The Afghan government's relationship with the Pashtun community and its effect on stability; a comparative approach

Alfred Jasins

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The American University in Cairo

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

The Afghan Government’s Relationship with the Pashtun Community and its effect on Stability; a Comparative Approach

A Thesis Submitted to
The Department of Political Science
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts

By
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Under the supervision of Dr. Ivekovic

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Research Topic

Afghanistan today is a continuation of nearly four decades of uninterrupted conflict and instability. The turmoil in the country has been exacerbated by international interference and influence, and by complexities of the Pashtun tribal society as well as multi ethnic, linguistic, and religious dimensions. In the past decade the country has become the focus of American intervention and its ‘war on terror’ against Islamist extremism. As the American 2014 military withdrawal looms, the Karzai government and its international backers have yet to create an atmosphere of stability and peace, which the country so desperately needs. The insurgents refuse to accept the legitimacy of the Karzai government and continue to garner support among various Pashtun tribal and religious communities (which make up roughly 40% of the population). Prior to the decades of turmoil, these same Pashtun communities were the backbone of government support. This era, known as the Musahiban dynasty (1929-1963), was an era of peace and stability, a rarity in modern Afghan history. The focus of this analysis is centered on this era and the current Karzai government.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze how the Afghan government’s relationship with the Pashtun communities affects the group’s acquiescence and support, thereby creating a less belligerent and more stable environment. The emphasis on the Pashtun communities is especially relevant due to their historical role as king maker, as well as the leadership’s primary threat of delegitimization and conflict. To fully understand how the current Karzai government’s relationship with the Pashtun communities has failed to create conditions amenable to stability and has generally fostered an environment of discord and conflict, this analysis will utilize a
comparative approach. The comparison under question will examine the central government’s relationship with the Pashtun communities during a period of stability and strong government – tribal relations, that of the Musahiban monarchy (1929 – 1963). The examination of this period will provide distinctions in the relationship under analysis, in an effort to draw attention to aspects of the current relationship under Karzai (and his US backers) that hinder stability and support continued conflict and turmoil. The most obvious difference between the two eras is the existence of foreign occupation, specifically the United States and to a lesser extent other NATO countries. Historically Pashtuns have summarily rejected foreign occupiers, evident in the three Anglo Afghan wars in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the Soviet intervention in the 1980s; both wars witnessed massive bloodshed that again has reemerged today. Although the rejection of foreign occupiers plays a primary role in why Pashtuns have joined the insurgency, this analysis will examine the specific policies and actions by Karzai and his US benefactors that have pushed Pashtuns to reject the central government.

A comparison between the Karzai government and the Musahiban monarchy holds particular relevance as it stresses the importance of the Pashtun’s role in creating a stable environment. Today the Pashtun tribal and religious groups make up the vast majority of those fighting and supporting (with the additional support from Pakistan, specifically the ISI) the insurgency against the Karzai government and his patrons the United States and NATO. In contrast, the Musahiban monarchy recognized the importance of the Pashtun tribal and religious communities, by absorbing them into government, creating strong patronage relationships, and implementing policies agreeable to the group. This in turn, contributed to the stable and prosperous nature of the era. Other Afghan governments in modern history chose to alienate the Pashtun communities, who were often deemed backwards. These governments imposed
economic and social reforms, with little support outside the urban educated elite, which offended Pashtun religious and tribal beliefs or were deemed threatening to their independence.

Pashtun’s tend to be independent minded (a cultural attribute) and skeptical of central government involvement in their communities. This makes the central government and the tribal communities relatively independent of each other. There are of course differing degrees of independence. Generally speaking, Afghan central governments haven’t survived without Pashtun tribal support. Central governments in modern Afghan history have continually attempted to implement social and economic modernization reforms, but have only been successful with a certain degree of tribal support. When governments pursue ideologies or reforms anathema to tribal culture (such as the communist ideology which led to the Soviet invasion), Pashtun tribal and religious communities revolt, resulting in the overthrow of governments or outright chaos. This suggests a distinction between the Pashtuns that rule the country and the Pashtuns in the tribal communities. Historically, Pashtun leaders have come from a royal family or a royalty lineage, which includes both the Musahiban leaders and Karzai. Especially as it relates to past governments, Pashtun leaders count themselves among a very small group of urban educated elite. This group, although not part of the tribal communities, may still utilize the tribal structure, which is the case in both the Musahiban and Karzai governments. These elites have studied or traveled outside the country and have developed progressive social ideologies which they have attempted to implement in their own country. The pursuit of these reforms while maintaining tribal support has created a cultural tug of war between the government and Pashtun communities; sometimes giving the government slack to pursue reforms, other times resisting with full force.
It’s worth briefly describing events in Afghan history where the government’s relationship with the Pashtun communities broke down, inevitably leading to conflict. This will highlight the relevance of utilizing the Musahiban era as a comparative tool. This era represents one in which strong center peripheral relations existed with the Pashtun tribal and religious communities, which led to an era of relative peace and stability, an anomaly in modern Afghan history. There are two primary traits of the Musahiban era that other political eras in modern Afghan history lack; a strong central government relationship with the Pashtun tribal and religious community, and stability. Prior to Musahiban rule in 1929 King Amanullah headed the country. Amanullah imposed social and economic reforms that offended and threatened Pashtun tribal and religious cultures. These reforms triggered a Pashtun tribal uprising, forcing the king to flee, and created a power vacuum followed by chaos. The Pashtun tribal and religious authorities eventually rallied behind Nadir Shah, the first of the Musahiban leaders, who ended the conflict by creating newly formed patronage relationships with the Pashtuns, solidified in the 1931 constitution (Ewans, 2002). The Musahiban era under analysis ends in 1963 when a new constitution is written the following year, culminating in a liberal era known as the New Democracy. This liberal era was spurred by the urban educated elite as well as King Zahir Shah’s own intentions of modernizing the country. The liberal policies of the era triggered protest and discontent among the Pashtun religious and tribal communities (Hyman, 1984). The turbulence created under the 1964 constitution would end in a bloodless coup, with ex Musahiban Prime Minister Daoud taking power and declaring a republic in 1973. Daoud’s coup, supported by Soviet influences, began the permeation of communist ideology and reforms, which supported an atheistic ideology and centrally sponsored national unity superseding tribal ties (Sen Gupta, 1986). These policies instigated a violent backlash from the Pashtun communities,
which led to a decade long Soviet intervention in 1979, and ultimately cost over a million Afghan lives. The Soviet backed government was succeeded in 1992 by a coalition government of Tajik and Uzbek mujahidin warlords, which was summarily rejected by the Pashtun communities, leading to civil war and further bloodshed. The various warlords vying for power, representing religious factions (supported by ethnic ties) would eventually fall to a newly emerged Pakistani supported Deobandi religious group, known as the Taliban. The Taliban’s ideology was supra tribal in nature, although wholly Pashtun. The Pashtun communities would initially support their religious brethren but would grow weary of the group’s constant war with the northern Tajiks (who controlled roughly 10% of the country), extreme religious ideology, and inability to function as an effective government. How long the Taliban government (1996 – 2001) would have lasted is uncertain, due to its abrupt end in 2001 after the American invasion (Rashid, 2001).

This historical summary is meant to highlight the importance of the Pashtun relationship with the government, as it relates to maintaining a stable, conflict free environment. Furthermore, history suggests the Musahiban era (1929 – 1963) was unique in that its leaders understood the importance of Pashtun tribal and religious approval, and sought to bring the tribal structure into government and empower the religious community, as opposed to undermine the groups, as had various other Afghan governments. Lastly, the Musahiban era, due to their supportive relations with the Pashtun communities, experienced a period of peace and stability, unlike any other era in the country’s modern history. The Musahiban era therefore represents an optimal historical comparative benchmark in which to analyze the policies of the current Karzai government, which have undermined both the tribal structure and religious communities, and how these policies have exacerbated the continued instability in the country.
The Karzai government’s inability to create a relationship with the Pashtun tribal and religious community amenable to stability is due to a number of reasons. Similar to past governments and their failure to placate to the tribal group, the Karzai government has embraced measures that are often considered foreign or threatening to the tribal and religious communities, this is partly attributed to the foreign influences that support the government. Furthermore, the government has undermined the tribal structure at large by supporting local strongmen or warlords. Warlordism, originally derived from the Soviet occupation and the subsequent mujahidin government, reemerged and was reinforced during the Karzai government. These local strongmen, supported by the United States (and NATO), other international organizations, and the Afghan government, have undermined the tribal structure but have also created a base of support for Karzai and his family.

The relationship under examination between the Afghan government and the Pashtun communities, during the two time periods, will focus on the patronage relationship between both the Pashtun tribal communities and religious community. The distinction is often necessary as the religious authorities influence often times (both at the local and national level) falls outside the authority of the tribal structure. Ultimately their authority is derived from their ability to ‘arouse devout and suggestible followers on occasions when acts and policies of the government are regarded as offensive to Muslim faith and traditions.” (Wilber, 1962, 146) Although, at the same time, the tribal communities may rise up against the government when they deem their tribal traditions or their particular tribe as being undermined, which falls outside of the religious spectrum. Creating this distinction allows the analysis to highlight the various relationships the central government has with the Pashtuns. Furthermore, the relationships under analysis will
include the patronage networks and access to government resources, as well as government reforms, which have affected the Pashtun communities.

Research Questions

Primary Research Questions:

1. What aspects of the central government’s relationship with the Pashtun tribal and religious communities under the Karzai government have contributed to the continued unrest and instability in the country?

2. How does this compare to the same relationship during the stable era of Musahiban rule (1929 – 1963), and how has the differences in the relationship affected stability?

Hypotheses

My hypothesis is that the current conflict in Afghanistan is attributed the alienation of Pashtun communities derived from their relationship with the central government, and have been a focal point of violence and predation, by both local and foreign forces. Additionally, resources from the central government and foreign agencies have channeled patronage to local Pashtun warlords, excluding and undermining the traditional tribal structure. These warlords, benefit from an atmosphere of chaos, earning revenues as security contractors, smuggling and the opium trade, while forcing their authority on the tribe and predating on other members of the Pashtun communities, pushing many towards the alternative political vehicle, the Taliban. Furthermore, implementation of secular policies, ignoring current religious and tribal norms, as well as excluding religious authorities from the dialogue, has pushed many Pashtuns towards to insurgency. This is especially relevant at the local level where local mullahs, an important voice and disseminator of information (and propaganda), have been entirely excluded from the
community decision-making process. Collectively these reasons account for why many Pashtuns are joining the insurgency, and creating instability in the country.

**Alternative Hypothesis**

The common narrative among western media attributes the continuing conflict in Afghanistan under the broad umbrella of radical Islam, a term which is also attributed to the Taliban, the primary insurgent group. This alternative hypothesis, accrediting the current violence solely to a conflict between western or secular forces and radical Islam, over simplifies the dynamics that exists. Economic alienation and tribal aspects as well as a religious dimension contribute to the ongoing conflict. However, the religious element that does exist can’t simply be attributed to the emergence of a radical form of Islam, exemplified in the Taliban. The Pashtun communities’ rejection of secular and foreign ideologies is not unique to the current period. The groups have continually rejected foreign influences, especially those that are deemed threatening to Islam and their culture. This rejection of secular ideology has been a central theme throughout the twentieth century, which has, with few exceptions, ended in the overthrow of the leader or government entirely. Habibullah Khan, the king of Afghanistan from 1901 – 1919, was assassinated for his refusal to join the Turks in *jihad* during WW1. His successor, Amanullah, would escape a similar fate by fleeing the country and abdicating the throne after he attempted to advance secular ideologies, which included women’s rights and the creation of a secular penal code and constitution. His policies infuriated the religious community who called for *jihad*, arousing the tribal communities and sending the leadership fleeing (Ewans, 2002). The Musahiban monarchy, the first period under analysis (1929 – 1963), managed to secure their place in power by coopting and defending the religious community from the liberal elites, exemplified during the Liberal Parliament era (1949 -1952). These educated urban elites were
allowed a prominent voice but were quickly dismissed when they attacked the clergy. The Musahiban leaders during this era generally understood the importance of Islam in society, which partly accounts for their peaceful and long tenure in power (Dupree, 1973). The emergence of foreign ideology threatening the religious nature of society again emerged under the New Democracy era in 1964. This era made way for a new constitution and reforms, which were supported by the urban liberal elites. This liberal element was quickly overshadowed by leftist parties (specifically the Soviet supported PDPA), this spurred protests by the religious community, leading to imprisonment of religious leaders and eventual revolts in the Pashtun south and east (Hyman, 1984). This led to a series of *coup d’etats* and eventually the outright rejection of the atheistic ideals of communist ideology, which was followed by the ten year Soviet occupation, and over one million lives lost. The simple point being made is religious rejection of secular and foreign ideologies is not distinct to the Karzai era nor should be solely attributed to the emergence of a radical strain of Islam. It existed long before the Taliban and continues to be a primary point of contention today.

The alternative hypothesis of attributing the current conflict solely to ideological discord overlooks other central elements of the problem, namely economic disenfranchisement. Among the largest of the economic issues relates to opium cultivation. Opium, the plant used to make the illicit drug heroin, is a staple crop in the Pashtun south; Helmand Province (a southern Pashtun province) alone cultivates 50% of the world’s opium (Coghlan, 2009). Government and foreign organizations have targeted opium farms, but offer little in alternatives. This has forced many farmers to go into debt and become beholden to various warlords and corrupt government officials (Rubin, 2008). In interviews with these Helmand Province Taliban fighters, 40% had their opium fields destroyed, and a majority of those citing this as a reason for joining the
insurgency (Smith, 2009). Furthermore, there has been a disproportionate lack of aid devoted to Pashtun areas as well as an excessive amount of military activity in the Pashtun south and east. Leading Afghan academic, Akbar Ahmed, suggests the military activity in the country is perceived as a war against the Pashtuns (Ahmed, 2011), which is supported by interviews of Kandahari Taliban, where a third joined the group after a family member had died at the hands of the military (Smith, 2009).

Arguably the most overlooked aspect of the conflict is its tribal nature and warlordism, which is most often intertwined. Regional warlords in the Pashtun south emerged to power either through their own ability or more often through connections with power brokers connected to Karzai. These warlords have flourished in the atmosphere of chaos. They control highways (by extorting the international agencies under the guise of protection), traffic drugs, and have been the primary beneficiaries of US military operations who work with these warlords and their militias, in their effort to hunt down al Qaeda and the Taliban. These warlords, who have Karzai and American backing, prey on rival communities, pushing them towards insurgency. Commander Razik provides a perfect example of this. Razik, police commander of the smuggling town of Spin Boldak bordering Pakistan, is a member of the Adozai clan. He emerged from obscurity to one of the most powerful warlords in the south by gaining US Special Forces (USSF) trust then targeting the rival Noorzai tribe by designating them Taliban insurgents. In reality, the Noorzai had controlled the lucrative smuggling trade at the Spin Boldak border, which Razik and his tribe now control after violent confrontation with both Razik’s militia and USSF. Today the Noorzai of the southeast are largely Taliban (Aikins, 2009). Examples like this abound, where a local strongmen with a militia supported by both the Karzai government and international agencies, prey and exploit rival tribes and clans that
threaten their own stature. This has pushed entire clans towards the insurgency, seeking alternative political venues and power structures.

The commonly accepted alternative hypothesis that the conflict in Afghanistan is simply discord between secular and radical religious forces clearly, as the above argument has demonstrated, doesn’t paint a proper picture of the dynamics that exist. There exists an economic element (or general alienation of the Pashtun communities), a tribal element, as well as a religious element. Although, the religious element can’t be wholly attributed to the emergence of a radical Islamic group. As discussed, Pashtun rejection of secular ideology is not unique to the current period; it has existed throughout modern Afghan history.

As the above argument suggests, Islamic rejection of secular ideas is an aspect of the multidimensional nature of the conflict. Although this discord has existed throughout Afghan history, it’s not to say Islamic radicalism doesn’t play a part in the conflict. The emergence of the Taliban generally represents a departure from the historical tribal power structure due to their supra-tribal nature. They were products of over a decade of war and the Deobandi madrassas system along the Pakistani border, where they studied as refugees and orphans. Here they would develop deep religious convictions without learning of their tribal roots and culture (Rashid, 2001). Today, the Taliban leadership that emerged from these madrassas, have reestablished themselves in Quetta Pakistan, and represent the ‘political’ Taliban, who fight essentially to regain power. The actual foot soldiers, or ‘fighting’ Taliban, are much more multidimensional, and fight for number of reasons discussed above. These ‘fighting’ Taliban, tend to be much more tribal in nature, and hold a number of different views than the political leadership in Quetta, Pakistan (Ruttig, 2010). The ‘fighting’ Taliban often hold very negative views of their supposed patron, Pakistan, and the vast majority of which don’t recognize the Durrand Line (historically a
divisive issue between the two countries). These foot soldiers often don’t even agree with the policies implemented under the previous Taliban government nor accept Mullah Omar as the leader (Smith, 2009). The Taliban essentially represent an alternative to the Karzai government, and a venue to reject the government for whatever reason.

**Conceptual Framework and Methodology**

The periods under analysis, that of the current Karzai era and the Musahiban dynasty, reflect two unique eras in Afghan history. These eras have maintained commonalities such as the traditional and tribal nature of the rural peoples of south, but they exhibit obvious difference as well; the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, new pressures from foreign occupying forces, different types of central governments, to name a few. To properly analyze these similarities and differences two different theoretical frameworks will be utilized, that of the rational choice theory (also known as the rational actor theory or rational actor) and political clientelism (patron-client relations, or patronage relationships). Discussed below are the basic assumptions of the theories and how and why these theories are useful in the present analysis.

The rational choice theory was originally rooted in classical economic theory derived from Adam Smith in the 18th century. He argued that individuals assert their interests in the market place, which collectively guides the market towards efficiency and reflects the collective desires of the group (Monroe, 1995, 2). The underpinnings of this economic theory evolved into a political theory in the 1950’s, which we know as the rational choice theory. The transfer from an economic theory to a social science theory didn’t come without snags. Economic exchange is voluntary, some win while others may not participate in the exchange, in politics all members are affected by the decisions of the group (Riker, 1995, 24). Furthermore, the goals in politics can
vary as opposed to economics where profit maximization or cost minimization are commonly the key determinants (Green, 1994, 18). What makes the rational choice model relevant to the current analysis is it “does not specify any particular goal as being universal.” (Riker, 1995, 23).

With this said, human goals are a key point of contention among rational choice scholars. Riker, as quoted above, utilizes a ‘thin rational’ approach, while other scholars subscribe to a ‘thick rational’ approach. The thick approach includes an assumption about the individual’s goals, generally involving wealth, power, or status. The thin approach makes no such assumptions; they assume an individual will maximize their respective utilities but not assume what that utility might be (Green, 18, 1994).

Due to the various interpretations of the rational choice model it’s prudent at this point to specify the assumptions related to the concept. The list of assumptions defined below could be described as a ‘sparse’ version of the concept. Meaning, it’s broad with less restraints than other conceptual definitions of rational choice. Macdonald states, actors “behave according to the rationality assumption” (Macdonald, 2003, 552). This assumption consists of three components, which are listed from Macdonald’s analysis verbatim.

1. Purposive action posits that most social outcomes can be explained by goal-oriented action on the part of the actors in the theory, as opposed to being motivated by habit, tradition, or social appropriateness.

2. Consistent preferences refers to preferences that are ranked, are transitive, and do not depend on the presence or absence of essentially independent alternatives.

3. Utility maximization posits that actors will select the behavior that provides them with the most subjective expected utility from a set of possible behaviors. (ibid, 552)
These assumptions generally suggest an individual makes decisions based on his/her judgment of what is most beneficial. Again this does not assume that goals are in any way universal. Goals may not even appear to be self interested. As Riker points out, “while all actions are by definition self–interested, some self-interested goals are self-regarding and other self-interested goals are other-regarding.” (Riker, 37, 1995) Meaning when a soldier jumps on a grenade to save his comrades, this still follows the logic of rational choice. The expected value of saving his comrades was worth dying for. This is an important concept because it legitimizes altruistic actions, which may not be entirely ‘self serving’, in the traditional sense of the term. As it relates to this analysis, some of the actions taken by Zahir Shah (and his PMs) may have been purely altruistic as opposed to realpolitik.

The broad applicability of the rational choice model makes it especially fitting for the complexity of the task at hand. This paper will use the rational choice model to analyze the two eras of Afghan government, the corresponding Pashtun tribal and religious communities at those times, as well as the insurgency in the current time period. These various groups had vastly different agendas and goals but can all be analyzed utilizing the rational choice model.

Clientelism, or patron–client relations, will be used to supplement the arguably broad based theory of rational choice. Clientelism, simply put, is “a relationship of exchange between unequals” (Clapham, 4, 1982). The theory is derived from the Max Weber’s, ‘The Theory of Social and Economic Organization’, in which he argues ‘traditional grounds’ are one of three types of legitimate authority that exist. The concept of ‘traditional grounds’ rests heavily on a concept he refers to as patronage (Weber, 342, 1947). This original work developed into various overlapping concepts such as patrimonialism, neopatrimonialism, and political clientelism,. Each of these concepts touches upon various aspects of the patron client relationship, all of
which are relevant to the analysis at hand. Although each of these three concepts are relevant to
the two Afghan governments under analysis, clientelism is the more encompassing of the three
concepts. Patrimonialsim relates to the patron client networks in a state without differentiating
between the private and public realms. Neopatrimonialsim makes the distinction between the
private and public realm, where rulers utilize the formal government as a source of legitimacy,
while utilizing the informal space to maintain relations with clients (Erdmann, 2006, 18).
Clientelism, on the other hand, encapsulates both these concepts but using a broader definition.
For the purpose of this paper, the following definition will be used in reference to clientelism;
“the analysis of how person of unequal authority, yet linked through ties of interest and
friendship manipulate their relationships in order to attain their ends.” (Weingrod, 1968, 379)
The core elements of this concept are exchange and inequality. The exchange can encompass a
wide variety of tangible and intangible things. A patron may supply land, wealth, security,
prestige, to name a few. While the client in return will give allegiance, military service, and
otherwise general support (Clapham, 1982, 4). Clientelism extends beyond individuals and can
be collective in nature as well. The irrigation of Pashtun lands by the central government is an
example of collective benefit for all Pashtun communities and not just an individual.
Furthermore, the collective nature of the relationship goes both ways, where an individual or
group may support a government structure and not just one particular individual or patron (ibid,
11). Furthermore, clientelism is not specific to the national realm either, it can involve a states
influence over a weaker state. This relationship can take the form of a mutually beneficial
economic relationship, but more commonly, and as it relates to this analysis, there exists a
military or security dimension. “The client principally seeks technology, sophistication… as
well as security guarantees” (Shoemaker, 1984, 14), return the patron expects various types of
support in an effort to enhance its own stature (ibid, 15). This element of clientelism is especially pertinent to the relationships governing modern day Afghanistan.

Collectively clientelism encapsulates the wide ranging patron client relationship that exist in Afghanistan. During the reign of Zahir Shah, the government maintained special relationship with the various Pashtun tribes, providing various types of services or providing for level of tribal independence in exchange for their support. Today, the dynamic has become more complex as tribal linkages have been undermined by new patron client networks between the central government and warlords. Many of the tribal Pashtuns, feeling alienated from the current relationship have given their support to insurgence groups whom have their own patron in Pakistan. The Karzai government itself represents only a link in the patronage chain, as they support various warlords and tribes, the central government is in turn supported by the United States and its allies, whom have their own interests as heart. With this said, Afghanistan clearly exemplifies political clientelism *par excellence*. Clientelism, of course, does not always tell the whole story when it comes to government or local actions, but together with the rational choice theory, these concepts will provide a relevant framework in the forthcoming analysis.

This thesis will depend on the use of both primary and secondary sources. Unfortunately, the dangerous climate in Afghanistan makes it extremely difficult to conduct useful interviews with Afghans. Fortunately, since 2001, there has been numerous newspaper, magazines, blogs, and other online resources that can be used as primary sources. There will be a heavy dependency on blogs and newspaper articles to fully articulate a conclusion to the research problem. Secondary resources, such as books and journal articles will also be used especially relating to historical periods of Afghan history where access to first hand resources may be limited.
Literature Review

The literature post and prior to the installation of the Karzai government tends to focus on different aspects of the Afghan political system and its participants. What makes this thesis of particular interest is there tends to be a lack of comparative analysis between various eras in Afghan history, particularly as it relates to the Musahiban monarchy, prior to 1963. Due to minimal western interest during the Musahiban dynasty there hasn’t been a preponderance of scholars focused on the area. Although the scholars that did have such a focus tended to produce in depth and enlightening analysis. Preeminent among these scholars were Louis Dupree, Vartan Gregorian, Akbar Ahmed, Asta Olesen, W.K. Fraser-Tytler, and Donald Wilber, to name a few. Arguable the prolific scholar of this era was Louis Dupree and his seminal 1973 work Afghanistan. Dupree, who had spent years in the country, was a great admirer of the Musahiban monarchy, but especially the era of Daoud (1953 – 1963). His historical review spent much of the analysis focusing on development of the era, specifically the Helmand Valley Project and how these measures benefitted the Afghan populace, specifically the Pashtuns (Dupree, 1973). He delves further into specific issues such as the ‘Pashtunistan’ issue and the government’s ability cajole the Pashtun tribes to accept international aid, which Daoud uses to create a modern military and further development initiatives, both of which has an effect on the government’s relationship with the Pashtuns (Dupree, 1961). Another scholar of the era, Vartan Gregorian, whose historical analysis spans the era from 1880 – 1946, focused on national reforms under Nadir and his predecessor Hashim. He stressed Nadir’s desire to reform but not to the detriment of the tribes and clergy, thereby maintaining an uncertain balance between economic and social development and but only with the implicit approval of the Pashtuns and the clergy (Gregorian, 1969). Olesen and Fraser-Tytler had similar focuses, Olesen paying especial attention to the
effects of Islam in society and the need to placate to this group (Olesen, 1995) and Fraser-Tytler demonstrated the importance of tribal acquiesce and gave a thoughtful summary of various tribal unrest and the reasons behind the unrest (Fraser-Tytler, 1967).

Akbar Ahmed, Olaf Caroe, Sayed Mousavi, Hasan Polladi, Leon Poullada, Nancy Tapper, and Hassan Poladi, each take a more anthological perspective in their analysis and focus on individual tribes and ethnicities, their local government structure, and it’s interaction with various governments. Ahmed and Poullada each provide rare insight into the interworking of Pashtun tribes, and to a certain extent their interaction with the central government (Ahmed, 1980) (Poullada, 1970). Caroe, focuses on the Pathans of Pakistan which overlap with the eastern Pashtuns of Afghanistan, providing insight into their internal networks and interaction with central governments. Tapper directs her attention also with the Pashtun demographic by focuses on the northern Pashtuns, the interactions amongst different tribal groups, and relates it to the politics of marriage (Tapper, 1991). Lastly, Mousavi and Polladi focus on the central Pashtun governments and their exploitation of the Hazaras (Mousavi, 1997) (Polladi, 1989).

The more contemporary historical analysis tends to focus attention on the effects of rentier revenues, the development of the state, and the emergence of Islamists. Barnett Rubin analyzed economic data of the 1950’s and 60’s to demonstrate the economic impact of development initiatives. His analysis provides insight into the dynamic relationship of the central government’s relationship with the periphery, namely religious groups, ethnic and tribal groups, and peasants at large, in a rentier state atmosphere. He builds upon this by analyzing the effects of Soviet aid on the Afghan state, through the modern era (Rubin, 2002). Roy also analyzes the impact of the Soviet intervention as well as the development of education as it relates to the emergence of political Islam (Roy, 1986). This naturally leads into the works of
Steven Coll who demonstrates how foreign assistance of the mujahidin fighter (especially American) led to the political emergence of the Islamists and the Taliban (Coll, 2004). From this point Ahmed Rashid’s influential work, *Taliban*, describes the forces behind the emergence of the group. This of course, has particular relevance to the insurgency today (Rashid, 2001).

Current academic literature, especially in the early years of the Karzai regime, focuses on the legitimacy of the Karzai government and its institutional structures and the ability of US led intervention to create a stable state. There’s a preponderance of literature relating to the electoral system and its faults. Beginning with the Bonn Conference, Dobbins sights the disproportional representation of Northern Alliance members in government and its potential impact (Dobbins, 2008). Post Bonn, the construct of the electoral system, has analysts like Barnett Rubin suggesting the ‘single non transferable vote’ system is undermining to democracy (Rubin 2005), and the International Crisis Group questioning the objectivity of the appointed members creating this system (ICG, 2003). International organizations at large have highlighted the existence of fraud in the electoral process. Scholars have supported this as Shahrani argues Karzai is given a disproportionate advantage due to his ties with the US (Shahrani, 2004), Abdul Ahad describes a electoral system similar to that of common street haggling (Abdul-Ahad, 2009), and Johnson through a robust statistical analysis suggests the outright fraud is coupled with a electorate which only votes via ethnic relations (Johnson, 2006).

It is worth noting the use of the term corruption in academic literature is often skewed towards the western sense of the word. A corrupt electoral process, in the western sense, is one in which votes are bought, intimidation is used, ballot stuffing occurs, to name just a few ways to influence electoral outcomes. With this in mind, the traditional Afghan decision making process could often also be viewed as corrupt from a Western perspective. This of course does not
necessarily mean that Afghans hold this same attitude. For instance, in traditional Pashtun society *khans* are only as powerful as the amount of patronage they provide. *Khans* will compete with one another in maintaining these patron client networks. In essence *khans* are distributing assets in return for support; this clearly could be construed as a corrupt practice from a western perspective but is simply a way of life in traditional Pashtun society (Rubin, 2002).

The more recent academic literature has shifted their focus towards the reemergence of the Taliban and other insurgency groups. Much of the literature has attempted to decipher why Pashtuns are joining groups like the Taliban. Giustozzi argues the Taliban garner their strength and the ability to infiltrate communities through a network of local mullahs (Giustozzi, 2007). Ruttig takes a less simplistic analysis and argues the structure of the Taliban is essentially a ‘network of networks’, some of the individual members may join due to disenfranchisement, some join for jihad against a foreign invader, and some are very tribal in nature while others are not (Ruttig, 2010). Strives suggests specific characteristics relating to tribal unity will identify whether the insurgency is part of Hizb Islami or the Taliban, suggesting Hizb tends to operate in areas where tribal ties are strong and the Taliban do not, with one exception being the Haqqani Network which is often associated with the Taliban (Strives, 2006).

