior officials at the Ministry of Finance and the Office of Administrative Affairs reflect the overall level of bargaining that became entrenched in post-2001 Afghanistan.

"I cannot tell you exactly how this money is being spent but we are constantly under pressure by the presidential office and the minister [Minister of Finance] to provide money.... Definitely most of this money is being channelled illegally as extra payments to key individuals. This is not something new. But this is having serious consequences. This year the World Bank under the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund cut 70 million of our funds."<sup>165</sup>

Similarly, another senior official remarked.

"Av az bala khed ast (the water is muddy from the top). The OAA [Office of Administrative Affairs] is Karzai's right arm. Do you know why he has more than 100 unofficial advisers? It is just a title. From the tribal elder in Uruzgan to those who claim that they are opposed to him like Mohaqqueq

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<sup>164</sup> Office of National Budget Annual 2010-11 Report. Afghanistan Ministry of Finance.

<sup>165</sup> Interview 40, 4 December 2010.

and Dostum are all in his payroll. They are all part of the system. People call it mafia, but as someone who has worked in [...] department, I can tell you it is a functional system they created for themselves.”<sup>166</sup>

These quotes point to the nature of statehood and governance that is being propagated by this system of payment and promise to buy loyalties. Of course, this does not include for the other unaccounted money that Karzai and his clients receive from neighbouring countries. In 2009, Karzai publicly admitted to receiving suitcases of money from neighbouring countries for his office expenses.<sup>167</sup> He also confirmed in 2013 to having received payments from the US intelligence services for the past ten years, known as “ghost money” that “came in secret and left in secret”, which he claimed to have spent on his office expenses.<sup>168</sup> These statements also suggests that international donors are not only aware of these illegal practices but in some instances promote them, which goes against their rhetoric of liberal peace peacebuilding and human rights. This confirms the main criticism expressed against the liberal peace in pursuing illiberal practices in reaching their goals. The role of international donors in this duplicity and hypocrisy is discussed in detail in the conclusion of this thesis.

The vote of confidence for the Minister of Finance and Interior on 19 February 2012 during the SC crisis is another telling example of opportunism and bargaining. Reportedly, a few days before the vote, ministers had made deals with the powerbrokers and their associated MPs. What followed is best described by the Kandahar MP, Abdul Rahim Ayubi, who arrived in the Wolesi Jirga the day after the vote covered with chains in protest, accusing some MPs and the Wolesi Jirga’s executive committee of making deals.

“They pre-planned the vote of confidence to make deals and once the bargain had been achieved they hastily closed the issue. They prevented MPs from asking questions, especially those who had evidence against the ministers. I have evidence that implicates

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<sup>166</sup> Interview 1, 21 April 2012.

<sup>167</sup> “Hamid Karzai admits office gets 'bags of money' from Iran” The Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/25/hamid-karzai-office-cash-iran>

<sup>168</sup> Rosenberg, “Afghan Leader Confirms Cash Deliveries by CIA”, New York Times, 28 April 2013.

ministers with some MPs over corruption and bribes. Why would ministers visit MPs' houses the night before the vote? Why would directors of customs, provincial governors, police chiefs, and the Attorney General get involved and lobby for ministers? Today, I have come to parliament in chains to protest against such practices and to honour the dignity of this house.<sup>169</sup>

State officials are not the only ones who provide financial and political deals. While research for this thesis did not attempt to directly examine the role of business in parliamentary politics, most of the informants pointed out to a high level of engagement worth mentioning. During the SC crisis, following the rumours that Azizi Bank had gone bankrupt, MPs scheduled an inquiry session to investigate the Bank's financial state. Some MPs provided compelling evidence suggesting that the Bank had been involved in illegal and corrupt business practices. As the day of the inquiry approached tensions intensified. Amazingly, on the day itself, despite most MPs' earlier rhetoric of corruption and mismanagement, MPs voted overwhelmingly not to investigate the Bank's financial dealings any further. Some MPs complained that deals had been made and some of them were threatened and intimidated by network nodes within the administration linked to the Bank. One MP put it:

"I fear for my life. Azizi Bank has threatened me on many occasions. We have evidence that 450 million dollars was transferred to Dubai for purchasing property, and not a single penny has returned. The Bank has also been involved in corruption in the oil business."<sup>170</sup>

A senior Investigative Officer at the High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption, who had examined some of the major Banks' corrupt practices, also confirmed these practices inside the Wolesi Jirga.

"Both Azizi Bank and Kabul Bank were heavily involved in bribing MPs in the parliament and in some cases made sure that nominated ministers were approved. We have evidence that Azizi Bank had bribed MPs to make sure that certain appointed ministers get elected. As you can imagine, once these ministers are appointed they have to get involved in

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<sup>169</sup> Tolo News, 20 February 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYopiK4q2dA>

<sup>170</sup> Interview 7, 16 July 2011.

corruption and to pay back their debt. We know in one case, Kabul Bank spent nearly 200,000 USD to get its person elected.<sup>171</sup>

Most MPs interviewed pointed out that if the investigation had gone ahead it would have exposed and implicated MPs and a wide network of top officials. In 2010, investigation into the corruption of the largest bank in Afghanistan, Kabul Bank, revealed that the bank officials had bribed the Wolesi Jirga when they had won the bid to process the government staff salaries.<sup>172</sup> Of the total estimated seventy-five million dollar bribe paid by the bank, a substantial part had gone to MPs. Evidence shows that the Bank had become the “unofficial arm of the Karzai government” helping corrupt elites to transfer money to offshore accounts (Bijlert 2011a). Of the list of 200 people involved in receiving irregular loans from Kabul Bank, there were 103 former MPs, several governors, and ministers (Bijlert 2011a). The Kroll investigation responsible for auditing the Bank called the Kabul Bank a virtual “Ponzi scheme”.<sup>173</sup> Both Azizi Bank and Kabul Bank expose the complexity and extensiveness of the connections across Afghanistan’s political, financial and administrative institutions and structures. It illustrates how some of these political networks cut across formal and informal, public and private, and licit and illicit structures of power, expanding their political and economic interests right under the nose of international statebuilders. A more detailed study of illegality as a key aspect of post-2001 Afghan politics is urgently needed, which was beyond the scope of this thesis.

The reason for the intensification of MPs deal making lies in the political economy of the Wolesi Jirga. The political economic explanation is that the new parliament has provided the necessary political protection needed for most politician-turned-businessmen to maintain themselves within the system (Coburn 2011). Coburn in his study of the political economy of Afghan parliament found that the role of business transactions have become more

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<sup>171</sup> Interview 10, 20 September 2011.

<sup>172</sup> Dexter Filkins, “The Afghan Bank Heist,” *The New Yorker*, 14 February 2011. [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/02/14/110214fa\\_fact\\_filkins](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/02/14/110214fa_fact_filkins) (accessed 2 May 2011).

<sup>173</sup> Matthew Rosenberg, “Audit says Kabul Bank began as a ‘Ponzi Scheme’,” *New York Times*, 17 November 2012.

important in terms of political financing, protecting their resources and preserving business monopolies of corrupt networks (2011:7). Coburn (2011:3-4) also found that MPs not only have to cover the cost of maintaining an office, staff and other expenses, they also have to fulfil a number of traditional political obligations for their constituencies, including providing a place for the constituents to stay while visiting Kabul, attending weddings, providing expensive gifts, offering food on feast days, and fulfilling religious obligations such as paying for a religious figure to recite the Quran. This is nothing when compared to the current monthly salary of an MP, which is around 2,000 US dollars. The state also pays for two bodyguards and an assistant. It seems that bargaining and exchange is a practical strategy that allows MPs to function. Several MPs highlighted how some MPs have incurred debts to be elected. As one MP succinctly put it, “some MPs have borrowed a lot of money to come to parliament so they have to make deals to pay for their debt.”<sup>174</sup> While another sarcastically complained how the crisis had failed to create more moments of opportunities for deal making “since the start of this crisis and the fact that not many laws have been passed or new ministers been introduced, MPs have not made any deals so they have become desperate.”<sup>175</sup> In fact, these bargaining and opportunistic practices are not considered as corruption but more as a survival strategy that has become the norm in an environment of uncertainty, elite distrust and malfunctioning state institutions.

However, there is also a cultural political dimension to their opportunistic and bargaining practices, which is a reflection of the Afghan society where actions are based on reciprocity and social obligations to the family, kin, tribes, ethnic groups and qawm. In his study of parliamentary election, Coburn (2010:3) highlighted that constituencies see their MPs first and foremost as part of the local patronage networks. Prior to the election, in many places he found competition taking place among different local powerbrokers, political-economic and identity networks over who to send to parliament. Once in parliament, they are expected to help provide services including securing

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<sup>174</sup> Interview 18, 24 August 2011.

