

AFGHANISTAN:
AN INADVERTANT CHOICE FOR A UNITARY
STATE?

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Without all of you, I could not have written a thesis that I could be as proud as I am of this one. Thank you for your patience and wisdom.

OBJECTIVES:

The debate of whether Afghanistan should remain a unitary state or become federal has been asked of me many times since the ouster of the Taliban in 2002 from power. I never had any evidence to back up my claims. With this thesis, I hope to finally be able to settle this debate in my own mind so that in the future, when the discussion arises, I can then give logical points to support my stance on which one it should be.

We all have preconceived notions of what direction our country should go and what will be better for its future but hopefully with the conclusion of this thesis, I can be more concrete on my stance.

INTRODUCTION

The mention of the name ‘Afghanistan’ to most people in the world these days instantly brings images of mountains, endless wars, ethnic divide, poverty, fundamentalisms, terrorism, corruption and many more negative definitions. This is in part due to the fact that these descriptive words are a reality on the ground in Afghanistan.

If you were to ask someone to describe the political landscape of the country, they would need a few minutes to think about it because the history, politics, ethnic diversity, and 30 odd years of war, has made the situation so complex, and that it is hard to know where to start.

War has been an imprint on Afghan history from the very beginning of its creation by Ahmad Shah Durani. Through war he consolidated power and brought the warring tribes together, forming the boundaries of what we know as Afghanistan today and ever since then, there has been a struggle between the tribes and the Kings. From then on, there has always been a power struggle between the center and its people, whether it be the tribes, the ethnic leaders, the war lords or the governors, Kings and Presidents have made every effort to try and bring more power to the center.

This struggle is going on until present day and may continue unless a decision is made to decentralize. This is the main idea of this thesis, what are the factors that have kept Afghan leaders in the mind frame that highly centralized power is the only way forward. Once we have understood this factor, then we can see if there is any merit to changing the system to more of a federalist model in order to give more powers to the provinces.

I will concentrate on the example of the Karzai government as my modern centralist government as we have the most information on this government. The power sharing policy on the basis of ethnic divisions by President Karzai is a great example of how formal and informal factors affect the decision making and functioning of government in Afghanistan.

From the choice of President Karzai as the leader in the Bonn Conference to the political appointments, use of the Loya Jirga and the Presidents highly centralized power through both formal and informal methods, as well as the use of other informal conventions, we will try to show how attempts were made to keep some sort of political harmony through this ethnic political power sharing mechanism.

A conversation about Afghanistan always starts and ends with war. Afghanistan's situation is very different than other countries when it comes to formulating a solid plan for its future because nothing is certain in a country that is still at war with different elements within its own society. President Karzai's attempts at trying to divide power amongst the different actors in Afghan politics, while keeping ethnicity in mind, is very commendable, has it worked? Will it keep working in the future? Does a change need to take place for more people to feel included in the system and society as a whole? These are all questions we hope will be answered by the end of this thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

In this chapter, I will try to give the basic information about the thesis. I hope to explain my research question, hypothesis, methodology, theory and literature review. This information is the foundation of my thesis.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Why has Afghanistan stayed so highly centralized when experts have stated that a federalist or a parliamentary system might be a better model?

I would like to specify that my focus is mainly the argument of whether Afghanistan should remain with the current very centralized Presidential system or switch to a more direct representative form such as federalism. I kept the parliamentary form in my research question because almost all of my experts have stated that a parliamentary system might be the way forward for the future of Afghanistan governance. I will not concentrate on the parliamentary form but will mention it as a possible alternative to the Presidential or Federalist forms.

HYPOTHESIS

Even though Afghanistan has always tried to maintain a centralized form of government through formal and informal conventions within the government and society, Afghanistan needs to switch to a more representative form of government, a mix between a federal and a centralized government model.

METHODOLOGY

I used a very qualitative method of research. I was able to use published books, peer reviewed articles and academic papers to get information and proper sources so I have the right foundation for my thesis. Then I was able to interview four different experts, which allowed me to have a more in depth look at the situation that I would have otherwise not been able to through my own research. The experts are as follows:

1. Masood Khalili. Former Special representative of President Rabbani to Pakistan, Ambassador of Afghanistan to India, Turkey and currently to Spain.
2. Whitney Azoy, Anthropologist, diplomat in Afghanistan and Pulitzer Prize nominated scholar for a book he authored called Buzkashi.
3. Tamim Nooristani, former governor of Nooristan Province in North Eastern Afghanistan. He was selected by President Karzai twice.
4. Ahmed Rashid, Author of the books, Taliban and Decent into Chaos.

THEORY

1. Informal Institutions theory

- a. I will show that the use of informal institutions in Afghan politics can help in the giving of representation but also can be an impediment to a merit based government as well as a challenge to political progress.

2. Power Sharing theory

- a. President Karzai has had a policy of power sharing between the ethnic groups to try and maintain a status quo of highly centralized power and some semblance of stability among the ethnicities. This is a positive policy but does it go far enough to give people the amount of representation they want from the government? This is what I will try and answer keeping this theory in mind.

LITERATURE REVIEW

If we take the most ideal image of what a representative government in Afghanistan should be, we would need to look at a theory that helps the different segments of society, the different ethnic groups and the different power holders to have the same amount of decision making and veto rights in the discourse of policy and legislature and this would lead us to the theory of “consociational democracy.”¹ Afghanistan meets the criteria of this theory but it is a utopian idea that it could be possible for an Afghan government to be able to adopt such a theory and put it into practice. For the purpose of this thesis, we are going to take this at the highest level of direct representative governance that could be achieved. Taking that into consideration, we understand the ground realities and through our research, we will try and find if a middle ground is possible.

¹ Wolff, Stephen. Consociationalism, Power Sharing, and Politics at the Center. Page 1, 4.
http://feula.eu/docs/Consociationalism_Power_Sharing_and_Politics_at_the_Center.pdf

Then we come down to what Afghanistan's politics and society is made of, which leads us to the extreme ethnic divide that has fueled civil war and de-stability in the country since 1991. The war against the Soviets that started in 1979, although a war that also included Afghans also fighting other Afghans was not a war that divided but that united the different ethnic groups in their efforts to gain freedom against the Red Army but we will mention more about this later. Since the coming of power of President Karzai in 2002, he has systematically tried to share power, maybe not evenly, but share power to some extent between the different ethnic groups. Power sharing conflict theory is very relevant to current politics as the president used this to not only maintain the status quo but also to give some concession to the different ethnic groups in order to keep them somewhat content. Here we might be more inclined to think of the centripetal mechanism² of power sharing that seems to be more molded towards the Afghan model of politics that we have seen ever since President Karzai's coming to power.

In a very politically unstable, war entrenched and ethnically divided society like in Afghanistan, historically, there have been informal conventions that have been adopted by the people and government in order to have more of a say in the politics of the country. The informal institutions theory that states that these conventions in the institutions of society, can have an increasing effect on events, policies, appointments or even political decisions by the leadership³ and this is almost exactly the situation in Afghanistan's political atmosphere.

The power of the President and of the states is very clear in the Afghan constitution.⁴ In article one; it states that Afghanistan is a unitary state. This in itself means it is a Presidential and centralist in form. It also states in article 60 that the president is the head of state with all

² Wolff, Stephen. Resolving Self-determination Conflicts: The Emerging Practice of Complex Power Sharing <http://www.stefanwolff.com/files/CPS.pdf>

³ helmke, Gretchen. Levitsky, Steven. INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS AND COMPARATIVE POLITICS: A RESEARCH AGENDA. September 2003. <https://www3.nd.edu/~kellogg/publications/workingpapers/WPS/307.pdf>

⁴ The constitution of Afghanistan. Ministry of justice Website. Accessed April 14, 2015 <http://moj.gov.af/en/page/1684>

executive powers. In article 64, it says that the President is also the Chief of the army and has powers to appoint all members of the Judiciary branch, including the Supreme Court judges. All of these powers have historically meant that President Karzai had all the power. No one had more power than the President. The basis of any argument when it comes to understanding the centralized power of the government has always been through the constitution.

Afghans and federalism do not go hand in hand. It is a very new concept and people do not believe in it but there have been some efforts to understand it by some foreign scholars. Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili states that Afghanistan already has informal or defacto federalism in place. Through research of different provincial districts and sub districts, she believes that enough powers have been given to local representatives that it constitutes a defacto federalism and if Afghanistan wanted, it can easily switch to a full-fledged form of federal government.⁵ I personally do not think this is true and an expert, Tamim Nooristani, confirmed that this was not the case in any way. He stated that government officials that have been selected by the President, have no way of making decisions without the consent of the center.⁶ This research might have been rejected by the former governor of Nooristan but it shows that a real conversation on the validity of a federalist form of government is taking place and that is a positive trend.

Another example of this is a paper by Micheal Semple, which writes about power to the provinces. His train of thought is in line with how many other scholars and experts also believe that if the Afghan government wanted, decentralization is definitely possible but because of factors of disintegration, resource management, and maintain the status quo of the power

⁵ Murtazashvili, Brick, Jeniffer. Informal Federalism: Self-Governance and Power Sharing in Afghanistan <http://publius.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2014/02/08/publius.pju004.short>

⁶ Nooristani Tameem. Former governor of the Province of Nooristan. Date of interview: February 16th 2015.

holders, it has not come to fruition yet and may not at all. Not to mention that the war has put even more strain on the notion that decentralization is even possible.⁷

CHAPTER TWO

In any kind of work, may it be an academic work or not, we have to know the background to the subject. In order to understand and analyze what the present situation is and what the future might hold, we have to look back and learn from the history first. In this chapter, I will attempt to give a historical and political summary of the leaders of Afghanistan that influenced the centralization of power and the political situations that have led us to the situation of the Presidency of Hamid Karzai. Hopefully, by the end of this chapter, you will see a logical pattern as to why we are asking the research question and then we can move on to try and answer that question having understood the past.