The preponderance of Afghan related literature today is heavily weighted towards the current era. This of course makes it slightly more difficult to find sources on the Musahiban monarchy but it also adds to the importance of the analysis. There has been a clear lack of literature today that attempts to understand current dynamics in Afghanistan from a perspective of different historical eras of the country, specifically the Musahiban monarchy. This thesis hopes to contribute to bridging this gap in an effort to better understand the current Afghan landscape as well as the reasons for it’s current instability.
Pashtuns

Ethnic Pashtuns are a diverse group of roughly 30 tribes including numerous sub tribes and clans, inhabiting both Afghanistan and Pakistan (ICG, 2003). The 12.6 million Pashtuns in Afghanistan populate the south and eastern parts of the country, and represent 42% of the total population. In Pakistan, where they number 28.8 million in total and 15.5% of the total population; Pashtuns are found in the western parts of the country that border Afghanistan (CIA World Factbook).
The diversity of the Pashtuns is especially important to this analysis. The central government’s relationship with the various Pashtun tribes often depends on the location of the tribe, the level of tribe’s adherence to traditional tribal practices, and the tribe’s historical relationship with the tribe in power. Past and present governments of Afghanistan have utilized the tribal structure as a venue to disperse patronage and garner support. Within the tribal structure intertribal and clan rivalries also exist. These rivalries, particularly between the Durrani and Ghilzai tribal confederations, are often at the center of the political dynamic. In essence, the tribe (and its various levels of identity) is a political entity and the venue in which politicking is played out. The tribe often acts as a single political unit, with its members adhering to the decisions of tribal leadership, in regard to political decisions and relationships.

The highest common denominator of the Pashtun identity (other then the Pashtun ethnicity itself) is generally the tribal confederation. The primary tribal confederations in Afghanistan are the Durrani and Ghilzai, as well as the eastern Pashtuns, which are an amalgamation of various tribes (Roy, 1986, 61). The Ghilzai, the largest of the Pashtun tribal confederations, are located primarily in the east inhabiting areas from Kandahar to Kabul (Barfield, 2010, 25) (although they also make up various communities in the north as a result of historical forced migrations (ICG, 2003)). The confederation is made up of various tribes, the largest of which are Hotaki, Tokhi, Kharoti, Nasiri, Taraki, Sulaiman khel, and Ahmadzai. The Durrani tribal confederation, generally located in the southern and southwestern areas of the country stretching from Kandahar to Farah provinces, may not be has big as their Ghilzai brethren but have historically dominated political power (Barfield, 2010, 25). Durranis are split up into two factions, the Zirak, or royal lineages of the Popalzai, Alikozai, Barakzai, and Achakzai, and the lesser Panjpai faction which are made up of Nurzai, Alizai, and Isaqzai,
among others. The eastern tribes inhabit the southeastern region of the country, centered around Loya Pakta (a region consisting of Paktia, Paktika, Khost and part of Logar and Ghazni provinces) and the Pakistani border. The most important among these tribes are the Wardak, Orakzai, Afridi, Wazir, Jaji, Khattak, Zadran, Mangal, Mahsud, and Khugiani (Barfield, 2010). Other eastern Pashtun tribes reside in the Peshawar area in Pakistan, which is dominated by the Yususfzais tribe, which inhabits the plains and valleys surrounding Peshawar (Caroe, 1958).

Within each of these tribes are subtribes, clans, and qawms. The hierarchal order of identity could appear as follows; Pashtun (ethnicity), Durrani (tribal confederation), Zirak (sub confederation distinction), Popalzai (tribe), Saddozai (sub tribe or clan), then local village qawm. Qawm, or solidarity group, represents the ‘lowest common denominator’ within communal identities, essentially every individual in a tribal village belongs to one (Roy, 1989, 71).

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<th>Tribal Confederations</th>
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<td><strong>Durrani</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Eastern Tribes (Karłani)</strong></td>
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Figure 1 – Breakdown of Pashtun Tribal Communities

Historically the Durranis have been the most privileged group within Pashtun society. The Safavid empire, the Persian empire ruling parts of modern day Afghanistan up until the mid
18th century, established two royal lineages within Durrani society, that of the Sadozai (which are a clan with in the Popalzai tribe) and the Muhammadzai (which were a clan within the Barakzai) (Rubin, 2002). These royal lineages have rotated among the leadership of Afghanistan, beginning with Ahmed Shah Durrani, known as the father of modern day Afghanistan. The hierarchy of power is further enhanced by their economic success and access to government resources. The Durranis inhabit a much more arable land than the Ghilzai, which has led to increased wealth which in turn facilitates patronage networks and powerful khans. The hierarchies created in society are then handed down through the generations, creating ruling lineages and subordinate lineages, something that isn’t as apparent within the Ghilzai confederation (Barfield, 2010).

The Ghilzai tribal confederation, as well as the eastern tribes, tends to be more egalitarian than the Durranis. Ghilzais generally inhabit land that is less irrigable, which makes it difficult for an individual to amass wealth, and therefore patronage, which has created a more egalitarian society. Leaders within this society tend to be charismatic due to the lack of a royal lineage and the egalitarian nature of the group (Rubin, 2002). This egalitarian nature of the group has made it difficult for a leader to consolidate power and lead the group as a whole. Their leadership tends not to emerge during times of order (as when Ahmed Shah came to the throne or during the Bonn Conference, where they were under represented), but during times of chaos. In recent history this is exemplified during the Soviet occupation where the communist backed PDPA leadership was dominated by Ghilzais (including the president, Mohammad Najibullah), Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Abdul Haq were two of the most prominent mujahidin leaders whom were Ghilzais, and Taliban leader Mullah Omar was a Ghilzai. With possibly the exception of Mullah Omar, all of these leaders’ positions were fleeting and stood above a wavering base of support.
(Barfield, 2010). The history of the Ghilzai in the context of its leadership rides in stark contrast to the Durrani who have managed to continually control the upper echelons of power.

Arguably the more discernable difference between various tribes, especially as it relates to their relationship with the state, is the area in which the tribe inhabits. Pashtuns living in the mountainous region, known as nang Pashtuns, have generally been inaccessible to government infringement and taxes throughout history. These Pashtuns, without foreign interference, have continued the practice of tribal culture, known as Pashtunwali (or tribal honor code), in its purest form. This has created egalitarian societies, a primary characteristic of Pashtunwali, as well as societies deeply skeptical of any type of foreign infringement. The Pashtuns considered nang, are some of the Ghilzai tribes and the majority of the eastern Pashtuns that reside in Loya Paktia and across the Pakistan border in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. In contrast to the nang hill tribes are the qalang Pashtuns of the plains. These tribesmen, due to the more accessible habitats, have had more interaction and infringement with the central government and have generally been more prosperous due to the easily irrigated lands. These qalang Pashtuns, since being subject to the state have established patronage networks with the central government, utilizing middlemen known as khans and maliks. The use of appointed representatives, often large landowners, creates a hierarchy of power which undermines the egalitarian nature of Pashtunwali. Generally these tribes, mostly Durrani as well as some Ghilzai, tend not to follow Pashtunwali as closely as their nang brethren, nor are they as skeptical of government infringement (Rubin, 2002, 28). Generally speaking nang Pashtuns are respected for their strict adherence to Pashtunwali, although are often considered unsophisticated and barbaric (Ahmed, 1980). The difference is summarized in the oft-quoted verse, “Honor, nang, ate up the mountains and taxes, qalang, at up the plains.” (ibid, p.177)
Pashtunwali, the tribal honor code, is adhered to at various levels, by the vast majority of Pashtuns. The tribal honor code is not only important in understanding the Pashtun people, but it’s also necessary to fully understand how actions by the central government or foreign entities will be perceived by the group. To get a better sense of the essence of the code, below is a translation of a local tribes interpretation.

“To avenge blood.

To fight to the death for a person who has taken refuge with me no matter what his lineage.

To defend to the last any property entrusted to me.

To be hospitable and provide for the safety of the person and property of guests

To refrain from killing a woman, a Hindu, a minstrel, or a boy not yet circumcised.

To pardon an offense on the intercession of a woman of the offender’s lineage, a Sayyid or a mullah.

To punish all adulterers with death

To refrain from killing a man who has entered a mosque or the shrine of a holy man so long as he remains within its precincts; also to spare a man in battle who begs for a quarter.” (Dupree, 1973, p.126)

A central element of the code, that the above translation stresses, is the importance of manliness, which is among the highest compliments one can receive. Manliness is derived from two central themes, tarboorwali (or agnatic cousin rivalry) and tor (upholding female honor) (Ahmed, 1980, 121). These themes are “the two main features, through which Pashtunwali is interpreted, enacted, judged in society” (Ahmed, 2006, 20). Tarboorwali is important for a number of reasons. First, the existence of an agnatic cousin rivalry (your father’s brother’s son) creates a very competitive and combative society. Pashtun legend maintains that all Pashtuns are derived from one of the four sons of Qais Abd al-Rashid, the father of all Pashtuns and a contemporary of the Prophet Mohammad, therefore all male Pashtuns are believed to be agnatic
cousins at one level or another (Tapper, 1991, 40). This rivalry suggests the status of one individual is inversely related to the position of his agnatic cousin, in many ways this is a zero sum game. This creates “concentric circles of protection and compulsion” (Poullada, 1970, 6) where agnatic rivalries exist within each circle. So in essence each clan of a tribe is in competition with other clans, but these clans will unite and relate to the higher identity when in competition with another tribe, and Pashtun tribes will unite when threatened by a foreign source (Roy, 1989).

_Tarboorwali_, or agnatic rivalry is derived from *zar, zan, zamin*, or gold (material goods), women, and land. Ownership and wealth are a direct reflection of one’s status. This makes ownership of land of primary importance and often results in continuous conflict over land rights and boundaries, which inevitably leads to blood feuds (ibid, 14). _Tarboorwali_ also reflect the importance of women as it relates to honor. Specifically, men in a particular qawm see the women as a reflection of their own honor. If a woman is viewed as defaming this honor, harsh repercussion can occur such as death or ostracism in the cases of sexual promiscuity, depending on the tribe. In most cases women are segregated from unrelated males in one capacity or another (seclusion of women is known as _purdah_, often with the use of the garment known as the _burka_). The defense of the honor of women has, by and large, created a society that is dominated by males (Rubin, 2002, 24).

Intertwined with tribal identities, Pashtuns society is very religious, as is Afghan society at large. As Olivier Roy notes, “Afghan peasant life is permeated by religion. It provides the intellectual horizon, the system of values and the code of behavior.” (Roy, 1986, 30) Roughly 99% of the country is Muslim, with the vast majority Sunni (80%) and a smaller minority Shia (19%) (Wahab, 2007, 18). Of the Pashtuns, the vast majority are Sunni of the Hanafi school, the
most common among the four schools of jurisprudence. Religion is prevalent in nearly all aspects of life. As an early adventurer noted during his travels, “one would think the whole people, from the King to the lowest peasant, was always occupied in holy reflections.” (Rubin, 2002, p. 38)

The religious authorities relevant to this analysis are the mullahs and the ulama. At the village level the mullahs control all religious activities as well as the religious teachings in the madrassa, which is often the only source of education in a village. Although, mullahs are not always held with high esteem, in areas where tribal structures are strong the role of the mullah is looked upon as an occupational group and often outside the tribal structure. Among Durrans, in the southern plains, mullahs are held with higher esteem and participate in different aspects of decision-making. The mullah’s station in a particular village is elevated during times of crisis, particularly when there is a call for jihad. When these events occur, religious authority transcends tribal authority (Roy, 1986).

Although there is no real organized clergy there is an obvious difference between the mullahs of the villages and the ulama. The ulama are essentially defined by their educational background. They graduated from the village madrassa and attended various higher education religious schools, many of who travel outside of Afghanistan, in particular the Deoband madrassas in Pakistan and India. Among the ulama are the Sufi pirs (who head Sufi orders), such as well known members of the Mujaddidi and Gaylani families who have played historically influential roles in Afghan politics. Collectively, similar to the mullahs, their power stems from rousing Pashtun tribes to jihad (ibid).
The Pashtuns, by and large, are an extremely independent minded and prideful people. An oft cited quote which encapsulates the ethnic pride was stated by a Pakistani Pashtun activist Abdul Wali Khan when questioned over his loyalties, he was quoted as saying, “I have been Pakistani for thirty years, a Muslim for fourteen hundred years, and a Pashtun for five thousand years!” (Barfield, 2010, p.20)

**Minority Groups**

There are an estimated 55 different ethnic groups throughout Afghanistan. Only in recent history have these minority groups begun to take part in the political process and the struggle for political influence. Other than the Pashtuns, the largest ethnic groups consist of the Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks. The Tajiks represent the second largest ethnic group, situated in Kabul and other urban centers, Herat, and the northeast by Tajikistan. They’re Dari speaking Sunni Muslims whom historically have acted as the Pashtun government’s ‘junior partner’, working in key administrative roles and have found success in business as well (ICG, 2003). With the exception of most recent history, Pashtuns have considered the Tajiks *humsayeh*, or adopted by the tribe, and by and large the two groups mixed more then any other ethnicities (Cervin, 1952).

The Hazaras have historically been at the bottom of the social pecking order in Afghanistan. They represent about 15% of the country’s population and inhabit the mountainous area of Hazarajat within the Hindu Kush in central Afghanistan (Barfield, 2010). They stand out from other Afghans, as they are Shia Muslim, speak a dialect of Dari known as Hazaragi, and exhibit Mongoloid like feature (folklore suggests the groups is descendent of Genghis Khan). Their Shia religion especially has made them a target of various rulers. Beginning in the late 19th century Abdur Rahman Khan, designated the group as infidels and called for a tribal jihad, this
began the Hazara – Afghan war (1890-1893), which ended in the destruction of their homeland while many of the inhabitants were enslaved and brought to work in Kabul (where a large population exists today) (Mousavi, 1997). The Taliban escalated the subjugation of the group by committing numerous massacres (Rashid, 2001). The harsh treatment of the groups continues to be a sore point today, although they’ve dramatically gained in strength after militarizing during Soviet occupation and given an opportunity to participate in government under Karzai.

The Uzbeks and their Turkmen brethren are Turkish speaking Sunni Muslims located in the north near the borders of their respective homeland of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan; they represent roughly 10% of the total population. These groups have had less significance in Afghanistan’s history compared to other groups noted above, although after living in relative autonomy under the Soviet occupation and the subsequent civil war, the groups gained considerable military and political strength. Warlords like Uzbek General, Abdul Rashid Dostum, went on to play significant roles in the toppling of the Taliban regime and the subsequent Karzai government (Barfield, 2010).

**Historical Background**

A brief historical description is necessary to provide a better understanding of the mindset of the Pashtun people during the first period under analysis. Historically speaking, Pashtuns are a prideful and deeply religious group, and generally skeptical of foreign interference. Their pride is rooted in storied empires of the past, such as Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan, who once ruled parts of modern day Afghanistan. In modern Afghan history, Pashtuns have ruled the country nearly without interruption to the current period. Their ascension to power began in 1747 under the leadership of Ahmed Shah Durrani, generally
considered the father of modern day Afghanistan. He was crowned leader of the Pashtuns in a Loya Jirga (grand assembly) of tribal chiefs following the death of the king of the Safavid Empire, which had controlled the area of today’s Afghanistan. Ahmed Shah was a member of the Sadozai clan of the Popalzai tribe, within the Durrani confederation, a royalty lineage. This tribe would rule until 1818 when the more powerful Barakzai clan of the Mohammadzai tribe, within the Durrani tribal confederation, would take power, the second of the royalty lineages. These two tribes would dominate the leadership of the country, which continues to this day, as the current president, Hamid Karzai, is a member of the Popalzai tribe (Ewans, 2002).

The 19th century and early 20th century, leading up to the first period under analysis, was a period which strong leaders such as Dost Mohammad and Abdur Rahman carved out the borders of today’s Afghanistan, forcefully pacified pugnacious tribes, and subjugated non Pashtun races such as the Hazaras. The country also faced constant pressure from the world powers that surrounded the nation. Russians from the north were stretching their imperialistic arms south towards the Gulf. This was of great concern to the British whom had monopolized the trading posts in India through the East Indian Company, which eventually gained administrative and military control of the country. The British saw Afghanistan as a ‘buffer’ state between the two imperial powers and wanted to ensure the country wouldn’t fall under the Russian umbrella. This period gave way to what Rudyard Kipling described as the “Great Game”. What ensued was three Anglo Afghan wars the first of which began in 1838 and the second in 1878. The culmination of these wars ended with the Afghans submitting to British suzerainty in exchange for subsidies, and a growing sense of xenophobia among the populace (Gregorian, 1969).

These events were followed by the establishment of the Durrand Line (Afghan’s eastern border with what is now Pakistan), and the third and last Anglo-Afghan war. The Durrand Line
has been hotly contested as an arbitrary dividing point, which separated a homogenous people, the eastern Pashtun tribes. This line would be a point of contention in future Afghan governments whom would call for the consolidation of the Pashtun tribes. The third Anglo-Afghan war began under the leadership of King Amanullah, in an effort to free the country from English suzerainty in 1919. The short lived war ended with the British ceding total Afghan independence but left the Durrand Line intact. The Durrand Line issue coupled with ambitions and unrealistic liberal modernizations policies, eventually led to Amanullah’s abdication and flight out to the country. His modernization policies included advancing the rights of women (especially in education), creating a secular penal code and constitution, creating a new tax system, giving equal rights to all religious faiths, creating a minimum age for marriage, enforcing monogamy among public employees, and suggesting modern western dress among the populace. The policies were a direct challenge to both the religious authorities (and the general religious sense of the populace) and the tribal establishment. This would culminate in a call for *jihad* by the religious authorities, spurring Pashtun tribal groups to take up arms, which led to the eventual abdication of Amanullah (ibid).

What followed was a period of chaos as a Tajik bandit, Bacha-i Saqao, managed to gather a following and claimed the crown in Kabul, exercising nominal power throughout the country. His tenure lasted 9 months, when he was eventually overthrown by Nadir Khan in 1929. This began a new dynasty, known here as the Musahiban dynasty, and the focus of the first part of this analysis.

Nadir Shah (changed from Khan to Shah when he became king) was the great grandson of the brother of the Afghan king, Dost Mohammad Khan (reign; 1826 – 1863) and a cousin of King Amanullah, which made him a Durrani member of the Mohammadzai branch of the
Barakzai tribe (Watkins, 1963, 59). His specific lineage within the branch was known as the Musahiban clan, which was a collateral line of Amanullah’s lineage. Nadir was the Commander in Chief of the Afghan Army and well respected for his worldly outlook, intellect, and temperance. He commanded the army during the Third Anglo Afghan War and received high accolades for his conduct. His growing influence and respect began to worry the monarchy, which would eventually lead to his dismissal in 1924. Amanullah sent Nadir to Paris to act as the Afghan agent to the country, far from his tribal roots and military garrisons (Fraser-Tytler, 1967, 224). As his country slipped into chaos and Amanullah abdicated the throne and fled the country, Nadir and his brothers plotted the overthrow of the Tajik bandit, Bacha-i Saqao. Two of his brothers, Hashim Khan and Shah Wali Khan, met with Nadir in France and left for India. These three with the help of a fourth brother, Shah Mahmud already in Afghanistan, would overthrow Bacha and reclaim the Durrani dynasty (ibid, 225).
CHAPTER 3

THE MUSAHIBAN MONARCHY (1929 – 1963) AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PASHTUNS

The first era under analysis, the Musahiban monarchy (1929 – 1963), is meant to demonstrate how the central government managed to maintain an era of relative stability through its relationship with the Pashtun communities. During this period, the Musahiban government, pursued social and economic reforms, similarly to the current Karzai regime, but did so without provoking political backlash, something the Karzai government nor most governments in Afghanistan’s history have been able to emulate. This analysis will analyze the government’s relationship with the Pashtuns through the lens of the rational choice model and political clientelism, which will highlight both the government’s relationship with the Pashtun communities and its efforts pursuing reforms. The chapter will be divided into three parts. The first section will focus on the policies established under Nadir Shah, specifically the government’s inclusion of the Pashtun religious and tribal communities. These polices, solidified under the 1931 constitution, were the backbone of succeeding Musahiban governments and its relationship with the Pashtuns after Nadir’s short reign. Section two will focus on the development policies of the Musahiban regime beginning under the leadership of Prime Minister Hashim Khan. The section will demonstrate how not only did development policies buttress Pashtun support of the government, but also how the government was able to pursue and finance these measures while still maintaining the policies created under Nadir. The last section will focus on the era under Prime Minister Daoud, the last of the Musahiban leaders under analysis, and how his government was able to push forward social reforms after years of building a national identity through the education sector and military. Collectively, this chapter will demonstrate how the government’s relationship with the Pashtun communities created an
atmosphere of stability, which will ultimately be used as a comparative tool when analyzing the destabilizing nature of the current Karzai regime.

**Part 1 - Nadir Shah and Political Clientelism**

The reign of Nadir Shah began during a period of chaos and turmoil but he consolidated the warring factions and eventually brought relative peace and normalcy to the country. The importance of Nadir’s reign lies in the patron-client relationship he built among the Pashtuns and the corresponding religious community, which are the basis of the social dynamics that existed during through the Musahiban rule. As history suggests, without the support of the Pashtuns, unrest and warfare ensues, and in Amanullah’s case, the toppling of a monarchy (Roy, 1986, 46). As the rational actor model indicates, the actor, Nadir in this case, will pursue actions in which he will derive “the most subjective expected utility” (Macdonald, 2003, 552), which in this case is to maintain power. To do this, Nadir and future Musahiban leaders, would build new relationships with the tribal and religious communities. These relationships were predicated on political clientelism where an exchange of tangible and intangible goods will be exchanged (Clapham, 1982). The basis of this exchange is grounded on the support and allegiance to the new Musahiban monarchy.

*Nadir Shah and Pashtun Tribes Take Back Afghanistan*

The Musahiban brothers would draw support in overthrowing the Tajik bandit Bacha-i Saqqao from three different venues, all of which were the basis for future patron client networks. First, and arguably most important, was the support for the religious establishment or *ulema*. The *ulema* had called for the overthrow of Amanullah after his progressive reforms infringed on their religious beliefs and stature, now they called for the support of Nadir and his brothers.
Specifically, the powerful Mujaddidi family rallied their Pashtun followers to the side of Nadir, this support of the tribal militias was instrumental in their success (Roy, 1986, 46).

The tribal *lashkars*, who were the backbone to Nadir’s overthrow of Bacha, were also instrumental in maintaining security and suppressing residual minor rebellions. *Lashkars* are tribal militias meant to defend tribal sovereignty and have been utilized by various Afghan leaders for various purposes. The *lashkar* also falls under the jurisdiction of the *jirga* (Tariq, 2008). Originally a 12,000 *lashkar* made up of Mahsud and Wazir and other tribes of Loya Paktia would follow Nadir into Kabul on October 15th 1929, sending Bacha fleeing (Saikal, 2006, 97). With the collapse of the central government and the country in chaos the Pashtuns tribes were warring and completely independent of the state. In a seemingly short period of time Nadir had amassed an army of 40,000 Pashtuns to subdue these various revolts and instilled upon the populace his dominance in the country (Fraser-Tytler, 1967, 231). Nadir also paid off local khans most notably the pugnacious Pashtun Shinwari tribe of Kunar and Nangarhar provinces (Dupree, 1973, 459).

Lastly, and more peripherally was the support of the British in India. The British had been constantly harassed by tribal revolts in the Pashtun belt, largely instigated by Amanullah whom supported their irredentist goals. Coupled with this the British wanted to counter the perceived pro Russian tendencies of the Amanullah government. For these reasons the British allowed Nadir passage to Afghanistan and to rally support among the Pashtun tribes of the tribal belt (Olesen, 1995, 172). Subsequently they supported the Nadir with funds and military aid, specifically 10,000 rifles, 5 million cartridges, and 180,000 British pounds (Saikal, 2006, 100).
This marked the beginning of new bonds between the various parties and the Musahiban monarchy. Among the various Pashtun tribal and religious communities newly formed patron client relationships would emerge. These newly formed relationships would last for decades to come, in which the Pashtun tribal and religious communities would support the government in return for various privileges. The British and the Nadir monarchy would also build up their relationship, which as we know, wouldn’t endure the length of the Musahiban dynasty as British withdrew from the region in 1947. The following sections will build upon these newly formed patron client relationships as the government pursues desperately needed economic growth and consolidation of their newly formed regime.

**Political Clientelism, the Monarchy, and the Tribal Communities**

Nadir’s ascension to power was legitimized through the traditional tribal structure, the *Loya Jirga*. A *jirga*, or assembly (a *Loya Jirga* being a grand or national assembly, generally including all tribal leaders), is a prominent aspect of the tribal structure and village tribal communities. A *jirga* is called to settle disputes, discuss pertinent issues relating to tribal relations, handle administrative tasks and judicial decisions. It’s a venue to air grievances and solve problems using a combination of *Pashtunwali* and Islamic law, which can convene at any level of the tribal hierarchy, including the national level. The *jirga*, which is ruled by consensus encapsulates the egalitarian nature of the Pashtuns, although individuals such as *khans* often have an influential voice in the decision making process (Tapper, 1991).

Upon Nadir’s arrival in Kabul he organized a *Loya Jirga* consisting of the local tribal and religious leaders throughout the Pashtun communities. The *jirga*, the traditional venue of legitimization, appointed him the new ruler of Afghanistan (Rubin, 2002, 59). The appointment
through this traditional system bestowed upon Nadir not only the crown but also more importantly, he became the newly appointed head of the Pashtuns. Without this legitimacy the monarchy’s power would be severely undermined and Pashtun subservience would inevitably surface (Olesen, 1995, 178).

With the authority to rule in hand, Nadir’s first order of business was to create a new social contract with the Pashtun tribal and religious communities under the proclamation of a new constitution. The 1931 constitution was this new document that created a bi-cameral parliamentary monarchy coupled with a national Loya Jirga that clearly placated to the tribal organizations.

The institutionalization of the Pashtun assembly system, the Loya Jirga (national assembly), was a legitimately powerful body and a true concession to the Pashtun tribes. This assembly was scheduled to meet once every three years and would consist of the Pashtun tribal khans, religious leadership, and other relevant individuals. All major reform measures had to be approved by this body, which included foreign policy decisions, tax laws, and amendments to the constitution. This essentially put the major concerns of the tribal communities in the hands of the tribal elders and khans. Tax laws had always been viewed as unwanted government infringement, which often led to unrest. Foreign policy as well was a particularly poignant issue, which was a major component of Amanullah’s downfall. After three Anglo Afghan wars the unusually independent tribal communities now had the power to maintain their sacred independence. This created a new power dynamic within the country that put the tribal communities interests at the forefront. It’s also important to note, with tax reform in the hands of the tribes the central government would need to find new sources of revenue to fund
development projects as well as to support a military. This would have to be done without obvious assistance from foreign governments (Gregorian, 1969, 305).

The institutionalization of the *jirga* also solidified Pashtun dominance in the country. The *jirga* was dominated by Pashtun tribal chiefs whom made up roughly 45% of the population at this time (Poullada, 1970, 2). This gave the country a Pashtun ethnic character as opposed to the multi ethnic character for which it truly was (Gregorian, 1969, 305). The *Loya Jirga*, comprised of both Pashtun and religious leaders convened to gauge support on pertinent issues and make decisions of national importance with the input of the tribes. As the government left conscription and taxes in the hands of the tribes the primary use of the *jirga* was to settle issues pertaining to international matters. The first *jirga* convened under this dynasty was in 1930, to crown Nadir as king, as previously discussed, the subsequent national *jirgas* were convened as follows.

1941 - During WW2 the governments of both the Allies and the Axis powers were vying for Afghan support. The king called a *Loya Jirga* to determine the fate of the country. The *jirga*, in true Afghan style, decided to maintain neutrality at all cost and would resist any further interference with military force. At that point they expelled all diplomats from both Axis and Allied governments (Dupree, 1973, 482).

1949 – A Loya Jirga convened to discuss the Pashtunistan issue. Pashtunistan refers to the area inhabited by ethnic Pashtuns who sat east of the Durrand line in, which became the country of Pakistan in 1947. The issue became a heated debate in the country as the British exited the sub continent and gave the Muslim population the right to secede and create a new Islamic country, which is now Pakistan (and Bangladesh). The issue that arose was the Pashtun society was only given the option to join India or join Pakistan, and not to create its own country or join Afghanistan. This became a point of contention between the two countries, where Afghanistan believed the Pashtuns east of the Durrand should vote on the issue of succession in a referendum while the Pakistani government did not. The Loya Jirga agreed to abrogate all existing treaties relating to the establishment of the Durrand Line, specifically the 1919 Treaty of Rawalpindi that established the demarcation (Newell, 1972).
1955 - Daoud convened a Loya Jirga in 1955 to approve the large scale Soviet military and development assistance as well as to reaffirm the hardline on the Pashtunistan issue. This was in an effort to offset newly established American aid to Pakistan, whom had rebuffed an Afghan aid proposal (Reardon, 1969, 157). The traditionally xenophobic Pashtun tribesmen clearly modified their stance due to their hardline on the Pashtunistan cause, and allowed mass foreign intervention in the form of aid. This new relationship forged with the Soviet government would have major ramifications in Afghanistan’s future and independence (Dupree, 1973).

Although the Loya Jirga only convened a handful of times during the period under analysis (1929 – 1963), it stands as a pillar in the decision making process as it relates to decisions of national importance. It exists as a latent power as well. Although the body never convened for issues outside of foreign policy, it still controls issues of taxation and other matters pertinent to government interference in tribal society. The fact that other sensitive issues haven’t been pushed by the monarchy suggests that even though tribal influence rarely manifests itself, the power lays dormant but is no less real, and remains an important part of the patronage relationship with the tribes.

Coupled with the national Loya Jirga, Nadir implemented a bi parliamentary system consisting of an upper and lower house. The lower house was named the National Consultative Assembly (NCA) (Majlis Shura Melli) and the upper house was called the House of Peers (HOP) (Majlis Ayan). The NCA was made up of 116 officials elected by Afghan males and the king appointed the HOP members. The king also appointed the cabinet, could veto any bill, and held broad emergency powers (ibid, 302). These two houses again, built upon the tradition tribal form of governance, the jirga. In the Pashtun communities members of the NAC were elected through the consensus of local jirgas overseen by government officials. These government officials in conjunction with districts elders, known as white beards (muyisafidan), would
preselect candidates from the local community that the *jirga* could choose from (Wilber, 1962, 150). This political exercise is not necessarily democratic in the western sense of the word, but maintains tribal input through consensus and through the use of the traditional tribal structure, which in itself contributes to the legitimacy of the process.

*Local Government*

The Nadir government also reinforced the establishment of local governments throughout the provinces. What developed over time was a fairly robust political system. By 1963 there were 16 provinces and the hierarchy of local government was broken down as followed.