<sup>175</sup> Interview 17, 24 August 2011.

jobs, business contracts, helping local powerbrokers to grab land, and even exemption from exams through their state connections (Coburn 2010:4). Such high expectations put MPs in a difficult situation. This is evident from one MP's reply when the author asked for his reason in joining the Karzai network: "They are the dominant network. They are in power. If I do not establish a close relationship with them how could I resolve my people's [constituents] problems when they come to Kabul."<sup>176</sup>

### *Instrumentalisation of Identities*

Opportunistic practices of bargaining and exchange were mutually reinforced with the politicisation of identities, especially along ethnic lines, which was another key characteristic of the Special Crisis. The previous chapter showed how in moments of contestation, like the 2004 and 2009 presidential elections, political networks have politicised identities along tribal, ethnic and regional lines to mask their opportunistic practices of bargain and exchange. The below quotes demonstrate that instrumentalisation of identities is not limited to moments of rupture or crisis as it is practiced on a daily basis at all state levels.

Another main issue for the current conflict in the Wolesi Jirga is the tribal, ethnic and linguistic fanaticism of the House. Whenever there is a serious issue to be discussed or voted on, it takes an ethnic line. Even open-minded and independent MPs adopt such lines.<sup>177</sup>

However, as the SC crisis shows, ethnic divisions can be understood as a form of political network competition over the state, rather than a battle over primordial identities. From the very beginning, the crisis took an ethnic dimension starting with the demand by the Karzai network for re-election in Ghazni province to balance the ethnic composition within the province. Although Karzai's primary concern might have been simply to try to expand his network within his southern constituency, the rhetoric used to justify his demand was couched along ethnic lines. In return, the Hazara political

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<sup>176</sup> Interview 19, 29 August 2011

<sup>177</sup> Interview 23, 25 June 2011.

network leaders, including the second vice-president, expressed their strongest objection, partly to safeguard their gain and partly to please their ethno-regional constituencies. Mohammad Mohaqqueq, the leader of Wahdat-e-Mardom network, publicly situated the crisis within a historical context as yet another attempt by the Pashtun leaders to marginalise the ethnic-Hazaras, while he was making deals privately.

Many Afghan analysts simply saw the crisis as an extension of a power struggle between the Pashtun dominated government represented by Karzai and the Tajik dominated opposition represented by Abdullah, who stood against Karzai in the 2009 presidential election. Others saw this as a rivalry between Hizb and Jamiat tanzims dating back to the civil war. Such simplistic accounts are widespread across Afghanistan as the following quote illustrates:

Unfortunately, ethnicity is rooted and institutionalised in Afghan politics. The ethnic conflict has increased in the new parliament, particularly between the Pashtuns and Tajiks. During the crisis, the Pashtun MPs supported the government line, while the Tajiks supported the opposition.<sup>178</sup>

On the face of it, one could make a crude analysis that the Sabah parliamentary group, representing Hizb and Sayyaf's Dawat networks in the Wolesi Jirga, both predominately Pashtuns, supported Karzai during the SC crisis while the majority of the ethnic-Tajik MPs joined the opposition. However, as shown in the previous chapter during the 2009 presidential election, competing political network leaders were ethnicising politics to mask their opportunistic practices of bargain and exchange. The SC crisis reproduces this pattern. A more detailed analysis suggests that network powerbrokers and their associated MPs were skilful in portraying the events during the crisis as an ethnic tension to conceal their back door deals. Whilst it was beyond the scope of this article, a thorough analysis of the complex relationship between identity and opportunity is urgently needed.

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<sup>178</sup> Author Interview, Ghazni MP, 26 June 2011.



The election of the speaker of the House provides an excellent moment to see identity manipulations in the Wolesi Jirga. Immediately after the end of the SC crisis, the House became a site of conflict and compromise over the election of the new speaker in January 2011. The two main contenders were Yunus Qanuni representing the so-called opposition and Abdul Rab Rasul Sayyaf representing the Karzai team. After three rounds of voting an impasse was reached which was largely portrayed as a Tajik-Pashtun ethnic impasse. The rhetoric and representation used suggests the ethno-regional features of powerbroker's discourse and, by extension, their political strategies. The main reasons for the impasse were the MPs opportunistic demands (Coburn 2011). Subsequently, an ad hoc commission was set up to find a solution. The commission's proposed suggestion was to have a candidate only from the ethnic-Uzbek group who is not affiliated to either political whole network. Eventually, Haji Abdul Rauf Ibrahimi, an MP from the Northern province of Kunduz with close ties to Hizb and Junbish tanzims, was elected with an overwhelming majority.<sup>179</sup> Mohammad Mohaqqueq who headed the commission presented the outcome as an achievement in balancing ethnic groups in parliament.

The SC crisis highlights a number of important characteristics about the nature of political networks, especially about whole networks and their day-to-day practices. First, it suggests that whole network formations are spatial and temporal. They are fluid, unstable, and temporary. While a core set of individual networks might be part of a broader network of common interests, they also compete with each other over influence, allegiances, state positions and resources. As shown during the SC crisis, networks reshape and restructure as events unfold, crisis continues, local socio-political balances change, and positions and resources shift. In an environment of uncertainty

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<sup>179</sup> Ibrahim was a Hizb-i-Islami tanzim commander during the jihad. During the civil war he joined the Junbish tanzim led by General Abdul Rashid Dostum. Abdul Rauf Ibrahimi belongs to a well-known family of Mujahedeen from Kunduz province in the North. His elder brother Amir Latif Ibrahimi has been governor of Takhar, Faryab and Kunduz in the past. He won 169 votes out of 176 present.

and political network distrust in post-2001 Afghanistan, it seems in the interests of individual networks and their clientele to keep their motivations and intentions concealed and remain publicly ambiguous, especially in state platforms like the Wolesi Jirga.

The Special Court crisis and the 2009 presidential election confirm the point made in Chapter 5 that the post-2001 state and political networks have become mutually co-constitutive. As both these empirical chapters revealed, political networks are able to utilise and manipulate the newly established and internationally sponsored formal state institutions to legitimise their network practices and strengthen their power within the state. The Karzai network, having control over most of the states, was able to rely on institutional organisations such as the Attorney General Office (AGO) and the Supreme Court to defend and justify their decision in setting up the SC in the first place. He also utilised other religious and legal institutions including the Council of Ulama and the Council of Interpretation of Constitution to advance the Court's decisions whilst discrediting their opponents. This was particularly the case when the Council of Ulama decreed that Simin Barezai's (the only female MP in the list of 9 disqualified MPs) 14-day hunger strike was un-Islamic according to Quran, which paved the way for Karzai to use violence in removing her from her tent and coercively breaking her hunger strike. The Karzai network was also able to employ the state's monopoly of use of violence in intimidating and threatening the parliamentarians. The violent replacement of 9 MPs in the Wolesi Jirga with army blocking roads and not allowing the opposition MPs to enter parliament as well as the brutal removal of Simin Barezai demonstrate the extent to which Karzai's network went to implement its despotic authority and power. However, this has not been limited to the Karzai networks. The SRL has used its own connections and networks within and outside the state, albeit a limited one, to exert their influence through the state institutions.

The crisis also suggests that within the political system that is based on patronage and opportunism, MPs see the need for certain levels of connection within and outside the state necessary to operate within the

system. This goes beyond the analysis offered by Coburn (2011) that sees the MPs deliberately concealing their intentions and remaining publicly ambiguous. For instance, the ability of an MP to politically manoeuvre within complicated formal state institutions as well as informal local societal power structures and licit and illicit business networks is a determining factor in their survival success. A high-ranking IEC employee in the north once explained how he had manipulated the election data in favour of a candidate who had initiated the contact.<sup>180</sup> The motive for the IEC staff was to get closer to Governor Atta Mohammad Noor's lucrative illicit business network through the candidate. Another MP from Kandahar province explained how he had strategically set up a team of campaigners who could provide him with access to state institutions in the province to win the vote.

In Kandahar, Karzai's brother is the king. The entire province is divided between three main powerbrokers, who made deals before the election on who to send to the Wolesi Jirga.... The people in my district asked that I stand in the election. I set up a team in Kandahar whose half was working within the government and the other half outside. This helped me get elected against the powerbrokers.<sup>181</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This chapter examined the power dynamics of political networks during the Special Court crisis and their network practices of patronage, deal-making, intimidation, and identity manipulations, shedding light on the nature of statehood and governance in post-2001 Afghanistan. I have considered how opportunism and politicisation of identities became mutually reinforcing during the Special Court crisis. The crisis suggests that competition and conflict among political networks has further consolidated the historically grounded 'network state' in which competing political networks readily utilise state resources and international patronage to expand their interests. This is discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter of this thesis. The success of the Support for Rule of Law coalition to stand firm against the Karzai network's authoritarian advance during the crisis and even forcing them to

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<sup>180</sup> Telephone conversation (Interview 94), 30 March 2012.