Now, let us start at the beginning. Throughout the ages, people have fought to try and gain enough power to have their own state, a place they call their own. People were living in Afghanistan and the surrounding areas for Millennia but it was only in 1772, that Ahmed Shah Durani, consolidated power between the warring Afghan tribes and founded Afghanistan. He is considered the father of the country. He was the first person who was able to hold such great amount of power over large portions of the country we know as Afghanistan today. The borders of todays Afghanistan was outlined later on but Afghanistan as one state entity had been established by this young leader. Even with all his power and influence, he had problems. Durani had territory from Eastern parts of the Persian Empire, what is Afghanistan today and the Western portion of the Moghul Empire. With all of these external empires trying to influence his

⁷ Semple, Micheal. Power of the Periphery? The elusive consensus on how to decentralize Afghanistan. July 2012. [file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/TEMP/My%20Documents/Downloads/michael%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/TEMP/My%20Documents/Downloads/michael%20(1).pdf)

empire, Durani not only expanded but consolidated power within his own country, quashing revolts that were popping up.⁸



The Durrani Empire at its greatest geographical extent, circa 1772.

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Then we jump ahead to the reign of King Abdul Rahman Khan from 1880 to 1901. Abdul Rahman Khan is the king that is known for having made the Afghanistan that we know today and the first king to really have a highly centralized and mostly effective system of power. Through sheer brute force, violence and fear, he was able to gain control over his population, especially the tribes that had given so many before him trouble. Through a network of spies, he was able to keep a tight grasp on the politics of the provinces. He even had a very good tax system, which was not supported by the population. Even though he had many different revolts against him, he was able to quash them. He gained his nickname IRON AMIR from his non-relenting and unflinching use of killing, fear and violence to maintain control.¹⁰

⁸ Runion, Meredith L. 2007. *The History of Afghanistan*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2007. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 16, 2015). Page 69. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=224848&site=eds-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_69

⁹ Momand, Wahid. Reign of Ahmad Shah. *Afghan Land*. Accessed December 2nd 2014. <http://www.afghanland.com/history/ahmadshah.html>

¹⁰ Runion, Meredith L. 2007. *The History of Afghanistan*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2007. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 16, 2015). Page 81 - 82. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=224848&site=eds-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_69

Abdul Rahman was not totally independent. He was under the economic and political yoke of the British Empire. He needed their money and they used this as leverage for his different domestic policies and programs. One of which was the signing of the Durand line, which is still contested until this day. This gave a large portion of land to the British, cutting off Afghanistan from the ocean to this day. Even though a very strong patriot, he was coerced to sign this document and Afghans have not forgotten it ever since.¹¹

Abdul Rahman was a Pashtun. He had no intention of power sharing or giving any sort of extra rights to the other ethnic groups. He was a Pashtun. A Pashtun should be in power and will always be in power, so he maintained the Status quo that had always been prevalent in Afghanistan.



King Abdul Rahman Khan's highly centralized state legacy lasted for many Kings after. Doud Khan was the next person to have a strong influence on the centralization of power in

¹¹ The Hollings Center. Durand Line: History, Consequences, Future. November 2007. Accessed April 10th, 2015. https://www.bu.edu/aias/reports/durand_conference.pdf

¹² Afzal, Shemerez, N. The "Durand Line" in the 21st Century. Spearhead Research. June 2014. Accessed December 2nd 2014. http://spearheadresearch.org/SR_CMS/index.php/researchopinions/the-durand-line-in-the-21st-century

Afghanistan. Doud Khan became Afghanistan's first President through a bloodless coup that deposed the last king of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah. Masood Khalili says, "he had highly centralized powers for a President. He was not averse to using violent means to ensure his influence in the provinces. In reality, he was a King without a crown and he used it to show power internally, so that he can be seen as someone that international powers could deal with."¹³

Doud Khan was in power at what might be called the heart of the Cold war. The influence of the Soviet Union was immense as they were actively involved in economic support. Close to 600 million dollars were earmarked to be given to Afghanistan in economic support.¹⁴ Russia was also giving military aid to Afghanistan. Doud Khan was able to get 30 tanks, 90 anti-air guns and much more.¹⁵ At that time, this was a huge amount for a very underdeveloped country like Afghanistan. Not to mention the president understood the geopolitical importance of his country and wanted to play both sides in order to increase the amount of economic support from Russia and America and so, even though Afghanistan was a member of the Non-Aligned movement, he took steps to further detach his government from Russian influence.¹⁶ He used his powers to get close to countries like America, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. He thought that if he had more international actors vying for influence in Afghanistan, he would be able to get more money in the many modernization projects planned for his country. All of the money would also give him the power to keep his many different domestic tribes at bay.¹⁷ The following is a map of the non-aligned countries

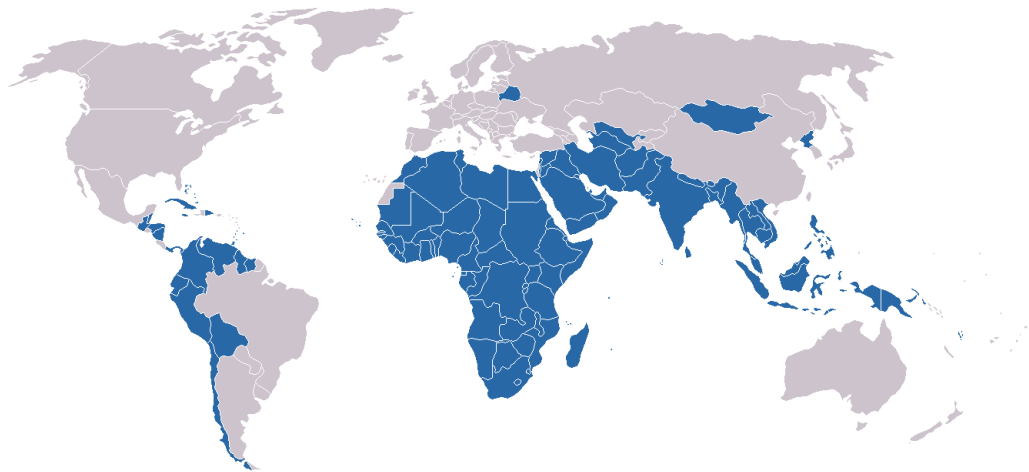
¹³ Masood Khalili. Current Ambassador of Afghanistan to Spain. Former Special representative of the Afghan President to Pakistan. Skype interviews taken over 2 month period. Each interview was at least 45 minutes long.

¹⁴ Saikal, Amin. *Modern History: A history of Struggle and Survival*. IB. Taurus 2002. Page 179. AUCA Library.

¹⁵ Written by Foreign Area Studies of American University. *Afghanistan: A country study*. Page 295. 1986. AUCA Library.

¹⁶ Masood Khalili. Current Ambassador of Afghanistan to Spain. Former Special representative of the Afghan President to Pakistan. Skype interviews taken over 2 month period. Each interview was at least 45 minutes long.

¹⁷ Runion, Meredith L. 2007. *The History of Afghanistan*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2007. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 16, 2015). Page 81 - 82.



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Doud Khan, like Abdul Rahman, used his internal strength to show the world that he had the power to be a major contender in the region. Both America and Russia were so intertwined in the cold war that they were willing to accommodate a leader, even though they clearly understood his double play moves. Doud Khan, even though the first President, maintained and enforced the status quo of the ethnic Pashtoon being the leader. Not much effort was given in power sharing with the less populated and powerful ethnic groups.

In 1979, the situation changed totally with the start of the war against the Soviets. The Afghan government was Communist and they invited the government in Moscow to send troops to give them internal support, lest America gains more influence. This being the height of the cold war, Moscow complied. This was the start of the war. This messed up the status quo to a large extent. There were still Pashtuns in powers in Kabul but the resistance movement that had sprung up was different. There was no hierarchy in terms of ethnicity, everyone was equal. They were all freedom fighters. The Soviets lost that war with casualties 10,700 and another 11,000 injured. On the Afghan side, they had more than 1.5 million freedom fighters and civilian

http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=224848&site=eds-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_69

¹⁸Map of Non-aligned Countries. International relations and cooperation. Department of International relations and cooperation. <http://www.dfa.gov.za/eumultilateral/acpcountrymaps.html>

casualties.¹⁹ The war that ended in 1988 had brought even more poverty to an already poor country. In terms of power, it had destabilized the power of the Pashtun elite. Now, other ethnic groups who had taken part in the war were armed and had power through political influence in their own areas. Even though Afghanistan was still very much divided on ethnic lines, the power center had shifted from Kabul to other parts of the country.

The final main political event in Afghan history is one that has been in the limelight ever since September 11th 2001, when the World trade center and the pentagon were attacked. Over 3000 innocent casualties from all different parts of the world, made the world focus on Afghanistan once again,²⁰ and totally changed the political, social and economic situation in the country.

The Tajiks were the dominant military force at the time. They were the ones that took control of the North and moved on to Kabul, the capital. Once this was accomplished, they helped in securing the rest of the country along with the help of American special forces and the anti-Taliban leadership in the different southern areas. The Bonn agreement that was signed in December 5th 2001. It selected a little known Pashtun, Hamid Karzai as the new leader, who would introduce a new constitution and elections in the near future, keeping in mind that both would have to have the multiple ethnicities in mind.²¹

President Karzai, a Pashtun, would be in power from 2001 until 2014. He would go on to have a policy of inclusion and power sharing with all other ethnic groups to some degree. The Tajiks that were in power were given the top spots in this new government. Hazaras and Uzbeks were also given posts. Even small ethnic groups like the Nooristanis were given some kind of

¹⁹ Runion, Meredith L. 2007. *The History of Afghanistan*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2007. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 16, 2015). Page 110 - 115.
http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=224848&site=eds-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_110

²⁰ 9/11 attacks. History Channel. <http://www.history.com/topics/9-11-attacks>

²¹ Afghanistans Bonn Agreement One year later. Human rights watch. Accessed April 3rd 2015.
<http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/asia/afghanistan/bonn1yr-bck.pdf>

representation. This was the new Afghanistan and although Presidents Karzai's policy of inclusion did not end the war with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, it did add much stability to the country.

The influences of America, NATO, other states was heavy on the government as they all had their own interests to take care of. The interference of the neighbors in the political and security sphere was also a hindrance to progress but all of this was done with the most amount of ethnic power sharing ever witnessed in Afghan history. It is in this light and in this Karzai government that we will concentrate our research and findings and hope that we can learn from the decisions, successes and failures of the government in order to understand the present and be able to give ideas on what we might recommend for the future. We have looked back at the history of central power and the status quo of the Pashtun ethnic group, now we will attempt to look the present and forward.



“Afghans have always been fighting themselves or someone or the other. Kings have asserted their power through violence and financial gains of tribal leaders. It has always been this way. The question you have to ask is until when will they fight this time around? We all hope not too much longer.”²³

²² Welcome to the unconquerable land. December 2009. (accessed December 28th 2014)

²³ Skype interview with Ahmed Rahid, author of Taliban and Decent into Chaos.