- Provinces
- Sub Provinces
- District
- Sub District
- Town and City
- Village, Nomad Camp

At each level of government, the officer in charge is appointed by the central government. At the sub district level, the sub district governor is assisted by an advisory council consisting of government officials and local representatives. The local officials are appointed through a local *jirga* of landowners and elders of the sub district. This sub district council convenes a *jirga* in which to select one of its own to the district level. The district level council, which assists the district governor, is made up of the informally elected sub district members as well as government officials. This process continues as the district level council nominates one of their own to the sub provincial council and so on to the provincial level, where this council assists and advises the provincial governor (Dupree, Jan 1963, 5). What’s important about this process is the use of the traditional tribal institution, the *jirga*, at each level of government. This system
was essential created from the ground up, using local Pashtun customs as opposed to installing a foreign system, which had the potential of delegitimizing the process.

This description of official local government doesn’t fully reflect the state tribal dynamics that exist. From the perspective of the local qawm, “the aim is to insert the qawm into the state institutions at a level which benefits their own importance.” (Roy, 1986, 24) The local communities essentially see the state as an opponent in a constant tug of war with the qawm. From one perspective the state is viewed as an external body, which distributes resources and subsidies to the qawm. From the reverse perspective, the state is viewed as a predatory agent looking to extract taxes and conscripts for its own benefit. Under this dynamic the representatives of the qawm, khans and maliks, are given increased importance as the middlemen to the state, who gain access to government resources. At the same time, state representatives at the local level such as sub district governors and police, represent the exploitive aspect of the state, and are to be avoided (Smith, 1973, 253).

Khans are generally considered the leader of the tribe. In the Ghizai and eastern tribal areas, the khans representing the qawm are in a state of constant competition with other potential khans. His authority rests solely in the hands of the jirga and the qawm at large. This authority is predicated on his ability to “provide food for others, arbitrate in their disputes and be unflinching in the defense of the interests of his qawm in the clash with the state.” (Roy, 1986, 23) His authority is derived from maintaining patronage with his community either through his own resources or resources extracted from the state. If he falters in this endeavor, a new leader will emerge who provides better patronage and who has proven himself worthy in the eyes of the qawm (ibid). The power of the khan often varies, in the plains were khans are generally large landowners they’ve historically been coopted (to varying levels) into government and maintain a
decisive amount of patronage and therefore power. *Khans* in more mountainous areas like that of Loya Patkia, have less power due to the lack of resources and government interaction, which are necessary for patronage (ISAF, 2010). The *qawms* in many of the Durrani areas tend to be less egalitarian and more hierarchal, which often resembles a feudal system. The largest land owners are often designated as *khans* who act as middle men with the government (Giustozzi, 2006).

*Maliks* represent a different type of community leader but exhibits similar traits as the *khan*, depending on the community. Normally, the *maliks* role is solely as a middleman between the state and community. His patronage is derived from his access to state resources and favors from the state. The *maliks* role is often necessary for the constituency he represents as well as the government (there may also be a *khan* in the community as well, although the *malik* generally represents a smaller constituency). In a local village the government employees and offices are generally completely separated from the village itself. Their ability to infiltrate the village is often stonewalled in the form of local bureaucratic courtesies (ie. Sitting down for tea) and other forms of procrastination, while village authorities become elusive, leaving government officials unable to deal with official business. The *malik* is the bridge between these two groups. He represents the *qawm* to the government and the government to the *qawm*. This creates a dynamic in which the government’s authority isn’t directly linked to the individual but to the community as a whole. Therefore, in this case, the individual is not liable to pay taxes, the community is liable. In the event of some form of transgression, the fines are imposed at the village level as opposed to an individual (Roy, 1986). This relationship preserves the tribal structure where an individual adheres to community decisions via the *jirga* who conveys their
decision to the *malik*, as opposed to circumventing the structure and dealing with the government individually (Smith, 1973).

The avoidance of the state by the Pashtun tribes should not be confused with the rejection of the state. Nadir Shah’s legitimacy, and the subsequent rulers of the monarchy, in the eyes of the tribesmen rests on his ascension to power via the *Loya Jirga*, the religious communities acceptance of the king, and due to the king’s *ipso facto* authority. For these reasons the tribes accept taxation and conscription, with the expectation that the king defends it’s interest specifically by fending off foreign influences (Roy, 1986).

Within tribal society the *jirga* system dominates the communities daily decision making process. The *jirga* holds administrative functions as well as judicial. During the Musahiban monarchy roughly 75% - 90% of court cases were administered within the confines of the *jirga* as opposed to the government supported system which was primarily used for commercial and trade cases. There is even an adjudication system between different tribal groups, where an outside tribe is brought in to arbitrate. Specifically tribes, like the Ahmadzai Durranis, hold the role of intertribal judge and considered specialists in arbitration (Dupree, Jan 1963, 3).

The *jirga* also administers the tribal self-policing unit called the *arabakai*. This self-policing institution is strongest in Loya Paktia and surrounding regions as well as the Kandahar region (where it is call *paltani*). The *arabakai*, in general, are authorized to “implement the *jirga*’s decision”, “maintain law and order”, and “protect and defend borders and boundaries of the tribe or community” (Tariq, 2008, 3). The legal source is derived from the Pashtun code, *Pashtunwali* (ibid, 1). Traditionally it was considered an honor to be a selected by the *jirga* to be part of the policing unit. They were not paid but given rations and weapons from the local
community (Ruttig, 2010). The Arabakai is another example of the local institutions outside of the central government purview. This autonomy from central government infringement, has historically been of central importance and a definitive part in the patron client relations.

The tribal khans and elders were also given authority to designate conscripts to the military. This conscription policy, known as qawmi (tribal), allowed the tribal leaders to designate the tribesmen to join the national army. These tribesmen wouldn’t be separated and would be stationed in close proximity to their home village. Amanullah had instituted a conscription policy known as nufus (population), which didn’t recognize tribal affiliation, thereby undermining the authority of tribal leaders as well as the tribal institutions as a whole (Edwards, 2002, 103). Nadir reversed this policy, placating to tribal influence. In the case of war where lashkars would be needed, the tribal leaders would maintain authority over their respective lashkars. This gave the tribal chiefs additional relevance and authority among their tribes and clans (Gregorian, 1969, 296).

The autonomy of the Pashtun tribes is especially relevant to the tribes of Loya Paktia, due to their military lashkar support of Nadir during the initial invasion. The tribal groups making up the various lashkars, stemming from the various eastern tribes of Greater Paktia (consisting of the provinces of Paktia, Paktika, Khost, and parts of Ghazni), were given special administrative status, which they maintained for the length of the Musahiban dynasty. This included near autonomy from government control, which included exemption from taxes and conscription (TLO, 2010, 2).

The newly formed patron client relationship between the Nadir monarchy and Pashtun tribes reflected a type of collective clientelism, which often enfranchised groups as opposed to
individuals (Claphan, 1982, 11). The newly formed relationship benefitted the client tribal communities in such ways described above; in return the patron monarchy was given support and legitimacy. This support gave the government the ability to collect taxes, create an army through conscription, as well withdrawing support from the eastern tribes and their harassment of the British (Olesen, 1995, 178). This is another patronage relationship where the monarchy ceded to British interest in return for military and economic support. The Nadiri government supported neither the efforts of the Red Shirt movement (the non violent Islamic movement that was working with Ghandi and his efforts) nor the Pathan tribal revolts (the Afridi tribe in 1930 and the Mohmand tribe in 1933). Although he traditionally supported an anti British stance he saw no reason to instigate the foreign power and chose to receive nominal subsidies and aid in a quid pro quo for reining in the eastern tribes (Fraser-Tytler, 1967, 239).

Within this new patronage relationship was an element of cooption of the tribal leaders, or clientelism at the individual level. Nadir and future Musahiban leaders were able to appoint members to the upper parliamentary house, the House of Peers (HOP). This allowed the monarchy to bring tribal leaders (as well as religious leaders) into the central government by appointing them members of parliament. This created a mechanism of cooption by appointing positions of prestige to loyal tribal leaders. Tribal members were also heavily represented in the various ministries, specifically the Ministry of the Interior, which provided an additional mechanism to coopt tribesmen into government (Cervin, 1952, 402). Further more, these members as well as member of the lower house of the National Consultative Assembly (NCA) brought tribal and ethnic leaders to Kabul and away from their constituents during summer and spring months, which were seasons during which uprisings generally occurred (Olesen, 1995, 182).
In tandem with conceding to tribal powers Nadir renewed powers back to the Pashtun religious community, which had previously been stripped by Amanullah. This group was at their height of power as they called for jihad against Amanullah in reaction to his secular reforms. Although Nadir was a modernist at heart, he understood social development couldn’t be rushed and the religious establishment’s support was necessary to maintain power. For these reasons he granted the group new influential power and privilege, thereby creating new patronage networks and mechanisms for cooption. His first order of business was to reverse many of Amanullah’s reforms, which directly confronted the religious establishment. This included closing down schools for girls, calling female student abroad back home, reinstating strict purdah (seclusion) of women (which included the burka) and reinstating polygamy laws (Gregorian, 1969, 295). As these reforms were a clear nod to the ulama he would go further and institutionalize the ulama and solidify new broad powers into law via the 1931 constitution.

Nadir formally institutionalize the ulama for the first time in Afghan history. Traditionally the ulama lacked any formal organization and constituted a class of well educated religious clergy. Nadir created the Society of Ulama (Jamiat-i Ulama) that was called upon to interpret Islamic law and to advise on religious reforms in the country. Initially, their new powers were real, as they quickly stripped women of many of their rights (including voting), and advised the king on other pertinent issues in education, politics, and other every day affairs (such as dietary reform, outlawing alcohol) (Olesen, 1995, 181).

The constitution of 1931 was another mechanism to solidify the acquiescence of the religious community and a new venue for patronage. The constitution heavily focused on the
implementation of Islamic law and the countries constitutional adherence to it, which is not just a nod to the ulama but the tribal establishment as well (ibid, 305). The constitution sets the tone of the newly formed relationship between the central government and ulama by beginning as such, “In the name of Allah the most merciful.” This is followed by Article 1, which continues to stress the importance of Hanafi Islam, and is translated below.

Article 1. --- “The faith of Afghanistan is the sacred faith of Islam and the official religion and that of the population in general is the Hanafi religion. The King of Afghanistan should be a follower of this religion. Followers of other religions, such as Hindus and Jews, who live in Afghanistan, provided they do not infringe the ordinary rules of conduct and propriety, also enjoy protection.”

(Max Planck Institute, Constitution of 1931)

This first article is in stark contrast to the first article in the prior 1923 constitution created by Amanullah, which declares that Afghanistan is a free and independent country (Max Planck Institute, Constitution of 1923). This statement is brought back into the 1964 constitution with the addition of explicitly noting the constitutional monarchy of the country (Max Planck Institute, Constitution of 1964). Under both the 1923 and 1964 constitutions the first article is void of the word Islam, Sharia, or Hanafi. The point being, Nadir is clearly making efforts to placate and garner the support of the religious establishment by stressing the importance of Sharia and Islam in the country’s constitution.

Articles 87-96 created an Islamic judiciary where the Ministry of Justice was to strictly enforce the Hanafi Islamic school of jurisprudence. The law throughout the land would be based on sharia law with some exceptions in commercial arbitration. The relevant articles are stated below.

Article 87 – General suits under Shariat law will be filed in the Court of Justice
Article 88 – Suits filed in the Shariat courts are dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Hanafi religion.

Article 91 - Every person may plead in court any provision of Shariat law to protect his rights

Article 92 - Courts of Justice may not delay the hearing and decision of cases, except as provided by Shariat law

(Max Planck Institute, Constitution of 1931)

Although other articles provide room for a more secular law for commercial disputes, the religious establishment unequivocally, according to the 1931 Constitution, is the adjudicator for the vast majority of court cases in Afghanistan. Theoretically this had the potential to lay the groundwork to drastically increase the influence of the ulama. The reach of the Ministry of Justice would eventually reach into nearly every single district, with roughly 171 lower courts, known as the Lower Court of Innovation (or mahkameh-i ebtideh) (Wilber, 1962, 162). The judges, or qazi, are appointed by the Minister of Justice based off their religious expertise and leadership. The qazi is assisted by the mufti and the mohtasib. The mufti plays the role of religious counselor and prosecutor. He’ll assist the court in citing the relevant religious precedent or fatwa the case relates too. The mohtasib acts to essentially ensure proper religious custom is practiced throughout the proceedings and in the courthouse (ibid, 69).

These new patron client relations not only increased the influence of religious community but established a mechanism for cooption as well. As discussed the ulama was once an unorganized group of educated clergy, making it difficult for the government to confront the organization without a leader or hierarchy. Now with the ulama under government control, the clergy morphed into government paid civil servants, dependent on the state. The government now could address the leadership within the ulama and quell rebellious sentiment or confront issues that may have deleterious effects on the ruling establishment. The installation of Jamiat
Ulama simply created an organization with an established hierarchy making it more accommodating to cooption, rather then having to coopt on an individual basis. In other words creating a community clientelistic relationship rather then maintaining many individual patronage relationships (Olesen, 1995, 184).

The strength of the relationship between the religious establishment and monarchy would be tested on a number of occasions in the decades to come. Most notably was the government’s defense of the clergy during the Liberal Parliament era (1949-1952). The Liberal Parliament era was a result of the educated urban elite calling for more dramatic social and economic reforms. The government, under Nadir’s brother Mahmud, accepted a more aggressive push for reform measures, which included a free press and a more liberal parliament. These liberals began to push the envelope by targeting the conservative clergy as the obstacles to progress. As the virulence rose the government quickly stepped in and shut down liberal newspapers and arrested liberal reformers (who were subsequently freed), and the country reverted back to the status quo. This is meant to illustrate how, the government as a rational actor, chose to defend the interest of the clergy rather then pursuing social reforms which it was ultimately striving for. The threat of a religious backlash was still real and apparently wasn’t worth testing, although a decade later Daoud would again push the envelope but only after the sufficient weakening of the clergy (Dupree, 1973, 496).

Nadir also placated to the local mullahs by reversing Amanullah’s law to institutionalize the madrassa system, which required that all madrassas be state run. Mullahs, ran both the local mosques as well as the local maktabs or madrassas. They were often times the only literate or semi educated person in a village and was depended upon to provide education at the primary level, which centered on religious instruction. Amanullah, in an attempt to modernize the
education system, stripped the local mullahs of authority over the private madrassas that they ran. Nadir reversed this by allowing mullahs to reopen their local madrassas without government interference. (Olesen, 1995, 185) This was among his most notable reforms, which gave “recognition of the traditional mosque schools, which existed in every village, and in each street of the towns, as an integral part of the school system.” (Shah, 1939, 265) These local maktabs, traditionally financed through local donations, would also receive government contributions (ibid). The Ministry of Education would also assist the mullahs by often times supplying materials and textbooks, but would leave the curriculum in the hands of the local clergy (Wilber, 1962). In addition to surrendering local control of education to the local mullahs, they further compromised with the religious community by banning Western language curriculum at the primary level (which was viewed as foreign ideological infringement) and closed down schools for girls. The exception to this was the Malalai school for nurses and midwives, which essentially was the only school for girls in the early years of the monarchy, it wouldn’t be until the early 1950s that it would evolve into a true secondary school (Gregorian, 1969). Over the era of Musahiban leadership the government would avoid infringing on the mullah’s local authority but at the same time instituting a competing education and religious education system in an effort to modernize society and create a more nationalistic ideology. The monarchy’s efforts in this arena will be discussed further on in the analysis.

Conclusion

The rational actor theory assumes “individuals have preferences and act instrumentally so as to achieve what they prefer.” (Uhlner, 1986, 554) The actions of Nadir Shah exemplify this concept in which he placates to the tribal and religious communities, whose support was essential to maintain power. Upon his ascension to the throne he created new reforms and
measures to placate to both of these communities, in doing so creating patronage networks in an effort to attain his goal of maintaining power. Political clientelism dictates that the exchange between two parties is from unequal positions (Clapham, 1982, 4). This is interesting to note due to the fact that Nadir was the weaker of the two parties upon his ascension to the throne, his success was almost completely predicated on religious approval and tribal military support. The creation of the 1931 constitution and the related reforms were based on this relationship dynamic, which inevitably created newly formed institution heavily influenced by the two groups. As the analysis will demonstrate, the relationship dynamic will eventually transfer power from the religious and tribal communities back to the central government. With the development of this new power structure, future Musahiban leaders will attempt to implement economic and social reform while maintaining their relationship with the religious and tribal communities via the various patron client networks.

Part 2 – The Role of Development in the Pashtun Patronage Relationship

In 1933 Nadir Shah was assassinated by a pro Amanullah supporter, ending his short tenure in power. Within the ruling clan, Nadir’s three brothers rallied behind his nineteen year old son Zahir, crowning him the new king and maintaining the continuity of the monarchy. The three brothers maintained their position in government but were elevated in the power structure. Meaning, Mohammad Hashim Khan continued holding the position of prime minister, but would essentially rule the country (Dupree, 1973, 477). This period of avuncular leadership (where Zahir’s uncles would lead the country) lasted through Hashim’s abdication in 1946 and Shah Mahmud’s leadership from 1946 – 1953.
The economic initiatives of the period are especially pertinent as it relates to the monarchies relationship with the tribal periphery. Originally Nadir had embraced the idea of economic development, much as his predecessor Amanullah had done. Although the Musahiban monarchy would pursue these goals at a much more gradual pace, one that was more in tune with society and wouldn’t threaten the Pashtun tribes. In Nadir’s own words:

“I am for a certain progress and for cultural reforms in the Western sense: but I want such reforms to be introduced with a slower pace than those adopted by Amanullah. That fact that Amanullah’s reforms brought his downfall does not prove in any way that they were bad. If in order to cure himself fast the sick absorbed a potion tenfold stronger than prescribed by the doctor, he certainly may become sicker. That, however does not prove in any way that the medicine itself was bad.” (Gregorian, 1969, 293)

These development initiatives, a primary element of the patronage relationship, would play an important part in the Musahiban’s relationship with the Pashtun periphery. As the rational actor model suggest, an individuals goals can be ‘other regarding’ or altruistic, although are no less self interested (Riker, 1995, 37). Meaning the development initiatives could be perceived as purely altruistic. Although, more importantly, the development measures also support self serving values, along the lines of the ‘thick’ interpretation of the rational choice model, that of power (Green, 1994). These development goals will distribute welfare to landless Pashtun peasants, and along with education reforms and creation of a modern army, will contribute to a national ideology and allegiance. This will have an undermining effect on tribal influence, as the government becomes to be viewed as a provider of services as opposed to its traditional role of exploiter.

An important aspect of the development reforms, relates to how these initiatives were funded. New tax revenues derived internally would enable the government to firstly function as a government but also implement these much needed economic and development reforms. These
new tax revenues would also allow the monarchy to continue supporting the patronage relationships with the tribal communities. Monies, derived internally, would have the following effects as it relates to the political clientelism in the country.

1. Internal sources of revenue allowed the monarchy to maintain their patron obligations by maintaining low or nonexistent tax rates with the tribal communities, thereby maintaining their continued autonomy.

2. Internal sources of revenue allowed the monarchy to avoid reliance on foreign sources of income to fund their development plans and operations of government. Again, this allowed the government to preserve the existing patronage relationships with the tribes who have traditionally shunned any foreign interference.

3. Internal sources of revenue were deployed to finance infrastructure and other developmental projects, which benefitted southern Pashtun communities. This gave rural communities the sense that government infringement wasn’t necessarily exploitive, as was the traditional point of view, which garnered new allegiances and supported a nationalistic ideology.

Economic Reform and a New Source of Revenue

This period would focus attention and resources on development initiatives. In pursuit of these initiatives the government maintained a relatively isolationist stance as it relates to the international community, and would continually rebuff his powerful neighbor’s encroachment, highlighted in the fact both Russian and Britain trade missions were banned in the country. Although, Hashim would eventually accept assistance from other seemingly less threatening nations (Dupree, 1973, 478). This economic isolation coupled with the inability (or desire) to tax the rural tribes meant the country would have to grow organically and tax revenues would have to be derived from commerce (as opposed to agriculture, which was dominated by Pashtuns). This would coincide with replacing the merchant base whom was primarily Indian with capital and trade companies derived internally (Olesen, 1995, 200). With these intentions in mind the
Afghan government blessed a new privately held Afghan National Bank (Bank-I Milli) and the creation of joint stock companies that would monopolize the trade in various agriculture products (called *shirkats*) (Franek, 1949, 431).

Chartered in 1932 the Afghan National Bank was created by a group of Herati merchants financed by 7 million afghanis (the currency) (or roughly half a million dollars), an extremely large sum of money at the time (Cervin, 1952, 411). The business was granted a comprehensive control of trade, the economy, and currency control. Under this bank, *shirkats* (joint stock companies) sprouted up which monopolized various trade; Afghanistan’s largest exports were cotton, fruits/vegetables, grains, and karakul skins (Rubin, 2002, 59). Over the next ten years more then a hundred *shirkats* would be established, the most important of which were the Karakul Company (established in 1934) and the Sugar and Petroleum Company (also established in 1934) (Franck, 1949, 431). This was really the first time national companies had emerged in the country, and created new investment opportunities. The success of this model was remarkable. The capital of the National Bank increased to roughly 650 million afghanis by 1950 (from 7 million in 1932) (Dupree, 1973, 362).

The success of the Afghan National Bank and its joint stock trading company spin offs had multiple effects. First the government benefitted enormously. The government originally invested 2.1 million afghanis (or roughly $160,000) in 1935. This investment returned 2.6 million afghanis on top of the original investment by 1939 when the government withdrew their stake in the company. The bank at this time, also lent the government a whopping 16 million afghani loan (ibid, 412). The government also held stakes in the various joint stock companies. These were set up such that company monopolized the trade and light industry of a particular product (like sugar), but the government was given a 40 – 45% stake. This gave the government
the capacity to control production on various agriculture products as well as provide income (Olesen, 1995, 200).

The increase in Gross National Product during this time was substantial. With a GNP of 2,493 million afghanis in 1935 and a GNP of 9,596 million in 1945, representing nearly a 300% increase in 10 years (Rubin, 2002, 63). The exports of karakul, the countries leading export (making of roughly 40-50% of the total), more then doubled between 1935 and 1945 (Gregorian, 1969, 368). As the below chart demonstrates, overall exports accelerated drastically leading up to and through the Second World War.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Exports (million afghanis)</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>258</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>59.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>19.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>-9.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>3.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>25.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>26.99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The data used in creating this chart was derived from Vartan Gregorian’s The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan, page 369

The government of course, benefitted hugely from these dramatic increases, not only by partial ownership, but also indirect taxes. With a hand in the various joint stock companies they were able to easily regulate the taxing of exports (Rubin, 2002, 59).
The significant increase in tax revenue allowed the government to avoid finding other sources of income. This meant they could avoid possible confrontation with the tribal groups, by not pushing for higher land and livestock taxes, and also not have to depend on foreign countries for aid, thereby maintaining their highly cherished independence. They managed to do this while at the same time implementing their own development polices with a focus on irrigation and road building. The taxes derived from land and livestock (which would have most effect the tribal communities) would decrease for decades as a percentage of the economy. By 1953 land and livestock taxes accounted for just 14% of domestic revenue (40% came from taxing of foreign trade), by 1973 it would account for just 1% (Rubin, 2002, 61). This focus on economic development created much needed revenue in order to avoid taxing the tribes thereby infringing on their autonomy, which could lead to possible confrontation. The need to tax tribal communities was part of the reason for Amanullah’s downfall and created tribal warfare under Abdur Rahman (ibid, 60). It also created a means to actually contribute to rural societies livelihoods rather then playing the historical role as exploiter. Providing resources to the various Pashtun communities gave them the ability to supersede the tribal structure by providing welfare to individual Pashtuns, with the intention of creating national allegiance.

**Government Funded Development and the Helmand Valley Project**

The formation of the various *shirkats* (or joint stock companies) and banks, the installation of roads, and the implementation of irrigation projects all meant to capitalize on the country’s primary economic strength which was agriculture. The country’s development plans were initially laid out in the Overall Economic Development Plan of 1932-1938 and the Seven Year Economic Plan beginning in 1939. These plans primarily focused on the improvement of agriculture through irrigation development and infrastructure as well as communication,
transportation, and hydroelectric power (Gregorian, 1969, 370). These government funded projects would disproportionately benefit Pashtun tribal society.

The implementation of a much needed road system (or a much improved road system) began under the reign of Nadir Shah. He would connect the Indus and Oxus valleys, travelling over the Hindu Kush mountain range, by road for the first time (Fraser-Tytler, 1967, 213). The geography of the country makes transportation difficult, which undermines not only economic progress but communication and government influence in rural areas as well. Kabul itself sits at 6,400 feet above sea level, but to travel west and you must travel as high as 10,000 and 14,000 feet, making roadwork very difficult. To the east, by the Pakistan border, was almost impossible to create passable carriage (M.B, 1941, 1908). Despite the topographical obstacles, the Afghan government between 1933 and 1946 built over 2,000 miles of road. New roads connected the Chinese border and the Soviet border that housed a train station as well as roads connecting Kandahar, Kabul, Herat, and Mazir Sharif. Along with the new road system trucking and bus companies emerged with a more productive postal service. More then 1000 trucks were imported in the late 1930’s, which were badly needed as the export business emerged (Gregorian, 1969, 366). The development of roads would continue under the future government of Daoud as well. Between 1951 and 1972 roughly 1,500 miles of roads were laid and completed (Rubin, 2002, 78), with more then half of the development funding being used for transportation and communication between 1957 – 1964. The US financed the road built from Kabul to Kandahar (Daoud had been granted approval by the Loya Jirga to receive foreign aid from the US and USSR). The Russian financed the road from Herat to Kandahar as well as Kabul to the Soviet Union via the Salang Tunnel. This created a national marketplace rather then various local markets, which reached into Iran, the Soviet Union, and Pakistan. (ibid, 79).
The majority of the road work focused around Pashtun dominated Kandahar. These roads would predominantly benefit a relatively small community in Afghanistan, where the general population, for the most part, didn’t own cars and wouldn’t use the new road work. Who did benefit from this newly installed road system was the trucking and smuggling industry. The dominant players in this industry were the eastern tribes of Loya Patika as well as eastern Ghilzai tribes (ibid, 67). As we’ll see, although these tribes benefited from the newly formed roadwork, they also became concerned with the perceived government interference.

The crux of the development reform centered on the Helmand Valley Project (HVP) and other irrigation development projects. Zahir Shah and his two prime ministers during the avuncular period decided rather to force industrialization onto an unsophisticated society they would initially focus their attention on agriculture reform which would breed more immediate benefits. These irrigation plans focused north of the Hindu Kush in the plains between rivers leading up to the Oxus River (Wilber, 1953, 488). In the south they took on what would be known as one of the most ambitions plan in Afghan modern history, known as the Helmand Valley Project. This project centers on the control and distribution of the Helmand River. The Helmand River is the longest in Afghanistan running roughly 715 miles (1,150 km) originating in the Hindu Kush just west of Kabul, then runs south and west into Iran. The vast irrigation scheme was championed by the Afghan government in tandem with the American based company, Morrison Knudsen. The initial estimate of the project was $10.7 million but ended up costing $63.7 million, clearly not a well executed plan. Although the project missed some expectations it still managed to irrigate 170,000 acres of land, which created new resources and contributed to the over all welfare of the rural community (Zakhilwal, 2010, 3).
A primary purpose for the HVP was not only to create a new source of government income by increasing agriculture production but also to raise the standard of living among the landless and nomadic (ibid, 2). Many nomads were no longer able to migrate into Pakistan (after Pakistan – Afghanistan relations deteriorated) and looked to settle. The government assisted the nomads and landless peasants through subsidizing land, real estate tax, seed, and equipment. The settlement of these groups was a major component of the irrigation projects. The plan was to allot up to 25 acres per family with an expectation of assisting nearly 20,000 different families (Franck, 1949, 426). This effort on behalf of the government was truly unusual in Afghan history.

It’s important to note the significance of creating irrigable land to distribute to landless Pashtuns. As mentioned in the prior chapter, conflict in Pashtun society is often derived from zar, zan, and zamin (gold, women, and land) and an individuals’ access to them, especially as it relates to agnatic rivalries. Land ownership, which is a primary indicator of one’s status, often leads to blood feuds, and generally breeds discontent (Poullada, 1970, 14). By supplying landless Pashtun tribesmen land they can irrigate and live off, they’ve not only created a new form of economic stimulus but have potentially subdued future quarrels among tribesmen, this of course contributes to the over all stability of the group and the country.

In the mid 1950’s families began to settle in the newly erected villages (complete with a mosque and bazaar) to farm the newly irrigable land. The first of the villages to be settled was just outside the Helmand capital of Lashkar Gah, in a village called Nad-i Ali. Here, between 2,500 and 3,000 families settled. The families were primarily Pashtun with roughly 1,200 of them nomadic. The Pashtuns were representative of the spectrum of clans, which included Ghilzai tribes, Durrani tribes, and eastern Pashtun tribes such as Afridi and Wardak (Dupree,
1973, 503). Although, throughout all the settled areas the Popalzai, Barakzai, and Nurzai were the most widely represented of the new settlers who represented the largest tribes in Helmand (Stevens, 1965, 34).

At Nad-i Ali the government supplied each family with the supplies and assets needed to start farming, which consisted of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Afghanis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land 30 Jiribs*</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Material for house</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One ox</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm equipment</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat seed and food</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1 jirib is roughly .5 acres, 2000 sq meters, or 1/5 of a hectare

Figure 2 – Description of Government Supported Financing and the Helmand Valley Project (Stevens, 1965, 50)

Although the government directly subsidies much of the development project, these expenses were expected to be paid back. A landowner was expected to make repayments each year for twenty years, at zero percent interest (ibid, 51). On top of these generous terms, the government taxes on land and livestock were as low as one quarter of one percent (based off the value of the asset) (ibid, x).

The second area to be settled under the Helmand Valley Authority was in Marja in 1957, in Helmand province. 730 families made up the original settlers but almost 2000 more would join them in the next decade or so. Of the original families, they would successfully put 55,000
jeribs (27,500 acres) under cultivation. Again, the majority of these newly settled farmers were Pashtun ethnicity (Dupree, 1973, 504).

Other aspects of government involvement contributed to the livelihood of the newly settled farmers. The HVA invested in a cotton gin as well as an alabaster plant. The cotton gin, which is owned and operated by the government, is a source of cash to the farmers, whom sell cotton to the government which is ginned then sent either to export or used locally (Steven, 1965, 62). The government also initiated a project to evaluate the feasibility of modern machinery. In conjunction with the Indian/American corporation, Indamer, the government operated and trained farmers on nine plows in the new established settlements (Dupree, 1960, 6).