<sup>181</sup> Interview 10, 30 June 2011.

back down from removing the 62 sitting MPs, further strengthen the argument that we must seriously consider the fundamental role and power of political networks in post-2001 Afghanistan. The SC crisis also reveals that Karzai's power is supreme to the extent that multiple individual networks that have fundamentally established in the system allow him to be. While Karzai and his political network has become more authoritarian in its governance, his failure to remove the 62 sitting MPs exposes the limits of his power. The anti-Karzai network groups were successful in sending a clear message to Karzai that they are an essential part of the system for which Karzai must share the fruits of international patronage.

The political economy of the *Wolesi Jirga* suggests that the post-2001 international effort to establish democratic political institutions in Afghanistan have been undermined. The key institutions of the state (e.g., IEC, ECC, and the Wolesi Jirga) that were established with considerable international support to safeguard the democratic processes have been readily utilised by political networks to expand their power and interests. The concluding chapter discusses the nature of statehood in post-2001 Afghanistan and its potential implications on security, political order and state survival in post-2014 planned NATO-led military withdrawal from Afghanistan in more detail.



## Chapter 8: Post-2014, the International Military Exit, Political Stability and State Survival

### Introduction

Concerns about political stability and the future survival of the Afghan state have intensified as the post-2014 NATO-led withdrawal approaches. The daily news headlines and much of the policy analysis offered highlight the increasing prospect of the state's collapse and civil war. In a paper in late 2012, the International Crisis Group (ICG) warned that if certain steps were not taken, the Afghan state was likely to collapse. The paper advised, "Afghan leaders [to] recognise that the best guarantee of the state's stability is its ability to guarantee the rule of law during the political and military transition in 2013-2014 ... [If they fail at this] at worst, it could trigger extensive unrest, fragmentation of the security services and perhaps even a much wider civil war" (2012: 2). In another policy report for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, titled "Waiting for the Taliban in Afghanistan", Giles Dorransoro, an Afghan specialist, predicted a future as bleak, including the return of Taliban control to large parts of the country. It concluded, "At the end of the day, the most likely scenario is the collapse of the Afghan regime in a few years, after a steady period of weakening" (2012: 14-18). In an interview on 5<sup>th</sup> September with *Voice of America*, James Dobbins, the US representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, described the current war in Afghanistan a "civil war" that has been going on for some time.<sup>182</sup> His comments received an unprecedented condemnation from Karzai, his ministers.

Most of these analysts draw upon a crude reading of Afghanistan's past collapses, particularly the one which shadowed the Soviet Union's exit and the subsequent civil war. At the same time, competing political networks and their elites have intensified their rhetoric of threat and fear, which many

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<sup>182</sup> Tolonews, Presidential Palace Chides Dobbins' 'Civil War' Comment, 8 Sept 2013, (<http://www.tolonews.com/en/afghanistan/11850-presidential-palace-chides-dobbins-civil-war-comment>)

analysts simply take as signs of impending conflict. Yet, from a network perspective, the current intensification of political tensions and the violent rhetoric (e.g. relapse to civil war, ethnic war) is yet another grand moment of re-negotiation in a system of bargaining and exchange. The escalation of identity-based rhetoric seems to be directed for ethno-regional constituency consumption in the present moment of uncertainty and ambiguity, a key feature of statehood in the post-2001 period

This concluding chapter reflects on the concerns above by providing a more nuanced and multi-dimensional examination of the prospects for political stability and of the post-2014 the Afghan state. The power dynamics of political networks and their day-to-day practices can shed light on the prospect of state survival or collapse in the post-2014 period. Drawing on this study's findings, I contend that political order and the network state, in its present form more or less, is likely to survive because of the interlocking power dynamics of political networks, and any attempt to destabilise the status quo would essentially undermine certain groups' economic and political interests. Here, I am primarily targeting the policy-oriented field of international intervention and peacebuilding whose decisions will have a significant impact on the future of Afghanistan and its people. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to situate the findings within broader comparative and theoretical contexts; however, I consider some of the implications that stem from the theoretical and empirical claims of this thesis relevant to future studies of international statebuilding and the post-conflict state. At policy level, I argue that a successful international exit from Afghanistan and the post-2014 political order and state's survival is contingent on the stability of the empowered political networks that currently constitute the Afghan state as well as the strength of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and the outcome of reconciliation talks with the Taliban. Although, this thesis did not have the space to discuss these two foci, I argue below that they have little implication on the hypothesis and propositions offered.

## **I. The Power Dynamics of Political Networks and Statehood in Post-2001 Afghanistan**

This thesis began with a puzzle. I asked how the post-2001 state could survive and political order be constituted when its institutions are considered corrupt, fragmented and weak by liberal peacebuilding standards. The last four main internationally-funded elections (two presidential and two parliamentary) and its democratic institutions such as the parliament and the judiciary have questioned the relevance and impact of liberal peace interventions. It seems that prescribed liberal peace and democratisation efforts aimed at establishing strong democratic institutions have become less relevant. Despite the failure of the democratic transformation, this thesis reveals that political order has emerged in the post-2001 period through power dynamics amongst informal political networks composing the state. The liberal peace formal institutions (e.g. the Supreme Court and Parliament) rebuilt by international support have been effectively constituted by political networks and their clientele through those who use state capacities of coercion and administration to legitimize their actions and strengthen their influence within the state. Political order is achieved through the informal practices of patron-client relations, opportunism and illegality as well as the politicisation of identity-based divisions by political networks, which feeds into and feeds off the governance and state institutions of Afghanistan at all levels. This is in contrast to liberal peace statebuilding objectives. This is not to say that state institutions are irrelevant but they are made meaningful as the result of competition for power, conflict and compromise between rival political networks and their day-to-day performances.

As the historical chapter highlighted, this is not a new feature of Afghan politics. The state and political networks (be them tribal, clan-based or modern organisational structures) have been mutually constitutive throughout Afghanistan's modern state formation. The founder of the Durrani Kingdom established the foundation of a network state that his successors built upon and further expanded. Both political stability and instability was fashioned in a mixture of personalised, patron-client relations and division of identities by



competing political networks. As a result the very nature of governance and statehood was shaped by power dynamics amongst rival political networks for the control of the state. Post-2001 international statebuilding and state formation efforts were not divorced from this earlier tradition of statehood. The state was re-assembled and transformed around key political networks and centres of power which came to compose the state-regime. Between 2002 to 2005 Karzai and his closely allied Pashtun technocratic network skillfully used their position in the internationally-sponsored state and their access to state resources to coercively remove the former Mujahedeen political networks, effectively consolidating their power across the country. The difference here was clearly the material resources and legitimacy provided to the Karzai network by international donors. Since 2005, the power balance between different networks has shifted away from technocrats and royalists back to the jihadists who functioned as key individual-network powerbrokers either for Karzai or for those patrons outside the government. Since then, the Karzai network has maintained power through bargain and exchange with key individual-network leaders as well as utilising state resources for personal gain.

The state and political networks are indistinguishable from one another; the empowered networks masquerade as the state. The post-2001 state is thus constituted as a state by its appreciation of informal exchange: political networks have formed an internationally supported government, which operates as a state in a system of patronage and illegality. The state has provided a framework for inter-network competition, compromise and accommodation made manifest in identity-based divisions, patron-client relations, opportunism and the expropriation of public resources for personal gain. Indeed, the state itself has exacerbated this problem as it provides the primary incentive structure outside of the drug trade for inter-network competition. The 2009 presidential election and the political economy of the *Wolesi Jirga* revealed that the formal state institutions and state capacities of coercion and administration provided political networks with the legitimacy to strengthen their influence, particularly the Karzai network. These network practices and the subsequent instrumentalisation of identity-based divisions is

not isolated acts of strongman politics but have become instruments of power. These mutually reinforced network practices are in fact essential to the survival of political networks and hence the Afghan state itself and subsequently the establishment of political order. Thus, the nature of statebuilding in contemporary Afghanistan contains multiple layers of contradiction, 'progressing' to build a schismatic state riven by political networks and fostering profiteering and opportunism.

The network state is not necessarily a "weak" or "dysfunctional" state. It glues together political networks and their clientele at all levels of government in a complex system where resources are distributed and administrative officials are mobilised and controlled. Whilst the whole-network patron depends on the support of individual-network leaders, these leaders rely on the backing of their local and regional clientele to mobilise support and exercise a degree of control over collection and allocation of resources. This relationship is reciprocal and mutual. The resource bargaining between the whole-network patron and the individual-network leader ensures the distribution of wealth and state resources amongst the network clients at the local and regional level. The provincial and district authorities depend on the support of their network leader in the centre to maintain their position and privileges. The outcome is a complex system of resource interdependency constituting the post-2001 state, which essentially helps produce political stability and order. As such, a new political order is being established in which there is an increasing understanding amongst political networks about the other's sphere of influence (e.g. political and financial privileges and resources) which seems to limit violence. I am not suggesting that there will be no competition and conflict amongst the networks but I believe this will not translate into war. Cambodia and Tajikistan are excellent cases where competing political groups have managed to constitute a complex peace, which has gradually become more authoritarian and controlled by a single dominant network. This is discussed in more detail below.