CHAPTER THREE

In the first article of the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan, it clearly and boldly states that Afghanistan is a unitary state. That question is solved. The President also has the right to call a referendum, he is the chief of the army, he can suggest laws, and he appoints governors and judges. Through the constitution, he has all the power²⁴. He cannot make laws but he has the right to not sign a bill into law or when to sign an international treaty for however long he likes. This basically gives him the informal right of presidential veto. The president holds all the power and no one in the country doubts this fact.

I would like to define Afghanistan's highly centralized unitary government as the government in which all executive powers lie in the hands of the President and through him, the provincial and sub-provincial actors gain political legitimacy and power.²⁵ Without the consent of the President, it is hard to conduct any politics related to the domestic and external politics of the country.

Afghanistan has formal government laws and rules through the constitution that are followed by all employees of the central government, including the President. There are the three branches of government, the courts, the military and the provincial governments that are run by governors and sub governors. This is the formal aspect of governance.

Informal governance and traditions are also a factor in Afghanistan. I will choose to call these informal conventions. In a deeply divided and culturally deep country, it is these informal

²⁴ The constitution of Afghanistan. Ministry of justice Website. (Accessed April 14, 2015)
<http://moj.gov.af/en/page/1684>

²⁵ Unitary Government. Britannica. November, 2014. Accessed April 10th, 2015.
<http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/615371/unitary-system>

institutions such as the Loya Jirga, the appointment of officials, the running of government that plays a major role in the forming and decision making of the leadership.

In this chapter, I will try and show the formal institutional factors that I believe shape and form the centralized state that is still the normative form in the country. We are going to concentrate on the Hamid Karzai period as it is the most recent and relevant for our conversation.

ETHNICITY FACTOR

In a country, everything starts with the people. I have put this down as a formal factor because it is these people that the Central government has to deal with and it is these people that will vote in the Presidential elections. Afghanistan's population is estimated to be over 27 million. Afghanistan is a highly diverse country with many ethnic groups. The population is divided into

1. Pashtuns at 27%,
2. Hazaras at 9%,
3. Uzbeks at 9%,
4. Aimaq at 4% ,
5. Turkmen 3%,
6. Baluch 2%²⁶
7. Pashai, Nuristani, Brahui, Kizilbash 5%²⁷

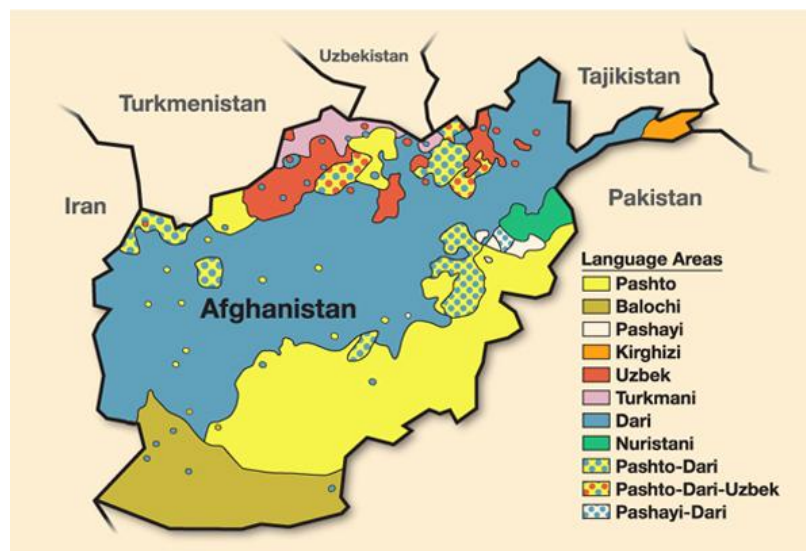
²⁶ Foster, Erin. Afghan Ethnic Groups: A brief Investigation. Civil Military Fusion Center. Accessed March 24th 2015. http://www.operationspaix.net/DATA/DOCUMENT/6393~v~Afghan_Ethnic_Groups_A_Brief_Investigation.pdf

²⁷ Afghanistan Language and Cultural Program. Ethnic Groups. Language acquisition resource center. Accessed March 24th 2015 <https://larc.sdsu.edu/alcp/resources/afghanistan/people/ethnic-groups/>



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In order to show the clear ethnic diversity, it is also important to note the languages that are spoken. Afghan ethnic groups have a common culture which is that they are all from Afghanistan but like any other country; their own ethnic traditions set them apart from other ethnic groups. Another main aspect of this is language. It is important to note that Dari is spoken in most of the southern belt as well.



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²⁸ Afghanistan Ethnic Groups Map. Maps of the world. Accessed April 3rd 2015.
<http://www.mapsofworld.com/afghanistan/afghanistan-ethnic-groups-map.html>

²⁹ Languages: Saar Cultural Portal Afghanistan. Saar Culture. Accessed April 4, 2015.
http://www.saarcculture.org/portal/countries/index.php?option=com_content&layout=blog&view=category&id=172&itemId=&mid=1&lid=af

As you can see that there are many different languages and dialects. You even have the small ethnic populations of Nooristani and Kyrgyz being represented. This shows an even more diverse image of the country than the Ethnic groups map that I have shown before.

CONSTITUTION

The constitution signed into law in 2004 was a constitution that not only gave a wide range of powers to the president but also set the foundation for the law of the land. An elected president is the Executive head and the Commander in Chief of the armed forces. He does not have the power to pass laws but has the power to reject laws passed by the Parliament. The President has the power to appoint everyone from his two vice presidents, Cabinet, supreme court judges, governors, mayors and military personnel. These appointments are one of the main methods of exerting control over the country. If he has the power to appoint, then he also has the power to fire. The upper house is totally appointed by the President giving him some powers over the legislature as well.³⁰ The President has no constitutional restriction on which ethnic group his appointed persons are from.

This constitution in Article four acknowledges the different big and small ethnic groups in the country and in article 6 gives equal rights to all peoples and tribes and commits the government to giving equal development to all the different parts of the country.

The President has taken a very progressive stance on this. For his first presidency, he had a Tajik and a Hazara as his two vice presidents and another Tajik as his defense minister. His Ambassadorial appointments were also very wide ranging in their ethnic scope. In the table below, you can see that already see the influence of a multi-ethnic approach by President Hamid Karzai.

³⁰ The constitution of Afghanistan. Ministry of justice Website. Accessed April 14, 2015
<http://moj.gov.af/en/page/1684>

Table 1. Interim and transitional Afghan authority administrators/ministers

Interim authority position	Name	Ethnicity	Transitional authority position	Name	Ethnicity
<i>Chairman</i>	Hamid Karzai	Pashtun	<i>President</i>	Hamid Karzai	Pashtun
<i>Vice-Chair</i>	Mohammed Fahim	Tajik	<i>Deputy President</i>	Mohammed Fahim	Tajik
<i>Vice-Chair and Women's Affairs Vice-Chair</i>	Dr. Sima Samar	Hazara	<i>Deputy President</i>	Karim Khalili	Hazara
	Haji Mohammed Mohaqqueq	Hazara	<i>Deputy President</i>	Abdul Qadir	Pashtun
<i>Vice-Chair</i>	Ahmed Shakar Karkar	Uzbek			
<i>Vice-Chair</i>	Hedayat Amin Arsala	Pashtun			
			<i>Special Advisor on Security</i>	Yunus Qanooni	Tajik
<i>Defense Minister</i>	Mohammed Fahim	Tajik	<i>Defense Minister</i>	Mohammed Fahim	Tajik
<i>Foreign Minister</i>	Abdullah Abdullah	Tajik	<i>Foreign Minister</i>	Abdullah Abdullah	Tajik
<i>Finance Minister</i>	Hedayat Amin Arsala	Pashtun	<i>Finance Minister</i>	Ashraf Ghani	Pashtun
<i>Interior Minister</i>	Yunus Qanooni	Tajik	<i>Interior Minister</i>	Taj Mohammed Wardak	Pashtun
<i>Planning Minister</i>	Haji Mohammed Mohaqqueq	Hazara	<i>Planning Minister</i>	Haji Mohammed Mohaqqueq	Hazara
<i>Communications Minister</i>	Ing. Abdul Rahim	Tajik	<i>Communications Minister</i>	Masoom Stanakzai	Pashtun
<i>Borders Minister</i>	Amanullah Zadran		<i>Borders Minister</i>	Arif Nurzai	Pashtun*
<i>Refugees Minister</i>	Intayatullah Nazeri	Tajik	<i>Refugees Minister</i>	Intayatullah Nazeri	Tajik
<i>Small Industries Minister</i>	Aref Noozari	Pashtun	<i>Mines Minister</i>	Juma M. Mahammadi	Pashtun
<i>Mines and Industry Minister</i>	Mohammed Alim Razm	Uzbek	<i>Light Industries Minister</i>	Mohammed Alim Razm	Uzbek
<i>Public Health Minister</i>	Dr. Sohaila Siddiqi	Pashtun	<i>Public Health Minister</i>	Dr. Sohaila Siddiqi	Pashtun
<i>Commerce Minister</i>	Sayed Mustafa Kasemi	Shiite Muslim	<i>Commerce Minister</i>	Sayed Mustafa Kasemi	Shiite Muslim
<i>Agriculture Minister</i>	Sayed Hussain Anwari	Hazara	<i>Agriculture Minister</i>	Sayed Hussain Anwari	Hazara
<i>Justice Minister</i>	Abbas Karimi	Uzbek	<i>Justice Minister</i>	Abbas Karimi	Uzbek

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(Table continued)

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The National assembly or parliament of Afghanistan is bicameral as written in the constitution. The lower house or house of the people has 249 elected members. The upper house or house of the elders has 102 selected members. These members are directly selected by the President. The lower house is fully elected, so the President has no say in the ethnic composition as every state has its own fixed number of representatives that can be elected to the lower house. The upper house or the Meshrano Jirga is a different matter with 2/3 being elected and the rest selected by the President.³²

³¹ Thomas Johnson, *Afghanistan's post-Taliban Transition: the state of state-building after war*, Central Asian Survey, 2006. (accessed December 2nd 2014)

³² Katzman, Kenneth. Afghanistan: Post-Taliban governance, Security and US Policy. December 2014. (Accessed April 10th, 2014) <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/234979.pdf>

House of Elders Ethnic diversity Chart:³³

TOTAL SEATS 102
GENDER: MEN WOMEN
76 (75%) 26 (25%)
ETHNICITY:
Pashtun 36 (35%)
Tajik 32 (31%)
Hazara 16 (16%)
Uzbek/Turkmen 8 (8%)
Baluchi 3 (3%)
Nuristani 3 (3%)
Others 4 (3%)

It is through appointees that the President can have a small say in the affairs of the legislature. The appointees are mainly to keep certain segments of society happy, giving certain ethnic groups or people of influence in some areas a place in the legislative body of the country. At the same time, appointing a person means they get power and get a salary and therefore, loyalties towards the president will probably grow with the appointee and within their community.