**Conclusion**

The avuncular period marked the beginning of the moderate developmental reforms envisioned by Nadir Shah, under the leadership of Hashim, Mahmud, and the newly appointed king, Zahir Shah. Under their leadership the Afghan government liberalized economic reforms, allowing a nascent merchant class to exploit the countries natural resources and created a national bank to finance the entrepreneurial endeavors. This created new revenues for the Afghan government via tax income derived from the emerging merchant class and by partial ownership of the various *shirkats*. These two forms of revenue allowed the country to avoid further interference from foreign countries (via aid) and avoid taxing the rural tribal societies, at the same time embarking on aggressive development initiatives. Traditionally the central government was viewed as an exploiter, and now “for the fist time in history, the Afghan farmer can feel that the government is concerned with his well-being.” (Wilber, 1953, 488) This magnifies an important element of the Musahiban leadership. As the rational choice model
suggests, the actions of an individual don’t necessarily have to be materially self serving, meaning they can be altruistic, or benefit others (Riker, 1995, 37). The development and economic reforms in many ways exemplify this concept. They also demonstrate how the government utilized the welfare system to enfranchise the Pashtun tribal communities in an effort to further stability of the south by providing land to landless Pashtuns, as well as superseded the tribal structure to garner individual allegiances in support of the government.

Part 3 – A Developing National Conscience; a Shifting Social Dynamic

Prime Minister Mahmud stepped down in 1953 and was succeeded by Mohammad Daoud, while King Zahir Shah continued to maintain his position on the thrown. This period within the Musahiban dynasty marked a relative shift in the power dynamic between the central government and the Pashtun tribes. At the emergence of Nadir Shah in 1929, the Pashtun tribal and religious communities were at their height of power. By 1963, after years of gradual reforms and the inculcation of a national identity, coupled with a dramatic military build up, the government began pursuing more aggressive social and economic measures. The creation of a national identity and allegiance to the state was instilled through the education and military systems. Educational reforms, a primary focus of Musahiban initiatives, would also support a more progressive religious narrative, in an effort to create a more modern minded populace and to offset the conservative teachings at local maktabs and madrassas. These reforms coincided with the government’s continuous build up of military forces, followed by accelerated military build up under Daoud with the assistance of the USSR and US. A loyal and strong military force, coupled with the development of a more progressive religious and education system, created a relative shift in the power dynamic in the patron client relationship. The patronage network still existed but the patron (the central government) had gradually become more
powerful, allowing them to resist Pashtun tribal and religious pressures, and as we’ll see, pursue more aggressive social reforms.

Daoud was relatively young (43 years of age) when he ascended to leadership but had been groomed by his uncle Hashim for decades (Dupree, 1973, 498). As the new Prime Minister, Daoud’s initial concern related to the Pashtunistan cause. Daoud, who had studied in Germany, was influenced by the nationalistic agenda of Adolf Hitler. Hitler’s radical nationalism fit nicely into the current ideology of the Pashtun cause, which above all else pushed for the liberalization of the Pashtuns in the east of the Durrand line (Saikal, 2004, 112). This cause garnered him support among the traditionally xenophobic Pashtun communities to seek foreign aid from both the USSR and the US. This influx of aid allowed him to dramatically strengthen the military. This, coupled with reforms in education, and the diminished influence of the clergy, created an atmosphere which allowed him to accelerate reforms and confront both the clergy and tribes. Before delving into this new social dynamic, it’s worth reviewing the international atmosphere at the time.

*Aid and Military Development*

The 1947 British withdrawal of the sub continent created a power vacuum that was quickly filled by both the United States and Russia. As the Cold War ensued the US established the Baghdad Pact (later in 1958 called the Central Treaty Organization or CENTO), which created a defensive alliance among the Middle East and Central Asian states of Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and Iraq, in an effort to repulse Soviet influence (Saikal, 2004, 118). This coincided with the deterioration of relations with Pakistan in 1955, due to the Pakistani policy of the ‘One-Unit Act’, where the Pashtun dominated North West Frontier Province was consolidated under a
new West Pakistan province. This immediately provoked a reaction among the Afghan Pashtuns who saw this as a move detrimental to the Pashtunistan cause. Pashtuns attacked the Pakistani embassy and consulates throughout the country, which led to a suspension in diplomatic relations and trade (Hasan, 1962, 16).

This turmoil was exacerbated by American approval of arms to Pakistan. Daoud, whose request for American aid was rejected, would approach the Soviets to establish a new relationship predicated on increased military aid. He would first consult a *Loya Jirga* for approval of the new relationship. The Pashtuns *jirga* would modify their traditional xenophobic tendencies and approved the new relationship due to their hardline stance on the Pashtunistan cause. This created an influx of foreign aid unseen in Afghan history. This aid was coupled with American aid, who although chose not to compete with Russia as the primary patron of the country, did attempt to complement the Russian aid in an effort to diversify Afghan dependence (Reardon, 1969, 159). The Soviets and its eastern European allies provided the bulk of the military aid, which from 1955 to 1960 totaled $215 million and American aid during this same period totaled $127 million (Dupree, 1960, 4). Through 1965 Soviet aid nearly doubled U.S. aid, which stood at roughly $650 and $325 million, respectively (Eltezam, 1966, 95). In addition, the Soviets also provided the spare parts and tools as well as training for military personal (Hyman, 1984, 29). The influx in foreign aid allowed for a dramatic increase in government expenditures, both military and developmental. Developmental expenditures jumped from 205 million afghanis in 1954 to 1,830 afghanis in 1963. At the beginning of Daoud’s term in 1953, defense and security expenditures amounted to roughly 280 million afghanis. By the end of Daoud’s tenure in 1963 defense spending reached nearly 750 million afghanis, almost a three-fold increase (Rubin, 2002, 68).
The army’s goals during this time were twofold. First, it was meant to create national allegiance, superseding tribal ties. Second, create a force that could forcefully suppress internal unrest and fight in conventional warfare against another state. The creation of a modern professional army was a conscious effort beginning under Nadir in 1929. He had learned the lessons of Amanullah, who not only accelerated reform measures at such a pace to irritate the tribal and religious communities, but due to his focus on reform left the military to deteriorate which stood at a paltry 11,000 men strong at the end of his tenure (Jalali, 2002). Nadir learned the lessons from his predecessor and allocated roughly half of government expenditures to the military, his successors would follow suit (Gregorian, 1969, 370). The military eventually grew to roughly 98,000 men under Daoud (Jalali, 2002). This was coupled with Russia and its allies providing tanks, M.I.G fighter jets, helicopters, small arms, and Ilyushin-28 jet bombers (Dupree, 1973, 522) and the construction of military bases and airfields, such as the Beigram airbase (Reardon, 1969, 158). The massive influx of military support after years of government spending would fully shift military dominance of the state over the tribes. This would come to a head as Daoud pushes for accelerated economic and social reforms, which will be discussed later.

The other challenge the military was meant to overcome was the tribal allegiances that superseded national allegiance. The military structure was used as a venue to instill nationalistic ideology. During the early years of the monarchy the government was heavily dependent on the tribal lashkars (solely dependent on them during the over throw of Amanullah), which operated as part time local militias, whose participation garnered them “tax breaks, land ownership, cash payment, or other privileges in return.” (Jalali, 2002, 75) Due to their independence these lashkars were viewed as both a support mechanism but also a threat, if they chose to turn on the
government (as they’ve done in the past). The government, beginning with Nadir, attempted to counter this by creating a national army with an institutional identity. Nadir reopened the Afghan military academy in 1930 and recruited among the Pashtun tribal aristocracy into its officer corps (ibid). Daoud would open similar military boarding schools, which focused their recruitment among the sons of khans of the Ghilzai and eastern tribes. The students would be separated from their families and qawms, and at a young age, trained to become officers in the army and indoctrinated into the state (Rubin, 2002). This created another venue in which the tribes used to increase their own influence in government, but turned primarily into a venue in which to coopt future tribal leaders and further create national allegiance. Overtime, the military structure became both a security force as well as a national education institute. Recruits would receive, in conjunction with military education, literacy and civic lessons, meant to further integrate the Afghan populace into the national mindset (Jalali, 2002). Daoud would further the education and professionalization of the army by sending thousands of officers to Russia and Czechoslovakia (Hyman, 1984, 29). The army became the most “significant integrating institution” in Afghan society (Jalali, 2002, 80). This integration was also supported by progressive educational reforms.

**Progressive Educational Reform**

Reforms in education were meant to create a national identity and consciousness as well as “pave the way for people’s acceptance of social reforms.” (Gregorian, 1969, 307) The Musahiban monarchy would pursue these reforms at a gradual pace while at the same time coopting and placating to the religious constituency and the local mullahs. As previously discussed, the government conceded local education to the authority of the local mullahs in the village maktabs, which accounted for the majority of primary education. Coinciding with the
support of the local mullahs the government would create an alternative education system, albeit one still centered on religion.

The reforms initiated in 1935 created government run schools which competed with the mullah run maktabs at the primary level (roughly ages 5 – 11), as well as created secondary schools and eventually higher level education and universities (Shah, 1939). The primary schools (located in village and district centers) and secondary schools (mostly found in provincial centers), held enrollments of roughly 93,000 students by 1946 and nearly 400,000 by the end of the Daoud regime in 1963 (Rubin, 2002), although the vast majority (roughly 90% by 1959) catered only to boys. The secondary schools focused much of their education on curriculum such as math, science, language, history, and physical education, although religion was deeply imbedded in all aspects of learning. The government’s goal, in addition to pursuing modernization reforms, was to create “good Muslims and staunch nationalists” (Gregorian, 1969, 353). In this effort to promote national consciousness the government created Pashtu speaking secondary boarding schools meant to cater to the sons of tribal leadership. Two of which, the Rahman Baba and Khushkal Khan schools, catered to the eastern tribes on both sides of the Durrand Line, in an effort to promote national ideology among the most pugnacious of the tribal groups (Rubin, 2002). Additionally elite secondary schools, meant for future Afghan leaders, were opened and run by various foreign countries, such as the Habibiya (American system), Istiqlal (French system), Nejat (German system), and Ghazi (British system), their graduates were expected to enroll in western universities and were among the elite of society. Lastly, the foundation of what is now Kabul University was opened in 1932, again with support from outside systems (Olesen, 1995).
Initially the education system was often viewed as threatening especially among the rural villagers who viewed an education past the primary maktab level as foreign and not supporting of Muslim values (Wilber, 1962). The rural elite viewed education as a potential threat to their own authority, but began to realize the graduates of the system became part of the central government bureaucracy, which would give them additional influence. This again exemplifies the give and take, relationship of mutual benefit, where the villagers send their sons to government run secondary schools, where they become indoctrinated with a national consciousness, and in return they join the government giving the qawm or tribe added influence (Rubin, 2002).

The Ministry of Education also created a more progressive religious school in an effort to create a more progress religious dialogue. The Madrasa Ulum-i Sharia, located just outside of Kabul, was meant to establish a “modern and broad-minded class of priests which will be able to help in the general reform of the country.” (Wilber, 1962, 69) Their progressive stance was exemplified when the government had requested the opinion of its teachers regarding the requirement of women and purdah. The response from the school’s clerics was clearly a moderate position and would not deny the fact purdah was non-existent in the Koran (Wilber, 1956, 107). As we’ll see, this eventually led to the public unveiling of aristocratic women, which would cause a stir among the religious conservatives. This emerging group, with its progressive ideology and access to the monarchy, clearly had an undermining effect on the conservative and traditional religious establishment.
Declining Religious Influence

Declining religious influence coincided with the educational and military reforms, which collectively would allow the government to push forward on more aggressive social measures. Their diminishing influence was due to three primary reasons; cooption of the ulama and religious authorities, implementation of competing judiciary, and as noted above, the implementation of a more progressive education system.

“The importance of the Afghan religious leaders resides in their ability to arouse devout and suggestible followers on occasions when acts and policies of the government are regarded as offensive to Moslem faith and traditions.” (Wilber, 1962, 146) The ulama’s ability to rouse the Pashtun populace by the end of Daoud’s reign was clearly in decline. Over the period of the Musahiban monarchy the ulama would become ingrained and coopted into government. The same religious authorities that had called for the over throw of Amanullah, that of the Jilani and Mujaddidi families (both Sufi pirs or leaders), would become embedded in the government establishment. The Mujaddidi chief, Fazl Ahmed, became the Minister of Justice with his son appointed as deputy. Other family members would become senators and diplomats. The religious families would often times solidify their relationship through intermarriage as well (Olesen, 1995, 186). Younger generations of these families would become accustom to their stature in life, many of whom would become part of the educated class, creating a more progressive religious clergy (Wilber, 1962, 148). Jamiat-i Ulema’s role, the religious authority meant to advise the government, would diminish significantly as its numbers dwindled to only fifteen members and was left leaderless. The government’s avoidance of the group, exemplified by the fact they chose not to appoint new members, was an indicator of their declining influence (ibid, 67). The monarchy instead sought advice from more progressive religious leaders such as
the royal imam, Musa Shafiq, who held graduate degrees from al Azhar in Cairo as well as Columbia University in New York (Rubin, 2002, 72), or from the authorities at the government run, progressive religious secondary school, Madrassa Ulum-i Sharia (Wilber, 1962, 69).

The judiciary exemplified another arena in which the religious authorities saw their influence deteriorate. Although the 1931 constitution plainly stipulates Sharia law as the primary source of legal code, competing sources of law were gradually introduced. Most notably was the implementation of statutory laws relating to commercial disputes. These laws were similar to western forms of jurisprudence as opposed to the Hanafi school of jurisprudence that was stipulated under the constitution (Olesen, 1995, 189). Judges were appointed from Kabul University’s Faculty of Law (as opposed to Faculty of Sharia) and the appeals process took place outside the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and reverted to a Board of Commercial Arbitration. Other forms of law skirted sharia influence, the Ministry of Communication adjudicated issues arising from telecommunications and mail, minor infringements of the law were adjudicated summarily by police courts under the governor’s jurisdiction (Wilber, 1956, 92), this is to say nothing of the informal jirga system that existed.

Over the thirty-year period under analysis, the religious authority never attempted to arouse its followers to take action against the government, an indication of both their diminished influence and cooption into government. The religious incitation of the populace only materialized sporadically at the local level, primarily due to Daoud’s accelerated social reforms. Daoud was able to pursue these social reforms due to the reasons discussed; increased military buildup, cooption and diminished influence of ulama, and creating an allegiance throughout the country through military and educational reforms.
The Government’s Accelerated Reforms, a New Social Dynamic

After years of increasing the strength of the military, diminishing the influence of the religious establishment, and imbedding national solidarity through education and military reforms, Daoud began to pursue more aggressive reform measures. This represented a marked shift in the dynamics of the patron client relationship. As political clientelism represents a relationship among unequals (Clapham, 1982), the fulcrum on which this relationship rests has shifted towards the side of the monarchy. This shift represents the strengthening position of the monarchy, as the patron, since the time of Nadir. Daoud would harness this new position by pushing forward social and economic reforms and quelling unrest through military force or the threat thereof.

The most important of the social reforms was the public unveiling of the female aristocracy during the celebration of Jeshn in 1959. This was the first direct challenge to the status quo with the religious community since Amanullah attempted the same reforms, which partly led to his abdication. This unveiling (the women stood in public exposing their head and shoulders) signified to the public that it was a woman’s choice to cover themselves, which had been a religious tradition (purdah). This created a stir among some of the more conservative local mullahs, who challenged the government’s decision. However, they were no match for Daoud’s new cadre of religious scholars and the authorities at Madrasa Ulum-i Sharia, all of whom supported the unveiling (Wilber, 1956, 107). The confrontation dissipated as local mullahs lacked the intellectual capacity to confront the new religious leadership, and more importantly realized there was little public support for their cause (Dupree, 1973, 532).
Religious agitation over the unveiling would arise again in Kandahar when the government began enforcing land taxes, which had been overlooked for decades. Each year Kandahari landlords and local officials would defy the governor’s call for taxes by marching to the local mosque and declaring *bast*, or sanctuary. Traditionally the governor would cede to the local leaders demands and withdraw the tax request. In 1959, the course of events took a different turn, instead of allowing local leaders to declare *bast*, police blocked the entrance to the mosque. Religious leaders and landowners immediately roused the locals to protest and riot the governments actions. The central government in Kabul quickly responded by sacking the local leaders and installing an army general as governor who utilized the military to subdue the unrest (ibid, 537). This would mark the first time in decades the central government dared challenge the tribal establishment or the religious authorities in the area. Additionally, the lack of backlash from the tribal communities demonstrated that Pashtun’s acquiescence of central government authority.

The military’s speed and reaction was again exemplified in Khost where Mangal and Zadran eastern tribes were fighting over land use. Where, for among other reasons, the tribes were irritated over the installation of roads, which they viewed as government encroachment. They viewed the roads as threatening a source of revenue, which they derived from taxing caravan traffic (Reardon, 1969, 160). Furthermore, these tribal groups had assisted Nadir Shah in his overthrow in 1929 and had traditionally been given near autonomy from the government. These roads were seen as breaking this thirty year old implicit agreement (Dupree, 1973, 534). A government official was sent to arbitrate the problem but was shot dead, reportedly by accident. Never the less, the government reacted by quickly mobilizing the military who sent thousands of Mangal across the border. Although the confusion was quickly cleared up and all
Mangal tribesmen were given amnesty and allowed back into the country, it was the first time a
tribal group had fled at the sight of the government’s garrisons without any sort of confrontation
(and the Mangal tribe non the less, which was known one of the more powerful and pugnacious
tribes (Wilber, 1956, 103)), again a testament to the strength of the military at this time (Dupree,
1973, 534).

The development of the military as a new mechanism of coercion coupled with the
emergence of a more progressive clergy has allowed the government to pursue economic and
social reforms more aggressively than its predecessors. With the support of these new
progressive religious authorities coupled with the threat of military action, Daoud was able to
directly confront the conservative ulama and local mullahs as well as the tribal establishment,
which was met with minimal physical conflict. It appears the mere threat of military action has
preemptively quelled minor eruptions in discord. This rebalancing of the patron client
relationship has now allowed the government to give less (or in this case pursue social and
economic reforms at a quicker pace) but expect the same support from a now relatively weaker
religious and tribal establishment.

**Conclusion**

By playing to Pashtun nationalistic concerns, Daoud, through a *Loya Jirga*, managed to
garner approval for foreign aid that substantially increased the size and professionalism of the
military. Coupled with this, the Musahiban monarchy had created an educational system, which
taught a more progressive view, as a counterweight to the *maktabs* of the rural villages, as well
as instill nationalistic ideology. As a rational actor, the Musahiban monarchy was able to
strengthen their own patronal position via increased military spending, at the same time
weakening the positions of the clergy through a competing educational system. Additionally, the
monarchy promoted nationalistic ideology and allegiance through the education system, military, and development programs. The patronage relationship between the two groups hasn’t broken, only tilted further in favor of the monarchy.

Through the era of the Musahiban monarchy (1929 – 1963), the government realized the importance of garnering Pashtun tribal and religious support as a prerequisite to stay in power and maintain stability. Nadir solidified the central government’s relationship with the Pashtuns through his initial policies, specifically the 1931 constitution. The constitution absorbed and utilized the tribal structure throughout government, and ceded control of issues of especial importance to the Pashtun communities through the Loya Jirga. In the same fashion, the Pashtun religious community was absorbed into government and policies placating to the group were implemented. At the same time, the Musahiban government pursued gradual economic and development initiatives. These reforms included irrigation and cultivation schemes that benefitted landless Pashtuns, while avoiding increasing the burden of taxes on the Pashtun tribal communities. Only after decades of building allegiance among the Pashtun tribes via the educational system and military, coinciding with the creation of a progressive religious narrative, did the Musahiban monarchy attempt to challenge the religious and tribal communities. Further analysis of this era is to follow under the last chapter, ‘Comparative Analysis’.

This concludes the first era under analysis starting from Nadir’s ascension to the thrown in 1929 to Daoud’s abdication in 1963. Daoud’s accomplishments would not over shadow his obstinacy relating to the Pashtunistan cause, which ultimately pushed the royal family to call for his resignation. King Zahir Shah would take the reigns of the country and lead the nation into a new era, marked by the dissolution of the 1931 constitution and the creation of a new
constitution in 1964. This new era would mark the beginning of a chaotic time for Afghanistan, eventually leading to decades of war.
CHAPTER 4
HISTORICAL INTERLUDE

*New Democracy Era (1963 – 1973)*

The New Democracy period, under Zahir Shah, began with a new constitution in 1964 and parliamentary elections in 1965. Although political parties were banned from the election process, unofficial parties were formed, most notably the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). The PDPA was essentially rival elements of the various communist orientated factions, consisting of the *Khalq* faction (the masses) led by Nur Mohammed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, and the *Parcham* faction (banner) led by Babrak Karmal (Fitzgerald, 2009, 106). These communist groups would call for secular reforms which emboldened the religious right led by the Mujaddidi family and other new more reactionary groups. These left and right wing groups would drastically overshadow the liberal reformers whom had fought for the new constitution. PDPA protests would eventually challenge the authority of the king who responded by using live ammunition to subdue the protestors, hundreds were injured and three dead. The religious community also began to protest the government’s modernizing policies, revolts emerged in the various parts of the Pashtun south and southeast, something the religious establishment refrained from participating in for decades (Hyman, 1984, 61) This growing unrest culminated in the overthrow of Zahir by his cousin Daoud and the support of left leaning military officers in 1973. Daoud would declare the country a republic, thus ending the Musahiban monarchy (ibid, 64).

*The Second Era of Daoud (1973 – 1978) and the Saur Revolution*

Daoud’s bloodless *coup d’état* was generally welcomed by Afghan society many of whom yearned for the less chaotic days before the New Democracy. Daoud began his reign by
alienating the leftists whom had brought him to power then aggressively subduing Islamic fundamentalist groups, many of whom fled to Pakistan. As Daoud continued to alienate the leftists groups, the *Parchamis* and *Khalqis* continued to infiltrate and recruit members of the military and civil servants, which would lead to another *coup d’etat* in 1978. This effectively ended the Musahiban dynasty after nearly fifty years of leadership.

The Saur Revolution took place on April 27\(^{th}\) 1978 (Saur meaning April), was more or less a *coup d’état* then a revolution due PDPA’s lack of popular support. The *Khalq* leader Taraki would become the president, and implement drastic new land reform measures and social reforms (education for women and regulation of bride prices), which were met with outright hostility among the tribal and religious communities, eventually leading to war. The violence began in Herat in 1979, when the religious community rebelled against the communist campaign of women’s education, which eventually led to nearly every province in a state of rebellion. This eventually led to Soviet intervention who installed Karmal as the new leader in 1979 (Hyman, 1984).

**Soviet War in Afghanistan (1979 – 1989) and the Mujahedin**

The outcome of the Soviet invasion was utter chaos and destruction. An estimated 1.5 million people died and 5.5 million became refugees in either Pakistan or Iran, which is roughly a third of the population (Kaplan, 2001, 11). Over 1800 schools were destroyed as well as over 40 hospitals and health centers (Loyn, 2009, 157). In one year alone over a quarter of the irrigation system was destroyed and half of farmers’ fields were bombed and their livestock slaughtered (Kaplan, 2001, 12). The country would also become a hotspot of international interest as the American government sought to undermine Soviet influence in the arena, the
Saudi government sought to undermine communism and atheism, and the Pakistanis built an Islamic ideological base to counter Pashtunistan nationalism. What emerged from this chaos were Islamic reactionary militant groups.

Islamism in Afghanistan largely stems back to the 1950’s at Kabul University, where professors of theology taught the messages they brought back as students at Al Azhar in Egypt, specifically the teachings of Sayyid Qutb and Hasan al Banna of the Muslim Brotherhood. They preached Islam as a political system and the Koran as the dominant tool of interpretation, as opposed to the ulama traditionalists whom participate in other sources of interpretation and authority such as qyas (reasoning by analogy) and ijma (the consensus of religious authority), and traditionally haven’t participated in politics. Politics, the traditionalists believe, are derived from a Muslim society, which dictates the various aspects of the state. Islamists essentially view the state and politics from an opposing point of view; “the nature of society is predetermined by the nature of the state.” (Roy, 1986, 80)

After Soviet invasion the Islamists and traditional ulama would reorganize in Pakistan and form various mujahidin groups, seven of which would be the primary clients of Pakistani support. The group of seven was made up of three Islamist groups and four traditionalist groups. The Islamist groups would prove to be much more organized and effective in fighting the Soviets, then subsequently fighting themselves following Soviet withdrawal. The most prominent of these groups was Hizb-i Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Hekmatyar was an engineering student know for his radical Islamic point of views which included dousing inappropriately dressed women with acid and even spent two years in prison on accusations of murdering a Maoist student (Jones, 2006, 20). Hizb drew its influence from the southern Pashtun area particularly among intellectuals (Roy, 1986, 111). Jamiat-i Islami was the other major
Islamist party. Jamiat was led by Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ahmed Shah Massoud, both of whom were Tajik. After Soviet withdrawal Jamiat and Hizb were the primary forces vying for power in what turned into a bloody and chaotic civil war.

Pakistan during this period would have the most to risk if the Soviets successfully implemented a communist state. The country had only recently come under new leadership after a successful coup attempt by Mohammad Zia ul Haq in 1977. Zia would turn to Islam to unify the country and to counter the nationalistic tendencies of the Pashtuns, which was strengthened under the communist movement (Nojumi, 2002, 128). He proclaimed Pakistan an Islamic state and promoted a religious mentality throughout the military and other government agencies (Coll, 2004, 62). Creating an Islamic bloc would also strengthen his position against India, with whom there was ongoing hostilities (Marsden, 2002, 28). This promotion of Islamic ideology created by Zia, in offsetting Indian supremacy and Pashtun nationalism, would eventually create an atmosphere where Islamic fundamentalism would thrive and the Taliban would eventually emerge.


After Soviet withdrawal in 1989 they would leave President Najibullah at the mercy of the mujahidin commanders who would take back power in April 1992. Jamiat Islami (Islamic Society), an ISI sponsor, would take control of Kabul which would lead to an ugly civil war. Jamiat Islami was led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, who would become president and his key commander Ahmed Shah Masoud would become defense minister. Masoud had been a key force in the fight against the Soviets, fighting from the Panjshir Valley in the northeast; he was given the nickname “the lion of the Panjshir”. He was also a bitter rival of Hekmatyar (Marsden,
Hekmatyar started launching rockets indiscriminately into Kabul, and a second civil war would break out. Much of the civil war was inspired by the fact that Rabbani and Masoud were Tajik and not Pashtun. Pakistan, aware of these ethnic divides would continue to back Hekmatyar, but with hesitation. His failure to take Kabul would push the ISI to look for new clients (Rashid, 2001, 21).

During this period warlords took over the provinces and bandits took over the highways, it was a dizzying act of violence as various factions would align together then turn on each. The country turned into a lawless state as bandits and warlords ransacked and raided homes and villages. From this chaos and violence emerged a pious group of religious students known as the Taliban (ibid, 21)


The Taliban movement began seemingly as a meaningful group of rural madrassas students attempting to bring an end to corruption and bring peace to a war ravaged country. Their initial goals, simple and innocuous, were to take control of Afghanistan to end the civil war, disarm the militias with force or otherwise, and enforce Islamic law. Many believe the Taliban first came about when a neighbor of Mullah Omar had asked him to free two teenage girls that had been abducted, and assumed to be sexually mistreated by local warlords. Omar collected his colleagues, a group of students and teachers (talibs and mullahs) and set out to free the girls, which eventually left the warlord hanging dead off the barrel of a tank (Rashid, 2001). In the early days of the Taliban existence stories like this were many, they would help the needy and ask for nothing in return, they were viewed as noble and unselfish, a stark contrast to the other militants.
The Taliban’s emergence was also spurred by Pakistani influence and specifically the influence of the Jamiat-e Ulema Islam (JUI). The JUI held little clout until the 1993 elections, but were allowed to build madrassas without interference from the government. President Zia allowed madrassas of all variations of Islam during his reign from 1978 to 1988. During this period nearly 32,000 new madrassas were built. The JUI built madrassas along the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), where they would educate underprivileged Pakistanis and Afghan refugees (Rashid, 2001). The JUI and its madrassas taught the Deobandi variation of Islam which in general has an anti modernist tilt. These madrassas taught the future Taliban leaders and became the recruitment ground of Taliban warriors (Rashid, 2001).

As the Taliban emerged from the madrassas along the Pakistani border, Afghanistan was falling into virtual chaos. The country was split up amongst the various ethnic groups and their corresponding warlords. At this time in 1994 the Tajik run Rabbani government controlled Kabul and the northeast section of the country, the Tajik warlord Ismael Khan controlled Herat and the surrounding provinces, Pashtun Islamist Gulbuddin Hekmatyar controlled a small area east and south of Kabul, Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum controlled six provinces in the north, the Hazaras controlled areas in central Afghanistan, and various Pashtun warlords controlled the east and south of the country. With the help of eager jihadists and support from their Pakistani patrons, the Taliban went on to take over the country and run the Masoud and Rabbani out of Kabul, sending them fleeing to the north where they would control roughly 10% of the country through the Taliban era (Rashid, 2001).

As the Taliban movement took charge of various provinces of Afghanistan they began to enforce strict religious laws, abiding by their version of Sharia, which they’ve become notoriously known for. Women were told to cease going to work and school and were forced to
stay at home with the exception of travel with a male blood relative and only while wearing the
*burka* which covered the entire body including the face and eyes. Men were forced to grow
beards and go to mosque five times a day. Nearly all sources of vice and entertainment were
banned this included movies, tv, music and photography to name a few. New draconian rules on
punishment were enforced which included public stoning to death of adulterers, amputations of
thieves, and public forums of execution for more serious criminal activity (Nojumi, 2002). The
Taliban treatment of the Hazaras was especially brutal. The group committed numerous
massacres against the Hazaras community, the largest of which occurred in Mazar Sharif then
again in the Hazarjat with the blessing of Mullah Omar (Rashid, 2001). Even within the Pashtun
communities (Durrani and non Durrani alike) divisions emerged. The Pashtuns originally had
welcomed the pious group whom were thought to be able to bring peace to the country, but as
war persisted and strict observance of Sharia law was enforced these divisions deepened. This
strict observance of Sharia law created unease within Pashtun urban areas such as Kabul and
Herat, which were traditionally relatively liberal communities (Rashid, 2001). Pakistani and
Arab presence under Taliban auspices also had a very alienating effect on the Afghan people. As
Pakistani and Arab fighters had filled Taliban ranks during the original revolt under the Taliban,
now this foreign presence was becoming a peculiarity to a country that spent ten grueling years
fighting against another foreign presence, the USSR (Tomsen, 2000). Osama Bin Laden and his
055 Brigade had training camps set up throughout Afghanistan and had instigated military strikes
in the form of United States cruise missiles (Coll, 2005).