The empirical chapters underlined a crucial link between the post-conflict state's survival (political order) and daily political network practices. The

power dynamics between political networks in post-2001 Afghanistan uncovered at least two of the following necessary functions: (1) networks must co-opt or eliminate rivals to consolidate power, (2) accumulate wealth for distribution, and (3) maintain strong ties with local communities to strengthen their constituency power base. In Afghanistan these functions are achieved through network practices of patron-client relations, illegality, opportunism and the manipulation of identity-based divisions. The empirical evidence suggests that the ability of political networks to achieve these functions varies. Although Karzai and his network enjoy an expansive patronage network and have accumulated a great deal of wealth and power, he lacks a strong link with any particular constituency. He maintains links by purchasing them from other networks, as shown during the 2009 presidential elections. The failure of the Karzai network in the 2010-2011 Special Court (SC) crisis to unseat the 62-sitting MPs despite being the best resource-buyer in the system proved that this kind of power depends very much on other influential powerbrokers. Influential political networks sent a clear message to Karzai and his team that their power rests largely on their support. In other words, Karzai's power depends on his ability to maintain equilibrium amongst competing individual networks, both in terms of sharing power and dispensing international funds.

Gul Aga Shirzai was initially successful in Nangarhar because he bought loyalties and controlled the licit and illicit market for distribution, thereby winning the support of some of the tribes. However, in recent years his power has weakened because of his loss of constituency support (Foschini 2001). Without international support he is likely to remain vulnerable. Shirzai's opponents have made several attempts to undermine his authority and even unseat him. In 2011, several MPs and one-third of the provincial council members organised a series of demonstrations demanding his removal (Foschini 2011). The protesters went as far as issuing him an ultimatum to resign.<sup>183</sup> Realising his lack of tribal support, Shirzai has expressed on many

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<sup>183</sup> In a vicious attack on the Kabul bank the Taliban killed several people. The failure of the governor to provide security and his inept response to the attack provided an excellent excuse for Shirzai's opponents to mobilise the population to unseat the governor (Foschini 2011). Despite historical grievances between the Arsala family and Hazrat Ali, they joined efforts against the governor. Dozens of networked MPs, PC members and tribal leaders met

occasions to US representatives that he would like to return to Kandahar.<sup>184</sup> The author's professional work on a USAID project on political entities revealed that the re-emergence of Hizb-i-Islami (both the Hikmatyar and Arghandival networks) is a more serious threat to his power. In the last parliamentary and presidential elections Hizb proved to be the most organised political group in the province, sending more than thirty MPs to parliament.

Atta Mohammad Noor, on the other hand, remains strong in the north. In addition to having a monopoly over state resources and economy (both legal and illegal), which has allowed him to establish an expansive patronage system, he enjoys a significantly high level of community ties in the north and even in Kabul. Indeed, since his positioning as the anti-Karzai strongman in the 2009 presidential election he enjoys greater legitimacy among his ethnic-Tajik constituency. Given that Karzai has not been able to remove Noor from his powerful position as the governor of Balkh indicates the strength of his network.<sup>185</sup> A recent Institute for the Study of War report on the former Northern Alliance considered Atta Mohammad Noor as the strongest node in the former Jamiat Tanzim network and a "king-maker" in the upcoming 2014 presidential election (Tchalakov 2013).

## **II. The Post-2001 State and International Statebuilding**

Where does the post-2001 network state stand in its relations with ongoing international intervention and statebuilding efforts? Given the main focus of this thesis, on power dynamics amongst local political networks, there was little discussion on the role of international statebuilding; however, I am not

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with Karzai and demanded Shirzai's removal. According to Foschini (2011) the anti-Shirzai powerbrokers, Hazrat Ali, Agha Jan (the head of PC), Haji Zahir and Haji Jamal, were so confident they would unseat the governor this time that in one of their meetings Hazrat Ali even proposed himself or another MP from Nangarhar, Fereydun Mohmand, as interim governor.

<sup>184</sup> US State cables, 20 January 2010.

<sup>185</sup> On several occasions, Karzai and his clientele failed to weaken Noor. In a serious attempt in 2009, the Interior Minister Hanif Atmar tried to dismiss three senior police chiefs in Balkh (Traffic Police Chief, Criminal Investigation Chief and Highway police chief) who were believed to be close to Noor. After a long standoff between Noor and Atmar, with Noor reportedly not allowing the policemen to leave their position, Kabul backed down.

suggesting that international interveners were passive players in this process. In fact the relationship between international intervention/statebuilding and local power networks is co-constitutive and intertwined. In the immediate international intervention in 2001, what enabled political networks to regain power was indeed the intervener's strategy of relying on former Mujahedeen tanzims to help compose and reassemble the state. From then on, the unintended consequences of international statebuilding's financial patronage and conferred legitimacy further enabled political networks and their elites to consolidate power. Scott's (1998) logic of "authoritarian high-modernism" [emphasis added] seems relevant to liberal international statebuilding attempts. Intervention groups were able to impose liberal political and economic agendas such as elections, rule of law, property rights and the formation of parliament above local political networks.<sup>186</sup>

Scott (1998) has reminded us that such grand schemes are commonly subverted as much as they are implemented, and this subversion often takes place under the noses of international statebuilders. What they have failed (and are still failing) to understand is that these schemes fail because they overlook local knowledge and power dynamics. From the very outset, international interveners in Afghanistan overlooked the historically grounded stubbornness of informal practices that had dominated Afghan politics throughout its modern state formation. The post-2001 outcome is a combination of "compromised peacebuilding" (Barnett & Zurcher 2009) where political networks are able to protect their interests whilst preserving a veneer of stability, alongside 'conflictual peacebuilding' (ibid) in which the Taliban

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<sup>186</sup> According to MacGinty (2011a: 67-69), the liberal peace agenda has a series of compliance mechanisms in place to impose conformity and discipline, much like the international financial institutions' terms of conditionality. There is an idea put forward that it is "the only deal in town", that other versions of peace are not legitimate. The incentivising power of peace refers to the persuasive elements that donors could employ through its democratic and economic reform and programs. The local elites could resist, ignore, subvert or adopt liberal peace interventions. This depends on the extent to which local actors retain power during a liberal peace transition, the extent to which external actors are dependent on local actors (e.g. a client government), the extent to which national, regional and local institutions are intact in the wake of a violent conflict, and the extent to which local actors (whether at state, regional or local level) can marshal resources (taxes, tradable goods, etc). Finally, the ability of local actors to present and maintain alternative forms of peace and peacemaking refers to the ability of local agents to promote alternatives to peace such as customary dispute resolutions, Islamic sharia law and others.

continue to contest the post-Bonn settlement. This outcome is not a “sovereignty paradox” (Zaum 2007) where the means (international intervention) contradict the ends (national sovereignty). As the case of Afghanistan uncovers, once the concept of the state is freed from the “territorial trap” (Agnew 1994) we can see that international intervention generates a network state rather than the ideal of a vertically organised and territorially encompassing sovereign entity. This outcome is an unintended consequence of international interveners’ poorly constructed strategies and actions, one that is not necessarily in their interests.

In its present stage, whatever the outcome, the circulation of discourses legitimising the Afghan state and statebuilding are essential to maintain and justify international engagement. Privately, key donors criticise the consolidation of the network state and its daily practices in Afghanistan; however, publicly they have little option but to justify and rationalise the outcome through their everyday discourses. The reply of a senior NATO coalition official provides evidence of this. When he was asked about Gul Aga Shirzai’s illegal practices he said: “We know he is corrupt. But we have to ask ourselves: Has he crossed a sufficient number of red lines that we’ve got to deal with it? So far, it doesn’t appear to have” (Hodge 2012). This also reveals the double standards of the liberal peace, which on one hand claim to be promoting liberal values and agendas, whilst at the same time they employing illiberal means to achieve their ends. As one political party leader commented, “the international community have sacrificed justice for security and stability. They have sacrificed democracy and human rights for security. For them it doesn’t matter if Mullah Raket, a Talib fundamentalist, comes to power or a corrupt official, as long as there is stability.”<sup>187</sup> For instance, during the 2010-2011 Special Court crisis, the US and its allies privately backed and supported the Independent Election Commission’s decision to overrule Karzai’s attempt to remove sixty-two sitting MPs. However, arguably they could not do much in the face of strong Karzai network interventions. This

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<sup>187</sup> Interview 118, 7 September 2009.

depiction of Karzai by a senior Foreign Affairs official reveals his relation to international interventionists, at least since the 2009 presidential election.