Appointees are not the only way to for the President to influence the legislative body of the country. President Karzai has been known to delay the signing of a bill indefinitely, extending his formal control over the legislative process in influencing both houses of the

³³ Livingston, Ian. S. Brookings Afghanistan Index. Brookings. January 2014. (accessed February 20th 2015) <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Programs/foreign-policy/afghanistan-index/index20140110.pdf?la=en>

parliament. He delayed the signing of the ‘military cooperation act’ for more than a year.³⁴ It was a political move to garner more power at home with the show of non-compliance with America’s wishes that the pact should be signed and he showed the world that he was a sovereign leader, even with pressure from the international community.

JUDICIARY

The 9 members of the Afghan Supreme court and Chief justice are selected by the President as said in article 117 of the constitution. It goes on to say that the maximum amount of tenure is 10 years. This in itself gives the president all the power he needs in the Judiciary branch. He not only has the right to appoint them but those whose tenure is four or seven years, he will have the capability of choosing new members.³⁵ The President does not have any constitutional imposition as to what ethnic group the people he appoints to the Supreme Court come from. It is totally at his discretion.

In another show of his highly centralized powers over all segments of the government, President Karzai chose to ignore constitutional rules of a chief justice not being able to extend his or her term in office and let chief justice Azimi take office for a second term. This clearly shows that he has the power to go over the constitution, which is supposed to be higher than any citizen of the land.

When it comes to lower provincial or district courts as well, the President has the power to hire and fire judges and in this way, he has even more hold of the judiciary.³⁶

³⁴ Harrison, Emma, G. Karzai delays signing new US-Afghan military pact. The Gaurdian. November, 2013. (accessed April 14th, 2015)
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/22/hamid-karzai-us-afghan-military-agreement>

³⁵ The constitution of Afghanistan. Ministry of justice Website. Accessed April 14, 2015
<http://moj.gov.af/en/page/1684>

³⁶ Jayakodi, Aruni. Separation of powers in Afghanistan, theory and practice. Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit. (accessed April 14th, 2015)
<http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/1509E%20Separation%20of%20Powers%20in%20Afghanistan%20Theory%20and%20Practice.pdf>

The Afghan Judiciary has had its problems of being threatened, of corruption and of not many other problems. Corruption is a big problem in any branch of the Afghan government and the Judiciary is no exception. Main factors that add to the lack of power by judges are low salaries and their lack of being in power for life. Following is a chart of the salary of some of the Judiciary staff.³⁷

CHIEF JUSTICE	1625\$
HIGH COUNSEL MEMBERS	1463\$
SUPREME COURT ADVISORS	1138\$
APPEALS COURT DIRECTORS	1300\$

INFORMAL CONVENTIONS

Informal institutions are the “political behaviors that depart from and even undermine formal institutions.”³⁸ These behaviors, actions, policy decision, appointments and other such occurrences, I will choose to call informal conventions. In Afghanistan it is very common for such practices to take place. They are taken as the way politics is done. It is the unsaid truths of politics. I will endeavor to show that through design or through political necessity, or just the notion that it has always worked in that way, these informal conventions have shaped the political life of Afghanistan and in some ways, lend it’s political stability and instability to it.

³⁷ Livingston, Ian. S. Brookings Afghanistan Index. Brookings. January 2014. (accessed February 20th 2015) <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Programs/foreign-policy/afghanistan-index/index20140110.pdf?la=en>

³⁸ helmke, Gretchen. Levitsky, Steven. INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS AND COMPARATIVE POLITICS: A RESEARCH AGENDA. September 2003. <https://www3.nd.edu/~kellogg/publications/workingpapers/WPS/307.pdf>

LOYA JIRGA

The use of the Loya Jirga has always been an informal tradition of trying to impose the power of the tribes upon the government. An informal but democratic institution, oddly prevalent in a very centralist state, even before democracy had come to the country, the Loya Jirga is an assembly of all the tribal and provincial leaders of the country to settle matters of national importance. It was through the Loya Jirga that Ahmad Shah Durani, the founder of the country came to power. It was also through a Loya Jirga that the constitution was put into place in 2004 and in 2012, it was the Loya Jirga that voted for President Karzai to sign the Defense pact with America.³⁹

The Loya Jirga has now been put in the constitution but only to be convened in times of changing the constitution. The constitutional Loya Jirga can only be called when there is a need for a change in the constitution. So, this informal institution has now become semi-formal. Even so, the president has the right to call any kind of Loya Jirga he wants. For example, when he wanted to know what the people think of him signing the Defense Pact with America. He wanted to gauge the opinions of the people and this is one of the ways that Afghan leaders have included the provincial leaders in some kind of decision making. President Karzai used this as a political tool to gain some more influence in the country and to try to repair his reputation. If the Loya Jirga had said no, he would tell the Americans that he could not do it and then find a way to convince people it was the right move, gaining influence with the West and with his own population. When the Loya Jirga voted that he should sign the Defense pact, he again exerted his power by not signing it for a few more months. This showed that he was the one in charge domestically and internationally.⁴⁰

³⁹ Bezhan, Frud. Loya Jirga, An Afghan Tradition explained. Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty November 2013. (accessed April 2nd 2014)
<http://www.rferl.org/content/afghanistan-loya-jirga-explainer/25174483.html>

⁴⁰ Interview with Masood Khalili. Ambassador of Afghanistan to Spain. Former Special representative to President Rabbani in Pakistan.

EXECUTIVE

President Karzai's use of his presidential powers of appointment, he has used very effectively to not only bring a relative stability to the politics of the country but also to further ethnic representation like it has never been seen before in the country.

In the transitional phase The President's first round in government was very pressured by the Northern Alliance who had the military power that had helped bring him to power, he had a Tajik, a Hazara and a Pashtun as his vice Presidents.

After being elected into office for the first time, his first vice president was Tajik and Second was a Hazara, the third largest ethnic group. His foreign minister and his director of Intelligence was also a Tajik.

In his second round of Presidency, his first choice of vice president was a Tajik and second was a Hazara again. This showed once again, that the President was now using an unsaid political move to gain more power and to bring a bit of stability within the government and that is to go along with Ethnic lines. He did not have to by this time select the two largest ethnic groups to be his vice presidents but he did and continued the notion of power sharing among the less populous of ethnic groups, something earlier Kings or Presidents would never have thought about.

LEGISLATIVE

As mentioned before, the President has the right to appoint members to the house of the elders, which is the upper house of the Afghan Parliament. He also has the power to not sign a bill into law, delaying it until whatever time he sees fit. Not only are these two points enough to influence the law making body of the country in an informal way but also, the president has his supporters whom he might have supported during their election process into the lower house of the National assembly.

President Karzai signed the passing of a law called the ‘shiiite personal status law’, which gives sexual preferences to Shiite men towards their women, not allowing them to say no to their husbands and the law goes as far as to not allow women to leave the home if their husband does not allow. This clearly goes against many articles of the constitution, mainly article 22 that states, “Any kind of discrimination and distinction between citizens of Afghanistan shall be forbidden. The citizens of Afghanistan, man and woman, have equal rights and duties before the law.”⁴¹ It is said that President Kazai pushed this deal through, knowing full well the constitutional implications because he wanted support for his re-election.⁴² Once again, we see the informal political moves by the President, manifest into formal law.

The President of Afghanistan has all the power, maybe not constitutionally, but the informal institutional mindset gives him the leniency to have a free hand at all levels of politics. In the case of appointments, we saw the President use his informal powers to share and divide power between the ethnic groups, using his powers in a positive way. In this instance of the personal status law, we can see that these informal powers can also be used to achieve purely selfish goals, not thinking about the helpless Shiite women that would suffer as a result.

Another informal system that is prevalent, especially in the South, is the informal law system of Pakhtunwali. There are many different local versions that does not have any written forms of the law but are mainly maintained as an oral tradition. Pakhtunwali is a set of laws that shape the customs, traditions, rules and norms of the Pashtun ethnic group. It deals with everything from domestic issues, blood feuds, financial issues and to most other facets of

⁴¹ The constitution of Afghanistan. Ministry of justice Website. Accessed April 14, 2015
<http://moj.gov.af/en/page/1684>

⁴² SCIUTTO, JIM. ROEBER, BRUNO AND SCHIFRIN NICK. Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai Passes Controversial Law Limiting Women's Rights. ABC News. (accessed March 24nd 2015)
<http://abcnews.go.com/International/story?id=8327666>

everyday life.⁴³ This kind of system takes away from the power of the center but it is not something that the center has the power to take away and replace with its own laws. The center does not interfere with such local traditional law systems because it does not have that much power. They have always had their own sub level of law and they always will.

JUDICIARY

As mentioned earlier, the President of Afghanistan selects the Supreme court judges and has a broad mechanism in also selecting lower court judges. This gives him another avenue of centralized power in the country. Not only does he have the right to appoint the judges but since the tenure of the judges can be 4, 7 or 10 years, if the President serves two terms, he can technically appoint many different judges.⁴⁴ This gives him over the sway of the judges because they might want to keep their jobs and in order to do so, you need to keep your boss happy. This is not the case in Western legal systems where judges are given their jobs for life and therefore, they do not are not swayed by the politics of every new person in power.