The ideological background of the Taliban is a unique mixture of Pashtunwali and the
Deobandi school of religious thought, it’s worth noting their ideology due to their relevance in
modern day Afghan politics and conflict. Their ideology stems from numerous influences yet
stands as a unique movement unlike any of the ideological platforms it’s derived from. The group is generally made up of Pashtuns, which traditionally follow Pashtunwali and their religious beliefs stem from the Deobandi madrassas they attended. These two culture characteristics are coupled with the Arab Wahhabi influence in the region. But by and large the Taliban are the offspring of a war torn country, “literally the orphans of the war, the rootless and the restless.” (Rashid, 2001, 32)

The Deoband movement subscribes to the Hanafi school of law within Sunni Islam. This group originated in Deoband India in 1866 under British rule. The movement arose to counter western ideology as religious leaders believed their society was losing its identity to the British. The movement eventually developed into a forceful political organization called the Jamiat Ulama Hind, to challenge British authority. This organization would evolve into the Jamiat Ulama Islami (JUI) in Pakistan (Reetz, 2008). The JUI, as mentioned above, was given the authority to freely build madrassas throughout the Pakistan Afghan border which would eventually house Afghan refugees and become the ideological birthplace of the Taliban leadership (Rashid, 2001). The Deoband school represents a conservative religious ideology in that it applies traditional jurisprudence to modern day problems and applies a strict interpretation of Islam. This strict interpretation suggests a limited role for women and a deep revulsion towards Shiites (Rashid, 1998).

It’s unclear what the potential longevity of the Taliban government was. Many analysts cited the on going alienation and subjugation of the various minority groups and the growing displeasure among the Pashtuns themselves, suggesting the Taliban’s position in power was beginning to wane. In any event, the United States invasion of the country, in retaliation to the attacks on September 11th 2001 by Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network, would end the
Taliban reign in the country and a new government led by Popalzai Durrani, Hamid Karzai would be installed. Although, this did not mark the end of Taliban influence in the country as they continue to agitate American forces and disrupt and attack government installations as well as terrorize the population in general. This era under Karzai is the second era under analysis and the focal point of this thesis.

Since the reign of Nadir Shah, the power and patronage of the Pashtun south and east has evolve. Nadir consolidated his power through the support of the Pashtun tribal and religious communities. Over the period of the Musahiban dynasty tribal relations with the monarchy remained strong while the religious community was sufficiently coopted and their power would deteriorate. Much would change following the New Democracy era in 1964, communist parties and reactionary Islamists would emerge. The communists would eventually take over the country leading to a state of chaos and Soviet intervention. This set the stage for emergence of Islamic radical warlords and supra tribal tendencies, mujahidin jihadists who fought the Soviets and the communist elements of the country. These warlords, through the support of their Pakistani, American, and Saudi patrons, would emerge as the new regional leaders superseding the traditional tribal structure. As the communists fell and civil war broke out among the various mujahidin factions, the Taliban would emerge with the support of their Pakistani patrons, and consolidate power in the country. This created a new power dynamic in Afghanistan, where the warlords lost support of their patrons and many were forced to flee the country. Local mullahs and ulema were given newfound influence in the newly formed ultra conservative republic, while many of the Pashtun tribal areas were left to their own devices. The societal structure would be upended by the US invasion in 2001. The emasculated warlords would reemerge as a tool to topple the Taliban and track down al Qaeda. This would result in a newly formed societal
structure which supported warlordism and emasculated the religious community. This is the societal structure under examination today, supported by the current Karzai government and its US patrons. The forthcoming analysis, is meant to illustrate how, under the current societal structure, Pashtun tribal and religious communities have become alienated and have led many to join the insurgency, leading to further instability.
CHAPTER 5
THE KARZAI GOVERNMENT; AN ERA OF INSTABILITY

The second part of this analysis is meant to highlight the role the Pashtun communities play in the current conflict in Afghanistan, the importance of this role, and why Pashtuns are participating in the conflict and joining the insurgency. Furthermore, the analysis will demonstrate the complexities of the insurgency, in an effort to demonstrate how the conflict isn’t simply predicated on discord between a radical strand of Islam and secular forces. Similarly to the previous period under analysis, the Musahiban period (1929 – 1963), the Karzai government in tandem with the US and other international participants, has embarked on numerous social and developmental initiatives. However, in stark contrast to the Musahiban period, Karzai has created disenfranchised Pashtun communities, who have become the primary source of conflict and insurgency in the country. This chapter will utilize the rational choice theory as well as political clientelism in analyzing the reasons behind Pashtun discontent and why they’ve become the backbone of the insurgency. The chapter is broken up into three sections. First, an analysis of the initial US invasion and the creation of a new government, highlighting how US actions during the invasion have supported the re-emergence of warlordism, which is further supported by the electoral process, as well as generally alienating the Pashtun communities at the national level. The second section will discuss how these warlords have undermined the traditional Pashtun tribal structure and have thrived and contributed to the on going conflict. The last section will examine other primary reasons contributing to the Pashtun’s support the insurgency. This includes economic deprivation, disproportionate military targeting of the Pashtun communities, and the role religion plays. The following chapter will compare the two periods, the current Karzai government and the Musahiban monarchy, in an effort to demonstrate the importance of the Pashtun role in the insurgency and why the current dynamic exists.
Before going forward, it should be understood, the primary difference between the two eras under examination is the existence of a foreign occupation. This occupation, led by the United States and its NATO allies, and supported by the United Nations, is a primary component of the chaos that ensues today. In essence the conflict is a rejection of these forces, in similar fashion to the Pashtun rejection of British forces during the three Anglo Afghan wars and the Russian forces through the 1980s. With that said, the analysis will examine how the patronage structure stemming from the United States and its support of Karzai, has exacerbated the rejection of the central state and foreign forces, which in turn, has led to the conflict and chaos that exists today.

**Part 1 - The US Invasion and the Emergence of a New Government**

Macdonald’s rational choice definition posits that “actors will select the behavior that provides them with the most subjective expected utility from a set of possible behaviors.” (Macdonald, 2003, 552) The subjective nature of the definition provides an applicable framework in which to analyze both American actions during the initial invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, as well as Karzai’s support of these actions. As will be discussed, American policy was to track down al Qaeda and dismantle the Taliban government as quickly and efficiently as possible. They utilized emasculated Tajik and Uzbek warlords with little cost or military commitment. This strategy was effective in the short term, but would have a negative impact on stability in the long term. Karzai, after ascending to power, would continue to support the new power structure and utilize this dynamic to support his own position. The following analysis will discuss the power dynamic that emerged, which was ultimately supported by the electoral system.
Initial Invasion, Reemergence of the Northern Alliance

After the September 11th attacks it quickly became apparent that the US military was unusually unprepared for military involvement in Afghanistan. Afghanistan had historically been a place where super powers, like Russia and Britain, had drastically underestimated the tenacity of Afghan fighters as well as the impact of mountainous terrain on military operations. These unbearable fighting conditions coupled with a historical lack of US interest in the area contributed to the unprepared nature of US military forces (Woodward, 2002). The American’s would initially depend on the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), who had been involved in the area providing military and financial support to warlords fighting the Soviets. They would lead the operations but would be heavily dependent on Afghan militias, specifically the Tajik and Uzbek dominated Northern Alliance (NA) (Coll, 2005).

A CIA team, saddled with millions of dollars to disperse to militias, entered Afghanistan on September 26, 2001, roughly two weeks after the September 11th attacks. This team was placed in the Panjshir Valley of northern Afghanistan near the NA/Taliban front lines. Gary Schroen, the leader of the CIA team, advocated the bombing of the NA/Taliban frontlines which would drastically improve the position of the NA and inevitably allowing them to take the capital Kabul (Schroen, 2005). This strategy would be the quickest in terms of military movement and displacing the Taliban, but it would leave the power in the hands of the NA whom were made up of minority groups of Tajiks and Uzbeks as well as notorious warlords whom had contributed to past atrocities in the country. The alternative to this was waiting for Pashtuns to mobilize, who were far behind the NA militarily. This assessment, although a more logical path, required patience; patience that the administration didn’t have.
As the rational actor model suggests, the actor attempts to maximize the utility of their actions (Green, 1994). As it relates to this case the American government, specifically the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and President George Bush, they initially pursued goals meant to show gains in the ‘war on terror’ at a minimal cost (which excluded any sort of nation building (Woodward, 2002)); both in terms of American military lives and financial cost. This gave way to the ‘light footprint’ approach which minimized American ‘boots on ground’, and utilized a sustained bombing campaign coupled with supporting Tajik and Uzbek warlords of the NA to take Kabul, and to a lesser extent Pashtun warlords in the south. The US “delivered 767 tons of supplies and $70 million, sufficient to equip and fund and estimated 50,000 militia men.” (Giustozzi, 2009, 88) By the end of 2001 these northern mujahidin commanders would rearm and remobilize their foot soldiers, eventually totaling a ‘few hundred thousand’ men under their command (ibid. 89).

This strategy led to a break in the Taliban line and General Fahim, the commander of the NA, taking control of Kabul on November 14th, 2001. With Kabul firmly in the hands of the NA and Pashtun resistance still largely in disarray, negotiations of future governments would be largely tilted in the favor of the ethnic minorities of the NA and its warlords (Dobbins, 2008).

Prior to the American invasion major warlords in the north had significantly loss their base of power, which had reached its pinnacle during the civil war. The major commanders in the north consisted of Ismael Khan, Abdul Rashid Dostum, Mohammad Mohaqeq, and Mohammad Atta; commander of the NA General Fahim occupied Kabul after the Taliban regime had been overthrown. Ismael Kahn was a Tajik warlord and commander within Jamiat-i Islami (the group formerly led by Masoud, and now Fahim) who enjoyed autonomy in his area of control, which included various provinces of the west bordering Iran, centered around his
homeland of Herat. Dostum was an Uzbek and commander of Junbesh-I Milli Islami, who had joined the NA in an effort to fight the Taliban. His area of concern was in the northern provinces bordering Uzbekistan, centered around Balkh province and its capital Mazar-i Sharif. Mohaqeq was a prominent Hazara commander within the ethnic groups largest militia, Hizb-i Wahdat, where it mainly operated in central areas of the country where large majorities of Hazaras lived, such as Bamiyan and Uruzgan provinces. Collectively these commanders had handedly been defeated by the Taliban but would reemerge with the help of US support (Giustozzi, 2009). The various Pashtun warlords, discussed later in the chapter, were even less relevant prior to US invasion; due to Taliban monopolization of power in the Pashtun dominated south and east, but would soon reemerge.

With Kabul firmly in the hands of the Northern Alliance, the United States quickly pressed for an agreement among the factions to create a new and representative government. This was a difficult proposition due to the fact the it wasn’t a peace agreement between warring factions, but a collective agreement between members of the anti Taliban coalition, whom held little to no authority in the country prior to US involvement. This would create an agreement among once hostile minority factions without consideration of the historically dominant and largest ethnic group in the country, the Pashtuns (Harpviken, 2002, 877). Regardless of the lack of popular legitimacy, the anti Taliban coalition met in Bonn Germany, under the hospices of the United Nations (but primarily influenced by the United States), in December, 2001.

**Bonn Process**

The primary objective of the Bonn Conference was to map out a plan towards popular elections, elect a leader for this transitional period and his cabinet. The international community
was led by James Dobbins, a US career diplomat and Lakhdar Brahimi, a well regarded Algerian ex foreign minister. The international community also had representatives from Pakistan, Iran, and Russia. The international community tended to focus their attention on maintaining territorial integrity, installing the basic structure of a government, and moving towards popular elections, rather than with legitimacy and proper representation (Starr, 2005). The Bonn conference established just this; they created the Afghan Interim Authority, which would govern for six months. During that time an Emergency Loya Jirga would convene to create a Transitional Authority, which would presumably be more representative then the former. The Transitional Authority would govern for two year at which time a Constitutional Loya Jirga would convene to create a new constitution. The Transitional Authority would cede control after the implementation of popular elections (Jalali, 2003, 176). Below is a time line to illustrate this process. *Taken from Thomas Johnson’s article published by Strategic Insights (Johnson, 2006)

![Bonn Process Timeline](image)

Figure 3 – Bonn Process Timeline

The task of finding a leader capable but also unconnected to the Taliban or other infamous warlords proved difficult. The most obvious solution was to reinstall the former king of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah currently residing in Rome. Unfortunately, the Shah in his old age (nearly 90 at this point) no longer had political ambitions and chose to act as a symbolic figure
and in support of the future government. Hamid Karzai emerged as a name most parties accepted and heavily promoted by the Americans (Johnson, 2006). He was the debonair, well educated son of Abdul Ahad Karzai, an ex Deputy Speaker of Parliament and Senator, arguably the head of the Popalzai Durrani tribe (a royalty linage, the same tribe as Ahmed Shah Durrani), and supporter of the royal family. Karzai, now a leader within the Popalzai tribe, also participated during the Soviet occupation where he had worked in a non military capacity with the National Front (Sebghatullah Mujadeddi, one of the smallest Peshawar based groups) (Misdaq, 2006). He was appointed a Deputy Foreign Minister with the mujahidin government and asked to work as a UN liaison for the Taliban, which he decline. In fact, after his initial support of the Taliban he quickly soured to their brutal and radical beliefs. As the US invaded Afghanistan, Karzai contacted the US embassy in Islamabad to inform them he intended to enter southern Afghanistan, rather callously, by motorbike and rally his fellow tribesmen against the Taliban. After he entered the country the CIA installed a team to support his efforts, as well as US military aerial weaponry (Berntsen, 2005, 82).

Karzai’s nomination to lead the Interim Authority garnered support from all parties, most importantly of which the Americans. The Iranians, Russians, and Pakistanis all viewed Karzai as acceptable and a person with little ties to the Taliban government. Zahir supported the choice also, for Karzai came from a prominent family, which had always been loyal supporters of the monarchy. The NA found him at the very least tolerable, Karzai had not taken much part in the mujahidin fighting post the Soviet withdrawal, therefore had not cultivated enemies on the battle field (Misdaq, 2006). This would commence Karzai’s reign as head of the Afghan government.

With an interim head picked, now came the much more difficult task of creating a representative government. The Northern Alliance, with US support of its warlords and control
of Kabul had little reason to relinquish any authority. Of the 29 different portfolios, 16 were distributed to NA members and the most powerful ministries went to the NA Tajik leadership. Commander of NA forces, General Fahim, received the Defense portfolio as well as a vice chairmanship. NA representative of the negotiations and Massoud protégé, Yunus Qanooni, received the Interior Minister positions. Lastly Abdullah Abdulllah, a senior representative of the NA, received the foreign ministry portfolio. This solidified NA’s control over internal security, allowing them to maintain their militias in Kabul and strengthen their position in the central government (Dobbins, 2008).

The conclusion of the Bonn Conference was internationally acclaimed as a success and the beginning of new hope in Afghanistan. In reality there was flagrant flaws relating to the under representation of the Pashtun communities and the disproportionate representation of northern warlords. Although Pashtuns still had high hopes leading into the Emergency Loya Jirga, which was to create the Transitional Authority. “(T)hey expected that he (Karzai) would make far-reaching changes, work closely with Afghanistan's Pashtun former monarch, reduce the power of regional warlords and build a new government that reflected Pashtuns' numerical strength.” (Constable, 2002, A01) Unfortunately this wouldn’t come to fruition.

The jirga was to convene with 1450 members throughout the country who would choose a new leader and its cabinet. 1051 of the delegates would be selected among local leaders in the intelligence personal and warlords, the Human Rights Watch reported as follows:

“At the first and second stages of the selection process, Human Rights Watch documented several cases in which local warlords directly or indirectly intimidated delegates through threats and the heavy presence of armed troops. Delegates complained of a widespread and systematic pattern of intimidation and threats by warlords and regional leaders, covert and overt surveillance by intelligence agents allied with the Tajik-dominated Northern Alliance, and a general failure by the loya jirga commission,
relevant U.N. officials, and other international actors to enforce provisions in the Bonn Agreement and the loya jirga procedures that were meant to sideline Afghan military leaders and Afghans with records of serious human rights abuses.” *HRW – Afghanistan’s Bonn Agreement One Year Later (HRW, 2002)

The jirga did reinforce the legitimacy of Karzai as leader, who garnered the support of the Tajik mujahidin government president (in the early 1990’s) Rabbani, and more importantly Zahir Shah back Karzai as well. This led to a near sweep, continuing Karzai’s leadership role.

In terms of the make up of the Transitional Authority’s administration, Pashtun’s increased their membership from 11 to 16 (which was clearly an attempt by Karzai to placate to Pashtuns and rectify the Interim’s Authority under representation of the group), but the security positions were still controlled by the Tajiks. The more relevant newly appointed administrative positions are listed below. (Johnson, 2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transitional Authority Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Hamid Karzai</td>
<td>Pashtun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy President</td>
<td>Mohammed Fahim</td>
<td>Tajik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy President</td>
<td>Karim Khalili</td>
<td>Hazara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy President</td>
<td>Abdul Qadir</td>
<td>Pashtun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Advisor on Security</td>
<td>Yunus Qanooni</td>
<td>Tajik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense Minister</td>
<td>Mohammed Fahim</td>
<td>Tajik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Minister</td>
<td>Abdullah Abdullah</td>
<td>Tajik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Minister</td>
<td>Ashraf Ghani</td>
<td>Pashtun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taj Mohammed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Minister</td>
<td>Wardak</td>
<td>Pashtun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Minister</td>
<td>Abbas Karimi</td>
<td>Uzbek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Minister</td>
<td>Yunus Qanooni</td>
<td>Tajik</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4 – Transitional Authority Cabinet Composition
Pashtun resentment began to simmer as they viewed this as a missed opportunity by Karzai to rebalance the ethnic imbalance. This was exacerbated by the sideling of those aligned with Zahir Shah, and giving Zahir virtually no role in government. The backhand to Zahir was apparently at the behest of US; apparently American unbridled support of Karzai left no room for a second Pashtun leader (Jalali, 2003, 178). This has left Pashtuns feeling “rapidly disillusioned by a series of developments that have reinforced the power of rival ethnic Tajiks and militia leaders, left the former king politically sidelined… and subjected Pashtun villages to lethal US air strikes.” (Constable, 2002, A01). This was a missed opportunity by both Karzai and his international backers.

**Elections**

During the two year period of the Transitional Authority a 502 member Constitutional Loya Jirga convened to debate and review a draft constitution presented by the government. They approved a constitution with a strong central government headed by a president elected by popular majority (every 5 years, limit of two consecutive terms), as well as two vice presidents. To balance presidential power a bi cameral legislative house was created; the lower house, Wolesi Jirga (House of People) and the upper house the Mesharano Jirga (House of Elders). The two houses held similar responsibilities comparable to western democracies such as “promulgate laws, ratify treaties, and approve budgets” (Johnson, 2006, 10). The lower house was elected directly by the people while the upper house was selected from provincial and district councils and a third was appoint by the president (ibid).

The structure of the legislative elections were particularly undermining to the traditional Pashtun tribal structure and the promotion of warlordism. First, since voting laws do not require
disclosure of financial sources warlords and drug lords had a disproportionate advantage (ICG, 2005, 12). Second, the Karzai government chose to use a single nontransferable vote (SNTV) as opposed to a party list system. The SNTV has a number of effects; first, it dramatically undermines political parties and creates a fractured parliament. Second, because it creates a fractured parliament and undermines political parties, it reinforces the central powers of the president. Third, it supports warlords whom only need a very small percentage of the vote to be elected. Under this system vote buying and intimidation have an amplified effect, due to the small amount of people that actually need to vote for a candidate. Lastly, it creates a system unrepresentative of the people voting, due to the fact that the majority of votes will go to losing candidates (Rubin, 2005). The international community at large, including the UN, opposed the SNTV system due to the above undermining effects on democracy (they supported the party list system as a more representative alternative). The only parties to support the SNTV system were the United States and Karzai. The US clearly didn’t want the power of its primary client in the country undermined (ICG, 2005, 10).

The SNTV system is simple. If a province is allotted 5 representatives to the Wolesi Jirga (lower house of parliament) than each individual voter will have one vote. The top five candidates will win the election. To further illustrate the problem lets look at the 2005 legislative elections for Kabul province, the most populous in the country. In this case 387 candidates were running for 33 seats. The top three candidates received 13.2, 7.8, and 7.7 percentage of the vote, respectively. The next 30 winning candidates all received less then 3% each (with the bottom 20 candidates each receiving less the 1% of the vote). Collectively the winning candidates throughout the country received roughly 35% of the vote, which leaves an astounding 65% of the vote distributed among the losing candidates. In the Kabul case, three of
the winning candidates won .4% of the vote each; essentially a candidate could win by stroke of luck (ibid, 20).

What added to this problem was the lack of party affiliation or banners on voter cards, as ruled out by Karzai. With some candidate registries nearly 40 pages in length, and without political party affiliation, people reverted to whom they knew. Individual candidates were given random symbols as a useless way to identify candidates; a section of a voting card is shown below.

Predictably, warlords sustained a large presence in both houses of parliament. In the 2005 Wolesi Jirga (lower house) elections ex-mujahidin commanders established the largest block with 133 of the 249 seats, in the Mesharano Jirga (appointed by president and provincial councils) the warlords consisted of 34 of the 102 seats (Ghufran, 2007, 87). The 2010 legislative elections were more of the same, as “former mujahidin leaders and their allies have won in almost all the constituencies,” (Shamel, 2010) marking another five year term dominated by warlords (Nordland, 2010).

Presidential Elections; 2004, 2009

The 2004 presidential elections were essentially a Hamid Karzai rode show sponsored by American resources. As the primary client of the United States, Karzai utilized private American
security firms to make appearances at the opening of development projects, delayed to open in the midst of campaign season, as well as other campaign related outings. He allocated $30 million dollars to promote registration among refugees in Pakistan whom were mostly Pashtun, dipped into government coffers to entertain tribal delegates, as well as freely utilized the airwaves, radio waves, and news media. Other presidential hopefuls, who didn’t have US support, obviously were at a great disadvantage (Shahrani, 2004).

With the clear advantage Karzai won 55.4% of the vote, enough to avoid a run off. The election was declared a success internationally and overlooked the complaints of “voter intimidation, voting procedures, and allegations of multiple voting and irregularities” (Johnson, 2006, 13), to say nothing of the fact that 11.5 million people were registered among a pool of 9.8 million eligible voters (Shahrani, 2004). These problems would be exacerbated in the 2009 elections.

The 2009 presidential elections were essentially a ‘battle of budgets’ amongst the main contenders. “(W)hat would constitute large scale fraud in western context meant little more to them (the Afghans) than the usual haggling over chick or vegetables in market.” (Abdul-Ahad, 2009) Although 700 occurrences of fraud were reported it seemed that it was systematic across the entire country, where each of the main contenders men (primarily Abdullah Abdullah and Karzai) were positioned in a poll station, stuffing ballot boxes and paying people for their ballots (ibid). As this was a battle of financing and establishing patronage with the local communities and its leaders, Karzai with the support and patronage of the Americans, again came out on top.

The point here is to illustrate the how the office of the presidency does not derive its legitimacy in the western sense of popular elections, but through patronage networks. This is
supported by the fact that statistically the Afghan electorate votes nearly exclusively by ethnic lines, which created an atmosphere where “no candidate received significant support outside of their particular ethno-linguistic group.” (Johnson, 2006, 13) As most Pashtuns see the election process as a foregone conclusion, which they view is derived from the international patronage of Karzai, their support during election time should not be construed as true popular support among the Pashtuns for Karzai. Without a perceived legitimate alternative in Pashtun leadership, Pashtuns will likely take their payment for their votes while possibly at the same time joining the insurgency.

**Conclusion**

The American strategy of utilizing Northern Alliance warlords and militias in an effort to combat the Taliban would create the building blocks for the re-emergence of warlordism and the disproportionate influence at the national level among the Tajik and Uzbek Northern Alliance members. Their influence was reinforced by the SNTV voting system. The system also would support regional strongmen in the Pashtun south and east. These strongmen, or warlords, would utilize the electoral system as a mechanism to garner legitimacy, which was easily done with their ability to buy votes and intimidate voters. The next section will examine how the emergence of warlords alienated Pashtuns at the national level and undermined the tribal structure at the regional level, both of which furthered instability and promoted conflict.

**Part 2 - Warlordism and Society**

Under Taliban rule, warlords and local militias in the Pashtun south and east would become a thing of the past, while the influence of Tajik and Uzbek warlords like Ismail Khan, Dostum and Massud in the north and west, would drastically be reduced. These groups would
reemerge as Karzai and the US established new patronage relations with the various warlords. The reemergence of warlordism would impact the Pashtun communities in a number of different ways. The warlords in the Northern Alliance, whom now controlled government would seek retribution for past grievances on various Pashtun communities and generally harass Pashtuns which created a sense of disenfranchisement among the group. Additionally regional Pashtun warlords in the south and east would emerge, creating an atmosphere of conflict and predation, both of these new dynamics will be discussed here.

As rational actors, the US seemingly had little interest other then tracking down al Qaeda and insurrection. To accommodate these goals the US perceived the various warlords, especially the regional militia leaders of the Pashtun east and south, as the best way to quell internal unrest and track down insurrection. Karzai would further support these patronage bonds by bringing various local Pashtun warlords into government as they often controlled the votes in their respective areas and were potentially too dangerous to ignore. The support of the warlords may support the agenda of the US and Karzai but have had a negative impact on stability. These warlords would permeate the central government down to the local level, creating an atmosphere, which thrives on conflict and weakens the legitimacy of both the Karzai government and international forces in the eyes of the disenfranchised populace.

Before going forward it’s necessary to define what a warlord is. In the Afghan situation it’s not always obvious what constitutes a warlord. Afghan insurgency analysts Michael Bhatia breaks down the various militias into three groups; political-military organizations (like that of Jamiat Islami, the primary player in the Northern Alliance), community militias (such as the arbakia), and warlords and strongmen (whose strengths are derived from patronage and charisma, and exist at the national, regional, and local levels) (Bhatia, 2008, 73). Antonio
Giustozzi, a leading expert in warlordism, defines the word in reference to the warlords of the north (Dostum, Ismael Khan, Masoud) as the following;

“a legitimate, charismatic, and patrimonial military leader with autonomous control over a military force capable of achieving/maintaining a monopoly of large scale violence over a sizeable territory. This definition has two major implications: the warlord has little or no political legitimacy but nonetheless he exercises patrimonial political power over such territory, where central authority has either collapsed or has weakened or was never there in the first place.” (Giustozzi, 2009, 5)

The Giustozzi definition pertains more to the warlords of the north who continue to operate under the government umbrella as well as these members that have since joined the central government, such as General Fahim (of the Northern Alliance). The Bhatia definition better encapsulates the atmosphere in the Pashtun south where he admits clear overlaps (between the three definitions) exist. A warlord could derive his strength from a tribe, as a private security company (PSC) operator, from government links, or illicit activity. In all, as of 2008, there are roughly 1,800 strongmen (used synonymously with warlord) commanding roughly 120,000 militia footsoldiers. The vast majority of these warlords and soldiers are not part of the insurgency or trying to overtake the government (such as the Taliban or Haqqani network), an analysis of these groups is forthcoming (Bhatia, 2008, 16).

The government, for their part, with the assistance of the international community publically promoted the idea of demilitarization. The primary pillars of demilitarization were the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants (DDR), the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG), both of which fall under the Afghan New Beginnings Program (AFBP). The AFBP, managed by the UNDP and the GoA, fielded some success. The DDR program disarmed roughly 64,000 former officers and soldiers whom were now part of the Afghan Military Force (AMF) (the AMF was the formal recognition at the Bonn
Conference of the anti Taliban militias assisted in the American invasion) (Sedra, 2008, 130). This program, which ended in July of 2005 still left an estimated 1,800 militias armed, that were not part of the AMF (globalsecurity.org), which prompted the creation of the DIAG. DIAG was meant to disarm ‘illegal’ militias, which again was met with some success; according to the UNDP from 2005-2010 759 armed groups were dismembered and 54,138 weapons were collected (UNDP, 2010).

These achievements were offset by hypocritical policies of the international community (military forces as well as development agencies), the Afghan government, and Karzai’s own personal endeavors. Each of these entities supported the use of warlords and their militias for their own means.

**Pashtun Warlords of the South and East**

The strength and legitimacy of the Pashtun warlords is largely predicated on conflict. Although they may often also provide services and patronage to communities similar to a traditional *khan*, there are discernable differences. A *khan* derives his influence through the distribution of patronage, which garners him the authority to influence decision-making and mediate in internal conflicts and disputes. Warlords will often try to portray the image of a *khan*, which may include solidifying support among the local elders and *jirga*. The difference is the warlord’s primary tool of influence is through force or violent coercion or the threat thereof, and not patronage. Because these strongmen derive revenues from outside the local community in which they control, his strength begins to supersede the traditional counter balances to the *khan*, that of the *jirga* and local elders. This eventually creates an atmosphere where the villagers are
in a sense held captive to the warlord. As his power grows the traditional aspects of the tribal system become less relevant, allowing him to become more exploitative (ibid, 86).

Traditionally, Pashtun khans have had to compete for authority with other khans. Their ability to provide patronage and hospitality, keys aspects of Pashtunwali, are the determining factors in maintaining their position. Their authority ultimately rests in the hands of the qawm elders and jirga, meaning their authority is predicated on the approval of the tribesmen. This traditional ground up approach has been undermined with the emergence of Pashtun warlords. They extract power from outside the qawm and force their authority on the community.

A typical local command hierarchy of a warlord and his militia includes close family members as the commanders’ bodyguards, a special force of close allies that are used for enforcement (the nezmi-has), and common foot soldiers consisting of the local community. The nezmi-has are the loyalists who police the actions of the foot soldiers and force recruiting. As one villager in Ghor province describes;

“We stayed by force, because we couldn’t stay in our home peacefully. If I didn’t go they came by force and would take my cows, money and everything in my home. They would hurt us and put us in prison. A big commander has a special force to control his own soldiers, also to bring new soldiers from families. If they told us to fight, we were fighting. When the commander became more powerful/rich, he never listened or respected the old people from the community.” (ibid, 87)

As these warlords feign legitimacy through the tribal structure they gain actual legitimacy through the implicit and explicit relations they have with the government and international forces, which are often indistinguishable in the eyes of the public. Their association with the government furthers the perception within the public eye of the government’s inefficiency, corruption, and exploitation.
The warlords and power brokers in the upper echelons of provincial and district government in the Pashtun areas of southern and eastern Afghanistan have benefitted enormously by contracting out their militias for international development and military operations. While much of the financial information relating to these contracts is undisclosed, one estimates suggests 10-20% of all reconstruction is spent on security (which would amount to roughly $300-$600 million per year), not including military, state department and NGO security (Sherman, 2009). As of 2011, Brookings Institute estimates roughly 18,000 local private security contractors (PSC) were employed (Livingston, 2011), 90% of whom were employed or subcontracted with the US government (HRW, 2011). These militias, often operating with impunity, derive revenue from contracting with international and government agencies, narcotics smuggling, general predation, and controlling of major highways. Human Rights Watch describes the PSC atmosphere as follows.

“Private security companies have provided a vehicle for many former warlords and some entrepreneurial newcomers to establish a lucrative hold on armed men and territory. Many of these companies, particularly in conflict areas, are allegedly responsible for serious human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, beatings, rapes, extortions, and smuggling. Often this may be little more than the abuse of their power to settle scores and attack local rivals, or to protect their illicit business interest.