Karzai has taken everybody hostage, the Americans, the UN, the Afghans, and even the opposition. Imagine him sitting in the driver's seat of a suicide-bomber's car and accelerating. He tells the Americans if you put pressure on me, I will explode myself and you will get conflict and instability; he tells the Afghans, if I leave, the country will slip back into the 1990s civil war; and he tells the opposition that if they plot against him he will destroy the current system and expose their corruption and illegal businesses.<sup>188</sup>

This representation sheds light on President Karzai's distrust of the international donors, the Americans in particular, which is reflected in his wider anti-American rhetoric over the past year or so. It also suggests that as the international military withdrawal takes place, Karzai's network seems to be losing leverage over the local political networks. The policy implications of this are discussed in section IV.

### **III. Theoretical Implications: International Statebuilding and the State**

The nature of the statehood in Afghanistan has a number of theoretical implications for how we understand international peacebuilding attempts. It shifts the conceptual focus: (1) from the institutional and structural affect to the informal network character of statebuilding; (2) from the conflictive to the co-constitutive nature of peacebuilding; and most importantly (3) from the behavior to the performance of statebuilding.

The peacebuilding literature has been dominated by recent studies that speak of "liberal peace", "hybrid peace" or "post-liberal peace". The theoretical and empirical chapters in this thesis emphasise that these matter little if one fails to theorise the whole relationship between the nature of peacebuilding and the desired outcome. This thesis offered a more nuanced study of international statebuilding by theorising the network character of statebuilding

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<sup>188</sup> Interview 55, 19 February 2012.

and its impact on existing political order and state survival. If the whole peacebuilding effort involves the following: its end (the state), the process (statebuilding), the agents and subjects of change (both international service and implementation network structures and local political networks) and the vehicle (network practices), this research offers some insights towards a theory of network politics in statebuilding. This thesis argues that international statebuilding must be seen as a “loosely structured network” and a “collaborative” process that facilitates the creation of service delivery and implementation structures that operate along network modes. A network approach goes beyond the subject-object approach which dominates the literature; it problematises the boundaries drawn between legal-illegal, private-public and local-international.

Also this thesis makes the case that post-conflict peacebuilding is a co-constitutive process where power is assembled and flows through international administrative and policy networks as well as local political-economic and identity networks. It argues that the co-constitutive nature of intervention and international statebuilding is key to our understanding of the post-conflict state and statehood. At the international level, the peacebuilding industry assembles a variety of actors and organisations into the post-conflict space, tying them into a complex network of resource interdependency. The network mode of organising and operation has primarily driven their day-to-day functioning. The empirical chapters highlight that the co-constitutive nature of the relationships between endogenous political networks played a central role in constituting and transforming the post-2001 Afghan state. These co-constitutive interactions create interdependencies which connects a wide-range of actors, such as local businessmen, drug traffickers, private security firms, international contractors, military commanders, custom officials, criminals and even insurgents, thereby limiting violence.

Most importantly, the ethnographic study of political network practices has shifted the focus from the behavioural aspect of statebuilding to its daily performance. In an influential study Mitchell (1999: 89) brought our attention to the concept of “the state effect”. He emphasised that we must analyse the



techniques and practices of the state which produce “two-dimensional effects”; that is, the practices that misleadingly contribute to constructing a world that appears to consist of a binary order: on the one hand individuals and their activities, on the other hand an inert “structure” that somehow stands apart from individuals and gives a framework to their lives. Political networks have come to masquerade as the state, producing the impression of an organisation which is a singular and vertical entity. Political networks within the state, particularly within the Karzai network, portray themselves as the state. Karzai’s expansive network was able to secure the post-Bonn state as an “image” through the symbolic and material organisation of social space, which helped his group to secure their legitimacy, naturalise their authority and represent themselves as superior to other institutions and centres of power. However, as the “networked” nature of the post-2001 suggests, the state does not stand apart from or in opposition to society, or is mutually exclusive of social spaces. This is in line with recent anthropological studies of the state in Central Asia that questions the nature of spatiality (Reeve 2007; Collins 2002; Schatz 2004).

The proposed network state and the nature of its statehood help us to go beyond the empirical categorisation of the state as either “weak” or “strong”. In Afghanistan, the state has been characterised as “weak central power but strong local powers” (Saikal 2006) or “strong at the centre but weak at the local” (Weiner & Banuazizi, 1994). These categorisations are misleading. The post-2001 state in Afghanistan is both weak and unstable according to the empirical definitions of statehood – exercising autonomy and authority and exhibiting solid capacities to provide basic services to its citizens – and relatively strong and stable in its effects on everyday life. This is not a paradoxical situation if we use a network lens to understand post-conflict international peacebuilding and state formation. As the case of Afghanistan reveals, political order and state survival depend on the power dynamics of endogenous political networks and their daily performances. As Reeves in relation to the neighboring Central Asian Fergana valley has noted, ‘these paradoxes and puzzles [of state weakness] arise from an initial assumption that the state “ought”, in both a normative and descriptive sense, to be a

singular rather than multiple entity' (2007: 11). The state in Afghanistan is multiple and networked.

#### **IV. International Military Exit and Political Stability Beyond 2014**

This section has policy implications for the planned NATO-led withdrawal from Afghanistan and political stability in the post-2014 period. Drawing on this study's findings, I contend that a successful international military exit from Afghanistan is contingent primarily on the stability of the empowered political networks and how the power dynamics amongst them are being re-structured and re-organised. Political networks are both a source of conflict and violence as well as political order and stability. This analysis argues that the current emphasis on the strength of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and the outcome of present reconciliation with the Taliban, the two key foci of current international exit strategy, are secondary to political stability in the post-2014 period. The most robust ANSF presence, capable civil service, and sustained international assistance, cannot prevent a possible return to violence and political crisis, unless a political settlement is reached among competing political networks. The importance of this was echoed recently by the first vice-president's speech who said, "Afghan people are not concerned about the security transition, they are more concerned about the political transition."<sup>189</sup>

Based on the experience of previous elections, one could argue that the 2014 presidential election provides an excellent opportunity for political networks to reach a political settlement. As I complete this thesis, twenty-seven candidates have been registered with the Independent Election Commission (IEC). The confusion that followed in the lead-up to registration highlighted the paradoxical fluidity of Afghan politics at times of uncertainty and contestation as well as its inherent rigidity. All-encompassing political horse-trading took place across different camps to reach a consensus over a candidate-patron prior to the registration deadline. The political horse-trading was focused on

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<sup>189</sup> In Haseeb Maudoodi, "Political Transition More Concerning Than Security Transition: Fahim," Tolo News, June 12, 2013.

assembling a government that could guarantee their interests in the post-2014 period, rather than simply determining the next successful presidential ticket. The discourse used to justify their deal-making was the *Ejma-yi-Millie* (National Consensus) but with different understandings (Hewad 2013).<sup>190</sup> Atta Mohammad Noor, the governor of Balkh, provided the most comprehensive understanding of this discourse. He published a paper in February 2013 under the title of “*Ejma-yi-Millie*” which proposed the creation of a High Leadership Council which would include the current president and his vice-presidents and all of the other Jihadi leaders. The Council would provide legal safety for its members.

After the two-month or so intense negotiations, Karzai was not able to unite his clientele to support a single candidate. The Hizb-i-Islami network of Arghandival, the main supporter of Karzai in the government since 2009, went with Dr. Abdullah Abdullah. Karzai’s other key whole-network allies: Sayyed Ishaq Gilani, the leader of National Islamic Front; Gul Agha Shirzai, the governor of Nangarhar; President Karzai’s brother, Qayum Karzai; Anwar-ul-Haq Ahadi, the leader of Afghan Millet; and Abdur Rab Sayyaf, the former leader of Etihad-i-Islami tanzim; filled separate nominations. Karzai’s favourite candidate, Zalmay Rasul, the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, gathered a weaker team along with Ahmad Zia Massoud and Habiba Sarabi. The main opposition camps, the National Front, split with Ahmad Zia Massoud, Mohammad Mohaqqueq and General Rashid Dostum, standing as Zalmay Rasul, with Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, and Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai as their running mates respectively. On the face of it the above picture might suggest a failure to reach a “national consensus”, and the experience of previous elections has shown that the majority of the above candidates are most likely to be co-opted by the main candidate-patrons by the time election takes place. This could be a political network strategy for deal-making with competing candidates, as it was in the 2009 elections.