Another informal factor that is present in Afghanistan is the tribal court system. This is an informal court system that has been present in Afghanistan before the formal legal system put into place in Kabul as a result of various constitutions. The informal court system takes into account traditions and religious laws. There is a close relation between customary law and sharia law in Afghanistan. T. Barfield claims that “In rural areas, however, there is such melding of their tribal law with Islamic religious law that the two are often viewed as inseparable and mutually supportive” (Barfield 2003, p. 4)⁴⁵

⁴³ Afghanistan: Blood feuds, traditional law (pashtunwali) and traditional conflict resolution. Land Info. November 2011. Page 4. (accessed January 28th 2015)
http://landinfo.no/asset/1940/1/1940_1.pdf

⁴⁴ Harrison, Emma, G. Karzai delays signing new US-Afghan military pact. The Gaurdian. November, 2013. (accessed April 14th, 2015)
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/22/hamid-karzai-us-afghan-military-agreement>

⁴⁵ Afghanistan: Blood feuds, traditional law (pashtunwali) and traditional conflict resolution. Land Info. November 2011. Page 3. (accessed January 28th 2015)
http://landinfo.no/asset/1940/1/1940_1.pdf

These courts rule over everything from domestic issues, family feuds, religious and criminal issues. It has been reported that when it comes to domestic issues, the male oriented courts are biased against rulings for women, even when the women are clearly in the right and need the support of the law in order to stop domestic violence, child abuse, rape, etc...⁴⁶ The government does not have the power to influence such courts and allows them to take some responsibility over the administration of their own tribal laws, in effect, giving these informal courts the right to be the judge and the jury.

We can go back to the custom of Pashtunwali in this instance as well. It is considered immoral behavior to commit theft, rape and murder and therefore, it is up to the victim of these crimes to regain their honor by taking revenge. This custom is accepted by the community as something that needs to be done in order to restore ones honor.⁴⁷ The community gives the right of revenge to an individual or family and they are entrusted to take back their own honor by killing the person or group of people that shamed them and took away that honor. It makes the community the judge and the individual the enforcer of that judgment.

Here we can see that although the president has much influence over the civil law in Kabul in relation to the appointment of the chief justice, the supreme court judges and the lower level judges, he does not have control over the tribal courts and informal court practices. The president can implement his civil court laws upon people practicing Pashtunwali but most presidents would refrain from such action because of the tension it would cause between the center and the periphery. In 2007, a senior judge said that over 80% of all murders in Afghanistan were due to blood feuds or personal revenge. This shows the lack of law in the

⁴⁶ Machenzie, Jean. Afghan women trapped in tribal court system. Global Post. March, 2012. (accessed January 28th 2015) <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/afghanistan/120306/afghan-women-trapped-tribal-court-system>

⁴⁷ Afghanistan: Blood feuds, traditional law (pashtunwali) and traditional conflict resolution. Land Info. November 2011. Page 3 - 11. (accessed January 28th 2015) http://landinfo.no/asset/1940/1/1940_1.pdf

country and the lack of power by the center to maintain protection of its citizens from an act that is clearly against the constitution of the country. This is one of the main reasons for president Karzai being called the President of Kabul because outside of the main cities, the influence of the rule of law (from the center) is almost non-existent.

Although the President has power over the appointment of judges and the chief justice, the informal systems even extend to the enemies of the state. The Taliban courts are being more and more favored because of the lack of power due to corruption and ineptitude of the judges in relation to getting a ruling on the issue. Taliban courts resolve issues quickly and it is free of charge. Although most people are against the return of the Taliban, they are still using these courts in order to achieve a resolution. One, the civil courts can't do or won't do or want large sums of money to do.⁴⁸ Again, this takes away from the power of the Center but since the lack of political power in the periphery, the center has no means of checks and balances when it comes to efficiency of its courts.

LOYA JIRGA

“The Jirga is an assembly of village elders and reflects the rituals of the Pashtun traditional assembly in which village and valley notables gather to discuss and resolve disputes and make collective decisions about important social issues.”⁴⁹ The Loya Jirga is the grand assembly that was convened to decide serious national issues.

The Loya Jirga has always been an informal tool of the tribes in order to assert some influence over the government. It has also been a tool of different leaders in order to assert their

⁴⁸ Ahmed, Azam. Taliban Justice Gains Favor as Official Afghan Courts Fail. New York Times. January 2015. (accessed January 10th 2015) <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/01/world/asia/taliban-justice-gains-favor-as-official-afghan-courts-fail.html? r=0>

⁴⁹ Gant, Jim and McCallister, William. Tribal Engagement: The Jirga and the Shura. Small Wars Journal. Page 1. (accessed January 28, 2015) <file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/TEMP/My%20Documents/Downloads/451-gant.pdf>

power through the consent of the people, in a way, making it a very democratic style of governance, giving the people a voice in stately manners. In the past, the first main Loya Jirga was when the tribes selected Ahmed Shah Durani, the founder of Afghanistan, as their leader. Then in more recent years, a Loya Jirga was assembled after the fall of the Taliban that ushered President Karzai into power and more recently, President Karzai himself assembled the Loya Jirga in order to get the people's opinions about whether to sign the defense pact with America or not.⁵⁰

Here there are two issues. One, the Loya Jirga has now taken on a new formal role in the sense that it has been included in the Constitution and given great importance in its role, at least symbolically. Second, we can see the use of his informal power, President Karzai played a political move by assembling the latest Loya Jirga. If the Loya jirga was to say no, he would show America that he had the power to sign the bill anyway, further showcasing his informal and formal political influence. If they said yes to signing the pact, which they did, he would delay the signing and show to the Afghan people his political informal and formal power by not signing the pact until a later time. This would also give him more of a power stance with his international allies who were waiting for the signing.

There are smaller jirgas known as Tribal Jirgas. These are mainly to do with conflict resolution among the different groups within a community. Very informal, also headed by local elders, leaders, military commanders and others, it is another informal means of settling community disputes or conflicts.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Bezhan, Frud. Loya Jirga, An Afghan Tradition explained. Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty November 2013. (accessed April 2nd 2014)
<http://www.rferl.org/content/afghanistan-loya-jirga-explainer/25174483.html>

⁵¹ Wardak, Ali. Jirga - A Traditional Mechanism of Conflict Resolution in Afghanistan. Univeristy of Glamorgan. Page 9 – 13. (accessed February 26 2015)
<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/apcity/unpan017434.pdf>

Even though these Jirgas, may it be the Grand Assembly or the Tribal one, their goals are the same, to settle national or local issues and people depend on them to make the right decision as a community. As we have seen, it can also be another tool used by the President to showcase his power standing within the country. Even though it is supposed to be for the power holders to be divided into the Center and the periphery, the president can use it to for his own political agenda, making it in effect, his own personal political tool.

DIPLOMATIC APPOINTEES

Presidents around the world, appoint their diplomats. This is not something new. President Karzai has used this tool to appoint political appointees, rather than based on merit, it has been what political gains can be had with the appointment of a person as Ambassador to a certain country. Although, some cases are prevalent that young and knowledgeable choices were made such as Janan Mosazai, who was made Ambassador of Afghanistan to Pakistan at a very young age, there have been others who were appointed just to appease a political leader, so his son or family members were selected for diplomatic duty.

This is a very easy tool to make people happy and to gain political support. President Karzai has used this in favor of different ethnic groups. He does not have to appoint people from different ethnic groups as his Ambassadors or diplomats but with the kind of power sharing policy that he has had, whether by necessity or design, his vice presidents would want their people to be given posts in embassies, so the President would have to allow for a few posts to be given to non-Pashtun ethnicities. Of course, he would have to appease his Pashtun brethren and give a large share of posts to the Pashtun leaders and their supporters but this has not been a real problem for President Karzai. This is just another example of the system in place that supports the extreme centralization of power into the hands of the President.⁵²

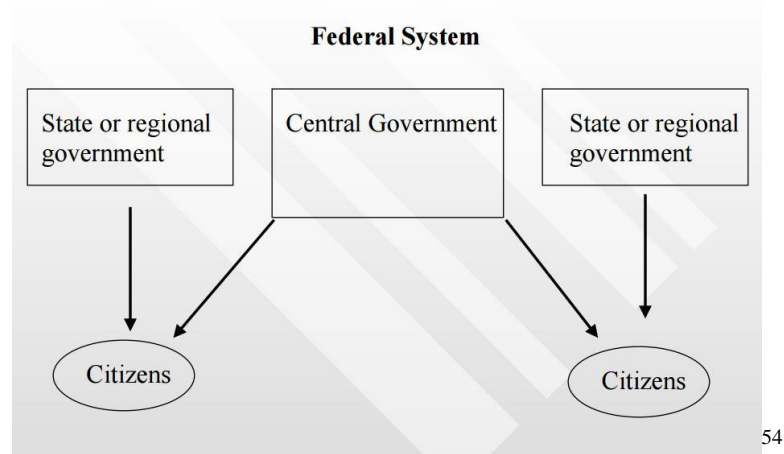
⁵² Interview with Masood Khalili. Current Ambassador of Afghanistan to Spain. Former special representative of President Burhanuddin Rabbani to Pakistan.

CHAPTER FOUR

If there is a highly centralized unitary form of government, with the President having formal powers through the constitution and informal powers through different policy issues and cultural institutions, then there will naturally arise the question of what system might be better to have more direct representation of the people.

After searching the academic journals and books, we quickly understand that experts have not really decided on one unified definition of ‘federalism’ and so, I would like to put forth the following definition as the one that I thought was best suited and best defined in relation to Afghanistan.

Federalism is a system of government characterized by semi-autonomous states in a regime with a common central government; governmental authority is allocated between levels of government (Wheare 1964, Riker 1964, Elazar 1987, Watts 1998). As a system it is complex; it is comprised of multiple interacting governing units, each with its own preferences and decisions to make (Ostrom 1971, 1991). The interaction between these governments produces system-level properties that are not properties of any individual unit on its own (Bednar 2009). Federalism’s complexity is believed to help societies reach particular goals, such as improved defense or a stronger economy, better than the alternatives of unitary governance or an alliance.⁵³



AFGHANISTAN PROVINCIAL STRUCTURE

⁵³ Bednar, Jenna. The political science of Federalism. University of Michigan. Page one. May 2011. (accessed April 10, 2015) <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jbednar/WIP/annrev.pdf>

⁵⁴ Scott, Patrick. Federalism. Saylor.org. Page 4. (accessed April 3rd 2014) <http://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/POLSC2311.3.pdf>

In Afghanistan, the Provincial governors and the District governors are appointed by directly by the President, another constitutional right given to the president. This one was especially given in order for the President to have a large amount of control over these appointees and in effect, have control over what policies and development projects they may have in the area over which they preside.