Both the Afghan government and US government bear a heavy responsibility for the corruption and impunity of these forces, many of which have become so intertwined with the war economy they are now hard to dismantle.” (HRW, 2011, 50)

Matiullah Khan provides a case study in how one warlord extracts enormous benefit from controlling highway, supporting the drug trade, working with US forces and development agencies. He controls the highway connecting the capital of Uruzgan province, Tirin Kot, to Kandahar and Helmand provinces. New York Times Afghan expert, Dexter Filkins, describes Matiullah as follows.
“It is Matiullah Khan, the head of a private army that earns millions of dollars guarding NATO supply convoys and fights Taliban insurgents alongside American Special Forces. In little more than two years, Mr. Matiullah, an illiterate former highway patrol commander, has grown stronger than the government of Uruzgan Province, not only supplanting its role in providing security but usurping its other functions, his rivals say, like appointing public employees and doling out government largess.” (Filkins, 2010)

His story also reflects the interconnectedness of provincial warlords and their relations with the Karzai family. Matiullah was the nephew and enforcer of Jan Mohammad Khan, the governor of Uruzgan from 2002-06. Jan, an ex janitor turned mujahidin commander, led one of seven minor mujahidin groups to support Karzai in his initial involvement in Afghanistan (in 2001). After the fall of the Taliban, Karzai appointed his loyal cohort governor of Uruzgan province, who quickly and ruthlessly labeled his rivals Taliban, and tipped off US Special Forces (USSF). This would often times push the other tribes, specifically the Ghilzai, to join the insurgency (Rutting, 2011). Jan also had his own lieutenant and enforcer, his nephew Matiullah. Matiullah was reported to have “led the hit squads that killed stubborn farmers who did not surrender their land, daughters, and livestock to the former governor (Jan Mohammad).” (Reuter, 2009) Matiullah went on to head the Highway Police in Uruzgan, which was shut down after allegations the department was nothing but a drug smuggling ring (Filkins, 2010), but Matiullah continued to control Uruzgan highways, essential to foreign military and development agencies. Today he controls a militia of 2,000 men strong, known as the Kandak Amniante Uruzgan (KAU), and charges various contractors with the US government $1,500 - $3,000 per vehicle to pass (making roughly $4 -$6 million USD a year). This toll, which is totally outside government jurisdiction, is less for protection from other forces, but from Matiullah’s forces themselves, a form of extortion (Tierney, 2010). His abusive behavior did not go unnoticed, the Dutch refused to take part in the ISAF-NATO mission in Uruzgan unless Jan Mohammad was dismissed as governor (which happened, and was subsequently assassinated by a suicide bomb), and refused to work or even
recognize Matiullah. With that said Matiullah had support elsewhere, from the Karzai government, and most importantly USSF, who worked hand in hand with Matiullah’s militia (Filkins, 2010). Matiullah’s acts of predation and exploitation led one Dutch diplomat in 2010 to say “if we appoint Matiullah police chief, probably more than half of all people in the Baluchi valley would run over to the Taliban immediately.” (Reuter, 2010) Which, ironically, happened in early 2011 via appoint by Karzai himself (Scheidle, 2011).

General Abdul Razik exhibits many of the same traits as Matiullah; they are both supported by US forces and the Karzai government, have positions in government, maintain militias which control certain areas, traffic drugs, derive millions in revenue from tolls as contractors, and exhibit violent and predatory behavior on much of the populace outside of their patronage networks; his example provides an additional case study.

Raziq is both the Border Police Chief and the Kandahar Provincial Police Chief controlling a militia of roughly 3,500, who reportedly takes in roughly $5 - $6 million a month through his control of Spin Boldak, an important opium and smuggling depot bordering Pakistan (Tierney, 2010). His rise from a lowly shopkeeper prior to 2001 to one of the most powerful warlords in the south was attributed to a number of fortuitous circumstances but largely due to vast smuggling (including narcotics) revenues and US support (smuggling into Pakistan is big business due to the duty free agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan, because Afghanistan is a free port and Pakistan has extremely high custom duties, this creates an opportunity for smuggling (Aikins, 2009)). US forces have praised his combat prowess in his assistance in fighting the Taliban, while at the same time turning a blind eye to his drug trafficking and reports of bloody retribution massacres (often colored over as Taliban raids) (Aikins, 2011). Karzai is a vocal supporter as well, who appointed the commander a general and police chief of Kandahar.
after a successful raid with USSF. Razik, in return, is a loyal supporter of Karzai; in the latest presidential election Spin Boldak tallied 8,341 votes for Karzai, his main competitor received 4 (Aikins, 2009). One unidentified Kandahar official summed up Razik’s exploitive leadership in the area, “When you go to an area controlled by Commander Razik, you will see the people’s hatred of the government, Razik is the representative of the government out there, but he’s a forced representative of the people. The people don’t like him, but they are forced to accept him.” (Peter, 2010)

To the east, in the provinces of Paktia, Logar, Paktika, and Khost, Padsha Khan Zadran, emerged as the most powerful pro-government warlord post Taliban fall. For his initial support of Karzai he was given the position of governor of Paktia in the Interim government. After he was dismissed in the following government he began attacking government forces, killing a number of women and children in a Khost bazaar (Burns, 2002) and firing missiles at the new government in Gardez Paktia killing 36. At the same time, 600 of his 6000-man militia were on US payroll to hunt down the last remnants of Al Qaeda (Fisher, 2002). The US backed away from Zadran following these events and Karzai called for his arrest on murder charges, although there were still reports of US military utilizing Zadran’s men for intelligence (Bennet, 2002). Today, he controls the main checkpoints and tolls in Khost and Paktia provinces and with his three sons provides security for military and development convoys (charging the going rate of roughly $1500 per vehicle). He was eventually pardoned by Karzai and is currently a member of parliament (Tierney, 2010).

Examples similar to the those just cited abound. Other high level warlords in the Pashtun east and south include Sher Mohmad Akhundzada, Commander Ruhullah, Abdul Wali Khan, and Arif Noorzai. Akhundzada and Noorzai are two of the countries top drug traffickers both
with substantial militias; Akhundzada was the governor of Helmand province and Noorzai held multiple posts including the Minister of Tribal and Frontier Affairs and was elected a member of parliament in 2005 (Forsberg, 2010). Commander Ruhullah, through his relationship with the Popal brothers (cousins of Karzai) has monopolized control of the critical passage from Kabul to Kandahar charging $1500 per vehicle to pass, making tens of millions of dollars a year. Ruhullah’s forces, heavily infiltrated by Taliban, have been known to attack convoys that choose not to pay (which seems to be the norm) (Tierney, 2010). Lastly Abdul Wali Khan, known as Koka, before becoming a district police chief in Helmand province, he was held for 14 months by US forces for insurgency activity. As a police chief in 2006 he earned $20,000 a day skimming of the opium trade and was known for his ruthless killings and robberies among other abuses, at which time the UK forced his removal. After Karzai insisted he be reinstated, the British caved and Koka continues his acts of predation as police chief, as well as operating a successful PSC, protecting international convoys (Tierney, 2010).

As rational actors, these warlords have no desire to seek stability. Stability would mean no more lucrative PSC contracts, developers could come into the country and help farmers grow something other than opium, and the authority on which they are based, that of the militia, would disappear. As self-interested actors they have no incentive to change the chaotic atmosphere in the country. The above analysis has described some of the major Pashtun warlords, but smaller militia groups, often associated with the commanders discussed, also exist and operate in a similar fashion but on a smaller scale. Many of these smaller (as well as larger) strongmen utilized the Afghan National Police (ANP) to legitimize their militias, discussed below.
Afghan National Police (ANP)

The inability of the government to maintain professional security forces has created an unstable atmosphere and undermined the government’s legitimacy, especially in the south and eastern Pashtun regions. The police, in particular, whom are often the only government officials in daily contact with villagers, have been especially corrupt. As the international community focused their attention on the national army, the Afghan National Police was left to strongmen and their militias, a spoil of war. These spoils initially left a disproportionate amount of policing and its authority in the hands of Tajiks, which “provided an ideal way for factional leaders to accommodate, legitimize and eventually pay for their militia groups,” (Wilder, 2007, 3). This began at the top level where Yunus Qanooni and General Fahim were designated Interior Minister (police fall within this department) and Defense Minister respectively. The day-to-day foot soldiers were also disproportionately Tajik, in 2003 an estimated 90% of the Kabul Police Academy student body was Tajik, in 2007 they were still roughly two thirds (ICG, 2007). The control of the ANP by the Tajiks and the harassment of Pashtuns, contributed to the overall sense of powerlessness and disenfranchisement among the Pashtun communities.

Various incidences of Tajik police harassment of Pashtuns were reported throughout the country. Small business owners in Ghazni reported Tajik intel officers shutting down stores and imprisoning the owners, only to be released after substantial bribes were paid. In city centers such as Ghazni City and Kabul Pashtun men wearing turbans or beards (which represented Taliban style of dress) were targeted for mistreatment. For example, one man recounts a story of taking a bus to Kabul for medical treatment, while wearing his turban, as he always had. At the checkpoint leading into Kabul, he was pulled out of the bus and interrogated as the bus left without him. The police took all the old man’s money and sent him on his way; he had to
borrow money for medicine and bus fare from distant relatives living in the city. Although their
lacks hard data on Pashtun harassment, especially as it relates to mundane daily tasks, numerous
examples like the one described have been reported, and undoubtably adds to Pashtun resentment
of the central government (Reuter, 2009, 102).

As the government began to rebalance the ethnic composition of the ANP (by adding
more Pashtuns) and the insurgency grew stronger in the south, the government instituted local
police mechanisms to assist the inefficient ANP. The local policing mechanisms again brought
Pashtun local militias into government, giving them funds, arms and further legitimacy, and
completely contradicted the policies of the DDR and DIAG disarmament programs. In 2006, the
government created the Afghanistan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP), focusing on 124 high
risks districts in the turbulent Pashtun south. The recruits were given 10 days of training and an
AK-47 (Wilder, 2007). The ANAP, with a seemingly negligent amount of training, was met
with near universal disapproval from the international community, with the exception of the
United States. General Esmatullah Dawlatzai, a senior member of the MoI, described it as
follows, “It was made for the warlords. They were given uniforms and salaries, but they were the
same people, committing the same crimes, with more power.” (HRW, 2011, 20)

The ANAP, which dissolved in 2008, was eventually replaced by the Afghan Local
Police (ALP) in 2010, meant to fill the security gap in the Pashtun south. An ALP force was
created upon community request and theoretically it’s members chosen from the village elders
and jirga. The system is drastically undermined as numerous accounts suggest local strongmen
either made the request on behalf of the jirga or controlled the jirga itself, leading again to the
legitimization and rearming of local militias (Oxfam, 2011). By 2010 there were numerous local
policing units under various different names and acronyms, these groups eventually fell under
the umbrella of the Village Stability Operations (VSO), supported by the United States. Each of the programs under this umbrella attempted to ingratiate local militias into the formal government structure. One of particular interest was the Community Defense Forces (CDF), meant to increase security in the Pashtun south during elections time, which was a time of increased violence. Karzai instituted this force, charging Mohammad Arif Noorzai to run the operation. Noorzai a family friend was also one of the countries biggest drug smugglers and maintained his own militia. These local militias, although in many cases were able to maintain security were also accused of numerous electoral abuses and inevitably secured Karzai additional votes (HRW, 2011).

The local defense force initiatives often times attempted to utilize the tribal *arabakai* but did so with flaws. The government essentially created new lines of patronage either with the local warlord or with the individual militiamen. From the perspective of the *jirga* this has an undermining effect. As one tribal elder describes, “in the king’s time it was an honor to be a member of an *arabakai*. Its members were provided with rations, weapons, and ammunition by the *jirga*.” (Ruttig, 2010, 10). Under Karzai and US influence, the *jirga* has been sidelined by the local district commander who pays these local forces. “To pay the arabakai means to render it uncontrollable when payment stop” (ibid, 10). This leads to security breakdowns when the *arabakai* isn’t paid, many of which went unpaid for months. More importantly this undermines the traditional tribal structure, which has been successfully utilized in the past in maintaining stability. Additionally, the *jirga* is supplanted by local strongmen, providing them with additional legitimacy and authority.

*Afghan National Army (ANA)*
A large part of the nation building initiative was centered around the creation of a functioning and professional armed forces. This is especially pertinent today due to the importance of having a security force to replace US forces after their planned withdrawal in 2014. Unfortunately, the current ANA has a myriad of problems, which don’t seem likely to be fixed anytime soon. Part of the problem is due to the fractional nature of the army, which has become another venue of ethnic tug of war and patronage.

The ANA was established shortly after the Bonn Conference and was expected to eventually play a role in stabilizing and securing the country. The Americans took the role of training the newly formed army but left the recruitment up to General Fahim, the Tajik NA commander, and Minister of Defense. This initially created a Tajik dominated force, which consisted of roughly 55% of the officers of Tajik decent by 2004. After pressure by the international community to create a more balanced force, ethnic quotas were established. Although today, there exists relative ethnic representation there still lacks a national character due to the ethnic rivalries that permeate the system. “This is the result of the existence of rival patronage networks inside the army, who tend to recruit on ethnic or regional bases.” (Giustozzi, 2009, 39) The largest of these networks centers on the chief of staff Bismillah Khan, a Tajik (associated with the NA), who holds the loyalty of six of the eleven brigade commanders. The Minister of Defense Wardak, a Pashtun, hold the loyalty of one commander, the Hazaras patronage is derived from one brigade commander, while four commanders are associated with Uzbek General Dostum that caters to the Uzbek patronage networks. This has created a fractured ethnic divide that is particularly concerning due to the importance of the institution post US withdrawal. At the highest level Bismillah isn’t even on speaking terms with the MoD
Wardak, at the lowest level superiors rarely confront subordinates from different ethnicities due to problems of escalation and desertion (ibid).

Unlike the compulsory conscription under the Musahiban monarchy, the ANA is a volunteer force. Originally, under the Bush administration, the goal was to create a 70,000 man strong ANA. As insurgent activity increased the Obama administration has raised the bar to 240,000 by 2014 (currently it stands at roughly 170,000 strong). Due to the low level of patriotism throughout the country and increased pressure to grow, the ANA has had to accept recruits from the lowest echelons of society, creating an army with a 90% illiteracy rate (the other 10% graduated primary school). Many of these recruits have problems with drug use (80-85% of recruits in some areas by one report) and alcohol, or have been sent by their community due to bad behavior. These personal problems become more relevant as the ANA is forced to leave the barracks and participate in lengthy deployments, stemming from pressures to professionalize before US withdrawal. This increased contact between the ANA and populace has led to a corresponding increase in acts of predation and corruption, which has started to mirror the notoriously corrupt national police force. These acts of corruption include, illegal taxation and road blocks, theft, and other such abuses (ibid).

The lack of national cohesion and professionalism in the ANA could potentially be a cause of great concern. If the American forces truly leave the Afghans to their own devices in 2014, the ethnically fragmented and unprofessional ANA would most likely not only fail to defend against the growing insurgency but also potentially exacerbate the problem by the emergence of ethnic divisions similar to that of the mujahidin period.
Warlords of the North and West Pay Retribution

Although the Pashtun population is primarily located in the south and eastern part of Afghanistan, small Pashtun communities exist sporadically throughout the north and west. These communities became the target of reprisal among the Tajik and Uzbek militias now dominating those areas. Their experience is worth briefly recounting following the days after the fall of the Taliban government, as it adds to the general sense of Pashtun distrust and alienation from the government.

After the initial invasion countless numbers of acts of murder, rape, and looting have been documented by various human rights organizations in northern Afghanistan, largely due to the perceived association of Pashtun communities with the Taliban. It should be noted, the backlash against the northern Pashtuns was not official policy of the Karzai government who had given amnesty to all Taliban who laid down their weapons (Tarzi, 2008, 287), but there was certainly no protection given to the group. Seemingly all major ethnic groups and their corresponding warlords in the north and west participated in the Pashtun atrocities. Abuses by the Hazara Wahdat militia were documented by Human Rights Watch shortly after the US invasion. They had visited the north central provinces from Faryab to Baghlan where they recorded over 150 incidences of criminal abuse, targeting Pashtuns. This abuse included mass execution of 30 Pashtun men, raping of mother and daughters, and the regular occurrences of looting entire villages and beating its inhabitants (HRW, 2002). In the west where Ismail Khan regained his power, many of the same atrocities against Pashtuns were reported (IRBD, 2004). Uzbek commanders under Dostum sent Pashtuns fleeing northern areas under their control in fear of reprisal, emptying villages near the Turkmenistan border. A UN official summed up the anti Pashtun campaign by saying, “it has been systematic and wide scale. Rapes are far more
common than killings, but the serious looting is very pronounced. With the change in power, it is time to settle old scores.” (Bearak, 2002) This targeting of Pashtuns sent many fleeing out of the country or to other areas as internally displaced people. By mid 2002 roughly 120,000 northern Pashtuns had left their homes in fear of their safety (Baldauf, 2002).

Conclusion

This section was meant to highlight the effect of the emergence of warlordism on Pashtun society and its impact on stability. Generally speaking, there are two primary effects. First, the emergence of Tajik and Uzbek warlords, primarily associated with the Northern Alliance, have targeted Pashtun communities, causing disenfranchisement and further alienating them from the government. Second, regional Pashtun warlords of the south and east have undermined the traditional tribal authorities and have become the primary beneficiaries of the conflict, due to their patronage relations with both the Karzai government and international (primarily US) forces. As rational actors, these regional Pashtun warlords have no incentive to contribute to a stable environment and have continually pushed other Pashtun communities towards the insurgency. An examination of why Pashtuns are joining the insurgency is discussed in the following section.

Part 3 - The Insurgency: Who They Are and Why They Fight

By May of 2003 US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld announced “the end of major combat operation” in Afghanistan (Katzman, 2008), as the US began focusing their attention and resources on Iraq. At this time there were roughly 10,000 US troops and 5,000 foreign troops deployed in the country, coupled with 6,000 Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) (Livingston, 2011). Rumsfeld’s announcement wasn’t all that far fetched at the time. The
Taliban government had disintegrated and al Qaeda was on the run. The remnants of al Qaeda, the Taliban, and militant groups like Hizb-i Islami led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (HIG), all fled into Pakistan into the bordering Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA). The FATA area was home to sympathetic Pashtun tribesmen, in an area with little government control and rough mountainous terrain, making for good cover. This was also an area where many Taliban and HIG had studied in the various Deoband madrassas and had many contacts with in the Pakistani government, especially its intelligence unit, the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). The Pakistan government, who had assisted the US invasion, would further assist the US in their hunt for al Qaeda militants and other foreign fighters, but as a top CIA official noted, the Pakistani government “made it clear that they didn’t care about targeting the Taliban.” (Jones, 2009, 101) Neither did the US, for that matter, as the same CIA official continued, “The US considered the Taliban a spent force.” (ibid, 101).

At the time international presence was roughly 1.6 per 1000 Afghan citizen, “translating into one of the lowest levels of troops, police, and financial assistance in any stabilization operation since the end of WWII.” (ibid, 118) The inadequacy of the ‘light footprint’ presence, coupled with the unwillingness of the top US military commanders to either send US peacekeeping forces outside of Kabul or even have US forces working with ISAF (International Security Assistance Force, mandated by the UN in 2003) translated into an opportunity for the insurgency (especially the Taliban) to regroup.

2006 was the year the insurgency really began to reemerge. ‘Force multipliers’ such as improvised explosive devices (IED) and suicide bombing were now being used (lessons learned from the Iraqi insurgency). Prior to 2005, suicide attacks were nearly nonexistent, in 2005 22 attacks took place, 2006 there were 139 attacks, and 2007 160 attacks (Williams, 2008). 2006
saw over a 100% increase in IED attacks (from 783 in 2005 to 1,677 in 2006) and armed attacks nearly tripled to 4,542 from the prior year; the brunt of these attacks took place in the Pashtun south, in particular Helmand province (Jones, 2009). This would mark the beginning of a lethal campaign by the Taliban and other insurgency groups; the chart below illustrates the increase in insurgent activity through 2010.

By 2009 security environment had sufficiently deteriorated, with a number of districts in the south under complete Taliban control. The threat level, according to the United Nations Department of Safety and Security, was at ‘high risk’ in 133 of the country’s 356 districts, nearly all of which were in Pashtun dominated areas. An illustration of the risk assessment is shown below (Talt, 2009).
Today the insurgency has grown to an estimated 25,000 strong, and seemingly only getting stronger (Katzman, 2011). The following analysis is meant to highlight the major elements of the growing insurgency; that of the Taliban, Haqqani network, and Hizb-I Islami Gulbuddin (HIG), and why Pashtuns are joining.

**The Insurgency**

**The Taliban**

The Taliban, as was briefly summarized in the preceding chapter section, was a radicalized Islamic movement with support from Pakistan, which took control of the country in 1996. After the US invasion the group fled to Pakistan and eventually its top commanders including Mullah Omar, settled in Quetta Pakistan near the Afghan border, where they continue to maintain close relationships with the ISI and Pakistani Islamic political groups. The group has evolved into a guerrilla organization, centralized in some aspects, and decentralized in others, one insurgency expert describes the group as a ‘network of networks’ (Ruttig, 2010, 1).
highest level of the centralized system is the Supreme Leadership Council, led by Omar, which presides over four different shura councils; the Quetta Shura (which controls the area of greater Kandahar, all the way to Herat in the west), the Peshawar Shura (controlling eastern Afghanistan), the Haqqani led Miram Shah Shura (controlling Loya Paktia), and a northern Shura (for northern Afghanistan) (Ruttig, 2009).

This central authority has also implemented a ‘shadow government’ or local Taliban administration. In some areas of the Pashtun controlled south, they are effectively the government in charge. Recently the WHO and UNICEF have utilized the Taliban administrative structure to receive permission to administer the polio vaccine (using an intermediary as UN agencies are banned from negotiating with the Taliban) in areas of the south and east, where the government essentially had no authority (Trofimov, 2010). In other areas the shadow administration is largely symbolic but still a venue for tribal competition as they attempt to have their members appointed, to better position themselves after US withdrawal. Depending on the location of the government, it can also impact where development aid is directed, effect taxes and the school system. The most practical, day-to-day aspect, of these shadow administration is their court system. Often times local mullahs are given authority to mediate or arbitrate conflict (Bilert, 2009). There is also so the mobile ‘desert court’ where Taliban members come from outside the community to settle a dispute. They’ve developed a reputation as an effective and quick way to solve conflicts, often where government courts are too corrupt or don’t exist and the jirga system has become tainted by warlord influence (Alizada, 2011).

This vertical hierarchal network, centered around Mullah Omar and the Leadership Council in Quetta, has distinctly different characteristics then the loosely affiliated horizontal networks which comprise of the day to day fighting. The central leadership tends to be more
political then the foot soldiers, in that they are essentially fighting to regain power, as the foot soldiers may have a multitude of reasons for joining the insurgency. This is reflected in their perceptions of Pakistan, where the ‘political’ Taliban have close patron relations with various parts of the Pakistani government, the ‘fighting’ Taliban often hold very negative views of their supposed patron, and the vast majority don’t recognize the Durrand Line (historically a divisive issue between the two countries) (Smith, 2009). There are also important distinctions related to the tribal aspect of the fighters and political Taliban. Mullah Omar and the political Taliban tend to be more supra tribal in that they view their Islamic ideology as the dominant identity trait. Among the foot soldiers, the tribal structure is much more relevant and rooted in their decision making (Ruttig, 2010).

The organizational structures at the local level, the Taliban fighters, are more or less a collection of decentralized groups whose members are drawn from some form of relations (blood, tribal, village, madrassa). These groups can emerge as a small group of three or four who operate at their own discretion (Elias, 2009), or an operating commander can essentially apply with the Taliban, much the same way they would with the government. These local commanders may receive some support from the Taliban core, such as arms, but the daily operations fall within their own authority, this often leads to settling tribal disputes in the name of the Taliban. To reduce the amount of friction between communities, Taliban commanders tend to only operate in their local community, if there is no Taliban presence in a community a Taliban agent will be deployed to build support among the local villagers. Without a local support base, the Taliban generally refrain from attacking government or international forces (Giustozzi, 2009). Although in the event a larger scale operation, higher-level commanders will be brought in (Bilert, 2009).
Once some sort of Taliban militia is in place they introduce different administrative structures to gain additional influence. This includes the implementation of a shadow government, a judiciary, and creating more organization among the various militias, often creating a hierarchy of commanders. Once international and government forces have sufficiently withdrawn the shadow government will began operating more effectively by creating permanent administrative institutions and collecting taxes (Elias, 2009).

Haqqani Network

The Haqqani network is a regional insurgent group located in the Loya Paktia region. The group, generally considered a network under the Taliban umbrella, has in recent years gained international attention due to their high-profile attacks and ruthless tactics. It’s leader, Jalaluddin Haqqani (although his son Serajuddin has been taking over in his father’s old age) was a prominent mujahidin commander against the Soviets (a CIA favorite and unilateral asset), a cabinet member of both the mujahidin and Taliban governments, and led the Taliban forces against the US (during the initial invasion) (Ruttig, 2009). The Haqqani network, easily the most powerful in Loya Paktia, operates out of the Miram Shah Shura out of North Waziristan, with roughly 5,000 -15,000 members under its command (Mazzetti, 2011). The group is known for having a close relationship with foreign/Arab Islamic fundamentalists such as al Qaeda, as well as strong links to elements within Pakistani intelligence. The ISI has been accused of waging a proxy war through the Haqqani network, which has focused a number of attacks on Indian contractors and most notably the Indian Embassy attack (killing 41 people) in July 2008. Over the past few years the network has extended its operations outside of Loya Paktia and into surrounding provinces including Kabul. Most recently they led the high profile attack on the US Embassy/NATO headquarters on September 12\textsuperscript{th} 2011, where 16 people were killed (Dressler,
Their brazen attacks often utilize IEDs and suicide bombers, seemingly without consideration of innocent civilian collateral damage. These types of tactics draw stronger similarities to al Qaeda tactics than the Taliban leadership in Quetta, whom have condemned the civilian bloodshed (Ruttig, 2009).

Haqqani, a traditional Islamist and a product of the Deoband madrassa system, has managed to create an environment conducive to Taliban influence in an area which is typically less conducive to religious influence. As previously mentioned, due to the rugged terrain of Loya Paktia and the special administrative status under prior governments, there has traditionally been little government infringement, which has created strong tribal structures. Typically there exists an inverse relationship between the strength of the tribal organization and the strength of the mullahs and religious networks. Tribal law and tradition, Pashtunwali, supersedes sharia law and religious authority in these areas, giving the mullahs a status below that of the tribesmen. Haqqani has resisted this trend by building a vast network of traditional madrassas, through Arab financial support, which has created the necessary conditions for religious networks to supercede the tribal system, thereby creating the conditions for increased Taliban support (Strives, 2006). The area of concern does not apply to all of Loya Paktia but specifically Haqqani’s tribal home, the Zadran Arc (the Zadran Arc consists of 9 district at the border triangle of Khost, Paktika, and Paktia provinces, home of the Zadran tribe) (Ruttig, 2009).

Lastly, it should be noted, that although there is a tribal element to the Haqqani network (Haqqani is a member of the Zadran tribe (which neither a member of Durrani or Ghizai Pashtuns) Mezai clan)) it is a more regional insurgency. The network includes other disenfranchised Loya Paktia tribes, students at the various madrassas, and foreign fighters (Gopal, 2010). Other Zadran Mezai leaders, especially Pacha Khan Zadran (previously
mentioned) have been fierce adversaries and have utilized US forces to target the Haqqanis (Dressler, 2010).

_Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin (HIG)_

Gulbuddin Hikmatyar is head of Hizb-I Islami (not to be confused with Hizb-I Islami Khalis), which primarily operates in north and eastern provinces surrounding Kabul (Kunar, Nuristan, Kapisa, and Nangarhar provinces). He was once the primary recipient of aid from Pakistan and the United States prior to the Taliban’s emergence (Katzman, 2010). HIG doesn’t have the support structure of the Taliban or Haqqani network and tends to be more open to working with Karzai but are adamant against a continued US occupation. In March of 2010, Hikmatyar’s top lieutenants met with Karzai where they presented a 15-point peace plan centered on US withdrawal. As many top HIG commanders have joined the government, the militancy of the group has dissipated since its height during the mujahidin civil war. HIG, which is entirely separate from the Taliban, have often worked in concerted effort due to the similarities in their cause and ideology, although as US withdrawal draws near the various groups have tended to become more confrontational (ICG, 2011).

_The Influence of Pakistan; The Patron of Insurgency_

The primary patron of the insurgency groups discussed above is Pakistan. Ironically enough, Pakistan is also an ally of the United States, its mission in Afghanistan, and the ‘war on terror’ in general. As President George Bush stated in a speech in July of 2004, “Today the government of the United States and Pakistan are working closely in the fight against terror… Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror and the American people are safer.” (Rashid, 2008, 236) Pakistan, for its alliance with the US, initially received (in 2001) multiple layers of sanctions
removed, $3 billion in debt forgiveness, and military supplies. In later years they would receive hundreds of millions of dollars in aid packages. Arguably more importantly than financial benefits, the country maintained its ally status with the US which counter balanced the influence of India and avoided becoming a terrorist pariah state (ibid).

Pakistani foreign policy is largely influenced by a powerful army and intelligence service. These organizations have strong ties with Islamic parties in the country and have links with roughly 40 different Islamic extremist groups. Their ties and support of Islamic extremism is central to their foreign policy goals. Paramount of which is countering Indian hegemony in the region by supporting the Kashmir (disputed territory between Pakistan and India) agenda and safeguarding their nuclear arsenal (both Pakistan and India became nuclear states in 1998). The support of Islamic extremist groups has become an essential tool in the Pakistani arsenal. They are used to combat India, without using the official apparatus (the army), and were used to counter what is perceived as pro Indian influences in Afghanistan. This began during the Soviet occupation where they supported various mujahidin militias, then focused their support on Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin during the subsequent Tajik led mujahidin government. When Gulbuddin failed to topple the Tajiks, they supported a new client, the Taliban. Today, they support the insurgency due to the perceived pro Indian support and the secular nature of the Karzai government (ibid).

The conflicting policies of supporting the US agenda as well as the insurgency, is accomplished through paying lip service to the Americans and only taking action against insurgency when American pressures can’t be diffused with rhetoric. Under Bush, this could be accomplished by solely focusing on al Qaeda, while allowing the Taliban to regroup. Although in actuality, the Pakistani military allowed foreign militants, including al Qaeda, to escape
American forces by entering into Pakistan through the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, specifically North and South Waziristan (two of the seven tribal agencies). The Pakistani army denied their existence while the ISI was known to have a presence in the area, meeting with militia leaders. During this time the Taliban leadership was situated in Quetta, where foreign militias and al Qaeda were banned, as to avoid US targeting of the area (ibid). Today, the Pakistani –American relationship has severely deteriorated due to the now common knowledge of Pakistani support of the insurgency (although the support isn’t universal), which has led to American strikes in Pakistan territory, and more recently a USSF mission in Abbottabad (just north of Peshawar), which killed Osama Bin Laden.