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<sup>190</sup> See Gran Hewad, Elections or National Consensus: Which one wins?, *Afghanistan Network Analysts*, 4 April 2013

Whatever the outcome of the election, I believe the Afghan state is likely to survive in more or less its current form in the post-2014 period for the reasons I have already mentioned. Empowered political networks have benefitted impressively within the post-2001 system, which they helped build, with the intention of guaranteeing their long-term interests. A reduction in external resource flows (e.g. military contracts and aid programmes) will certainly affect the magnitude of exchange and bargain but arguably will not weaken political networks' relative ability to rent loyalties given their absolute control over the Afghan economy (both licit and illicit). A recent World Bank study found that the macroeconomic effects of transition and a reduction in international military and development spending might be less than expected, given how little of that money has actually entered the Afghan economy. Arguably, a drawdown in international spending would not drastically undermine the rentier dynamics of the state and political networks. Suhrke (2012) has argued that a reduction in international funding could actually be good for long-term political stability in Afghanistan. In another comprehensive report, Fishstein and Wilder (2012) found not only no correlation between aid and security, but that aid in some areas generates perverse incentives and harmful effects, which the story at the beginning of this thesis illustrates.

While instability can raise the likelihood of violence, it can also decrease if violence is so destabilising that it threatens to destroy the political order. Once again, it seems that the Jihadi political networks would play determining roles in the post-2014 period. Although in the last twelve years these Jihadi networks have competed with each other over the control of the state, sometimes quite fiercely, they have also become more conscience and respectful of each other spheres of influence and their resource interdependencies. The post-2001 political and economic developments have further entrenched political and business interdependencies among them. After all, these Jihadi networks have dominated and shaped Afghanistan's political developments in the last three decades. Except for Karzai, who was imposed by the Americans at the Bonn conference, hardly any new network leader has emerged outside the Jihadi networks, indicating the rigidity and exclusivity of the system. Even Ashraf Ghani, the former Finance Minister who

was considered the political mastermind behind the removal of most Jihadis from power between 2002-4, has been unable to build a support network, evident from his failure to win votes (less than 3%) in the 2009 presidential election. As Maley (1997) once noted, the core problem of Afghanistan is not reassembling a government but rebuilding a basic consensual framework in society. It seems that in post-2001 Afghanistan, that consensual framework is emerging in the form of a network state.

However, the network state will only be stable over the long-run if it is aided by two external factors. First, the proposed international military presence in Afghanistan, especially the ongoing negotiation with the US government over its military camps in the country, must produce results to help curb the “bad neighbour” effect. In the 1990s, neighbouring countries supported competing political networks against each other, which intensified a decade of civil war. As the 2014 NATO military exit approaches the regional security aspect of the Afghan conflict is being discussed, in particular those of Pakistan, Iran, India and even Russia, are intertwined. Given their long-term interferences in Afghanistan, both Pakistan and Iran have some influence within the Afghan government. If these involvements intensify they could have destabilising effects on the current balance of power among political networks.<sup>191</sup> The US military camps could be an excellent deterrent against interferences by these regional players. Second, international aid must continue to sustain the Afghan state, especially the ANFS numbering around three hundred thousand. Afghanistan’s current GDP will not be able to sustain the Afghan army for years to come. A recent congressional report suggested that the Afghan government is likely to need at least 10 billion USD annually, mainly towards maintaining the ANSF, until 2017 (Katzman 2013).<sup>192</sup> After all, the Soviet backed regime collapsed in 1992 only when the Soviets stopped

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<sup>191</sup> As the political economy of the Wolesi Jirga uncovered, in post-2001 international statebuilding, political network connections stretch beyond Afghanistan’s national border. Reportedly, Karzai’s former Chief of Staff, Omar Daudzai, who was himself caught getting suitcases of money from Iran, had asserted to former deputy US ambassador, Francis Ricciardone, that “in addition to financing Afghan religious leaders, Iran had provided salary support for some [Afghan government] deputy ministers and other officials, including one or two even in the palace” (US Embassy Cables, February 2009).

<sup>192</sup> See Katzman, K. (2013), “Afghanistan: Politics, Elections, and Government Performance”, Congressional Research Service Report RS21922, 14 August 2013.

supporting the regime financially, three years after their withdrawal. The aid reduction will not have a major impact on the power dynamics of political networks as long as it is gradual, predictable and orderly.

The case of post-2001 Afghanistan suggests that international intervention and peacebuilding must pay particular attention to the role of endogenous political forces in their peace efforts. Failing to grasp the co-constitutive, interdependent, and network character of international-local power dynamics limits our ability to understand the nature of statehood and governance in post-conflict spaces. This thesis explored the fundamental role of endogenous political networks in the process of statebuilding and state formation, where it showed how their power dynamics and day-to-day practices shape political order and stability. The better we realise how international peacebuilding is grounded in local order, the better we can picture the limits of international intervention and the prospect for alternative ways of achieving peace. Further research is needed to further understand the complexity of power dynamics and relations among political networks at the local-district level and how political network contestation is affecting the bureaucratic structure of the state, which was beyond the scope of this PhD thesis. Much more research remains to be done to provide satisfactory answers to the research puzzle and questions proposed here, but I believe this research has contributed towards the essential basis of a political network approach for such future research.



## Appendix

**Table 9.1:** The List of the Main Political Networks since the 1990s.

The Main Ethnic Groupings	Former Mujahedeen Tanzims	List of Key Leaders and Commanders (1992-2001)	Splintering of Tanzims & the Main Post-2001 Political Network Leaders
Tajiks	Jamiat-i-Islami	Burhanuddin Rabbani (Political Leader). Famous Commanders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ahmad Shah Massoud (the Military leader of Jamiat known as Shura-yi-Nizar)</li> <li>- M. Qaseem Fahim (Chief of Intelligence Service)</li> <li>- Yunos Qanuni (Commander and Jamiat Spokesperson)</li> <li>- Abdullah Abdullah (Advisor to Massoud)</li> <li>- Ismail Khan (Independently Controlled Herat and its three neighbouring province)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rabbani remained leader until assassinated in 2012.</li> <li>- Massoud assassinated in 2001. His brother Ahmad Zia Masoud became Karzai's vice-president (2004-9). He founded the National Coalition in 2011 with General Dostum and Mohaqeq but split in 2013.</li> <li>- M. Qaseem Fahim: The most powerful commander of Jamiat in post-2001 and Minister of Defence (2001-2004). Karzai vice-President (2009-present).</li> <li>- Yunos Qanuni: Former Interior Minister (2001-2002). Run against Karzai in 2004 election. Established the New Afghanistan party.</li> <li>- Abdullah Abdullah: Former Foreign Minister (2001-6). Challenged Karzai in 2009 Elections. Established the Change and Hope Coalition in 2009. One of the main candidates in the 2014 presidential elections.</li> <li>- Ismail Khan: Strongmen of Heart province (2001-2004). Coercively co-opted by Karzai in 2014 to take the position of Minister of Energy. Backed Karzai in 2009 elections.</li> </ul>
Pashtun	Hizb-i-Islami Gulboddin	Gulboddin Hikmatyar (Political Leader) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abdul Hadi Arghandival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hizb-i-Islami Gulboddin: Anti-government and his where about is unknown.</li> <li>- Hizb-i-Islami Afghanistan: A number of senior Hizb members break away from Gulboddin setting up their party, which is currently led by Minister of Economy Abdul Hadi Arghandival. Karzai's main political network ally in post-2005 period/ Sabbah parliamentary grouping in the <i>Wolesi Jirga</i>.</li> </ul>