Table 2.1
Afghan Subnational Government as Mandated by the 2004 Constitution

Level	Type of Government			
Provincial level	Provincial governor (appointed)	Provincial council (elected)	Line ministries (appointed)	Provincial-level courts and prosecutors (appointed)
District level	District governor (appointed)	District council (elected)	Line ministries (appointed)	District courts and prosecutors (appointed)
Municipalities	Mayors (elected by voters)	Municipal council (elected)	Line ministries (appointed)	
Villages	None	Village council (elected)		

SOURCE: World Bank, 2007, p. x.

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For any federalism to take place, these officials would have to be elected. The mayors and village councils are elected in some form but they hold no real power. The governor has the most power in the province and even he or she is restrained by the President will on how much funding to give and how much free reign to give the governor.⁵⁶

“If Karzai would allow for the governors to be elected, then that would already mean that he would have no power. Once the people are electing their officials, there is no reason for those officials to pay attention to the President because they have the vote of the people, making them legitimate in the eyes of the law and in the eyes of the people that voted them in. If Karzai and the West want a strong central government, then of course, they would not want to move towards any kind of federalism.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Shurkin, Micheal. Subnational Government in Afghanistan. Rand, National Defense Institute. 2011. (accessed April 15, 2015) http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/occasional_papers/2011/RAND_OP318.pdf

⁵⁶ Interview with Tameem Nooristani, former governor of the Nooristan province, twice, under the Karzai government. Interview taken January 11th 2015.

⁵⁷ Interview with Masood Khalili. Current Ambassador of Afghanistan to Spain. Former Special representative of President Burhanuddin Rabbani to Pakistan.

“For any effective provincial system to work, we need to have the right to be elected by the people. It is only then that we will have the legitimacy and the power to really make a positive change in our communities. If I don’t have the power to fire ineffective government personnel, then how am I supposed to run an efficient province? I cant. If all the power stays with the President, then it is impossible for us to remain proactive in the projects and reforms we need to bring in our provinces so that the common people see some benefits.”⁵⁸

In a paper written by Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili, she argues that customary organizations at a grass roots level in villages show that federalism is possible because they were able to have some kind of small-scale public goods, building projects and resolving conflicts without the help of the state or aid projects.⁵⁹ I asked Tameem Nooristani, the former governor of the very volatile, ethnically diverse and politically active province of Nooristan what he thought about Murtazashvili’s argument and he told me that in no way, shape or form is that true. The projects at that level are so small, that in the larger scheme of the whole province, it doesn’t bear any importance because it does not reach the majority of people but he did agree with her that if a federalist form of government were introduced, the current institutional structure would very easily adopt to the new system.

⁵⁸ Interview with Tameem Nooristani, former governor of the Nooristan province, twice, under the Karzai government. Interview taken January 11th 2015.

⁵⁹ Murtazashvili, Brick, Jeniffer. Informal Federalism: Self-Governance and Power Sharing in Afghanistan page 339. (accessed February 18th 2015)
<http://publius.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2014/02/08/publius.pju004.short>

Table 1 Political representation in Afghanistan

Level	Number of units	Formal political representative
Province	34	Executive authority: Provincial governor Legislative authority: Provincial council
District	~400	Executive authority: District governor Legislative authority: District council
Village	20,000–40,000	Executive authority: None specified in constitution or existing legislation Legislative authority: Village council

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With 34 provinces, 400 districts and somewhere between 20,000 to 40,000 villages, I think it is safe to say that it is a very hard task for only village councils and grass roots community organizations might not be able to start development programs that would be beneficial to most of the population within the society.

DISINTEGRATION or NOT?

“Many who know the ground reality in Afghanistan would agree that federalism is not only unnecessary under the circumstances, but it also would serve as a recipe for deeper divisions among diverse ethnic groups in Afghanistan and would lead to a subsequent disintegration of the country.”⁶¹

This is the sentiment by many Afghan experts that if Afghanistan were to switch to a federalist system, the deep ethnic divide, the ethnic connection with neighbors and the dissatisfaction of the common Afghan, would definitely lead to the secession of the province from the Union, ultimately joining the neighbor who they have such close ethnic and territorial

⁶⁰ Murtazashvili, Brick, Jeniffer. Informal Federalism: Self-Governance and Power Sharing in Afghanistan page 328. (accessed February 18th 2015) <http://publius.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2014/02/08/publius.pju004.short>

⁶¹ ZAKHILWAL, OMAR. Federalism in Afghanistan: A recipe for disintegration. October 2001. (accessed January 24th 2015) <http://www.forumfed.org/libdocs/Federations/V1afgh-af-Zakhilwal.pdf>

ties with. “Afghans have always been at war and the Afghan tribes have always had a hard time with the center. Afghans have always had the problems they face today at some point in their history and still their union has stood the test of time. I do not think that even if a federalist system were introduced that Afghan governors would suddenly start calling for secession from the union.”⁶² Tameem Nooristani feels the same and says, “this is all just a Pashtunist fear mongering attitude. The Afghan people are highly patriotic and so are the governors. No one will want to leave Afghanistan to join another country.”⁶³ “It might be true that Afghans would never want to secede but we have never been in that situation as a country before where our governors have all the powers, which you would have in a federalist system. We have no idea of what would happen. All of this is just our guessing. Maybe no one would want to secede but what if one province was not happy with the state of affairs in the country and goes towards Pakistan, then another to Iran and another to Uzbekistan?”⁶⁴

These are all very good arguments and arguments that will continue to take place in a country where the people are not happy with the central government. People do not see any substantial help or improvement in their lives and so, when this is the case, people look for alternatives. Since centralized power has not helped them, then why not federalism or another form?

In a country with so much warlordism, uneducated, bad economic and social conditions and not to mention the ongoing war, federalism is not seen as the answer to all these woes but maybe the start of many more problems.⁶⁵

⁶² Interview with Ahmed Rahid, Pakistani author of *Taliban and Descent into chaos*.

⁶³ Interview with Tameem Nooristani, former governor of the Nooristan province, twice, under the Karzai government. Interview taken January 11th 2015.

⁶⁴ Interview with Masood Khalili. Current Ambassador of Afghanistan to Spain. Former Special representative of President Burhanuddin Rabbani to Pakistan.

⁶⁵ ZAKHILWAL, OMAR. *Federalism in Afghanistan: A recipe for disintegration*. October 2001. (accessed January 24th 2015) <http://www.forumfed.org/libdocs/Federations/V1afgh-af-Zakhilwal.pdf>

ETHICITY AS A FACTOR



The Map of Afghanistans ethnic diversity shows just how politically and socially complex the situation of Afghanistan is, not to mention the war which adds many more dimensions to this picture. If you think of the Afghan population as one of the poorest and one of the most corrupt in the world, you can see why people would have a problem with the central government, which has had billions of dollars flow through it. If the common people do not see any incentives from the central government, then they are going to start to look for alternatives.

As I have shown in my section about disintegration, ethnicity can be seen as a negative aspect of the notion of federalism in Afghanistan, that because of ethnic diversity, and ethnic ties with neighbors, governors could want to secede from the state.

At the same time, ethnicity could favor the change to a federal system. Because of ethnic diversity, a federal system would work because people would be content that they are being

⁶⁶ Afghanistan Ethnic Groups Map. Maps of the world. Accessed April 3rd 2015.
<http://www.mapsofworld.com/afghanistan/afghanistan-ethnic-groups-map.html>

directly represented by the people they elected. The elected officials would be weary of not doing the best job because the population could choose to elect someone else.⁶⁷

LEGISLATURE AND ECONOMICS OF FEDERALISM

Once again, the economically poor situation of the provinces and the people living in them are factors in the discussion of unitary or federal. The people are already unhappy with the way the central government has handled the economy. They have seen no economic gains from the center. If a federal system were to be adapted, then each province would be in charge of whatever resources they have within their own borders. If the provincial government did not have any resources, then it would depend on the central government again.

Some provinces such as Badakhshan, where the Kyrgyz live, no crops can grow, while other states are highly agriculturally dependent, while others have large reservoirs of gold, precious stones and others in the west even have crude oil deposits but if it was in a federalist system, then the province would get a major share of the profits and the central government would only be eligible to the tax revenues. The people in the less resource laden provinces would not be eligible to anything that their resource rich neighboring province might have. This would in turn cause more ethnic divide and more ethnic tension.⁶⁸

Not only are the economics of the system important but the legislature would also be in the hands of the states. In a highly uneducated, conservative and male oriented country, what is to stop a state from passing laws that go against the constitution? I mentioned the case of the Shiite family law that was passed by the parliament and signed by the President and that was in

⁶⁷ Interview with Masood Khalili. Current Ambassador of Afghanistan to Spain. Former Special representative of President Burhanuddin Rabbani to Pakistan.

⁶⁸ Roashan G. Rauf. Pros and Cons of Federalism in Afghanistan. Institute for Afghan Studies. Page 6. (accessed January 27th 2015) <http://institute-for-afghan-studies.roashan.com/AFGHAN%20CONFLICT/Analysis/Pros%20and%20Cons%20of%20Federalism%20in%20Afghanistan.pdf>

the capital of the country. There can be an argument made that if states pass laws that are unconstitutional, and then the central government can step in and fix the problem. The government would take it to the court system and that would take years to debate. Take for example the abortion issue in America or the gay marriage rights.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

As I have shown above, Hamid Karzai has tried to maintain a relative stability in relation to his government and national security through appointing of a variety of powerful leaders through their ethnic backgrounds. His appointment of Vice presidents is a clear indication of his efforts to include other ethnicities in the power sharing of the country in order to maintain his own power and giving power to smaller ethnic groups to further the legitimacy of his government. For example, Rashid Dostum (Uzbek) and Mohamed Fahim one of the most powerful men in the country (Tajik) being given top posts of Vice President, not only because they were leaders of their respective ethnic groups but a second factor was that they were both warlords, having their own standing militias.

Even though Karzai had tried to sideline warlords, in the end, he had a change of mind and decided that he needs to work with them. In 2004, he made a clear effort to give militia leaders or warlords a place in civil administration. One was Atta Mohamad, who President Karzai made the governor of Balkh. Atta was and is one of the most powerful men in the country. Even until today, maintains leadership of his militia and is one of the strongest and independent governors in the country. There are only 3 or 4 other governors that might have the same power as Atta does.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Ghafoor, Hamida. Karzai Shifts 3 Militia Leaders to Civilian Posts. July 2004. (accessed March 27th 2015) <http://articles.latimes.com/2004/jul/21/world/fg-afghans21>

By chance, design, or simply being forced to give support to get support from the power holders of the country whatever their ethnicity maybe, President Hamid Karzai was thinking that this would not only give him some sort of political stability but also he could rely on these powerful warlords to maintain security in their own places of influence. This plan worked to some extent but the President could not command complete allegiance through these appointments and these power holders were not responsible enough to improve on security in their areas, so, the Taliban were able to find some better foot hold in the North and South of the Country.