**Why They Join: The Disenfranchisement of the Pashtun Populace**

**US and International Military Involvement**

As of September of 2011, there were roughly 98,000 American troops (comprising of both NATO-ISAF troops and troops participating in Operation Enduring Freedom) and roughly another 40,000 other international troops deployed in Afghanistan (Livingston, 2011). A majority of these forces are situated in the Pashtun south and east, as you can see from the below troop disbursement chart.
The military focus on the Pashtun areas of the country, due to the level of insurgency activity in these areas, has led to a disproportionate amount of collateral damage in the form of Pashtun civilian deaths. A break down in civilian deaths is illustrated in the chart below.

Brookings Institute

Figure 8 – NATO-ISAF Troop Distribution
The military focus on the Pashtun areas of the country, due to the level of insurgency activity in these areas, has led to a disproportionate amount of collateral damage in the form of Pashtun civilian deaths. A break down in civilian deaths is illustrated in the chart below.

Brookings Institute
Although the majority of civilian deaths are attributed to insurgency attacks, civilians on the ground often have a very different interpretation of events. This could be due to the localized nature of the insurgency, where many Taliban (or other insurgence) are part time soldiers and part of the community, often indistinguishable from other villagers, or often times civilian casualties simply go unreported (Gaston, 2011). According to a recent report by Open Society Foundation, regardless of who was at fault, Afghans are blaming the international forces who they perceive as “violent, abusive, and sometimes, deliberately malevolent in their conduct and nature” (Wood, 2010). The report went on to say that “Many (Afghans) were even suspicious that international forces were directly or indirectly supporting insurgents” (ibid). This is not surprising due to the high level of support various warlords receive from both Karzai and international forces.

This collateral damage has been exacerbated by the often indiscriminate use of aerial bombings, which not only take human lives but also destroy homes. These aerial bombings have dissipated to a certain extent due to the appointment of General McChrystal as commander of ISAF and US forces in Afghanistan (in 2009, then released in 2010) whose counter insurgency policies focused on minimizing civilian casualties in an effort to win back their support (Hastings, 2010). Prior to his appointment aerial attacks had steadily increased as the insurgency strengthened, as illustrated below.
These aerial bombings as well as night raids have led to countless incidents of civilian casualties often times of women and children. These military activities disproportionately focused on the Pashtun east and south has furthered the alienation of the tribal groups, who often see the Karzai government and US military actions as indistinguishable. Leading Afghan anthropologist, Akbar Ahmed, argues US military action has been perceived as a war on the Pashtuns and Islam at large, and sees the Taliban as a champion for their cause even in light of their violent activity. This is especially prevalent among the nang Pashtuns in the mountainous eastern border. He remarks, “Mutilating Pashtun bodies, desecrating the Quran, dropping bombs from 30,000 feet, and killing women and children fed the perception that Americans were not people of honor, and it invoked the code of revenge” (Ahmed, 2011).

Studies done by daring journalists have supported this notion, that Taliban insurgence are joining the ranks due to family, friends, or other civilian deaths cause by international forces. Graeme Smith, a Canadian journalist, conducted interviews with local Kandahari Taliban
insurgence and found that roughly a third had joined the ranks after a bomb had killed a family member, while many cited civilian deaths among their reasons (Smith, 2009). Other reports cite local mullahs invoking jihad in daily sermons due to bombs and other indiscretions (Reuter, 2009). This fact isn’t lost on international forces, as General McChrystal noted when describing his “insurgent math”, “for every innocent person you kill, you create 10 new enemies,” (Hastings, 2010, 4).

**Development**

International development in Afghanistan, post US invasion, has been fraught with problems and underfunding. “Despite billions of dollars in aid, state institutions remain fragile and unable to provide good governance, deliver basic services to the majority of the population or guarantee human security.” (ICG, 2011) Development in the country was largely underfunded during the Bush administration that focused on anti terrorism rather than national building. In the first five years of the war per capita aid in the country was roughly $292 as compared to $1,528 in Iraq and $585 in Bosnia (Ibid). This was eventually corrected to a certain extent, due in part to President Obama’s focus on counter insurgency (as opposed to counter terrorism), but flaws still exist.

Foreign aid and international assistance has largely excluded local resources and productivity, undermining the potential for organic growth and self-dependency. This problem was most apparent during the first years of the war, during the Bush administration, where they focused on tracking down militants rather than assisting in the national building process. Basic infrastructure, such as roads and an electrical grid, hadn’t been rebuilt or improved after decades of war, crippling local producers. This problem was exacerbated by cheap products from Iran
and China being dumped in the local economy, as well as the US Army that has ignored local production, leaving Afghanistan’s primary industry, agriculture out of its supply chain (Rashid, 2011).

The implementation of development programs by international aid agencies has also undermined local involvement. Between 2001 and 2008 nearly $15 billion in assistance reached Afghanistan, although this number doesn’t reflect the actual amount that reaches the local community. Estimates suggest roughly 40% of aid eventually leaves the country. This is largely due to high paid foreign workers. The largest US distributor of aid, USAID, depends on five large US contractors which employs high paid expatriates, who earn $200,000 - $500,000 annually. These donor agencies have also generally excluded the Afghan government in assisting with development initiatives, leaving line ministries ineffective (Oxfam, 2008). 80% of aid funds bypass the government, diminishing the importance of the Karzai administration (Jones, 2009). At the same time, foreign aid agencies publicly promote their support of creating an efficient and strong government. This also applies at the provincial level where provincial governments manage the development process through the various Provincial Development Committees (PDC). PDCs have by and large been sidelined in the development process, only recently has efforts been made to include them in the process. Even still, they’ve only played a small role. For instance less than half of Herat Province’s PDC development projects found donor funding in 2011, in Balk Province roughly 10-18% of development aid is channeled through the PDC. The lack of government and local involvement will become a more apparent concern in the near future when US forces start their planned withdrawal, which will likely coincide with a drawn down in aid as well (ICG, 2011).
As Obama shifted the Afghan strategy from counter terrorism to counter insurgency, a renewed focus was placed on winning over hearts and minds. A prominent aspect of this strategy was implementing development projects, with a focus on the turbulent Pashtun south and east. With the majority of the Pashtun inhabited areas insecure, NGOs and USAID generally have a minimal presence unless accompanied by military personal. Due to the insecure atmosphere, foreign forces have relied on Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT). PRTs are hybrid development-military groups, meant to secure an era then provide aid. 26 PRTs exist in the country, 14 of which are led by American forces who primarily operate in the conflict areas of the east and south. The hybrid operations have caused many to voice concern. The very nature of its hybrid function begins to blur the line between military operations and development operations. As the two groups have become indistinguishable, militant groups have begun targeting aid workers. This additionally restricts access to aid workers, even when not operating under the military umbrella. This hybrid approach has also prioritized military needs over developmental, which makes the disbursement of aid not on a needs basis and tends to create very short influxes of aid without long-term agendas (ICG, 2011). Especially relevant in the Pashtun south, these projects are often political in nature and tend to be very small in scale. Part of the problem is due to a lack of community involvement, which ultimately produces unused and unsuitable projects (Oxfam, 2008). Oxfam International summarizes the primary problem with PRTs.

“Given the historic suspicion of foreign intervention, such efforts to win ‘hearts and minds’ are naïve. It is unsurprising that the huge expansion of PRT activities has not prevented the deterioration of security. The development process needs to be owned and led by Afghan communities, which is essential for sustainability. PRTs are no substitute for long-term development work.” (Oxfam, 2008)
In the Pashtun south and east, delivering aid has been especially problematic due to the atmosphere of insecurity. During the first years following the US invasion, Pashtun areas were largely ignored and the slowest to receive development assistance (Rashid, 2006). Eventually, as the development component took center stage, international aid agencies found it difficult to operate in the turbulent Pashtun east and south. For instance, Helmand province in 2004, a USAID contractor, Chemonics International received $130 million in development contracts, the project was quickly terminated after five employees were killed. This left aid deliver in the province to a PRT. The Helmand PRT was allotted $9.5 million and 300 men; a relatively paltry amount for a province of its size (Coghlan, 2009). The minimal amount of aid contributing to Pashtun development in the south and east is a problem in itself, but is exacerbated by the government policies on a primary Pashtun staple crop, opium.

**Opium**

The largest industry (arguably second to smuggling) in Afghanistan is the production of opium, which directly employs roughly 14% of the country (Rubin, 2008). Opium poppy is the plant used to produce the illicit drug heroin. The opium crop, which was outlawed in the latter years of Taliban rule, has seen accelerated cultivation over the post Taliban years, reaching it’s pinnacle of 193,000 hectares in 2007. The below graph illustrates the growth.
At its height, Afghanistan produced roughly 92% of the world’s heroin (van Ham, 2007), Helmand province on its own produced 50% (Coghlan, 2009). Due to the drastic increase in opium production the Afghan government and western forces have spent hundreds of millions in poppy eradication, executed by Afghan Security Forces. The issue of poppy eradication is a substantial one. As seen from the below map, opium production is most prevalent in Pashtun dominated provinces, especially Helmand.
Figure 11 – Poppy Cultivation Map

This is an especially relevant issue as it pertains to individuals joining the insurgency. In various interviews conducted in Helmand province 80% of the insurgency interviewed grew poppy, half of which had their poppy destroyed, many suggesting outright that poppy eradication was a major influence in joining the insurgency (Smith, 2009). Many of these farmers participate in *salaam* financing, where a trafficker will pay below market price during the winter for a certain quantity of opium produced in the summer. This gives the farmer a source of income during the winter months. Problems arise when the farmers can’t produce the given amount of poppy, which puts them in debt to the trafficker, creating a vicious cycle of increasing debt and dependence. Eradication is one way a farmer might find himself in this sort of debt, and be forced to extreme measure like exchange a daughter for debt forgiveness (Peters, 2009)
Leading Afghan expert Barnett Rubin argues alternative sources of income need to be put in place prior to any eradication. He suggests, contrary to US and UN assertions, that poppy cultivation is the result of, not the cause of insecurity. These subsistence farmers need an alternative to poppy cultivation, often times other crops such as wheat don’t suffice to maintain just the basic elements of living. Eradicating fields often only puts these farmers into debt, thereby become more dependent on opium production (Rubin, 2008).

Heroin is an inelastic product, when prices go up demand tends to change little, both empirical and theoretical evidence would support this notion (ibid). Therefore eradicating poppy farms only increases the prices, benefitting traffickers, and laying the burden solely on the subsistence farmers. This is an important concept as it relates to who the US and Afghan governments are supporting. As previously discussed both entities have supported warlords for various reasons. Many of these same warlords are making millions off trafficking of opium with the support of the US and Karzai. The biggest ones of which are Arif Noorzai and Abdul Raziq as well as numerous members of government and key US contractors. This completely flies in the face of logic; as the US and Karzai attempt to eradicate poppy, they alienate they very group most susceptible to joining the insurgency (disenfranchised Pashtuns), while creating an environment that enfranchises the very people rooted in the creation of insecurity. This only further alienates the already disenfranchised, who inevitably look for other sources of political authority outside the Karzai government.

*The Tribal Nature of Warlordism and Insurgency*

The tribal structures, in many ways, have become a venue in which “political competition takes place,” (Ruttig, 2010, 24) this applies to both warlords and the insurgency. As Karzai
emerged to power he was supported by various Pashtun anti Taliban strongmen in the south and east. These same warlords would become clients of Karzai as well as US and international forces. As the warlords solidified the patronage networks with the US and Karzai, their own localized patronage networks grew stronger. These local and regional networks utilized personal relationships within tribal networks and allied tribes to increase their influence. These Pashtun warlords, settled old grievance and abused various tribes for their own benefit. This would often lead to alienated tribes joining the Taliban as a source of protection and an alternative political venue.

Tribal alliances with either the government or insurgency aren’t universal; all tribes have at least some members in both the insurgency and government positions, although it’s apparent that regional conflicts among tribes often create dividing lines between pro government and pro insurgency forces. Although, with this said, the Zirak Durranis (making up the royalty lineages consisting of the Barakzai, Polpozai, Alokozai, and Achakzai) tend to be more pro government then the Panjpai Durrani (the non royalty lineages of the Durrani tribal confederation) and Ghilzais. This is especially apparent among the Polpozai Durranis, which the Karzai family is a member of. This Polpozai relationship is most evident in the south in the greater Kandahar area, where the power structure was centered around Ahmed Wali Karzi (AWK) (AWK was recently assassinated in July 2011). AWK, together with the ex governor Gul Agha Shirzai (a Barkazai mujahidin commander who assisted Karzai during the US invasion), monopolized industry, maintained private security companies, and monopolized the international development contracts which they used as patronage for the various militias. In doing so they’ve alienated other tribes from the lucrative patronage networks pushing them towards other political venues such as the Taliban (to say nothing of the effects of predation on these communities). This is precisely what
happened to the Alokozai tribe whose leadership was pushed out of government, especially within the police force. They had once protected their district of Arghandab from Taliban infiltration, but today it’s in the hands of the Taliban (Forsberg, 2010).

In the east of Kandahar in Spin Boldak, the warlord Commander Razik (previously discussed), of the Achakzai tribe of the Adozai clan, for his military support of Gul Agha Sherzai he was given control of the Spin Boldak border which was traditionally controlled by the Noorzai Panjai tribe. After targeting Noorzai as Taliban utilizing USSF, the Noorzai in the region have nearly all become Taliban (Aikins, 2009). Although Arif Noorzai, another Noorzai warlord has held multiple seats in government, controls the smuggling route in the south of Kandahar, and is an in-law with the Karzais, needless to say he’s a close ally. In general, of all Kandahari Pashtuns involved in the insurgency there is a lack of Popalzia, Barakzai, and Achakzai, but a disproportional amount of the Panjpai tribes and Ghilzai tribes and more recently the Alokozai tribe. (Smith, 2009).

In Helmand the divide is relatively more extreme as the governor Sher Mohammad Akhundzada of the Alizai Panjpai tribe, and Helmand Intelligence Chief and legislature, Dad Mohammad Khan of the Alokozai tribe, have ruthlessly abused and targeted the Ishaqzai Panjpai tribe, which stemmed from old tribal and drug related conflict (Rubin, E., 2006). The Ishaqzai eventually assassinated Dad Mohammad and killed 40 of his family members. This slaughter could be attributed as a Taliban insurgency attack, a result of a tribal conflict, or part of a drug war, but it’s most likely all three intertwined (Coghlan, 2009).

Karzai has also utilized the various tribal relationships in an effort to solidify his own power. It’s often argued that the central government has little authority outside of Kabul (often
referring to Karzai as the Mayor of Kabul), this isn’t entirely accurate. Although many local villages see little government involvement in their communities, Karzai through various patronage networks has utilized local powers to support his own base. His power base in the south, in many ways, is derived from the various Pashtun militia strongmen that supported him and the US invasion, as well as his close family and friends. These commanders included Gul Agha Sherzai (Barakzai Durrani), Mullah Naqiib (Alokozia Durrani), Amir Lalai (Popalzai Durrani), Hajji Ahmed (Achekzai Durrani), Ustad Halim (Noorzai Durrani (of the lesser Panjpai sub confederation), and Habibullah Jan (Alizai Durrani). Absent among these commanders are any Ghilzai Pashtuns and only one Panjpai Durrani, which have disproportionately made up the ranks of the insurgency. Sherzai, arguably the most powerful among the Pashtun warlords (due to being a member of the Barakzai clan, normally recognized as the dominant royalty lineage over the Popalzai), has been both a rival and strong supporter of Karzai. He was once the governor of Kandahar (2001 – 2005), currently the governor of Nangarhar province, and was the dominant power broker in the south along with AWK. Sherzai has his own patron network, which inturn supports Karzai, most notably Commander Razik who controls Spin Boldak and its smuggling industry. Further west the smuggling route is controlled by Arif Noorzai whose sister married into the Karzai family, securing their relationship. This smuggling route extends into Herat in the west which is controlled by Ismail Khan, a major commander in the Northern Alliance whose held multiple posts in government and considered a loyal adversary (Forsberg, 2010).

Karzai’s primary base of power centered around his brother AWK (until his recent assassination) and other family members. Hashmat Karzai, the president’s cousin, runs Asia Security Group, which has an estimated 10,000 security personal, which employs various smaller
militias providing security and logistics for international agencies. This creates a vast patronage network which begins at Karzai himself (through his client Hashmat) to low level commanders throughout the southern provinces. The Watan Group, run by two other Karzai cousins (Ahmad and Rashid Popal) run similar operations. These two organizations largely benefit from the relationship with AWK who has essentially monopolized security contracts and has close operations with international NGO and US military forces. AWK’s role as head of the Kandahar Provincial Council also allowed him to appropriate land as well as other exploitations. In general his control of international contracts, government resources, and connection with US military has made him the prime power broker in the south, which in turn solidifies Karzai’s own power (ibid).

The Role of Religion

The role of religion plays an important part in the current conflict and the motivations of those joining the insurgency. Media commonly emphasizes the role of religion and how it often exacerbates the conflict. Some of the recently publicized issues include, American soldiers desecrating Afghan bodies, American military’s accidental burning of the Koran, and the intentional burning of a Koran by an American minister. These well-publicized stories highlight the religious aspect of the discord, but don’t necessarily describe the role religion plays in government or the alienation of religious authorities, especially in the local villages. The role and power of these religious authorities in society, that of the mullahs and ulama, has changed throughout modern Afghan history. Over the reign of the Musahiban monarchy, the religious community was placated too, brought into government, and eventually coopted. The influence of the group drastically increased during the jihad against Soviet occupation and the subsequent leadership under the Taliban. Under the Taliban the mullahs were invited “to consult on the
implementation of Sharia, the role of the government and other prestigious issues” (Wardak, 2007, 18). Today their authority has drastically diminished due to the secular nature of foreign governments assisting in the nation building process and the skepticism of American military forces who essentially invaded the country in an effort to combat Islamic extremism. Afghan scholar Prakhar Sharma summarizes it here.

“The active role that mullahs played in the Taliban government led the Karzai administration and the international community to view them with concern. The mullahs are seen as pro-Taliban, or “extremists” whose views are incompatible with the ideals of democracy, freedom, and the integration of Afghanistan into the international community.” (Sharma, 2009, 35)

The alienation of the Pashtun religious community, especially that of the village mullahs, has excluded a local leader from the decision making process and marginalized a figure who’s influence rests in their ability to call their constituency to jihad. Many of these mullahs, without any clear incentive to support the government, have turned to the alternative political venue, that of the Taliban who in the past have empowered the religious community.

“The legitimacy of Afghan governance is derived from two immutable sources: dynastic sources, usually in the form of monarchies and tribal patriarchies, and religious sources. This problem of legitimacy is especially acute at the local and village level of rural Pashtun society.” (Johnson, 2010, 43) The importance of local religious authorities lies in their ability to disseminate information, this is especially relevant in southern Pashtun societies where many can’t read and largely depend on the local mullah, who operates as both an educator and impartial arbitrator between the local society and foreign bodies, including the state. Their primary venue of information dissemination is at the local mosque, and particularly the Friday sermon. By western standards, the sermons are not wholly focused on religious matters; political issues in this society are intertwined with the religious narrative. It is here that the local mullahs
advocate to their constituency of supporting the insurgency or the government. In many ways, the current conflict is predicated on information dissemination, and the local mullahs are a primary body in which information is distributed (ibid).

The importance of religious authorities, especially at the local level, has largely been overlooked by the international community and Afghan government. In the debate on “peace building and development in post-Taliban Afghanistan, religion is hardly ever mentioned, and religious actors and institutions are rarely included in policies or programs.” (Borchgrevink, 2007) Rather than strengthen bonds with the local community through religious inoculators, the government and international community has sidelined the local mullahs and ulama in debate relating to various community related issues such as education and development. In the sphere of development, its been reported that most mullahs support development initiatives, but donor organizations and NGOs have largely excluded them from the process. Many of the current donors have little experience in involving religious organizations into their delivery process; they tend to depend on services providers, which are secular in nature (ibid). Other NGOs and foreign agencies are simply prohibited from working with religious bodies, or in many cases, have negative perceptions of the religious institutions, therefore exclude them from the process (Wardak, 2007).

Education reform has also added to the alienation of local religious authorities. Education in Afghanistan is divided among those accepting a secular based system and those supporting the religious based system. The secular system is supported by the Afghan government, with the assistance of foreign donors including the United States. The religious system, the madrassas run by local mullahs, has largely been ignored and underfunded (Sharma, 2009). During the Taliban era, madrassas were built with foreign funds funneled from Pakistan
or Arab countries, today this channel of support has been dramatically stymied forcing many madrassas to close down or work with a shallow support base. This has forced many young students to travel to Pakistan for education, which is heavily supported by government, but often teaches a more radicalized interpretation of the religion (Wardak, 2007). Generally speaking, the Pashtun communities and Afghan society at large, at the very least supports a religious component in education (Sharma, 2009). Although, if the government had effectively implemented the secular based system they may have been able to mobilize supporters to push for societal acceptance. This has not happened. The Ministry of Education, and the educational system at large, has proven to be corrupt and a venue to disburse patronage for political support. This has led to hiring drastically under qualified teachers, a lack of supervision, poor facilities, and demoralized professional educators (an estimated 70% of trained teachers find work outside the education system). The government’s failure to implement an effective education system has had two detrimental effects. First, the original advocates of the system who could have generated additional support in society have lost faith and enthusiasm. Second, it marginalized those that were against the secular system, with nothing to show for it (Giustozzi, 2010).

Arguably the most important aspect of the government’s relationship with the local religious community is the government’s complete lack of defense of mullahs even among those who support the government. Those that support the government are targeted by the insurgency and those holding a middle ground are attacked by both the insurgency and the government (Borchgrevink, 2007). Extending this logic, there’s seemingly no benefit to supporting the government, while supporting the insurgency will garner them support among the Taliban and political relevance in the shadow government or a future Taliban regime.
This alienation in itself doesn’t necessarily drive local religious authorities to support the insurgency, but as “the current administration has done little, if anything, to seriously integrate the religious leaders into the political process” (Sharma, 2009, 35) they have no venue to discuss concerns or vent frustration with the government. This dialogue could potentially quell the contempt over military operations in Pashtun communities. Instead mullahs sermonize about civilian deaths, unnecessary military actions, and generally the perceived un-Islamic disposition of the government and international involvement. Examples abound of mullahs calling their constituencies to jihad and support of the insurgency, predicated on these reasons (Reuter, 2009). This has led to near universal disapproval of military presence among local clergy (Borchgrevink, 2007), and animosity towards foreign presence and the government in general in southern Pashtun districts (Zabulwal 2009).

The ulama, who constitute the educated class of religious clergy, are mainly a disorganized group of roughly 2,000 alim (singular of ulama). They make up the Shura-i Ulama, the consultative body to the Afghan government created at the Bonn Conference, and various other provincial shuras, the most prominent of which is the Kandahar shura. The ulama are also prevalent in the Supreme Court and Ministry of Justice. The group is generally considered moderately conservative and relatively pro government, which is partly due to the ostracism of religious leaders associated with the Taliban. Although most Taliban were given amnesty in 2003, and all Taliban were given amnesty in 2005 (established under the Independent Peace and Reconciliation Commission) (Stanekzai, 2008), these declarations didn’t permeate at the local level where various warlords took retribution for past grievances with the group (Zabulwal, 2009).
The ulama’s influence is minimal, largely due to the secular reforms supported by foreign governments, evident in the constitution. The constitution is pluralistic in character, combining various Islamic and western laws into one body, which has watered down its conservative nature. For instance, the preamble cites the observation of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article two declares Islam as the official religion of Afghanistan although doesn’t identify which sect and allows other religious followers free of Islamic oversight, articles 131 and 132 cites both Hanafi jurisprudence and Shia jurisprudence and to rule “in a way that attains justice in the best manner.” (afghanembassy.com) The collective nature of the constitution drawn from different sources of jurisprudence creates possible contradictions, which by and large, has allowed secular influences to push for a more liberal agenda (Wardak, 2007).

The judiciary is the most evident venue where secular and conservative forces have positioned themselves. The establishment of a Supreme Court was headed by Fazel Hadi Shinwari, the Chief Justice. Shinwari, a strict conservative, led a conservative bench that issued various fatwas and decrees on hot button issues rather then attempting to professionalize the department. Western forces, specifically those of Italy and the US who were charged with reforming the judiciary, focused on professionalizing and implementing western mores as it relates to human rights, especially rights of women and minorities, deemphasizing the Islamic role (Suhrke, 2008). The differences in Islamic and western ideology were exacerbated during two controversial cases that highlighted the confrontational ideologies. The first, a case of a man converting to Christianity, faced the death penalty under their interpretation of sharia law. The second, a journalist was accused of blasphemy for criticizing Islam in the judiciary. The Kandahari ulama called for his execution if he did not repent. The outcome of these cases was telling indications of the influence of western powers, which was not lost on the religious
communities or the Pashtun villagers at large. Under pressure from western groups, the Christian convert was expelled to Italy and the journalist was given a short prison sentence (later commuted). Shortly thereafter, under pressure to ‘professionalize’ the court, Karzai began appointing less conservative judges; subsequently Shinwari lost the Supreme Court Justice seat in 2006 (ibid).

The obvious foreign intervention was not lost on the Pashtun communities (ibid). The promotion of western ideals of human rights, with especial focus on women’s rights, has further alienated many within the local Pashtun religious community. Clergy at the local level “believe laws relating to human rights and women are the government’s main concern and other laws are not deemed important.” (Wardak, 2007, 42) Additionally, it’s estimated roughly 75% of local religious leaders believe the constitution isn’t compatible with sharia law, which is damaging to the government’s legitimacy in a society so religious (ibid).

The policies of the central government have by and large alienated the religious community, especially relevant at the local level, and have contributed to the legitimacy of the insurgency. In interviews with Taliban fighters, the vast majority cite religion, or the un-Islamic nature of government and western forces, as an aspect of their decision to join the insurgency. It’s also worth noting the religious nature of the conflict isn’t necessarily attributed to radical Islam or support of the Taliban. In fact many Taliban foot soldiers that have indicated religion as a reason for their participation in the insurgency don’t support the policies of the past Taliban government, nor do they recognize the leadership of Mullah Omar, the group’s leader. They’ve utilized the Taliban as an alternative political venue and as a vehicle to join the insurgency (Smith, 2009).
Conclusion

As discussed the Pashtun insurgency is predicated on a number of factors, which include an economic aspect, the rejection of foreign forces, a tribal aspect, and a religious component. Contrary to the commonly accepted narrative, the conflict is more dynamic than simply a war between secular forces and a radical strand of Islam. The dynamic is multifaceted but predicated on the general alienation of the Pashtun communities. This alienation has pushed Pashtun communities to find alternative political venues, found in the Taliban. The rational behind those joining the insurgency will be discussed further in the next chapter. This concludes the analysis of the Karzai regime and it’s relationship with the Pashtun communities.
CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This analysis is meant to examine the Karzai government’s relationship with the Pashtun communities and the impact this relationship has had on the growing insurgency. The analysis has demonstrated that the conflict is more complex than simply discord between secular forces and radical Islam, but also includes various tribal, economic, and religious dynamics. To help illustrate the reason behind the current turmoil this thesis has utilized a comparative approach; comparing the relationship between the government of Afghanistan and the Pashtun tribal and religious communities during the Musahiban Period (1929 – 1963) and the Karzai government (2001 – present). The hope is to illustrate the reason behind the current turmoil in the country by comparing the current chaotic period to a period of relative stability, that of the Musahiban monarchy. This analysis will highlight the goals of the relevant actors, through the use of the rational choice framework, which will be complemented by emphasizing the patron client relations and how these patronage relationships have changed. The analysis will focus on three primary differences of the social dynamic, during the years of the Musahiban and Karzai rule that have affected stability. These differences are described below.
Patronage, Pashtun Tribes, and Warlordism

The patronage networks of the Karzai government that support his regime lay in stark contrast to the networks under the Musahiban leadership. The rational choice theory, specifically the ‘thick’ version of the concept, the rational actor strives for power (Green, 18, 1994). The various leaders of the Musahiban monarchy represent rational actors driven to consolidate power in Afghanistan. As we’ve seen in the past, the Pashtun tribal society and the associated religious community were essential in maintaining power and preserving stability. As this was apparent to Nadir, he created new patronage relations with these groups in an effort to consolidate his rule.

The patronage relations with the Pashtun tribal communities utilized the traditional tribal institutions of the khan, malik, jirga and its elders. The individual authority, that of the khan and malik, was predicated on their ability to provide patronage to the qawm, gain access to government resources, and protect the qawm from government infringement. Their position in leadership was counter balanced by the jirga and elders whom their authority was derived from.

Daily interaction with the tribes took place between central government officials and khans and maliks. These khans and maliks operated as middlemen creating space between the government and tribe. This create a political atmosphere where the tribe or qawm was often viewed as one
single constituency as opposed to governing each individual tribesmen, thus maintaining the autonomy of the tribe.

The Musahiban monarchy utilized the government structure to bring in the tribal communities which distributed power to the tribes and acted as a means of cooption. The government was viewed as the tribal representative to the outside community and acted on their behalf. The government was also viewed as an external agent which could distribute resources and power. The government utilized its resources and distribution of power by bringing tribal leaders into government as a means of cooption. This was a give and take relationship, a one of mutual benefit. The government gave the tribes influence in the central government and resources, while maintaining tribal autonomy, in return were given tribal loyalty, taxes, and conscripts.

The official government structure also utilized the jirga system at each level of local government. At each level (the sub district, district, sub province, etc) a jirga was convened to decide who would represent the body at the next highest level, thereby maintaining tribal integrity. At the central level, the government instituted a Loya Jirga, which convened on issues important to the nation, summarized below.

1955 – Convened to build consensus on the Pashtunistan issue. The jirga gave its support to approach the Russians and to secure military armaments.

1949 – Convened to abrogate all existing treaties related to the Durand Line, including its origination in the 1919 Treaty of Rawalpindi.

1941 – Convened to discuss the nations neutral stance during WW2. The jirga approved neutrality and expelled foreign diplomats

1930 – Called to confirm Nadir Shah’s ascension to thrown
The *Loya Jirga* consolidated powers of taxation and foreign relations in the hands of the Pashtuns. These powers were real, if not latent, as the government kept extremely low tax rates on agriculture and land (and many tribes in the eastern region were wholly excused from taxation) and asked for tribal support on pertinent foreign relations issues. A summary of the political clientelistic relationship is summarized below.