	Hizb-i-Islami Khaled	Mawlavi Yonous Khalis: Famous Commanders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abdul Haq in Kabul (Arsala Family in Nangarhar)</li> <li>- Haji Abdul Qadir / Governor of Nangarhar province (Arsala Family)</li> <li>- Jalaluddin Haqqani</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Abdul Haq: Assassinated in 2001 by the Taliban.</li> <li>- Haji Abdul Qadir: Governor of Nangarhar. Assassinated in 2002.</li> <li>- Haji Zahir Qadir: son of Haji Qadir set up and became leader of the Support for Rule of Law coalition in 2010-2011 Parliamentary crises. Leader of Peace Caravan PG. He and his powerful Arsala family enjoys significant influence in Nangarhar</li> <li>- Haqqani: Known as the “Haqqani network” the most dangerous anti-government group.</li> </ul>
	Mahaz-e-Miilie	Pir Ahmad Gillani (political leader). Key Commanders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gul Agha Shirzai</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gilani: Little political influence in post-2001 period. He was allied with Abdullah Abdullah in 2009 elections.</li> <li>- Shirzai: Governor of Kandahar (2001-2004) then governor of Nangarhar (2005-present). Enjoys influence in Kandahar and to some extent in Nangarhar.</li> </ul>
	Jabha-e Milli-ye Nijat	Sebqatullah Mojaddadi (First interim President in 1992).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Leader of the Upper House (2005-2010). His son Mojaddadi became the governor of Kabul in 2009.</li> </ul>
	Etihad-i-Islami	Abdur Rab Sayyaf (Leader from 1980s –present)/ Allied with Jamiat-i-Islami	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sayyaf: Member of Parliament since 2005 and a key ally of Karzai in post-2001 period. Enjoys influence within the government.</li> </ul>
Hazara	Hizb-i-Wahdat	Abdul Ali Mazari (Leader from 1991-1995). Key commanders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Karim Khalili</li> <li>- Momahhad Mohaqqeq (Northern Regional Commander)</li> <li>- Qorban Ali Irfani (deputy chief of Wahdat)</li> <li>- Mohammad Akbari</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Khalili: became leader of Wahdat in 1995. Karzai’s second vice-president (2004-9). Supporter of Voice of Justice PG.</li> <li>- Mohaqqeq: Former Planning Minister resigned (2001-4)/ Set up the People Wahdat party/ Challenged Karzai in 2004 elections, came third (12.5%). Supported Karzai in 2009 election. Abdullah Abdullah’s second running mate in upcoming 2014 elections. Influence in Kabul, Mazar and Central Region.</li> <li>- Irfani: Opposition/ supported Karzai in 2009 election. Set up Wahdat Millie party. Some influence in Bamian province.</li> <li>- Akbari: Mainly with opposition. Little influence in Bamian province.</li> </ul>

	Hizbi Harakat	Asef Mohezeni (leader 1979-Present). Key commanders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hussein Anwari (regional Commander)</li> <li>- Ali Javeed (regional Commander)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mohammad Asef Mohezeni: Leader of the party but it has been divided into two branches.</li> <li>- Hussein Anwari: Former Minister of Irrigation (2002-2004)/ appointed governor of Kabul in 2005; then governor of Herat province (2005-7)/ In 2009 election allied with Abdullah.</li> <li>- Javeed: Former minister (2001-4), Javeed is now the political leader of Harakat.</li> </ul>
Uzbeks	Junbish (Later Junish-i-Islami) Party	General Rashid Dostum (a former Militia commander in Soviet-backed Afghan army in the 1980's, and has been leader since)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Junbish is the only political network that has not experienced splintering. Junbish exerts significant influence in the Uzbek dominated provinces of the North, especially in Jawzjan. He was the forth candidate in 2004 election. In 2009 he supported Karzai but then his relations deteriorated. He is Ashraf Ghani's first running mate in the upcoming 2014 presidential elections.</li> </ul>

**Table 9.2: List of Interviews**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/ Organisation</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	Dr. Reza Jahangir	Head of Internal Policy at Office of Administrative Affair	Kabul	Interview	12 Apr 2011
2	Amrellah Saleh	Director of National Security Directorate	Kabul	Meeting	21 May 2011
3	Eng. Anwar	Director of Global Construction (Ltd)	Kabul	Meeting	23 May 2011
4	Abdul Rahman Safi	Afghanistan Stabilisation Initiative Research Officer	Kabul	Meeting	12 May 2011
5	Ramazan Bashardost	Kabul MP	Kabul	Interview	24 Jun 2011
6	Nabi Khalili	Son of Karim Khalili (Second Vice-President)	Kabul	Interview	19 Jul 2011
7	Arif Rahmani	Ghazni MP	Kabul	Interview	16 Jul 2011
8	Ramazan Bashardost	Kabul MP	Kabul	Interview	31 Jul 2011
9	Massoda Karukhil	Kabul female MP	Kabul	Interview	25 Jun 2011
10	Lalay Hamidzai	Kandahar MP	Kabul	Interview	30 Jun 2011
11	Mr. Rezwani,	Eqtedar-e-Millie Newspaper	Kabul	Meeting	21 Jul 2011
12	Khaled Pashtun	Kandahar MP	Kabul	Interview	24 Jul 2011
13	Abdullah Forough	Ministry of Trade and Commerce	Kabul	Interview	24 Jul 2011
14	Dr. Mousavi	Senior Advisor to Ministry of Higher Education	Kabul	Interview	23 Aug 2011
15	Tarana Wafi	Former Senior Advisor to Ministry of Trade and Commerce	Kabul	Interview	17 Aug 2011
16	Homa Sultani	Ghazni MP	Kabul	Interview	31 Aug 2011
17	Mirbat Khan Mangal	Khost MP	Kabul	Interview	24 Aug 2011
18	Dr. Saleh Saljoqi	Heart MP	Kabul	Interview	24 Aug 2011
19	M. Ali Alizada	Ghani MP	Kabul	Interview	29 Aug 2011
20	Davoud Moradian	Former Director of the Centre of Strategic Studies	Kabul	Interview	18 Sep 2011
21	Latif Pedram	Speaker of Support for Rule of Law coalition (SRL)	Kabul	Interview	21 Sept 2011
22	Asadullah Saadati	Speaker of Support for Rule of Law	Kabul	Interview	18 Sept 2011
23	Asadullah Saadati	Speaker of Support for Rule of Law	Kabul	Interview	26 Jun 2011
24	Elham Gharji	Former Research Policy Director of MRRD	Kabul	Meeting	24 Sep 2011
25	Safoora Ilkhani	Bamian MP	Kabul	Interview	8 Sept 2011
26	Mr. Alizada	Budget Officer at Ministry of Finance	Kabul	Interview	20 Sep 2011
27	Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai	Former Minister of Finance	Kabul	Meeting	9 Oct 2011
28	Naseema Zeerak	Activist for Young Women for Change	Kabul	Interview	18 Oct 2011

29	Mr. Mohseni	Director of Asset Registration at Afghanistan High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption Unit	Kabul	Interview	24 Aug 2011
30	Mansoor Naderi	Head of Paywand-e-Millie Party	Kabul	Interview	16 Nov 2011
31	Ali Ghanji	Deputy Director of Brishna Electricity	Kabul	Interview	21 Nov 2011
32	Khaleqyar Haidari	Director of NetZone	Kabul	Interview	6 Nov 2011
33	Hussain Hazara	Director of Budget, Ministry of Finance	Kabul	Interview	21 Nov 2011
34	Eng Nawyan	A Founder of Haq and Adalat Party	Kabul	Interview	18 Nov 2011
35	Janan Musazai	Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Kabul	Meeting	9 Dec 2011
36	Abrur Rahman Sheidani	Bamiyan MP	Kabul	Interview	12 Dec 2011
37	Glen Davis	US Embassy Diplomacy Section	Kabul	Meeting	14 Dec 2011
38	Dr Jonathan Terre	US Embassy Diplomacy Section	Kabul	Meeting	14 Dec 2011
39	Ehsan Zia	Former Minister of MRRD	Kabul	Interview	18 Dec 2011
40	Hussain Hazara	Office of Budget / Ministry of Finance	Kabul	Meeting	4 Dec 2010
41	Davoud Moradian	Former Director of Centre of Strategic Studies	Kabul	Interview	9 Dec 2011
42	Ali Eftekhari	Speaker of Ministry of Labour	Kabul	Interview	11 Dec 2011
43	Neerav Patel	UK embassy Head of political Affairs	Kabul	Meeting	12 Dec 2011
44	Shahzad Akbar	Afghanistan 1400	Kabul	Meeting	18 Jan 2012
45	Zahra Mobtakker	Former Head of Jabhe Millie Weekly Newspaper	Kabul	Interview	16 Jan 2012
46	Mr. Afghanzai	Independent Election Commission Officer	Kabul	Interview	8 Jan 2012
47	Mr. Nateqi	Wahdat Party	Kabul	Meeting	17 Jan 2012
48	Dr. Sima Samar	Head of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commissions	Kabul	Meeting	1 Jan 2012
49	Barna Karimi	Former Deputy of IDLG	Kabul	Interview	22 Jan 2012
50	Barna Karimi	Former Deputy of IDLG	Kabul	Interview	6 Jan 2012
51	Karim Khalili	Second Vice President,	Kabul	Meeting	20 Feb 2012
52	Fiona Grant	UK Embassy Political Affairs Officer	Kabul	Meeting	9 Feb 2012
53	Farkhunda Zahra Naderi	Kabul female MP	Kabul	Interview	11 Feb 2012
54	Diana Bowen	Director of Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistance Project	Kabul	Meeting	14 Feb 2012
55	Dr. Davoud Moradian	Former Director of the Centre of Strategic Studies	Kabul	Interview	19 Feb 2012