Hamid Karzai not only had these and many more domestic power holders to contend with but also the influence of Afghanistan's neighbors on its internal politics. Afghanistans four corners are bordering countries who have always tried to interfere in the internal politics of the country to further their own interests. He had to contend with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the North, Pakistan to the South and East, and finally Iran to the West. All these countries tried to impose their own policies in Afghanistan by supporting certain warlords, opposition groups like the Taliban or even politicians in financial ways.

By trying to settle conflict issues within ethnic groups through formal and informal means did have some positive effects. The Presidents appointments into civil posts of the War Lords and people with power, President Karzai was not only thinking of his own power but also the amount of stability that would be brought to the country if the leaders of the different ethnic groups and the warlords in those areas were kept relatively happy. This is how politics in Afghanistan always happened. Through financial means, you gain the support of the leaders of the areas, provinces and ethnic groups in order to be given some space to govern without open resistance against your government.⁷⁰ It was his opinion that these power holders would not

⁷⁰ Interview with Masood Khalili. Current Ambassador of Afghanistan to Spain. Former Special representative of President Burhanuddin Rabbani to Pakistan.

only take care of security threats within their own territories but also prevent any interference by the neighboring countries.

CHAPTER FIVE

Why make a change? This question is very relevant to the discussion in the sense that just because a system isn't perfect, it does not need change. Corruption, irresponsible spending by the government, improper use of power, ethnic tensions, these are all aspects of society that can be seen in almost every country to some degree but not everyone calls for a total change of government. So, why would an Afghan feel the need for a change from this highly centralized presidential system?

Afghanistan has been one of the poorest countries in the world and in 2013 was 174th out of 184 countries in relation to its economic status.⁷¹ That being said, with the military intervention of America and the world in Afghanistan in 2002, billions of dollars of military and development aid has been given to Afghanistan. Up to 2008, 15 billion dollars of only development aid was given and 127 billion dollars in military support.⁷² Just from 2010 to 2014, you can see that over 25 billion dollars of only development aid was given to the country.⁷³

In all sphere of life, Afghans are connected to media in one way or another and know the amounts of aid given to the country are astronomical, at least in their minds. In 2013, the World Bank published a list of countries by GDP an Afghanistan landed 107 out of 177 countries.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Pasquali, Valentina. The worlds richest and poorest countries. Global finance Mag. June 2013. (accessed April 10th 2015)

<https://www.gfmag.com/global-data/economic-data/worlds-richest-and-poorest-countries>

⁷² Waldman, Matt. Aid effectiveness in Afghanistan. Oxfam. March 2008. (accessed April 10th 2015)

https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/ACBAR_aid_effectiveness_paper_0803.pdf

⁷³ Net official development assistance and official aid received. World Bank. (accessed April 10th 2014)

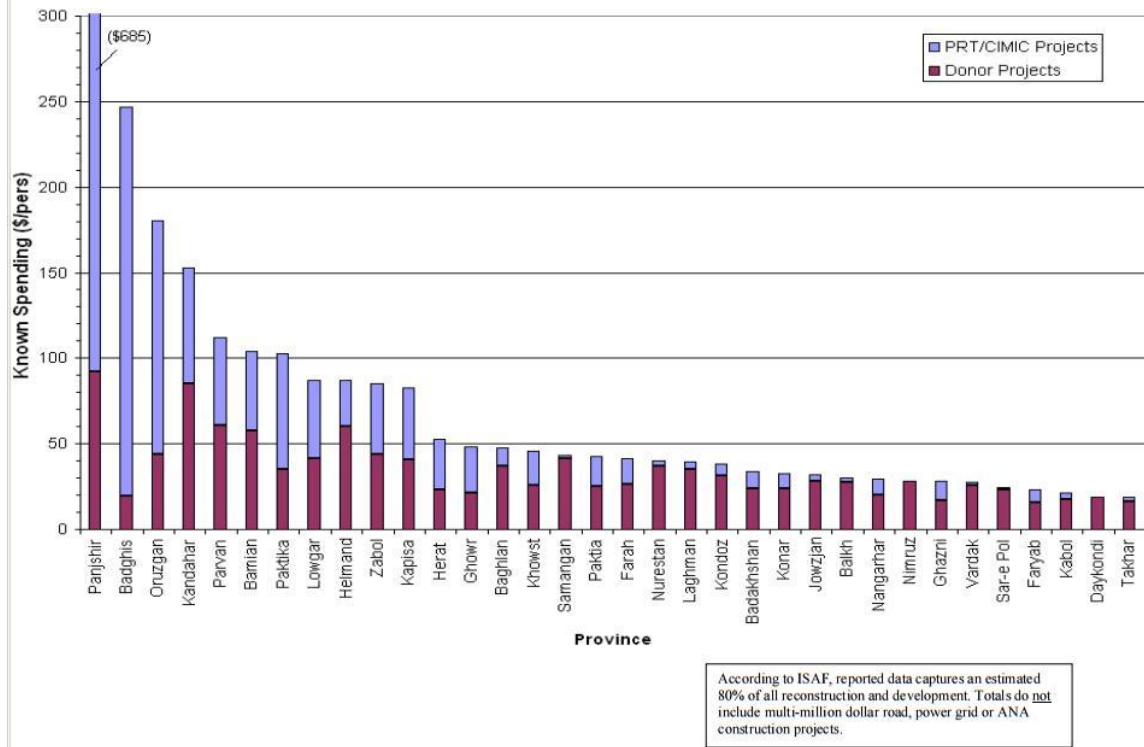
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ALLD.CD>

⁷⁴ Gross Domestic Product 2013. World Bank. Accessed (April 10th 2014)

<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/GDP.pdf>

Figure 4 Completed, ongoing, planned and funded PRT spending per capita, per province

Source: ISAF, May 2007



The people who have not seen much economic change in their lives even with all of this international aid, they feel like they are being left behind. Due to massive scales of corruption, inadequate government policy, high wages of foreign nationals and expatriates, inefficiency of foreign and local contractors, and no checks balances, all of this money has not reached the common Afghan in a sustainable manner.⁷⁵ Afghanistan being ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world, year after year does not help people being content with their government and their own poor economic situations. In 2014, Afghanistan was ranked 172nd of 175 countries in relation to its corruption.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Waldman, Matt. Aid effectiveness in Afghanistan. Oxfam. March 2008. (accessed April 10th 2015) https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/ACBAR_aid_effectiveness_paper_0803.pdf

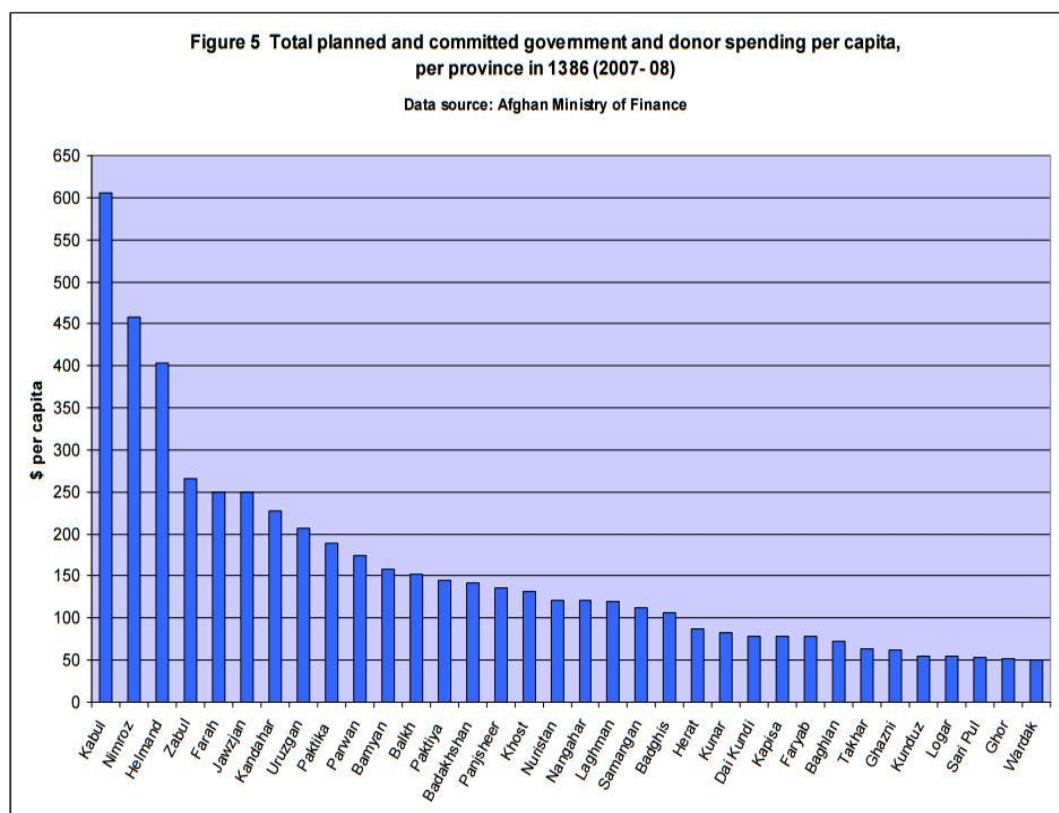
⁷⁶ Corruption Index. Corruption by Country. Transparency international. (accessed April 12th 2015) <https://www.transparency.org/country/#AFG>



Afghans feel that the people in power in Kabul do not have a vested interest in making policy and funding available to their provinces in order for them to see some real development. They see that people in power in Kabul are busy filling their own pockets to be concerned with them. This fuels resentment. When it comes to governors, most governors do not have the funding or permission from the center to carry on development projects that are needed in their own communities. Only a handful of powerful warlords who are also governors, have that power because the central government cannot touch them and this is why there is also a vast disparity between different provinces when it comes to aid distribution. ⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Foden Glen. Political Cartoons. Townhall. (accessed March 2 2014)
<http://townhall.com/political-cartoons/glennfoden/2012/02/27/96811>

⁷⁸ Interview with Tameem Nooristani, Former governor of the Nooristan Province.