### Clientelism and the Tribal Communities under Musahiban Leadership

- **Tribal Autonomy at Local Level**
  - Tribes of Loya Paktia given near autonomy
    - Maintain authority over *lashkars* (militia), *arabakai* (police force), excluded from paying taxes and conscription
  - Pashtun khans and maliks acted as middlemen between state and tribe.
    - Local authority in conscription
    - Qawms taxed at community level
    - *Local jirgas* continue to function as a local judiciary and administrator

- **Implementation of traditional *Loya Jirga* structure throughout government**
  - Each level of local government supported by a *jirga* of the local elders
  - Parliamentarians elected via local *jirgas*
  - Central government supported by *Loya Jirga* of predominantly Pashtun tribesmen

- **Pashtun Participation in the Central Government**
  - Creation of *Loya Jirga*
    - Authority over taxation
    - Authority over foreign policy – maintaining non-interference policy
    - Authority over amendments to constitution
    - Generally providing input on major decisions

- **Bicameral Parliament**
  - Created a consultative, *jirga* style, assembly, which included tribal and religious leaders

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**Figure 12** – Tribalism and the Tribal Communities, Under Musahiban Leadership, Summary
Today the power dynamic has changed. Minor Pashtun warlords who had assisted Karzai during the US invasion would emerge as the new power brokers in the Pashtun east and south. These warlords, who often represent themselves as *khans* and leaders of *qawms* or tribes, base their authority on the militias that they control. Traditionally a *khan* or *malik’s* authority is derived from patronage and support among tribal elders and the *jirga*, only through these bases of support would a *khan* preserve his position. Warlords transcend this relationship by imposing their authority primarily through the control of militias and the implied threat of violence. Rather than competing for patronage among their fellow tribesmen, they’ve monopolized the use of force instead. That’s not to say the warlord doesn’t provide some patronage to the *qawm*, but in many cases this patronage is simply in the form of protection from other warlords. His influence and power is also derived from resources stemming from outside the tribal communities illustrated in the patron client diagram below.

Figure 13 – Patronage Flow Chart
As the diagram describes both the Karzai government and the US acts as patrons to the warlords by delivering resources and influence, leaving the tribal communities relatively outside the patronage network. This has broken down the mutually beneficial relationship under the Musahiban monarchy between the tribes and government, where the warlords act as independent and powerful middlemen. In turn, this creates an atmosphere where the tribe, which lies relatively outside of the patronage network with the government seeks other venues such as the Taliban where their influence maybe more pronounced.

Furthermore, warlords thrive and derive their influence in an atmosphere of conflict. As rational actors, whose presumable goal is to attain power and wealth, their interests lie not in stabilizing the country but maintaining instability. Without conflict PSC companies wouldn’t exist, contracts with USSF would no longer be necessary, and development workers could assist farmers in producing crops other then opium. As rational actors maintaining an unstable atmosphere is in their best interest as it is their source of revenue and influence.

Warlordism also creates a tribal aspect of the insurgency. As various warlords have relationships with Karzai and the US, they’ve exploited their position by predating on tribes not in the government’s patronage network. This is most evident in the drug trafficking business and controlling highway tolls, where powerful warlords target rival tribal groups who threaten their lucrative businesses. As dominant warlords target rival groups, these less powerful (or not in the good graces of the US military or government) tribes seek an alternative political vehicle in the Taliban. Karzai plays an important role in the tribal nature of warlordism and the insurgency.
Karzai, by influencing the flow of patronage from both the state and international sources, has channeled these sources to his brother AWK and cousins, who in turn, distribute patronage regionally. Karzai’s patronage extends well beyond his immediate family to other areas of Afghanistan. Warlords in each district receive government positions and lucrative contracts in exchange for loyalty and votes. Tribes alienated from this network turn their support towards the Taliban, who garner them influence.

**Development and National Allegiance**

Development was a primary focus of the Musahiban monarchy. Up until 1955 when Daoud convened a *jirga* to accept foreign aid, development was largely derived from internal revenue sources. This would be done without increasing taxes on the Pashtun tribes, which was a staple pillar of the patron client relationship, and was also controlled by the tribes in the *Loya Jirga*. The government under Prime Ministers Hashim and Mahmud would create a new merchant class through the creation of a national bank and its *shirkats* (trading companies) spin offs. This created an economic base to support development goals while maintaining their agreement relating to taxes with the tribes. From the perspective of the rational actor these development measures could be viewed from two angles. From the ‘thin approach’ encapsulated by Riker, the idea that goals may simply be altruistic or ‘other regarding’ (Riker, 1995) the implementation of development reforms such as the Helmand Valley Project could be viewed simply as public-spirited intentions to build a better society. The project irrigated vast expanses of land and allowed landless Pashtuns to settle in the area under extremely favorable financing. This is particularly relevant within the Pashtun communities who see land ownership as a reflection of ones self worth and has historically been a primary reason for intertribal conflict. From the ‘thick approach’, which suggests motives are driven by power and wealth, these development reforms could be construed as a mechanism to undermine tribal authority (Green,
These reforms create a favorable view of the government, which has historically been viewed as an exploiter, and also creates a dependence on the state, which perpetuates national allegiance and undermines tribal allegiances. This creation of national identity was also a primary component of both the educational and military reforms, which would become more relevant during Daoud’s leadership.

The Musahiban government also utilized the military apparatus to increase national allegiance as well as to create a mechanism of coercion in an effort to create a stronger state. The military institution recruited from the tribal aristocracy which created another mechanism of coopting the tribes into the state, while the tribes viewed the military as another venue to increase tribal power. Today the institution has become a fragmented institution where alliances to various warlords, stemming primarily from non Pashtun Northern Alliance members, creates an institution of little national allegiance and only contributes to the fragmentation of the country.

Today the government under Karzai and his American patrons have taken a dramatically different approach to the enfranchisement of the Pashtun communities. The Pashtuns of the east and south have largely been the target of US military operations while development projects have done little to contribute to the well being of society. The projects that do exist are often done sporadically without a long term focus and are executed through international agencies, rather the Afghan government. This ultimately undermines the creation of allegiance to the government. More importantly the government has actively eradicated the southern Pashtuns primary cash crop, opium. The GoA nor the international community have attempted to provided an alternative source of income before the wholesale eradication of a farmers livelihood. The eradication creates higher prices for the traffickers and warlords who are the primary
beneficiaries of the policy, but does little to help the Pashtun farmer who can’t survive on alternatives crops. This creates the perception that the government has little interest in bolstering the livelihoods of Pashtun locals and continues to support exploitive warlords.

The Pashtun communities were generally alienated from the central government from the onset of the US invasion. The initial US strategy of utilizing ex mujahidin warlords of the Northern Alliance, allowed the non Pashtun warlords (mostly Tajik and Uzbek), to take control of Kabul. This inevitably led to a Tajik dominated central government initiated at the Bonn Conference. The disproportionate amount of ethnic minorities stemming from the NA would permeate into the army and police force, which from the start targeted and harassed the Pashtun communities. Each successive government where this misrepresentation wasn’t corrected, was a missed opportunity for both Karzai and the US, and would exacerbate the general feeling of alienation among the Pashtuns.

**Comparative Relations with the Religious Community**

The religious dynamic between the two eras has also changed significantly as well. Under the Musahiban monarchy, the religious community, due to their ability to arouse their religious followers, were also given newfound influence in the government. At the highest level they were consolidated under the Jamiat-i Ulema, controlled the MoJ, and the constitution of 1931 was predicated on Islamic law. The religious leaders were also members of the Loya Jirga and the national assembly. At the local level the mullahs were given autonomy by reversing the laws under Amanullah, which had created government jurisdiction over all private madrassas and maktabs. These newly created powers at the highest level and autonomy at the lowest level were the basis of the patronage relationship between the government and religious community.
The government would solidify this relationship after coming to the defense of the religious community during the era of the Liberal Parliament. A summary of the government’s relationship with the religious and tribal communities is illustrated here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clientelism and the Religious Community under Musahiban Leadership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Figure 14</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local level reforms and reversal of Amanullah era reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Closed down local government funded madrassas, (viewed as government infringement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Closed down girl schools, calling female abroad students back home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Reinstated strict purdah of women, which included the burka. Stripped women of voting rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Reinstated polygamy laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Created <em>Jamiat-i Ulama</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Institutionalized the <em>ulama</em>, religious clergy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Advised king on all issues relating to religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Assisted courts in interpretation of sharia law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o The preeminent religious authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ministry of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Creation of Islamic Judiciary, abiding to Hanafi school of jurisprudence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Religious courts extends to all corners of the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Religious leaders appointed leadership positions in organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Religious scholars appointed judges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Constitution - Stressing Islamic character of state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Defended religious clergy when attacked during the Liberal Parliament era. Subsequently dissolving parliament and shutting down critical newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allowed local mullahs to operate private madrassas/ maktabs without government infringement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Daoud continued to maintain the patron client relationship between the monarchy and religious community but was able to change the power dynamic between the parties. After decades of educational reform, cooption of the religious establishment, and military reform which was bolstered by an influx of military support from the Soviets, Daoud was able to become independent of tribal *lashkars* and was also able to push social measures, the same measures that had led to Amanullah’s downfall, without creating public unrest, due to the clergy’s lack of desire or influence to arouse the community. Their diminished influence was due to the gradual cooption of the religious *ulama* into government and the gradual implementation of a competing more progressive religious education.
Contrary to the Musahiban policy of placating to, coopting, and absorbing the religious community into government, the Karzai government and its international support has largely excluded religious influence, especially relevant at the local level. Local mullahs, who are an influential authority and primary disseminator of information among the community, have been nearly universally left out of the local decision making process. Traditionally a primary source of consultation and arbitration, the mullah has been sidelined due to government and international suspicion of the local religious community, who once played a prominent role under the Taliban government. The local mullah has been further alienated as one of his primary sources of authority has been additionally undermined, that of the local madrassa, which the government and international agencies have largely ignored, leaving them underfunded without public support. Arguably the most important aspect of the relationship is the lack of protection pro-government mullahs receive. If they support government measures they are attacked by the Taliban, if they hold a middle road they are targeted by both the Taliban and government. Extending this logic, it’s clearly in the best interest of a local mullah to support the Taliban nullifying one source of potential attack, while also garnering political influence within the group.

The other religious authority, the more educated ulama, more prominent at the national level, have largely been ineffective in promoting Islamic policies and countering western secular ideals. This is partly due to the ostracizing of many religious figures who were once associated with the Taliban, as well as the influence of foreign forces. Secular influence is prominent in the constitution, judiciary, and education. This dynamic isn’t lost on the local Pashtun community that rejects the idea of total secularization and feels western mores such as women’s rights dominates policy making, overlooking cultural and religious norms.
The un-Islamic nature of the government has proved to be an influential force in pushing local Pashtuns towards the insurgency. This is further aggravated by the local mullahs, with no voice in the public dialogue to vent or discuss foreign and government infringement, they’ve instead promoted the idea of jihad, and the rejection of the government and its foreign inoculators.

The religious motivation that has pushed many towards insurgency does not necessarily mean they are supporters of a Taliban government. The Taliban represent the primary alternative political venue to the Karzai government.

**Comparing Stability**

As discussed, the reasons for joining the insurgency are many fold, often involving overlapping interests, as illustrated in the bullet points below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Reasons</th>
<th>Economic Reasons</th>
<th>Warlordism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Perceived secular or immoral nature of government</td>
<td>• Lack of development initiatives in Pashtun areas</td>
<td>• Predating activity both within and outside their patronage networks and tribal association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• American occupation and military action encourages jihad</td>
<td>• Destruction of opium crops, especially relevant to the Pashtun community</td>
<td>• The perceived corruption and exploitation of the government derived from government’s support of warlords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General alienation of religious community</td>
<td>• American military operations contributing to economic deprivation</td>
<td>• The tribal effect, where a warlord imbedded with the government targets and alienates rival tribes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This has fueled an insurgency, which clearly has contributed to the instability of the country, as highlighted by the number of attacks on government and international forces and agencies illustrated below.

The instability and attacks on the government during the Musahiban monarchy under analysis (1929 – 1963), was comparatively less. The major disturbances targeting the government are summarized below.

**Frontier Uprisings – Mohmand, Shinwari, Sulayan Khel and the Shami Pir Revolt (Late 1930’s)**

Eastern frontier tribal uprising on the Afghan Pakistan border. The tribes threatened both the Afghan monarchy as well as the British government. The most threatening uprising in Afghanistan was the Shami Pir revolt led by an Iraqi named Sayyid Mohammad Saadi. His political ambitions were to bring Amanullah back to the thrown. He eventually ended his campaign against the Nadiri monarchy when the British paid him off and sent him back to Baghdad. (Dupree, 1973, 479)

**Rebellion of Safi Tribe (Late 1940’s)**

In the mid 1940’s the Hashim government changed its conscription policies as it relates to the Pashtun Safi tribes of the Kunar province of eastern Afghanistan. Previously Nadir had
reinstated the *qawmi* (tribal) style of conscription, where tribal leaders would supply a certain amount of their young tribesmen for military conscription. These young men would serve together and stationed near their home. Hashim reversed this process, reverting back to the conscription process under Amanullah (which had contributed to his upheaval), called *nufus* (population). Under *nufus* the government would pull conscripts directly out of a given population without regard to their tribal affiliations. This removes a mechanism of power for the tribal leaders as well as undermines the tribal structure at large (Edwards, 2002, 103).

The Safi’s rebelled by capturing a contingent of government troops whom were rounding up conscripts, sparking an uprising. In the end a young general by the name of Sardar Daoud (the same Daoud who would go on to become PM) subdue the resistance and sent many of the Safi tribesmen to the north. This was meant to separate the pugnacious tribesmen while at the same time installing more Pashtuns in the Turkmen/Uzbek dominated north (Shahrani, 1988, 58).

**Kandahar Tax Unrest Supported by Local Mullahs (1959)**

Daoud ended tax exemption on Kandahari landowners as well as increased taxes on shopkeeper. The local leaders marched to the local mosque where they declared *bast* or sanctuary. Traditionally the government would give in and everything would progress as usual. This time the police blocked the mosque and wouldn’t allow them to declare *bast*. The landowners and religious conservatives (who were still sore from the unveiling earlier in the year) quickly whipped up unrest among the youth; riots ensued, targeting symbols of modernity such as the cinema and the girls’ schoolhouse. Daoud quickly installed the provincial military commander as the new governor, whom brought in the army to assist the police. By the next afternoon the unrest had been subdued. Dramatic differences of opinion exist regarding the amount of death. The renowned Afghan scholar, Louis Dupree, notes three people were killed and eight were injured (Dupree, 1973).

The above comparison is simply meant to demonstrate the relatively stability during the Musahiban monarchy compared to the current Karzai government. It should also be noted that all of the unrest stemmed from Pashtun tribes, little to no disturbances derived from the non Pashtun element in the country.

At this point the analysis has demonstrated how the Karzai government’s relationship with the Pashtun tribal and religious communities has fueled instability, and how the Musahiban monarchy’s (from 1929 – 1963) relationship with the Pashtun tribal and religious communities
has contributed to relative stability. The last part of this analysis will attempt to provide suggestions that may resolve the current turmoil in Afghanistan, by applying lessons learned from the analysis of the Musahiban period.

*A Comparative Approach: Applying Musahiban Methods to the Current Conflict in Afghanistan*

There was a relatively simple reason behind the peaceful era under the Musahiban dynasty under analysis. The leaders during this era placated and coopted Pashtun tribal and religious communities and avoided infringing on traditional tribal and religious norms. Musahiban leaders, beginning with Nadir Shah, as rational actors understood their power was largely predicated on Pashtun acceptance of their authority. These leaders also sought to develop and modernize the country but would only do so in a very gradual fashion, minimizing tribal and religious backlash. The precondition of Pashtun acquiescence over the past thirty years has largely been overlooked by the various Afghan governments, including the current Karzai government (as well as his foreign government patrons).

The patronage network derived originally from the United States, supporting Karzai militarily and economically, has had undermining affects on stability. The framework in which political clientelism operates in today was born during the 2001 US invasion, in which the US reinvigorated northern non Pashtun warlords, while Karzai mobilized lesser Pashtun warlords in the south. The emergence of warlordism, rather than being stymied after the Bonn Conference, was bolstered with the implementation of the SNTV voting system which gave warlords a significant upper hand in the electoral system, utilizing voter ballot stuffing and intimidation to garner the small percentage necessary to win an election. Arguably more important than the voting system, was the complex clientelistic dynamic that centered on the various warlords, most
relevantly those in the Pashtun south and east. In exchange for lucrative security contracts, assisting USSF, and monopolizing various drug and smuggling industries, they gave support to Karzai. Karzai then intern appointed many of them government officials. Warlords are the primary beneficiaries of the conflict that exists, and as rational actors, garner no benefit from seeing the end of hostilities.

The patronage relationship centered on various warlords has essentially superimposed itself on the traditional tribal structure. The Musahiban monarchy utilized this tribal structure at all levels of government and as a mechanism for patronage. This became a relationship of mutual benefit where a local jirga would appoint a khan as its leader, who would protect the tribe from foreign forces and attempt to extract resources from the state. The khan’s position was predicated on his ability to disburse patronage to the qawm, and whose authority rested in the hands of the jirga and qawm at large. This system has been undermined by warlords usurping the position of khan by force or threat there of, whose authority is originated from outside the tribe.

The patronage dynamic centered on various Pashtun warlords, as discussed is undermining to the stability of Afghanistan. The dynamic has also left many tribal communities outside of the patronage relationship with the government, leaving them little incentive to support the government. The Musahiban strategy of absorbing tribal constituencies into government, with each tribe being represented at the Loya Jirga, and each tribal jirga appointing it’s own representatives, would give all tribes an influence in government and a stake in its survival. Furthermore, the jirga system of government, where leaders are chosen by local elders, could potentially create a more representative government body. Today the SNTV system allows warlords to garner the 2-3% necessary to win through voter intimidation and other such acts, the
**Jirga** system requires at least a majority and is openly discussed, arguably more democratic than the current system, and would weaken the warlords’ ability to undermine the system.

During the Musahiban monarchy the patronage network was between individual tribes and government, today the government and foreign forces are the patrons and the client is the warlord (who in turn has his own clients). Redirecting this patronage and support away from the Pashtun warlords and their militias could very well prove difficult. It would take a commitment by international agencies and forces to stop using the PSCs as well as a commitment by USSF to stop utilizing known warlords as sources of information and assisting in operations. Additionally, warlords and their militias controlling major highways would have to be dismantled, which would unlikely happen peacefully. Lastly, Karzai could start appointing technocrats and traditional tribal elders to local community leader positions, especially as police chiefs and governors. In doing this he would likely be forfeiting the votes that warlords garner him, making decisions like this all the more difficult.

An aspect of the patronage relationship lies in the cultivation of opium. Warlords have largely benefitted from the production of the illicit drug, even while government forces continue to the eradicate crop. The Musahiban monarchy understood the importance of Pashtun livelihoods, especially as it relates to *zar, zan, zamin*, or specifically the ownership of land. They established the Helwan Valley Project to provide land and livelihoods to the Pashtun poor and landless, which in turn gave the government additional legitimacy, and changed the common perception of the government as the exploiter to social provider. Contrary to the Musahiban era, the current government has had a detrimental impact on the livelihoods of many Pashtuns, especially in the south. In the southern region where opium cultivation is plentiful, the government has continually targeted opium production, which directly negatively impacts the
Pashtun farmer, while benefitting the warlords, drug cartels, and smuggling operations by raising the price of opium. The destruction of opium crops often times forces Pashtun farmers into perpetual debt (through *salaam* financing), creating further dependence on the lucrative opium crop as well as on warlords and drug cartels that operate as financiers.

From an international standpoint, continued opium cultivation is clearly an untenable option, but outright eradication is untenable to the southern Pashtun farmers who depend on the crop and has driven many to join the insurgency. The government and international agencies need to provide solutions in terms of agricultural substitutions. Economically feasible substitutions should be encouraged and supported by the government, and implemented with their support. Outright eradication has proven to improve the lives of no one except the illicit drug operators, which further supports the warlords and undermines the Pashtun poor, driving many towards insurgency.

Development in general has largely been devoid of in the Pashtun south and east. This is largely due to the increasing insurgency and the Taliban’s increasing control of the south, for reasons discussed. This has made it difficult for international and government development projects to be implemented in the Pashtun areas, although they are not fully blameless (disregarding for the time being that they’ve contributed to the growing insurgency through reasons discussed). The government and international community, in an effort to implement development programs in the turbulent east and south, has utilized Provincial Reconstruction Teams. These teams are a mix of development workers and military, creating an indistinguishable line between the two, making both targets of anti government militias. Furthermore, these teams implement projects not on a needs basis but to mollify Taliban controlled communities. Additionally, their operating timeframes tend to be very short, which
doesn’t allow for proper follow through. It’s understandably difficult for aid workers from both the government and international agencies to implement projects in an area of conflict. This inability is essentially a product of a growing insurgency caused by reasons this analysis has discussed. If or when the insurgency dissipates, development programs could presumably be reinitiated.

The Karzai and Musahiban governments’ relationship with the religious community, currently a primary aspect of the insurgency, provides clear differences in their relationship with the group. At the emergence of the Musahiban monarchy, the religious community was at its height of influence. To garner their support the government absorbed the ulama into government, and allowed the local mullahs autonomy and free from government infringement. More importantly the government allowed the religious authorities to implement regulations which coincided with religious and cultural norms of the day. The government pursued social and economic development but would only do so in a manner that wouldn’t threaten their relationship with the group. When the government pushed too hard for reform, such as the Liberal Democracy era, they reigned in the liberal reformers and defended the religious conservatives. This allowed them to eventually coopt the religious groups and gradually implement reforms without triggering a dramatic religious backlash.

The Musahiban strategy of cooption and gradual reforms lays in stark contrast to the measures implemented under the Karzai regime as it relates to the religious community. Under Karzai and his international supporters, local mullahs have been nearly completely excluded from the dialogue. This is largely due to their past relationship with the Taliban and western government’s hesitancy to include religious figures in their projects. The ulama at the national level has become an ineffective organization, as all Taliban related figures have either been
targeted as insurgents or ostracized from government, and secular ideology dominates the current
debate. Emulating the relationship under the Musahiban era, the Karzai government could
reestablish its relationship with the religious community and rebuild its Islamic credentials. This
is especially relevant at the community level, where local mullahs are often times the mouthpiece
for the insurgence and a primary source of information and propaganda dissemination. Including
local figures into the dialogue not only brings in an important local authority into the local
decision making process, but also gives mullahs access to the political structure. This access
would give them more influence in decision making, a venue to express dissatisfaction with
government policies, and an alternative political venue to the Taliban which currently is
essentially the only political venue in which mullahs have a voice. The importance of the local
mullahs, and their ability to call their constituents to jihad, really can’t be over stressed.
Additionally, mullah’s that haven’t supported the insurgency should receive some sort of
protection and acknowledgment from the government. Without this protection, the local religious
community, have little reason to stick their necks out and support the government.

At the national level, the government and its western supporters seemingly haven’t taken
into consideration the religious and tribal norms that currently exist. The Musahiban monarchy
allowed the ulama to influence government decision-making on religious issues, which hasn’t
existed under the Karzai government. Karzai, due to the secular nature of his foreign support, has
focused on secularizing various aspects of society, specifically in the constitution, education and
judiciary. As the majority of people believe sharia based law should be the law of the land and
religion should be a part of the education curriculum, implementing secular reforms will
continue to exacerbate the problems in the country, and undermine the legitimacy of the
government; whose legitimacy is historically partly predicated on its religious authenticity.
Finding a way to integrate religious ideology into the policy debate and including the conservative elements of society, could potentially stymie the influx of Pashtuns joining the insurgency on religious grounds. If history is any indication of what the future will hold for an Afghan regime pushing secular reforms against the headwinds of traditional and religious norms, one could surmise it would be overthrown by religious and tribal forces just as they had done in the past.

This is not too say instituting new Islamic based reforms would nullify the insurgency all together. This pertains more to the Taliban foot soldiers, who don’t necessarily have a particular allegiance to the Taliban group but utilize it as a mechanism of rebellion against the government. The ‘political’ Taliban, the relatively small group centered around Mullah Omar and the Quetta Shura, is essentially a guerrilla movement looking to reclaim power. As Macdonald states, a rational actor makes choices to maximizes their expected utility (Macdonald, 2003). Referring to the ‘thick rational’ approach, which assumes actions are made to maximize wealth, power, or status (Green, 1994), one could assume the Taliban are not solely driven to establish an Islamic state, but are primarily driven to install such a state under their own authority or government. To undermine this threat to the current Karzai government, actions would have to be taken to quell their influx of support among the Pashtun communities, which this paper has discussed. The other aspect of Taliban support is derived from their relationship with Pakistan. The Pakistanis have been funding the Islamic extremist elements in Kashmir, FATA, and Afghanistan for decades now, with the intention of creating an Islamic coalition in an effort to off set Indian hegemony. Creating a government less dominated by secular ideology, could potentially also have the effect of easing Pakistani concerns, and reducing their dependence on the Taliban.
It’s also important to note the role of the United States and the effects of their policy as it relates to the stability of Afghanistan. The US initially intended to root out al Qaeda, a central element in the ‘war on terror’, and later committed to the nation building process. As the insurgency reemerged in 2006, countering these guerrilla attacks began to take priority. As US withdrawal approaches, it appears the country plans to maintain some sort of presence in the Afghanistan, indicated by the construction of permanent military bases, agreed upon by Karzai. Although, it’s yet to be seen what role the US will play in Afghanistan post 2014 (Tolo, 2011). The US’s influence in the country, as it relates to the secular nature of policy, alienating the religious community, and supporting warlordism, has already been discussed in depth. Other policy measures, specifically relating to their support of northern warlords during the initial invasion, which allowed for mass retribution against the Pashtuns and eventually led to Northern Alliance dominance in government, will be hard to correct. Although today the Afghan National Army still stands as an ethnically divided institution. Referring back to the Musahiban monarchy, leaders during this time utilized the military apparatus as a mechanism to instill a national identity and as an educational institute. Conscription was enforced, where each tribal group was expected to supply a certain amount of men. Additionally, the government recruited among the tribal elite, giving them positions of authority in the army and the tribes an additional stake in the government. Today the army is a fragmented structure, dominated by Northern Alliance connected generals, which has created ethnic divisions and loyalties. Unlike the Musahiban period when conscription was enforced, the Afghan National Army recruits on a voluntary basis and has been attracting recruits from the lowest echelon of society, creating an institution with a 90% illiteracy rate, and an alcohol and drug problem, with little national consciousness. Rectifying this problem will take an additional commitment by the United States,
its primary patron. Creating a nationally loyal army, utilizing the methods of the Musahiban monarchy, by recruiting among the Pashtun elite and instituting compulsory conscription, would not only give Pashtuns an additional stake in government but would also provide a loyal mechanism of coercion. Similar to how Daoud was able to install social and economic reforms with the support of a professional and loyal military, today the institution is needed to pacify the country and reclaim Taliban dominated areas. An organically Afghan force is seemingly necessary to combat the insurgency, as US efforts have become a primary point of contention and disdain.

The outcome of this conflict is still uncertain. Whether or not Karzai and his American backers can build support among the Pashtun communities and stymie the legitimacy of the insurgency seems less and less likely over time. If history is any indication of the outcome, the alienation of the Pashtun tribal and religious communities cannot coincide with a peaceful and stable government. Measures either need to be taken to rectify the current problems, or the government may experience the same fate of the failed governments of the past.

Afterword

This thesis was completed in late November 2011. Since that time, the country has made little progress towards a peaceful reconciliation between the insurgency and government and NATO forces. As the 2014 withdrawal of American and foreign forces looms, it still remains unclear what the political landscape will look like in Afghanistan. Both the Karzai government and the American government have both reached out to the Taliban and their affiliates, the Haqqani network. While all groups have seemingly been receptive, at some level, to initiate peace talks, the violence has continued unabated. This was exemplified when Burhanuddin
Rabbani, head of the Afghan High Peace Council, was assassinated by Taliban militants, while in the process of negotiating with the same group. This left many commentators questioning the viability of a peace agreement between the conflicting parties.

The Taliban have seemingly little reason to take part in a Karzai government. As the antiforeigner sentiment among the populace grows stronger, giving the group additional support, major countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and France have all set time tables for withdrawal, giving them little reason to negotiate. The group has also arguably moderated its extremist stance, although it’s unknown how genuine these pragmatic gestures really are. Notable among these gestures is allowing girls to go to school and reopening schools in Taliban controlled areas, as well as declarations that a new Taliban government would be more inclusive. The idea of becoming more inclusive and less Pashtun dominated has largely been dismissed by the Uzbek, Tajik, and Hazaras minorities, who still remember their treatment under Taliban rule during the 1990s (Trofimov, 2012).

With a legitimate peace deal increasingly unlikely, the roll of American forces in the country has become less clear. By June 2011, shortly after the US forces killed Osama bin Laden, President Obama declared American goals largely achieved in the country, and an accelerated drawdown of troops (Landler, 2011), although some element of US forces will exist in the country. The extent of these forces is uncertain; as of April 2012, American Vice President Biden has publicly supported a counterterrorism strategy, leaving Afghan forces to their own devices, while American troops stationed in well protected fortified bases would track down terrorist elements when called upon. Although, more recently, Admiral Bill McRaven, head of US Special Forces, has put forth a more aggressive strategy of that would replace many of currently deployed troops with Special Forces groups who would assist, train, and provide
communications and intelligence support. This strategy takes a much more proactive approach and requires a larger US presence, arguably not ‘withdrawing’ at all (Associated Press, 2012). US military officials have become increasingly concerned with the influence of the Taliban and anti-American sentiment, partly due to American and NATO mishaps, such as pictures of US troops desecrating Afghan bodies, burning of the Koran, and the Kandahar massacre where a US soldier killed 16 civilians in March of 2012.

Pakistan also plays an important role in the future of Afghanistan. The American government has tried to persuade the Pakistanis to rein in the Haqqani network, largely believed to be an ISI agent, although sidelining the government in its peace talks with the Taliban. The Pakistanis seemingly have no benefit in restraining the Haqqanis nor the Taliban in general, as these groups could potentially take back Kabul in a post US withdrawal government. Having a close ally like the Taliban back in power would further the Pakistani goal of offsetting Indian regional influence. Karzai has been less amenable to this cause; in late 2011 he signed an accord with the Indian government, which included their assistance in training of Afghan forces. Afghan policies like this have provoked an immediate backlash from the Pakistani government, giving them less reason to support a Karzai government, or a leader within the current regime, after American withdrawal (Perlez, 2011).

What will become of Afghanistan in the next few years is anyone’s guess. In the probable event peace-talks don’t materialize, Karzai or his successor, will likely not survive without American military support. This required future support may not be tenable in the current American climate of budget austerity coupled with diminishing popularity of the war. Today the odds are seemingly against the future existence of the current government, but who knows how the final chapter will eventually unfold.