56	Bruce Tolentino	Director of Asia Foundation	Kabul	Meeting	19 Feb 2012
57	Roshan Mashal	Afghanistan Women Network	Kabul	Meeting	18 Feb 2012
58	Waheed Omar	Former Spokesperson of President Karzai	Kabul	Meeting	16 Feb 2012
59	Ted Lawrence	USAID	Kabul	Meeting	13 Feb 2012
60	Haneef Atmar	Former Minister of Interior	Kabul	Meeting	18 Feb 2012
61	Waqif Hakimi	Spokesperson for Jamiat	Kabul	Interview	10 Feb 2012
62	Nurollah Ulumi	Former Kandahar MP	Kabul	Meeting	30 Feb 2012
63	Roshan Mashal	Director of Afghan Women's Network	Kabul	Meeting	14 Feb 2012
64	Mahmoud Saikal	Former Ambassador to Australia	Kabul	Meeting	8 Mar 2012
65	Fauzia Koofi	Badakhshan Female MP	Kabul	Interview	9 Mar 2012
66	Dr. Anwar	Spokesperson of Hizb-i-Islami	Kabul	Interview	12 Mar 2012
67	Alizada	Office of Administrative Affairs	Kabul	Interview	13 Mar 2012
68	Abdul Baqi Popal	Director of Directorate for Principle Affairs	Kabul	Interview	10 Mar 2012
69	Mr. Ayam	A Former Representative of the Zahir Shah	Kabul	Meeting	7 Mar 2012
70	Abdullah Ahmadzai	Chief Electoral Officer	Kabul	Interview	8 Mar 2012
71	Dr. Abdullah Abdullah	Leader of the National Coalition	Kabul	Interview	9 May 2012
72	Ali Amiri	Wahdat Political Party Official (Also National Front Coalition)	Kabul	Meeting	9 May 2012
73	Arash Barmak	Managing Director of ANSYO	Kabul	Meeting	10 May 2012
<b>Nangarhar Interviews</b>					
74	Waslee Khan Malek kheil	Nangarhar Head of Afghan Millet PP	Nangarhar	Interview	21 Feb 2012
75	M. Alkozai	Regional Manager of National Democratic institute	Nangarhar	Meeting	22 Feb 2012
76	Abdul Razzaq Pacha	Head of Mahaz-e-Millie	Nangarhar	Interview	23 Feb 2012
77	Mavlna Salaar	Nangarhar Head of Hizb-i-Islami	Nangarhar	Interview	24 Feb 2012
78	Mavlna Sor	Nangarhar Hizb-i-Islami Member	Nangarhar	Interview	24 Feb 2012
79	Zainuddin Hottak	Head of Muttahid-i-Millie	Nangarhar	Interview	23 Feb 2012
80	Yaqub Mohmand	Nangarhar Afghan Millet Member	Kabul	Interview	8 Mar 2012
81	M. Yousof Saber	Nangarhar Kuchi MP	Kabul	Interview	12 Apr 2012
82	Dr. Esmatullah	Nangarhar MP	Kabul	Interview	14 Apr 2012

	Shinwari				
83	Mr. Jalal	USAID (Governor Programme)	Kabul	Meeting	14 Apr 2012
84	Mirwais Yasini	Nangarhar MP, Former Presidential Candidate	Kabul	Interview	13 Apr 2012
85	Habibullah Ismailzai	Senior Officer at Ministry of Labour	Nangarhar	Interview	1 May 2012
86	Nematullah Hamdard	Civil Society Activist	Nangarhar	Interview	2 May 2012
87	Dr. Najibullah Sahebzada	Civil Society Activist	Nangarhar	Interview	2 May 2012
88	Zabiullah Zamrai	Provincial Council Member	Nangarhar	Interview	4 May 2012
89	M. Anwar Soltani	Political Analysts	Nangarhar	Interview	5 May 2012
90	Nafas gul Malekzai	Female Provincial Council Member	Nangarhar	Meeting	6 May 2012
91	Angeza Afridi	Female Provincial Council Member	Nangarhar	Meeting	6 May 2012
<b>Balkh Interviews and Meetings</b>					
92	Azizullah Aziz	NDI project manager	Balkh	Interview	4 Mar 2012
93	Hiedo Ikebe	UNAMA Political Officer	Balkh	Interview	3 Mar 2012
94	Danesh Daneshwar	Former IEC Regional Manager	Balkh	Telephone conversation	30 Mar 2012
95	Hairatan	Hairatan Custom border city Observation & Interviews	Balkh	Observation & Interviews	2-3 Mar 2012
96	Zahir Wahdat	MP	Kabul	Interview	15 Apr 2012
97	Farid Arezoo	Researcher	Kabul	Interview	15 Apr 2012
98	Afzal Hadidi	Head of Balkh Provincial Council (PC)	Balkh	Interview	21 Apr 2012
99	Gulam Abbas Akhlaqi	Deputy Head of Balkh Provincial Council	Balkh	Interview	21 Apr 2012
100	Mahbooba Sadat	PC Secretary	Balkh	Interview	22 Apr 2012
101	Yasir Wares	Civil Society Activist and former UNDP official	Balkh	Interview	16 April 2012
102	Ustad Mohseni	The former Head of Civil Society Organisations in Balkh	Balkh	Interview	18 Apr 2012
103	Mr. Ahmadi	Transparency International	Balkh	Meeting	17 Apr 2012
104	Mr. Alipoor	Transparency International	Balkh	Meeting	17 Apr 2012
105	Rajab Ibrahim	Director of Intelligentsia Academia	Balkh	Interview	19 Apr 2012
116	Qazi Sayyed Sane	Regional Director of Afghanistan Independent Human Rights	Balkh	Interview	20 Apr 2012
107	Haji Mahmoodi	PC Member	Balkh	Interview	21 Apr 2012
108	Mr. Amini	Director of Afghanistan Institute of Democracy	Balkh	Interview	20 Apr 2012
<b>2009 Election Fieldwork</b>					

109	Zaki Lali	Dr. Abdullah Campaign Manager in West Kabul	Kabul	Interview	4 Sept 2009
110	Haidar Motahher	Arman Millie News paper	Kabul	Interview	7 Sept 2009
111	Fahima Sadat	Jawzjan female MP	Kabul	Interview	8 Sep 2009
112	Mohammad Mohaqgeq	Leader of Hizb-i-Wahdat Madam	Kabul	Interview	30 Aug 2009
113	Dr. Yasa	Wahdat Party Advisor	Kabul	Interview	28 Aug 2009
114	Sayyed Hadi	Spokesperson for Harakat Party secretary	Kabul	Interview	24 Aug 2009
115	Shukria Barekzai	Kabul Female MP	Kabul	Interview	13 Sept 2009
116	Shinkai Karokheil	Kabul Female MP	Kabul	Interview	12 Sept 2009
117	Mr. Noorzai	Kandahar Independent Human Rights Commissioner	Kabul	Interview	5 Sept 2009
118	Akram Gezabi	Spokesperson for Civil Movement of Afghanistan	Kabul	Interview	7 Sept 2009
119	Najiba Ayubi	Director of Killed Group	Kabul	Interview	14 Sept 2009
120	Wada Farah	Ministry for Women Affairs	Kabul	Interview	22 Aug 2009
121	Ramazan Bashardost	Presidential Candidate	Kabul	Interview	27 Aug 2009
122	Fayzullah Zaki	Junbish Party Deputy	Kabul	Interview	14 Sept 2009
123	Masooma Tawassoli	Deputy to Mr. Pajman, Karzai Kabul campaign manager	Kabul	Interview	2 Sept 2009
124	Reza Jalangir	Office of Administrative Affair, Policy Analyst	Kabul	Interview	23 Sept 2009
125	Zaher Qadir	SRL Opposition Leader	Kabul	Interview	10 Sept 2009
126	Mr. Amini	Cultural Head of Hizb-i-Harakat	Kabul	Interview	6 Sept 2009
127	Dr. Ali Cheraq	Dr. Abdullah Second running Mate	Kabul	Interview	10 Sept 2009
128	Shafi Ayubi	Karte Naw Karzai Manager	Kabul	Interview	5 Aug 2009
129	Dr. Dawood Moradian	Former Director of Strategic Studies	Kabul	Interview	12 Jul 2009
130	Ghulam Mohammad Aylaqi	Deputy Minister for Trade and Commerce	Kabul	Interview	17 Jun 2009
131	Sardar ogli	Faryab MP	Kabul	Interview	13 Sept 2009
132	Mr. Ershat	Former Adviser to President Karzai	Kabul	Interview	10 Oct 2009

#### Focus Group Discussions

1	Students	Kabul University Students	Kabul	FGD	30 Sept 2009
2	Campaign Staff	Karzai Kart-e-Naw Campaign Office	Kabul	FGD	28 Aug 2009
3	Taxi Drivers	Khairkhana	Kabul	FGD	26 Aug 2009
4	NGO staff	Employment and Capacity Building	Kabul	FGD	24 Sept 2009
5	Government Officials	Ministry of Water and Energy	Kabul	FGD	1 Sept 2009





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