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“The government needs to be just and only then, the people will be content. If the government is not just, then the people will get fed up and want to change that government,” said Masood Khalili, the current Ambassador of Afghanistan to Spain in relation to why people want a change and do not feel properly represented. He went on to say, “you are hungry and see that only some people are getting food meant to feed everyone, would you not want a change? Same applies to the Afghan people. They do not want everything but at least something. Sadly, the government has not been able to provide a balanced distribution of aid.”⁸⁰

PARLAMENTARY SYSTEM

Until now, we have talked about variations of the Presidential system and how much decentralization, if any, would be good for Afghanistan. A presidential system can be defined by

⁷⁹ Waldman, Matt. Aid effectiveness in Afghanistan. Oxfam. March 2008. (accessed April 10th 2015) https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/ACBAR_aid_effectiveness_paper_0803.pdf

⁸⁰ Interview with Masood Khalili. Current Ambassador of Afghanistan to Spain. Former Special representative of President Burhanuddin Rabbani to Pakistan.

two major characteristics, an elected President is the head of the executive and has some limited legislative powers, though the Executive and Legislative branches are two separate entities.⁸¹ As we have seen in the case of Afghanistan, a highly centralized presidential system, the President has influence over all branches of government and this is exactly why the question of an alternative system where one person doesn't have all the power has been discussed in different forums.

Most experts believe that Afghanistan will most likely move towards a parliamentary system rather than a federal. A parliamentary system can be defined also be defined by two characteristics. The executive as well as the cabinet are elected by the legislative and can be taken from power by a no confidence vote.⁸² This would need a total reworking of the constitution and a reorganization of the politics of the country.

President Karzai and his Western backers, especially America were not in support of shifting to a parliamentary system as they thought it would give less power to the leader and therefore there may be a standstill in political decision making when it comes to National security or other political situation that may arise. A strong center, headed by a Pashtun President was the means which would bring more stability and long lasting peace to the country. Hamid Karzai had to share power with the people in power because he did not have any at the start of his presidency, so he had to deal with the likes of the Northern Alliance (Tajik by Ethnicity), making Mohamad Qasim Fahim his defence minister and vice President as well as Qanooni as Interior minister and Abdullah Abdullah as his foreign minister. Of course, he also gave posts to his own Pashtun backers.

The issue here was that power did lie in the center with the President but with a number of different actors in all the different ethnic groups, not just the historically powerful Pashtuns.

⁸¹ Shugart ,S.Matthew. Review Article Semi-Presidential Systems: Dual Executive And Mixed Authority Patterns. Palgrave Journals. December 2015. <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/fp/journal/v3/n3/full/8200087a.html>

⁸² Shugart ,S.Matthew. Review Article Semi-Presidential Systems: Dual Executive And Mixed Authority Patterns. Palgrave Journals. December 2015. <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/fp/journal/v3/n3/full/8200087a.html>

Present and the West thought a that there would be too much political gridlock when it came to having a party based parliamentary system and chose rather to adopt a highly centralized presidential system, maintain the power status quo that has existed in Afghanistan since its foundation.⁸³

“A less centralized system might be better for the Afghans. I feel that eventually Afghanistan will shift to a parliamentary system but is this the right time? I do not know,” said Ahmed Rashid the world famous world author in a Skype interview. “Supporters of a Presidential form will never support the change to a Parliamentary system because it will take away from their own power base,” said Whitney Azoy, author of the book titled Buzkashi. “Whatever the system, in order for the provinces to be involved in security or economic improvements, we need direct election of provincial representatives as well as elected representation in Kabul,” said Tameem Nooristani, a former governor of the Province of Nooristan. “In the end, it is up to Afghans to decide when they will want to shift towards a parliamentary form of government. It is not if they will shift but when they decide. With the inert Afghan mistrust of governments in Kabul, a more representative form will eventually take place if relative stability is maintained,” said, Masood Khalili, current Ambassador of Afghanistan to Spain.⁸⁴

CONCLUSION

Kings and Presidents have tried to maintain a very strong hold of the country’s internal politics, mainly by the use of violence and gaining influence through giving money to the Tribal leaders in the Provinces. From Ahmad Shah Durani to Abdul Rahman to President Karzai, they have tried to increase their hold on power through a dictatorial hand on the politics of the land.

⁸³ Taken from interview with Whitney Azoy. Former US Diplomat, anthropologist and author of book called ‘Buzkashi’. Three paragraphs in total summarized.

⁸⁴ Skype interviews taken from four experts, all of whom have been mentioned in above references.

This is what America also thought when bringing Hamid Karzai came to power that only a highly centralized presidential system can bring any sort of peace and stability to the country. So, with the signing of the new constitution in 2004, President Karzai was giving sweeping powers through all the different branches of government. This was seen as being very normal in Afghan society as it has always been done this way. The President should have power.

President Karzai had the rights to pick his own cabinet, selection of a certain amount of the upper house of the Afghan parliament, selection of Judges as well as the chief judge, selection of governors, as well as selection into the different ranks of the army. These are all powers given to him in the constitution. The President has used some of his powers to increase posts in the government of ethnic minorities and given power to warlords in order to bring more stability.

No time in Afghan history has so many powers and opportunities been given to ethnic minorities in Afghanistan. This was in part due to the fact that the Tajiks and Uzbek minorities gained so much military power through the Holy war with the Soviets, so President Karzai was forced to share power with other ethnic groups. In fact, this policy worked for him to a large extent because he was able to gain more power, through the posts he gave to these ethnic minority leaders. The division in the Tajik Northern Alliance, the most powerful group in the country during the time just before and after the Bonn conference, was mainly in part due to the political rift that was put in place by Hamid Karzai's appointments into different posts.⁸⁵

Over the years, people have seen an increase of violence by terrorist groups, an increase in corruption, an increase in the wealth of the politicians and leaders but very little change to their own lives in relation to the economy and security. In the end of the day, Afghans want to be governed people that they believe have their interests in mind and if they see that too much corruption is taking place, it is natural for them to want a change", said Whitney Azoy, author of

⁸⁵ Interview with Whitney Azoy, Pulitzer Prize nominated scholar and Author of the book, Buzkashi.

the book called Buzkashi. The government is seen to put money into their own pockets, take all the power from its appointed representatives, and not care about the lives of the Afghan they govern. This is not the way government should work. We respect our leaders but they should also do something to improve the lives of the people in the provinces, not just the cities,” said Tameem Nooristani, a former governor of the Nooristan Province.

People feel under-represented, the governors and appointed representatives feel they need more powers given to them in order for them to be more productive to the people in their provinces, and even people in power in Kabul, feel the President needs less power given to him so that more influence can be made to bad policy. Corruption is a major part of the concern on people’s minds. This is when people think of alternatives and one of the major points of discussion has been to decentralize the powers of the president.

I believe that I have shown that the informal conventions of the President have been good in the sense that he has shared power with other ethnic groups but this has also served to increase the power of the president himself and to further centralize the powers of the President. Informal conventions do not always help in choosing the best person for the job but maybe someone that will keep the status quo going. This kind of politics was needed in Afghanistan in the first few years of the Afghanistan presidency but people start to grow weary of only a small group of people, spreading the political posts amongst themselves. These political posts have translated into more corruption and less security which does not help in keeping the population of a country content with its leadership.

Inadvertent or by design, the current political situation in the country is that the President has sweeping powers throughout all branches of government. The power shift of smaller ethnic groups other than the Pashtun, forced the President to make sweeping changes in the way these smaller ethnic groups were represented and gave their leaders the highest posts in his government in order to bring about more political stability, which it did in some ways but it did

in some ways. The system in Afghanistan is still highly centralized but through power sharing with other ethnic groups, the political landscape has changed and some of these groups now want more responsibly and powers given to them by decentralizing the powers of the President, changing the status quo of the political life of the country even more.

Through my research, I have concluded that my hypothesis was right in more ways than I had expected. I stated that even though Afghanistan has always tried to maintain a centralized form of government through formal and informal conventions within the government and society, Afghanistan needs to switch to a more representative form of government, a mix between a federal and a centralized government model. The experts that I interviewed, all agreed with the fact that Afghanistan needs to change to a more representative form of government but none of them were for a purely federalist form in any way. Every single expert thought that some sort of decentralization of power is needed and leaned more towards a parliamentary form, rather than a mix of federalist and presidential.

Will a change of government make the people happy? Probably not but it might make them more content in the system because all power does not lie in the hands of just the President and a handful of other political or military leaders. What form of government should the country switch towards? Through my research, I think the best form would be a parliamentary form with provincial representatives being elected as well, instead of being appointed by the head of the executive.

Will Afghanistan switch forms of government to a decentralized one? Yes, eventually but nothing happens fast in Afghanistan, so we will probably see a slow and self-imposed decentralization by the leaders in order to make people more satisfied. As a matter of chance, this has already happened with the new Unity government of Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, where the powers of the executive are shared between these two individuals. In the future, further decentralization will probably happen with provincial leaders also being given

more powers to govern and not be micromanaged from the center. This way, less of the responsibility will fall on the leadership in Kabul and will allow for the presidential system to not take all the blame, as it is doing now. This would translate into the status quo of the presidential system being maintained for a longer periods of time.

Afghanistan is a complex land with many problems related to domestic and external security concerns, large amounts of poverty and illiteracy and a very conservative and diversely ethnic society to add to the mix. These matters are talked about in many circles of the country but the leaders of these ethnic groups do not always see eye to eye and do not always do what is best for their constituencies. So when the topic of changing forms of government arises in the legislature of the country, a powerful leader in Kabul can sway them with promises of power and money, delaying matters for many more years. Since the status quo is something all Afghans know, there is also apprehension about what would happen if the new system does not work. This will make the leaders want to keep as much power as possible and any other system as the one way have now, will reduce the power of the chief executive and no Afghan leader will want that to happen because one day, they might be sitting on the top spot.

Afghans are becoming more and more aware of their rights and the lack of good governance being a major part of why their lives are not changing for the better even with such large amounts of aid being pumped into the country. They feel that corruption is filling the pockets of a small percentage of people in power and the trickle down is too low. They want a change and the decentralization of power might give them more chance of having proper representation that has their interests in mind.

I would like to end my thesis with a quote from my father because whenever I think of the current situation never ending, I remember his words. "Nothing ever stays the same or we would still be at war with the Macedonians, Mongols and the Moghuls. Even this situation will change but what it will change to, no one knows."

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